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HOW WOMEN BECOME ROCK MUSICIANS.

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May 1989.

ABSTRACT.

This thesis is about women rock musicians in the U.K. It is based on in-depth interviews with 36 female rock musicians in the 1980s. Firstly, it examines the relative absence of women in rock music-making and explains this in terms of gender socialisation and a number of social constraints operating on women. Secondly, it looks at those women who, despite all the obstacles, do become rock musicians. A number of variables are put forward which, it is suggested, have helped these women overcome gender constraints. These factors are conceptualised as "escape routes" into rock music-making. Thirdly, all-women bands are examined, and the individual careers of the women who constitute them. An ideal-type model is constructed of the stages of a female band's career. It is concluded that, compared to male bands, there are a whole set of factors which make it more difficult for women's bands to be set up and continue along the career path. These factors have the strongest effect in the early career stages. Lastly, some non-typical career patterns are investigated, and particularly the strategies developed by feminist musicians as alternatives to the mainstream commercial path.

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BRIEF NOTE.

In this thesis, unless otherwise specifically stated, I am using the terms 'rock' and 'pop' interchangeably. I feel justified in doing this as these concepts have no clear-cut or stable empirical boundaries, and I am also reflecting the current conventional usage amongst my interviewees.

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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION.

The academic study of popular music has only a short history and the focus has been overwhelmingly on the end product, namely records. Little work has been done on the production of music, or on its primary producers, the musicians. Also, the field is top heavy: most of the work has been theoretical and empirical work has been neglected. Moreover, existing studies are mainly about jazz groups rather than rock bands, and few have been done in the U.K. Lastly, these empirical studies have all been about men, not women. This thesis is intended to contribute to the sociology of music as the first major piece of empirical work on women's rock music-making.

The study of music has been the meeting place for a wide number of disciplines, most notably sociology, anthropology and musicology. But a sociological approach has been slower to gain ground in music than in other fields of art, and most of the basic publications have been about classical music.

Max Weber (1958) analysed the development of harmony, scale systems, the dominant seventh, etc. in terms of the progressive rationalization of society.

The sociologists who followed also studied classical (rather than popular) music, for example Silbermann (1963). More recently, Da Silva's book, 'The Sociology of Music' (1984), a general textbook, has a lot about classical music, a little on jazz and folk, and hardly anything on rock. In fact, it is clear he has little knowledge or understanding of rock music.

Like sociology, musicology has traditionally studied classical music. Viewing music as autonomous from the social realm - as a hermetically-sealed 'given' - musicologists have used formalist-idealist methods to analyse the 'transcendent' 'essential' meaning supposedly 'immanent' in the structure of the music. When musicologists first deigned to turn their gaze on popular music they used the standard methods of classical musicology. With their focus narrowly on the end product (the musical score), these methods and concepts have, not surprisingly, proved totally inappropriate for the study of popular music.

Given that popular music is an important factor in the way in which many people construct their identity and social reality, it is notably under-researched. I find it remarkable that such a large area of contemporary life (in terms of institutional structures, social processes, cultural artefacts, etc.) has been largely ignored by sociologists. Frith has argued (1985b) that this neglect is due to lack of

funds. It is also the case that there has been a strong elitist tendency, in both musicology and sociology, to view popular music as the shallow product of unrestrained commercialism.

More recently, both sociology and musicology have begun to study popular music. The development of the sociology of popular music has been pioneered in this country by Frith (1978, 1983). Meanwhile, a new brand of sociologically-informed musicology has emerged such as the work of Shepherd (1977), Middleton (1983), and Vulliamy and Lee (1982a, 1982b). These new musicologists have attacked the ingrained elitism and ethnocentrism of the traditional discipline, arguing that all music must be seen as socially located and that musical pieces cannot be regarded as 'pure text'. Strongly influenced by ethnomusicology, they have argued that it is necessary to develop a new musical "grammar" which is appropriate for the analysis of popular music.

Most of the academic work on music has been concerned with reception/consumption and interpretation/meaning than with inception and production. Musicologists have focussed on the end product and ignored the process of production, because in classical music the musicians have minimal influence. In analysing popular music musicologists have kept the same orientation. The issue has been the

"effects" of music on its listeners, or the "reflections" of social and political developments in the music. In the 1950s and 1960s most work consisted of fairly positivistic content analysis of lyrics, ignoring the music, the 'grain' of the voice, the genre, and the performance context. Since then analysis has become more sophisticated and increasingly influenced by semiology. But the emphasis remains on the musical end product. The typically musicological task is a detailed analysis of one piece of music. (For example, Bradby and Torode, 1984, and Cubitt, 1984) The apotheosis of this approach is provided by Tagg's (1982) immensely detailed hermeneutic-semiological work. People seem interested in the product but not so much in the process of production which gives birth to it.

The recent international collection of essays edited by Lull (1987) offers a useful illustration of my argument. The second half of this collection is on consumption/reception and, whilst the first half concerns the creation and distribution of popular music (including record companies, radio, music videos, etc.), there is nothing on musicians.

Production and consumption are intimately (dialectically) intertwined. Musical production starts with the initial conception of the musical idea, passes through a series of roles and institutions

narrow methodological base. Ethnomusicology has been the only area in which much empirical work has taken place, but it has mainly been on acoustic, rather than electric, music and little has been carried out in the U.K. (One interesting exception is Pegg, 1984.)

Academic work on popular music has often been concerned with the meanings of music, the beliefs and values embedded within it, but often those meanings are assumed and those values intuitively guessed at, rather than established via empirical research. Assumptions have been made, firstly, about what the producers intended their music to mean and, secondly, about what meanings emerge for the listeners. As Becker has said,

"Sociologists like to theorise about these matters without acquiring a first-hand working acquaintance with the materials or characteristic social situations in which artists work and audiences absorb what they do" (1977, p.xiii).

Does this matter? I think the answer must be a resounding 'yes'. In the absence of concrete data on what Frith calls "the collective practices of rock and pop" (the day to day activities of musicians, record companies and fans), both journalists and academics make all kinds of questionable assumptions about social reality, assumptions which become embedded in their theorising. Huge theoretical edifices perch on minimal empirical knowledge. Few people are prepared

to admit the obvious: the empirical work has not been done, and without this even the most sophisticated theories are as unstable as a house of cards. For example, the approach of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (whose work I shall be discussing) involved interpreting subcultural styles as signs, but these theorists made no attempt to validate their semiological interpretations by interviews, observation or questionnaires. I am not suggesting that all meanings are conscious or that semiological interpretations are inevitably invalid, but merely that the subjectivity of the actors themselves must play an essential part in the overall explanation. After all, any piece of music has multiple and contingent meanings to various audiences and these need to be studied rather than guessed at. How can the armchair theorist catch all the ambiguity and, often, irony in a song? For such meaning is not simply apparent in the song per se, but only emerges in the song's location within the wider genre and overall context of the listening publics. Moreover, as Middleton (1985) argues, theoretical frameworks must also include idiosyncratic connotations and purely personal meanings:

"...we will not arrive at a real understanding of popular music unless we pay attention to these individual differences, or at least study the consequences of ignoring them". (p.102)

Now, I am not presenting a simplistic positivistic argument on the lines of "let's get back to the facts untainted by theory". I just think that the theory generated in this field should be more empirically grounded. There is too much grand speculation and not enough linking with musical practice as a day-to-day interactive process. Lack of empirical research leads to theorizing which overgeneralizes and renders misleadingly clear-cut the problematical, changing and contested nature of day-to-day constructed reality. There is a need for more people to go out into the field and find out what people do and think, rather than to fit people's responses into the pre-determined categories of some vast theoretical schema. Or, as Vulliamy puts it, there is a need for,

"a more phenomenologically inclined analysis, which takes more seriously the definitions of the situation of the actors concerned...the various participants in the pop music process". (p.185. Shepherd et al, 1977)

There has been much discussion of music as discourse, as style, as symbolic expression. But there has been a relative neglect of that basic web of ongoing social interaction traditionally called the social 'system' or 'structure'.

One sometimes gets the impression that the cultural domain is wholly pre-determined rather than a site of conflict, resistance and negotiation. As Middleton and

Horn so rightly point out, in semiological studies of musical texts "the audience appears, if at all, only as an abstraction" (1984). Empirical work such as mine shows the possibility for resistance to dominant discourses and how people create their own meanings along with their own music. Frith argues along similar lines that the "derivation of pop meaning from collective experience is not sufficient" but, rather, it is the impact of the music on individuals which now needs to be studied (1987, p.149).

A perfect example of the way in which empirical work can radically change the theoretical prism is the research by Hennion (1983). The strange bifurcation of studies into 'production' and 'consumption' is superseded in his work. Hennion shows the way in which production within the record industry is intimately and inseparably bound up with the music's anticipated consumption, especially through the crucial mediating role of the producer - who is able to intuitively grasp public meanings. Flying in the face of most musicological work, this research shows that it is fruitless trying to analyse the end product without studying the way in which it has been produced. Form and content are an indissoluble whole, just as the words and music, likewise, form a composite whole:

"...there is no such thing as the 'structure' of a song. None of the elements which go into its creation, none of the dichotomies which the outside

observer can detect, are above the process of negotiation". (Hennion, 1983. p. 161)

The theoretical advance marked by Hennion's work is the outcome of his decision to do an empirical study of studio production. Producers, engineers and arrangers have been virtually ignored by academics in the past, and a lot of misleading theoretical work has been published because of this. My argument is that we should not be "outside" observers but obtain "inside" information; theories not firmly rooted in empirical research will bear little fruit.

Most of the existing sociology of music is macro-sociology. It is concerned with broad social forces (notably class), with statistics about record sales, or with the rock industry. There is a dearth of material on the grass-roots processes of music-making. Detailed study of the institutional structure of the rock world, the role relationships of musicians, the social processes of music production, social relations of production and technological factors, has been a far less popular field. Insofar as production has been studied there has been more interest in the workings of the record industry (for example, Gillett 1970, and Frith 1978, 1983) than in the work of the most primary producers: musicians, arrangers, producers, sound engineers and mixers. Kealy (1979) used participant observation and informal interviewing methods to

investigate the interactional process of sound recording, and Hennion (1983) has done excellent work (see above), but there is little else in the way of sociological fieldwork. Thus the collection of transcripts of interviews with record producers by journalists Tobler and Grundy (1982) performs an important function.

I can understand why musicologists have ignored musicians, given their training in classical music (in which the composer and the written score dominate, and musicians have minimal influence). But I find it more difficult to understand why sociologists have done this. As Frith (1982) says,

"we still don't know much about how musicians make their musical choices, how they define their social role, how they handle its contradictions...There is little work in Britain, in short, to match the scholarship in other countries on two crucial areas of pop music: commercial and musical practice".

Little is known about what it means to be a 'musician' or 'band member' and how such meanings are constructed, 'negotiated', change over time, etc. For such questions, the interactionist approach (or, more broadly, ethnography) is, I believe, the obvious choice. Moreover, it is eminently suitable for debunking the dubious assumptions of armchair theorists. Macro-theories are based on taken for granted notions of what is going on at the micro/interactional level. As Hammersley and Atkinson

argue, "the value of ethnography is perhaps most obvious in relation to the **development** of theory" (1983, p.22).

Surprisingly, Becker's pioneering interactionist study of jazz musicians (1963) has been followed up by few sociologists. (See Lewis, 1985, for a summary of the American studies.)¹ Recent years have seen a few similar British studies. White (1987) used participant observation to study a British jazz band. Christian (1987) carried out a similar study of jazz musicians and used a combination of participant observation and interviews, as I have done.

Moreover, this approach has spawned only a handful of rock/pop applications and (like the jazz studies) they tend to concentrate narrowly on the issue of role conflict. Lewis (1985) has studied role conflict and its resolution amongst popular musicians in Hawaii. Coffman (1972) writes about role conflict amongst rock stars, but his study was based on the content analysis of recorded song lyrics rather than on any original fieldwork. Van Elderen (1984) used qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviewing, in his study of Dutch rock groups. But he seems to be mainly interested in, firstly, audiences, and secondly, song lyrics. Undoubtedly the best work on rock to come out of this Becker 'school' is that of Bennett (1980).

I wish to emphasize the following points about these Becker-inspired studies: most are American, few are British; most are about jazz, few are on rock; all are about men, none are about women. My study of female British rock musicians is therefore unique. Furthermore, although I do cover similar ground, my approach is also much wider than the studies mentioned above.

The interviewing of rock musicians has been largely left to journalists. There are plenty of biographies of stars and glossy photo-books about bands. However, the text is often superficial and the commercial constraints within which journalists have to operate have important consequences for the material they write (and do not write).

Firstly, the focus is on personalities rather than on institutions. The emphasis on the individual 'artist' reinforces the belief that musical creativity is lodged solely in the uniquely talented individual, rather than being the end result of a complex work process involving a large number of creative workers. This point has been made by Nugent (1985) in relation to rock reference books:

"Non-performing songwriters, producers, arrangers, session musicians are acknowledged - if at all - as necessary contributors, but insufficiently luminous creators".(p.237)

"For many rock writers, the inside dealings of the business simply constitute background".(p.240)

In contrast, as Becker (1982) has emphasised, sociologists' proper focus should be on 'art worlds'.

Secondly, rock biographies are part of the star-making process; they are hagiographic. They actively construct the myths of rock rather than deconstruct them. As Frith (1983) says,

"What the stars themselves think, why they make their musical moves, seems less important than what everyone else thinks about them...In rock biographies we see not the stars at work but the star makers, the fans and journalists and critics through whose mediations musical lives are continually being defined and measured and made meaningful".(p.277)

Thirdly, rock journalists only write about the people who have reached the top of the pinnacle and become successful in commercial terms. The stars are written about simply because they are stars. The vast majority of musicians, beavering away up and down the country, are inevitably ignored because they are of little or no interest to the fans. Likewise, the wide terrain of the everyday social practices of rock is omitted: the gig, the rehearsal, the process of composition and arrangement, and the endless succession of choices and decisions, conflict and negotiation which being in a band entails.

One journalistic book I did find interesting was that by Gorman (1978). Although it is written in the

style of an uninhibited fan - "this amazing part of the amazing world of rock" (p.12) - and is primarily about rock's service roles, rather than musicians, it does contain much useful (although superficial) nuts and bolts information about the back-stage world, for example about the physical constraints of performance space. However, it is written very much from a male perspective and women only figure as sex objects and "groupies".

There are, therefore, obvious limitations in using both biographies and journalism for research purposes. Neither operate under the constraints of social scientific methodology as pertaining to, for example, interviewing techniques. As sources, they may be contaminated by selective memory, deliberate omission, exaggeration and so on. However, they are useful for comparative purposes, which is how I have used them.

My research differs from these works, firstly, by being methodologically rigorous and, secondly, by deliberately turning the spotlight on the hitherto unilluminated 'ordinary' female musicians: women playing in local bands. It is true that I have interviewed some famous women's bands, for one of my aims was to construct a career process model, but the majority of my interviewees were unknown outside their immediate localities. I wanted, and got, a view

from the grass-roots of music-making and not simply from the celestial heights.

The only rock source I could use for comparison was the American participant observation study by Stith-Bennett (1980). This work, however, is much narrower than mine, for Bennett only observed bands at the 'local band' stage of the musical career. Because I chose to do in-depth interviews I was able to look at a more varied collection of bands - in terms of music played, career stage, etc. But the most significant difference between my work and Bennett's is that Bennett only studied male bands and the question of gender was not even raised; it is as if women never played rock. Also, because my research has been on women it leads into more areas and becomes wider in scope than Bennett's, or indeed any of the Becker-inspired studies. But there is still no study of rock bands in this country like Bennett's (apart from mine), and there is still no equivalent study on women musicians anywhere to my knowledge.

The British work which stands out as most like mine in approach is that of Cohen (1988), who undertook participant observation of Liverpool bands. Although the bands she studied were male, Cohen does address the issue of gender and I shall be discussing her research later on in this thesis. Also, Finnegan (1989) includes rock bands in her wide-ranging

ethnographic study of all kinds of grass-roots music-making in Milton Keynes. But the ethnography of rock bands is still in its earliest infancy. I see my own work as making a major contribution towards opening up this field.

Turning to the issue of gender, it is conspicuous by its relative absence from existing accounts of rock music. The focus has been overwhelmingly on other forms of social differentiation: age, race, and especially social class. The little work which has been done on gender has been mainly theoretical. Frith and McRobbie (1978) produced the pioneering work. Many people have quoted it but few have followed it up. (Taylor and Laing, 1979, are a major exception.) Shepherd (1987) has also recently addressed this issue, but his analysis relies heavily on McRobbie and Frith and he also veers strongly in an essentialist direction with his talk of the 'feminine heart' and the 'masculine head'. Goddard, Pollock and Fudger (1977) carried out an interesting feminist analysis of female song lyrics. Wise (1984) has also written about rock from a feminist perspective. Using her own personal experience as an Elvis fan, she challenges the view of reality taken for granted by male music writers, and thereby uncovers a much more complex reality. Also Garratt (1984) has written an

influential piece on her experience of being a Bay City Rollers fan.

Therefore, although there has been some theoretical work on gender and music, and some analysis of records, there has been no original fieldwork. I did find a couple of American historical works which were of interest partly because they were interview-based (Dahl, 1984, and Placksin, 1985.) However, as these were solely on jazzwomen I have used them only for comparison. Similarly, I found the oral history of interwar female entertainers carried out by Vicinus (1979), although not on rock music, useful for comparative purposes.

Turning to journalism, one finds that there are fewer biographies about female stars than their male equivalents.² But there were a handful of journalistic accounts which I found useful, notably Willis (1981), Dew (1977), and Archer and Simmonds (1981). Steward and Garratt (1984) performed an important task in uncovering the sheer variety of women musicians whose history has not been written. I have also drawn on Balfour (1986), which is based on interviews with rock stars' wives.

Apart from these sources, however, very little is known about female musicians and women's bands. At present, apart from my own work, there is not a single

piece of sociological research looking specifically at the practice and careers of female rock musicians.

To summarise, my work differs from existing accounts in the following ways: it is on popular music, rather than classical; it is on production and inception, rather than consumption and interpretation; it is empirically rich; it is on women.

If women have been neglected in the sociology of music³ this is hardly surprising, as women have been traditionally 'marginalised' in sociology, left out of the 'public' arena (of class and work, etc.) and relegated to the 'private' sphere of the family, marriage and sexuality.

Studies of male musicians rarely mention their non-working relationships with wives, girlfriends, and children. By contrast, studying women musicians necessitates looking at their lives as a whole within contemporary capitalism, as some of the most important constraints arise outside their immediate work situation. Like other recent feminist work (for example, Gamarnikow, 1983), my research brings together the 'public' and the 'private' realms and shows that the 'private' is an important influence on the 'public', rather than a subordinate or 'determined' sphere.

The (male) workplace is, in itself, a major problem for women musicians. Insofar as the growth of feminism has influenced theorists to recognise gender stratification in the workplace, explanation has typically been in terms of capitalist exploitation, or the domestic division of labour, or ideology. However, following Cockburn (1981), I would argue that what have, until recently, been ignored are those material aspects of male power beyond the narrowly economic: the multitude of practices by which male power is exerted over women within the institutional world of work.

I think the reason for this neglect is that, once again, theory has outstripped research:

"we may have been hampered by our preoccupation with developing a 'correct' theoretical understanding, and by our endeavours to constitute our concepts with little relevance to concrete evidence about women's employment" (Beechey, 1983).

However, there has gradually been emerging a body of detailed empirical studies, often ethnographic, which document the structure of women's lives, presenting the findings as through their subjects' own eyes (Oakley, 1974; Sharpe, 1976 and 1984; Pollert, 1981; Cunnison, 1983; Attwood and Hatton, 1983). Such studies are crucial, I believe, for both the sociological understanding of women's oppression and for social change:

"We need to know how, in minute detail, all facets of the oppressions of all women occur. To talk blithely of 'the family', 'capitalism' or 'men' as the reasons for women's oppressions may in a sense be true. But this merely restates the problem. It doesn't tell us the mechanisms, the experiences, the behaviours, the looks, conversations which are involved". (Stanley and Wise, 1983. p.167).

I offer my own work as an addition to this body of data.

Thus, I see my research as a contribution to the sociology of work and the sociology of gender as much as to the sociology of music. I have looked at rock musicians as workers: female workers within a male occupational world. I have looked at how women musicians learn their working skills and are socialized into the values and attitudes required for full participation within rock music as a world of work. And I have looked at the way in which sexist practices and harassment impede their careers.

Male domination of technology is one of the particular handicaps which women face in music, and my work can be situated in relation to the recent emergence of studies in this area (for example, Cockburn 1983; 1985; McNeil, 1987; Kramarae, 1988). Technology is an important part of our identities as masculine and feminine, and these gender identities are reproduced in the technology itself. Women who enter a traditionally masculine field are likely to

be perceived as a threat and be met with harassment. My research presents plenty of evidence for this assertion, showing how technology affects women's musical careers. Firstly, both technophobia and an aversion to male-defined and male-designed instruments act as a barrier to women's involvement in rock music. Moreover, the whole world of sound recording is perceived as male and therefore alien. Secondly, male control of musical technology, both in the 'live' performance situation and in the studio, is a major constraint on the creativity of female musicians. Such control is maintained by a possessive attitude towards technical knowledge and a language of mystification which operates to exclude women.

My work is also a contribution to the growing body of research on sexual harassment and the social control of women. Until recently this area has also been ignored in sociology:

"...women's experience of violence is rarely submitted to scrutiny or analysis either as a topic in its own right or as a constituent feature of any of the sub-areas of the discipline. We hear little, for example, of sexual harassment as it may be experienced at work, school or college, nor is much attention paid to the ways in which women are forced to modify their behaviour and activities through fear of attack". (Hanmer and Maynard, 1987, p.1.)

Violence is an important mechanism of male power. It is, especially, the threat of violence, which acts as a constraint. For example, the way in which rape is

reported in the newspapers serves "as a veiled 'warning' to non-conforming independent women" (Smart and Smart, 1978, p.91).

In feminist writings of the 1970s ideology was given the prime role in maintaining male domination, and it was believed that physical violence was a rarity. More recently, however, male violence has come to the fore. My work confirms the findings of other recent empirical research⁴ that violence, the threat of violence, and various forms of sexual harassment are routine, often taken for granted, aspects of most women's lives.

It is not surprising that women musicians encounter a lot of harassment, for they are intruders onto clearly-defined male territory: on the streets at night (unpacking equipment, flyposting, etc.), and working in a setting (the gig) which is renowned for its violence potential (fights, drunks, etc.).

Furthermore, rock music itself is not simply a 'no-go' area for women but is used as an important mechanism for endowing masculinity. This special function of rock is undercut by the existence of female performers. In this way women musicians are perceived as a real threat to men.

As I shall show in this thesis, women musicians are joked about, patronized, leered at, insulted and

verbally abused, threatened with violence, and even physically attacked on occasion. These are mechanisms for keeping women "in their place" and out of rock. And it is not surprising that I found it was the lesbian bands who experienced the most male violence, for lesbians commit the unpardonable sin of making themselves sexually unavailable to men.

Whilst it is true that there may be class variations in the likelihood and type of harassment which women suffer (for example, ownership of a car is a form of protection), it is notable that all of the women's bands I interviewed experienced some form of sexual harassment regardless of the type of music played or the age, location, social class or sexual identity of the players. My own women's band experienced the whole gamut of this behaviour - but continued to play. This is the crucial point: women can survive as rock musicians, despite the odds, and they can fight back.

When I was in a band it was simply accepted that if you wanted to play in conventional venues you had to accept a certain level of sexist hassle, a level that was considered "normal". It is only in retrospect that the harassment we experienced really stands out. It is also interesting that some of the women I interviewed who initially said they had not experienced harassment from men later on recounted many examples. Many women

musicians ignore harassment in order to be able to play at all. On the other hand, a lot of the women I interviewed resisted and retaliated, as indeed my band did. An all-women band can be an effective form of collective struggle and both female bands and their fans engage in strategies which reclaim public space for women.

THEORETICAL NOTE

In recent years socialization theory has come under fierce criticism from some feminists. As interactionists Stanley and Wise (1983) argue, "most feminist writers seem to see socialization as a kind of 'self-fulfilling prophecy'". They argue that the concept is overly deterministic, presenting an 'over-socialized' conception of people. No exceptions or variations are allowed for or explained:

"One consequence is that feminist explanations of women's oppression ignore the existence of feminists, lesbians, men who oppose sexism, and other people who aren't like the stereotype for their sex...and (such research) largely ignores fathers as unimportant in socialization" (p.98-99)

"The search for universalized theory means there is no time or inclination to include - and little respect for - individual experience and individual variation. Too often this is treated as but so much grist to the ever turning mill of 'theory'. In contrast to this, we believe that a feminist approach should recognize, indeed begin from, the existence of variations and complexity".(p.105)

Because of such criticism, feminist research has moved away from the idea of a once-and-for-all creation of women's subordination in childhood to the investigation of how male institutions operate to exclude women and maintain that subordination. This is where the interactionist approach is useful:

"In it people are seen as actively involved in constructing and negotiating and interacting, not just passively 'enacting'". (Stanley and Wise, 1983, p.137)

I too am committed to an interactionist approach. However, I do not want to throw the baby out with the bath water, because I believe that gender socialization is relevant. I don't think it simply prevents girls from wanting to become rock musicians at all. Rather, I believe that the learnt categorization of technical things as male, combined with the learnt fear of, and general lack of confidence in the face of technology is a crucial factor in constraining young women from learning to play rock instruments.

"The exclusion of women not only from active practice in scientific and technical fields but from training in basic physical and mechanical principles means that even when women use tools or machines, they are marginal to a male-created and male-dominated technology...as far as social norms go, men are assumed to be inside the magic circle and women outside" (Benston, 1987)

The information I received from my interviews can be seen as a contribution towards beginning to close

some of the gaps which the simplistic use of the concept socialization leaves out. By definition my interviewees are exceptional, and by exploring the ways in which their socialization experiences differ from the standard model (and they do greatly) some of the crucial mechanisms for change may be highlighted: being brought up as a "tomboy", unusual (political, musical, feminist) parents, etc. Furthermore, my research does not ignore fathers, but highlights them. Indeed it suggests that fathers may be a very important factor in girls becoming "tomboys" and, later, musicians.

Similarly, whilst I believe that the ideologies of femininity and romance are important factors in inhibiting in young women the desire to be rock musicians, I wish to distance myself from "overdeterministic, versions of ideology which leave little space for contradiction, struggle or change" (Beechey, 1985, p.108) and "in which individuals are completely subjected to, and enmeshed within, ideology". My interviewees have escaped, or, more aptly, broken through the ideological net. It is not that they are no longer subject to ideological pressures, for my research shows clearly their struggles, compromises, and negotiations, but that those pressures did not manage to hold them back from

adopting a traditionally male role in a male-dominated and highly masculinist world.

If, in recent feminist writings, there has been a shift away from explanations in terms of socialization, there has also been a re-evaluation (in the wake of Althusserianism) of the importance of ideology. Barrett (1980) has argued, "There has been a tendency to locate the oppression of women principally at the level of ideology..." (1980, p.31). It is not my purpose here to get embroiled in the long debates about the relations between truth and ideology, base and superstructure, language and social relations, and so on, except to say that my position is closer to the classical Marxist tradition than to discourse theory. Although I think that ideology and the processes of representation are important, I believe that male domination and female subordination are not simply constructed by language or ideology, but by the material social relations of everyday life, and I hope that my empirical research can help, in the case of female rock musicians, to illustrate those "concrete practices through which women are disadvantaged" (Cockburn, 1981).

It is clear that domestic labour plays an important role in preventing women from actually becoming rock musicians in the first place. It can also act as a serious handicap for those women who (upon marriage

or, particularly, motherhood) opt to continue in their careers. I do intend to emphasise this factor in my thesis. But I shall also throw the spotlight on gender relations across the entire working situation of women musicians (the gig, the tour, the recording studio, the record company) and show how power is exercised by men (producers, sound engineers, producers, agents, etc.) over women musicians to the detriment of their careers.

OBSERVANT PARTICIPATION TO PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

"It must be an important part of the feminist sociological enterprise to expose the link between personal life and academic work" (Oakley, 1986. p.209).

"The researcher is always and inevitably in the research...feminist research ought to make this an open presence". This means "saying why and how particular research came to be carried out, why and how the researcher came to know what she knows about that research". (Stanley and Wise, 1983, p. 179, p.178.)

For this reason I have included, where relevant, some short autobiographical sections. Likewise, I shall now give an account of my own relationship to this research, how and why I came to be doing it, the methodological route which I took, and my experience of "doing research". As a feminist interviewing women, and as a female rock musician interviewing female rock

musicians, my own experience is particularly relevant.

The idea for this research project grew out of my personal involvement as a musician, in a women's band, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It was my first band and I was fascinated by the special social world to which I had gained access. I observed the social relations within the band, its relationships with other bands, and the 'local rock scene'. As the band developed its career I came into contact with a wider range of social roles: the producer, the engineer, the agent, the manager, etc.

Because of my sociological training, I inevitably found myself analysing these worlds in sociological terms, although at first in an unsystematic and only partly conscious way. I began to keep a diary, intermittently recording my observations at gigs. Also, for musical reasons, I happened to be taping all band practices.

I gradually became conscious of the fact that I was located in a situation which had unique research possibilities. I discovered that hardly any empirical research had been carried out on the way in which rock bands work. There was little on male bands let alone female ones. So I decided that it would be worthwhile engaging in systematically organised sociological

research. I was in an ideal (and unusual) situation, being both a sociologist and a rock musician, already immersed in the local rock scene and steeped in the wider rock culture.

From the start I was specifically interested in women rock musicians and all-women bands, rather than bands in general (and "in general" means, to a large extent, male). For, being a feminist, I was interested in issues concerning gender differences, and I had become increasingly aware of the absence of women from rock. I was interested in charting the difficulties which women face on route to becoming rock music-makers in the first place, and those obstacles which impede women's musical careers. I wanted to understand how women musicians' careers worked.

So my research started from a sort of participant observation, looking at the world from the perspective of women rock musicians, and trying to make sense of it as they made sense of it. However, there was an obvious difference from the usual participant observation process: I was already a member of the social world I was studying, and my own experience was thus part of my subject matter. Because of this I avoided a number of the problems which typically confront researchers using this method: gaining access, initial acclimatisation, fear of undue influence on the other actors by the process of overt

observation, and the ethical problems of covert observation. Some observers have been known to 'go native'; I suppose you could say I was going sociological. In this respect my work is similar to that of Ned Polsky (1967).

FORMULATING QUESTIONS

With this experience behind me, and still in a band, I started reading all the available literature on women and music. I quickly discovered that little existed. I then turned to the literature on male musicians. As well as specifically sociological texts, I read biographies and autobiographies.

I became interested in two main lines of enquiry. Firstly, why is it that so few women become rock musicians, and why are women's bands so rare? Secondly, given the above, how is it, then, that a small number of women do become rock musicians, and what happens to these women? This thinking crystallised into three questions:

1. Why do so comparatively few women become rock musicians?
2. What is so special about this minority?
3. How do their careers work?

Addressing the first question, there was hardly any sociological literature directly relevant. So I turned to literature which dealt with the much broader issue of women's relative absence from masculine occupational spheres. I looked at theories of socialization and feminist theories, and attempted to apply them to the specific issue of women and rock. I then narrowed my focus somewhat and turned to subcultural theory. As this theory specifically concerned itself with rock music and youth I thought it might shed some light on my question. If youth subcultures were a way into rock for boys, then why did they not function in this way for girls too?

Lastly, I concentrated, more narrowly, on the rock world itself. Were there factors at work there which acted so as to limit the involvement of women?

CHOOSING A METHOD

After this literature survey, I came to the conclusion that original empirical data was essential to obtain answers to my three questions. What method should I use to obtain it? Upon reflection, I considered that participant observation would be inappropriate, given the breadth of the issues I was concerned with. I decided that I needed to collect data from a number of female musicians. Simply to

observe one group would be to narrow the field and provide me with inadequate clues; I needed a bigger sample. I felt that the only way to get the information I required was through in-depth interviews. This method of starting with participant observation and then doing interviews is not without precedent in sociology. For example, it was used by L.Humphries (1970).

I also felt that it was unlikely that any one variable would be of universal significance; my experience told me that many variables would be at work. I needed a method which would shed light on all three of my questions. I wanted, for example, to examine musical careers in terms of the subjective changes which the women underwent at various stages, and not merely record a sequence of externally-observable events. I wanted to investigate to what extent different women followed differing career paths and employed different strategies. The issues were complex.

Therefore, my overall methodology was qualitative rather than quantitative. I decided to do interviews rather than postal questionnaires. In a sense I was trying to get the best out of both worlds. I did in-depth interviews but I used a formal interview schedule, for I wanted to achieve some degree of comparability. I felt able to do this, as I was

starting out with a store of knowledge based on my participant observation. So I actually had quite a clear idea of what issues I wanted to discuss. I felt I knew enough to construct a schedule to give direction to the interviews. I used open-ended questions, and my interviews were quite long (from 1½ to 9 hours). Most took around 3 hours. I used a tape recorder so that I could use the time to maximum advantage and cover a wide range of questions. Also, I believe that a tape-recorder, after its initial appearance, is far less obtrusive than the interviewer taking notes; my interviewees seemed simply to forget it was there. Furthermore, I was able to capture vocal emphasis, tone, pitch, and so on. Such paralinguistic features are lost with note-taking.

I took care to ask all the questions on the schedule in the same way with all my respondents. Yet I did not always stick to the same order: I played by ear, prioritising rapport and flow. Furthermore I asked additional questions as and when I felt the situation demanded, following 'leads' from the women themselves. If, during the course of an interview, a relevant question occurred to me, or an interesting point came up, I did not hesitate to pursue it. Thus, despite my formal schedule, my interviews were not strictly structured and my approach was clearly reflexive. A few of my interviewees were eager, from

the start, to spontaneously tell me their 'story' in their own way. I allowed them to do this and only later went through my questionnaire. This accounts for the length of the longest interviews. They contain a superabundance of data. Consequently, my interviews fell in the middle of the axis structured-unstructured. They were somewhere between a structured interview and what has been called a 'focussed' interview. I was aware of the relationship between methodological variables: degree of structure, possibility of comparability, measurement and generalisation, and depth of understanding. I wanted depth of understanding, but I did not want totally unstructured interviews, as that would allow no comparison at all.

SAMPLING

I was next faced with the problem of sampling. On what basis could I choose a sample? There were a number of immediate problems, the main one being that of representativeness. I could not use random sampling or stratified sampling techniques, as the total population of female rock musicians in the U.K. was an unknown factor (to me or anybody). This was virgin territory and it would take me far too long to obtain the answer merely as a preliminary stage of my

research. Also, it is in the nature of rock bands to be short-lived. By the time I had my definitive list many of the bands would have broken up. It is difficult to obtain an exact list for even a local area, let alone the country as a whole. Thus no sampling frame was available.

There was also the problem of defining 'rock'. Being able to secure a sampling frame presupposes some pre-existing, fairly unambiguous 'objective' categories. But rock is difficult to pin down, being to a large extent an ideological category. It would be difficult to draw a boundary around it; it shades off into other genres. I realised that I would have to rely on the information I had already acquired during my experience of playing in a women's band, and forsake the idea of obtaining a final list of the overall 'population'. (For a rough list of bands in existence in 1982 see Appendix 1.)

Another problem was to decide how many women I would interview. In-depth interviews are inherently time-consuming, both at the moment of interviewing itself and in the later transcription. (For example, the longest interview, when I had typed it up, amounted to 197 pages of single-spaced A4.) Consequently, there was a limit to the number of interviews I would be able to carry out. In the end I did 36 full interviews. This gave me detailed

information on 20 bands which the women were currently involved in. I also obtained data on other bands which some of my interviewees had previously played in. If a woman was involved in more than one band I obtained information on all of them. Of the 20 main bands, 12 were all-women and the other 8 were 'mixed' (in terms of gender). Of the latter group, one was composed of 3 women and one (less dominant) male, and this band had originally been all-female; 3 bands were composed of roughly equal numbers of men and women; and 2 had one powerful woman singing lead vocals, playing guitar and songwriting. These interviews were carried out over the period 1982 to 1987, but mainly in 1982. As well as these 36, I also did much shorter interviews with 6 other women musicians, using some questions from my schedule. These were in the context of an O.U./B.B.C. programme, on which I was engaged in 1982. (Open University course U203/T.V.10, 'Women and Rock'.)

I did 3 short interviews with young women at a 'Women and Music Workshop' in Oxford, in 1985. I also did non-participant observation at two such workshops, and participant observation at three others, as an additional part of my research.

Lastly, in 1987, I visited 2 women's music projects and conducted 2 interviews; one with a music tutor and

project initiator, the other with a project administrator.

Although, I did no formal sampling, I did try to obtain some degree of representativeness in terms of a number of facts which I thought would be relevant:

1. Region.

I knew, from my own gigging experience, that the majority of all-women bands were located in London. But I wanted to make sure that some of my interviewees were based outside of the metropolis. Of the 36 women:

3 (8%) were from the South,

8 (22%) were from the Midlands,

7 (19%) were from the North,

18 (50%) were from London.

I did not interview musicians from Wales or Scotland.

Of the 20 bands on which I obtained information:

just over one half were located in London

one third in the Midlands

2 in the North

1 in the South.

2. Instruments Played.

I wanted to interview a cross-section of performers and, although I was primarily interested in women who

played instruments, I did wish to include a few vocalists. (Plus, many of the instrumentalists also sang lead and/or backing vocals.) Of the 36 interviewees, 3 were P.A. engineers. I thought it important to interview them as they are so rare. Of the rest:

- 10 (33%) played guitar,
- 6 (18%) played bass,
- 6 (18%) played keyboards,
- 5 (15%) played drums,
- 2 (6%) played sax,
- 3 (9%) sang lead vocals.
- 1 (3%) played percussion

Some of the women also played other, more unusual instruments for rock, such as the flute and violin. The category 'keyboards' included piano, organ, and synthesiser. I think that my sample is fairly representative of the proportion of women playing various instruments in women's bands. (See Appendix 5.)

3. Type of Music Played.

The problem with this issue is that, often, the music which bands play is a mixture of styles and does not fit into any of the available categories under which rock/pop is marketed. My interviewees

themselves were reluctant to label their music; nor would fans and audiences necessarily agree on a label. So a certain degree of subjectivity comes into play when 'placing' the music. Roughly speaking, of the main 20 bands:

11 could be called 'pop' of some kind,

3 could be called 'punk' / 'new wave' / 'post punk',

1 could be called 'heavy metal',

2 could be called 'rock' / 'heavy rock',

2 had notable jazz influences,

1 was was reggae.

It is also difficult to categorise the different women themselves in terms of musical genres, as some of them were involved in a number of different bands and played a variety of music. For example, some belonged to rock, jazz, and swing outfits.

Although there is a fair degree of variety in my sample, there are some obvious omissions. For example, there are no bands playing funk, disco, rockabilly, R'n'B, or electronic music and there is only one (mixed) reggae band. I regret that time restrictions meant that I did not manage to interview an all-women reggae band.

4. Age.

The age range of my sample was very wide: from 20 to 47 years. Of my main interviewees:

25 (69%) were in their twenties,

9 (25%) were in their thirties,

2 (6%) were in their forties.

One omission is that of very young women musicians. I would have liked to have interviewed some teenagers. I must say, however, that during my years of playing, I came across very few young women musicians other than vocalists. Still, it is an obvious omission and one which someone should perhaps follow up. I did, however, interview 3 teenage women at a women's music workshop.

5. Domestic Status.

My interviewees included those who had been long-married, single women, and women in lesbian relationships. There were childless women and mothers. Out of the 36 interviews, 6 (17%) were mothers. The age range of their offspring ranged from babies through to teenagers. I was particularly concerned to include women with children in my sample. Indeed, one of the bands I interviewed was composed solely of mothers.

6. Social Class Background.

This category immediately poses the problem of definition. If one opts for a 'mainstream' sociological definition (ie. in terms of father's occupation, and in terms of 'working class' being manual workers and 'middle class' being non-manual workers), then my interviewees break down thus:

23 (64%) 'middle class',

10 (28%) 'working class.

But the other 8% are difficult to place. For example, where do you locate a woman whose parents were upper middle class but who was raised, for most of her childhood, by her lower working class grandparents? Also, what does class background have to say about these women's class position today? For instance, one of my interviewees came from an upper middle class background but had fled from her home at 16 years of age, emigrating at the same time. I have classified her as middle class because of her upbringing, but her current situation, as a single mother on the dole, has few middle class attributes. Similarly, two women came from working class backgrounds but, having gone to university, ceased in any way to be working class. The standard sociological definition also ignores mother's occupation and thus sidesteps a whole area of

empirical ambiguity: many families have non-manual mothers and manual fathers.

If defining women in terms of class background is difficult, classifying them in terms of their current class membership would be even more so. What class do rock musicians fall into? According to my car insurance schedule they come into the same category as "gypsies and tinkers"! If some of these women are living on the dole, how are they to be classified? However, I would say that only 3 bands out of the 20 in my sample could be both defined as working class and define themselves as working class. The rest are composed of either all middle class women or a mixture of classes.

It is difficult to know whether my sample reflects the composition of women musicians in terms of social class because, as already explained, the total 'population' is unknown. However, I did deliberately set out to include working class women's bands in my sample. The trouble was I simply could not find many to interview. The large majority of women's bands do seem to be middle class.

7. Ethnic Origin.

This is one category which, I am afraid, I have not covered sufficiently. Of my interviewees, one was Afro-Caribbean and one had a West Indian father. Two

others were Eastern European first generation immigrants. I should have liked to have interviewed more black musicians.

8. Education.

The educational background of my interviewees ranged from a very expensive girls' public school, through grammar and comprehensive schools, to secondary modern: the whole educational gamut, in fact. Of the 36 respondents, 14 (39%) had been to university and others had attended art school. My sample is thus skewed towards people who had been in higher education, although exactly how much is unmeasurable because, once again, the total 'population' is unknown. In Part 1, I argue that, for a number of reasons, both university and art school education are a route into rock music-making for many women, and I think it is likely, therefore, that my sample is fairly representative.

9. Sexual Politics.

Having been in a feminist band, I tried to interview women with different attitudes towards sexual politics. I made sure that I interviewed non-feminists as well as feminists. Once again, however, it is difficult to neatly pigeon-hole people. Should they be classified in terms of their own subjective assessments, or in terms of some objectively-defined

criteria? One is on dangerous territory: the ground is strewn with epistemological problems. My approach was similar to that which I used with regard to social class. That is, I accepted the difficulties in classifying people except in the most approximate terms, and I also used a range of questions around the theme in order to get the maximum information.

'Feminism' means different things to different people. It also arouses strong emotional responses. Furthermore, the meaning of the term has changed over time and continues to change. Roughly speaking, of the 20 bands, 5 (14%) were explicitly feminist, and 3 of these were 'radical feminist'. The rest were not specifically feminist, but their attitudes varied enormously, both within and between bands. For example, a few women said they were "anti-feminist" and others denied being feminist. Yet many outsiders would, in fact, define these women as feminists in terms of their attitudes. They wished to distance themselves from what they perceived as a negative label. In contrast, one woman strongly defined herself as a feminist, and also defined her band as feminist (in both theory and practice) even though all its other members were men.

10. Career Stage.

The career of the rock musician spans various stages, and one aspect of choosing my sample was to achieve representation across the career ladder. This was essential because one of my aims was to build up a picture of how women's careers worked over time. In my sample experience ranged from women who had only gigged a handful of times, to women who had been gigging regularly every week for two decades. I interviewed women in bands which had only just been set up and, at the other extreme, professional bands that were commercially successful.

A point of significance here is that the further one moves along the career path the fewer women musicians (and women's bands) there are. This, whilst interesting in itself, meant that I had far fewer women to choose from in the 'professional' category, and very few indeed in the 'star' league. If a relatively unknown band had refused to be interviewed it would have been easy to get a replacement. (In fact, interestingly, no band did refuse.) Not so at higher career levels, however. It took more time getting hold of well-known female musicians and bands, and some women I had chosen to interview were unobtainable or declined to take part. So, in a sense, there was something special about my non-respondents: fame and success. Women, in unknown bands

were, on the whole, interested in my research and often quite keen to participate. For some, being interviewed was a unique experience and they were pleased to have the opportunity to engage in "band talk" with an outsider and to discuss their experiences and problems. For professional musicians, however, interviews are taken for granted. Moreover, my kind of interview was not likely to advance their careers, or help with record sales, and thus of no strategic value. Just getting hold of these women, as they dashed from one foreign tour to another, was something of a problem. This caused me a little anxiety, as the pool of such women was very limited. I was lucky that the two successful all-women bands I approached were quite happy to take part. I had more difficulty when it came to getting hold of individual female musicians in high-profile mixed bands. Such women have difficulty fitting in press interviews, let alone talking for hours to an, unknown research student. With women at the early or middle stages of their careers, my own status as a rock musician helped to establish the necessary rapport and interest to set up an interview in the first place. With really successful musicians, however, my status was irrelevant.

There is also a definitional problem here. How does one define "successful"? Even "professional" is an

ambiguous term. Roughly speaking, in terms of having the band at the centre of their lives, and having no other major money-making occupation, 8 (40%) of the bands I interviewed were professional. Of these, 3 were fairly well-known, and 2 were very well-known and could be said to be 'stars'.

In order to rectify the problems I faced regarding representativeness, I would have had to interview a lot more women, say 50. Given I was doing in-depth interviews, I simply did not have the time to carry out that many. This was a pity, as I thoroughly enjoyed interviewing and found it difficult to stop that particular stage of the research process. (Left to my own devices I would probably have wandered off into the distance with my tape-recorder, amassing vast quantities of data which would never have reached the transcription stage!) However, if I could do this research again I would interview more black women, and include a black all-women band. I think that this is the main limitation in my sample.

INTERVIEWING

I did not have too much difficulty with the interviews themselves. It was all relatively straightforward (and immensely interesting.) I had a distinct advantage in being both a rock musician and

a woman. Any interviewer has to assume some kind of identity or label: s/he cannot be neutral. One's assumed identity affects one's access to the data, both in terms of contacting people, and getting them to be interviewed, and in terms of generating in-depth answers to one's questions. I did not simply approach people as a sociology student, but as a rock musician, and that made all the difference. For me, the (positive) musician label outweighed and offset the (negative) 'sociologist'. My interviewees assumed that I shared the same sort of interests and values as they did. This led to a lack of suspicion or reserve, and the creation of an immediate rapport.

What also helped, I believe, to create a situation of trust, was that the interviews were confidential. For there were a number of ethical problems to which I had to give careful consideration. Some of the material which interviewees were likely to give me was of a sensitive nature. I therefore decided that all of the interviewees would be kept anonymous. If I had not done this some of the women would have given only restrained answers. (I think this is why most of the women I approached agreed to be interviewed.) This meant that I acquired a far more valid account, I believe, than I would otherwise have obtained. Indeed, some women introduced their answers with telling

comments such as, "Well, we always tell the press ...but the truth of the matter is..."

But this fairly standard procedure becomes somewhat problematic. Because I am dealing with popular music, some of the women I interviewed were famous and, given the very small number of such well-known female rock musicians, it becomes impossible to write about them and keep it completely anonymous. So, although I have not disclosed names, knowledgeable readers will have little difficulty in working them out. There is not much I can do about that. Moreover, if I were to name these famous women their comments would be lifted into prominence just by virtue of their fame itself. Anonymity thus helps to keep my respondents all equal from the point of view of my research.

The circumstances in which the interviews took place varied interestingly, particularly with the mothers in my sample. Often the situation was not ideal: tapes are punctuated with babies crying, children interrupting, and so on. One interview took place on a children's beach. Some were done backstage at venues, just before gigs. A few interviews, begun in the evening, carried on into the small hours. Many took place in kitchens.

Regarding the all-women bands, I decided to interview more than one member from each band. In this

way I could get fuller information, and it also furnished me with some corroboration of the factual data. Apart from the interviews themselves, I listened to the bands' records and tapes, and attended their gigs (where I took notes and, sometimes, photographs).

Given the circumstances in which the interviews took place, some of the tapes were not fully comprehensible to anyone else, so I had to transcribe them all myself.

Lastly, I must add that some women were keen to 'interview' me as well. I was happy to go along with this at the end of the session. It felt right to me, as a feminist, for it helped to undercut the power relationship of interviewer-interviewee. The 'formal' interview itself was defined by my tape-recorder being on. However, once it was switched off most of my interviewees wanted to carry on discussing the issues and also to ask about my own experiences, why I was doing the research, whether I would publish it, and so on. Sometimes these discussions were so relevant that I was forever turning the tape recorder on and off. Thus, in some ways it was difficult to say clearly when the 'interview' ended. Furthermore, some women rang me up days or even weeks later with extra things to say or points they had forgotten to make. In this

way my experience of doing interviews is strikingly similar to that of Oakley (1981).

Women musicians cooperated in my research because they believed in its goals and they wanted to provide me with information. They sometimes made suggestions as to other musicians I should interview, bands I should listen to, etc. In return I wanted to make the interview experience an enjoyable one for them. To do interviews without some form of reciprocity, and to limit one's interaction to the duration of the formal interview, is to treat ones interviewees like objects. An in-depth interview is a highly accelerated way of getting to know someone. To then just disappear with the data, never to be seen or heard of again, would be like a one-night stand.

I think I was fairly successful in avoiding the exploitation of my interviewees. I was gratified that many women spontaneously said that they had enjoyed their interviews, as with this comment:

Me: "Is there anything you want to say that I haven't asked you?"

V1: (laughs) "I shouldn't think so! Just that I want to say that it's been very good talking because you are who you are. Sometimes (in interviews) I feel that I'm not getting connections. But it's been a real joy - the connections have been there".

CONSTRUCTING A MODEL

So far, then, in the research process, everything was actually quite straightforward. The real problems commenced when I had finished transcribing. For how was I going to organise this superabundance of empirical material?

Regarding the question of how individual women become musicians, it is clear that the explanation is inevitably multicausal. All I have done in this research is put forward some suggestions of factors (or paths) which I think deserve further exploration. Others could develop specific hypotheses from these if they so wished. Their present methodological status is just as hints at further avenues for exploration.

For the analysis of how women musicians' careers work, I followed, more or less, the same kind of methodological approach as Becker (1963) and his student Bennett (1980) and, broadly-speaking, modelled my work on theirs. Specifically, I was not engaged in testing a hypothesis. I read all the transcripts and tried to construct a story that seemed to be representative of a female career in rock music. This was rather complex as I was looking at how bands 'work' at different stages of their life and, simultaneously, at the careers of their individual members. So my unit of analysis was not simply an

individual woman. For example, in looking at a band operating at the professional stage, one is, at the same time, studying how professional womens' lives are organised. What I was doing, then, was constructing an 'ideal-type', and I have used quotes from my interviews in order to illustrate it. This seemed to me to be a valid method. No one woman's career, or band's career, has exactly followed the process which I describe. Nevertheless, I believe that it is only through such an ideal-typical model that their various individual careers can be understood.

The question this immediately raises is whether it is justifiable to construct such a model. Are there significant similarities between all these various individual careers, or are there such basic differences that they outweigh the similarities? I therefore looked out for differences between the women (and between the bands) which might be more significant than the things they had in common.

The first difference which I explored was that of social class background. I found that there certainly were significant differences along this dimension (although one must bear in mind the problematic nature of the concept class). For example, women from middle class backgrounds were more likely to have had private classical music lessons as children; they were more likely to have been in higher education; they were

less likely to be playing 'heavy rock'; they were more likely to have had space to play in (a room of their own) and financial resources. However, despite the lack of finances, working class women often received financial support from their parents when setting out on their careers, and I think that this was just as significant.

But, although such differences exist, they appeared to be slight compared to the similarities. On the whole, the story I tell is one which occurs in all classes, and thus I feel justified in using it as an 'ideal-type'. And the same kind of thing can be said about other variables such as region, type of instrument played, age, and so on (although I did not have enough black women in my sample to be able to evaluate the significance of ethnic background).

One point which is methodologically interesting, however, is that career stage was the one difference which did stand out as really significant. For example, because of the role of selective memory, and of experience itself, there were huge differences in terms of the way in which women musicians saw their careers. The highly successful commercial musician looks back on her early career without mentioning the problems; she concentrates on the successes. She is, anyway, far more interested in discussing her latest record and her recent tour than her early strivings.

When she does discuss her early career it is the first successes which she remembers and describes. In contrast, a woman starting out on her career mentions all the problems. On the whole, the bigger the star the less likely they are to talk about the difficulties they have had in being a woman musician. So, the view from the top is very different from that at the bottom, and career stage was the one dimension which I did find to be significant. But I feel that this major difference can be explained in terms of the model itself: not only are the opportunities, constraints and pressures different at each career stage, but so is the women's subjectivity.

Given the type of research I did, and my own involvement as a musician, it could be argued that the sort of conversations I had with women musicians ended up focussing on issues which were of personal interest to myself, rather than ones which would have spontaneously occurred to my interviewees. Put another way, how much was I directing these interchanges? Clearly, all interviews are directed, no matter how unstructured they are. Mine certainly were, for I was following a formal interview schedule which I had designed. No doubt somebody else doing these interviews would have come up with a somewhat different story, but this does not make my account any the less valid.

My interview schedule was based on participant observation and I think that was a major advantage, for it was more likely to be intelligible to my interviewees. My band experience led me to see the world in a closer way to other women musicians than if I had never had that experience. The observer and the interviewer can never be the same person as the subject, but I believe I came as close as possible to that state. Yet perception is inevitably selective and all facts are 'chosen'. Also, an exact replica of my research would be impossible, as the world of rock bands, like all social worlds, is in a state of constant change. Indeed, if I were to do such interviews again I would probably change the schedule and ask some different questions. (For example, in 1982 feminist musicians were very concerned about the ideological "correctness" of various kinds of aesthetic options, such as wearing make-up on stage. Now, the debate has moved on, and that particular question has become less significant.)

Although the kind of research in which I was engaged was not concerned with exact replicability, I was aware of the way in which the process of data collection could influence the results. Thus, although I sometimes felt like omitting some of the questions on my schedule, for reasons of time or because they seemed inappropriate in a particular interview, I

usually asked them anyway. One exception to this occurred with J8. because I was interviewing her primarily as a manager rather than as a musician. Two other exceptions were E1. and K3. who were successful professional musicians, and I wished to ask them some extra questions. As their time was limited I had to sacrifice some of the more routine questions on my schedule. For, the more successful the musician, the more potential questions there are to ask and one is forced to prioritise.

Finally, I wish to emphasise that this is a new field of study, and my research has been, essentially, pioneering. There were no pre-existing guidelines and so the area covered has been quite broad. It is open to others to explore this field in new ways, using different methods. In terms of my career-stage model, it is in the very nature of an 'ideal-type' that it cannot be empirically tested, but only evaluated in terms of its usefulness as an ordering concept. I hope that others will find my ideal typical account a useful analytical tool for their own research purposes.

I think that many methods could be used to shed light on the subject, from a number of different angles. I simply chose a methodology that seemed appropriate to produce the data I needed in order to answer the particular questions which interested me.

There is no reason to assume that my research allowed a better account than that which other methods might reveal. The point is, there are no other accounts as yet. Furthermore, I do not believe that just one methodology could apprehend the world of the female rock musician in its totality; methodological pluralism is essential. I can only hope that my work will stimulate others to investigate this underdeveloped terrain.

I also hope that, by illuminating the everyday mechanisms whereby women are excluded, contained, and controlled by both individual men and institutionalized sexism, this study will be of some practical value to women musicians and would-be musicians in their ongoing struggles within the world of rock.

WHY I DID NOT INTERVIEW MEN

As I have indicated, my interest lay primarily in the field of rock and gender, rather than rock music per se, and thus I chose to concentrate on women musicians. However, it could be asked why I did not interview the same number of male musicians in order to make a comparison and bring out the differences. That is, why did I not use a sample of male musicians as a kind of control group?

There are a number of reasons. Firstly, given I was doing in-depth interviews, it would simply have taken too long.

Secondly, when doing my literature survey, I discovered plenty of material on male musicians, albeit of a biographical and autobiographical nature, and I felt that (despite the reservations I have discussed earlier on in this chapter) I could use that material as my 'control', without needing to do any interviews myself. (It will be noted that I have chosen to use books on the Beatles for the majority of my illustrations. My reason for doing this is simply that the Beatles are by far the best documented band.)

But my strongest argument is simply that the vast majority of empirical sociology has been solely about men. It has simply never occurred to most researchers that they should study women. For example, no-one ever asks why Becker (1963) did not include female marijuana users or female jazz musicians in his, respective, studies. Similarly, Stith-Bennett (1980) did not study any female rock musicians and he hardly gives women a mention. Yet no-one has criticized this. I shall not apologize for presenting a study of solely women musicians, for very little research time has been invested in "a sociology of, or for, women as a collectivity" (Oakley, 1986, p.210).

Lastly, although this research is ostensibly about women, there is ample data here on men, masculinity and male domination. Indeed, this theme runs right through my thesis just as it pervaded the interviews themselves. For my enquiry has been about women in a 'male' world, and it is the very 'maleness' of that world which has shown itself to be the major hurdle facing women musicians.

OVERVIEW OF MY ARGUMENT

My thesis starts with a chapter substantiating the absence of women from rock. After this I turn to subcultural theory. As the main approach which has specifically concerned itself with rock music and youth, I hoped that it would shed light on the questions which I had formulated. If youth subcultures were a way into music-making for boys, then might they not function in this way for girls too?

However, I discovered that, firstly, girls are markedly absent from subcultural accounts. Secondly, the youth groupings which subcultural theorists have studied have been masculinist and have offered little scope for female 'resistance' to ideological hegemony. Thirdly, such subcultures have not been a breeding ground for musicians, anyway. I conclude that the subcultural approach sheds more light on the

traditional sexism of sociologists than it does on why the vast majority of girls do not (and a tiny minority of girls do) get involved in rock music-making.

I next examine women's absence from rock music-making in terms of the various constraints which operate on women. For the sake of analysis I have tried to separate 'internal' and 'external' constraints, but in concrete reality they are inevitably intermingled in complex ways.

Lack of money, equipment, transport, time and private space are examined as important external constraints. Likewise, male domination of public space and sexual harassment is discussed. I argue that female leisure possibilities are further constrained by the demands and prohibitions of parents, boyfriends and husbands. Having looked at these general factors, I then examine the particular restrictions operating within rock music-making itself: how male musicians monopolise rock music (instruments, playing styles, etc.) and how rock itself is gendered as male.

My next chapter deals with the way in which ideology (acting through the family, the neighbourhood, the media, etc.) operates as a constraint. I pay particular attention to the way in which working class young women are 'policed' by their own subcultures. I examine the power of the dual

standard of morality and the ideology of romance, operating within the limited material horizons of working class women. But the preoccupation with boyfriends and marriage acts as a powerful leisure limitation for young women of all classes, and I examine its effects on middle class women as well.

I next look at that space within the world of rock which is seen as most appropriate for women: being a fan. I analyse why women become fans and what it entails. It becomes apparent that, for a young woman, becoming a fan is partly a solution to the ideological dilemmas and double-binds discussed in the previous chapter. I then argue, on the basis of both existing literature and my own research, that the more a woman is involved as a fan the less likely she is to become a musician herself.

In the following chapter I look specifically at the rock industry and examine the (very narrow) range of places which women occupy within it. I argue that the male-domination of the industry, the sexism of its 'gatekeepers', and the masculinist culture of the studio and 'the road', operate as important constraints on women musicians. I show how the spaces reserved for women within the rock world are predominantly 'service', rather than creative, roles. I show how women's routine performance of domestic labour enables male musicians the freedom to pursue

their rock careers, whilst severely restricting women's chances to do the same. I then begin to look at those few women who do manage to become rock music-makers. I show how they are moulded to fit the pre-conceived ideas of the rock industry about gender-appropriate categories. I assert that the pressures on women performers are greater than those on men and thus constitute yet another handicap.

The next chapter is radically different in that it is solely about the exceptions: those women who, despite all the obstacles, do become rock musicians. A number of variables are put forward which, I suggest, have helped these exceptional women overcome gender constraints. These factors are conceptualised as "escape routes" into rock music-making. They are: musical families; being a tomboy; being a rebel; classical music; an 'artistic'/'bohemian' identity; unusual boyfriends and husbands; the punk period; higher education; a supportive local music scene; a strong local women's movement; feminism; lesbianism; and role models.

In Part 2. I examine the careers of women musicians and all-women bands. This section of my thesis is based directly on my own fieldwork. It is organised in terms of an ideal-type model of the stages of a female band's career: joining, going public, and going professional. I outline the major tasks, problems,

conflicts, contradictions and opportunities which women encounter at each career stage, and how they typically deal with them. I discuss the learning processes involved and the rich culture which bands create. My analytic approach is basically interactionist, but I do locate the interactional microcosm of the band in terms of the wider world of rock, for it exists in relation to that larger context.

It is apparent that at each stage there are differences between male and female bands. Compared to male bands, there are a whole set of factors (both material and ideological) which make it more difficult for women's bands to come into existence and continue along the career path. I argue that these factors have the strongest effect in the early career stages. At the professional stage there are fewer differences between male and female careers. Yet, clearly, conventional "success" requires that, compared to male musicians, women make more sacrifices, especially in terms of sexual relationships and motherhood.

Yet not all musicians conceive of "success" in the same terms. In my last chapter some alternative notions of success and non-typical career patterns are examined. In particular, I describe and assess the

various strategies developed by feminist musicians as alternatives to the mainstream commercial path.

Notes

1. It is interesting that most of the sociologists who have undertaken first-hand research have been musicians themselves. (My own gravitation towards this methodological approach stemmed directly from my personal involvement in music-making.)

2. The ones I have tracked down and read included: Baez (1970); Landau (1971); Albertson (1975); Mander (1976); Bangs (1980); O'Connor, (1981); O'Day and Eels (1983); McKenzie (1985); Turner (1986); Welch (1986); Bego (1986); Fleischer (1987); Wilson (1988); Voller (1988); and these included folk and blues artists. Thomson (1982) has lots of glossy pictures of contemporary female rock performers but only a superficial text.

3. In contrast, the relative absence of women in fine art has been much addressed:

"It is evident that the relative invisibility of women in the history of the arts is the result of a variety of exclusionary practices, changing from one period to another, but always discriminating against women" (Wolff, p.6. 1987).

In the visual arts (Parker and Pollock, 1981), literature, and even embroidery (Parker, 1984) such discrimination has been documented. Yet music remains an area where empirical work establishing such social practices has not been previously produced.

4. For example, Dobash and Dobash, 1979; McNeill, 1987; Kelly, 1987; Ramazanoglu, 1987; rhodes and McNeill, 1985; Stanko, 1987; Hanmer and Saunders, 1983 and 1984; and Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987.

Chapter 2. The ABSENCE OF WOMEN IN ROCK

There have always been women vocalists. So, for example, in the 1950s and early '60s there were quite a few all-women vocal groups. However, both the brief 'skiffle' craze and then the more sustained 'beat' music boom made purely vocal groups *passé*; you had to be able to play your own (electric rock) instruments. All over the country boys banded together to form groups, but girls seem to have been left out. My own research has uncovered several cases of girls' skiffle and beat groups but there is a lack of instances documented in the available literature for this period. All the indications are that such groups were exceedingly rare.¹ In the decades since there have been more women playing electric instruments and, indeed, all-women rock bands, but it is still the case that men are the norm and women the exception.

This thesis takes as its starting point the following assertions:

1. There are very few women involved in rock music.

2. Those women who are in bands tend to be vocalists rather than instrumentalists: women who play electric rock instruments are rare.

What I am asserting here is taken for granted by rock musicians. From the point of view of this thesis, however, some substantiation is necessary.

First, I would cite my own experience. From 1978 to 1985 I played in local bands and was thus immersed in the Oxford music scene. I gigged regularly, went to other bands' gigs and socialised with local musicians at pubs and parties. In 1978 I joined Oxford's first all-women band. Initially, we had problems finding a woman drummer. Later, when she left, we had difficulty finding a replacement, so much so that we had to recruit a young woman from London who, luckily for us, was willing to move up to Oxford just to be in our band. That indicates how rare women drummers were, and still are.² Amongst the thousands of musicians in the city there was only a scattering of women.

After the demise of this band I tried, in 1982, to set up another, but I could not find enough women musicians. Those few women who did play were already in bands. In the end I joined a short-lived women's band in Coventry, where, despite a lot of advertisements, they had been unable to find a female guitarist. This was Coventry's first all-women band.

When this band folded I resorted, with regrets, to setting up a mixed band in Oxford. I was able to find a female keyboard player and a percussionist but there simply were no guitarists, drummers or bass players available. In contrast, it was relatively easy to recruit male musicians.

This pattern was not unique to Oxford and Coventry. With my first band I had travelled around the country and performed hundreds of gigs, as far apart as Brighton and Newcastle. In most places there were no all-women bands at all. Indeed, one of the reasons why our band had so many gigs was the sheer absence of women's bands who could play danceable music at all-women bops.

When I started this research, in 1981, non-musicians were always telling me, "There didn't use to be many women's bands, but today there are". This erroneous opinion was usually based merely on having seen one or two women's bands on television. So I decided, in 1982, to collect together a list of women's bands in England. I did this via talking to every woman musician I met on my travels and women in the women's movement around the country.³ My total was 51 all-women bands: fewer than the number of male bands in a small city. (See Appendix 1.)

In 1985 I decided to scan the local music scene again to see if there had been any changes. I went to a succession of local gigs, talked to musicians, P.A. engineers (who were in a good position to assess the question) and organisers of local events. For example, I interviewed the only woman on the organising committee of 'Fun in the Parks', a council-funded organisation which paid bands to play at open-air venues on bank holidays. At the end of this exercise I had only turned up 11 women who played instruments in local rock bands.

As a check I asked the local branch organiser of the Musicians Union, Roger Woodley, for the Oxford membership figures. In 1985 there were 149 male and 35 women members. Thus 19% of the membership was female. But he pointed out that of those 35, probably at least 30 would be classical musicians.⁴

In March 1988, no longer playing local gigs, I wondered if things had changed. I talked to Dave Newton, the editor of Oxford's music paper 'Local Support'. He said,

"I reckon there's probably one hundred regularly gigging bands in Oxford, probably more if you take in Abingdon and other places outside the city. And if you included college bands there are probably loads more. But probably no more than 10% of the musicians are women and they're nearly all vocalists. Less than half the bands have some female in them and then it's usually one woman at the most. And bands have 4 or 5 musicians in them".

This would mean that in Oxford itself there are about 400 to 500 rock band members and, of these, only 40-50 are female. Thus, there are still probably only about 10 to 15 female instrumentalists in Oxford bands.

I also looked at 'Local Support' itself. It mainly discussed male musicians. I counted the pictures. Only 2 out of 22 were of women. (9%).

But is Oxford typical? What of the national scene? Unfortunately, there are very few secondary sources available on this question, either in Britain or the U.S.A., and an absence of national statistics.⁵ Sara Cohen (1988) found very few women musicians in Liverpool. The percentage is, if anything, lower than in Oxford. Ruth Finnegan (1989) found that in Milton Keynes 1982-1983, out of 125 rock musicians only 8 were female (6%). To take another example, Leeds is a bigger city than Oxford and therefore probably has more rock bands. Yet, in the course of my own research, I found in 1982 that it did not have a single all-women band. I have already stated that I could only find 51 all-women bands in England in 1982. Thus I do not think that Oxford is in any way unusual in this respect.

As indicated above, in 1985 19% of Oxford Musicians Union members were female. For a comparison I obtained the national 1984 membership returns from the M.U.

There were 34,082 male members and 5,518 female members. Thus 14% of the total national membership was female. Again, this would imply that Oxford is fairly typical.

Another way of substantiating the relative absence of women from rock bands is to do a media survey. I undertook this for one week, commencing Thursday 2nd. April.⁶ I watched the music programmes on television, listened to a cross-section of Radio 1 programmes, and read the weekly and monthly music magazines. I also read other magazines which contained a fair proportion of music coverage. (See Appendix 2 for full list.)

When looking at the national media, one can discern a number of separate, though overlapping, worlds of popular music. Firstly, there is the world of rock. This is represented in the album charts, the "serious" music magazines (New Musical Express, etc.) and also in the specialist magazines catering for musicians and recording engineers, such as 'Guitarist' and 'Guitar World'. The local rock band scene, such as I have discussed above, is part of this world. So is the audience for evening Radio 1 programmes, in particular those by John Peel and Andy Kershaw. This is a predominantly male world and is perceived as "harder" than the wider world of pop. The readers of Melody Maker, N.M.E. and Sounds are two-thirds male, whilst

the audience for John Peel's radio show is 90% male. (Frith and McRobbie. 1978) The audience is also older.

Secondly, there is the younger world of 'pop': the singles chart, daytime radio, television programmes like 'Top of the Pops', and music magazines such as 'Smash Hits' and 'Number One'.

Thirdly, there are a number of much smaller specialist worlds focussing on a particular genre of music, such as 'soul' and 'heavy metal'.

In gathering this data I was interested in two rather different things:

- (a) the empirical issue of the number of women involved in commercial popular music;
- (b) the ideological issue of the imagery of musicians (ie. the invisibility of those few women who are involved, which leads to the lack of female role models for would-be women musicians).

THE ROCK WORLD

The world of rock, as defined above, seems to be about 90% male. For instance, on John Peel's radio show only 11% of the musicians were female. Of these, half were vocalists. On Simon Mayo's programme 10% of the musicians were female (mainly vocalists). Andy Kershaw's programme produced the lowest figure: only

4% of the musicians were female and all of them were singers. There was not a single female instrumentalist on the entire 2 hour show.

In the "serious" music magazines the amount of space allocated to female performers is similar to the evening radio programmes. In the Melody Maker only 15% of the pictures were of women: 28% of the pictures in the main text, but only 1% of the advertising pictures. In the main and subsidiary articles women got about 15% of the coverage.

In the New Musical Express 20% of the pictures in the text were of women and 13% of the advertisements. Women were allocated 47% of the coverage in the main articles.

In Sounds 9% of the pictures in the text were of women, and 18% of those in the adverts. The six main features were about male musicians.

In the Record Mirror women were represented in only 9% of the main feature articles and 8% of the pictures.

Q Magazine had six main features on men, one on a mixed band and only one on a woman. On the other hand, that woman, Tina Turner, was allocated eight pages, that is more than double the amount given to anyone else. In the text 17% of the pictures were of women and 9% in the advertisements. Q has a long album

review section. In April's issue 67 albums were reviewed. Of these, 30 were put out by all-male bands, 20 by male solo performers, but only 7 by female soloists.

The Face was mostly concerned with male performers and most of the records reviewed were by men.

In Sky the same pattern occurs. Of the 14 records reviewed only 3 had any women performing. In a major feature article on Prefab Sprout there was only one sentence from Wendy Smith, the female quarter of the band. The vast majority of the records reviewed were male.

Similarly, apart from a one-page article on Joyce Simms, the articles in i-D were almost exclusively about male musicians.

Lastly, Underground, a magazine about alternative music, also had less than 15% of its picture coverage devoted to women, a percentage which approximately reflected the text.

I analysed the Top 40 albums for the week in question. (See Appendix 3.) Of these, 6 were by "various artists" (mainly male). Of the 34 remaining, 6 were solo albums by women performers, 6 records were by bands which included at least one woman, and the rest were all by men. In all, there were only 12 women involved in the Top 40 records (15% of the total

number of musicians and vocalists involved). In contrast, there were 9 solo albums by men and 58 men playing in bands. Of the total of 79 performers, there were less than 5 women instrumentalists.

Another interesting point is that if you take the solo albums, most if not all the session musicians providing the instrumental "backing" are men, whilst backing vocalists are women. I shall take two examples to illustrate this. The Rick Astley solo album credits 5 male session instrumentalists and 4 female backing vocalists. The Tiffany album credits 8 male session players. Also, male solo artists are much more likely to be producing their own albums than are women.

Lastly, in this survey of the rock world, I turned to the specialist magazines bought by musicians themselves. As might be expected, these are directed overwhelmingly towards male consumption. The articles tend to be more about equipment than musicians, but star performers are used to test equipment and to talk about their technique and playing styles. They are also notably used to sell products by "association".

In *Guitarist* I was surprised to see 2 feature articles on women musicians. The other 6 articles were on men. This was the exception amongst these trade magazines. In terms of picture coverage, women were allocated 17% of the total. But one picture was of a

non-musician and the others were of the same 3 female guitarists. Of the advertisement illustrations, only 4% were female, and one of these was a cartoon of a traffic warden.

In Guitar World there were 7 pictures of women in the text and 66 of men. Thus women represented 10% of the total. The adverts broke down into exactly the same percentage. In the 8 pictures of women only 4 were playing what are generally thought of as rock instruments, for 2 women were playing the flute and 2 the violin. Another interesting point is that in some of the adverts the guitar is very clearly being used as a phallic symbol.

In International Musician and Recording World 17% of the pictures in the text were of women and 13% of those in the advertisements. (This includes a cellist and the traffic warden cartoon again.) Inside this issue is a 32-page glossy advertising feature. In it there is a 2-page article on the band Swing Out Sister, composed of two men and one woman. The men's feelings about the equipment are discussed at length, but Corinne Drewery is merely given a passing mention. One would get the impression that she, as a female singer, is not interested in the musical equipment at all. If you add up all the pictures of musicians actually playing or holding musical equipment, whether

in the text or the ads, it comes to 51. Of these less than 10% are of women.

Music Technology is similar to International Musician. Only 18% of the pictures are of women, and if you take out those pictures where women are used for merely decorative purposes (gazing admiringly at men) then the figure is reduced to 9%.

When we turn to Rhythm, aptly subtitled Brothers in Arms, we find a near total absence of women, which, I believe, reflects the rarity of female drummers and the way in which drumming is seen as a very masculine activity. In the text there are 31 pictures of men but not one of a woman, and women account for only 1.6% of the advertising pictures. Most of the ads use famous drummers as their means of selling equipment. For example, the Zildjian cymbal advertisement features 6 well-known (male) drummers. The following page has the faces of 15 famous (male) drummers advertising another brand of cymbal. The centrefold spread is yet another cymbal advert and shows 10 (male) drummers amongst their kit. Similarly, the feature articles are all on male drummers.

Finally, Home and Studio Recording, "the magazine for the recording musician", has no pictures of women at all in the text, and only two in the adverts (who do not seem to be musicians anyway). There are 3

articles on male producers and none on women. Interestingly, one of the articles quotes the following comment from a recording studio: "In this country I know two female sound engineers".

One other thing which is similar in all these 'craft' magazines is that nearly all the contributions to the letters page come from men.

THE POP WORLD

When we turn to the broader world of 'pop' the picture is a little different. There are more women performers written about and pictured in the magazines. Compared to albums, a higher proportion of records in the singles chart are by women. Likewise, more records by women are played on daytime radio. However, what stands out clearly is that the majority of singles are still recorded by men; that most of the women performers in the singles charts are vocalists; and that the percentage of women playing instruments remains very low.

I listened to the Radio I Chart 40 on Easter Sunday, 1988. (See Appendix 4.) Overall, about 25% of the musicians involved in these records were women. This was a very good week to be doing this survey as there was, in fact, a higher than usual proportion of female performers in the charts. There were twice as

many female solo performers as men: 5 men and 13 women. Indeed, this point was being made much of in the music press. The Record Mirror pointed out that 13 records by female soloists in the Top 40 was the highest figure ever recorded in the singles chart and adds, "They are less numerous in the remainder of the chart but take a creditable 17 of the top 75 places." However, as that paper goes on to point out, only one of the women in the entire top 100 singles chart is a British singer (Hazel Dean); it is American vocalists who hold the field. "Given that 50% of the chart is made up of British acts this week, it's staggering that our own women do so badly".

I would also add that the vast majority of the women involved in any way in the chart were vocalists. In the Top 40, of 27 women only 4 or 5 were playing instruments.

The same sort of pattern is discernible in daytime radio play. I listened to Chartbusters, in which Bruno Brookes picks out what he considers to be future hits. Less than 15% of the musicians and vocalists on these records were women. Again, the majority of this group were singers. Steve Wright's afternoon spot mainly featured solo performers. Only 22% of the total were female, the majority being vocalists. Simon Bates played both contemporary records and hits from 1978 and 1983 on his daytime programme. The figure here was

28% women. Gary Davies' programme rendered 20%, again mainly vocalists. Whereas, Singled Out, on Good Friday, had 25% women performers.

Turning to television, one can see a similar pattern. It is worth pointing out that although women performers are typically singers there are often more male vocalists in total in particular programmes. For example, on Top of the Pops (March 31st.) there were 4 women and 6 men doing lead vocals. There were also 2 women backing vocalists. Regarding instruments, there were 4 static pictures of men with instruments (guitars) but none of women. You saw 16 men actually playing instruments on the programme (either live or on video). In stark contrast, there was not a single woman to be seen playing an instrument, or even holding one. Any young women watching the programme would be learning that playing instruments is a male occupation.

I then watched the Chart Show (Friday 1st. April). There were 19 female vocalists and 23 male vocalists. There were 39 men playing instruments, but a mere 5 women. In Roxy the Network Show you could see equal numbers of male and female vocalists. Once again, though, the difference was sharp for instrumentalists: 13 men and not a single woman.

On America's Top 10 you could see 13 male vocalists and 11 female, 19 male instrumentalists and only one female. (She was merely tinkering briefly with an acoustic piano.) On Europe's Top Ten you saw 3 male vocalists and 4 female, 4 male instrumentalists and no women. On Meltdown there was just one band, composed of a male lead vocalist, 2 women backing singers and 4 men playing instruments.

These last three programmes were also on April 1st. On that one evening, then, I had seen 99 men playing instruments but only 6 women (6%). (The latter were mainly in the Communards, a band which explicitly tries to break down gender stereotypes of this kind.) There were also more male vocalists than female (44 compared to 38).

On Easter Sunday there was a Tube programme which was originally shown in 1983. Of the 48 performers, only 11 (23%) were female. Of those, 82% were only seen singing. Of the 30 people seen playing instruments, only 2 (6%) were female, and one of these was playing an acoustic instrument.

Daytime Live, on Tuesday 5th. April, included some live music: 2 men and 3 women were seen singing, 5 men and, yet again, no women playing instruments. On Daytime Live on the Thursday, two days later, there

was only one band: one male lead vocalist, 4 male instrumentalists and one female backing vocalist.

The last Roxy programme was screened on Tuesday the 5th. You saw 4 women singing and 4 men singing. The 12 instrumentalists were men. Once again, no women were playing at all.

So, in watching one week's worth of popular music on T.V. the viewer would have seen 58 female and 64 male lead vocalists, 148 males playing instruments but only 8 women, 2 men doing backing vocals and 16 women. Overall, women represented 26% of all T.V. performers, a figure very much in line with day-time radio programmes. What these statistics show is that,

(a) there are far fewer women than men, overall, in the world of pop,

(b) there is a place for women in electric music but that place is limited to vocals,

(c) despite this, more men do lead vocals than women,

(d) the playing of instruments in popular music is overwhelmingly dominated by men,

(e) this is particularly true of rock instruments.

(Of the 8 women instrumentalists seen on T.V. in this one week, some played acoustic stringed instruments),

(f) backing vocalist is a female role. The 2 men doing backing vocals were actually musicians from other bands, brought in temporarily to back a highly prestigious female singer (Tina Turner). This male absence is in line with the way in which the role of backing vocalist has been seen as lightweight, mere icing on the cake. Someone says, 'Oh, I'm just a backing vocalist' like they might say, 'I'm just a housewife'. Men who sing backing vocals tend to be instrumentalists as well. Women sometimes play percussion, but there is a tradition of female backing vocalist being a 'glamour' role; women add sex-appeal to a performance, by their clothes and by dancing.

I next looked at the music magazines aimed at this pop end of the market. As the main consumers of these magazines are young girls, the preponderance of pictures of male musicians only partly reflects the dominance of men within the music; it also testifies to the use of these pictures as pin-ups. Musicians are presented as idols. The music itself is not discussed.

'Number One' clearly reflects the singles charts. The majority of space is devoted to male performers. The front and back covers sport male pin-ups, and there is also a free badge picturing 4 male musicians. The men are presented as heart-throbs. In the Lola gossip column only 5 female performers are discussed. One is shown in a highly unflattering position and, of

another, Lola says, "pity she didn't ask for a decent singing voice". A third is presented merely in terms of being the ardent fan of another (male) performer. A fourth is offered a "trowel" for her make-up. In sum, the column is highly bitchy about women performers. As in other magazines of this type, the musicians are not seen playing their instruments, and the music itself is not discussed; the focus is on the performers as stars and personalities.

Smash Hits is similar. Front and back covers have male pin-ups. Free stickers are enclosed (6 men and one woman.) The coverage is mainly about male stars. Most of the glossy pictures are of men. I also purchased the 'Smash Hits Collection 1987: An A to Z of Pop'. This featured 42 women and no less than 300 men, making women a mere 12% of the coverage.

Number One Summer Special had 8 men on the cover and 3 women. There were 16 feature articles on male stars, discussing 28 men in all, and only 5 features on women, discussing just 6 women (all singers).

Lastly, I looked at girls' and women's magazines. Jackie magazine's music coverage was overwhelmingly about men. There were only 8 women mentioned (all singers). In Look Now, 13% of the coverage was about women. Over 21 mentioned no women at all, compared to 11 men. Just 17 was nearly all about male performers;

just 3 women were mentioned (all vocalists). Girl, similarly, was nearly exclusively about males. The Mizz Special gave 27% coverage to women, and My Guy Holiday Special only 5%. Blue Jeans Spring and Summer Special was practically all about men. The women performers pictured and discussed in these magazines comprised just the same short list of (mainly American) vocalists time and time again: Tiffany, Madonna, Shanice Wilson, Sinitta, Carol Decker, etc.

My third selection of magazines relates to the specialist musical genres. In Blues and Soul (and Black Music and Jazz Review), women were represented in 25% of the pictures in both the text and the advertisements. About the same percentage of main feature articles was devoted to women. So, clearly, there is a higher representation of women here than in the world of rock, but about the same as in pop. Like the latter world, the women concerned are predominantly vocalists.

In Echoes, a magazines for soul enthusiasts, 19% of the pictures in the text were of women and 15% of the pictures in the adverts. Roughly 15% of the articles were about women performers, 8% of the singles reviews, and 12% of the albums.

In International Country Music News, women were in 13% of the pictures in the text and 20% in the

advertisements. I estimate that women were allocated no more than 25% of the text.

Lastly, I looked at the heavy metal magazine Solid Rock. In this, as I expected, women were notable by their absence. There were 232 pictures of male musicians in the text, but only 4 of women (1.7%) and in the adverts the pictures were exclusively of males. The text was, I estimate, 99% about male musicians, which is probably the same as the readership of this magazine. A couple of comments caught my roving eye:

"Our stage is like walking into a rock'n'roll strip club...This tour is the hugest rock'n'roll orgy in the history of the world".

"Our new... symbol is a bent over blonde stripper in garters. That's what Motley Crew are all about".

Apart from looking at the radio, television, music papers and magazines for one week, I also looked at a couple of encyclopaedias as a further check on the proportional representation of women. I reasoned that the picture coverage was similar to the text and that, if there was any difference, it would be women being photographed more than discussed. Thus, counting the pictures of women might lead to an overestimate of the coverage of women in the text, but not an underestimate. In '25 Years of Rock' by Tobler and Frame (1980), only 123 pictures were of women: 10%. Exactly the same percentage pertained to the pictures in 'The Rolling Stone Rock Almanac' (1984).

In conclusion, one can see that women are under-represented throughout popular music and in certain genre's, like heavy metal, women are practically non-existent, either as instrumentalists or vocalists. (Although women are frequently visible as decoration on album sleeves.)

At the rock end of the spectrum women's presence is, I estimate, about 10%. The majority of these women are vocalists. The proportion which women make up in the instrument-playing part of the rock world must be 5% at the very most. Likewise the rock audience is disproportionately male, in terms of both the audience for rock programmes and the consumers of the more serious music papers. Rock, then, is a male musical form; women performers are rare.

At the pop end of the spectrum, the world of daytime radio, of televised music, lightweight pop magazines, and the singles chart, women are there in greater strength. But they are still a minority (about 25% of all performers). The majority of these women are vocalists. They are also young. It is quite notable at the moment that such female performers, like, for example, Tiffany and Debbie Gibson, are the object of much scorn in the music papers and have been the butt of endless jokes, for example this week on Friday Live (15.4.88.). They, and the young girls who buy their records, have been denigrated as

"bubblegum rock" and "teeny-bop fodder". This is not to say that no men fall into this category, Rick Astley is a good current example, but most male performers do not, whereas most females do. To be "laddish", like Status Quo is to be admired, whereas to be "girly" is to be seen as silly, scatter-brained, "bubbly", and stupid. Such female performers are more likely to be viewed as "puppets" for male producers like Stock, Aitken and Waterman. Female vocalists are pushed by the music press into this narrow, feminine category. Presented thus, they are perceived as no threat to the male musical club. But it is not only the press that do this; record companies and producers also tend to package women in this way.

It is very rare that a woman is discussed as a musician in her own right, in terms of playing an instrument, composing, arranging, etc. Musicianship is not discussed at all in girls' magazines or in the light-weight music publications. It is covered more in Melody Maker, N.M.E. and Sounds, but rarely are women interviewed or analysed in these terms. This reflects the way in which the press generally treats women (ie. trivialises them, and deals with them solely in terms of their physical attractiveness) Women are simply not taken seriously as musicians. They are not expected to be able to play an instrument and, if they do, we, the readers, do not hear about it. Thus this knowledge is

denied to young women, growing up and looking for role-models. Meanwhile, singing is rarely discussed as a musical skill which has to be learnt over time; female vocalists are not interviewed on how they learnt their technique.

In conclusion, I have shown that women are in a minority within all the various worlds of electric popular music. The one space they do inhabit in any number is that of vocalist, but even here they are outnumbered by men. But it is when we look at the playing of instruments that women's absence is most notable. Moreover, this is an established pattern; it was the case in the 1950s and it is still the case today. This lack of women, however, is taken-for-granted and rarely commented upon, let alone examined. In the ensuing chapters I shall address the question: 'Why are there so few women in popular music?'

Notes

1. Note the absence of women in Liverpool beat bands in the book by S. Leigh and P. Frame 'Let's Go Down the Cavern'. Vermilion.(1984)

2. Other women's bands told me of their problems in finding women drummers. Some resorted to getting a male drummer. In the early 1980s a number of London bands were all-female except for the drummer. In the Coventry women's band which I joined we could not find a bass player, despite widespread advertising, so we simply played without one. Similarly, a London rock band told me,

(S4): "We were looking for bass players...and we

just couldn't find any good bass players around. There was just none. We advertised and everything. We just couldn't find anyone who was good enough. So I said, 'Why don't I play bass and we'll look for a guitarist' and they said, 'Yeah, O.K.' But then we looked for a rhythm guitarist and we didn't (find one). Then we decided to stay a 3-piece".

When a famous all-women band advertised nationally for a female drummer they only had 4 applicants. When another band, of established women performers, advertised for a bass player, likewise they only had 4 applications. A similar male band would have had scores of men applying. Indeed, female bands have told me that men often apply to their adverts, even when 'women-only' is clearly specified.

3. I do not claim that this list was exhaustive. It only pertained to England. Also, the nature of bands is such that by the time you think you might have the definitive list, half of the bands you first wrote down have broken up. This banding together, disbanding and reforming in altered combinations is common to all bands, whether male or female. Sometimes a seemingly new band is actually composed of nearly all the same members as another band which has folded. Furthermore, some of the women were in two, three or four bands.

4. The problem with the M.U. figures is precisely that they include all musicians who belong to the union, and most of these are in the 'classical' world. Also, the M.U. is for professional musicians and most musicians in rock bands are amateurs or semi-professional. The majority of local rock bands simply cannot get M.U. rates. Lastly, in Oxford there are a large number of college bands, composed of students playing just for fun. These would not be part of the M.U., either.

5. In the U.K. there is only 'Signed Sealed and Delivered' by Sue Steward and Sheryl Garratt (1984), and 'Jazzwomen: 1900 to the present' by Sally Placksin. In the U.S.A. there is just 'Stormy Weather' by Linda Dahl. Placksin and Dahl write only about jazz musicians, and none of these sources has statistical data. The absence of women musicians in popular music is assumed rather than demonstrated, which is why I felt I needed to do this instant statistical survey.

6. I chose to start the week on a Thursday, as that is when the three main music papers come out: Melody Maker, Sounds and the New Musical Express.

Chapter 3. SUBCULTURAL THEORIES.

Virtually all the writing and explanations of the relationship between youth and music-making, in British sociology, has been by subcultural theorists. This is why I have chosen subcultural theory as my starting point. Subcultures have seemed a fruitful area of exploration because, like rock music, they are to do with being young. They have been posited as the typical way in which young people have been able to escape from the ideological pressures surrounding them.

"In the mid-1970s, a group of Marxist sociologists based at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University published studies of the various British youth groups of the previous two decades. By adapting the notion of 'subculture' developed in deviancy theory, these authors provided an image of the Ted, Mod and Rocker not as delinquents or victims of capitalist society but as various sorts of unconscious working-class resistors to the system. The argument gave a special value to the style of these youth subcultures which then suffered from the effects of a 'commercial defusing...in order to make it widely marketable'". (Laing. 1985. p.107.)

Rock music is integrally linked with youth style, thus subcultures have been seen as the link between

rock music and youth, and, as Chambers 1982) has pointed out,

"While it has not been the intention of subcultural accounts to privilege analytically the specific cultural domain of pop music, it remains the case that they have had a profound influence on discussion of British pop music".

Clearly, peer groups are an agent of socialization (and this is something I intend to discuss later), but subculturalists argue that they can also be a crucial source of opposition to cultural hegemony. Subcultural theorists have examined the way in which certain groups of young people have engaged in 'movements' of cultural resistance. This has then been related to music.

You would expect subcultural theory to prove helpful in explaining women's absence from rock music, because the approach focusses on how young people can formulate their own subcultures of resistance; young women could thus engage in resisting femininity. However, the subcultural approach does not shed any light on this question. Why is this? It is either that,

(a) women are in subcultural groupings but have been ignored by commentators (the press, sociologists, etc.)

(b) young women have simply not been involved in such subcultures at all,

or (c) women have been involved, but only in limited and supportive roles, and therefore, for them, such subcultures do not provide much in the way of resistance at all and certainly not to the ideology of femininity.

I wish to argue that subcultural theory cannot provide an explanation for women's absence from rock music-making for a number of reasons.

Firstly, subcultural theory has been imbued with sexist assumptions. Women have been viewed as unimportant, and thus ignored both theoretically and empirically. They were notably absent from all the American and British classical ethnographic studies of deviant subcultures. This is not that surprising, as women were largely absent from all sociology up to, and including, the 1960s. What is striking is that when the new wave of British, subcultural theory developed in the 1970s, women were left out again. (One reason for this persistent masculinism might be simply that all the research has been carried out by men.) Stan Cohen's study (1972) of the mods can be seen as an empirical link between the old and new schools of subculturalism, and I would like to take this as an illustration of the inherent sexism of the subculturalists' approach.

Cohen spent a great deal of time doing participant observation in order to construct one of the first British naturalistic accounts of subcultural activity. There were probably more girls involved in the mod subculture than in any previous youth subcultural grouping. We can see that from Cohen's own book, for they are numerous in the photographs. Yet Cohen leaves them out of his account. In a book of 200 pages he only mentions girls in passing. It is, then, with great surprise that we read on page 186 that, "in many ways Mod was a more female than a male phenomenon", and "at Bank Holiday weekends the fifteen-year-old Mod girl...was always the dominant sight". Why does Cohen discuss girls so little? Is it because they were just literally "a sight", perceived as visual objects rather than as actors in the unfolding drama? It is quite clear that Cohen is seeing women from the male-as-actor point of view. Girls were relegated to the status of stage props. Cohen is very critical of the news accounts which were 'manufactured' by the press and accuses the latter of "selective misperception". Yet was not Cohen's own observation and account at the mercy of selective perception? The media, police and courts saw female mods not as "folk devils" but as "silly little girls". But Cohen too viewed the boys alone as important. Young women did not fit easily

into pre-existing images of delinquency, so they were left out of the account.

McRobbie and Garber (1976) make the same point, using Fyvel (1963) and Willis (1972) to show the entrenched sexism of all subcultural theory: either girls are not mentioned at all or they are trivialised in a dismissive way. They ask, is it because all the researchers have themselves been male, or is it because they happened to have been focussing on boys and therefore absorbed their perspective? This begs the question why were they only studying boys in the first place, and I think the answer is that the origins of the subcultural approach were in the social policy fuelled subject area of male delinquency.

Secondly, women have been left out of the picture because the focus has been on "the streets". Again, I think the reason is partly historical. Delinquency has been seen as a visible problem of public space: the threat posed by working class male youth in town centres, etc. Crime and anti-social behaviour within the home (like incest and violence) has, until recently, been neglected. It has been hidden and difficult to get at, and it has not been perceived as a threat to social order in the way that routine male delinquency has. The Marxist subcultural approach of

the 1970s also saw all the important action as being out on the streets.

As Frith (1983) has pointed out, "the streets" have always had negative associations for women. Obviously women use the streets; they go shopping, push prams along them, etc. But "the streets" also connotes prostitution, as in 'streetwalker'. In both a literal and a metaphorical sense the streets can be seen as a male world. As I have already discussed in the previous chapter, women are physically at risk from male attacks in public places, whether literally in the streets or in pubs, dance halls, etc.

The 1970s subcultural approach argued that working class subcultures mark out 'territory' in local neighbourhoods to claim as their own, as a way of "negotiating their collective existence". I would argue that when they are doing this they are not just saying, "This patch belongs to skins", but also, "This area belongs to males". It is argued that each subculture represents a different 'solution' to collective problems which are faced (the 'class problematic' of the particular strata from which they are drawn.) But, it seems to me, that each one is a 'masculine' solution to a masculine problem: the erosion of space (both physical and cultural) for the

working class male. Thus youth subcultures are essentially male (and not female) defensive measures.

If subcultural theorists had looked at all at the domestic realm, however, it would have been impossible to avoid discussing women. We are told nothing about what Teds, Mods, etc. do at home or their relationships with their families. We know nothing about their sexual relationships. It is as if these other areas of their lives simply do not exist. Hall and his colleagues (1976) show how youth subcultures are related to class relations and the occupational division of labour. However, they do not show how these subcultures are related to gender and to the sexual division of labour. They say that subcultures offer a collective solution to problems generated in the work situation. The family, however, is ignored. The home and domestic life remain unexplored. There is no discussion of 'negotiation' there regarding space, values and behaviour. McRobbie (1980) argued that subcultural writers reflected the way in which sociologists in general, until the impact of 1970s feminism, have ignored the whole realm of the personal and the private. She argued that the male researchers had absorbed the New Left and countercultural values of the period and romantically overidentified with their (male) research subjects in their symbolic flight from the clutches of the family and

domestication. This flight was at the expense of women.¹

Thirdly, the theory is only concerned with resistance to class relations. It ignores resistance to gender stereotyping and the construction of sexual identity. It is unable to make sense of gender relations. It may be true, as the subculturalists argue, that post-war British youth subcultures have, through their construction of style, represented a form of opposition to bourgeois hegemony. But this opposition has been very limited, for it has not tackled the hegemonic ideology of gender. Indeed, I would argue that these youth formations have actually worked in the opposite direction and reinforced gender ideology. They have functioned as peer groups, socialising their members into dominant male ideology. In that way they are just one aspect of the wider socialization pattern which may be described as 'male bonding'.

I think that this is a suitable point at which to discuss the subcultures themselves in a bit more detail in order to substantiate my assertion that, on the whole, working class youth subcultural formations have, from the point of view of gender, been not oppositional but reactionary.

TEDS

Girls are entirely absent from Jefferson's attempt to 'decode' the Ted style (Hall and Jefferson 1976), which he explains as a cultural response to the erosion of physical and cultural space in a working class inner-city environment. But Jefferson only looks at male style, and analyses it in terms of a male response. Female Ted style is not observed or explained. No equivalent female reaction is analysed; the question is simply not raised.

Yet we know that female Teds did exist, so why were they ignored? The reason might be that girls were excluded from the central activities of Ted subculture (fighting, hanging around the streets, etc.), and because of its deeply masculinist core values.

Jefferson argued that the Teds were reaffirming traditional working class values. If so, this would help to explain women's 'invisibility'. For in traditional working class culture a woman's place is in the home, and with other women in a relatively sexually-segregated world of domesticity.² Men dominated the public realm of pubs, working men's clubs, and football matches. Women could be Teds, but not on equal terms in public areas. No such restrictions limited their activities at home. Young women could be Teds in their bedrooms, playing

rock'n'roll records, practising jiving with their girlfriends and perfecting their bee-hive hairstyles. Ted girls' image, though deviant, was highly feminine: tight waisted dresses, which emphasised the female form, high heels which limited mobility, etc.

So it is not the case that girls could not become Teds but, rather, that they could not be part of the subculture on the same terms as men; for the subculture was male-dominated and masculinist in its values and concerns.

ROCKERS/BIKERS

Once more, girls have been largely ignored in written accounts of this long-lived and highly-differentiated subculture. As with Teds, women have been excluded from this subculture's central activity - bike riding - and they are denied membership on the ideological plane: biker culture is a brotherhood. Few women ride their own bikes. Their place is on the pillion, riding behind their boyfriends. On the long 'run', the bikers' most celebrated activity, girls are often left behind completely. In Willis's (1978) study female bikers were usually accompanied by men, spoke much less than men and, although there was a very small group of unattached women, "they were allowed no real dignity of identity by the men". As McRobbie and

Garber (1976) have argued, when pictures of biker girls first emerged in magazines they seemed to represent a new, bold, aggressive form of female sexuality, but this appearance hid and mystified the reality of sexual subordination. Bikers treat women primarily as sex objects, as "birds" to be "pulled", and as property belonging to individual men. (See Harris, 1985).

This is perhaps the most sexist subcultural form; it has the hardest, most macho image. According to subcultural theory, rockers/bikers were in revolt against bourgeois cultural hegemony. They opposed authority and responsibility by being 'bad' boys with wild ways, aggressive, scruffy, dirty and violent. But I think that this type of subcultural formation can also be explained as a revolt against 'femininity' and domesticity. It represents an escape, not only from the daily dead-end drudgery of the factory floor (which subculturalists stress), but also from the home and family. The so-called feminine values of cleanliness, gentleness, emotional expressivity, etc. were anathema to these boys. Indeed, Harris (1985) argues that in the 1960s rockers were a dying breed and it was only the effeminacy of the Mods which gave them renewed life; traditional macho values had something to assert themselves against. Femininity and "settling down" into domestic life is what bikers have

resisted, and this is how they prove that they are 'hard'. Bikers see women as necessary for sex, but they fear being trapped into a life of debts, responsibilities and babies. Their need for women is hidden, as is the way in which they are 'serviced' by mothers and girlfriends in terms of domestic labour. Bikers go home most nights, like everyone else; they do not sleep on the pavements. But this whole other side of their life is absent from sociological accounts.

Biker subculture does not offer women very much. Biker girls deviate from traditional notions of femininity, for sure, but the choice of 'scripts' is limited: good girl or slag, 'Old Lady' or 'chick', somebody's sexual property or everybody's. What Brake (1980) calls the "celebration of masculinism" could hardly be more apparent.

Before discussing the rockers' sparring partners, the mods, I shall now turn to the third 'macho' subcultural group.

SKINHEADS

John Clarke (1976) describes this subcultural form as an exaggerated version of traditional working class chauvinism (both racial and sexual). But Clarke tells us nothing about girls. Yet again, we are faced

with the question, were they absent, invisible, or just ignored? However, it is clear that the three elements which Clarke emphasises - territoriality, collective solidarity, and masculinity - pertain to males rather than to females. From scattered sources and personal observation, one knows that there were skinhead girls ('boot girls' or 'bovver girls') and that they sported the same masculine style as the boys: short-cropped hair or shaved heads, tattoos, Doc Martins, etc. In terms of dress, then, they clearly broke with the norms of femininity. They were also involved in fighting (other girls). However, there do not seem to have been many female skins, and as the essence of the culture was working-class conservatism they were hardly likely to have espoused feminism. The skin terrain of football matches remained male territory as well. Mike Brake (1980) concludes that skinhead girls had a complex relationship to femininity. On the one hand they dissociated themselves from the traditional feminine image, but on the other hand they remained contained within the ideology of male supremacy and were still seen as, and treated as, the property of individual males.

MODS

I have already discussed the way in which Stan Cohen ignored girls in his study of the mods on the beaches. Hebdige (in Hall and Jefferson 1976) does not say much about them either. Like Cohen he seems to exclude them from his very definition of mod. For more detail about female mods we have to go to non-sociological authors such as Richard Barnes (1979).

Mods did seem to encompass some challenge to gender ideology compared to the previous subcultural groups. In its early art school beginnings, mod culture gave space to homosexuals, and the wearing of so-called feminine colours (like pastel pink) challenged current male stereotypes. Mod culture was oppositional to the traditional working class male look of the teds and rockers. Mod masculinity was still sexist, but much less macho. For instance, mods rode scooters, a mode of transport which emphasised safety and which was originally designed for women

Female mod subculture also challenged traditional female dress codes. For example, the new fashion for tights gave women freedom from the physical constraints of corsets and suspender belts. It led to miniskirts, which, whilst exposing more flesh, allowed a longer, more assertive, stride and could be de-sexualised (to a degree) by wearing thicker, coloured

tights. Initially, minis and their wearers' accompanying air of self-determination were shocking, while mods' hair was cropped as a reaction to 1950s styles and the bee-hives of rocker girls. Mod girls thus broke through the whole time-consuming fuss of fifties rollers, setting lotion and hair-nets. Their styles were simpler and easier to maintain. Body shape was flatter, in vivid contrast to the waist-clinching dresses, uplifting, wired and padded bras which had constrained unwilling female bodies towards an hour-glass shape in the 1950s. Likewise, lips were white instead of rosy; eyes black instead of pale. Also revolutionary was the way mod girls raided men's wardrobes for shirts, instead of busty jumpers and frilly blouses, and for grey flannels instead of skirts. Flat shoes replaced stilettos, and this meant the gait changed away from the wiggle-in-the-walk. Twiggy was the model par excellence for this new look. And this change of image did go with a more open, permissive and autonomous female sexuality and new styles of acceptable behaviour. As McRobbie and Garber (1976) argue, girls' position within mod subculture did mark, overall, a shift towards autonomy.

If I can dare to be autobiographical here, I can confirm that the female mod style allowed me to achieve considerable freedom in a number of respects.

The move towards 'unisex' clothes made it easier for me to buy clothes that would fit. At nearly six foot, and with size nine-and-a-half feet, there was no way in which I could squash myself into the fifties feminine mould of petite-and-curvy. My shape was also wrong: long and lean. My mother encouraged me to wear a pantie-girdle. This I did, but could not figure out what it was supposed to do for me. My stomach was as flat as a pancake: there was nothing to 'keep in'. The new flat straight up and down mod style suited me perfectly. The approved shape became Twiggy skinny, and being tall was O.K. for the first time I could remember. Fashionable model Verushka was well over six foot. The mod girl fashion for wearing men's trousers could not have suited me more. They were the only ones that would fit me. I took to them with alacrity, front-fastening and all. The abandonment of winkle-pickers was even more important for me, as I had been unable to find any which fitted my large and broad feet. No shoe shops in the London suburbs or in the provinces at this time sold any sizes larger than seven. There was just one shop which sold them and this was located in the West End. It was both expensive and very conservative. I could not afford to go there very often, and when I did I was usually disappointed. The first pair of "ladies" shoes which I ever possessed were ordered for me by my local co-op

store from Norwich. After great anticipation (at 11 years of age) I suffered utter chagrin when I saw them. They were classic old ladies' shoes. So I got into the habit of kicking off my shoes the very moment I got to a party. I was acutely embarrassed about the size of my feet. A lot of the time I went barefoot. This, in turn, meant that my feet grew even more, not being constrained by the pinching confines of "fashion" shoes. The changes which mod style brought into the shoe arena enabled me to wear men's shoes and yet be fashionable. This change was long-term. It gradually became more and more acceptable for women to wear men's shoes, particularly as trousers became more popular. (It has only been in the last decade that tall women have been able to buy large sizes in provincial shops. To this very day there is only one shop in Oxford which offers large sizes.) The wearing of flat men's shoes affected the whole of my wardrobe: dresses did not look good with them. The shoe problem determined that I spent most of my out-of-school time in trousers, a habit I have to this day. Posture and movement are also affected. Men's shoes allow you to run faster for a bus, to walk further, to carry heavy objects, and to be freer and more protected in general. Women's shoes limit physical activity, throwing the body forward onto the pelvis. In the worst cases women's shoes cripple. The average female

foot is deformed with corns and twisted toes to a greater extent than a man's.

The unisex movement brought about by the mods was a godsend to me. I had slunk through my latter teens head-to-toe in black with uncombed straggly hair, deliberately unfashionable. My body shape put me at such a disadvantage in the fashion stakes that the only sensible solution was to drop out. I am not sure to what extent my whole bohemian stance was sustained by the simple practical problems I faced in clothing myself. This prompts me to ask, to what extent does attachment to subcultural style allow freedoms to those girls who, for physical reasons, do not fit the mould. (This argument might apply with greater force to the punks, for example.) For myself, suddenly I had become fashionable. Overnight, long straight hair was all the rage and tall, lanky fashion models stared coolly from every fashion page.

Yet this challenge to traditional gender stereotypes only went so far. It was boys who owned and rode the scooters. Girls were still dependent on boys for transport. The new glamour jobs, like working in a boutique, paid badly. Also, as the sixties wore on, 'hard mods' emerged, a style which emphasised masculinity (and from which the skins emerged). McRobbie and Garber conclude that,

"There is nothing to suggest that participation in Mod subculture sharply loosened the bonds between mothers and daughters, or significantly undermined the girls' self-conception and orientation towards marriage and the family".(1976. p.218)

Although there were probably more girls involved in mod subculture than in previous youth groupings they did not participate on equal terms with the boys.

In my empirical overview, above, I have only discussed the 'classical' youth subcultures which were analysed by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (C.C.C.S.). I shall be discussing punks later on, for I consider this more recent subculture to have offered young women more cultural space than previous youth groups. I shall argue that punk was a significant way in which some women got into bands.

SUBCULTURAL THEORY: AN ASSESSMENT

It is important to note that the subcultural approach is not comprehensive: there are some important omissions. The theory has not only ignored middle class subcultures but also, more problematically, ones which span the classes. Yet such bohemian subcultural forms have been far more overtly political than any of the working class subcultures discussed and probably, for that reason, offered more scope for female resistance. The most notable example of this is the student culture of the late sixties.³

Gay subcultures have also been ignored, which may be even more significant. I think that this is of particular importance for it is these subcultures which have, far more than any others, challenged dominant gender ideology. I have found in my own research that involvement in lesbian culture has been a route into rock music-making for a significant number of women, and I shall be discussing this, and also bohemianism, in Chapter 8. But I want to end this one by suggesting that another major reason why subcultural theory cannot explain the absence of women rock musicians is because it does not anywhere describe or analyse music-making as such. As already stated, subcultural theorists talked about youths on the streets, on the beaches and other public places, but not in the private realm of the home. Yet it is precisely in this latter space that much rock music-making goes on. Bands certainly do not practice, or often play, in the streets. Musicality is expressed in the bedroom, the living room, the garage. Outside the home, even practice areas such as community centres, church halls and rehearsal studios are zealously guarded against outsiders. More surprisingly, nowhere do subcultural theorists look at gigs, which are public.

So the question arises, is this omission simply the result of subculturalists presenting a partial

picture? Or is it that music-making is not important within subcultures?

It has always been assumed that, because subcultures have been associated with certain genres of music, they have been breeding grounds for bands. For example, heavy metal music has been viewed as congruous with the masculinist culture of bikers. Willis (1978) argues that there is a very close relationship between the present-orientation of rockers and both rock music and motorbikes. In *Resistance Through Rituals*, Willis's argument is summarised thus:

"Basically Willis argues that there must be a 'homology' between the values and life-style of a group, its subjective experience, and the musical forms the group adopts. The preferred music must have the potential, at least, in its formal structure, to express meanings which resonate with other aspects of group life". (Hall and Jefferson. 1976. p.106)

It is clear that Willis is not talking about lyrics but about the musical form itself. As Brake (1980) puts it:

"Rock is body music, simple and yet highly aggressive; death is ever present on the bike, and this threat is central to control, control over the machine, one's life, one's body, one's identity, one's manhood".

Brake makes the same sort of point in his section on the counter-culture. For example, he says:

"There was an important interaction between progressive rock music and life-style, the music

dialectically pursuing the drug experience. Progressive music matched in its complexity and rhythmical asymmetry the hippy life-style, setting the form which through hallucinogenic drug use could be used to undercut the linearity of the straight world". (p.96)

And such an argument is even easier to make about punk - the subculture was built around the music much more clearly than other youth styles had been - and so Brake argues,

"The music...has the beat emphasised, with the melody in the background, and this makes a connection with punk appearance and anarchy".

This kind of analysis is obviously superficial (it is far easier to make a connection between punk lyrics and punk sensibility) and while exponents of the subcultural approach have, either directly or obliquely, attempted to make a structural connection between the values of the various subcultures and specific musical forms, what has not been done is empirical work looking at how rock music is produced, who makes it, etc. For example, the Who, so closely associated with the mods, did not itself emerge from that subculture, and Led Zeppelin the original source of the 'heavy' music so beloved of bikers, came out of the bohemian culture of art schools. Whilst some members of youth subcultures (especially punks) have undoubtedly set up bands, music-making (as against music consumption) has not been a focal activity of the colourful groupings with which subcultural

theory has concerned itself. Rather, music has been a backdrop to their other activities: the juke-box in the cafe, the transistor on the beach, etc. They bought records but did not produce them. They appropriated various forms of popular music from the existing social menu; they did not cook them up in the first place.

Thus, in a way, it does not really matter that subcultural theory did not discuss girls, or that the subcultures themselves excluded or marginalised young women, since women's exclusion from youth subcultures in no way impeded their entry into rock bands, or, to put it another way, membership would not have helped them. Subcultural theory would only be relevant if most members of male bands had come out of subcultures, whereas the vast majority of people who play in rock bands have not been "stylists", and a large number have not even been working class, in any usual sense of the word. The factors which subculturalists have viewed as triggering subcultural involvement (failure at school, failure to achieve financial success, lack of space in the inner cities, etc.) are therefore irrelevant in the explanation of rock music-making.

Membership of youth subcultures is, in fact, rare for all young people (not just musicians). A lot of young people briefly flirt around their fringes and

raid them as sources of sartorial inspiration, but very few are committed long-term members. Wearing a leather jacket does not a rocker make. Furthermore, it is also very difficult to draw a line between subcultural members and ordinary youth. For many people subcultural membership is just a matter of fashion. A stranger perusing my photograph albums would think that I had been, variously, a bohemian, a mod, a hippie and a punk. Yet I was never really any of these things, merely, I suppose, a dedicated follower of fringe fashion. My politics and world view certainly did not change with my hairstyle.

Subcultures represent only a small part of the 'boys' world'. The majority of boys are concerned with other things: playing football, train-spotting, fishing, etc. Music falls into this other (wider) realm, of boys, alone or in small groups, engaging in all-absorbing hobbies. This whole terrain is relatively unexplored territory, whether empirically or theoretically. There are few studies of 'ordinary', everyday, youthful peer group culture. For subcultural theorists have never been interested in 'ordinary' youth. This is probably because of the origins of British subcultural theory in American theories of delinquency, which made a rigid distinction between the ordinary and the deviant. The focus has always been on the extraordinary.

In the end, the majority of subcultural theories are of limited usefulness because they are based, not on original empirical work, but on second-hand media sources. With only a few exceptions, British subcultural theory has been a brand of armchair sociology. Indeed, it was precisely because of their reliance on distorted media accounts of subcultures that the C.C.C.S. writers were more able to romanticise those subcultures, exaggerating their confrontational thrust, by putting forward an oversimplified opposition between subcultures and the dominant culture.⁴

Once the question of gender is raised, it is obvious that subcultures are no different from 'ordinary' life. Women are just as marginal and subordinate there as elsewhere and, from a feminist perspective, the division of youth social life into subcultures, on the one hand, and 'ordinary' youthful peer groups on the other, is pointless.

Notes

1. In a similar way rock music is also a symbolic flight from domesticity and at the expense of women.

2. See Young and Wilmott (1962); Dennis et al. (1956); P.Cohen (1972).

3. I am not suggesting that the radical student culture of the sixties liberated women, but that the contradiction which it set up led to many middle class

women becoming feminist. For example, Sheila Rowbotham:

"the culture which was presented as 'revolutionary' was so blatantly phallic...Street-fighting man - the cult of Che, the paraphernalia of helmets, the militancy that could shout loudest - went around with naked genitals. This contradiction was powerful enough to bring women like me in the revolutionary movement to a recognition of ourselves as women...I found myself in conflict in an increasing number of particular incidents, sexual banter, the whistling when women spoke, the way in which men divided us into two, either as comrades or as women they fucked".(1973. p.24)

Speaking personally, I was at L.S.E. in 1969 and I remember that these were the very issues which led to the setting up of the women's liberation group there.

4. Frith (1983b) made this point in his overview of the state of British research into popular music:

"...the C.C.C.S. account of youth derives from a reading of the media, the media's account of youth derives from a reading of the C.C.C.S....It needs to be stressed, then, that there is very little empirical substance to subcultural theory."(p.11)

See also Frith (1984).

Chapter 4. CONSTRAINTS.

Subcultural theorists took for granted young people's ability to choose what to do in their leisure time, and thus merely addressed the question of how their choices should be interpreted. In contrast, Frith (1983) argues that different leisure patterns are a reflection, not so much of different values, as of the different degrees of opportunity, restriction, and constraint that are afforded to different individuals and social groups. A particular leisure pursuit may be made easy or difficult for an individual according to their position within the social structure. Gender (along with class, race, etc.) is one aspect of such societal location. Frith's argument is that, for everyone, leisure, consumption and style involve a relationship between choice and constraint.

Many sociologists have assumed that young people are 'free', and have overlooked the restraints and restrictions of family life, money, boy-girl relationships, career imperatives and the sexual mores of the neighbourhood, etc. I wish to argue that these

constraints are absolutely crucial to the explanation of women's absence from rock.

Clearly, such constraints are relative: gender is mediated by social class. So I shall be considering the degree to which gender operates within the different social classes. One thing which stands out, however, is the extent to which girls and young women in all social classes are restricted in their leisure pursuits compared to boys/young men.

It is important to note that there is more than one sort of constraint operating on women. There are both material and ideological constraints. In reality, of course, these two are inter-related. (For instance, lack of access to equipment is an important material constraint, but one of the reasons for its denial is ideological.) However, for the sake of clarity I shall endeavour to separate them conceptually. This chapter will deal mainly with material constraints, whilst the next will include a discussion of ideological constraints - in particular, the 'culture of femininity'.

Anyone who wants to become a member of a rock band will need equipment, transport, money, time, and a space to practice in. Women, compared to men, have less access to each one of these material factors. Thus women are at a serious disadvantage. In this

chapter I shall examine these material constraints and show how they minimise the chances of women getting a foothold on the first stage of the rock music career.

MONEY

Schoolgirls are less likely than schoolboys to have part-time employment and, if they do work, they will usually be paid less. Market researchers Fisher and Holder (1981) found that in their large and statistically representative sample twice as many boys as girls had a part-time job and that, therefore, the boys were better off. Schoolgirls have to rely mainly on pocket money - to buy clothes, make-up, bus and train fares, club and disco entrance fees, drinks, etc. There will not be much left for a set of strings, let alone a guitar.

Playing in a rock band is a fairly expensive hobby. Firstly, individual instruments and ancillary equipment (amplifiers, effects pedals, stands, etc.) have to be purchased. Secondly, there are other costs which, to people outside of bands, are largely hidden. Equipment has to be kept in good repair: strings, drumheads, etc. have to be bought and renewed; occasional repair bills must be met. There is the cost of transporting people and equipment to and from rehearsals and gigs. Rehearsal studios or practice

rooms have to be hired and, perhaps, a studio to make a 'demo' tape. Cassettes need to be purchased and someone has to own a reasonable tape-recorder. The more you get into playing the more aspirations rise, and the more costs escalate. My argument is that women are less able to afford these outgoings. They find it more difficult to purchase their own equipment or to contribute towards a band's general running costs.

EQUIPMENT

Girls and young women typically lack access to rock equipment. Parents and schools do not provide it and girls lack the money to purchase their own. Moreover, where equipment is, sometimes, provided (for example, at youth clubs) boys tend to take it over.

Instruments are gender stereotyped. Studies show that both musicians and non-musicians share a sexual classification scheme, in which, for example, drums and most horns are seen as 'male', whilst flute, violin and clarinet are seen as 'female'.¹ Children's books contribute to this process. For example, boys, but not girls, are seen playing the trumpet. Indeed, instruments are often portrayed anthropomorphically as 'Felicity the flute', 'Tubby the tuba', and so on. Rock instruments are classified as 'male' and thus parents, teachers and male peer groups deny girls

access to them.² For example, the following quotation is taken from an interview which I conducted after a music workshop organised for young women.

E2 said that at her school, "the girls had tambourines and did all the singing and the boys played the drums. Girls played the glockenspiel. It was a jingly sound and they thought that was feminine. I would have liked to have a go (at the drums) but I didn't, because girls don't do those things...Girls don't have a chance. We're not introduced to these things."

E2. was now going to an all-girls' school. But this had not expanded her musical opportunities. The school has only a few classical instruments deemed suitable for girls. There were no guitars, basses, or drums.

TRANSPORT

Money is also crucial for transport. Young women, as Leonard (1980) found, are less likely to own their own car than are men. This means that they cannot carry their own equipment about. They will be dependent on someone else for their physical mobility.

This lack of vehicles can be a source of arguments. It creates dependency and affects the power relationships within the band. Car drivers tend to take on more responsibility for the equipment and physical arrangements. This can breed resentment.

Lack of money and transport forces many women to rely on men. They use their boyfriends for lifts and

the loan of equipment. This dependency gives considerable power to the men in such relationships. Here we have in microcosm the situation in society in general: women's lack of material resources forces them into dependency upon men. Women's lack of money creates their lack of social power, so that often they have to concede in arguments rather than negotiate a compromise.

Young women typically go out with boys who are a few years older than themselves. This means that the boy is even more likely to have transport compared to the girl. If she joins a band with her boyfriend the relationship could always fold. In such a situation she might find herself stuck for transport and unable to play in a band anymore. She would probably be ousted out of the boyfriend's band, anyway. It means the boy has quite a 'hold' over his girlfriend. They could have a row and he could leave her in the lurch.

This was certainly my own experience. At 18 I acquired my first 'steady' boyfriend. He had a motorbike: I was mobile at last. But I could never have been in a band unless it was with him, because I was totally dependent upon him for transport. Otherwise, I always had to catch a mid-evening tube, in order to catch the penultimate train, in order to catch the last bus home to the London suburbs.

SPACE

1. Lack of Private Space.

Women tend to have limited space. For a woman to have her own flat or house (bought or rented) requires funds. Independent women are more likely than men to be living in cramped conditions.

Schoolgirls, or young women living at home, are unlikely to have much space, particularly within the working class. Such women are dependent on their parents. Adult status and freedom are only achieved by leaving home. Yet they often cannot afford to move out. On top of this in a working class community young women are not supposed to live by themselves (Leonard 1980; McRobbie, 1978). It is still unusual for a working class young man or woman to leave home except to marry. To move out of one's home whilst still based in the same town would be seen as a slight on one's parents. For a working class young woman to get her own flat or move in with the other members of a rock band, in her home town, would be a rebellious act.

If space at home is cramped, then parents' attitudes become crucial. How far will they allow communal space (eg. the living room) to be taken over by the requirements (noise and clutter) of rock? To what extent will parents be prepared to accommodate

the unusual social hours of a daughter who plays in a band?

Leonard points out that working class girls are allowed less space than their brothers within the home. They are also expected to sit in the living room with their parents to a greater extent than boys are. Having less money than their brothers makes girls that much more vulnerable to their parents' demands. (Middle class girls are likely to have more space. Their families live in larger houses. Also, those women who go on to higher education have a privileged access to communal space.)

Once married, women are likely to have no personal space at all. The husband may have a study or workshop, but the wife's space is defined as 'public' - the kitchen, the bedroom. Husband and children invade it. This is because the woman's pursuits are typically viewed as less important than her husband's, particularly if he is the only, or main, wage-earner. Women with pre-school children are most tied to the home. They are isolated within their own privatised sphere, captive in their own nest.³ How would such women meet others with whom to organise a band? And if they did meet them, how would they be able to arrange their lives in order to be able to rehearse and do gigs?

2. Exclusion from Public Space.

Space, like artefacts and activities, is categorised in terms of gender. In general, in our society, women have less space than men. They take up a smaller physical area by the way they sit and use their bodies and there are fewer 'female' spaces. Public provision and the usage of public spaces seems to reflect the inequality of leisure between men and women. For example, council estates were often built with no leisure facilities for women; only men were catered for in the early post-war designs (Bea Campbell. 1984.)

So-called 'public' space is actually dominated by men (Ardener 1978). This is first learnt at school, where the boisterous activities of boys monopolise the playground and force girls to the edges, in a similar way to which they marginalise girls within the classroom and claim the greater part of the teachers' time. Likewise, boys dominate parks and open spaces. Thus, it is no surprise that when music-making facilities are on offer these are also dominated by young males. This point was stressed to me by a number of women who have been involved in running music workshops and projects. For instance, L:

"There's a lot of stuff available for youth clubs that nearly always gets dominated by the young men. There's a lot of facilities available in community halls, community centres, around music,

that is supposedly available to mixed groups, again dominated by men".

Music shops are also male terrain: they rarely employ women as assistants, and the customers are overwhelmingly male. Boys tend to feel at home there, whilst girls feel that they are entering alien territory. In any of these shops you can observe the assertive way in which boys and young men try out the equipment, playing the beginning of a few well-known songs time and again, loudly and confidently, even though those few bars may encompass the sum total of their musical knowledge. Young women, however, typically find trying out equipment a severe trial. They are scared of showing themselves up and being 'put down' by the assistants. They are inhibited in what they perceive to be a 'male' arena.

Frith (1983) argues that leisure in general is perceived to be a male preserve, whilst the 'private' realm of the home is a female domain. He argues that girls, especially in the working class, spend far more time inside the home than do boys, and that they are more closely integrated into family life. They are expected to spend a lot of time with their mothers, as part of the preparation for being an adult woman. Whereas boys, encouraged to model themselves on their fathers, spend more time outside the home. This means

that girls are less likely than boys to go to gigs, and even less likely to become members of rock bands.

But the main way in which women's leisure is controlled by men is through violence. Physical and sexual violence is an experience that many women have had, far more than has been thought previously. Sexual violence is not just the act of a few disordered men on a few particularly unlucky women. It is, rather, an omnipresent possibility that affects all women, regardless of class, age or ethnic group.

Apart from actual attacks, fear of violence is a crucial constraint on women's freedom: it limits what they can do, and where they can go, and when, and who with, etc. Research shows that women fear attack far more than men do (Stanko, 1987).

"...feelings of fright, vulnerability and lack of protection are common features of women's lives and contributory factors in the way these are circumscribed". (Hanmer and Maynard, 1987. p.7)

Recent research has shown that large numbers of women are afraid to go out alone at night. Public space - the streets, the bus, the tube, the train - are viewed as alien space. Many become totally dependent on men (husbands, boyfriends) for lifts or protective company. (Hanmer and Saunders, 1983 and 1984; Radford, 1987) This in turn, enforces dependency on men and becomes another form of social control.

Women have to invest thought and energy into making themselves feel safe when out at night: walking a certain way, carrying keys in their hands before reaching house or car, not parking in underground or multi-story car-parks. (I have been late arriving at gigs simply for this reason.) Women also have to be careful what they wear (for fear of 'provocation'). For female musicians this may necessitate changing clothes to get to and from the venue.

Women live under a partial curfew that men find very difficult to understand. The fact that some men sexually attack women means that public spaces become male terrain; that is, all men benefit:

"Nearly all aspects of the everyday lives of women and girls are affected by the fear, the reality of men's sexual violence...Experience of being assaulted or reading about women being assaulted can keep women locked in their homes in the evening, which effectively imposes a curfew on women...The minimum effect of all this experience - from some of which no woman is immune - is to undermine our confidence and restrict our movements. It is a substantial reason why women are apparently cautious about strange territory and new experience".(rhodes and McNeill, 1985. p.6)

If the world of leisure poses threats for women, that is particularly true of pubs. This phenomenon has been most fully explored by Valerie Hey in her study of the patriarchal nature of pub culture. She states that public houses have never actually been public for women:

"'public' houses are male 'playgrounds' to which women are 'invited' on special terms". (Hey. 1986. p.3)

Women who go to pubs alone risk being labelled as "loose" or worse. There is even male hostility to women in groups.⁴

This point has also been made by Whitehead in her study of rural Herefordshire. Whitehead argues that women are objectified and used as cultural counters in an on-going competition between men to prove their masculinity and virility. Men aggressively defend pubs as their own terrain and attempt to control any women who enter them, using tactics ranging from sexual innuendo to physical attack:

"The situations range from quite gentle reciprocal teasing between individuals, to more hostile and boisterous teasing between gender groups, and even more overtly hostile and physically abusive attacks on individual women by groups of men. These more overtly hostile elements should not be separated from the ambivalence being more generally signalled by joking". (Whitehead. 1976. p.179)

This behaviour is not restricted to pubs; it is found in men's drinking groups everywhere, in male-dominated institutions - such as Parliament (Rodgers, 1981). Mungham (1976) says that a woman alone is never really 'free', as men feel it is in order to stare as much as they like, to point, ridicule and touch her. A woman is supposed to be with a male 'protector'.

In general, then, it can be argued that male domination of leisure space⁵, coupled with the dual standard of sexual morality, operates to exclude women from the world of rock. In particular, male domination of drinking places has particular relevance for young women and rock, for pubs are the most common venue for gigs. Going to a pub alone, or even with a girlfriend, can be risky. Women playing there are encroaching on male territory and are likely to face hostility or resistance from men.

TIME

Women have less free time than men. To explain this necessitates examining women's domestic role.

A woman living with a man will typically find herself doing far more housework than her partner. The man will expect this. The woman herself will probably have internalised high standards of cleanliness and order via her own socialization experience - from her mother, women's magazines, advertisements, etc. Oakley (1974) has shown that, despite the proliferation of technological appliances over the last few decades, the actual amount of housework that women do has not decreased. Instead, standards appear to have risen.

If there are children, the load of housework carried out takes a quantum leap. Plus, there is

child-care itself, as distinct from the extra amount of washing, cleaning, cooking, etc. which children create. Typically, in our society, the woman has total (or major) responsibility for child-care and associated domestic labour. She may also have a full-time or part-time job. Given the inestimable number of hours tied up in this way, it is apparent why large numbers of women are not in rock bands.

Young women, living at home with their parents, are expected to do far more housework than boys. It is clear that housework is seen as 'feminine' in our society. If there are younger brothers and sisters in the family (and, especially if it is a single-parent household), the girl will have a crucial role to play in babysitting. This would make it impossible for her to be in band. Girls in such a position are tied to the house, particularly in the evenings, when gigs and practices are scheduled.

Leonard (1980), and Fisher and Holder (1981), found that working class girls did housework but working class boys did not. Kitwood (1980) found that working class boys did some housework but far less than their sisters. He points out that when, at 16, working class boys get a full-time job, their parents no longer expect them to do any domestic labour, for they have achieved adult male status. Whereas, going out to work makes no such difference for working class girls. In

those families where there is no mother at home, young women have to do all of the domestic labour, taking over the mother's role. (I have come across this amongst my 17-year-old students, both working and middle class.)

It is difficult to find sociological evidence concerning middle class girls, but Kitwood found that they did less domestic labour than their working class equivalents, although more than middle class boys. It would seem that the latter group do the least housework and working class girls the most. Angela McRobbie (1978) argues that working class girls find it harder than their male siblings to get part-time jobs and are forced to earn cash by helping their mothers in the house. This work is less well paid and they work longer hours than do their brothers. Also, it means that they get out of the house far less than boys do. McRobbie estimated that 14 to 16 year-old working class Birmingham schoolgirls were doing 12 to 14 hours of housework per week. This has been corroborated by Sue Lees (1986), in her study of 100 15-16 year-old London schoolgirls. Lees also found that working class girls did the most. Some working class mothers expected their daughters to take a day off school every week in order to help them with household chores.

Kitwood (1980) argues, however, that middle class youth experience more leisure constraints than do the working class. Far more middle class young people stay on at school to do 'A' levels, many with the intention of going on to higher education. Middle class girls (and boys) worry about their exams, and a lot of their time and energy goes into their school work. They cannot invest as much of themselves into hobbies. In contrast, argues Kitwood, working class boys tend to be in the lower streams at school and therefore get their self-esteem and status from their hobbies rather than from educational success. Thus they will, for example, practise the guitar for hours on end.

Middle class parents expect their sons and daughters to do a lot of homework and therefore restrict the amount of time they are allowed out of the house. They are expected to get back early at night so as to get a good night's sleep to prepare them for school. I listened to a radio live phone-in about rock bands one morning. Only one girl rang in. She asked for advice about how to get involved in a band. The dee-jay said that she should get out and about and "meet other musicians". The girl replied that she was not allowed to go out in the evenings as her parents kept her in to do her school-work.

Norms are important here, too. Kitwood points out that economic dependency makes these young people

more likely to conform to their parents' expectations that they engage in "suitable" leisure activities: school societies, classical music, etc. Rock bands would be seen, by parents, as a threat to their children's educational careers.

The same arguments apply to those working class girls who manage to stay on into the sixth form. Indeed, the pressures on this group tend to be greater, for, as Kitwood found, many working class parents put pressure on their daughters to leave school at 16. Leonard discovered this too. Working class parents are making a greater economic sacrifice, in allowing their daughters to stay on at school, and they therefore expect their offspring to make the sacrifice worthwhile - by coming home early at night, by getting a part-time job, etc. And on top of all this daughters are expected to do housework.

The oral history collection, 'Dutiful Daughters', sheds light on the parameters of life for upwardly-mobile working class girls. For example, Irene McIntosh recalls her parents' attitude:

"they weren't keeping a girl at school, because all she was going to do was going to get married. There was no point in educating her any further than that...I said, 'Well I don't want to leave school, I don't want to work in an office, and I don't want to work in a shop'...I said that I would work to keep myself at school. And she (her mother) said, 'Alright...but you've got to prove that it's worth it to us'". (Jean McCrindle and Sheila Rowbotham 1977. p.336, 337.)

In my own case, my father did not approve of pop music. In order to be able to have records, or my own radio (and therefore listen to whatever I wanted to), I did Saturday jobs and worked in the summer holidays. I would not have had time join a band.

Being a band member is a very time-consuming leisure pursuit. Hours are spent just learning to play one's instrument, from the rudiments to getting "good". Days and nights are devoted to individual practising, and a lot more time is involved in collective activity: band practices, travelling to and from gigs and rehearsals, loading equipment in and out of vans, 'setting up' and sound-checking at gigs, etc. Further time goes into the organising side of a band: going to venues to check them out, trying to get gigs, phoning band members to arrange gigs and practices, etc. Out of all this, actual performance time represents only the tip of the iceberg. I am arguing that boys typically have more time available than girls, and that this is an important factor which helps to explain the relative absence of girls from rock bands.

I have explained the various material reasons why boys tend to have more time. There is, however, one important aspect of this which I have so far omitted: girls spend an enormous amount of time in pursuit of boyfriends, directly or indirectly, and on their

physical presentation of self. As this commitment of time is inextricably linked with ideological considerations, I shall leave its discussion until the next chapter, in which I shall discuss girls' peer groups and the whole 'culture of femininity'.

THE REGULATION OF FEMALE PLAY

1. Parental Restrictions.

Girls living at home are under pressure to conform to constraints and prohibitions imposed by parents. The latter are more protective towards their daughters than their sons. Girls are expected to stay at home more than boys and get home earlier at night. But it is not so much that they are not allowed out, so much as they are not allowed out just anywhere and with anyone they choose: companions and destinations are vetted. Clubs, discos and other social meeting places are checked out, for reputation, with other adults. Clearly, this higher level of social control imposed on daughters is based on the very real dangers already discussed.

Kitwood (1980) found both working class and middle class parents to be concerned for the physical safety of their daughters. But they were also concerned to "protect" them in another sense, that is from sexual activities. Working class girls, argues Kitwood, are

allowed more freedom with regard to boyfriends than are middle class girls. The latter are more heavily protected, especially if they are en route for higher education. Boyfriends involve the possibility of an emotional entanglement or, even worse, a pregnancy and are thus perceived by parents as a threat to their daughters' careers. Middle class girls are under more pressure than their brothers to develop "worthwhile" and "respectable" leisure pursuits in order to deflect them from sexual relationships. They are not allowed to just 'hang around' the city centre, but are expected to pursue some purposeful activity. In a way, this gives middle class girls a choice of a far wider range of pursuits and experiences than those available to working class girls. For example foreign travel is valued for its educational function, and middle class girls inhabit a more cosmopolitan environment. But they are also under more parental constraint than working class young women. For middle class parents check up more fastidiously on where their daughters go at night and what they do.

Fisher and Holder (1981) found, in their large mixed class sample, that mothers worried more about their daughters than their sons. They were twice as likely to restrict their movements and forbid them to go to certain places. They were also twice as likely

to check up on them. Boys were given far more freedom. This led to resentment on the part of the girls.

Leonard (1980) similarly found that working class girls had to accept a greater degree of parental control than boys, and had their geographical mobility curtailed. Young women had to be in earlier at night than boys. They were not allowed to go out as many times a week. Daughters, but not sons, were cross-examined about where they were going, what they were going to do when they got there, who they were going with and how they were going to get home. The gap between boys and girls in terms of mobility grew larger as they got older. Young women were regarded as needing increasing physical and moral protection.

The sort of venues where local gigs are held would not be considered salubrious by many, especially middle class, parents. Indeed, rock music itself, is often viewed with disdain. I would argue that joining a rock band would be perceived as a serious threat because, firstly, the rock world is peopled mainly by men. Secondly, rock music's themes are concerned with relationships and sexuality. Thirdly, playing in a band necessitates late hours. Fourthly, rock is heavily stereotyped. For a girl to get involved in a band she would have to convince her parents that she would not have the opportunity for sex or drugs. This would probably mean not being able to go on tour, and

also missing out on the collective social life of the band. Apart from doing gigs, playing in a band often demands involvement with other band members in a shared social life. The musical group is also a social group, and this is what helps to keep bands together. This means going out to pubs and to parties. If a young woman cannot join in with all this she will not be treated as a full and equal member of the band. Her commitment will be questioned.

These kinds of restrictions were mentioned by a number of my interviewees. For instance, K2.'s (upper middle class) parents used to lock her in the house to prevent her from going out to rock venues. A4, working class, aged 20, and still living at home was currently experiencing problems of this sort. Her parents, particularly her mother, disliked her being in a band:

"She thinks it's a bit degrading, playing percussion...she was saying, 'Oh, you shouldn't play tambourine in a pub'. I just got really upset and went up to my room and stayed up there all day. I didn't come out today at all. I didn't know what to do. I just felt completely confused for a while".

Whereas A4.'s brother was allowed to be in a band:

"He's done toasting. But she hasn't said anything about that. She lets him go to practices and sing at a gig. She doesn't mind".

This gender-specific protective attitude is laid on top of a general concern which parents have for their children to get well-paid, secure jobs.

My personal experience was that, as a female child, I was allowed far less freedom of movement than my brother, and a wide range of things were forbidden to me; things which boys were allowed to do. Some of these constraints were to do with protection, and some were more ideological. In everyday life these two dimensions were, of course, interwoven. Life became a struggle to get the things which I saw boys getting.

Horizons closed down unless you fought. My father wanted me to leave school at 16. He then wanted me to get a job at 18, believing that education was wasted on a girl. He told me that I'd only get married and have three kids by the time I was in my mid-twenties. My headteacher and I joined forces and I was, eventually, allowed to apply to university. In the inevitable arguments we had about what time I should come home at night and what places I should or should not go to, I was always aware that my chance of going to university depended on my father's continuing goodwill.

Had I wished to be in a band in my early teens, which is the time when boys start to get involved, it would have been impossible. I would not have been able to carry equipment about. I lacked transport and money. The main restriction, however, would have been

parental regulation of my social life. Even at 18 I was supposed to be in by 10.30 at night.

But parental constraints are not only about protection. They are also to do with getting girls to conform to gender-appropriate behaviour. The range of activities and hobbies considered "suitable" for girls is considerably narrower than for boys (Leonard, 1980). As rock music-making is seen as a male domain parents discourage their daughters from getting involved in it. In contrast, boys are less likely to be encouraged and biographical evidence suggests that some, at least, are given considerable encouragement. For example, the Beatles were inestimably helped when Pete Best's mum set up a music club for the boys in the family's cellar. Similarly, Paul McCartney's dad, spurred Paul on when he wanted to learn guitar, and bought him his first instrument. He also encouraged Paul's brother, Mike, to play the drums. George Harrison's mother bought George his first guitar and later helped him buy his second. But, more importantly, she gave him consistent encouragement:

"George tried to teach himself," says Mrs Harrison. 'But he wasn't making much headway. I'll never learn this' he used to say. I said, 'You will son, you will. Just keep at it.' He kept at it till his fingers were bleeding. 'You'll do it, son, you'll do it,' I said to him. I sat up till two or three in the morning. Every time he said, 'I'll never make it,' I said, 'You will, you will'". (Hunter Davies, 1969. pp.58-59)

This degree of parental encouragement may be unusual, but it is difficult to imagine any mother going to these lengths for a daughter, unless she herself was a musician. For, 'rock musician' is seen as a 'male' role and thus not deemed appropriate for women.

2. Boyfriends' and Husbands' Constraints.

Boyfriends are much more significant in the lives of girls than girlfriends are in the lives of boys. Boyfriends constitute an actual or potential constraint on young women's music-making. A young woman already in a band may acquire a new boyfriend who, whilst admiring her musicianship, may still put pressure on her to leave. In my research I did encounter such experiences. But for every one of these cases, more significantly, there are probably untold thousands of young women who are dissuaded by their boyfriends from band participation right from the start.

Why do boys and men exert such pressures? There appear to be a cluster of reasons. Firstly, the boy may be jealous or envious of all the attention his girlfriend is receiving. He might have a frustrated desire to be up on stage himself and think, 'Well, if I can't do it, why should she be able to?' He may think it inappropriate that his girlfriend should be seen as more important than himself in the eyes of

others. Many males in this situation feel part of the "baggage", tagging along at gigs - the "I'm with the band" syndrome. They feel that they are only seen as so-and-so's boyfriend. Men may all the more resent this by sensing the 'femininity' of such a role.

Secondly, many men feel that it is 'unfeminine' to be playing in a band. To be able to cope with all the knocks and strains, both physical and mental, which it entails is seen as 'masculine'. A "real" woman needs a man to shield her from such situations. This line of thinking concludes that women who do play in bands are all tough, butch women, possibly lesbians.

Thirdly, men often think that they can or could do it better than women. This helps to explain the phenomenon, which I have occasionally witnessed, of men jumping up on stage at the beginning, middle or end of gigs and trying to take over the equipment. They are saying, virtually, 'This is a man's role. I am a man. Therefore, I should be doing this and not you'. Usually these men have negligible skills. Their misplaced confidence comes merely from being male. When I played in a women's band this happened on a number of occasions.

Fourthly, a man may view women who play in bands as "loose" sexually. He may admire and desire women performers but have a very different rule for "his"

woman. This is the old 'virgin-whore' dual standard of morality and I will be discussing it further in the next chapter.

Fifthly, men may feel threatened sexually. A man may feel that with all the public exposure to other men's eyes his woman will be pursued and taken over by another man. Such a position forces him into competition with other men and, he feels, gives his girlfriend power over him. For example, this happened to M. Her first husband, tormented by jealousy and possessiveness, tried to prevent her going abroad on tour. Similarly, a lead singer in another band was given an ultimatum by her boyfriend: the band or the relationship. She left the band.⁶

As discussed above, married women are often constrained by the demands of housework and child-care. Women typically have to choose between motherhood and a career. This holds true for women in all types of work but is, I would argue, particularly problematical in the world of rock. The long and unsociable hours, the incessant touring, etc. militate against an easy combination of career and personal life. It is difficult for a woman to combine a career in rock with domestic labour, unless the husband is also a musician and in the same band.

But it is not simply a lack of time which constrains women. Married women have to negotiate for the right to go out by themselves and engage in leisure activities:

"Our findings indicate that becoming a mother forms a pivotal stage in women's lives...women's leisure patterns generally become more home-centred and largely family orientated...It is generally expected that women who are mothers will restrict their activities to those which fit well, in both practical and ideological terms, with their mothering role". (Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987. pp.83-84)

There is a transition to home-based leisure activities, and out of the home activities are usually an extension of the wife/mother role. Indeed, many women are made to feel guilty that they should even want any time for themselves. Husbands might not absolutely forbid their wives to go out, but they might turn moody. Many women relinquish the idea of independence in their leisure simply to avoid argument. (Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987)

Cowie and Lees (1981) found that having a job was the only legitimate way for working class wives to spend time outside the home. Whilst Dobash and Dobash conclude from their study:

"The dictum that a woman's place is in the home doesn't so much mean that she shall not go out to work, but that she should not go out to play". (Dobash and Dobash, 1980. p.91)

A number of the married women I interviewed said that being in a band (and earning money from it) was the only way they were allowed to get out of the house. This is linked, again, to men's attempts to control women's sexuality. Being in a band often entails being in pubs and drinking places and this is seen as a particular risk:

"Our study indicates that male disapproval and displeasure is particularly marked in relation to women drinking". (Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987, p.85)

These conjugal norms may also be reinforced by the wider family and local community. My (working class) neighbours used to say that I neglected my husband, when I went off on weekend tours with the band. T. has been a professional musician for many years but finds people still comment:

"They still say, 'Do you go on tour? Oh. How does your boyfriend feel about that?' I've never (heard) them ask that question of male musicians. It's accepted. But they find it really freaky, the idea of women going off and touring on their own".

The media also reinforce these norms:

E1: "It's the whole thing of boyfriends. Perhaps that's why there are quite a number of gay women involved in music. I remember reading some double-page spread with the Bangles, after they'd just had about three records in the Top 10. And the headline was something along the lines of, 'Why the Bangles have Lonely Nights Alone'. And the whole two pages was about how none of them had boyfriends because it was so difficult when you were travelling around all the time...You always get asked these questions about boyfriends. And I think if a young girl reads something like that she's gonna think, 'I've got the choice between

either a career or a boyfriend. And I want a satisfying personal life. I want a boyfriend and I want kids. And no man's gonna want me if I'm travelling around all the time'...And I think it's much harder for women to be off on tour for nine months and to have a boyfriend sitting, waiting for them to come home".

Many other women musicians I interviewed made similar comments. For instance,

K2: "Women who've got relations with men tend to wrap themselves around men, tend to live their lives around men, so that they've got less space to develop themselves. So, (to become a female musician) you either need a gay woman, or a woman who has come to the conclusion in her life that she's going to dedicate her energy to something, no matter what".

For stars, the problems ramify. For example, Hazel O'Connor says,

"I have not found it easy to find a steady boyfriend. I am more preoccupied with falling in love than with diving into bed with someone for a one-night stand. I am also put off because when you are a name singer, people subject you to their fantasies. If I went out with someone I did not know well and end up in bed with him I could not help wondering if he were going to talk to his friends about what happened...what my body was like...that kind of thing". (O'Connor. 1981. p.108)

3. How the Boys Monopolise the Toys: Exclusion by

Male Musicians.

Rock is associated with youth, and research shows that a major preoccupation of young men is establishing their masculinity. Thus, so-called masculine traits are exaggerated. (See, for example,

the findings from Fisher and Holder's large-scale market research project. 1981.)

It is in their younger teens that most male rock musicians start playing in bands. For instance, Paul McCartney joined the Quarrymen when he was 14 and George Harrison first started gigging at the same age. Thus it is hardly surprising that boys exclude girls from their bands. Boys regard playing rock as a masculine activity. To have, say, a girl on drums would undermine rock's latent function of conferring masculine identity on its male participants. Its masculinity is only preserved by the exclusion of girls. I think that if it were traditional for girls to play rock, then boys would avoid that activity with as much avidity as they presently eschew embroidery. It is precisely because of the fragility of such notions of gender difference that so much 'work' is invested in patrolling the ideological boundaries (by name-calling, boasting, and so on). Girls fulfil the role of 'outsiders'. No matter how small or weak a boy is, at least he is not a girl. So, from the boys' point of view, girls must be kept out of football, cricket, woodwork, etc.⁷

If a young woman, despite her experience of gender socialization, does get a rock instrument and express an interest in joining a band, she may find that no-one wants to play with her. This is what happened, for

example, to A1. (now a professional musician). She had wanted to play in a band since the age of 12 years:

"I couldn't think who I could play with. The boys at home...wouldn't play with me, because they wouldn't have a girl in their band. I was too young to approach older people about it. I had the electric guitar for about 2 or 3 years and didn't actually have anybody to play with".

All-women bands may be formed for a number of reasons, from feminist politics to an opportunist strategy for commercial success. But some women who started playing in their teens set up all-women bands simply because male bands would not accept them. For instance, E1. started playing with other women when she was 14 years old, but this was not for ideological reasons:

"I've played in a lot of all-women bands. It was always an all-women band at that time. And that came about because the men we knew who played in bands weren't interested in playing with us".

As Fisher and Holder (1981) point out, teenage boys tend to take music far more seriously than do girls. They might thus question the commitment of young women who ask to join their bands. This was, for example, the experience of K3:

"At that time, the guys we knew who could play didn't want to know at all about us. Females playing in a band, at that time, was totally unheard of. They thought, 'Oh, girls! They won't be serious and they won't carry on. And they wouldn't be any good, anyway'".

Unlike classical music, there are few institutional settings in which to learn to play rock. Thus the informal peer groups within which rock music-making occurs are of crucial important as learning environments. However, teenage women are typically excluded from these male music-making peer groups and are thus not privy to the insider information and tips which are routinely traded within them. Male musicians tend to be possessive about such technical information. For instance,

J6: "Quite often the musicians you come into contact with when you first start are men. I've found it's very hard to get them to show you things. They're very reluctant to part with their bits of information and knowledge. And they'll show you it all fast and say, 'That's how it goes'. And you say, 'Could you show me it a bit slower?' and they go, 'Oh!' As often as not they can't play it slower. They only know that little bit and that's how they do it. Then you try it a couple of times. And when you can't do it, they say, 'Oh, well. You can't do it yet'."

Sara Cohen's ethnographic study of Liverpool bands (1988) provides further evidence of the way in which bands function as vehicles for male bonding, and how male musicians actively exclude women from participation as band members. She also shows how wives and girlfriends are often kept away from rehearsals, recording sessions and even gigs. In Cohen's study, male musicians viewed women as a serious potential threat to the continuing existence of their bands. When tensions arose, it was often

someone's girlfriend who was blamed. Women were used as scapegoats for bands splitting up.

MUSICAL STYLES

Lastly, musical style operates as another sort of constraint. It could be argued that women are least likely to get involved in the kind of music which has been described as 'cock rock', for this type of heavy rock embodies the apotheosis of 'masculinist' values.⁸ Certainly in my own research I have come across very few women musicians within this musical genre. Frith and McRobbie argue that "cock rockers' musical skills become synonymous with their sexual skills". (1978. p.6) This equation cannot work for women. Nor can the guitar, played by a woman, be a phallic symbol. By contrast there have been a lot of women playing within the, lighter, 'pop' category of music.

As a new musical style becomes fashionable it can affect the number of women musicians. For example, in the early '60s there were, in America, a large number of all-female singing groups. The 'British Invasion' of beat music signalled the demise of these groups. It is hard to think of any female beat groups, either in the U.K. or in America.⁹ This female absence is all the more surprising in that many of these beat groups, and most notably the Beatles themselves,

performed quite a lot of covers of American all-girl singing groups. Why were young women not performing this eminently suitable material in the new beat group format? The answer, I believe, is simple: female singing groups did not have instruments. They could rehearse their harmonies at home and in the school playground. Beat music, conversely, made guitars, bass and drumkit essential. You needed money to purchase these instruments and a car or van to transport them around. I have argued that young women have less access to these material resources than do young men. Beat groups required proper rehearsal space, which not only had to be paid for but also necessitated going out at night. Parental protection was, thus, an additional explanatory factor. Lastly, electric guitars were new. Given the gendered nature of technology, it would have been very surprising if many women had jumped straight in and started using them. Thus the development and application of a new form of technology led, both directly and indirectly, to the exclusion of women from groups.

Notes

1. See Dahl (1984) for a full discussion of this. It is interesting that such a sexual classification of instruments is widespread in the world and normatively enforced. In some tribes the consequences of breaking musical taboos can be serious. Yet it is important to note that such schema are not universal. For example,

stringed instruments have been traditionally seen as 'female' in our society, but in jazz, "wherever a stringed instrument has played a more percussive role, it seems to lose its passive connotation and become an acceptable vehicle for male players". (Dahl p.37)

2. Girls are denied access to rock instruments: There is an important exception to this. In the North of England there is a tradition of young women playing in brass bands. A number of women have come into rock music through this route, for example, the well-known trombonist Annie Whitehead.

3. See Ann Oakley. (1974.)

4. This is what makes 'hen nights' so special as a rare ritual reversal of the norm. See Diana Leonard. (1980).

5. Feminist research is beginning to show how men contain and control women's leisure. For example, Middleton's study of how men within a local community denied women access to sports facilities, whilst using their unpaid labour for making cricket teas and washing 'whites'. (Imray and Middleton, 1983)

6. Men are often unwilling to compete even with their girlfriends' mere fantasies. Fred and Judy Vermorel's book (1985) cites many instances of husbands issuing ultimatums on the lines of, "It's Barry Manilow or me!"

7. "...the acute self-consciousness of adolescent sexuality is disguised by a taken-for-granted camaraderie. At school, or with his peers, the individual's insecurity is hidden by becoming 'one of the lads'. In the collective context a boy will reaffirm the chauvinist stereotypes" (Tolson, 1977. p.33-34)

8. "By cock rock we mean music making in which performance is an explicit, crude and often aggressive expression of male sexuality...Cock rock performers are aggressive, dominating, boastful and constantly seeking to remind the audience of their prowess, their control". (Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie. 1978. p.5)

9. In America, Suzi Quatro comes to mind. She started out in a family group. And in the U.K. the Vernons, were a group of 15 year-olds who worked at Vernons' pools factory.

Chapter 5. THE IDEOLOGY OF TEEN FEMININITY.

It is not simply material factors which lead to women's absence from rock, for many young women have no desire whatsoever to play in a band. The reason why boys are drawn to rock bands, whilst women are not, can be explained in terms of gender ideology: rock bands are masculine.

Clearly women are just as musical as men and more girls than boys play the piano. But they do not play in rock bands. The piano, the flute, and the violin do not conflict with femininity; rock instruments do.

The ideology of sexual differences permeates our society. The last two decades have seen the documentation of gender socialization processes operating through language, children's toys, books, television, magazines, etc. In particular there is now a substantial body of research in the sociology of education which shows gender differentiation to be an important part of the 'hidden curriculum' of schools.¹

Why is rock seen as masculine? Firstly, rock is dominated by men. There are very few female role

models available. This sets up a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Secondly, it is believed that in order to play rock music/instruments certain physical and mental characteristics are required, such as aggression and physical strength. These traits are seen as 'male'. Thus women who play rock are considered to be putting their femininity at risk. Rock music is loud, amplified music. From earliest childhood noisiness and rowdiness are proscribed for girls. A certain degree of toleration may come into play before puberty, but such indulgence rarely escapes the onslaught of the 'femininity' project associated with adolescence. Parents, peers and magazines all decree that girls should be quiet and seemly in their behaviour, although the actual boundaries of what is allowed vary somewhat with social class background.

Thirdly, rock is associated with technology, which is itself strongly categorised as masculine. Boys get given technical toys; girls do not. Boys' informal learning, in the home and amongst their peers, breeds a familiarity with, and confidence in, all things mechanical, technical and scientific. Research in the particular field of gender and science education indicates that girls fear technical equipment, whereas boys do not.² Boys dominate the experiments whilst girls fall into the wait-and-watch role. The image of

viewed as a cynically manufactured phenomenon to sell records. Furthermore, in its elevation of the male pop star as an object for female adoration, it reproduces the structured emotional dependence of women on men. On the other hand, girls have used it to negotiate their own cultural space. McRobbie found that working class girls rejected official school ideology and replaced it with an anti-school culture of exaggerated femininity: obstructive obsession with boys and appearance, flaunting their sexuality, etc.

This certainly resonates with my experience as a sixth former in 1963. When we covered the walls of our room with Beatles pictures it was to make it truly our territory. It was the first time we had ever had a collective space of our own. The pictures outraged our headmistress, who told us we were allowing ourselves to be naively exploited by sinister commercial interests. We did not feel exploited. To us it felt like freedom, and her ultimate defeat marked the distance we had travelled down the path towards autonomy.

McRobbie conceptualised the culture of the working class girls she studied as partly determined by their social structural position: both the material restrictions of class and sexual oppression. They were living at home, dependent on, and constrained by, their parents. Their present was parochial and their

future prospects restricted. The culture of romance and the boyfriend was an exciting escape from drab reality. However, it was also the means by which they were ultimately trapped: it was at the same time a 'solution' and a prison. Like Willis's 'lads' (1977), the girls created a culture which then acted upon them as a powerful form of social control. Their preoccupation with romance limited the time available for study and, thereby, their educational achievement. Their desire to get a 'steady' in their early teens meant that they only had a brief period before being engulfed by the duties of wife and mother. Having limited occupational choice, marriage was seen as an economic necessity, the only way to gain independence from the family. It was also made inevitable by the local gossip networks which enforced a powerful double standard of sexual morality. In sum, marriage was the main goal for working class girls as it gave them adult status, legitimate sex, somewhere to live, economic security and a ready-made 'career'.

Working class girls invested a large proportion of time, money, thought, and energy into making themselves as attractive as possible to boys. McRobbie describes the 'bedroom culture' in which they would read 'teenybop' magazines, practise dancing, and learn how to negotiate a safe route through the minefield of teenage courtship rituals and double-binds.⁴ Although

each girl is in competition with the others (to get a man), a lot of this 'work' is shared. Much time is spent together, preparing to go out: deciding what clothes to wear, how to do their hair, etc. Girls arrange transport and devise protective strategies for the evening. A solitary girl is defined negatively, as a "wallflower", or else "loose". She is also a potential victim. If girls go out together they can protect each other from actual threats, and also preserve each other's reputation. They can affect a cool nonchalance on the dance floor, feigning aloofness from any cattle-market atmosphere.⁵ The female dyad also functions to enforce the norms of local working class sexual morality.

Female dyads are the best way for working class girls to attract future husbands. The dyad also foreshadows the narrow exclusiveness of the future marriage relationship. For the double standard continues after marriage.

Further evidence for this comes from research done by Celia Cowie and Sue Lees (1981), and Lees (1986). They found that the behaviour of working class girls' is policed by the vague and shifting nature of terms such as 'slag'. Any girl was at risk of being so labelled, either by appearance or behaviour. One way

to minimise such labelling is to be "in love". But marriage is the only really safe place.

Thus it is that the dual standard of sexual morality underpins both marriage and the ideology of love and romance. Young women's behaviour and freedom is restricted by this ideological factor just as much as by the material facts of sexual attack. Girls must be careful not to wear the "wrong" sort of clothes, be seen in the "wrong" places or with the "wrong" male, or even female, company. Being seen as a slag not only ruins one's marriage chances, it also rationalises being treated without respect on a line that runs from insults to rape and murder. Thus physical and social risks operate to drive women into attachments where it is expected that they will be protected.⁶

Girls' peer groups are less long-lasting than their male equivalents. As girls grow up their main concern becomes, increasingly, boyfriends. When a girl gets involved in a "serious" relationship she is likely to sever her relationships with her female friends, often at her boyfriend's insistence, and spend all her time with her boyfriend and his friends. This is the norm in working class communities, as research by both Lees (1986) and Griffiths (1985) makes clear.

Leonard's ethnographic study (1980) bears this out. She found that girls' peer groups dissolved rapidly when they left school. In contrast, the boys' neighbourhood peer groups actually grew stronger. Once a boy had a 'steady' he gave up "the chase" and had more time for fishing and football with his mates. Moreover, the whole courtship 'career' commenced earlier for girls than for boys: at age 12 to 14. They rejected their earlier hobbies. They devoted most of their time and energy to their single goal: marriage. Leonard discovered that almost all working class girls in her Swansea sample had begun their relationship with their future husband by the time they were 19.

Kitwood (1980) provides similar evidence. He found that working class girls are often married by 18. They are under great pressure to get a boyfriend; it is the only way in which they can gain any kind of status. The working class girl, says Kitwood, will make many sacrifices to get and maintain a relationship: put up with infidelity, boredom, etc. In contrast, the boys, under less pressure to get a girlfriend, engage in shared male hobbies. Boys are in a powerful position; they can pick and choose. Kitwood also says that girls have no existential projects. This is normative and it is difficult to deviate.

The market research study by Susie Fisher and Susan Holder (1981) also highlights the pressure towards

conformity which young women's peer groups exert. A girl cannot be a mod if her mates are not mods. The girls all dress the same so that they will avoid being picked out. Girls have to be as feminine as possible in order to confirm their shaky sexual identities. They learn to be deferential in order to please the boys. Thus the latter gain power. Teenage girls are expected to "quieten down", give up sports, be ladylike, etc. Fear of being "left on the shelf" drives the girls on. Girls think about boys all the time. In contrast, boys do not worry much about girls and it is considered "soft" to enthuse over them.

It would seem, then, that there has not been that much change since Pearl Jephcott's study (1942) which showed the way in which future marriage dominated the minds of adolescent girls.

With the proviso that all of the above material applies only to working class young women, I find it far more useful than subcultural theory for explaining women's absence from rock. Of course, both the ideology of romance and the ideology of 'slag' are simply that: ideology. They are normative and do not preclude deviation. Indeed, I shall be discussing the ways in which some young women manage to escape the imprisoning impact of these norms. Nevertheless, I would argue that these ideological processes do

represent as important a set of obstacles as do the material factors which I have already discussed.

Firstly, for a girl to get involved in a rock band she would probably have to be involved already in a group of girls who decide to do this together. This is unlikely as working class girls appear to spend their brief "flowering period" in exclusive dyadic relationships which are preoccupied with the courtship game. A girl attempting such a project alone would be rejected by her peers.

Secondly, girls are under a lot of pressure to get a boyfriend, and this means they have little time for anything else. At adolescence previous hobbies and activities are suddenly dropped. Some are seen as childish, others as unfeminine. Characteristically, girls give up sport at this time, whilst boys get more involved in it. Some activities are perceived as a threat to her marriage chances. If a girl had learnt to play in childhood she would be likely, then, to cease playing at this time and, instead, devote all her spare time to activities like dancing which allow the possibility of meeting boys.

As I shall show later, those young women who do join bands find that they have to allow music-making to become their number one priority. Most girls are totally preoccupied with boyfriends and romance. This

is their (sole) hobby, and preparation for the most important female career: marriage and motherhood.

Thirdly, when a working class boy gets a girlfriend she is expected to traipse around after him, which leaves him free to continue his playing but restricts her autonomy considerably. Thus it is that there is often a special table, at gigs, for the musicians' girlfriends. The boy may also wish his girlfriend to service his domestic needs: mend his trousers, etc. He may feel that she needs no other interests. Furthermore, the "steady" girlfriend is perceived as "respectable" and must only be taken to "decent" places. This would cut out many gigs.

Fourthly, girls are expected to "settle down" at an earlier age than boys. They "go steady" and marry at a younger age than boys, which means that if a young woman does get involved in a band she is openly renouncing her marriage chances as far as the local working class community is concerned. Yet these mid-teenage years are precisely the period when boys embark on their rock careers.

Fifthly, some of the artefacts seen as essential for achieving femininity pose an obstacle to playing rock instruments. For example, at music workshops girls have expressed dismay when told that the first step to playing guitar is to cut their fingernails.

Long, carefully painted nails might be a girl's proud possession but they make electric guitar playing very difficult.⁷ Also, you cannot maintain a neat and tidy appearance when you are humping equipment about. You get filthy. You have to wear tough clothes and shoes for this work (until you get famous and roadies do it for you). It is hard, tiring manual labour, which builds up stamina and muscles. All of this clashes with the norms of femininity, which dictate that a girl should hang around and wait for a man to do it for her. In a mixed band the boys might do it all, but in an all-women band you do it. Feminine characteristics are a positive hindrance:

T: "You find you have to keep up your feminine 'girly' thing and that doesn't particularly go with being in a hard, sloggy job, which is what music's all about".

It is difficult to stay feminine in these circumstances precisely because femininity is an artifice. It is assumed that women do not sweat, that their noses do not go red and shiny, and that their hair stays in place.⁸

Involvement in a rock band can only enhance a boy's status, whilst it jeopardizes a girl's femininity. As Kitwood found, boys want "nice" girls, not loud, brassy ones. The dual standard is relevant here. A girl hanging around with a group of boys, unless she is "going steady" with one of them, is courting the

label 'slag' and this is probably particularly true of boys in a rock band, given rock's media reputation.⁹ Unless her boyfriend was part of the rock world too, it would not be tolerated. Thus women playing in bands are most likely to be musicians' girlfriends, which means that if their relationship ends they may feel compelled to leave the band.

By getting involved with the rock music world, working class girls cut themselves off from potential boyfriends outside that world. If a young woman is already engaged or married and wishes to join a band, her husband or fiance would be likely to object, for her "place" is at home. Neighbours and kin also enforce this norm. Lees (1986) found that girls could lose their reputation simply by looking "weird". One can see how being in a band places a girl beyond the bounds of local "normality". Likewise, a young woman can be labelled a slag just for going to a rock venue alone, and this restricts a girl's chances of meeting a group of musicians to play with in the first place.

MIDDLE CLASS GIRLS

The studies I have been considering so far have all been about working class girls. It is important to consider class as a mediation between women and the

ideology of femininity, and as there has been very little good empirical work published on middle class girls growing up and how they negotiate gender ideology, in what follows I am going to use some autobiographical material.

The first point to make is that the moral imperatives of the 'dual standard' exert a stronger grip on working class than middle class girls, because the former are less mobile and their actions more visible to the local community. Although the double standard runs right through society, including higher education establishments, the female student can lead a quite separate life at home and at university. If a working class girl loses her 'reputation' she has lost her one chance. Within the narrow confines of the neighbourhood there are few alternatives to marriage, and she may no longer be marriageable. Middle class girls know that they are going to move out of the locality (to college, at marriage or through their job), and therefore their local reputation does not matter that much. There is less holding a young woman back from taking chances. Playing in a rock band might be seen as one of those chances.

It is also true that the possession of a car creates more freedom sexually (one reason for the difference between American and British youth cultures). Middle class girls with wheels may have

casual encounters well outside of their home area and no-one need be the wiser. Middle class people tend to have more 'widely dispersed networks', anyway.

However, middle class young women do encounter the commercial culture of femininity. It is common female knowledge, and the list of activities in which women are told to engage is endless. Hands must be softened, fingernails manicured, eyebrows plucked, hair conditioned, permed, bleached...There are numerous procedures for the face alone: scrubbing, cleansing, moisturising, etc. There are pages and pages on the application of make-up. This is undoubtedly a lot of hard work but, we are told, it should also be fun.

Obviously, not everyone does all of these things every day, but these are the standards established by women's magazines, and it is a rare woman who is not influenced by these norms at some period of her life.

In my mid-teens I slept in hair-rollers every night. By 20 I used to start getting ready to go out on a Saturday night sometime in the mid-afternoon. There was also an element of ritual involved. It made the disco a significant 'moment'. Getting ready was part of the anticipation of a good time. Success meant "meeting someone", and if the evening was not a success, despite the charmed precautions, then one could always blame it on one's brand of mascara.

Middle class, like working class girls, become obsessed with romance. Concentration is narrowed to the love object, jeopardizing exams and undermining leisure projects. Girls are more prone to this state of mind than boys, because they are expected to indulge in it. As Greer (1970) says, romance is portrayed as the one great female adventure. It is supposed to bring total fulfilment. If girls spend incomparably more time than boys in this condition, then no wonder they have little time to become rock musicians. Moreover, girls are encouraged to be self-sacrificing. Hobbies and friends may be offered up on the altar of "the relationship". Nowhere is this more apparent than in girls' magazines, which focus entirely on romance.

"These stories cancel out completely the possibility of any relationship other than the romantic one between boy and girl. They make it impossible for any girl to talk or think about a boy in terms other than those of romance". (McRobbie. 1978b.)¹⁰

Everything a girl does is seen as instrumental to getting a boyfriend, getting engaged, and getting married. One might argue that this is not real life. But these magazines set up normative patterns which do have a lot of influence on the actual behaviour of girls. The sales are massive. Most girls will have read them at some time in their adolescence.

I certainly viewed parties, dances, and the youth club in mainly instrumental terms during my teenage years. My pursuit of a boyfriend was obsessional and undermined my main leisure project, swimming. I actually disliked youth clubs but felt I had to go to them. I was in tears most Sunday evenings when I had failed (once again) to summon up the requisite courage to go to the local club. I spent a lot of time lost in introspection and writing in my diary. What was wrong with me that I didn't have a boyfriend? I felt I was a failure. Being good at swimming and coming top in physics didn't seem to matter any more. What was the point in sleeping in prickly rollers every night when my hair only got wet in the swimming baths the following morning and all my curls fell out? No, the curls came first. I tried to make my mouth fuller by contorting my features. I tried to look shorter by slouching. I practised "looks" in front of the mirror. I spent hours mooning over boys I had never even spoken to. I would meet someone at a dance and immediately fall headlong into the delicious anguish of unrequited love. I would fritter away hours when I should have been doing my schoolwork, reading and writing love poems, listening to love songs. My school work suffered: I failed half my 'O' levels. I only managed to reverse this process when I finally acquired a steady boyfriend in the sixth form.

This adolescent crisis seems to affect women in all social classes. Sue Sharpe (1976) found it to be one of the factors which help to explain the marked fall-off in academic performance among girls during the third year onwards in secondary schools. Lack of academic achievement, in its turn, encourages young women to put their energies into the culture of femininity instead. On the other hand, girls who are quite successful academically may suddenly feel that it is no longer enough. There is a new arena in which competition is more important. Having a boyfriend is both an end in itself and, perhaps more importantly, a status symbol. Girls conform to peer group norms out of a need for approval, acceptance and belonging. Autobiographies of middle class women bear witness to the pain of female adolescence. For instance,

"there was that terrible agonizing bit between fourteen and sixteen. Well I didn't really have a boyfriend like some of the other girls did, and I really wanted that..." (Pat Garland in McCrindle and Rowbotham. 1977. p.271)

"For women-to-be in those days, as in most others, being without a boyfriend signified a certain physical and moral unattractiveness, whereas the state of being without a girlfriend has no such implications for men-to-be". (Oakley.1984.p.22)

This theme also came out in my interviews, for example, this upper middle class woman:

S3: "I think puberty is really traumatic, especially reading this diary from when I was 13. I can remember how low my self-confidence was then...That was the year I started menstruating.

But things started happening before that and it was to do with girlfriends and boyfriends, having boys for social status...I think it was sexuality and the social implications of that. I remember thinking, 'I can't stand all of this!' If someone had said, 'Don't worry, you don't have to have a boyfriend. It doesn't matter. You don't need that status', it would have made such a difference".

Whilst all children are candidates for 'fear of failure' it has been argued that girls in mixed schools, paradoxically, are also afraid of success. They find themselves in a contradictory situation. Sue Sharpe's Ealing schoolgirls were of a majority opinion that boys dislike girls who surpass them in their schoolwork. Thus, if a girl wishes to be attractive to boys she should hide her academic abilities and camouflage her intelligence. For example,

"By adolescence I was interested in being approved of to the same extent as I had been in primary school, But...It wasn't my parents anymore to whom I went for the presents and the pat on the back. It was the males around me. Sometimes male students, sometimes male teachers. What did get me approval was being vague and dumb, letting them help me with my work, seeking their guidance". (Pippa Brewster in Spender and Sarah. 1980. p.11)

My interviews furnished similar evidence, such as this comment,

B3: "I used to be very good at school. I used to do all my work and be top of the class in everything. Then, when I reached adolescence - it's weird - I just gave it all up. I stopped working. I'm sure it happens to girls more than boys. You're not supposed to be brainy as a girl or you're not attractive. I had a lot of trouble getting boyfriends. So I'm sure it had that effect. (So) I started going out, wearing make-up, having a good time".

In this way young women learn to sell themselves short. They are being prepared for marriage; for accepting that whatever career they choose to do it will come second to their role as wife and mother. As Frith (1983) has said, marriage is still the feminine career and other options (including becoming a rock musician) only come to be seen as possibilities when women reject marriage as a full time career. On the whole it is easier for middle class women, especially those who go on to higher education, to make that rejection. McRobbie (1978) found in her research that middle class girls had wider horizons despite the "common interest in femininity":

"Boys may well dominate their consciousness at the moment, but there are also possibilities for a career other than just marriage". (p.101.)

For many middle class (and some working class) young women, higher education provides an escape route from the ideology of femininity. Even in secondary school some girls avoid the competitive pressure of peer group ideology by becoming 'blue-stockings'. For example, Alison Fell recalls her early teenage self:

"In 1957 she's thirteen...and figures are bursting out everywhere, particularly in the lower streams, or so it seems: it's as if the girls in the A class are saving themselves for better things. In the playground it's nothing but waspie belts and transparent blouses, a wiggle when you walk and a wiggle when you talk, really vulgar, the lot of them...Aspiring to femininity feels like imagining you could climb Mount Everest - all these film stars so impossibly hourglass...Femininity is a

vocation in itself, and it looks to her as if it would take a lifetime; surely Art would be easier". (Liz Heron. 1985. p.18-19)

However, many middle class parents expect their daughters to put marriage first, whether they go on to University or not. As Ann Oakley points out, the inherent role conflict is rarely recognised:

"My school and my parents had both made it plain that girls should get married. If they could fit in a career as well, that was fine. Nobody pointed out to us that in this situation there was a certain conflict to be resolved. We had to find that out for ourselves".

This is echoed by Harriett Gilbert, recalling her mother's attitude:

"While never doubting my right to whatever the best education might be...or my ability to profit from it, she would still ask, 'Who'll ever marry you?' as I lost my temper, shouted too much or behaved in some other 'hoydenish' way...Marriage and children were still, it was perfectly clear, the only safe goal". (Heron. 1985. p.54)

The way girls are socialised at home, at school, by peer groups, and by magazines, does make them more likely than boys to prioritise love and personal relationships over career considerations. And this seems to be true of all social classes.

One of the main themes of Ann Oakley's autobiography is the emotional dependency brought about in women by love:

"any attachment that is formed between myself and another becomes, for its duration, my ruling concern. I become inseparable from that person and

lose much of my capacity for independent voluntary action. I have given myself up to the other person, whether or not such self-sacrifice was asked for, and I am, indeed, nearly willing to give up everything". (Oakley 1984. p.55)

The centrality of love makes it difficult for girls to make long-term plans. In a sense, all career plans are provisional. In contrast, for a boy having a girlfriend is not the be-all-and-end-all of his life and marriage does not interrupt his career. For a man, paid work is the central plank of his life.

What I have been describing in this chapter is the set of ideological constraints which young women have to contend with as they grow up in our society. I have shown that these pressures affect women of all social classes, although in different ways; gender is mediated through social class. Middle class girls are not expected to find their husband by the age of 16. Their education is often more academic and less directed to femininity. They have other possibilities than wife and mother. Higher education provides them with a privileged space in which to explore a variety of activities whilst suspending thoughts of marriage or career for a few years. (Boarding school may very well function in the same sort of way.) They are influenced, like working class girls, by the culture of femininity, but it does not dominate their lives in

the same way. They are expected to have some sort of career, even if it is of limited duration.

I do not intend to suggest that women are simply passive slaves to this ideology. Culture is about how people make sense of the world and their situation within it. There are complex dialectical relationships between people, the social structure which they inhabit, and culture (including ideology). The culture of femininity is both inherited and created by young women in particular structural locations. The material circumstances in which particular groups of girls are situated affect their reading of femininity and the way in which they construct it in their everyday lives. This is precisely because culture in general, and ideology in particular, is a way of handling these circumstances. Ideology is a constraint and yet also a partial solution. A young woman is socialised by a particular set of parents, siblings, peer groups, etc. She reads particular magazines and learns in a particular school environment. Thus the daughters of manual workers, white collar workers, professionals, etc. will interpret femininity differently and develop various responses to it. For the working class girl, as I have discussed, restricted material circumstances in both the present and future push her towards an early marriage. Marriage is her only career. The

ideology of romance functions to transform into fun the work of finding her future spouse.

On the other hand, the teen culture of working class girls is not monolithic. Some variations have been sketched in, but female cultures have been long neglected and much more empirical work is required.

The culture of McRobbie's Mill Lane girls, although a form of resistance to school, was very much a culture of femininity. *Working class young men use music to express a particular form of resistance. Why, then, do their sisters not also use music in this way?* The answer is that female working class resistance takes the form of ultra-femininity and this is not conducive, as I have shown, to becoming a rock musician. On the other hand, in my own research, I have found some evidence of a working class subcultural form of resistance to femininity: the East End renees. Renee (short for Irene) means girl. It was a term the mods developed. Renees have short hair and wear masculine clothes: monkey boots and jean jackets.

K1: "You do things that girls don't usually do, like smoke roll-ups or ride a motorbike, that sort of thing. So I suppose anyone that does anything like that is slightly unfeminine".

But it is a working class culture; middle class feminists are not renees. Yet the word describes something broad.

K1: "I mean, even some punks and some skinheads could be renees - depending on their attitude to life...You've got to be quite socially aware of things around you. You see a girl, a working class girl like my sister, for instance. She ain't a renee. I mean, she goes to discos and wears sparkly dresses and things like that."

This form of resistance is compatible with rock music-making and I found quite a strong connection between this sort of culture and working class women in rock bands.

Young women who resist both the commercial pressures of femininity and those of their local peer groups are, in effect, rejecting the idea of early marriage and motherhood as the only possible career open to them, and refusing to accept romance as the sole adventure.

If working class girls do get involved in rock music they are more likely than middle class girls to treat it as a career. Rock offers the dream of money, travel and glamour which few other jobs can supply. Even if, in reality, they do not get much money, there is always the possibility that they might meet and marry a rock star. Middle class young women are more likely to pursue music merely as a hobby. They do not tend to see it as an acceptable way of making a

living. They have far more choices and a more open future. Sixth form studies, and then higher education, are seen as more important. Working class parents may be initially worried about rock's reputation but, once reassured, are likely to back their daughters all the way and even make considerable financial sacrifices. I found this to be the case with the working class musicians I interviewed. For example:

K3: "I was going to do 'A' levels and go on to do commercial art at college. And then, one day I just thought, 'I don't want to do this'. Equipment's very expensive and my parents couldn't afford to buy me any. So the only way I could afford to buy equipment was to get a job. And so I said to my mum and dad, 'Look, what do you reckon? I wanna leave school. I wanna go for the music thing'. And they said okay and that was it...My mum and dad kept us. We couldn't have done it without them. They bought a van and we hi-jacked it and ran it into the ground for them! So they helped us a lot".

In contrast, middle class parents, unless musicians themselves, are likely to see rock music as an unsuitable occupation for their daughters (and sons) and do all they can to dissuade them. And, as Kitwood's study showed, middle class parents have far more influence over their children's careers than do the working class.

Notes:

1. For example, Sharpe, 1976; Wolpe, 1977; Byrne, 1978; Stanworth, 1981; Clarricoates, 1978; Spender, 1982; Mahoney, 1985; Baran, 1987.

2. For example, Kelly, 1981; Stanworth, 1981; Deem, 1978; Spender, 1980 and 1982; Byrne, 1978; the Brighton Women and Science Group, 1980; Weiner, 1985; Mahoney, 1985.

3. Perhaps this is why it is males rather than females who have flocked towards the synthesiser, despite the fact that women are more likely to have had piano lessons and thus be familiar with the keyboard.

4. For example, in her article on Jackie magazine (1978b.), McRobbie describes the way in which girls are actually publicly encouraged to be devious. Make-up must be worn but, at the same time, must look 'natural.' So girls take ages putting it on, worrying about it, and then taking it off again.

5. Frith (1983) points out that it is still, surprisingly, the case today that in the U.K. young brides of all social classes are more likely to have met their husbands at a dance than by any other way.

6. Deidre Wilson's study of working class teenage girls in a northern town shows how both formal and informal agencies of social control operate to restrict girls' freedoms, limit their options, and channel them into an early marriage. (See in Smart, C. and Smart, B. 1978)

7. Dolly Parton has long fingernails but she seems to play in open tuning and thus restricts her playing technique to just one style. It is interesting, too, that Pete Green has grown extraordinarily long fingernails since his retirement from Fleetwood Mac. He appears to be using them as a psychological defence against ever taking up playing again.

8. Germaine Greer (1971) described femininity-as-deception the most pithily:

"In their clothes and mannerisms women caricature themselves, putting themselves across with silly names and deliberate flightiness, exaggerating their indecisiveness and helplessness...I'm sick of the masquerade. I refuse to be a female impersonator. I am a woman, not a castrate".

9. The term 'groupie' is used in the same sort of loose way in which slag is utilised. You can be called a groupie just for hanging around with musicians. But sex is always implied. Whereas, boys do not get called groupies.

10. If a girl and boy are engaged in some leisure pursuit together romance is the real reason for the

relationship. I found a pertinent example in Jackie Number 936 (December 12, 1981). A girl who plays guitar meets a boy who works in a record shop. He seems interested in her playing. But the story quickly turns into a romance as she feels "all weak and sappy inside" and is "too busy gazing into his eyes to take in what he was saying for a minute..." Moreover, there is a very unrealistic ending where he asks her to audition for his band. As far as we know he has never heard her play. We have never seen her actually playing her guitar. The work involved in getting a boyfriend is shown, but the work involved in learning to play an instrument is not. You would think that the only requirement for getting into a band was purchasing a guitar. It is clear, anyway, that joining a band is far less important to the heroine than getting the boy.

Chapter 6. FANS.

"Nik Kershaw has always rejected the teeny bop tag foisted on him by "serious" music journalists, scornful of his good looks. 'I get no satisfaction in seeing myself on some glossy poster', he says, 'But if it gets people to my music then it is a game worth playing.'" (Oxford Journal. 5th. February. 1987.)

This quotation from my local paper illustrates a crucial paradox: the 'male' music world is, in fact, dependent on female consumers, who, although often derided by musicians and rock journalists, are essential for a band's success. Consumer and producer, fan and star; these are socially created roles and there is a symbiotic relationship between them. Fans hold up the whole industry. Without their adulation where would the Beatles and Marc Bolan have got to? Without their initial young female following they could never have developed their, later, artistic/serious music.

The pop/rock world works in such a way as to constitute men as music-producers and women as music-consumers. In this chapter I am going to analyse fans as an extreme example of the latter role. Strictly

speaking, only a minority of the people who buy records are fans, for being a fan involves a certain degree of commitment and, although both young men and young women become fans, male commitment of this kind easily leads into active involvement in the music-making world (as musician, song-writer, sound engineer, roady, etc.), whereas female fans remain confined to consumption.¹

Stars are marketed so as to encourage girls to dote on them. Record companies strive to present stars as romantic and accessible. If someone is married it must be hidden and denied. If old, they must be presented as young. They must be vague about the type of girls they find attractive so as to allow all young women some hope. This is what drives sales, not only of records but of posters, T-shirts, and so on. These articles are a more lucrative source of profit than records.

In this promotion, record companies, stars, and magazines work hand in hand. Pictures and "exclusive" interviews with stars guarantee magazine sales, whilst performing a crucial publicity function on behalf of the record companies and thereby increasing record sales. The fans' obsessiveness is ultimately the very motor of both the record and teen magazine industry, and is fostered in a myriad ways. Because of this, it would not suit record companies or magazines for girls

to renounce their position of fan in order to play themselves.

This leads directly on to my main argument in this chapter: to be a fan is to a large extent incompatible with being a musician. The more fanatical the fan the more true this is. This, then, helps to explain women's absence from music-making. In order to understand this it is first necessary to look at what being a fan means to women.

WHY BE A FAN?

For this section I have analysed two main written sources on the fan phenomenon: Sheryl Garratt and Sue Steward (1984), and Fred and Judy Vermorel (1985). From these works I have drawn out the following implicit functions of being a fan:

1. Escape from Alienation.

Being a fan provides an escape from the routine and boredom of a daily life spent in alienating labour. For example,

"I think perhaps that my fantasies are a way of controlling my own life. Because I always feel people are trying to take control of my life all of the time...it's the feeling of helplessness..."
(F. and J. Vermorel, 1985, p.94)

2. Anti-Depressant.

Some fans' accounts of their sensations, behaviour and feelings are akin to descriptions of drug experience: the 'high' of the concert, and the depression, sense of loss, etc. afterwards reminiscent of drug-withdrawal. For example,

"I had butterflies in my stomach and...I was actually foaming at the mouth. But when I woke up next day I felt I wanted to die. They'd gone, you know, and I'd probably never see them again. So I spent about a week crying. I just couldn't stop crying. I couldn't eat". (Ibid. p.131)

3. Religion.

Fans often treat their stars as gods, and travel halfway around the world just to be near them. This woman actually emigrated to follow David Bowie:

"I adore him. I worship him. And I have come to know that he is my personal God". (Ibid. p.245)

Fetishism fits in here, too. Anything the 'god' touches becomes sacred and imbued with power.

"I collected their dog ends too. You see them smoking and after they've gone you go round with your plastic bag. I think I've got about six. All kept in a plastic bag which is in a tin so the smell doesn't get out..." (Ibid. p.145)

4. Fantasy as Sex Aid.

In the Vermorels' book, married female Barry Manilow fans describe how their fantasies about the star have improved their sex lives. For example,

"I'd been frigid to my husband...I hadn't

discovered this fantasizing helps so much then. Now I find it helps. A lot. When I make love to my husband I imagine it's Barry Manilow". (F. and J. Vermorel, 1985, p.15)

5. Desire for Fame and Status.

Fans identify with stars because they wish to be famous themselves. Fans try to touch and kiss stars in the hope that some of the stardust will rub off. Everything from autographs to actually meeting the star brings status in the eyes of others.

It is clear that 'groupies' are not seeking sexual satisfaction per se, but fame:

"I always used to like being seen with them in the bar of a gig. Or walking out at the end with them. Like I remember once in Manchester when I was getting a lift to the hotel with the band and all these girls were surrounding the band and going: 'Ooohh, oooh, oooh.' And I was sat there and felt so proud. You just sort of feel important somehow. Sort of the 'chosen one'". (Ibid. p.176)

6. Friendship.

Being a fan can be a way of making friends, a protection against loneliness. Fan clubs offer a way of making sociable links with other people. In the Vermorels book it is the Barry Manilow fans who say the most about friendship. There is a national network of Manilow fanclubs as well as loose informal gatherings. Fans have created a whole social world, as this quote illustrates:

"There's two kinds of Barry night. With civilized ones we hire a room in a pub and have a video on.

Most of us are sitting and chatting around tables, meeting up with friends we haven't seen for a while, exchanging news and gossip - just generally having a chat...It's just a nice warm, friendly feeling...On the other side are the Barry discos...". (Ibid. p.215)

At the latter gatherings the women play Manilow all night in a room covered with pin up pictures. These all-women discos allow the same kind of freedom from gender restrictions that occurs at feminist events:

"You can leap up and down, your hair can get in a mess, you can smudge your make-up - it doesn't matter...It's just pure fun". (Ibid. p.216)

7. Collective Power.

Being in a crowd of fans is one of the few occasions when girls feel powerful. Men get this kind of feeling from situations like football matches, union meetings, pubs, rugby clubs, etc. Sheryl Garratt brings this out clearly,

"One of my clearest memories from nine years ago is of a bus ride from my housing estate in Birmingham into the city centre. An atmosphere like a cup final coach, but with all of us on the same side and with one even more radical difference - there were no boys. At every stop, more and more girls got on, laughing, shouting, singing the songs we all knew off by heart. We compared the outfits and banners we had spent hours making, swapped jokes and stories, and talked happily to complete strangers because we all had an interest in common; we were about to see the Bay City Rollers". (Garratt and Steward, 1984. p.140)

8. Role Models.

Fans use stars as models. They copy their clothes, hairstyles, way of talking, etc. In the absence of

many female role models, young girl fans often identify with androgynous male stars instead.

"Androgyny is what they want: men they can dress like and identify with, as well as drool over. With so few women performers to use as models, perhaps girlish boys are the next best thing". (Ibid. p.144)

As Garratt points out, it is not the heavy metal bands who have girls screaming at them in their thousands, despite what their lyrics boast, for "there's no way you could imitate Whitesnake's David Coverdale". These bands appeal to other men, who form the majority of their audience.

Androgyny, femininity and even a hint of homosexuality enhances a male star's popularity with young women. For example, Frankie Goes to Hollywood appealed to teenyboppers. So too did Roxy Music, David Bowie, Adam Ant and Boy George. All of these performers have projected a degree of camp, regardless of whether they were actually homosexual or not.

In this context, I think it is interesting to note the importance of the Beatles to the women musicians I interviewed. The band, in their early days, fitted Garratt's description of the non-threatening, needing-to-be-mothered image. They were often described as "lovable mopheads"? As individuals, they were different enough from each other to give girls scope for reinforcing their identity, by favouring

Paul, say, instead of the others. Half of my interviewees mentioned the Beatles as being significant in some way. They were the band who were most mentioned when I asked my interviewees about their early influences and favourite groups. Significantly, this was true regardless of the age of the interviewee. The first record bought was typically a Beatles record. Also, many parents liked the band. Girls were more likely to be allowed to listen to Beatles records in the family living room than 'heavier' bands such as the Rolling Stones. Some women said that they had, as children, pretended to be the Beatles. In particular, the Beatles' music was melodic and lyrical. Beatles harmonies were ones that girls could easily copy.

Despite singing the hit songs, however, being a female fan does not lead to music-making (as it often does for boys) but, rather, to dressing up. This is particularly true regarding pre-pubescent girls. The Boy George lookalikes and Madonna 'wannabes' are having fun experimenting with images of femininity in a safe collective setting.

9. Security.

Fantasising about a star can provide a sense of safety which may be absent in the fan's real life. This kind of remark is fairly typical:

"I wish I could be in your arms and forget who I am and feel protected and secure with your love". (Ibid. p.27)

10. Rebellion.

Boys use rock music for rebellion. Girls can too, up to a point. A girl can express her autonomy and personality by allegiance to a particular star and, as McRobbie (1978a) has pointed out, young women can use pop music as a form of resistance at school. Yet pop music, mainly directed at females, is not characterised by rebellion, whilst rock, which often is, is a male discourse. Thus women's identification with archetypal rebellious rock bands can only go so far. In this autobiographical passage Sheila Rowbotham contrasts the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan with the Beatles and tries to explain her ambivalent attraction to the former:

"They kept on saying that's how it is, in brief, ugly, short and real, and the women who listened to them had better learn it...But even so their songs are really often very scared...I'm split in two in different parts of me. Their music attracts and threatens me. It is beautiful, but at my expense, and I am always external to the way they are thinking. It seemed as if Janis Joplin was fighting through to an answer. But she went through too much pain to get there safely".² (Rowbotham, 1973. p.22)

WHY DO WOMEN BECOME FANS?

So far, the functions I have been discussing could operate for both male and female fans. There are some

other important functions, however, which have a specific relevance for young women and it is to those that I now wish to turn.

11. Resolution of the Dual Standard of Morality.

The way in which female fans describe their sensations at a concert is very much like descriptions of being 'in love'. The pounding heart, inability to eat, etc. are the classic symptoms regularly revamped in girls' magazines and romantic fiction.

Germaine Greer (1970) has argued that these sensations are sexual but not perceived as such by the girls experiencing them, because girls are brought up to be cut off from their sexuality, taught that males monopolise sexual passion and have stronger sex drives. Furthermore, a girl cannot express her sexual feelings openly for fear of losing her public reputation. Female fans are often surprised and puzzled by their physical sensations:

"My feelings were so mixed up I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. And I just didn't understand why I was feeling that way for a person I'd never met who was just someone on a stage. I really didn't understand what was happening to my feelings...And I didn't know whether it was love or what I was feeling at the time...I was frightened of my own feelings..." (F. and J. Vermorel, 1985. p 206-207)

Conflict is built into the role of adolescent woman in our society. Sex is exploited to sell commodities, and women, via the media, are encouraged to become

sex-objects. Male sexuality is exaggerated in its power, and female sexuality is underplayed. The dual standard of sexual morality runs right through society, imposing different rules on men and women. Adolescent girls have strong sexual feelings but these are denied legitimate expression by both the law, the family, and local peer groups. Falling in love with a fantasy, an idealised 'true love', is a safe focus for all that pent-up sexual energy because there is very little chance of any real contact occurring; the girl cannot get pregnant or lose her reputation.³ Thus, in a way, the pop star can solve the problems of having a real boyfriend. Indeed, it is a preparation for a boyfriend relationship.

12. Romance/ Surrogate Boyfriend.

Girls become fans far more often than boys, because they are more generally concerned with love and romance. It is central to their lives. The whole pin-up/rock star phenomenon is fuelled by girls' preoccupation with romance.

Pop stars are presented to girls in very romantic terms, as fantasy boyfriends. There is much similarity between fantasising over a pop star and fantasising over a boy you would like to go out with. The fantasies are similar: romance, sex, marriage, and babies. Girls are brought up to expect a man to give

them security, to "save" them and "fulfil" them. Their fantasies about pop stars are along the same 'knight on a white charger' lines. So there is a straightforward continuity between the relationship girls are expected to have with boys generally and the relationship they are expected to have as fans. The fan relationship anticipates marriage; it reproduces the dependency of women.

If girls were not fantasising about pop stars they would be dreaming of film stars, as in the pre-war period, or about the desirable but unobtainable boy in the next street. Indeed, I have already argued that a major reason why girls do not become musicians is because they spend so much time being "in love". Pop star infatuation is but one specific case of this general phenomenon.⁴

THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING A FAN

Both Garratt and Fred and Judy Vermorel challenge existing notions of the fan as passive victim and assert the positive features of fanhood. Fans, say the Vermorels, show "courage, innovation and daring". Now, it is true that fans are not the totally unthinking, record-fodder which the media have sometimes made out but, for all their adventurousness, fans are consumers and not producers of the music. And, although one can

discern positive functions which being a fan can perform, there are also dysfunctional aspects for the women who choose this role. Relief from alienation is only temporary. The fantasy lover is, after all, only fantasy, and realism tends to surface at some stage or other. Fan letters often swing back and forth between the dizzy heights of unrealistic expectations and down-to-earth level-headedness. There is often ambivalence. But, then, this again is true of the boyfriend relationship, which the fan relationship anticipates. The star is unobtainable, but the objects of girls' sexual infatuations so often are. Unrequited love is often built up from the slightest knowledge of the love object, as is the case with romance discourse in general. Closer acquaintance would end the relationship. 'Starlust' shows that many fans are well aware of this, but choose to put it to the back of their minds. For example,

"...sometimes I got a bit desperate and I felt I really had to meet them...But then again, I never did take steps to meet them. I suppose I wanted to but also I didn't. It might spoil it if I did find them". (Ibid. p.198-199)

The fact that stars are unobtainable also leads to resentment, frustration, anger, hostility, and violence, all of which were present in some of the fans' letters and fantasies collected by the Vermorels. Fans seem to tread a narrow line between a naive hope that they will one day have a relationship

with their idol, and a recognition that they are merely one in a faceless million and will never have their feelings even recognised by the star, let alone returned. Fans' gifts never reach the stars and, far from being answered, their letters are cynically shredded by intermediaries, whose job it is to extract any money and then simply send the fans order forms for consumer goods.

Fans' frustration is often turned inwards into masochism. For example,

"I am really desperate to meet Nick Heyward. I have tried many times to get myself knocked over just wishing that I would be hurt bad enough to be put in a coma...I thought if I was hurt bad enough my mum would write to Nick and ask him to pull me through...Please help me before something really bad happens to me". (Ibid. p.29)

The higher the pedestal upon which the star is erected the less important the fan feels. Many of the fans in the Vermorels' book say that they would give up their life for their star. It is clear that these fans are extreme; most people who become fans stay at the pin-ups-on-the-wall stage. Yet being a fan does mean placing oneself on a lower plane and giving away power. The relationship between fan and star is premised on the existence of a huge gulf. Star and fan are complementary roles. The relationship rests on the difference; they are mutually exclusive.⁵

What follows from this is my first argument as to why girls being fans excludes them from becoming musicians themselves: the mentality involved in being a female fan is not conducive to music-making. It is, instead, a preparation for the boyfriend relationship and, eventually, marriage. Female fans typically daydream about going out with their heroes rather than about being stars themselves.

One thing I found striking in 'Starlust' was the number of times women mentioned fantasising about marrying their star. Female fantasies often end in a domestic setting: "the domestic romantic myth remains the centrepiece of feminine culture". (Greer, 1971. p.188) For example, a 14 year-old fan dreams:

"...the next thing I knew we were in bed. He's soft and he's gentle and he's sweet. And then he asks me to marry him. I only imagine him asking me to marry him and that's as far as I go. 'Cos when you're married there's nothing much more to think about. You've got there". (F. and J. Vermorel, 1985. p.153)

This 22 year-old goes further:

"We make love and decide to get engaged and then we get married. It's a nice wedding with a three-tier cake. And about two years later we decide to have a baby - well planned for and wanted. The baby is a little boy...Then we go in for another one and it's a little girl. So we're a complete family". (Ibid. p.140)

In contrast, the male fan's relationship to the male rock star is characterised by admiration (even adulation) and sex, but not romance and marriage.⁷

The male fan models himself on the star and seeks to emulate him. Thus male fans are much more likely to take up music-making and male musicians frequently start off as fans. Biographies of male rock musicians show that they usually start out with the explicit goal of wanting to be a rock star.

The evidence from my interviews is that women musicians, whether fans or not, do not usually grow up wishing to become rock stars. Only five of my interviewees said that they had ever had this aim. Most women did not even think of becoming a rock musician. The minority who did, dismissed the thought as impossible. For example,

B3: "I really wanted to (but) I never thought a woman could do it. So I forgot about it for years...I never actually decided, 'When I grow up I'm going to be in a rock band'. It's not something that I thought I would ever do. But I really liked the idea of it".

My second argument is that there is simply not enough time to be both a really devoted fan and a musician. Both roles are inordinately time-consuming. The fans in 'Starlust' are extreme because they do not seem to do anything else but be a fan. Most fans are not like that. However, it is useful to treat this extreme as an 'ideal type', for it furnishes clues as to what being a fan means in less extreme situations. Being a fan can take over your life. The closer a

woman is to that ideal type the less possible it is for her to become a musician.

Unlike most female fans, Sophie really wanted to be in a band herself:

"The best daydreams were when I had headphones on and was staring at the ceiling. They'd be singing away and I'd be there. I'd be playing something - not part of the audience, part of what they're doing. And everyone's thinking: Oh, lucky her". (F. and J. Vermorel, 1985. p.194)

It is clear, however, that she would never actually do it, precisely because she was so much of a fan. This is how she spent her days:

"I hardly went out. I was like a hermit. I was just playing Japan records all day, reading about them and things like that...I was 18 then. I'd had a job after I left school but it didn't appeal to me. So I just packed my job in. It was all Japan. Japan was my life for a few years...You couldn't see a bit of my walls for pictures of Japan and I just used to lay there for hours looking at them...And I'd play their records over and over again...Sometimes I used to lie there all day...I used to get muddled up with day-dreaming and reality". (Ibid. p.194)

The more resources that are directed into being a fan the less are available for music-making. With this kind of fanaticism there is no way anybody would have time to learn an instrument, practise, write songs or be in a band:

"I've missed nights of sleep trying to draw a map of the area you live in. I've written 165 or more letters to people asking to meet you as well as 32 poems. I've made hundreds of phone calls trying to get people to tell me your address or phone number. So please, don't you think I'm a true fan of yours

and that I deserve an answer to the 42 foot letter I wrote you?" (Ibid. p.150)

Being a fan and becoming a musician are both obsessional. Each becomes the most important thing in a person's life, dominating their thoughts and swallowing up all their spare time. You can read this in the biographies of male musicians. For example, Jimi Hendrix played his guitar constantly and was practically inseparable from the instrument. Bob Dylan played the guitar all the time from the age of about 10. He was utterly single-minded in his pursuit of musical success. According to Paul McCartney's brother, Michael, Paul's preoccupation with the guitar was sparked off by his mother's death:

"It became an obsession. It took over his whole life. You lose a mother - and you find a guitar?" (Hunter Davies. 1969. p.44)

Thirdly, both fan and musician roles require considerable financial investment. The amount of money the fans in 'Starlust' spent on their obsession is astonishing. For example,

"God, it must have cost us thousands, really thousands...When they've done a tour we've been to all the dates. And paying the fare and staying at hotels...We went to three countries with one band. We went to Italy, Holland and Paris". (F. and J. Vermorel, 1985. p.171)

There is simply not enough money, time and energy to be both a fan and a musician. So women who play music are not likely to be, or have been, obsessive

fans, and this is precisely what the evidence from my research confirms.

MY INTERVIEWEES

None of the women musicians I interviewed were fans like the ones in 'Starlust'. A few had followed bands and put pictures up on their walls, but none had been obsessive.

Only one woman was anything like a typical fan. C. had fantasised about being married to Jimi Hendrix, but she also wanted to be a rock musician herself. A highly capable classical musician, she lacked the confidence to play rock. Instead, she idolised the men who did. She could have been in a band at any time from when she was 15, but she was overawed and intimidated by the male musicians around her and, instead of playing with them, became their fan:

"It was me in a man's world, really. I just used to sit there and never say anything".

But C. was quite exceptional in my sample.

A minority of my interviewees were fans, but, more like male fans, they did not throw all their energies into worshipping pop idols. Rather, their liking for the music spurred them on to play themselves. Instead of staring at pin ups for hours on end, they went out and obtained instruments. Instead of fantasising about

marriage, they planned to become musicians. Thus this group were not at all typical of female fans. For example, T. briefly dreamed about marrying Paul Simon. But she also wanted to be Paul Simon - and John Lennon. She decided she wanted to play herself at only 8 years of age, and by 11 had got an acoustic guitar and was writing lyrics. Another example is M. and B5. They loved the Beatles but they were never screaming Beatles fans. Instead, they acquired instruments and learnt to play Beatles numbers themselves. Indeed, they never even bought records; they learnt to play from sheet music.

Young teenage boys often get together as groups of friends and attempt to emulate their idols. From such shared activity bands and individual male musical careers emerge. My research suggests that this is rare amongst females. Women do not usually form bands as a hobby with their friends. Amongst that small minority who do become music-makers, the pattern seems to be one of individualistic isolation rather than of musical skills developed within a collective setting. I think the reason for this is probably simply the lack of like-minded girls to play with. As discussed in the last chapter, female teenage peer group culture tends to enforce conformity to femininity. Most of the young women in my study who rebelled did so individually and often felt isolated.

In my research sample there are just two clear exceptions to this, both of them working class, where a group of girls get together to play music in the standard way that boys do. This is one of them:

K3: "Me and E1. lived down the same road and we were really good friends and were really into music. I was a big heavy rock fan - all of us were. Queuing up all night on the doorstep to see Led Zeppelin at Earls Court...We were totally into music...And then Dad came home from a Spanish holiday with an old acoustic guitar and I just started plonking on that. I was 15. One day I went along to E1.'s and I remember knocking on the door and saying, 'Right, let's form a band. I'm gonna be the guitarist. You're gonna play bass'. She just said, 'Oh, O.K. Right, let's do it'".

It simply did not occur to them that girls did not usually form bands:

"I didn't see any reason why not. We just did it. It just seemed natural to do".

The band which they set up originally included a number of women who were later to become well-known musicians.

But by far the majority of my interviewees were not fans at all in their teenage years. This was mainly because they were absorbed in other activities: drama, swimming, art, classical music, etc. Quite a few did not even like pop music. Some spent most of their time studying, and claim they never experienced an adolescence at all. For example,

V2: "I wasn't besotted with pop stars like my friends were. I remember one of my friends queuing for 10 hours to get a ticket to see the Osmonds,

which I thought was really stupid, and I wouldn't have dreamed of doing anything like that. I was never a fan in the way that you were a teenybop fan. I wasn't that interested...I was far more serious than that".

V2. was from a working class background, but she was upwardly mobile. She spent her time studying (in order to get to university), and playing classical music.

H3. was also serious and not interested in pop music until university. There seems to be a clash in terms of self-image between being academic and being a pop fan:

H3: "I was a 'good girl' and I wasn't interested in pop music at all...As I perceived it then it would have been contradictory to being 'good', and I was extremely 'good'; I was Head Girl...I think that pop music is probably part of a rebellious adolescence and, as I didn't have one, I missed out on it".

Liking pop was also seen as integrally tied up with being a typical teenage girl:

A2: "You see, rock music was all kind of connected with boyfriends and I had great difficulty in that world and becoming a woman and all that".

On the whole, the women musicians I interviewed were not very interested in popular music when they were at school; that interest came later. For quite a few, their rejection of pop music seems to have been connected to an overall rejection of femininity.

CONCLUSION

In general, then, girls become fans and not musicians. The way in which the role of female fan is constructed is incompatible with becoming a musician and band member. The latter involves fulfilling your own ambitions, following your own path, and developing your own talents. Traditional femininity prescribes waiting around for someone else to fulfil your fantasies, hitching a lift on someone else's journey, and gaining reflected glory from someone else's talents - whether they be husband or rock star. Where women do become musicians there is usually some important factor at work, such as coming from a musical family. I shall be examining these influential factors in Chapter 8. Before that, however, I think it is necessary to look at the rock industry and women's place within it.

Notes

1. There are some young women who are fans less of the person and more of the art itself. They do not tend to become musicians, however, so much as writers and editors of fanzines. Their creativity is expressed in a less 'male' field than rock music. They write poetry and, sometimes, lyrics. This is a middle class phenomenon, but although I interviewed quite a number of middle class women, there were none like this in my sample. This is not surprising, for the women I interviewed were musicians rather than fans.

2. Ellen Willis makes the same point in 'Beginning to See the Light'. 1981.

3. This also appears to be true for older women. For example, Barry Manilow fans are able to experience all the thrilling sensations of an extra-marital affair without actually committing adultery. Husbands often feel threatened by this behaviour, but for most it would not be considered as important as an actual affair.

4. The Vermorels' book shows that all women are eligible for this role. Indeed, the older married Barry Manilow fans are just as fanatical as any teenage girl. Barry Manilow is their fantasy lover in a one-sided affair. The function, as for the teenager, is to provide romance in their lives. Germaine Greer described their state of mind in 'The Female Eunuch'. (1971):

"Romance had been the one adventure open to her and now it is over. Marriage is the end of the story. Women's magazines exhort her not to let the romance die out of her marriage...Now she finds that marriage is a hard job. Her romanticism becomes... escapism...Romance is now her private dream...the supreme adventure is still falling in love..." (p.185-187)

This comes out clearly in 'Starlust'. For example, a fan speaks of her marriage thus:

"...for me the magic (if it ever existed - because I can't even remember any now) died a long time ago...For years the real me has been fighting to get out, and now through Barry it has". (F. and J. Vermorel, 1985. p.190)

5. However, a few fans, female as well as male, have crossed the gap between ardent fan and musician. This was particularly true during the punk period, for example Siouxsie Sue. Punk bands specifically challenged the star-fan gulf.

Chapter 7. THE ROCK INDUSTRY.

Most popular musicians share the same dream of fame and fortune. Yet, of all the many thousands of bands in the U.K, only a small proportion become well-known outside their local neighbourhood, few make a record and only a tiny fraction of those reach the charts.

In order to become successful (in the conventional sense), the musician has to gain access to a series of social institutions: clubs, record companies, the music press, radio stations, etc. Such access is gained via a series of people in influential positions, who Hirsch (1970) has termed "gatekeepers": promoters, agents, journalists, D.J.s, etc.¹ The majority of these role incumbents are male. Thus the careers of female musicians are dependent on the decisions of a series of men in key positions, who filter out the vast majority of bands (whether male or female) as unworthy of attention.

In this chapter I wish, firstly, to explore the extent to which the 'maleness' of the rock world affects women musicians' opportunities and the general shape of their careers. Secondly, I shall look at the

(very restricted) places which women occupy within this world.

MALE GATEKEEPERS

1. Promoters and Agents.

When bands start out they find it relatively easy to get gigs locally. At a later stage, however, they find that they need an agent: to save time, and in order to gain access to prestigious venues. The majority of agents and promoters are male. They may be prejudiced against women's bands or, perhaps, against those all-women bands who refuse to present themselves as sex objects. In the pre-war period, direct and open discrimination against women was quite common, as Dahl (1984) documents in her book on jazzwomen.² Joan Dew (1977) makes the same point about country and western music. Today sexist ideology generally works in more subtle ways. My interviews uncovered a number of instances. For example, M. and B5. were asked to perform in bikinis, with the implication that they might have to play topless:

B5: "It was worth a fortune! And we wouldn't do it. We'd come to play music, not show our tits".

In the highly competitive process of gaining access to venues, gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes can seriously harm a band's career.

2. Media Men.

D.J.s, argues Frith (1983), are the most significant of rock's gatekeepers. Airplay is the most effective form of record promotion, but it is not under the control of record companies.³ Most D.J.s are male. For a long time Anne Nightingale was the only female D.J. on Radio One. She was faced with the sort of ridicule and hostility which beset women interlopers in other all-male settings. (See Steward and Garratt. 1984). Today, women D.J.s on national radio are still the exception. Furthermore, it would seem that they are expected to forego motherhood: in the spring of 1988 Janice Long, returning from maternity leave, found that she had lost her weekly show on B.B.C. radio and been demoted.

Music journalists are another set of gatekeepers. Frith (1983) argues that,

"Music papers...are important even for those people who don't buy them - their readers act as opinion leaders, the rock interpreters, the ideological gatekeepers for everyone else". (p.163)

Gig and record reviews are especially significant for unestablished acts. Regardless of whether the review is favourable or not, such publicity can only help a band. Moreover, reviews influence record companies:

"...the papers are also part of the rock filtering process: they give record companies an early indication of public taste, useful advice on which releases to push". (Frith. 1983. p.174).

Female journalists are in a small minority. Here, again, is another male world where women entrants have been made to feel unwanted. Steward and Garratt's book (1984) includes many quotations from women music journalists which underscore this point. For example, Vivien Goldman, comments on her experience at Sounds:

"You had to make sure that your work was really impeccable - you really do have to do it twice as well as a guy to get the same place, and even then, you are resented". (Steward and Garratt, 1984. pp.90)

Victoria Balfour's book (1986) contains similar statements from American writers.

As most journalists are male, a masculine view tends to predominate in the music press. Women tend not to be presented as artists in the way that men are. They are not taken seriously as musicians. It is often taken for granted that women are just puppets, moulded by record companies. For example, several of the female musicians who Steward and Garratt interviewed said that they had never before been asked about playing their instruments. As I have already indicated (in Chapter 2.), women performers are often presented in sexual terms rather than as craftswomen, serious about their work. This comes across in both text and photographs.

There have been a surprising number of women rock photographers.⁴ This has been one of the few areas

within the rock world in which women have been able to carve out careers. But photographers have only a limited influence over what actually gets printed, for (male) picture editors select which shots the paper will use. Choices are influenced by ideas of sexual attractiveness; gender notions help to structure the framework within which such choices are made. In my personal experience, those who work on local newspapers tend to see women's bands simply in terms of 'glamour shots', and this is often completely out of keeping with a band's music and image.

The same thing can be said about television coverage. Most producers, directors and camera operators are men. When I was involved in making a television programme on women rock musicians⁵, the director had already scripted all the shots before seeing the bands perform. Cameras were on the lead singers. The other band members were hardly shown, let alone their instrumental technique. Only after vigorous objection from some of the musicians involved, was this pre-arranged shooting script dropped. Yet the whole point of the programme was to direct attention to women as instrumentalists rather than as front persons.

In videos, women often get presented as sex-objects, rather than as people doing things. The emphasis is on bodies and faces, and the pictures can

be highly fabricated. Techniques such as air-brushing are used to make the "perfect" shot; flawless and unreal. These processes are usually carried out by men, and it is men's ideas of perfection that influence the final result.

There are only a few established female artists who have managed to gain control over these presentation processes. Kate Bush, for example, has been interviewed mainly by the trade magazines, who discuss the more technical aspects of performance with her. But, on the whole, male artists get this kind of attention much more easily.

3. Managers.

The manager's role is basically to organise finances and get the best deals for the band. But, as Frith (1984) says, "Most managers are also involved in the creation of the "product" itself". (p.106-107) They influence the band's name, clothes, appearance and overall image; the publicity, the kind of venues played, etc. A manager may attempt to push the band in a certain direction, in terms of its music and audience. S/he may even try to exert influence over who is actually to stay in the band. There is plenty of scope here for sexual prejudice. For example:

J8: "He didn't like the idea of the two women in the band. He referred to us as a pair of backing singers and said that we shouldn't really be forward in the profile. He didn't think that that

would sell an 'image' band. He felt that women and men in the same band didn't go and it was against tradition; it should just stay as four male members".

Sometimes, with professional bands, the manager role is split into two. One person deals with all the financial tasks, and another takes care of the band in a more personal way: organising their time, encouraging them along, etc. Where such role division occurs, quite often a woman performs the latter, more 'motherly' role.⁶

But most managers are men. Before the end of the 1970s a female manager was a very rare thing. Punk opened the way into band management for some women, but they faced a lot of sexist prejudice. For example, Caroline Coon recollects:

"The Clash would have been much happier if I was male...whatever I did was sabotaged by the fact that I had tits". (Steward and Garratt, 1984. p.75.)

She also had to deal with incredulity from record company staff. Caroline and the other early female managers stood their ground, and there are more women doing this job today. But they still have to confront sexism.

Sometimes, a promoter tries to avoid paying the band. This is probably more likely to happen to a female manager, as she will be seen as a "pushover". For example,

J8: "They tried to pull one over on me and say, 'We're not gonna pay you because you didn't play long enough'. And I just said, 'I'm not leaving until I get paid the money'...I think they just test you to see how tough you are. It happens all the time".

A far more serious threat came from an agency company. J8. believed that some of the gigs she had set up, on the university circuit, were being cancelled due to pressure from an agency representing a rival male band. She made an accusation to one of the student unions concerned. As a result, the agency started making intimidating phone-calls to her flat.

"They said, 'This is Nick from --- agency and you know what we do to little girls in this industry. Lay off our patch!'"

Agents find it easier dealing with male managers, because most agents are male themselves and their working lives are interlinked. Men in the rock industry, whether agents or record company employees, find it difficult to take a woman manager seriously:

J8: "They laugh at you. People actually laugh in your face".

They also see women primarily as sex objects, as in this incident:

J8: "I went to the international music festival in Cannes. I think I was one of only two executive women. I encountered a man from a major company. He asked me out to dinner. I said I couldn't go. He said, 'Well, we'll go another time, but just let me know where you are staying'. And he rang up my hotel at one o'clock in the morning and told me what he was going to do to my body. This went on and on...I was absolutely furious. And I went up to

him and said, 'I am appalled at what you did and I think your behaviour sucks. I am here to do business and I am annoyed and frustrated that you see me as nothing more than an object'".

This man turned out to be the financial director of a record company with whom she was trying to negotiate a deal. On realising this she said,

"'That's the end of our deal. We don't have a deal'. And I know that cost me good business with a major record company".

4. A&R Men.

A key task within the record industry is deciding which performers should be offered record contracts and which records should be released. This is called A&R (artist and repertoire). Because women so rarely do it the usual phrase is "A&R man". This work is not seen as suitable for women, involving going out late at night to clubs, etc. Yet female fans go out to gigs, so this sort of rationalisation is spurious.

Only a small percentage of bands get signed by record companies. The A&R man is, first and foremost, a talent scout. He also decides which numbers the bands should record, whether as album or single tracks, and, of all the records put out by the company, which ones should be promoted. He is restricted by public taste, for the over-riding goal of the record company is to sell its records and thus maximise profits. But no-one knows for sure exactly

what the public will purchase. So, ultimately, the clutch of records which become available in the shops have been chosen for the consumer by A&R men. Thus, few roles could be more important for the musician's career than that of A&R.

The assumptions made about what the public wants to hear can easily reflect sexist ideology. If, for example, an A&R man has entrenched chauvinist attitudes then he would be reluctant to sign an all-women band to his company's label. That is, outright discrimination is a possibility. He also has to decide how much money and time to invest in any particular band he has signed. There is obviously much scope for gender discrimination. Similarly, as Frith (1983) has pointed out, A&R men have to differentiate their acts into potential earnings divisions: major stars, cult bands, etc. An all-women band might be more readily classed as of cult status. Women performers, in contrast to men, tend to be placed in a very limited number of categories, as I shall later discuss.

5. Backroom Boys: the Recording Studio.

Only a tiny part of the rock world is visible to the public. One of the most crucial parts of this hidden life is the mini-world of the recording studio.

There are only a handful of female producers and recording engineers in the whole of the U.K.⁷ There

are women in recording studios, but they do clerical work: selling studio time, etc. The absence of women in all the important technical roles has serious implications for the career of the female musician.

Frith (1983) describes the producer as,

"the crucial rock role...they act as the link, the mediator, between musicians as artists and their music as commercial product...it is the record producer who is responsible for getting the sound that is the essence of a record". (p.111)

It has been the introduction of 'multi-tracking', whereby individual instruments are 'laid down' one by one rather than simultaneously, which has widened the producer's role and made it incomparably more creative than it was in the past. Producers have begun to see themselves as artists. Indeed, some producers are more creative than the bands they work with, in the sense of originating the musical ideas. In this situation, bands are reduced to being merely vehicles for the expression of the producer's characteristic sound, and the latter is privileged over all other aspects (such as lyrics and melody).

With so much potential control over the final record, it can be seen how easily producers can come into conflict with bands. As nearly all producers are male, such conflict can, with women's bands, take on gender characteristics. There is plenty of room for gender stereotyping to enter into the innumerable

musical and technical choices which must be taken during the recording process.

Producers engage in various manipulative strategies in order to gain more control. They may belittle musicians' skills. This is particularly relevant to women musicians, who often lack confidence. A producer might wear band members down over a period of time by constantly asking them to re-do their parts. He might employ a strategy of divide and rule, whereby conflicting positions within a band are exploited, so that all aesthetic decisions are left to him. For example, Frith quotes a producer who says he uses "wrath" as a technique for the manipulation of musicians in the studio:

"He challenges musicians' egotism by harping on their technical insecurities until 'the group isn't thinking anymore' and trusts his promotion designs without argument". (Frith. 1983. p.111)

As recording became increasingly technically complex, from the late 1960s on, a process of role differentiation occurred within production. As the producer's role was enlarged, it became necessary for some of the more technical aspects of production to be hived off, and so the role of studio engineer developed. In turn, this role also widened in scope. Originally the engineer was just in charge of the purely technical task of operating the tape machine,

but he gradually became more involved in making aesthetic decisions.

The sound engineer, like the producer, has tremendous power within the creative process of making a record. He does not simply tape what the musicians create. How the final recording sounds depends very much on how the engineer 'hears' the piece. Each engineer stamps his own individual character onto the music. He does this by altering the levels of the various independent 'tracks', and by the judicious use of various 'effects', such as reverb, digital delay, etc. The engineer's decisions affect the overall sound in important ways, and can take away a large measure of control from the musicians themselves. A guitarist may spend a lot of time and trouble deliberately setting up a specific kind of sound, via the manipulation of a number of controls (such as volume and tone) on both her instrument, her amp, and effects pedals. Such a multiplicity of controls, and the complex ways in which they interact with each other, allows a wide variety of sounds to be available at the guitarist's fingertips. However, the engineer can over-ride all her decisions from within the control room. The guitarist may be unaware of this at the time, as the sound which she hears is different to that heard in the control room. For example, a 'warm'

tone on the studio floor can be made cold at the mixing desk, or vice versa.

The scope for sound manipulation has grown as technology has advanced.⁸ The development of synthesizers and programmable instruments has enabled people to create a wide range of instrumental sounds without having to spend years developing the traditional manual skills involved in playing instruments. One social effect of this change has been an intensification of the conflict between musicians and technicians. Pressure is exerted on musicians not to play at all, to allow the engineer to create the sounds and, in particular, to take sole charge of the final mix.⁹ Gender becomes an important aspect of such studio battles when all-female bands are engaged in struggle with male technicians.

Why do so few women work in the recording studio? Firstly, because of their socialization, young women do not often consider a career in sound technology. In contrast, boys' liking of pop music leads them to think in terms of entering on musical careers, both as musicians and as producers. This is clear in 'The Record Producers' by John Tobler and Stuart Grundy (1982). The main route into production is via engineering, and most girls do not even consider that as a career choice.

If at some stage a young woman does decide to try and get a job in a studio, she will be hampered by the fact that she does not possess the sort of everyday technical skills which most young men have. For example, she will probably never have used a soldering iron. This could go against her at interviews.¹⁰

Secondly, recording work does not combine easily with family life. Soundproofed and windowless, the studio is a mini-world, cut off from everyday life. Producers and engineers typically work very long hours. Many prefer periods of continuous recording, so that a project can be completed in one fell swoop. It is clear that *family life has to take second place*. For example, Mike Chapman says,

"I generally get trapped in there for fourteen or sixteen hours a day. That means no social life and no home life". (Tobler and Grundy, 1982)

For women the choice is stark: becoming a producer or having children.

Thirdly, if a young woman did, despite her early socialization, develop technical interests and want to become a record producer, she would face a wall of prejudice. Sheryl Garratt provides evidence:

"Obviously, I haven't found a studio willing to admit that they operate a men-only policy. Many, however, felt that having a woman around would cause problems at times...the implication being that some male musicians would spend so much time hassling a woman that expensive studio time would

be lost, or she just wouldn't be able to do her job". (Steward and Garratt, 1984. p.76)

Barbara Jeffries, a studio manager, told Garratt that a lot of studios do not even bother to answer letters of application if they are from women

Fourthly, if a woman does manage to overcome employer prejudice, and actually get employment in a studio, she will probably find the going tough. It is a male world, and women are viewed as intruders. They have to fight to establish their right to be there. To quote Barbara Jeffries,

"...there's more pressure on you to be above and beyond the men. If any small thing goes wrong, it's blamed on her being a girl, that she's not really up to the mark". (Steward and Garratt, 1984. p.77)

There is a career route within the studio. Typically, a young man interested in science and technology applies to become a tape-op, and then works his way up from there, via engineer to producer, following a sort of informal apprenticeship. Often women cannot get employment at the initial tape-op stage, and thus cannot get a foot in the door. This career progression, however, does not have to be followed. Some people have gone straight into production without any training in studio technology, picking up technical information and skills from the engineers and technicians they have worked with. This depends, of course, on having good relationships with

these technicians. For a female producer, gender prejudice could seriously hamper the establishment of such good working relationships.¹¹

But even for successful female producers, the recording studio, as a male environment, can be off-putting. For here men exert social control over women just as they do in the pub, the streets, the factory, the rugby club, the City, and innumerable other male-dominated worlds.

As Whitehead (1976) has argued, men are always aware of gender and sexuality, and these factors get in the way of a simple working relationship between equals. Sexist jokes are widespread in our culture and based on degrading and contemptuous stereotypes of women. These are most apparent in all-male environments, and therefore, not surprisingly, surface in the recording studio.¹² For example, Sheryl Garratt mentions a computer mixing desk (the SL 4000 E) which has been programmed to use sexist language in its replies to 'errors' (Steward and Garratt, 1984). I have also witnessed the workings of this machine, when it was first introduced into a studio. The (male) studio staff thought it was witty and amusing. The assumption of the programmers was clearly that only men use mixing desks, for the humour was solely for their benefit.¹³

This masculinist culture helps to explain the rarity of women studio technicians. It also poses problems for female musicians. Entering a recording studio can be daunting. The fact that the producer, engineer, and all the technicians are men makes a woman feel that she is entering alien territory. And lack of technical knowledge puts the female musician in a position of relative powerlessness. I wish, at this point, to draw on my personal experience.

As a musician you become aware of the tremendous power the engineer has over the sound when, at the mixing console, he cuts out the other tracks and just plays around with yours. You do not wish to offend him, precisely because your overall sound rests largely in his hands. Also, you often do not know enough about the possibilities of the particular desk in order to judge whether he is doing a good job or slacking. Furthermore, you do not understand the techno-jargon. Abbreviations abound and, as a newcomer to this world, you do not know they are abbreviations, let alone what they mean. You may be reluctant to keep asking for a translation, for fear of being made to feel foolish and accused of wasting expensive studio time. You do not understand what the engineers, producer and other technicians are saying to each other, and you cannot make yourself understood. You resort to descriptions on the lines of "I'd like a

sort of warm sound". In return you are greeted with stares of incomprehension, or condescending smiles. You do not know whether the engineer is hiding behind a pretence of ignorance the better to get his own way.

Alone on the studio floor, you feel vulnerable and exposed. Your only contact with the world is a set of headphones. You may be asked to re-do your part dozens of times and yet not be told why. You may think you are making a mess of it, only to find out later that it was some technical fault at the mixing-desk which was necessitating the repeats. Women, in such a situation, lacking confidence in their playing abilities, may find themselves becoming disheartened. Furthermore, I have heard engineers, and even tape-ops, make disparaging remarks about women's playing, upsetting the women concerned. Or they look down on the women's particular playing style and boast about their own ability to play "really heavy" rock. (Engineers are often frustrated musicians and feel superior to the women they are mixing.) This is confirmed by my interviews. For example,

R2: "Sound technology is controlled by men and a lot of men want to keep it for themselves. They don't take you seriously as a woman. Some men are fine but the situation is generally that you are liable, as a woman, to be given wrong information, misleading information. They're so possessive about it. Or, they just won't let you near it".

J8: "I think women are treated very much as useless. I think we're given a very hard time

...your opinions are never wanted unless you have already secured a position where you are respected by the other people around you. But if you are unknown to the producer, don't imagine he will listen to you...I think a bloke has an easier time of it, I really do".

But women's bands may have little choice. They may have to accept a male producer.

For all these reasons, feminist musicians have been concerned about the lack of women technicians. Plus, an all-women band with a male producer cannot claim that all the creativity which went into the record was female. Thus, there have been feminist initiatives to create alternative recording environments: all-women studios for women's bands to record in, and courses in sound engineering and production. (I shall be discussing these in Chapter 12.)

6. On the Road.

P.A., lighting, and road crews are, with hardly any exceptions, male. There are probably less than a dozen female P.A. engineers in the whole of Britain. There are no physical reasons why women should not do these jobs, as they require skill more than brute strength.

Those exceptional women who do try to enter this field find themselves in an even more masculine environment than that of the recording studio. The ambience is one of male camaraderie, which most women find difficult to adapt to. It is this masculinist

subculture which limits women's involvement, and constrains their presence, rather than the physical demands of the work. The sexist jokes, the chatting up of "chicks" at gigs, the frank discussion in the van of sexual encounters, the sexual boasting - all of these things make women feel uncomfortable. A woman's options in such robust male company are limited. She can ignore or accept it, becoming one of the lads, or she can try to restrain it and demand respect, in which case she is fighting an uphill battle. A woman can never really be one of the boys. If she, too, tells raunchy stories, they do not work in the same way, for a woman's place in the discourse of sexual relations is structured completely differently. Behaving like this, regardless of the fact that a woman is present, is saying, 'This is a male club. You do not belong here, so you do not count'. A female P.A. engineer explained to me why she would not go on tour with a male band:

F: "I'd probably be the only woman. It would just be horrific. There would be constant sexual bantering, and they'd immediately want to slot me (into a category) - I'd either be the tart who slept with them all, or I'd be a real prude because I wouldn't sleep with any of them. It's very sexist, the straight music business, and the blokes all think they're terribly strong and macho".

Conversely, I was told about a male roady who left a women's band because he missed the all-boys-together ambience of working with men:

K3: "The funny thing is, there was one roady who used to be our drum-roady for years, and in the end he defected to Motorhead's crew. He just couldn't stand working with girls anymore! 'Cause he was more wanting to be out with the lads. He was going, 'Oh, I can't stand it anymore!'"

These jobs are seen as endowing masculine status. If women start doing them, such status-conferral will be undermined. Stories about life on the road are told with relish. The hardness of the life is romanticised for ideological reasons: if you can survive, it proves you are a 'real man'. All this has implications for women musicians and women's bands.

The most important role is that of P.A. engineer, working with a P.A. system at a gig. He has great influence over what the audience hears, and his work shades over from the purely technical into the creative. At big gigs, band members will not be able to hear the sound the audience is receiving. What they hear is mixed separately for them: the 'onstage mix', or 'monitor mix'. This comes out of small onstage speakers placed in front of the band, and is quite distinct from the sound issuing from the main speakers. Two separate sound engineers are involved in these operations. Thus the engineer doing the 'main

mix' has enormous power: the band cannot hear or evaluate what he is doing. A lot of trust is involved.

Male P.A. engineers often take women musicians less seriously than men, ignoring the instructions they are given. Where a number of women's bands are playing, a P.A. engineer may set up the sound for the first band, and then not bother to change it for the other bands, despite the fact that he is being paid to mix them all. (I shall discuss these problems in Part 2.)

FEMALE COMPARTMENTS

Two generalisations can be made about the place of women within the world of rock. Firstly, in terms of paid employment within the record industry, women are situated in jobs which have low pay, status and power. They are at the bottom of the hierarchy, doing unskilled and semi-skilled manual jobs, and routine office work. As in other industries women are segregated into female 'ghettos', such as cleaning, tea-making, canteen work, and clerical tasks. Many young women are attracted to the industry for its glamour; believing they will meet the stars. In reality, the nearest they typically get to their idols is typing their names on envelopes.

Secondly, women are concentrated in service roles; women servicing men rather than being creative

themselves: fan, girlfriend, wife, secretary, etc. It is not surprising, then, that within the music industry itself, press officer is the only important role which has a high proportion of female incumbents.

"the press office is one of the few areas in the music business in which women can have a career, 'feminine' qualities are seen as valuable aids in the job of charming favors from the sources of publicity". (Frith, 1983. p.116)

As in other fields of employment, women are utilised for their sex appeal and "charm." Press officer is a role which involves public relations, reception and hostess duties, all traditionally 'feminine' functions. Penny Valentine, a one-time press officer, describes the job:

"You had to 'nanny' people, you had to make sure everyone was comfortable, to make sure they all had drinks at receptions, that they had everything they wanted...It was a total service job". (Steward and Garratt, 1984. p.68)

Public Lives and Private Support: Wives,
Girlfriends and Mothers.

One way that women have been able to gain access to the world of rock has been through their relationships with male musicians. For a tiny minority, this has been the gateway to their own performing careers (and I shall be discussing these women in the next chapter), but, for the vast majority, only one kind of activity has been expected of them: personal service.

Men are aided in their careers by the unacknowledged, hidden, and taken for granted, private services carried out by the women in their lives. Wives and mothers perform routine, unpaid, mundane domestic tasks, so as to enable their husbands and sons to concentrate on their careers. Mothers, for example, may creep around, waiting hand and foot on their "artistic" sons. In contrast a daughter would typically be expected to help with the housework. T. recounts how, in strong contrast to her own struggles, her boyfriend was mollycoddled:

"He had no job. His mother supported him, and used to bring him little meals on a tray".

Male musicians, with their minds on "higher things", are often assumed to need a woman to look after their daily existence. Some of the girlfriends and wives in Balfour's book (1986) tell how their partners were in terrible physical shape when they first met them. It is as if these male stars were totally incapable of looking after themselves. The expectation that women service men applies also to women musicians. The sole woman in a band, for instance, may find herself expected to become the surrogate wife. For example, jazz trombonist Melba Liston recounts her experience:

"I was everybody's sister, mama, auntie. I was sewin' buttons, cuttin' hair and all the rest".
Dahl, 1984. p.256)

Women drawn into the world of rock by the promise of freedom, often end up in narrowly defined gender roles. They may set out on rock-related careers of their own but, over time, many of them become just girl friends and wives. For example, Meatloaf's wife, Leslie, started out wanting to be a recording engineer, and she managed to get a job as assistant studio manager. Upon marriage, however, her role became one of domestic service:

"Taking care of Meatloaf is a full-time kind of thing. His health needs looking after...He needs to eat a certain kind of food. Then there's the laundry".(Balfour, 1986. p.218)

Before they married, all these tasks were performed by paid employees: road managers and assistants.

"Then when we married, a lot of those people left. 'Cause a wife can replace four or five people". (Ibid. p.218)

Male musicians also expect women to raise their children. Having children does not hinder the career of the male musician; it does not impinge on it. Unlike women, men do not have to choose between having a career and having a family. In the average heterosexual couple the man's career usually comes first. Job mobility is made possible by the woman either giving up her career, or pushing it firmly into second place behind her familial obligations. Women are handicapped in their careers by the role

they play in the family sphere. Nowhere is this general picture more true than in the world of rock.

Being a professional rock musician requires a greater dedication of time, energy, and concentration than most other careers, and money and recognition may be slow in coming. Continuance in the career depends on the musician's unshakeable belief in his talent and the importance of what he is trying to do. He is obsessive about his music. Everything else in his life is, consequently, downgraded in significance.

The girlfriends of rock musicians are expected to tailor their social lives so that they fit around their boyfriends' musical careers. They are kept waiting for long periods of time, hanging around at the end of gigs. For example, J1. vividly described her early experiences as a musician's wife:

"You're part of the female scene - 'the women'. And you've got 'the women's table'. There's the drummer's woman, and the guitarist's woman, and the bass player's woman. And you join the women's table. And you sit there, because they're up there playing for hours. And another thing that the women have to do is get the audience going. The band starts up and it goes down like a ton of lead, and there's no-one dancing. Then the group's women have to get up and dance...Every gig you get up and dance in a very loyal way. We knowingly had to make idiots of ourselves on behalf of the band".

T. also used to go to gigs with her boyfriend:

"I felt like a bit on the side - you're the lead guitarist's 'chick', or something very insignificant. The musicians never took each other's girlfriends seriously".

Gender constraints of this kind are also apparent in Kitwood's study (1980). Musicians' girlfriends were expected to go to gigs regardless of whether they liked the music or not. And some of them hated it. Further evidence for this is provided in Sara Cohen's (1988) ethnographic study of Liverpool rock bands.

The implicit assumption is that nothing a young woman is involved in could possibly be as important as her boyfriend's career, and that her role is to service him, domestically, sexually and emotionally, so that his special talent is able to flourish to its full capacity. She is the artist's handmaiden. If he is difficult, demanding, and possessive this will be explained, and made allowance for, in terms of his artistic temperament. (Yet men are rarely willing to perform this slavish role for female performers.) For example, Susan Rotolo says that she felt like one of Bob Dylan's possessions rather than a person in her own right. She was expected fit her life around his, and give up her own artistic ambitions:

"I don't think he wanted me to do anything separate from him. He wanted me to be one hundred per cent a part of what he was. He was tied up with his own development...The assumption is that the female doesn't really do anything". (Balfour, 1986. p.60)

Jo Howard had a thriving modelling career, but when she met Ronnie Wood she put her career firmly second:

"He wouldn't let me go back to England...I blew all my modelling jobs. I didn't care. I only had eyes for Ronnie. Ronnie wanted me to sit there and watch him all the time". (Ibid. p.227)

The position of the girlfriends and wives of rock stars is often characterised by dependency and insecurity. The male star, besieged by women, has all the power. Hazel O'Connor remembers the time when she was living with Kenny Morris of the Banshees:

"When he went away on tour I became depressed again. I got fed up with the role of musician's stay-home lady. It is really horrible if you live with a musician who had to go on tour. You know he is going to meet people and fall in love in different places". (O'Connor, 1981. p.106)

This also comes out clearly in the biographies of male musicians - of the Beatles, for example:

"Altogether the Beatles made five trips to Hamburg...Each time Cynthia stayed at home - the steady girlfriend, while John wallowed in excesses of sex, pills and drink. Cynthia was the archetypical rock and roll widow". (Connolly, 1981. p.47)

Beatle wives were banned from the recording studio. They were kept separate from that whole rock world, totally dependent on the whims of their husbands, unable to put into action any plans of their own:

"(Maureen's) life is really Ringo's. Anything he wants to do, she wants to do...(She) stays up for her husband and waits for him, no matter in what condition he's likely to arrive". (Hunter Davies, 1978. p.363)

Only Yoko Ono dared to deviate:

"...they found Yoko sitting on the speakers

listening to everything, even occasionally making unrequested suggestions and even criticisms. None of the other girlfriends or wives had ever shown such temerity". (Connolly, 1981. p.103)

As John Lennon said,

"normally an artist has someone from whom he can suck completely. He says, 'I'm the fucking artist, where's my dinner?' and the other person has to be passive and quiet".(Connolly, 1981. p.135)

As I have shown, women involved with male musicians provide a wide range of private services, which help the musician to pursue his career unhindered by daily maintenance tasks. In strong contrast, the husbands and boyfriends of female musicians do not perform such services. Housework and childcare are seen as female tasks. A woman might be lucky enough to find a man who will share this work with her, but he is unlikely to be a stay-at-home husband, raising the children whilst she pursues her career. Thus a woman musician is at a disadvantage. Not only does she miss out by not having a wife, she will be expected to be someone else's wife. Thus women are faced with the choice of musical career, or marriage and family.

This choice comes out time and again in the biographies and autobiographies of women musicians. For example, Anita O'Day recalls,

"I thought my man would be thrilled at the way my career was picking up. He wasn't. I couldn't believe it was just bad luck that I'd chosen another competitor instead of a teammate...when I became busy looking after my career, we began

clashing because I didn't have time to cater to his whims and wishes. He accused me of being married to music". (O'Day and Eels, 1983. p.269-270)

Many of the rock wives in Balfour's book are women who had themselves been musicians. The typical pattern is that, on meeting her man, the performer gives up her own musical career in order to further his.¹⁴ For example, Marilyn Wilson allowed her singing career to slide into second place when she married Brian Wilson of the Beachboys. She was expected to go to all his recording sessions and be his live-in audience:

"Every time he'd get a new line he'd wake me up out of bed, drag me out - 'Hey, you gotta come listen to this!' My whole life was sitting there at the piano with him...When I was married, it was all Brian and Brian first". (Balfour, 1986. p.103 and 106)

Similarly, Carlene Carter recalls:

"I was the little homemaker and wanting him to do good. But he never hardly worked, because he thought he should stay home and write songs...Basically, he was sitting at home and getting drunk a lot".(Balfour, 1986. p.241-242)

Carlene worked to support the household and continued with her songwriting career as well. When she got her first big break her husband became very jealous. She was offered a record deal and he threatened to leave her if she accepted it:

"He was so scared that I would be better than him. And the whole male-ego thing...After that, it was pretty much downhill". (Ibid. p.243)

Archer and Simmonds, in their study of female superstars, emphasise that touring poses more problems for female than for male performers:

"Any woman who was still trying to keep up with the notion of good wife, mother, homemaker even, was always at odds with the professional necessity of being away from home most of the time. None of these women really resolved that conflict, and for Patsy Cline in particular it proved fatal". (Archer and Simmonds, 1986. p.136)

A central contradiction lies at the heart of the role of female performer: no matter how successful a woman is, she is still made to feel inadequate, for success in the 'male' field of music is seen as no substitute for success in the 'female' field of marriage and motherhood; moreover, the two are incompatible. Joan Dew's book (1979), which deals with the five female "greats" of country and western music, provides evidence of this. For example, June Cash was originally very ambitious, but when she married her idol, Johnny Cash, she put her career last:

"...when I decided to make my life with John, I made up my mind to give as much as I had, to put our life together above things like ambition and career". (Dew, 1977. p.88 and 89)

Interestingly, the other four women have become successful stars because they have managed to avoid the traditional role of wife-mother. Loretta Lynn is married, but lives in her tour bus, completely separate from her husband's world. And it is he who has brought up their children. If she had taken time

off to raise her children her career would have been ruined. It was a heart-breaking choice:

"Loretta suffers over this more than any other single factor in her life. She feels enormous guilt because her duties as a mother have been fulfilled by someone else; she is hostile about being "pushed out of the nest" and denied the privileges of motherhood...and she is jealous over the fact that the twins are obviously closer to their father than they are to her". (Dew, 1977. p.27)

She is also bitter about the irony in her situation:

"In country music we're always singing about home and family. But because I'm in country music I've had to neglect my home and family". (Dew, 1977. p.27)

Likewise, Dolly Parton's marriage is exceptional. From the start it was premised on her career coming first and a firm decision not to have children. Dolly has been totally single-minded, and everything else has taken second place in her life. This pattern is very unusual for women performers, but normal for men.¹⁵

Vocalists.

Within the rock world, singing is the most obvious female role. Indeed, women have a (rare) space in the professional world of rock as session vocalists, where they (anonymously) hold their own with (male) session instrumentalists. Singing is one of the few rock spaces into which women have been allowed. Indeed, female musicians have been steered into it. On the whole, male musicians see female instrumentalists as intruders into their world, but they respect women as

singers and exploit their appearance as a 'front' for stage performance. Female instrumentalists who are able to supply lead or backing vocals are more likely to be offered employment. Some women join bands as instrumentalists but, due to lack of confidence and competition from male band members, they gradually find themselves singing more and more and playing less and less. After a while, the guitar, say, may merely function as a fashion accessory.¹⁶

Girls are encouraged to sing far more than boys. Indeed, at certain ages, it is seen as a distinctly feminine pastime. Consequently, women generally sing better than men. Many of my interviewees had sung in school choirs. It is doubtful whether a similar cross-section of male musicians would have done.

People commonly regard singing as "natural". It is not treated in the same way as instrumental skills. Yet, like playing an instrument, singing is learnt. There is nothing natural about the contemporary pop female singing voice, because there is nothing intrinsically natural about any kind of actual vocal expression. As with language, any particular singing style is just one out of an infinite number of possibilities: clear or husky, clipped or smooth, etc. The voice is highly malleable. Given the wide range of vocal expression which is possible, it is remarkable how similar the majority of singers sound within any

one genre. It is also instructive to listen to female singing voices in other cultures, to hear styles missing from our own.

Just as much as physical appearance, voices are governed by cultural rules. These norms change. Vocal styles come in and out of fashion. They also vary between genres. The sort of voice deemed suitable in country and western is inappropriate for soul; the demands of rock are different from those of folk. With vocals as with music, the record industry works with a set of categories into which it seeks to mould its performers.

Categorisation

Frith (1983) points out that record companies have a massive amount of fixed capital, which requires constant maintenance and refurbishment. Most records are not hits. Therefore, those which are must be extremely successful, in order to produce the extra-high profits necessary to meet long-running capital costs. The underlying fear is that audiences might act in totally unpredictable ways. Therefore, the record industry strives to mould its market. One important strategy is the "continuing effort to freeze the rock audience into a series of market tastes" (Frith 1983). Artists are packaged into genres, so that audiences can be better persuaded to buy their records and, in

this way, financial risks minimised. Categorisation is an essentially conservative approach, for the aim is to limit surprise. This means that dominant ideology tends to be reinforced, rather than challenged.

Gender is inevitably a factor in this categorisation process. But the categories available for women are restricted, and women's music which cannot be fitted into the pre-existing genres may be rejected outright as unsuitable for signing. Alternatively, the musician or band may be altered by the record company so that they do then fit into one of the limited slots to hand. A good example of this is Suzi Quatro. She was originally in a family group with her sisters, playing strip clubs. Her first record, however, presented her as a folksinger, with a characteristic folk image. The producer of this record was Mickie Most, who had just produced Julie Felix. With later producers she changed her image yet again. But, in a way, Suzi Quatro is untypical of female performers, for she was, apparently, always in control of these image changes.¹⁷ Many women performers have little influence over their image.

One example of a traditional female classification is 'female folksinger/singer-songwriter'. This has been a very conservative category, offering women little scope for experimentation. Because of the lack of role models many women performers have been

packaged as folk. This, in turn, perpetuates the dominance of the female folk image. Given this, it is not surprising that many of my interviewees had, in their teenage years, aspired to become folksingers, whilst very few had, even briefly, entertained the notion of playing rock. Female performers such as Joan Baez, Judy Collins and, especially, Joni Mitchell have acted as important role models for innumerable young women, and were mentioned time and again by my interviewees. For example,

J1, a drummer: "I used to play acoustic guitar. Why? It's a romantic poet female image to be doing folk stuff...It was very much Joni Mitchell in the days of the hippy woman cult...When I played guitar it was the image of being a female folk guitarist that appealed".

In contrast rock musician was not perceived as a possibility due to the lack of female role models.

My research suggests that women guitarists usually start on acoustic folk guitar, rather than electric. Yet the latter is, in many ways, easier for the beginner to play. The reason might be that folk music does not require coming to terms with sound technology, or it might be, simply, that female folk singers act as powerful role models. For example, B3. taught herself to play folk guitar as a teenager:

"I used to love Joni Mitchell, and I'd play her all the time...It was the usual girl-syndrome, playing acoustic guitar. But you never think that you could play electric guitar".

At the very opposite end of the spectrum to folk is the phenomenon of the 'chick singer'. Women have been valued in the industry for their glamour, and it is often fashionable to have a female 'fronting' bands, singing backing vocals, playing a bit of percussion and dancing. (This role has come to be associated with black women, just as the singer-songwriter image has been a white female niche.) As with the long-established showbiz tradition, women are prized for their physical attractiveness as much as for their musical abilities.¹⁸ It is true that good looks have helped male performers become successful too, but men have a wider range of available images. This is clear when you look at female stars.

Frith (1983) cites the star system as another record company strategy to secure profits. Stardom creates product loyalty, and simplifies record promotion. The big stars provide the majority of record companies' profits.

The star system leads to the objectification of performers. The classic way in which pop stars are marketed is as sex-objects. Even those performers who start off as "serious" musicians are pressurised towards existing sexual stereotypes. But there are more pressures on female performers to conform to certain "right" images than there are on men. Men seem to have more freedom to play around with masculine

stereotypes, such as 'macho', 'androgynous', etc. In contrast, the range of representations available to women is narrower, and women performers often seem trapped by images rather than utilising them.

The pressures on women performers are greater, because women generally in society are sexually objectified. Women's bodies are used to sell products and, in turn, become products. Women have a more stringent set of standards to live up to than men do. The stereotypes are more restrictive. Therefore, women spend more time thinking about their appearance.

This does not mean that female performers never break the rules. Indeed, some women have become successful partly because they were mavericks: Dolly Parton, Pattie Smith, etc. But these are in the minority. Other women have become victims of these rules. For example, Karen Carpenter died from anorexia, and Dinah Washington from an accidental overdose of diet pills, after twenty years of stringent dieting.

In 'A Star Is Torn', Robyn Archer and Diana Simmonds emphasise the way in which female stars are under constant pressure to conform to sexist stereotypes, and they argue that this is why so many have had "working lives that were plagued by a degree of physical and spiritual misery...inconsistent with

their status as stars" (Archer and Simmonds, 1986 p.1). The usual explanation is that women like Judy Garland, Billie Holiday, and Marilyn Monroe had only themselves to blame. Archer and Simmonds, however, argue that, "they were subject to pressures and discrimination different from those that governed the lives of their male counterparts" (Ibid. p.3), and that from Marie Lloyd's day to Janis Joplin's, "a woman could do what a man could, but she certainly couldn't get away with it without being branded" (Ibid. p.192). Judy Garland can be taken as the classic case:

"When Judy signed with MGM she was told she was fat, ugly and that only by a great deal of hard work would she become acceptable in Hollywood's terms...Judy was made to diet, to take 'slimming pills', encouraged to smoke and drink coffee without milk, all to get her weight down. She was thirteen years old". (Ibid. p.103)

Thereafter, MGM ruled her whole young life, delaying her adulthood for as long as possible to exploit her little girl image. She became addicted to the pills and they, combined with the tremendous pressures of the business, eventually killed her prematurely.

Although young male actors also appear to have been routinely supplied with addictive drugs by the entertainment companies, their lives were not controlled and exploited to anywhere near the same extent as women's. In the world of show business, a

woman's place, in both a physical and ideological sense, has been tightly confined:

"When any of them drank, screwed or partied with the same freedom or pleasure as men in the same business, it was not to be admired or glorified but seen as reinforcement of their reputations as vamps or sluts who would come to grief by their sins and their destructive way of life". (Ibid. p.153)

The emphasis on glamour has meant that another space allocated to women has been disco, Hi-Energy, Eurobeat, dance music. In this genre women rarely play instruments. They are vocalists. Record companies who have signed up all-female bands in the recent past have tried to slot them into this genre, favouring a sort of "girly" sound, emphasising femininity and youth. Although Bananarama, the Belle Stars, and Amazulu came from completely different backgrounds, and played different types of music, they were made to sound very similar. Instead of doing their own numbers, they ended up putting out light-weight remakes of old hits with all the emphasis thrown onto the vocals. Women who can perfectly well sing in tune have been made to sound "untogether" because it is how their company thinks they should, as a gang of "girls", sound. For example:

J1: "The last two things we've done, we've never sung them before. We go up to the studio and we don't even know the songs. Two days before we go in we're told you'll be doing such and such tomorrow. And we're in the studio and no-one knows it properly. And that's the sound they want us to

have, that Bananarama untogether-girls-that-can't-sing, singing all different. And we do it".

When dealing with all-women bands, record companies have automatically turned to production teams which specialise in this type of sound. In the last few years Stock, Aitken and Waterman have risen to fame for their production of "girl" singers. This phenomenon is not new. Previously Jolly and Swain and, before that, Peter Collins were prominent in this role. In the 1960s Phil Spector produced black female singing groups in which the vocalists became virtually interchangeable. The only constant was Spector himself. What has been different in the 1970s and 1980s is that many of the women's bands which have been treated in this way were, on signing, fairly autonomous, writing and performing their own compositions, playing their own instruments, etc.

Companies have only had this one narrow category in their minds. All-women bands are marketed as "all-girl bands" regardless of the fact that many of their members are in their late twenties, and some older.

There is, finally, another way in which vocal norms, and the ideology of the natural, act as a constraint. Many women believe that their so-called natural voice is unsuitable for pop, being too pure and "choir-like". In fact, this traditional English choral sound is not natural at all, but, it is

normative in church and school assembly, and has been acquired from an early age. Unlike many third world countries we do not sing much in our daily lives. African and Afro-American singing styles have evolved from the exuberant vocalisation encouraged in their churches. Some West Indian children have experienced this tradition, but most people brought up in this country have not. It is entirely different from British church singing. The gospel influenced voice bends, slurs and slides, and its rhythms are syncopated. Many women lack confidence because they do not sing like this "naturally". For example,

H3: "I think that everything, when I sing, just sounds drippy. I'd like to be just a bit more stylized...I've got a very tuneful sincere sort of voice. It irritates me".

Female punk vocalists confronted conventional vocal norms, singing in an unconventional and often deliberately 'artificial' way, and thereby challenged the very notion of the "naturalness" of the voice. This was at one with their strategy on clothes, appearance and image. A similar challenge to the meaning of the female voice has been made by avante-garde singers such as Maggie Nicholls.

Feminism and lesbianism have also had an effect on female vocals. Conventional female pop songs have usually presumed a male listener. Women have been expected to sing in heterosexist terms for the male

ear. Frith (1981) has noted the variety of voices to be heard on the 'Making Waves' album of women's bands. The reason for this multiformity is that many of these bands were singing consciously and explicitly for other women, and thereby breaking the voice codes.

Just as both punk, on the one hand, and feminism and lesbianism, on the other, have enabled women to escape from the restricting conventions laid down for the female voice, so too have they allowed women to do more than sing. In the next chapter I shall analyse both these and other significant factors which have helped to free women from the traditional roles set aside for them in the male-dominated record industry.

Notes

1. See Frith, (1983). p.92.
2. Both Dahl (1984) in her study of jazzwomen, and Vicinus (1979) who interviewed popular female entertainers, found evidence of the 'casting couch' phenomenon in the interwar period.
3. Record companies exert influence at a covert level, via the manipulation of sales at 'chart shops' which determine the playlist of D.J.s.
4. For example, Penny Smith (in Rolling Stone), and Anne Liebovik (in the New Musical Express).
5. B.B.C. Open University Programme 1/FOU P092W.
6. Archer and Simmonds (1986) show the extent to which individual female stars have relied upon male managers who were also (or became) their lovers. This was one way of resolving the star versus wife conflict, yet it also compounded the way in which these women could be exploited.

7. In January 1988, Studio Week published a comprehensive list of Britain's pop/rock producers and engineers: 222 men and only one woman - Julia Downes. (Source: Frith, S. The Observer. 10.1.88) This lack of female record producers also applies to the U.S.A., as Linda Dahl's research (1984) indicates.

8. "Technological innovation in the recording studio has been consistent with the argument that the introduction of new technology is invariably for the purposes of increasing control over the workforce". (Struthers, 1987, p.254)

9. This conflict came dramatically into public view during the 1988 court case between Holly Johnson of Frankie Goes to Hollywood and producer Trevor Horn, when it emerged that the band had not played on any of "their" recordings.

10. It is therefore ironic that it is not men, but women, who are employed by the major record companies in the manual task of soldering electrical equipment.

11. In fact, women tend to get into production in rather different ways from men. For example, arranging is one of the few areas where women have been able to gain employment in studios, particularly as arrangers of strings. This is, perhaps, because many women have been classically trained on stringed instruments, like the well-known British producer Ann Dudley, who studied at the Royal College of Music and moved from arranging into production. But the most popular route for women has been via self-production. For instance, Joni Mitchell, Carole King, Kate Bush and Millie Jackson learnt their production skills in this way.

12. "...sex and bums are funny per se. Pretty much what one might expect and not really any different from any other group of men together anywhere; on a cruising submarine, a North Sea oil rig..." (Gorman, 1978, p.33.)

13. This is similar to the masculinist programming involved in computer games.

14. Dahl's research suggests that many female jazz musicians are married to musician husbands. If a jazzwoman married a non-musician she would be under pressure to give it up. Dottie Dodgion told Dahl:

"I knew several lady players who were really very, very good, but they didn't get support from their husbands and they gave it up. That would be competition: 'Who do you love? Me or your

instrument?'" (Dahl, 1984. p.219)
But the musician husbands of jazzwomen were not supportive, either. Melba Liston says,
"in Bessie Smith's time and all that, you don't hear too much about the men. They were piano players. But on stage it was the black woman. But now, to get an instrument? No, sir, a woman couldn't bring an instrument in no house, especially with a husband that was a musician. And not today either". (Dahl, 1984. p.256)

15. Vicinus, likewise, stresses the problem for women of combining marriage with a career in popular entertainment in the interwar years:

"Most women performers, whatever their long-term professional ambitions, hoped to marry...Yet prospects for marriage were more chancy for a woman who seldom stayed in one place for more than a few months and who was virtually never free evenings...Many women who did marry, particularly outside the profession, often left the profession. Unless one's spouse traveled with one, temptation, and suspicions, were inevitable...(and) the nervous tension is not appreciated by someone outside the business". (Vicinus, 1979. p.368-369)

16. This has also been true in the pre-rock era, for example in jazz:

"...singing has been one of the principal means of legitimizing a woman's presence on the bandstand. Thus, whether by choice or by necessity, many talented women pianists (as well as other instrumentalists) also made their mark as vocalists, 'singing for their supper' in the harshly competitive jazz-as-entertainment business". (Dahl, 1984.p.68)

Having women in the band has been seen as a way of adding a touch of glamour. Sheila Jordan told Dahl:

"When you're a singer, oh, you're this chick that gets up and sings some songs and you look good - especially with the club owners. They couldn't care less what you sing like; they're more concerned about what you look like". (Ibid. p.242.)

17. I am indebted to Simon Frith for this point.

18. In her study of women entertainers in England during the interwar years, Martha Vicinus says:

"Talent alone was not enough; it had to be combined with charm and an attractive appearance...While sexual appeal might not be the dominant element in the act, it was a necessary ingredient in meeting audience expectations". (Vicinus, 1979. p.365)

Chapter 8. THE GREAT ESCAPES.

There are many factors which make it possible for women to become rock musicians, despite all the obstacles so far described. For any one person more than one factor is at work and no one variable is, by itself, a necessary or sufficient explanation of female rock success: there is no single 'typical' female route into rock music-making. Bearing this in mind, I shall now outline those few variables which do seem to stand out as particularly significant. They are ones which enable women to evade or overcome the constraints which I have already described. I have called them "escapes" because, in order to take on the 'male' role of rock musician, a woman must somehow break away from the pre-ordained path which our overall culture sets for her. I have already examined subcultures, which other writers have held up as the major source of resistance to these cultural tramlines. I have concluded that, for women at least, subcultures prove to be no escape at all. In contrast, I have found from my empirical work that the following are girls' real escapes.

1. MUSICAL FAMILIES

I have already shown how the family, being an important agent of gender socialization, acts for most girls as a constraining force, inhibiting their involvement in rock music. Rock has usually been seen as some sort of rebellion against family life, and so parents have been generally less supportive of their children's involvement in rock music than, say, in sport, dancing, etc. (Even Samantha Fox is managed by her mum and dad.) Parental support is relatively rare in the rock world and especially so for young women.

However, rock does not necessarily involve anti-family rebellion and, indeed, some musicians are following in their parents' footsteps.¹ My research indicates that, in families where one or more parents have been in bands, the musical aspirations of daughters are encouraged. Thus, when trying to explain how it is that some women do become rock musicians, family background turns out to be significant.

For example, M. and B5. came from a family with a tradition of musical entertainment; both parents and grandparents were performers. It was the family's livelihood. It seems clear to me that, in the case of these sisters (as well as the other members of their female band) family background was the main factor leading to a musical career.²

Many of my interviewees had a musician parent. For example, K1.'s father had played in various groups and he encouraged and supported her musical endeavours.

K1: "He was in a skiffle group. He played trumpet, banjo, guitar...Then he went on to folk music".

When she was nine he offered to teach her the guitar, but she decided on drums. Most parents would not relish their daughter learning drums. K1'.s father, however, bought her a cassette and book to help her learn, and paid for her first drumkit. She was allowed to practice at home, and later her whole band was provided with rehearsal space in the family's small terraced house.

Parents who are, or have been, rock musicians, understand the world of popular music. They tend to encourage their children to play music as a hobby and pursue it as a professional career. They can often provide equipment, space, finance, and general guidance. They may also function as early role models for their children. In my research I found that such parents were predominantly working class.

But some exceptional parents who are not themselves musicians are also supportive of their daughters in this way. These families also tend to be working class. Working class parents may to be more tolerant of their daughters pursuing rock music as a full-time career, perhaps because there are fewer

options available, and rock music does at least hold out the chance of financial success. For example,

E1: "Our parents lent us quite a lot of money. We all had very working class backgrounds, and we were very lucky that we had parents that helped us out in that way. My dad mortgaged the house so that we could buy a P.A."

2. TOMBOYS

One factor common to all but a handful of my interviewees, and therefore, I believe, highly significant, is that in childhood they identified with boys rather than girls. In particular all of the women who played drums - the most 'male' instrument - said they had been tomboys. For example,

H2 (drummer): "I always saw myself as being a boy. And when I had fantasies about glorious exploits, I was always a commando or something. Being a brave, courageous, hard toughie - that was what I wanted to be. I never wanted to be an nurse or anything".

Some of my interviewees had wished that they could actually become boys. Here is the strongest statement of this feeling:

H3: "I didn't like the idea of being a teenage girl, and I didn't want to do the things that they did. I wanted a sex change".

These women either rebelled within the family against the restrictions of conventional femininity, or else they were brought up in an unusual background in which gender stereotypes did not impinge as much as

usual. A significant number of my interviewees came from families which broke the mould. For instance,

B1: "I didn't realise how fortunate I was in my upbringing. I didn't realise how free of all these hang-ups I was until they got imposed by other people. Because I had none of this thing about being female and the restrictions. It was only when I came to college that I began to get the shit thrown at me. I've never had those barriers to break down because, at home, my mother was a very active woman...It would be mum and us who'd build brick walls".

Discussion of family backgrounds usually lays emphasis on mothers; fathers are often neglected. However, one striking finding in my research is the importance of fathers as role models for their daughters.³ For instance,

D1: "I love technology, but then that's probably come from my dad being an engineer. We used to talk a lot about physics. In fact, he's never been any different to me or my brother. We had really long conversations about all sorts of things. I used to watch him change plugs and do fuses".

In some cases, clearly, the father had wanted a son and the daughter was being reared without the usual feminine restrictions. For example,

T: "I think I was very lucky. My father made me feel I could do anything. Like, I was very ill when I was six, but rather than my mother bringing me dollies, (she) used to bring me broken transistor radios and bits of machinery and a set of tools, and I used to take everything apart and put it all back together again. I used to walk around in a shirt with a screwdriver in my top pocket because that's what (my father) did...I was the surrogate son, definitely. But it wasn't that my father ever treated me like a boy. I never felt like a boy. He just made me feel like anything was possible".

Two musicians I interviewed were sisters and had been brought up in a similar way to T:

F: "My dad, there was no doubt about it, wanted to have a son. And...he got three daughters, instead. But, although in terms of his work and how he sees women he's fairly sexist and discriminates against women, he didn't too much at home. He taught us about cars, as much as he knew. He encouraged us to be involved in what he was doing; he liked that. Probably both of us know more about cars than he does now, and he would probably accept that".

F.'s father bought her a motorbike. Most fathers would not contemplate such a purchase for their daughters.

What my evidence suggests is the significance of girls perceiving male roles as available; that is, not being restricted to traditional feminine behaviour patterns. Fathers treating their daughters more like sons seems to be the important factor, here, regardless of the particular attitudes of the parents towards gender in general.

Often girls from such backgrounds pursued so-called male subjects at school, such as sciences. One woman had been the only girl in her school to take woodwork. Another was the lone female in the metalwork class. My interviewees included mathematics, animal psychology, and science graduates.

For these women, a childhood pursuit of 'male' hobbies continued into adulthood, and they engaged in activities such as carpentry and electronics. Quite a few rode motorbikes. A number had done 'male' jobs

for a living, including motorcycle messenger, van driver, printer, farm worker, gardener, electrical engineer, civil engineer, piano tuner, bus driver, carpenter, and designer of spare parts for furnaces. Such women found it easier to enter the 'male' domain of rock music because they already had the confidence to tackle supposedly male tasks. For instance, before becoming a drummer J1. was already a world expert in the field of mud-in-suspension:

J1: I picked up hydraulics quite rapidly. A lot of the blokes used to say, 'You can't do that. That's not women's work! Let me do it'. And I'd say, 'No, no, I'm quite alright'. I was wielding these huge bits of equipment and learning how to move heavy things alone. It was really quite gruelling physical work".

All the above women came from middle class homes. Their resistance to femininity was, in many cases, aided by their schooling, particularly for those who went to boarding schools with a strong academic tradition. Such schools do not steer their upper middle class charges into sexually stereotyped dead-end jobs, but, rather, instil high aspirations and self-confidence in their pupils.⁴ For example, F. and her sister went to a prestigious private school.

F: "You weren't pushed into traditional women's things. It was quite a good school and most people, the clever ones, were going towards law or medicine".

But middle class girls do not have a monopoly on resistance to femininity; there were plenty of working

class tomboys too. Indeed, in my sample, more than one working-class women's band had carried the tomboy style over into the band's own discourse, reflected in their clothes, lyrics, stage posture, etc. As discussed in Chapter 5, these particular women were in long-term revolt against the norms of femininity. Yet it was not a feminist or lesbian stance, and joining a rock band was not perceived as a feminist act. They just saw themselves as being 'one of the boys', and thus engaged in music-making much as they would participate in playing pool. Early on in life they had escaped the strictures of femininity for good.

3. REBELLION

For many boys, playing rock music is part and parcel of youth rebellion. This rebellion has often been a bohemian one, against everyday conventions and, specifically, the norms of domesticity.

This has been true for many women too. For example, K2. was brought up in Hungary and was drawn to rock music because of "the freedom, the rebellion". Her parents tried to prevent her going to rock venues: "I used to get locked in the house". At school the reaction was even stronger: "I was expelled for bringing Beatles records into the school. They called it 'Western propaganda'". But the rebellion of women

has an extra dimension. Rock is a man's world, and the conventional guise of a "'rock'n'roll' gypsy - rootless, free and promiscuous"⁵ is a male image. For women, making rock music has often been a rebellion against the restrictions imposed by femininity. For many of my interviewees this rebellion started in the home from an early age. For example,

V1: "My mother wanted very much for me to do well: make a good marriage, have a good home, nice children, all that sort of thing. So I just got stropopy all round and started getting into trouble. I was totally disturbed, but it was healthy. I was reaching out...I remember making a decision, about eleven: I was gonna be a tearaway and stop being introverted and repressed and get into trouble. I started to want to leave home when I was thirteen, and got into trouble with the authorities...I got absolutely freaked out by the demands of my mother, and realised I had to leave home to keep sane".

It was later on that she discovered rock and took to it with a vengeance: "There was all this fire and stuff going on in rock music and I loved it".

The second battleground has been at school. For example,

G: "I hated needlework and I got thrown out of the class...I suppose I was quite disruptive, actually. The boys did metalwork and woodwork, and we did cookery and needlework. When I was thrown out of that I did woodwork for a term. I was doing it just because it was only boys doing it".

Many of my interviewees were "naughty" in class. For instance, H2. said,

"I used to do completely mad things. We used to have cupboards in our classroom and I used to get

inside before the next teacher came, and make these miaowing noises while the next person was doing the history lesson or whatever. ".

And A1. told me,

"I was always in trouble. I got expelled in the end. I couldn't stand the rules...I never used to do any work for exams and so, consequently, I failed them more and more as I got up the school...I got into art and music".

4. CLASSICAL MUSIC

Many young women have a classical training whilst they are of school age. The piano is the most popular instrument. Although playing the piano is, in the school years, often characterised as feminine, girls who are given music lessons are thereby able, at least partially, to escape from the teenage world of romance and compulsory femininity which, as I have shown, produces passivity rather than creativity. For one thing, the daily discipline of piano practice means that girls simply do not have the time to become a fan to any significant degree.

Clearly, rock musicians do not have to be classically trained, and most people who are do not join rock bands. On the other hand, it is one possible route into playing in a band, for such women have a proven ability to play an instrument and also have a sense of themselves as musicians. Quite a number of my interviewees had been trained in this way

- some to Grade 8, and others to degree level.⁶ These women tended to become interested in popular music at a later age than average, sometimes not until they were at university.

Some of these women had no initial intention of playing in a rock band, but simply drifted into playing rock instead of classical music in the process of seeking others to play with.

Whilst (in 1982) many British cities and towns had no all-women bands at all, one small northern city had three, including a 'big band'. This I believe to be related to the unique undergraduate music course which the local university offered, which made the transition from classical music to rock easier for its students than is normally the case. There is often another kind of rebellion here; a rebellion against the very nature and taken-for-granted norms of the classical training itself. For example,

A2: "I have been in orchestras, at school and when I was growing up - youth orchestras. I went to the Royal Academy of Music for two years. (Later) I was at university studying music, and I was really pissed off with the whole thing of formal music training. It's to do with being in control. When you're in an orchestra you just play your part and do what you're told, and that's that. You've got nothing of your own coming out. I decided I wanted to learn an instrument that hadn't got any of those connections with concerts...I started a real reaction in the music department. I couldn't really relate to it and I wanted to disrupt a lot. And I had this great friend who also wanted to. We were both rebels, and we both left after the first year".

5. ART AND BOHEMIANISM

Frith and Horne's book, 'Art into Pop', starts with the observation that

"a significant number of British pop musicians from the 1960s to the present were educated and first started performing in art schools". (1987. p.1.)

My own research indicates that the art school experience has also been a way into playing music for a number of women. Many all-women bands contained one, or even two, women who had undergone an art education. For example, S1. spent six years at art college and had two art degrees. Her interest in music and desire for a guitar coincided with a conception of herself as an art student. She was interested in

"arty people and things people were doing at art school...But then art is connected to music... That's when it started - as soon as I went to my first art college".

Similarly for D1, becoming a singer in a band, and also a P.A. engineer, was tied in with her art school experience. She sees music-making very much as an art form and is more concerned with making aesthetic statements than entertaining people:

"I see it as an extension of art...I'm interested in music as part and parcel of cultural activity...I've spent seven years thinking about the position of the creative artist".

She has approached music in an analytical way, applying the theories discovered at art school.

In my research sample there were a number of women who felt they had to choose either art or music for a career, or who fluctuated between the two.

Art schools have provided a very important institutional base for people who have sought to define themselves as "creative" or "non-conformist". But you did not necessarily have to actually attend an art school to lay claim to this sort of identity. Some women musicians I interviewed had never been art students yet still saw themselves as essentially "artistic". This was tied in with an image of themselves as 'individuals' and as crucially "different" from the archetypal "teenage girl". For example,

S2: "I was a hippie...I had long hair and beads and used to walk around in bare feet...It's being different. I mean, I felt different all the time. I never fitted in and couldn't conform, so I might as well make the most of being different. I always think that (my) feminism comes from that as well".

J1. also saw herself as a bohemian in terms of the then current hippie style. She was drawn to the 'travelling' mythology: "How you hitched around Europe with a guitar slung round your neck. And you sit on the beach and everyone comes round". Although J1. never actually went to art school, she did consider the idea and she grew up with an "arty" self-image.

Since the 1950s varying versions of the the bohemian/artist identity have offered successive

generations of young people an escape from the narrow conventions of suburb and small town. For example,

"At seventeen, school dances are full of Sandra Dees, sweetheart dresses, flatties, rustling petticoats. She opts for the Bad Girl look...At last she has heard of Juliet Greco and the Left Bank with its candlelit cellars and existentialists, and so she grows her hair and bleaches it...and wears long black sweaters and black stockings in the Art Room, preparing to be a bohemian...She's going to be a college girl, not just another village girl, another teenage shotgun bride...they've got a place for her at Edinburgh Art College, her grant is in the pipeline, and there's no stopping her".⁷
(Alison Fell in Liz Heron (ed.), 1985. p.22-24)

From beatniks to goths, bohemianism has provided an alternative self image and the promise of a future beyond locally-available options. Moreover, it does not depend on being a member of a large group.⁸ You can be a bohemian by yourself, drawing on films, records, and books. It is an individualistic phenomenon, but one which is based on the fantasy that a bohemian subculture does exist outside of the literature.

As Frith and Horne (1987) point out,

"in the 1960s art school students became rock'n'roll musicians and in doing so inflected pop music with bohemian dreams and Romantic fancies and laid out the ideology of 'rock'".

Thus the art school and rock worlds drew closer together. If a woman saw herself as "artistic" she would probably find herself mixing with musicians.

6. DRAMA

Drama, like art and classical music, is an outlet for girls' creativity and one which, importantly, prefigures performance on the rock stage. My research suggests that drama is, indeed, more significant than art as far as women musicians are concerned. About half of the women I interviewed mentioned drama as being an important activity in their schooldays; they performed in school plays, belonged to dramatic societies, etc.⁹ They also tended to be informal entertainers, extroverts who put energy into making people laugh in the playground.

A number of my interviewees had wanted to take up acting as a professional career. For example,

A1: "I wanted to act. I wrote to R.A.D.A. when I was about nine, saying I'd like to join and how could I go there when I left school. I was always going to act. I never really thought about anything else".

Some of these women did go on to work in the theatre. For example, in one band I interviewed half of the members were also in a theatre company.

Sometimes women started playing music as a direct result of their theatrical experiences. For example,

J2: "I used to do a lot of acting. I was in loads of plays at school. Then I did drama at college. And I did pub theatre for three years in Birmingham...What happened was we'd been doing a lot of theatre. I was unemployed for a bit...and

we just used to go round to a flat and bang on things and make up amusing songs, just by improvising. And then we started taping it. None of us had much to do. We just started picking up guitars. We just drifted into it".

This is how one women's band got together:

S3: "I started getting involved in music in 1975. There was a theatre group that went to Edinburgh that did a show. And there was music in that. We sang in that. And some of the things, we wrote for it. And then, when the theatre group finished...we carried on playing music".

7. BOYFRIENDS/HUSBANDS

It is clear from my research that one way in which women get involved in rock bands is via their sexual relationships. The musician's wife or girlfriend gets involved in her partner's social world. She thereby has access to 'insider' knowledge, such as how to get gigs, how to practise, and how the rock world works. She is exposed to key values of the musician's world and, especially, the value of playing music. She has role models close at hand. Her partner may encourage her to start playing. If she does decide to get involved she will have access to musical equipment.

A woman's desire to play music may be an attempt to integrate her social life more closely with that of her partner, so that she sees more of him, as, for instance, when she joins the same band. Or, it may be that she is going along to his gigs and wishes to swop

the passive role of fan for the more exciting one of performer. J1. affords the best example of this:

"That's why I got in a band...Watching your man play a gig...it's a really frustrating experience ...He dragged me along. You get there early and you sit there with a pint. You sit there night after night. I remember all the time I was sitting there I was thinking, 'Christ! If I'm gonna be in this place it's much better to be up there on stage'. I was looking at the drummer, thinking, 'It's really easy what he's doing. I'm sure I could do it'...And that's a huge motivation for getting in a band. Because, by force of circumstances, I was at gigs but I was in the audience".

This is like the situation where a woman gets involved in golf to avoid being a grass widow. J1. was not even particularly interested in rock music until she met her husband:

"I've never really had a burning love for music...(My husband) has always had a huge love for music - it really excites him, he loves it. So now I love music and I love listening to records. And I can talk about it for ages".

If a man wishes his wife or girlfriend to become involved, then he is in a very good position to help that come about. He knows the ropes. He can teach her to play, help her get into a band and boost her confidence. For example,

S1: "I was going out with a boyfriend that was in a band. That's how I became interested in being in a band...It never really occurred to me that you could be a female musician, (but then) I saw this advert and thought, 'How marvellous. Girl guitarist wanted for all-girl dance and beat band. That sounds exciting!'"

Her boyfriend encouraged her:

"He said, 'Why don't you answer it?' So I did. I applied for it with just a hobby in mind, and he pushed me along, and gave me his guitar, and showed me how to do a bar chord."

All the other members of S1.'s band had also got involved via their husbands and boyfriends.

One band I interviewed was composed of four married women, each with young children. These women would not have been in a band had they not been married to musicians:

S2: "Our husbands had always played in bands. We used to meet that way...So we thought, 'Why don't we have a band? Then we can get out three evenings a week as well!' If you've got it every day of the week from your husband...a bit gets rubbed off ...It's been an escape from being a boring housewife...We were all at the same stage - with kids and housework. We were sat at home with nothing to do, while...our husbands were out."

Thus the band allowed them to widen their horizons. It gave them a valid excuse (in their husbands' eyes) to escape from the house and their domestic role. Just going out to the pub would not have been acceptable. Given the importance their husbands placed on music, setting up a band was the ideal vehicle for escape.

8. A TIME: THE PARTICULAR MUSICAL 'MOMENT' OF PUNK

AND ITS AFTERMATH, NEW WAVE

In the late 1970s there was a marked increase in the number of women rock musicians, partly attributable to the rise of punk and new wave music.

By changing the existing rock conventions, punk opened up a 'space' in which women could play. Far more women leapt across the great divide between fan and performer than in the previous two decades. In the 'progressive' period, which immediately preceded punk, instrumental virtuosity was required. Punk brought in musical simplification, in terms of structure and rhythm, and made spirit more important than expertise. Indeed, for a while, amateurishness and mistakes were in fashion; punks were not just 'rough' but actually anti-polished. Many women started performing who had previously lacked the confidence to even consider joining a band. If boys could play knowing only one or two chords, then so could women. For instance, it was possible for B2. to play just one note on the bass throughout her first gig. Likewise, it was punk which got V1. playing for the first time in her life,

"We emerged in 1976/77 when the punk thing happened. Punk was very important, because until then I felt alienated from music...The ethos of punk was that anybody can get on stage and do it. And if punk had not happened I don't think we would have been allowed on stage".

Women started bands and gigged right away, learning en route. Audience expectations had changed and such 'absolute beginners' were accepted. For example,

S4: "Everybody could play in bands who couldn't really play. You could do gigs. There was a lot of gigs at that time. Like, the Marquee used to be a very select type of place, and then in '77 everyone was playing there...The feeling was good; everyone

was so friendly...(Without punk) we wouldn't have formed a band 'cause we would have thought we was terrible! We all learnt from scratch - all of us together...We done our first gig after we'd done only one rehearsal. We was absolutely abysmal...We weren't serious about it. We just used to do it for a laugh, really. It was good fun".

And K2. tells how, in 1979, her band was touring English universities within one month of forming:

"When we started we were terrible and we went down really well everywhere!"

Bands like this were accepted as a breath of fresh air on a basically stale rock scene. The fact that it was women playing added to the novelty. Their sheer nerve, in getting up on stage and trying, was appreciated.

K1. felt that punk made it easier for all women to play, regardless of whether they were actually in a punk band or not:

"Because that was the time when the Slits and a few other girls' groups started popping up. People took it more seriously than they would have if (punk) hadn't started. I think it made a lot of difference to a lot of groups".

It could be argued that the career chances of all women musicians were enhanced in the late '70s and early '80s, compared to the preceding period when stereotypes were firmly set about sex-appropriate roles and when the emphasis was on technical virtuosity.

In common with women's movement bands, (and many female punks were explicitly or implicitly feminist),

the traditional emphasis on attractiveness and glamour was challenged. Punk women, like Poly Styrene and Laura Logic, refused to be defined in conventional ways. They broke all the rules of feminine clothing: skirts too short, slits too high, etc. New female images were possible. A woman could be childish, eccentric, butch, or tarty. Punk women attacked conventional notions of femininity. Some went in for parody, taking 'sexy' clothes and pornographic images and flaunting them back at society: the tatty-corset-and-ripped-fishnet-stockings approach. By parading as 'slags' they robbed the label of its power.¹⁰ This brazen attack on the 'double-standard' was reinforced by the bands' names, such as 'The Slits' and 'The Snatch'. Others were determinedly a-sexual, trying to avoid all existing sexual codes:

D1: "I was an anti-front person. I used to wear this big mac and hang onto the mike and hardly move".

Similarly, faces did not have to be beautiful or pretty. In direct opposition to the beauty advice in magazines, make-up was applied in garish ways and hair dyed shocking colours. In this way the whole emphasis on the creation of 'natural' beauty was undercut.

Women performers could also be fat, tall, and even middle-aged. As C. remarks,

"Punk was a great equaliser. I was struck by the

fact that punk girls didn't think they had to live up to any kind of standard woman image. You could be any shape or size and you'd be quite acceptable".

If new images of women were allowable, so were new female vocal styles. A far wider range of women's voices found expression, as Frith (1981) points out:

"The legacy of punk to women's rock was that in making ugliness an aspect of authenticity, it opened up to female singers sounds that had previously been regarded as unfeminine and therefore unmusical. In punk, 'strident', 'grating', 'screeching', 'squawking' (once applied dismissively, for example, to Yoko Ono) were terms of praise".

This encouraged a lot more women to start performing. For example, V1.

"There have always been women singing, but not that I could identify with. 'Cause I was told that I was not pretty enough to go on the stage and be one of those. I didn't have a pretty voice, or pretty looks".

V1. was in her forties, but she did not try to disguise her age. Indeed, she drew attention to it via her lyrics about the menopause, etc.

Playing 'standards' and copying other bands was out of style, and women felt encouraged to write songs. For D.I.Y. was the norm and no theme was taboo: menstruation, contraception, rape, housework, etc. Women did not have to sing about love, and they could even write anti-romance lyrics.¹¹

Punk also reversed the trend towards increasingly expensive equipment and proclaimed that 'cheapest was best.'¹² For a brief interlude costs de-escalated. Instead of the priceless, custom-made guitars of progressive rock, punk revered the old, the battered, and the second-hand. This meant a smaller financial outlay to set a band up, and so the earnings differential between young women and men was (temporarily) irrelevant. This factor, alone, probably encouraged more women to join bands. For example, the band I was in started off with a trifling total outlay of £100 for amplification. The bass player's instrument cost a mere £20 and she did not get a better one for two years.¹³

Furthermore, as punk melted into New Wave, experimentation was rife. Musicians were breaking down a whole range of assumptions about lyrics, song structure, time signatures, instrumentation, etc. Gender-specific notions of rock were challenged as part of this overall process of deconstruction.

Non-rock instruments became fashionable. This, too, opened the door to many women. It was possible for classically-trained women to play, say, the violin or the flute in a popular music context. Nor did a band necessarily have to include the classic rock instrumental components. If no female bass player could be found in the locality then a band could still

play, compensating for the lack of a bass with the use of a percussionist or an extra keyboard-player. Nor did you need a lead guitarist, for 'lead' instruments, and solos in general, were out of fashion. (This anti-elitism resonated with the democratic principle in the women's movement which insisted that nobody should take up too much 'space'.) In particular, punk undermined the 'male-guitar-hero' pose.¹⁴ Instruments were often swapped around. For example,

V3: "We're not so concerned with being a good guitarist or a good singer, which is why we all play several instruments and why we all sing...in order to 'deconstruct' it a bit. It's not the one person at the front".

9. PLACE:

(a) Higher Education.

For young women, leaving home to go to university or polytechnic gives freedom from parental restrictions. They have considerably more control over their own lives. It is also a period of time when women are removed from the obligations of earning a living, housework, and raising a family. Student culture allows involvement in many activities which are difficult to fit into a 9-to-5 routine. It is easier to get band members together in the same place at the same time. Hours are more flexible than in ordinary working life. A very late night can be

compensated for by lying in bed the following morning and skipping some lectures. Thus higher education, whether art school, university, or polytechnic, is a context in which some of the important constraints which I have already discussed are lifted.

In terms of concrete resources, a college environment will often provide equipment storage facilities, rehearsal space, and a venue for gigs. Use of minibuses for transporting equipment can often be arranged and, sometimes, money from student union funds to help subsidise costs.

A number of the musicians I interviewed became involved in playing whilst at college, and all-women bands have often developed in university towns. For example, it would appear that the university was an important factor in the emergence of the women's music scene in York. A significant number of the people in the three women's bands were either students or ex-students from the university. Similarly, Brighton's all-women band emerged from among university students.

(b) Local Music Scene.

The organisation of musicians into a supportive community, or collective, has been of crucial significance for the emergence of a number of all-women bands. Women tend to have fewer material

resources than men, and therefore benefit a lot from a situation of sharing. Whilst local male rock cultures often exclude women, certain localities have proved exceptional. For example, in Brighton the Resources Centre was an important form of support for a large number of bands. Seventy nine male bands and one women's band practised there. Some of the male musicians shared their equipment with the women and helped them.

S5: "Every band had an arch - a vault! And we shared our vault with four bands. We were the only women's band, but they were all sympathetic men and, between us, we had the equipment for one band. We could practice in the arch. We could form a band because the arch was there; because other bands had equipment. It was owned by individuals but they left it in the arch. It was very cooperative, that situation...We all got on well, and the men had to support the women's band. We felt we were the poorest of the bands...We wouldn't have existed if there hadn't been 'the Vaults'".

(c) Local Women's Movement.

Sometimes it is other women who provide the equipment and knowledge which helps get women musicians started. Places which had a strong feminist movement in the 1970s were more likely to have developed all-women bands. Firstly, having a lot of feminists in the area meant that there was a reasonable-sized 'pool' of potential women musicians; that is, women who would be willing to learn to play in a feminist context. Secondly, regular women-only bops provided the opportunity for novice bands to

debut in a supportive environment. All-women socials created a demand for women-only bands. For example, Brighton used to have a regular women-only event called the 'Women's Monthly'. Thus the local women's band had at least one gig per month.

Feminist musicians will also often help other women with equipment and musical instruction. For example,

A4: "I'd seen pictures in the (local paper) and it said 'All girl band'. And I was really into being in a band at the time. I'd seen (the bass player) on the street, and I spoke to her and asked her about the band. I went round to her house and played the bass. She showed me the notes and how to put my fingers. She gave me lessons for about a year - free. She wouldn't take any money. I asked her. She wouldn't take nothing".

A4. was unemployed and could not afford a bass or amplifier. Another local woman came to her aid:

"She said I could have it for £50. She was going to Leeds...She left, and I'd only paid her £10. And she said I could have it free after that. So I didn't bother paying the rest. It was really good luck. Then she sent a message and said I could have an amp, free, to go with the bass".

Sometimes equipment has been passed on successively, from band to band, within feminist circles. This has been particularly true in London.

10. FEMINISM

Another important route which has led many women into music-making has been feminism. For example,

A1: "I don't think I would have started playing in bands if I hadn't become involved in the women's movement".

Feminists got involved in rock music-making for a number of reasons. For some, the main motivation was political. Being in an all-women band was a means of communicating a feminist world view. It was a chance to write lyrics which challenged ideological hegemony. Many others, like myself, had long-held musical aspirations but lacked the confidence to approach a male band with a view to joining. Early seventies feminism emphasised the importance of women entering male terrain, doing things *which only men were* supposed to be able to do. Regardless of the lyrics and the music, being in a band was a political statement in itself, and it was recognised as such at all-women gigs. When I first heard that some feminist women in my locality were trying to get an all-women band together I was down there in a flash, despite my very limited playing abilities.

Many women, who would not otherwise have ever considered joining a rock band, have been encouraged to make music by the separate playing context which the 1970s women's movement created. Indeed, some women have started playing an instrument for the very first time simply because there was a need for all-women bands to supply live music at women-only socials.

Feeling excluded from the mainstream (male) rock world, feminists created a musical world of their own, in which women could play solely with, and for, other women. This world offered the chance to rewrite the 'rules': of the lyrics, of band membership, of the gig, of the stage, and even of the music itself. Women created a different, and alternative, group culture to that of the 'straight' rock world.

The women's movement converted many women from non-musicians to music-makers, via creating a sympathetic 'space' for their early endeavours. One of the main features of the women's liberation movement was that it provided a forum in which women's voices could be heard, even if those voices were inarticulate, confused, or lacking in confidence. In this context many women learned to speak in public, chair meetings, and take an active part in political debate, who would otherwise not have done so. The overriding norm was tolerance. Thus it was that women's bands which started off tentative and unskilled were given support and encouragement. It was enough, at first, that women were playing at all.

Early feminist bands (with prosaic names), like the London Women's Rock Band, also served as important role models for a whole clutch of new women's bands which emerged in the late seventies. For example,

A2: "I got into the women's movement and I saw the Stepney Sisters play and that was the first women's/feminist band I'd seen. And I thought, 'Oh, I've got to get into a band'".

In turn, these bands have served as role models for more women. For example, I was in a women's band which gigged around the country for a number of years, and I have been told by a whole succession of women that it was seeing our band perform which inspired them to start learning to play an instrument.

The earliest bands to spring out of the contemporary women's liberation movement were often a sort of musical variant of a 'women's group'. For example, T. recalls her first women's band:

"We met once a week and we used to talk after every rehearsal. We were all really eager to talk to each other. We just used to talk and talk and talk. We just used to sit around the table and it was amazing...We used to take turns. It became more like a consciousness-raising thing as well as a band. We were really close".

And the politics was sometimes as important as the music:

T: "We decided we were only going to have people in the band who were exactly politically right. We used to audition them, but not for their playing - for their politics".

Also, the occasional women's music workshops which feminists developed were an important source of inspiration for many women, and a chance to try out rock instruments. For example,

S3: "I went to two 'Women and Music' workshops in Liverpool that summer of '76. And there were women from Stepney Sisters and The Northern Women's Rock Band and all that. And I picked up a bass there. That was the first time I laid hands on a bass, (and yet) there had been a bass guitar in my house for a whole year and I'd never touched it. And I came back from those workshops thinking, 'I've got to play an instrument', and I thought, 'Right, I'm going to learn the bass.' So I did".

11. LESBIANISM

Lesbianism is also important. A significant proportion of women-only bands have been lesbian. This is partly because the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s contained a large number of lesbians. Lesbians preferred to play with other women rather than men.

Separatist politics became increasingly important during the 1970s. It was argued that lesbianism was not merely an individual sexual preference but a political commitment. Eisenstein summarises the argument:

"...it was lesbians who were most likely to focus personal attention and energy on women rather than on men. A woman who sought and received validation from other women was not hostage to male approval. If the personal was the political, then the choice to give primacy to a woman in one's personal relationships was of great political significance". (Eisenstein, 1984. p.48)

Lesbianism became an increasingly vocal political movement, and was viewed as the most 'radical' wing of feminism. Many feminists thus became lesbians, in

terms of their identity, if not necessarily their sexuality, and lesbians became politicised as feminists. This, for instance, was how A1. got involved in a women's band:

"Becoming a lesbian and then getting involved in Gay Liberation...a lot of the politics of Gay Liberation fitted in with certain aspects of feminism. And it was almost without really being aware of it, because I'd started going to women's things. I went to one or two conferences. I went probably because...there was going to be a social. I gradually got drawn into it....I was involved in the collective for a while. I helped organise a Women's Day march and a social in the evening...and we had the Stepney Sisters playing at it...Then I got into music and that was where my energy went into the women's movement".

It was lesbians who were most involved in developing feminist alternatives in terms of theory, culture, and identity.¹⁵ Specifically, it was lesbians who had the most need of women's bands, to provide live music at women-only events, such as bops after Gay Pride marches.¹⁶

During the 1970s lesbians developed a coherent subculture with its own norms, values and institutions. This represented a more radical alternative to dominant culture than any of the formations studied by subculturalists.¹⁷ Many women who became involved in this world got drawn into music-making, and the music they created reflected their subcultural perspective. They had their own

venues and support systems, even record distribution.¹⁸

Moreover, lesbians had liberated themselves from a many of the constraints which I have discussed: the need to prove their femininity and conform to heterosexist expectations; the role of wife or girlfriend, and so on. Without such conventional heterosexual commitments and constrictions, lesbians were freer than the average woman to engage in rock music-making if they so desired.

12. ROLE MODELS

I have already mentioned the importance of the lack of female role models. Those women who do play, then, often serve as a source of inspiration for other would-be musicians. Some women told me that they had first become motivated to play music, or join a band, by seeing other women playing in a rock context. For example, B3. remembers seeing women playing in an electric band when she was 13 or 14:

"Amazing women. Very good, they were. Very strong women. It definitely had an influence on me. There's no doubt about it...I never thought a woman could do it".

In the following case it was not actually seeing a women's band performing but, rather, hearing a record (by the Runaways) which inspired a woman to play:

S4: "When I was 16 I heard this record on the radio...So I went out and bought it. I thought, 'It can't be girls playing this. It can't be! I thought, 'Oh, God! I can't believe it'. I bought their albums and I went mad on them. And that's when I wanted to join an all-girl band, from then on. That's before I even started playing".

Many of the women I interviewed were highly aware that they, in turn, were serving as role models for other women. For example,

V1: "I saw a 3 year old girl at Hebden Bridge. She was sat...looking while we did our sound-check. And I thought, 'Great! She's watching my daughter (playing)', and she'd seen me on stage. And I'd never seen anybody like that before I started. I didn't know that there were women doing it at all. Knowing that that little kid saw me play, and that my daughter found it natural to play bass guitar - I just think that's wonderful. I feel really privileged to be part of that".

Notes:

1. In her empirical research in Milton Keynes, Ruth Finnegan (1989) found a number of instances where (male) band members had parents who were, or had been, musicians.

2. Before the Second World War, in both Britain and America, the tradition of 'family bands' was the means by which a large proportion of women became musicians. Martha Vicinus, in her study of women entertainers in England during the interwar years, says,

"It was sometimes easiest for those who came from families that had been in entertainment for generations and had never thought of doing anything else". (1979. p.358-359)

Many of the jazzwomen whose lives are recounted in the books by Placksin (1985) and Dahl (1984) were introduced to playing and trained by their families - famous performers such as Victoria Spivey and Ma Rainey. Mary Osborne, for example, was so steeped in jazz as a child, that she believed everyone in the world was a musician. Dahl says, of her interviewees,

"Significantly, in many cases, one or both of their parents (or sometimes siblings, close relatives, or teachers) were either musicians themselves or were unusually supportive of their playing ambitions". (Dahl, 1984. p.43)

3. This was important in Anne Oakley's background:
"I identified with my father and felt ambivalent towards my mother. In that sense my relationship with my father has been the most powerful influence in my life...my mother seemed to my childish eyes less remarkable and more ordinary than my father". (Oakley, 1984. p.13)

4. Sue Sharpe (1976) suggests that upper middle class girls are under less pressure to conform to gender norms. At boarding school they are more likely to get involved in sport and, in this context, aggression and non-feminine behaviour is allowed. It may be that boarding school creates a breathing space from the pressures of femininity. In contrast, working class girls are under most pressure. Lack of school success means that the emphasis swings to the search for a husband, and thus conformity to femininity is likely.

Sharpe also mentions the significance of a left-wing family background for widening girls' horizons and aspirations. Four of my interviewees came from such a background. For example, S5. describes her family as "liberal and progressive". Her father was a life-long member of the Communist Party and her mother an ex-shop steward. This gave S5. a completely different outlook from her schoolfriends:

"I was in a very normal working class school and all my mates were going steady. And they married and everything. I just had different prospects...My teachers thought I was going to go to secretarial college (but) I was determined, just because of my background, that I was going to go to university. I wasn't gonna leave school at 15".

5. John Street, 1986. p.128.

6. The following women were, at least to some extent, classically trained: A1; A2; A3; B1; B2; B3; C; D1; H2; H3; J3; J4; J5; K2; R1; S2; S3; S4; S5; V2.

7. In fact, Alison Fell's future turned out differently:

"In spite of my staunch teenage vows against marriage, during the five years at Edinburgh I was married, divorced and finally pregnant, so that in 1967 I found myself in Leeds as faculty wife, mother, and depressive". (Heron (ed.), 1985. p. 24)

In all the arts (except writing) the assumption exists that only men are truly creative. Although there are as many female as male art students, far fewer women actually become career artists. Instead, they marry and then cease to be creative. In my research H4.'s experience is the clearest example of this pattern:

"I'd got this thing about wanting to play blues on the piano...I couldn't do it when I lived with him because he was a musician...That was his thing and I was just there to watch him. It was very significant that I didn't take it up until he'd gone. Because he was the creative one. We had different roles. I had the kids and he had his job and his guitar. It happened with painting as well, because I could really paint. And I gave that up to get married (and had kids) really soon after that. So I didn't have time to do anything. He didn't stay on at college, and I gave college up to get married. And I stopped painting as well. I just stopped being creative...I got married and everything just stopped".

This is a typical pattern. It is, for example, exactly what happened to Cynthia Lennon. This is also why so few female, compared to male, art students become musicians. H4. was only able to become a musician after she had broken away from her husband.

8. Bohemianism has been a far more powerful and explicit source of resistance, particularly for women, than the working class formations which subcultural theorists have chosen to focus on. It is surprising, therefore, that it has been largely ignored in the literature.

However, I do not wish to give the impression that women taking on some kind of bohemian identity has been unproblematic. I was immersed in this style for a number of years, from when I was about 16. Previously a tomboy, a bohemian identity allowed me to continue my escape from the conventions of femininity. I adopted the style from observations at folk and jazz clubs, and from what I could glean from literature. Although a virgin, I argued the case for "free love" at school. I deliberately courted the label 'beatnik' and gave the impression that I had broken far more social rules than, in fact, I had. I consequently had a lot of trouble with men misjudging my sexual experience. I wanted to be bohemian but had no knowledge of contraception and did not wish to become pregnant. I was not, at the time, aware of the contradictions I was inhabiting.

I was inspired by Kerouac (1958) and the 'beat' poets. They seemed to offer an exciting alternative to

the stuffy conformity and sexual repression of the early 1960s. But I could not identify with any of the women in 'beat' literature. They were just temporary figures, "shelters from the storm" for the male characters, and often prostitutes. There were no independent, free, strong women. In the songs I listened to, at blues and folk clubs, there were only women who sat patiently at home, lonely, abused and broken-hearted, waiting for their man to return. (At this time you never heard the hard-hitting female blues numbers like Bessie Smith's 'Second Fiddle', etc.) I could not find any women, in either the literature or in real life, who came anywhere near the 'beat' image. 'Real' bohemians seemed to be male. So I identified with the men. But this created problems. The reality, for example, of solo hitchhiking posed specific dangers for a woman. All I could do, it seemed, was wait for the appearance of my bohemian man, my ticket into the subculture.

Bohemian culture offered women the same old service roles: sweet little girl, mother earth, artist's muse, and so on. I could not find the role I was looking for within this subculture because it did not exist. In a masculinist and male-dominated subculture the only active and 'free' role was that of a man. In those 'pre-feminist' days I was unaware of this. Nor was I aware that there were other young women who shared my dilemma. Sheila Rowbotham, for instance:

"I managed to get On the Road...I simply switched sex as I did with Miller and Lawrence and identified with the men because they were exciting and dangerous. On the Road was 'a coded message of discontent', an exultation of moving on. Hitchhiking was made to seem infinitely exciting. The fact that the girls invariably got a rough ride in the beat movement never really dawned on me until later. I just thought it was somehow inevitable that girls were meant to be heroically tough and miraculously soft at the same time. Exhaustingly I tried to live the contradiction". (Rowbotham, 1973. p.14-15)

Elizabeth Wilson (1982) also found her role in bohemian culture to be limited to Artist's support service. A woman's desire to do Art itself (whether writing, painting or music) was perceived as a threat by bohemian men.

The 1970s, hippy, version of bohemianism, despite the sexual freedom, offered women the same tired old roles:

"The passivity of the ideal 'chick' - serene and spiritual although she was completely broke and standing in endless NAB queues, with a baby on her breast and her tarot cards on her knee - was

transparently a new version of the old mystique".
(Rowbotham, 1973. p.21)

See also, 'Vida' by Marge Piercy (1980) for the American version. The masculinism of the culture comes through most graphically of all in Richard Neville's panoramic view of hippy culture, 'Play Power', in which we are told that "The way to a girl's mind is through her cunt". (1970. p.92.)

9. The following women had been significantly involved in drama at some point prior to commencing their musical careers: A1; A2; B5; B1; B2; H1; H2; H4; J2; J3; K1; K2; M; R1; S1; S3; V1.

10. As the punk phenomenon spread through society it soon solidified into a far narrower (and sexually stereotyped) stylistic range, and female punks became marginalised. (The same thing had happened to both mods and skinheads.) However, female performers maintained the freedom to experiment with sexual imagery and resist gender stereotyping.

11. Punk bands wrote aggressive and insulting lyrics, rather than love songs. In male bands, some of these negative feelings were directed at women. As Laing (1985) says,

"...the lifting of the taboo on the unsayable in rock discourse ended in a new way of saying something quite old: a celebration of male sexuality as essentially aggressive and phallogentric". (p.46)

The lyrics of many punk bands were as misogynist and sexist as those of the Rolling Stones. Yet, at the same time, punk allowed women to voice their anger and frustration with the sexual status quo.

12. In fact, 'pub rock' had already promulgated this approach and developed a whole mythology around old valve amps, like AC30s. For you could not fit whole banks of amplification in the back room of a pub; nor did you need to.

13. But the liberating effect of amateurism and poverty was inevitably short-lived. By definition, professional musicians cannot stay amateur. They become more skilled and desire better equipment. Moreover, whilst virtually all the male punk bands made a fairly fast transition to professional status, few female bands survived into the mid-'80s. This suggests that the transition from amateur to professional status is easier for male bands.

14. I would agree with Laing (1985) who argues that female punk performers went far further in challenging the sexist connotations of established performing styles than did their male equivalents:

"Most punk bands shared with earlier groups the guitar-based line-up and the 'spontaneous' adoption of a narrow range of guitar-playing and parading genres...the performance of male artists generally showed an uncritical adherence to standard styles which emphasised macho postures. In complete contrast, most of the best-known female punk musicians set themselves up to undo the conventional performing roles provided as models by mainstream music". (p.87 and p.97-98)

15. Lesbian separatists also developed the (essentialist) notion of a "women's music". Some rejected rock altogether (turning to acoustic music instead), and all rejected 'heavy metal' as being quintessentially 'male'. "Women's music" was defined in contradistinction to heavy rock, but proved impossible to define in its own terms.

16. This was a pressing problem as quite a few 'straight' non-feminist bands would not play at all-women events. Moreover, lesbians wanted 'woman-identified women' to perform: bands who would sing love songs for and to the women in the audience, and whose lyrics would reflect a lesbian consciousness.

17. Lesbian and feminist subcultures have proved just the sort of subcultural experience which McRobbie says is needed as an alternative to male-dominated youth subcultures:

"To the extent that all-girl subcultures, where the commitment to the gang comes first, might forestall these processes and provide their members with a collective confidence which could transcend the need for 'boys', they could well signal an important progression in the politics of youth culture". (McRobbie, 1980. p.49)

18. In Britain this did not develop to the same extent as in America, where feminists and lesbians created a whole institutional network of women-only record labels and recording studios.

Chapter 9. JOINING A BAND

There seems to be a fairly typical way in which male bands get started: a group of friends (usually at the same school, of the same age and living in the same locality) gradually evolves into a rock group.¹ My research suggests that this is not at all the typical way in which female bands emerge. There are also a number of male musicians who play along to records, alone at home, for years before actually joining a band. Research suggests that this pattern, too, is rare amongst women. As I have indicated in Chapter 8, women get involved in a band via other routes: a musician boyfriend or husband; involvement in the theatre; being part of a local feminist or lesbian network, etc.

Whatever the impetus for setting up a band, certain material requirements must be met. A band needs instruments, amplification, transport and a rehearsal space. These, in turn, require money. Until these needs are met the significant starting-point, the first rehearsal, will not be reached and 'the band' will remain a notional entity; an aspiration, rather

than a reality. I have already argued that women have less access to money, transport and space and, no doubt, a lot of women's bands never get off the ground for this reason. On the other hand, a man joining an already established band would be expected to own the necessary equipment, whereas, because of the shortage of women instrumentalists, a woman might be welcomed into a women's band with no instrument whatsoever:

H1: "I think they would have been severely handicapped if they had wanted to get somebody who had all their own equipment...I didn't have any equipment at all".

Some bands get help with equipment and transport from musician boyfriends and husbands. For example,

S2: "We didn't have any gear to start with. I was borrowing other drummers' kits...L.'s husband played bass and L. could use it. Mike played in bands and he couldn't say no if J3. wanted to use the piano, because he's already got all the gear anyway. It must have helped, you know, urged us on a bit. And then we got our own stuff together later on. Well, we didn't have any money; we couldn't have done it otherwise".

Feminists are often aided by other feminist bands. For instance,

T: "The original London Women's Rock Band had had a bass and had lent it to the Stepney Sisters, but on the understanding that it would always get passed on". (This bass, in turn, was lent to T.'s band, along with a piano.)

It is feminist politics which has underlain the practice of sharing/ lending/ giving equipment, which

has enabled women to play who would otherwise have never had the chance.

As discussed in Chapter 8, other local bands can sometimes be a source of assistance, especially when they are organised into some sort of collective (although this is rare).

A major problem is finding a suitable practice space, which can accommodate all the band members and all of their equipment: most living rooms are too small. It is important to have the same rehearsal room, as the architecture affects the sound; if you chop and change you have to keep making decisions about where and how to set up the equipment.

Women band members are prepared to put up with highly inhospitable surroundings in order to be able to start practising:

S2: "It was really grotty; right next to the canal, very damp basement and very cold - miserable to play in".

Male bands also face these kinds of problems but less than women, I think, as they are more likely to be able to afford reasonable rehearsal space.²

Once a band has equipment, and access to both transport and a rehearsal space, it is in the position to start making music.

INITIAL ISSUES

Two issues confront the novitiate band:

(a) Who shall play which instrument?

(b) What kind of music shall we play?

The first question is not one which typically confronts male bands. Male musicians are more likely to be able to play before joining a band, or at least attend the first practice with some clear idea of what it is they are going to play. Women are much less likely to be able to play already. Quite a number of women I interviewed had never played any rock instrument before, and the sheer shortage of female musicians means that often a woman who turns up intending to play one instrument is entreated to play a completely different one. The lack of female bass players and drummers is the main problem.

A1: "The first time we got together...I played guitar - not terribly well. I wasn't a great guitarist. And we decided we were gonna have a band and we were looking for a bass player. And we couldn't find a bass player...We met and there was a bass and a bass amp. And I said, 'Well, look, I'd quite like to have a go on the bass, you know, and if it's no good we'll carry on looking for a bass player'...I had a basic knowledge of the guitar, so it wasn't altogether too difficult".

Male musicians are usually drawn together to play a certain style of music. This is not necessarily true of female musicians. Again, the small size of the 'pool' of players is a determining factor here. For

many of the women I interviewed, the desire to play in an all-women band was far more important than the style of the music itself - at the beginning, that is. Some novices had no preferred style at all, whilst others had to compromise to join a band. This can lead to problems later.

S1: "It would be nice to have more choice, other players to play with. It can be a problem, if you're really set on being a reggae player and you come from Leeds and there's only one girl-band, and they're not really into playing reggae. Then you're stuck...But I didn't know what I wanted to play until I joined the band. I only (recently) discovered that I'm really a sort of 'funky' player...And I'd love to be in a heavy funk band".

For bands composed of already experienced musicians the pattern is different - the band starts out with an agreement on the style of music they are going to perform, their projected audience, and so on - but this is very rare amongst female bands because of the small number of experienced rock performers.

S1: "It's really difficult. because if you haven't been through that whole thing of playing covers and Jimi Hendrix solos and Eric Clapton things...You have never experienced the whole thing of playing rock, and a bit of this and a bit of that - to have gone through it all and (then) put it aside, to know exactly what you want to play. So, for me, the three years that I've been playing have been an experiment, sorting out what direction I personally, and the band, want to go in. And I think it's really showed...I think it would be good for anybody that was thinking about being in a band to get an electric guitar at 12 and do all those bedroom and garage things, go through all that so that you've got it all sorted out in your head. So you don't have to go through all that experimental period once you're in a band that's trying to be

successful. You need to exhaust all that, so that you've got a direction once you're in a band".

This goes back to the fact that young girls do not see rock musician as a role to which they can aspire.

LEARNING TO PLAY ROCK INSTRUMENTS

For some band members the very rudiments of playing their instrument are learnt within the band.

S1: "What girls have been confronted with...is being a girl-band in a male-orientated world. How can we do this? How can we go about this? We were all in the same boat together. None of us could play any better than anybody else. So we helped each other. We listened out, on my old record player for the bass line, and all those that could play guitar and bass tried to work it out, until we got it - in the end - and then the bass player played it. We listened to the horns and helped M. work out the horns. So we helped each other. Right from the word go there was this working-together atmosphere, each one having an equal say in the matter".

Other women may have been classically trained and are therefore 'musical', and may even define themselves as 'musicians', but they still have to learn to play rock. An outsider might assume that a trained musician would be easily able to transfer her skills from one musical genre to another. This is not so. Being able to read and understand written music is no clear advantage in rock. Some even argue that it is a disadvantage. For example,

A2: "That's the thing about being classically-trained, you've got to throw it all away and start again!"

I shall address this issue in some detail here because it applies to many women in bands, especially keyboard-players.

FROM CLASSICAL TO ROCK

Classical music skills are not the same thing as rock skills and a classical education may be more of a hindrance than a help when it comes to learning rock. My research clearly indicates that many classically trained female musicians have trouble making the transition. This can be a source of great anxiety: a woman's identity as a musician is threatened, and she experiences a crisis of technical confidence. Many years of a classical training - and for some women I interviewed that included degree courses - means internalising the norms and social structure of the classical world. There is a sexual division of labour within the world of classical music. Although more women learn to play classical music, men outnumber women in orchestras and monopolise positions of power. In particular, the (male) composer is exalted, whilst the individual (female) player has low status. It is difficult for women to rid themselves of the effects of this status

hierarchy, which is part of the hidden curriculum of a course in classical music.

R1: "You've got to get rid of all the ideas that you've got to play only the music that's written down, and you're sort of servicing the composer...It did take a while to get the confidence to get away from the written music...That's the transition you have to make: from the theoretical to 'feel'".

Having been trained to follow a written score, classical musicians find improvisation a major problem. For example,

C: "I find it difficult freeing my brain to be able to initiate things. Because when you play classical music you just play what's written down by somebody else, and all your energy and musicalness goes into expressing something that someone else has written...Knowing what to play was my main problem; not having been in that situation where you're required to think something for yourself. Tied to the dots on the page...breaking away from that".

Also, as rock music is rarely written, players have to rely on their memories, another new experience for the classically trained.

Playing pop means developing a different style from classical. On keyboards the hands are doing different and usually far less complex things. The keyboard player can feel redundant. As one woman put it, pop is more like creating a poster than an oil painting.

A3: "The thing about playing in a band is, each individual doesn't have to do that much for it to sound good. I didn't realise that at first...You can often play just a single line and it's really effective...It was very halting at first. I didn't know what to do with my left hand. I do feel I have

evolved a style for playing pop music now, but I hadn't then and it was just trial and error".

This cutting down on classical skills is even more apparent with synthesiser playing. This woman played a monophonic synth and thus could not play chords:

C: "It just seemed rather a waste. It seemed that here's somebody who is able to be dexterous and yet not doing it, and being more of a technician. I mean, I like the sounds that I produce and it's nice to make them. It's just that, often, on stage I feel totally at a loose end. I think, 'What the hell am I doing here? I'm not really doing anything. I'm only playing one note!'"

Although C. downgraded her contribution to the overall sound and had problems deciding what to play, she still saw the opportunities which pop offered in a very positive light. If pop is like poster painting, "classical music is pretty well painting by numbers, because somebody is telling you what to do". Many classical musicians become critical of their training, and it can be argued, as I suggested in Chapter 8, that rock/pop is a form of rebellion against the norms of academic music.

B1: "The rules of harmony! The only rule you can possibly use is whether or not it sounds right! Even if you're writing music, surely you hear what you're writing down? But some people write music as a mathematical exercise".

Rock/pop also poses a new problem of audience.

H1: "Most of the stuff I've played before, I've had dots in front of me. And when you've got to concentrate on that, you can't think about your relations with the audience, because the

relationship with the written music is more fundamental to the performance. Whereas, being in a rock band it's not. It's just you and the audience".

Finally, perhaps surprisingly, although used to analysing classical music in depth, 'educated' musicians often do not think of being analytical about rock and pop. For example,

H1: "It sounds really silly to me to say this, but...I haven't been really aware of listening to things closely at all, or analysing - which is a complete contradiction, having been involved in a music degree, done an analysis portfolio, listened to and pulled classical pieces apart, and yet had the attitude to pop music that I enjoyed it, but...I think I have listened to pop very lazily".

AMPLIFICATION

For many women, whether classically trained, folk guitarists, or complete newcomers, joining a band is their first experience with amplification. There is a whole world to come to grips with.

First, there are anxieties about electricity which women, unused to this 'masculine' domain, have to overcome. Many spoke of their initial fear of 'feedback'.

S1: "I had to turn up for the audition...and I felt, 'Oh, God!' 'cause I'd never played electric guitar...I was really scared".

Guitarists have to learn to overcome this fear of feedback, to see it as one of the distinctive

resources of the electric guitar, to be tamed and exploited for effect. They have to learn the effects of amp settings; how speakers and speaker positions affect sound; the use of various kinds of 'pedals' for sustain, compression, phasing, flanging, chorus effects, fuzz, delay, echo, graphic equalisation, etc; how to 'slide' and 'bend' notes; how to play with their fretboard hand. Males pick up much of this arcane knowledge before they join a band, women come across it for the first time when they do.

V1: "I think there is a tendency for us still to be scared of equipment: the 'black-box-with-chrome-knobs' syndrome...I've obviously become very familiar with what I do but I still don't feel physically as at one with my equipment as I think most men do...It took me a year before I turned my volume up. Roger would see that my amp was turned up even if I turned it down, because I was still scared of it...of making a noise to that extent. I turned the knobs down on my guitar for a whole year. And then, suddenly, I thought, 'Fuck it! I'm not going to do that anymore'".

All of these problems become more significant when gigging starts. Women then have to confront not just the technology itself - in an even more amplified setting - but also the entrenched sexism of male technicians. I shall be discussing this in the next chapter.

For women who have been learning from books, being in a band enables them to learn the 'tricks of the trade' which would otherwise be hidden from them -

unlike men very few women learn to play from records.

For example,

J1: "I've never really done the record scene - which I think you might find is common to a lot of women, for some reason. Men learn the whole set of Eric Clapton solos...And you get Billy Cobham drum solos off. And I listen to a record and I think, 'Oh, that's great!' Then I sit down at a drumkit and nothing happens. And I never go on through that bit, thinking 'I will sit here. I will analyse for four nights exactly what he's doing and work out how he plays those two bars. I will do it'...And I think that's a female attitude".

Most women musicians know that analysing records is a useful method of learning; it is just that, somehow, they do not do it. They lack confidence in their ability to be able, ultimately, to work it out and are therefore not willing to invest the very long hours it takes. It is only being in a band that gives women the necessary incentive. They can learn from each other; they are not struggling alone. Boys usually know other boys who are learning: they can compare work on records and figure sounds out in small groups. But girls tend not to be in rock-music-making peer groups. If they do try to learn the electric guitar it is typically a solitary experience (unless they are going out with a musician boyfriend who is willing to help them). This goes back to "electric" music being perceived as 'male' terrain. As they leave their teens, women buy fewer records than men and are far more likely to live without a record player. Indeed, some of the women musicians I interviewed still did

not possess one. The point here is that while, for boys, joining a band is a stage in the gradual process of learning how to hear and play rock music, for young women joining a band is when the learning starts.

SINGERS

Even singers have new techniques to deal with: they have to learn to sing through a mike, quite different from acoustic singing, as this quote illustrates:

A3: "I found...that I had to project my voice far more. And I don't think I sing very well through a microphone...It's just a completely different style, really. I feel I tend to shout a bit when I'm singing through a mike, 'cause I'm worried about it being heard. In fact, the more singing I've done the better I've got, obviously".

Because the voice is taken to be 'natural', even in women's bands vocalists can feel insecure "just singing", as if they are not contributing (or learning) as much as the instrumentalists, and are therefore easily replaceable. Thus, singers often learn to play an instrument as well, even if it is just some form of percussion to be played occasionally, like the tambourine. (In feminist bands this can be a gesture too against the limited "chick singer" role prescribed for women in rock bands in the past.) For example,

V1: "When we were just beginning to make music, I felt excluded from that because I was singing. S3.

and I both started fiddling around with the bass guitar. But she got to it before I did. So I thought, 'Alright. I don't want to be left out of this. I'll try the rhythm guitar'".

LEARNING TO PLAY TOGETHER

Apart from learning how to play their own instruments and to play in an amplified rock or pop style, band members must learn how to play with each other. There is a subtle and complex web of skills and norms involved in this. Band members must be able to hear the instruments separately - whether on a record, on tape, or live - which is one skill; they must be able to listen to each other whilst the whole group is playing, which is another. Some band members have always been able to pick out and listen to individual sounds whilst listening to a piece of music. Others (the majority) learn this from being in a band, and all members improve this skill by practising together. This is part of the general change that comes about when people first join a group: they become analytical about rock music. They do not let the noise flood over them, but break it up and try to work out what is being played and how, instrument by instrument, section by section. The same record will be listened to very many times, and each time a different thing is being heard. Many of the women I interviewed mentioned this change in their listening habits. For example,

A3: "This has changed my whole way of listening to music. 'Cause I can no longer listen to it as a whole. I have to analyse it down to whatever everyone's doing".

Norms govern all aspects of playing. They regulate tempo, volume and tone; what to play and when to play it. Some learners play too loud and/or too much and have to learn to give others 'space'. Such learning can be more or less competitive, which is one problem women musicians may have in male bands. For example,

H4: "It was really awful - who was going to do the biggest and longest and loudest solo? The drummer was into playing Led Zeppelin. The guitarist was into playing something totally different. There was no communication...(The drummer) was always playing very loud drums and not listening. That was the one thing they didn't do. They didn't listen to each other. There was no feeling of sharing in the music...like, you know, it goes backwards and forwards between people, this feeling. Whatever it is, it never happened at all. It was just 'Get in there and play as loud as you can'".

For female (and indeed most male) musicians what matters most about group music is that individuals show a sensitivity to what everyone else is playing. To borrow from George Herbert Mead, one could say that the novice band member must develop a 'generalised other' - an overview of the whole 'game', rather than an individualistic concern with her own role within it. The more that band members 'listen' to each other the better the group playing becomes. This point was mentioned a lot by my interviewees, many of whom believed that it was easier to learn these skills, at

least initially, in the context of an all-women line-up. For example,

A3: "I think probably we encouraged each other far more, or allowed each other to progress at our own rates, far more than men would. And I think a lot of men are quite wanky about how they play".

On the other hand, several women felt that some constructive (and necessary) criticism was missing in the carefully democratic atmosphere of women's bands:

J2: "I kept thinking, 'God, they must think this sounds awful and nobody's telling me!' It felt very much like I was working in a bit of a vacuum... It's almost as if there are sort of sacred areas - you don't tell anybody that what they're playing on the guitar is crap...People can do what they want, even if it's not particularly good".

In contrast,

B2: "Nobody gets upset about it. Like, if you say, 'Oh, I don't like that bit'. You work it out one way or another, so nobody gets upset about it". (And when conflict does threaten it is resolved.) "It mainly happens at the end of rehearsing...You know what you're like after four hours playing. You're not fresh. So we just say, 'Oh, let's not work on this because it's all loose...So let's leave it till next time'. I think that's one of the reasons why we don't beat each other up!"

For the band to gel and develop, some compromise has eventually to be worked out between an easy tolerance and mutual criticism. The overall good of the band is the main goal; the whole rather than the parts. But, even when this is accepted, problems remain. Who decides the good of the group? Is policy to be left to the people with the most obvious musical authority? The musicians I interviewed were all

committed to notions of group equality. This may have been as aspect of the 'post-punk' period: leaders were unfashionable. It was also a reflection of feminist politics: leaders were ideologically unsound. Either way, it raised a problem which is exacerbated in the next stage of a band's career: how is it to be 'fronted'? Even in a group which sees itself as completely equal and democratic, someone has to introduce the numbers and generally talk to the audience. This question is double-edged: who is capable and confident enough to perform this role? How can the resulting power be shared out?

REHEARSAL

But before these issues have to be faced other more mundane questions arise. How many practices a week should there be? How long should they last? Should one smoke or drink during a practice? Should one engage in small talk and general conversation, and if so how much and when? Does one finish the practice in time to go to the pub? How important is punctuality? Decisions are made about all of these things and they become normatively 'set', so that deviance incurs some degree of bad feeling or sanction.

All the bands in my research had norms of mutual help and tried to share out rehearsal tasks like

loading and unloading the equipment and setting up. Deviance occurred, of course, but norms clearly existed and were referred to within the band. People not pulling their weight create ill-feeling amongst the others. What's equally important, though, is that such discontent is expressed and resolved privately. It is thus crucial that people other than band members are excluded from the practice space, so that the band can concentrate on its tasks and come to see itself as a special kind of social unit. Privacy is necessary for reasons of both efficiency and morale, something which bands quickly learn for themselves if they have to deal with 'outsiders' intruding on their space.

In particular, boyfriends/husbands have to be kept out of rehearsals whether they are musicians or not. For women's bands, indeed, it is probably most important that male musicians are excluded - it is when women are trying to build up confidence on their instruments that male players are perceived (however fairly) as threatening and judgemental. It is clear from my research that if a women's band is to survive, the exclusion of male outsiders must be rigorously enforced in its early stages.

K1: "There was one girl...who was in our group whose boyfriend played guitar. And he was teaching her. And, at rehearsal, she'd say, 'Oh, I can only stay for half an hour'. And we used to get really fed up with her 'cause she didn't learn the songs. And her boyfriend was always with her, dragging her

along. They used to sit there together all the time. And we got really fed up with her in the end. So my brother just said, 'Let's play a twelve-bar'. 'Cause that's the first thing that everyone learns. He said, 'You can play that, can't you?' And she was sitting next to her boyfriend and she goes, 'Oh, I dunno. Mick, can I play a twelve-bar?' So after that we decided to get rid of her and she hasn't done nothing since".

This example is from a mixed band. If it had been a women's band the boyfriend would probably not have been tolerated in the first place. It is important either way that women are seen to be learning to play for themselves and not endlessly dependent on a man's direction.

ANCILLARY SKILLS

People who join electric bands not only learn how to play instruments together, they learn how to amplify them, set them up, and transport them, etc. Even packing the vehicle efficiently is a learnt task. Because people assume that (masculine) strength is the prerequisite for such "humping", it is particularly important for women to discover that skill is just as necessary. A1. explains:

"Equipment can be heavy but I don't think that's really a problem. Because women may not be as strong as men in terms of their physical force, but you don't need brute strength to carry equipment, even heavy stuff. You need to know how to do it. You need to lift it carefully and the right way...There's been lots of times when it's a student union and there's three or four students delegated to help carry the P.A. out - and, you get

two guys who pick up a bin and drop it half way down the steps, because they don't know what they're doing. And they're probably twice as strong as we are. And then B. and J. will come along and they can barely see over the top, and they'll pick it up and carry it to the van. It's how to do it. Women carry plenty of heavy objects. Women carry babies around. Lifting things is like a knack. If you do it the right way you don't strain yourself".³

Musicians must also learn how to repair equipment and do routine maintenance tasks - mending jack plugs, for example, means soldering (typically the first time that women have ever done this), while drummers must learn how to change drumheads and tune their drums. In time the keyboard player learns how to change the guitarist's strings, and the guitarist learns how to organise the keyboards. Everyone learns how to set up all the equipment - the practice P.A. (if there is one), the drumkit (which always takes a long time), the guitarists' amps, and so on. And when (as usual) some equipment fails to work, each band member must be willing to address the problem, demonstrate to the others that she has technical skills, that she is at least in control of her own equipment. Without these skills (not often thought of as 'feminine', whether in formal schooling or informal peer culture) the band will never be able to gig.

Women are at a disadvantage here. Unlike boys, girls are not taught skills such as soldering. Furthermore, young women trying to work from technical

manuals find that the books assume all kinds of knowledge which women do not have. To take a relevant example, girls trying to tackle an amplifier which is not working, may have an initial problem in just trying to get the back off, for the simple reason that they are not used to screws and screwdrivers. On top of this, women suffer from 'technophobia'. Many of my interviewees talked about their 'mental block' in the face of technology and how they had struggled to overcome it. For example,

J6: "Once it sounds like it's getting technical, I immediately think, 'I don't understand that' and I turn off. In a way, I deliberately don't understand it because I think I can't cope with it. I personally find P.A.s quite unfathomable, because I'm not electrically-minded, I'm not mathematically-minded, and I think I get put off...It's like I can't comprehend it as a whole...I can't get into my head what can do what".

LANGUAGE

Becoming a member of a band means learning new languages. There is a language which describes artefacts: technical terms, phrases and abbreviations; there is a language which describes sound. Many women join bands quite ignorant of both. For example, H2. had originally thought that "arrangements" described where band members stood on the stage.

H2: "K. had done this Grade 17 piano(!) and knew all about musical theory. M. knew what the names of the notes were and also had some experience of

arranging songs. And I didn't have a clue what they were on about most of the time".

Once again, men are at an advantage. 'Masculinity' demands technical literacy and so, when men start playing rock, they pick up the technical jargon fast. They will use it wrongly rather than not employ it at all. They are concerned to be seen to know what they are doing, whether they actually do or not. Young women, however, are typically wary of such terms and reluctant to familiarise themselves with them. The innumerable technical terms which pepper the talk of rock musicians revive, in the memories of many girls, their mystification in the physics lab.

Yet a shared language is necessary simply to be able to communicate with other band members and, eventually, P.A. crews and recording technicians, and, as Wittgenstein said, the limits of one's language are the limits of one's world. Learning rock band language is learning about the world of rock bands, how that world operates, what is one's place within it.

A band member must learn what is meant by a 'bar', 'middle 8', 'riff', 'phrase', 'bass line', etc. (a lot of miscommunication occurs at early practices because people mean different things by these terms) and in time everybody is able to name each other's equipment parts and effects - 'snare', 'Hi-hat', 'toms', and so on. This is professional jargon and one

can feel somewhat silly on first using a term like 'gig' in non-musician company. It sounds pretentious; it implies that you are a fully-fledged rock player. Learning the language, in short, means taking on a new identity, making a distinction between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Such language also gives power, and I think that men typically use it in a less self-conscious way than women do - it is clearly associated with the male power of the rock world. This has certainly been so in my own experience and has come out in my interviews with other women musicians, who are often reluctant to 'talk shop' on makes of guitar, new amplifiers, etc. and are hesitant about being too 'technical' even among themselves.

GETTING SOME NUMBERS TOGETHER

Bands often start by just jamming rather than working on any specific songs. 'Jamming' may be defined as playing loosely and spontaneously for its own sake and with no particular direction. Sometimes the first band song will emerge out of an initial 'jam'. Othertimes someone will bring a semi-composed number to a practice and the band will jam around that until it 'gels'. That is, jamming can be part of the composition process. The danger is that a band may never get beyond jamming. Unless it gets some numbers

written and arranged it is unlikely that it will reach the gigging stage.

B2: "They weren't into sitting down and working out the song for hours and hours. I think that was the only difference between me and K2, and X. and Y. 'Cause they were more into just playing free. And next time you can't remember any of it. I love doing that too but I like writing songs as well, working hard on them. It does you a lot of good - sweat!"

In order to perform in front of an audience a band must be prepared to conform to the norms of the gig. At most gigs this means that a 'set' of carefully constructed numbers be presented. But getting numbers worked out takes much time and effort. It is more enjoyable, for beginners, just to play together as the mood takes them. But this immediate gratification has to be sacrificed if the band is to perform live. Some band members recalled their shock at this need for hard work. This was particularly true if they had never had any previous experience of arranging. For instance,

H2: "It took a long time, because we weren't very musically capable, to work out what notes everybody ought to be playing...and how to arrange a song. We'd five numbers and it had taken about four or five months to work all that out. People like me, who didn't know what was going on, used to get bored and pissed off because it took such a long time to do the arrangements, though I recognise that it was very important".

SONGWRITING

There is a conventional distinction between 'composing' and 'arranging' testified to by the existence of the words themselves, but in the bands I spoke to the distinction is not easily applicable. Although the words are used, the realities shade into each other. Clearly, if a band is doing a 'cover' of a 'standard' then they are not composing but arranging. However, most of the bands in my research wrote most, if not all, their own material. In some bands someone would go off alone and compose a number and then present it to the group as a finished article. But this was a rare occurrence. The most typical case was someone (or sometimes two people) presenting the band with a number which was partly written. It might have, say, the lyrics, vocal line and chords but no bass line, drum parts, or keyboards. Or else a number might be presented complete except for the lyrics and the lyric line. All kinds of variation on this pattern existed. Also the very nature of what is conventionally meant by a 'song' or 'number' had to be learnt: a pop song is usually not much more than three minutes in length; it has verses and choruses and often a 'middle 8'; it needs some kind of 'intro' and some kind of ending; it has 'lyrics' and not just a set of words. This knowledge is a prerequisite for composition.

A band is therefore both a context and an opportunity for writing. Many women who found themselves coming up with songs had never dreamt of doing so before (and some have never done so since). For example,

A3: "I never wrote a song until I joined the band. It was only joining the band that encouraged me to write anything. And I didn't know that I could before I did it. I quite surprised myself. It was a good feeling to write songs that we played...I don't really write songs now, now that I'm not playing in a band. 'Cause it's stupid writing them, 'cause I know they're not gonna get played. On occasion I might come up with the odd riff but that's as far as it goes".

If there are no men in the band and the band needs songs then at least one woman has to step into the breach, and it is often the exigency of a debut gig which reveals songwriting talents for the first time. Resentment and conflict can arise over this, although not usually at such an early stage. At this point band members are still not confident enough to criticise each other: they are wary of upsetting each other's feelings and doubt they are competent enough to criticise anyone else's material, especially if they have not themselves written anything yet. No group style or standard has yet emerged; the band is typically still experimenting and most things are given a try out. Anyway, there is a shortage of material, so all songs are gratefully received:

H2: "Anything that anyone had written was seized upon with great delight".

Later, however, as regular songwriters emerge from within the band, there can be too much material and choices have to be made. The longer the band has been playing the more likely this is to be the case. Conflict occurs between the goal of doing the best songs possible for the group and the value of self-expression for its individual members. Feelings easily get hurt - so much of the self is poured into songwriting that rejection of one's song may feel like rejection of one's person. As A3. recalls,

"We had rows and rows and rows. And that was partly because we were so collective and everyone had to come to some kind of consensus, but also because it's a very intense kind of thing to be doing, playing music with other people. And then especially as we wrote our own stuff. I'm sure that had a lot to do with it. Because if you do cover versions, then you're not likely to argue so much about the arrangement and what different people are playing. Whereas, when people did their own songs it mattered so much more what everyone did".

There is a norm in feminist bands that the original material they play must be written by women (it is usually written by the band themselves) and non-feminist bands, too, are often unhappy about featuring new songs by 'outsiders', particularly male outsiders. For example,

J3: "J4. writes most of the material and I think the songs are pretty good. But none of us are actually sure how much is J4.'s and how much is Ian's. Because she says they do it together...It

started to be apparent that Ian was sitting at home writing all these songs for our band because he wasn't in a band himself and it was his outlet. And so we started to weigh up - well, does that matter? Or not? I suppose I was more worried about it because I wanted to get some of my own songs out, and I thought, 'Well, they're not even J4.'s! They're Ian's'. We were just doing it exactly as we were told. We were just becoming the vehicles for his writing. There wasn't anything of us there. It got too manufactured and anybody, whether they could play the keyboards or not, could play these notes. There wasn't anything of me there. And I didn't like that. So I'd revolt against that, saying, 'Oh, I'm not going to do that. I'm doing this'".

Male rock and roll bands, even now, tend to start by doing covers and only later attempt to write their own material.⁴ Most women's bands mix originals and 'standards' from the start.

H4: "The main difference was that they (the men) hadn't got as much originality as the women I've played with. Or they wouldn't use it. They wanted to just do cover versions of things and be the same as other bands have been. And they just hadn't got the creative energy that women have got. They wouldn't use their own creativity or they were cut off from it...The guitarist in this band was technically really good. But he was just shit scared or couldn't find his own style. And he'd just copy things...They'd play the record and you were supposed to (copy it). Having played with women before...I was really glad that I had done, because if that had been my first experience of trying to play it might have put me off for ever".

Women's "creativity" is more a matter of politics than inspiration. Some feminists in my research, for example, argued that women's bands should not do 'covers' because the majority of existing songs have been written by men and it is about time women's voices were heard. The suggestion here is that women

write different sorts of songs than men, in terms of both lyric and sound. For these women, songwriting is an ideological duty which is also fun!

But there are 'non-feminist' factors here too. As already emphasised, many women join bands as complete novices. If such women play 'covers' they run the risk of being compared, unfavourably, with the originals. For instance,

S2: "We did lots to start with - badly, as well. Well, to start off with, you see, we didn't have any songs and we just fancied playing together as a band. So we thought, 'Right, what songs do we like?' And we tried playing those. 'Hold On I'm Coming', 'Keep On Running' - sixties kind of stuff...We just played it to the best of our abilities - which wasn't very much at the time".

This group quickly changed to writing its own material, and even when women's bands continue to perform standards they often adapt the lyrics to a new gender persona. Feminist bands, indeed, change the words as a matter of political subversion (though sometimes not changing the words can be equally subversive, as when a lesbian band sings a love song addressed to a woman). For instance,

S3: "We did 'I Saw Her Standing There'...A woman saying, 'I saw her standing there' just gives a different twist to it. And we did 'Da Doo Ron Ron', with 'I met her on a Monday and her name was Jill', changing the sex of it so that you had whole lesbian undertones to it. I think that is fun. As well as finding those ones which were about how men were not to be trusted".

ARRANGING

When a band member brings a song along to the band there can be problems in getting across her ideas. If all the parts are worked out and (unusually) written down, or recorded on tape, then communication is straightforward. But this only happens when someone has written every part of the song; worked out exactly what every instrument should be doing in detail. This situation is rare because, firstly, not many members are capable of doing this, particularly at the beginning of the band's career. Most members are still learning their own instrument and cannot play or think in terms of other people's. Secondly, the norm of creative space for everyone militates against having all the 't's crossed and 'i's dotted from the word go. There would be resentment if a member was continually told exactly what to do. This democratic norm is common to many male bands too, although not all.⁵ Certainly, all the women's bands I researched subscribed to the unspoken convention that everyone contributes to the arranging of the songs and the working out of one's individual parts. Thus the person who initiates the song has to get across her own ideas without stifling other people's creative input. Just communicating the 'feel' of a song in this way can be difficult. If a woman cannot play the notes she might hum or sing it, but even this can be problematic.

B1: "You hear it in your head and yet you can't necessarily grab hold of it quickly enough to sing it...You can hear this riff and you can hear the rest of it in your head that's supposed to be going with it, and it's wonderful. But when you just hear that by itself you've lost the rest of it".

Arranging can lead to friction and although it does tend to be a collective process in women's bands, not everyone contributes equally, even if the underlying principle is agreed: however much the various individuals contribute, arranging means treating as primary the overall sound.

V1: "There's discussion and compromise. A sort of refining process. What usually happens is, in the beginning when you're working on a song there's too much. And so we thin it out. So, I might play only half the original riff I thought of, because the rest of it's being compensated by the bass guitar, or a drum pattern. And I think that's what's exciting about working with the band: that is, working with other people, nobody's actually playing the whole thing. It's only the little bits that we're doing and the way they connect to form a (whole). I think that's wonderful. I love that".

Once songs have been decided upon and worked out, then individual members have to learn them. Sometimes classically trained musicians write down "the dots", but this is rare. Usually practices are taped on portable cassette machines and individuals use these to learn from at home. A great deal of learning is involved. Irritation is expressed at any member who consistently needs to be reminded, from one practice to the next, what the various arrangements are. People

also scribble notes down and bring these along to practices as a further aide-memoire.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A 'MUSICIAN' IDENTITY

Most women starting out in groups do not define themselves as musicians. For instance,

S2: "At first, when people used to say, 'What are you?' I wouldn't say a drummer. 'Cause even now I don't think of myself as a drummer. I just say, 'Well, I sort of play the drums'. I can't say, 'Oh, I'm a drummer' 'cause it used to sound really odd. I suppose I am, but..."

Those rock 'beginners' in my sample who did define themselves as musicians tended to be the ones who had been classically trained, but that was certainly no guarantee of such self-definition - one woman I interviewed did not think of herself as a musician despite years of classical training, Grade 8. on the piano, and a few years experience in a rock band! This general lack of confidence makes women susceptible to criticism, especially from male musicians. For example,

S2: "We're a bit hesitant. We aren't confident enough. We're just hopeless...In everything else we're quite good at what we do - which is looking after kids. We're confident in that way".

Once a woman does start to see herself as a 'musician', or even as a 'member of a band', this new identity functions well beyond the temporary existence

of the band at practices. It is carried around and affects the whole of the woman's life. For example, she will listen to music in new ways, discuss it differently, and engage in technical talk with other musicians. Band members go to gigs together to watch other bands and pick up ideas, and so other people's gigs, too, come to be experienced differently - musicians tend to stand down the front and intently watch exactly what various members of the band are playing. Going out to hear live music ceases to be simply a social event, a chance to dance, talk and meet people; it becomes part of band 'work', and in this setting the role of musician provides women with a shield against the strictures of the double standard. It is suddenly legitimate to go up and talk to the musicians during the break or after the gig. So long as your identity as 'musician' is known, or made apparent at the start of the conversation, you will not be put into the 'groupie' category or be seen as on the look-out for sex.

H2: "When I was playing in that band, I found it much easier to talk on more equal terms with blokes that I had known vaguely around the music scene...for a year or something - musicians. Word gets round, you know, and gradually they realise that you're actually playing in a band. And I was able to talk to them on a much more equal basis".

Not only is it easier to meet musicians and talk to them, it is also easier to be at a gig. You have a clear purpose and now look purposive. It gives you

confidence. You feel more at ease in your surroundings. You've got a new place in the music world.

COMMITMENT

It is undoubtedly true that women find it hard to commit themselves to music in the way in which Bennett (1980) shows that male musicians do. Women do not typically have that total dedication. Bennett argues that the musician has got to be involved in his music to the exclusion of everything else. He has to be able to 'get out of himself' at practices, so that he is unaware of the rest of his environment. We can assume then that the male musician who is a father will certainly not have the major responsibility for childcare. Male musicians do not take their babies along to band practices; indeed they would find the idea unthinkable. Yet some women do have to do this, and clearly, in this situation, their concentration cannot be exclusively riveted on the music; they cannot forget they are mothers. For instance,

J4: "When we first started I used to take Sam with me up to J3.'s and he just used to play with the toys. (But) you couldn't get into it. You couldn't relax. My mind was always, 'Oh, God! What's he doing?'...You've got to have children to understand that, I think. When they're around, you're just totally involved in them. I find I get them to bed and, if I'm going to a practice, it takes a while

to readjust...to get into that other state of mind".

Having children affects the choice of practice place, what time of day or night practices can be held, how long they can last, how frequently they can take place. For example,

T: "We were going to Leyton, but since L.'s had her baby we need to have a place that has two rooms. In fact, this place is rather good. It doubles as a recording studio and has glass panels. So we can sit and peer at the baby through the panels".

K2: "Sometimes we had to wrap up practices earlier because we didn't have a babysitter and the child wanted to go to bed. We had to stop. Or, she wanted to go and pick him up from school, or whatever".

Getting a babysitter can be a problem and it is costly. If a babysitter has to be hired for rehearsals, then it seems too much of a luxury to hire one in order to go to other people's gigs too. Women musicians who have children go out to gigs far less than other musicians do - if they go out at all, that is.

J3: "We've got sympathy with each other, with our respective problems, with fitting everything in. And someone says, 'Well, look, I can't do this because I've got to take this little child to the doctor', or, 'He's ill and I can't...', we'd all sympathise. Whereas, if you were in a male band and you said, 'Oh, I'm sorry, I can't...' they'd say, 'Oh, crikey, her and her kids!'"

Musicians schedule their lives around music; mothers schedule their lives around their children, and only highly successful - and rich - women

musicians can resolve this contradiction satisfactorily. Though men who are musicians are more likely to understand the importance of being in a band and to accept the complex arrangements this necessitates than other male workers (the women I interviewed who had young children were either single parents, or married to musicians), it is also apparent that they see their own role in music as being much more important than that of their wives.

A1: "The baby comes with her...Her husband is a guitarist, and he is the breadwinner and brings in the money to pay the mortgage. And she has the baby. So the baby comes to rehearsals...She's in this nuclear family set-up and, of course, the way it's set up doesn't work around a woman being a sax player in a band. That's a big disadvantage in terms of work. So we all have to pull to help things work. Sometimes, I don't like it if I feel we're supporting this nuclear family set-up but, on the other hand, why shouldn't we support her and be as helpful as we can to her...He just goes off to his gig. I mean, can you imagine him turning up to his gig with a baby? I mean, what a joke, you know!...If J.'s husband turned up at a gig with a baby I should think they'd be shocked out of their brains! He wouldn't do it though".⁶

Women are expected to be most "committed" to their families, to their children and partners. A girl's search for a boyfriend is conventionally more important than a boy's search for a girlfriend. It takes up more time and effort and boys thus give a far more whole-hearted commitment to their hobbies than girls typically feel they can. This is one reason why girls' bands break up or, indeed, never get off the ground in the first place: boyfriends resent the

amount of time band practices take up and put pressure on girls to leave (and research makes clear that similar pressure is put on older women musicians by their partners).

But if women musicians aren't (can't be) committed as exclusively to their music as men, they do seem to have a greater commitment - an emotional commitment - to each other. In the bands I studied, getting on well, friendship, was a far more important aspect of musical life than it seems to be in accounts of male bands. There was less mutual detachment; less of a split between practice sessions and 'normal' life; one could argue (as male musicians do) that there was less "professionalism".⁷ This was certainly true of bands just starting out. For instance,

H4: "I think the difference is that if somebody has had a row with somebody, or somebody isn't feeling too good, they don't come into practice and pretend nothing's happened. It's real. Whatever's been going on in people's lives comes to the practice. And with guys it's not like that".

S2: "You get to the practice and somebody's in a bad mood or pissed off or something. And it always affects it. And in the four of us, with kids and everything, somebody's bound to turn up at a practice each time feeling rotten...Some practices we'd play one number and spend the rest of the time talking. 'Cause it was an excuse for all of us to get out and go to the pub and have a drink and moan about this and that and the other. So, even if we didn't practice, it was nice just to get together as a group to chat. (Whereas, when she played with men) We didn't talk about bloody kids or anything. With them it was go there and you'd play. You don't piss around. You're playing for two hours and you make good use of it. So I wouldn't go along there

and say, 'Oh, I'm pissed off with X, and Y keeps wetting the bed'. I knew I was there for one reason only and that was 'cause they needed a drummer".

It is clear that practices were performing more than one function for S2.'s band. They were social events, a chance to get together and talk. The band was not just a unit which produced music together; it was a friendship group. "Chats" seem to be important in all women's bands, especially in their early stages. There is usually a lot of getting together apart from practices, lots of phone-calls and general contact, and the friendships built up within bands were often as important as the music itself. This aspect of "being in a band" seems often to outweigh the lack of money, the frustrations, the hard work, and the scant chance of commercial success. For women - and this may be the paradoxical twist in the explanation of why they don't "make it" in rock as often as men - the immediate experience of playing together is a source of strength and pleasure and purpose far more important than individual commercial success.

K2: "We're all in love with each other, in a way, but it's platonic. We do admire each other a lot and it feels like we're one person when we play...It's like a family. We are very close and it's given me all these extra people that I care about and they care about me. It's more than just working together...It's adventurous, exciting. It's like a gang. You're mates. You're up there together".

B1: "We have a good time when we play. We have a good time and a laugh when we rehearse. And we enjoy it. We're not striving for anything in particular...I've always enjoyed the gigs. Even bad gigs I've enjoyed on stage, because you get a good feeling going together. We know what's happening and we're all laughing at each other..."

Notes

1. This conclusion is based on reading the biographies and autobiographies of male rock stars, talking to male musicians in my area when I was playing in a band, and what little sociological evidence is available (eg. In America, H.Stith Bennett's study (1980), and Ruth Finnegan's research in Milton Keynes, England). Also relevant: 'Band of Hope', a Radio 4 programme produced by Peter Everett, transmitted 6.4.88.

2. Bennett (1980) found that most (male) rock bands form whilst their members are still living at home with their parents and therefore the main practice space tended to be in the family home - the garage, the cellar or living room. The discrepancy with my own findings (where no bands practised in the parental home) may be due to the difference in housing between America and Britain. On the other hand, most of my interviewees were no longer living at home. Besides which, as argued in Chapter 3, parents tend to disapprove of their daughters being involved in rock bands. Similarly, Bennett found that "direct parental funding" was the most common way of obtaining an instrument, whereas this was not true of my sample.

3. I think that at least some of the equipment could be made in a smaller and lighter form, and certainly trolleys could be used much more than they usually are. As Cockburn says, "Units of work (hay bales, cement sacks) are political in their design" (1981). They are made for men and thereby function to exclude women. "This need not be a conspiracy, it is merely the outcome of a pre-existing pattern of power".

4. Stith Bennett (1980) emphasises the importance of record-copying. He assumes that all bands start off by copying records together:

"What separates a rock consciousness from a rock audience is the knowledge of how to get a song from a recording".

"The career of a local rock musician starts when the resource of the instrument is combined with the source of the MUSIC in a private copying session". This sort of generalisation does not apply to women's bands. Only one of the bands in my research operated in this way.

Again, in contrast to Bennett, Ruth Finnegan, in her Milton Keynes study, found that all the rock bands played a high proportion of original material.

5. All the bands Bennett (1980) researched had official leaders: there was one main organiser and all the other members were "joiners" and it became the organiser's band. The bands I studied may have been initiated by one or two people but that did not mean they held more power. The pattern of intra-band power was one of shifting alliances, varying over the band's lifetime.

6. There is some evidence that, in America, this is just beginning to change. The Austin Chronicle September 4th. 1987 featured musicians and their children and included a few male musicians who have tried to take on more responsibility for childcare. For example, Joe "King" Carrasco: "I've tried being with Noah as much as I can, so since he was two weeks old, I've taken him on the road with me all over the U.S., Canada, Mexico and even Bolivia and South America. He even has his own baby passport". (p.20)

7. A male musician told Bennett (1980): "I guess you could say we had a professional relationship. I couldn't stand his guts, and he couldn't stand mine, and we never saw each other except to play jobs or practice".

Chapter 10. GOING PUBLIC.

THE FIRST GIG

'Going public' is the next stage in the career of a band. All the practising and preparation has been dedicated to this moment. Will the technical aspects of the gig all go smoothly? Will the band remember the arrangements? These are the sorts of questions which beset band members and, especially, will the audience like them? What kind of reception will they get? First night nerves are the order of the day and sometimes people have extreme physical sensations of unease such as gnawing pains in the stomach. There is great excitement and anticipation.

S1, recalls: "I was just shitting myself! I couldn't believe it! I gave the barman my pick instead of money, I was so nervous".

The first gig marks the band's 'coming out'. Band members will be seen and judged as musicians, whether they apply that label to themselves or not. It is a crucial learning experience. Not only knowledge and factual information, but norms, values, attitudes and expectations will be absorbed.

There will be more than one 'audience' at this first gig. Strangers, lovers, friends, relatives, the promoter, the P.A. crew, and local musicians form discretely separate audiences, about whom the band may feel very differently. Some people prefer playing their first gig to complete strangers, in case it all goes wrong, whilst others prefer the support given by friends and would prefer to play at, say, a private party. The first gig, therefore, is chosen with care. If it is perceived as a disaster it could be the last. There is often a fear of other musicians being in the audience: new band members may not wish to be "judged" by their 'peers' at this stage. Yet, when a new band launches itself onto the local scene, members of other bands are usually present. They come out of curiosity, particularly if it is a women's band. Feminist bands may choose to emerge at an all-women gig, where they will not be exposed to male scrutiny and criticism. By doing this, on their first gig, they are also saying that women are their priority audience. For example,

H2: "Because it was a women-only audience they were very pleased that it was women who were playing and there was tremendous enthusiasm because of that. And I thought that whatever we did they would have liked (it). They didn't give a shit whether we were good or bad...They were just thinking, 'How nice it is that these women are playing'".

How soon the band does its first gig varies. it depends on a lot of factors - whether its members have been playing instruments before, for example.

Beginners might take longer before they dare to go public. On the other hand, experienced musicians in a new band may feel that they have reputations to live up to and may choose to delay their arrival onto the gig circuit. The 'moment' is of some significance, too. For instance, at the time of punk, bands (whether explicitly punk or not) were able to gig almost immediately:

S1: "We could hardly play and there we were on a major tour all over England!"

Many feminist bands gigged very soon after forming because of the demand for women-only entertainment by both lesbians and the women's movement:

A3: "There were so few women's bands around that people really wanted to see one".

The intervention of 'outsiders' may force the pace. For example, a number of women's bands got their first gigs via their musician husbands or boyfriends. These bands tended to be the ones which got going with the support and encouragement of those men in the first place. For example,

S1: "Both X.'s boyfriend and mine were dead keen about the whole thing and thought it was great and helped us enormously. They were doing the whole of the London circuit, both of them...And Joe decided that we weren't gonna go anywhere...so he booked us a gig to give us a goal to work towards".

Gigging raises new transport problems. Those bands which emerge with the help of musical boyfriends

typically have access to their vehicles and this is a distinct advantage. In other bands the existence of one or two women with cars is crucial. Initially, gigs tend to be poorly paid and if a band has to hire a van it will find itself out of pocket at the end of the evening. Sometimes someone in the band has access to a vehicle through her work. For instance, this is how a 'big band' of nineteen women musicians managed to cope:

R1: "Well, until we got this car we hired the bookshop van. We get all the instruments in the vehicle and everyone else cycles!"

Occasionally, in the early stages of a band's career, women might even have to take themselves and their instruments to gigs by bus.

Gigging usually necessitates further equipment purchase. For instance, at practices two guitarists might cope with sharing the same amp; impossible at a gig. If the band does not possess its own 'backline' then it must borrow or hire equipment for each gig. If there is more than one band on the bill, sharing a 'backline' might be negotiated. In this way a novice band may be able to do a number of gigs before they are forced to purchase their own equipment. Once again, those women who got into a band via the help of boyfriends tended to have little problem in borrowing equipment from those same male musicians. But

borrowing equipment from a husband or boyfriend in this way does tend to put the woman in a dependent situation, which can be exploited by the man concerned. For instance,

J1: "X. was playing her husband's bass guitar and amp and stack and everything. When he started getting ratty with her he started saying, 'Oh, I'll have that back'. So it wasn't available".

In this way equipment becomes part of the interpersonal politics of the relationship - not a desirable situation. Married women with young children are often totally dependent on their husbands for cash. Thus the husband has to decide whether or not to buy his wife an amplifier. For example:

J3: "I'm tied to Paul, hook, line and sinker! He's not been too bad but it's always his decision what we spend on what and where we go".

Feminists are sometimes able to borrow from other feminist bands initially, as already discussed. But borrowing of equipment cannot continue for long. Gigs start to clash. Besides which, band members begin to be more fussy about getting their own particular sound right. Thus gigging inevitably necessitates an increase in members' financial investment in music.

Gigging also leads to a substantial increase in the amount of time a band takes up. The performance itself may last only one hour, but the (unglamorous) work underpinning that exciting 'moment' might last the

equivalent of a day. Band members only learn what work is involved by actually doing it for the first time. It may come as a shock. What follows is a typical outline.

Before the gig there is usually advertising to be done: ringing the local papers and radio, flyposting, and so on. The venue will have to be inspected, P.A. (and perhaps also lights) hired. The band may even have to acquire a bar licence. In the days preceding the gig musicians must check their equipment to make sure that it is in top working order. For example, guitarists will probably replace their strings with a new set. The question of what to wear must be discussed and clothes got ready. Some members may have to arrange for time off work, depending on how far away the gig is and what time the band is supposed to arrive. Mothers will have to arrange for babysitters. A van must be hired, or car borrowed, depending on how well equipped the band is in terms of transport. A provisional 'setlist' must be worked out and some discussion will take place about the layout of the equipment on stage.

On the day of the gig each band member must collect the equipment, and the vehicle(s) must be loaded. (This takes more time and skill than is usually imagined.) Then someone has to drive the vehicle to the venue. On arrival the equipment has to be unloaded

and carried into the venue (up the stairs, round the corridors, in and out of lifts, etc.) and, eventually, onto the stage, where it is 'set up'. Instruments must then be tuned. (If the band is taking a P.A. with them this increases the workload considerably, as that too has to be collected from the hire company, loaded, transported, unloaded, set up and tested. Even more work is created if the band hires a lighting rig.) Next, there is the 'soundcheck'. Instruments will first be individually checked for 'sound' (volume, tone, etc.) and adjustments made to the P.A. and individual amps. Then the band will run through one or two numbers so that the overall sound can be adjusted and set. After the soundcheck, if there is more than one band playing, the women might have to move all their equipment off the stage to make room for the other band's equipment for their soundcheck. After this the equipment will have to be re-arranged.

At this point, during the lull before performance, the band will devise a 'setlist' or alter the existing one. Some members might decide to do warm-up exercises on their instruments in the dressing-room.

After performing, all the equipment has to be taken off the stage, carried out of the venue, packed into the vehicle(s), transported to each individual's house and unloaded. That is, the whole procedure is carried out in reverse. Band members will be tired by the end

of all this. It can be frustrating having to hang about until the other bands finish playing in order to be able to get the equipment off the stage. The hour or so spent packing up is not usually perceived as fun. After playing it would be nice to drink and totally relax, rather than stay alert and responsible. Moreover, arguments can break out if some members feel they are doing a disproportionate amount of work:

A3: "We had a lot of rows about...who humped the gear and who set it up and who drove back".

The hard work may be lightened by friends. This is particularly likely for the first few gigs, which have novelty value. For those women's bands which get going with the aid of musician boyfriends, help in 'roadying', driving, and setting-up is usually available. For example,

J1. (referring to the band prior to her joining): "They did one gig, but helped terribly by all their boyfriends that told them how to set up the drums and how to set up the bass stack and everything".

Feminist bands take pride in doing without male assistance, although at all-women gigs they may get help from the gig organisers before the performance and members of the audience afterwards. However, there can be problems with untrained help.

The gigging stage is marked, then, by a considerable increase in commitment - of money, time and hard work. Band members weigh up the effort and

costs involved against the returns. The first gig is a critical point for the band's survival. Enjoyment shared, and relived afterwards in a band discussion, will reinforce group morale and auger well for the band's future. (Post-gig impromptu informal meetings may become institutionalised as an important ritual.) On the other hand, a negative first experience of gigging will lead some band members into deciding to leave, and the future of the band will be uncertain. A few women enjoy playing at practices but find that they do not actually enjoy performing live. This is often due to a lack of confidence and stage fright. Others, however, find the first gig immeasurably enjoyable; overnight they are "hooked". Yet others find that their enjoyment from gigs increases gradually. Whichever way, it is a learned experience: they learn to enjoy performing in public and, once learnt, they are reluctant to relinquish such pleasure. The 'high' from the gig outweighs weeks of hard work, frustration, aggravation, arguments, etc. This can come, at first, as a surprise. For example,

C: "One of the positive feelings, which I never thought I'd feel, is the amazing high you get from performing. I think the first time was the most amazing, because you built yourself up to this incredible event and there it was. I suppose it's like a drug. As soon as it was finished you just wanted to do it again. I felt very depressed the next day".

Indeed, it is interesting that quite a few women performers used the drug metaphor to explain their feelings.

Some women discovered that new aspects of their personality surfaced in the gig situation. For instance,

A3: "There is definitely a part of me that enjoys the glamour, really. And I'm a different person on stage. Well, a different side of me comes out. A lot of people have said that. They don't recognise me".

LEARNING

All gigs are learning experiences, but particularly the first. What is learnt? A whole culture: the culture of the gig. One thing that is obviously learnt is what work (indeed, how much work) is involved in being in a band. All the tasks that have to be carried out and how to do those tasks is part of band knowledge. The band member learns what happens at a gig, the kinds of contingencies that may arise (technical, social, emotional) and how to deal with them. The more gigs a woman does, the more she learns and, thus, the more control she can exercise over the gig environment. For example, bands learn to keep a wary eye on promoters:

V1: "At (one) gig we put one of our people on the door with a clicker, because we weren't trusting

what people were saying about the numbers. And he was heaved out of it by the manager! He was called to the manager's office and told, in a very horrible way, that he was upsetting the door people. And once you're called away, even for five minutes, your counting is null and void".

They become wary of other bands:

V1: "A very ambitious band...abused us, put our guitars out of tune before going on stage, ripped off our equipment! Because they were very competitive and they wanted to blow us off the stage. That's happened a lot".

They learn to deal with the P.A. crew:

J1: "We did our first gig. There was a P.A. there that was not a P.A. - no mike on my drumkit or on the main band's! A P.A. (that) sounded worse than any cheap record player! And he wanted ten pounds. We said, 'We'll give you ten pounds if you mike up the saxes, and do this, that and the other' And he said, 'No way, grumble, grumble...' and didn't know what he was talking about. So we took all our equipment off stage...and we put it all out the window...We didn't pay him!"

Band members have to become familiar with the material environment of the gig and develop the skills required to use the equipment. For example, they must learn how to set up their own equipment on stage, to understand the acoustics of the room and how it might affect the sound, how P.A. systems work, how to set up mike-stands (or, at least, how to alter them), how to D.I. a guitar amp, how to mike up a drum-kit (or, at least, how it should be done), the optimum time to tune up their instruments before playing, and how room temperature affects them. Plus there are many tricks

of the trade to be picked up - from other musicians, and technicians.

Women are often alienated from the essential technical aspects of rock. If they become singers, or play the sax, they may manage to avoid full immersion in this sea of technicality. However, to participate fully in a rock band even a vocalist should understand the technical aspects. Questions of control and power are involved. Technical decisions, on stage or in the studio, may seem remote from the playing of one's own instrument, but they dramatically affect the sound. To withdraw from the process of collective decision-making is to abdicate responsibility and lose influence over the final performance or record. Yet, in my research, some women who had been playing in rock bands for years, said that they still had not completely overcome this problem of 'technophobia'. For instance,

J1: "A lot of my problems are to do with a mental attitude...There's a huge thing in my brain that just shouts out, 'Practical? Not me, not me!' And I have to fight that: 'You can do it. You've got a brain, you have ability. If a man can work out how to do this, you can do it'".

As such blocks are overcome they are replaced by confidence and pride in one's new skills:

J1: "Practical things - when you get the hang of them through force of circumstance, then you can be quite proud about your knowledge. You can take a

certain pride in the fact that you know how to put up a microphone stand".

Fluency in this technical language is important for women's self-definition as a musician or bone fide band member, as the above quote illustrates. It is also important for gaining respect from other (usually male) musicians and, thus, being accepted into 'the club'. Even one's status with audiences can be affected. For example, if a woman is shown unable to adjust her microphone stand or put the plug back on her microphone when it falls off, then she is diminished. Clearly, one's standing with P.A. crews, lighting technicians, roadies, etc. is crucially affected by one's competence and confidence in the technical field. Women have to prove their competence by being articulate about technology. Only this will gain them influence over such crucial matters as the off-stage and on-stage sound. Soundchecks can become battlegrounds between bands and P.A. engineers. Various power strategies are used, including deliberate mystification. Language is thus crucial.

V1: "All of technology is dominated by men...but I'm fucked if I'm going to say it belongs to them. It's ours! Right? Every single wire that's been put together was made by a man who was fed, nurtured, supported by women somewhere. I think we've got to reclaim the lot. It's to do with how you talk with the P.A., how much they understand what you're doing and so on".

One needs to know the various roles: 'roady', etc; the terms used in mixing: 'gain', 'graphic', etc; those terms which describe the various pieces of P.A. equipment: 'monitor', 'tweeter', 'woofer', 'jack-to-jack'...the list is long. You must learn not only what these terms refer to but what these artefacts do and how they work. It is also important to understand general terms used in the gig situation: 'set-list', 'support', 'soundcheck', and so on.

Once this technical language is learnt it distances the musician from 'outsiders' - the audience, the non-initiated, non-musicians.

Another important part of gig culture is the normative structure. What is everyone supposed to do at a gig? What is expected of a band and what can a band expect of its audience, the promoter, P.A. crew and all the other roles which are part of the gig situation? Some of these norms may be fairly manifest, others subtle. Some might never have been anticipated until the situation arises. For example, who is going to introduce the numbers ('front'):

J2: "It's something we never thought of and when we went on stage, suddenly we were thinking, 'Who's gonna say something?'"

What do you do when you cease playing?

S1: "We all stood there at the end. Instead of saying 'thank you' and getting off, we just stood

there, just froze to the spot! Didn't know what to do".

Similarly, how does one 'do' a soundcheck? Band members learn that they are expected to stay within earshot to be ready to be called onstage to check their instruments. They are not supposed to wander off to buy food, etc. (If the soundcheck is late there may be no time to eat at all and this has to be accepted.) The soundcheck is crucial and band members must listen out for each other as each instrument is checked, rather than leave once their own one is done.

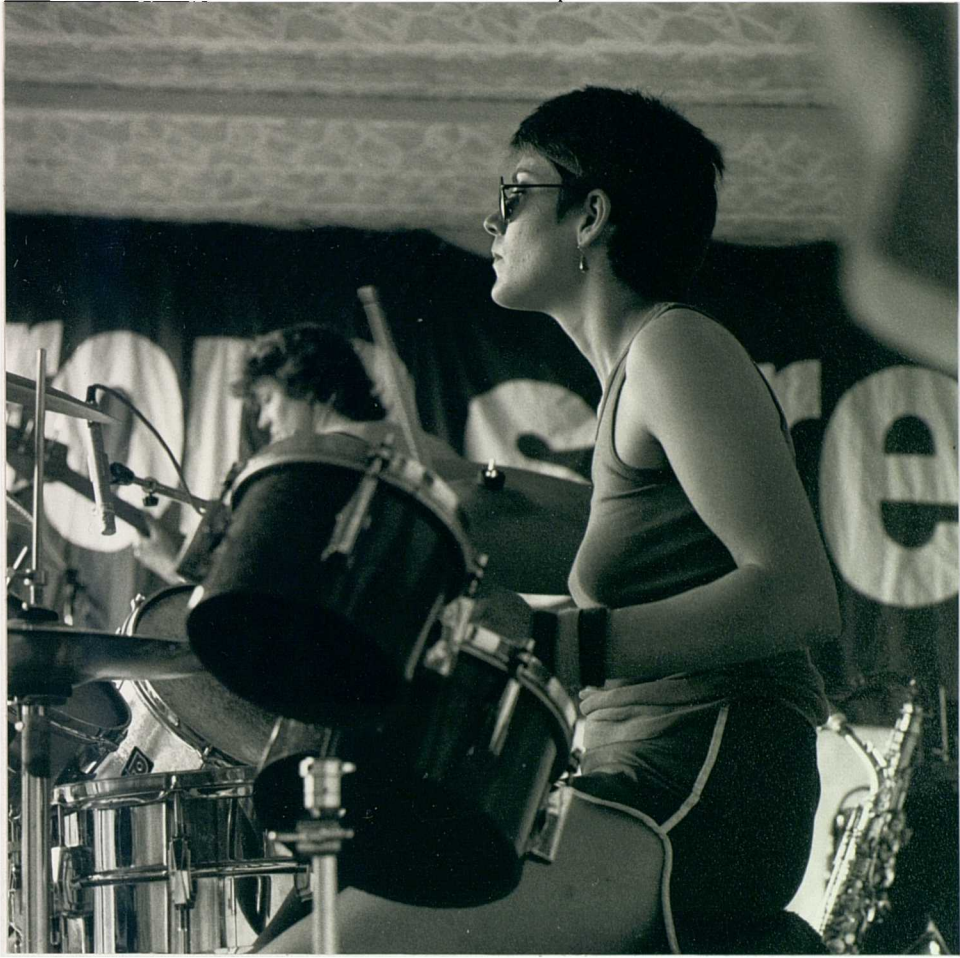
Band members learn how to devise a setlist and how to alter it according to perceptions of the audience's taste. They learn how to communicate with each other whilst playing. Most of all, they have to learn a whole plethora of norms concerning communication with the audience: you should never criticise the audience; you should not normally turn your back on them, or share 'in-jokes' with other band members; you should look as if you are enjoying yourself on stage, even if you are not - smiling and moving are normative; you should never denigrate yourselves or your music, be self-effacing, etc. A standard norm is that the audience should clap. If they do not, however, the band is not supposed to demand applause. This would merely highlight the fact they are not getting any, and antagonise the audience. Similarly, the audience

must not be told to dance. The gig is a social event and a general norm is that it is up to the audience itself to define the event as it wishes: to talk, to drink, dance or whatever.

On the other hand, some feminist bands do intervene in order to create space for women in the audience. Given at most gigs there is a preponderance of males, and the area in the front of the stage tends to be packed with men, women can find themselves unable to see. Feminist bands often invite women to come to the front.

The norms of the gig depend on particular circumstances: type of venue, music, fan, etc. At some gigs the audience expects the band to play dance music. Whereas, at other gigs the audience expects to hear lyrics that are worth listening to. A band cannot expect the audience to stand and listen if the context is a dance. Conversely, if the band considers itself to be a 'dance band', then it expects people to dance. Gig norms vary in different subcultural settings. For example musicians in feminist bands are supposed to be supportive of each other whilst on stage. This expectation is also shared by the audience at women-only gigs.

R1: "All the male bands I know don't look at each other much...Because we're really in contact with each other and quite sensitive to what we're all



feeling, then you know more easily how to deal with the situations that crop up".

It may or may not be that male bands do not look at each other as much as women's bands (or feminist bands), but it is certainly normative that women in feminist bands should engage in plenty of eye contact.

Bands also devise their own particular sets of behavioural rules, covering things such as eating, drinking or smoking on stage, the length of time allowable between numbers, and so on. For instance, in some bands it is expected that you move speedily from one number to the next. Whilst others tolerate "cigarette breaks" between numbers. But bands are constrained by their particular audiences: what is acceptable in one setting would not be in another.

Bennett (1980) refers to the ritual scene in the band van before the (male) bands go on stage. Women's bands also devise their own rituals; they spend time together before performing, 'though it is less likely to be in a van and more likely to be in the dressing room or toilet. "Getting changed" is a significant point in the evening. It marks the transition from the everyday self (in the old clothes typically worn for setting-up) to the new self of rock performer. Donning stage-clothes is an enjoyable pre-gig ritual which women can share. It signifies the end of the hard slog

of preparation and the beginning of the really enjoyable part of the evening.

S3: "I find dressing-up is part of getting into the right sort of 'space' to do it and so it is important that I go and get changed. It's part of the sort of hyping-up".

It is important for 'esprit de corps' that band members stay close together before performing. This can cause role conflict. If a musician's friends turn up to give her support, and yet there is no time for socialising, they might not come again. It is difficult for outsiders to understand these pressures. If there is time, band members might go out for a drink or meal together, or dance with each other. Other times they will just drink together in the dressing room. They need to make each other feel relaxed and positive about the gig.

It is also usual for the band to get together immediately after their performance, which (again) reaffirms group solidarity. This is especially so if the gig was a difficult one or, conversely, highly successful. For example,

J1: "After that gig we came back to the dressing room and we all screamed, which I'm sure only a girl band would do. For about twenty minutes we just screamed in high pitched voices, all of us ...Whenever the band enjoy themselves they scream like that, which I think is something that male bands never do...It was as good as doing the gig, the screaming afterwards. When we have a good gig we do it. And sometimes before we go on, if we want to, we have a bloody good scream".

IMAGE: THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF SELF

It is often only immediately before the first gig that a woman becomes conscious of the kind of decisions that have to be made about image. 'What shall I wear?' might very well be a last minute question, surprising her by its sudden importance, after the more practical problems have been dealt with. A band might not even discuss the question collectively. When the women's band I was part of did its first gig we all turned up looking completely different from each other. There had been no prior consultation. We just made individual decisions. It was only after the gig that we started considering the question of the total 'look' of the band. Ultimately, a group decision always has to be taken on this issue, even if the decision is simply to have no policy at all. The nature and amount of compromise between the individual and the group varies considerably from band to band but, certainly, performers are forced to become self-conscious about their clothes and general appearance, and there is always an ideological aspect to this. 'What shall I wear?' is inevitably linked to 'what am I expected to wear?', even if these expectations are deliberately not met. There is no way that dressing for the stage can be completely "innocent" or spontaneous. It always involves some

deliberation. Even the decision to look "natural" is a choice and indeed a sartorial strategy in itself.

All rock musicians have to address such questions but, because of the greater pressure on women to conform to stereotypes of attractiveness, they assume greater importance for women's bands. Certainly this is the perception of my interviewees. And the expectation that women look "attractive" is both a constraint and a pressure. Women who deviate can expect censure. For example,

A1: "There's that great emphasis on women's looks. If we were all incredibly attractive and wearing masses of make-up and looked very sexy for men, probably that would be just fine. It wouldn't matter whether we could play or not. They would just look at you. But we're obviously not into that at all, so you get a certain amount of criticism on that level...They have a certain expectation of women on stage: that they would usually be singers and look quite good".

Although all women must tackle these questions, a particular set of thorny problems have confronted feminists: shall I wear make-up? Shall I wear a dress? What skirt length shall I wear? Tricky, because feminist performers have been highly concerned about the political implications of their appearance. It has been not merely an aesthetic issue, but an ideological one.¹ Many women musicians were far more worried about their appearance than about their playing:

V2: "I feel confident about singing and I feel confident about the band, in that I know that we

can all play moderately well and practices are good, and therefore gigs should be good. The things I feel shy about are how I look, the clothes I wear, if people are commenting on them or not, and feeling bad because I don't move. That's what bothers me more than ability".

Even explicitly non or anti-feminist bands voiced concern over these issues. For instance,

S1: "I quite like sex appeal (but) I think there's an extent I would be careful not to go (beyond)... because seven women on stage is a very heavy thing. And I think it could come across as very heavily sexual if people weren't careful...I quite like sexy corsets and things like that, but I don't think I would wear them on stage because it is so openly, blatantly sexual".

Women musicians typically want to look attractive but do not want to be seen as sex-objects:

H1: "I do think about what I'm going to wear and usually get paranoid about it...I wouldn't wear anything that was specifically designed to be sexy, because that's not how I want to present myself. I don't want to present myself as a sex-object; I want to present myself as a musician".

One argument which was held by many feminists was that one should be as "normal" or "natural" as possible on stage.² For example, one should only wear the sort of clothes that one would be wearing in everyday life. Women of this persuasion eschewed "stage clothes" as such. For example,

T: "You can see who is and who isn't a feminist. because when they get up on stage they tart themselves up and they pose and pout...We get up and we play and we are ourselves. We're not trying to project an image. We're not being false. What you see is what we're like all the rest of the time. I don't wear stage clothes".

J2: "I don't think you should look too different on stage, 'cause I think there are people in the audience who think, 'God! They are so different. I could never be like that'. I think it's important that the audience recognises that you're just ordinary people, like they are".

However, not all women subscribed to this view. Furthermore, what was "normal" varied from woman to woman. For some it meant jeans or dungarees (the stereotype of feminist dressing in the '70s), whilst for others it meant miniskirts.

The stage is a very specific social situation where strong expectations exist of how women should appear. It is also an extraordinary context and the "natural" response of some women was, simply, fright. Thus they dressed down for fear of drawing attention to themselves. The idea of wearing 'normal' clothes on stage has been an attempt to break down the performer-audience gulf, to de-mystify and de-romanticise. But, as V1. points out, however the performer dresses she is making some sort of statement:

V1: You're making a total statement. You're asking for attention. You're asking people to look at you and hear you. And you're throwing away an opportunity if you don't work with that. You're saying something whether you like it or not. So if you're going up in ordinary clothes you're saying, 'Here I am in ordinary clothes'".

Many women's bands have effected a compromise between stage clothes and "ordinary" clothes. For instance,

A1: "Well, they're not actually stage clothes. they're the better of my clothes...I don't dress differently to if I was getting dressed up to go to a party".

Many women said that comfort and practicality were the determining factors in their choice of clothes. For example,

V2: "I never wear high heels, especially not on stage. I always wear shoes that I can move about in. I think that's really important - a lot of the problem with women's clothes stems from shoes, in that women wear high heels that they just could not walk normally in. Therefore you do make yourself a fragile little thing that totters around".

This woman's choice of clothes developed out of her experience of rough gigs:

V1: "I've got two sets of stage clothes now: one for a gig which I think is either going to be cold or hassly, which is very tough and is made out of very strong, heavy, black cotton drill - trousers, because if you're bending down doing fuzz boxes and things you don't want to have a skirt on...And I've got another version which I use in a safer venue, which is thinner and has got a very shimmery top ...If you're going on tour it's got to be hard-wearing and washable".

Another practical reason for getting changed was that pre-gig work inevitably meant getting dirty. Similarly, many women changed again after performing:

A1: "Usually it's very hot and, sometimes, if you play for an hour, you are extremely sweaty. And it's very nice to put on clothes to play and then take them off again".

Many women varied what they wore according to their prior evaluation of the gig. Some did not bother to

change if the audience turnout was sparse or the gig looked unlikely to be a success. For instance,

A1: "Occasionally I don't get changed. If I'm at a gig and it seems like it's a bit of a disaster I don't change. We all look at each other and we all sort of agree. J. says, 'Oh, are you gonna get changed?' I say, 'Oh, I don't really know'. She says, 'Oh, I might not bother'. I say, 'Yeah, I know what you mean. Looks a bit naff, doesn't it?'"

Some lesbians, on a point of principle, will only get dressed up for other women. Some will only wear skirts at women-only gig, because they wish to avoid fulfilling men's expectations, whereas, with women, they feel free to wear 'feminine' clothes. Often a number of reasons are combined: the refusal to get "dressed-up" for men; the wish to avoid conforming to sexist stereotypes; the need to avoid sexual approaches from men; and safety. For example,

S5: "I'm not interested in dressing-up for men. I don't see any point, reason, or function to it. I feel more vulnerable at a mixed gig and clothes are a vulnerable area for me, being large, and, partly, I'm extrovert in my dress to avoid that vulnerability. But it's more difficult at a mixed gig. It's got to feel safe at mixed gigs. I'm much more flamboyant dressing for a women-only gig".

Dressing in a skirt and 'feminine' clothes made most women feel more at risk, whereas dressing in tough and traditionally masculine clothes often made women feel tough themselves, a feeling which might be necessary for some women performing to a mixed audience. For instance,

H4: "I like the idea of women being assertive and slightly aggressive because I think we've all repressed it".

But women did not wish to look butch. For example,

A1: "I don't want to come across as being too butch. On the other hand I don't want to be seen as too 'fem'".

This wish to avoid either end of the spectrum of gender-appropriate clothing was something of a dilemma for many feminists:

S3: "It's like the whole issue of 'what's a feminist culture?' It's all male-defined and it's (a question of) how do you get round that".

For some women the choice seems stark: either become a sex-object or 'one of the boys'. In a mixed band, where the only other woman had chosen the former role, H3. felt in a quandary:

"The problem was she had an image as a singer which was a sort of sex kitten, which put me in a really odd position. Because - I don't know, I might have had some other bad idea, like I was one of the boys or something like that - but I turned into some really in-between, asexual sort of figure. Because there were the two boys, and me drumming, and S. Maybe, in a way, she didn't mean it seriously. But it still put me in a difficult position".

V2. was also a feminist in a mixed band:

"I don't want to have to appear not as a woman...I don't like the idea of, if you're a woman in a band you've got to be one of the lads and be completely indistinguishable from them. I think that's bad and just avoiding the issue completely. And it's good to be seen as a woman. In normal day I wear a lot of skirts and dresses...but it becomes much more of a dilemma when you're going on stage".

One way of circumventing these image-traps is to 'go over the top' as a kind of spoof. For instance, this band decided, for one gig, to be ultra-feminine:

S3: "The one time we wore skirts was the Suffragette number and that was very deliberate. It was hats and stockings and high heels - very feminine. We all wore hats and it was a gas! Playing bass in high heels was weird. It was really funny! And it was odd, playing drums in a short skirt".

On the other hand, whilst some feminists have worn dresses as a way of sending up femininity, other women have deliberately worn dresses to women-only gigs as a way of reacting against what they have perceived as the 'orthodox' feminist line of anti-feminine dressing. For instance,

B2: "When we go and do all-women gigs I particularly put my skirt on, I do! because I'm so totally against those who are so fucked up in their heads because of what I wear, or because I've got a boyfriend, that they won't accept me as a woman ...That really upsets me because they don't see it inside - what I'm really like. They just think, 'Ah, she's a heterosexual. She's wearing skirts. She's got a boyfriend. Therefore she's 'out'!' I don't go, 'Oh, no, I shouldn't wear this skirt!' I just wear whatever I feel like wearing that day ...People shouldn't judge people by what they wear".

K2. also felt that feminist strictures against wearing, say, short skirts, were a form of repression of women's sexuality and freedom of expression:

"I've worn miniskirts. I'll wear anything!...I think it's hang-ups. I like wearing no clothes. I wish people could go around wearing no clothes and have no hang-ups about it".³



The question of whether to wear make-up or not also presents itself to every woman who starts gigging. Again, views were polarised amongst my informants. Generally speaking, the positions were identical to the ones discussed regarding clothes. One view amongst feminists was that the wearing of make-up of any kind, either on or off stage, was ideologically unsound. It was making yourself over in the ("un-natural") male-created image of what a woman should look like; it was worn basically to please men. For example,

T: "I am totally and utterly opposed to make-up of any kind...It's not a thing of being boring and we should all look the same and nobody should have fun, but I don't think the whole point of make-up is for fun, (but) to make women look a particular way and have a look which actually has very little to do with women...It's a caricature of a woman".

At the opposite end of the continuum, one non-feminist and commercially successful band had a policy that everyone should wear make-up:

S1: "When it comes to photos - when you've got the whole band and some are wearing make-up and some aren't...it makes people that haven't got it covering up their spots look awful! Bags under their eyes! And if it's just a black and white photograph you should just have make-up on that smooths out the lines. Because you're trying hard to publicise the band and trying to make it look to the best advantage...It is awful if people don't like wearing make-up. But, then, if you're in a band and you're in a unit, and you're all trying to reach the same goal, you've got to compromise. I suppose make-up attracts men and that's why feminists don't like it...but then that's only natural, as far as I'm concerned".

But some feminists defended wearing make-up too. For instance, some women argue that it all hinges on why, and to what effect, you are using make-up:

V1: "Well, I think there are ways of presenting yourself on stage that are unsound. But I don't think that the way I use make-up or clothes is unsound. I'm not trying to make myself anxious to please. That's where it's ideologically unsound; if I was just doing it so I would please the men. But I do it in a completely different way. I usually put a lot of make-up on and it's all run by the end of the set. And I work with that. I use make-up that runs easily, 'cause I sweat. I start off with a mask, a beautiful face, and the make-up gets ravaged".

This contrasts starkly with the conventional reasons for wearing make-up. And here is another interesting solution:

J1: "I didn't (wear make-up) for a long time and from the band it was hassle, hassle, 'why don't you wear some make-up?' And they think that I'm completely mad. But my idea is they're completely mad - about make-up and image...Anyway, now I've discovered mirrored sunglasses, which means I don't have to put any make-up on".

This whole issue of clothes and make-up, as is shown in the quote from S1. above, involves the question of the band's corporate image. If there is to be such an image this, in turn, raises the question of commitment. For, as it is unlikely that everyone will automatically have the same taste and dress the same way, some element of compromise is inevitable. Amongst the bands I studied, a common compromise was having a theme. Members could wear whatever they liked so long as it was, say, pink, or dotted, or striped, etc. For

example, this band was loth to allow their individual identities to be submerged beneath an identical band 'uniform' but were prepared to co-ordinate in terms of colour:

S5: "Sometimes J. says, 'Right, we'll wear red and blue. Red and blue? O.K.'".

There was clearly a resistance to telling people what to wear. Bands further along the career ladder usually imposed stronger rules upon their members regarding appearance, and this will be discussed in the next chapter.

Feminists often believe that it is important not to submerge members' physical differences. Clothes and make-up can make women look identical. Moreover, this becomes an image which fans copy. It becomes, then, normative for both the band and other women.

J2: "I saw one girls' band (which) had three vocalists and those three girls were so different ...I found that really interesting, because there are so many images of women and they were saying, 'this is what women look like'. I think it's important that you see as many images of women as possible, and then it gives people room to be themselves".

As discussed earlier, women typically come together to play in a different way from their male counterparts. There are few women musicians about, and so women get together to play with whatever women are available, rather than clustering into stylistic tendencies as boys do. Thus a women's band is likely

to contain people from diverse backgrounds, with varied aesthetic tastes. This, plus the strong theme within feminism of expressing your own personality, lends weight to the anti-corporate-image position.

Apart from clothes, other more subtle issues emerge: how shall I stand/ hold my instrument/ move, etc. Typically, until women musicians commence gigging they have never contemplated these questions and are surprised at just how many points there are to consider. Most of the women I interviewed were keen to discuss these matters, which were often experienced as unresolved dilemmas. As with clothing and make-up, feminists were very concerned to avoid presenting themselves as sex objects for men, but they also rejected stereotyped male poses on stage:

A1: "When you see women or men performers who use their body in an extremely sexual way it's a very objectified situation. It's objectified for the audience...and it is objectified for the performer".

Many feminists drew a distinction between "sexy" and "sensual", as in this typical comment:

D2: "I like to feel that our performance is sexual in the sense that we're projecting ourselves, but it's not sexy or sexist. It's not deliberately trying to be titillating to the audience. I think that everybody has their own sexuality, and sometimes you define it as personality or charisma, and I think it's nice...We're just trying to be ourselves. And I think, in that way, we're being sexual. But that's such a big part of everybody, I think".

A woman faced with all these ideological and practical dilemmas can end up being so self conscious that she just does not move at all:

V2: "I don't want to convey anything. I want to be looked at in the way people look at everybody else in the band and not to be singled out (as the lead singer). So I've just tended to stand still - which I don't really enjoy doing. I would like to move about but I am worried that I'd feel embarrassed about my body shape and size, and things like that, and that people would pass comment on it. I think it's a problem being a woman on stage. I think it's made very much easier if you've got a very boyish figure. You can stand on stage and you can move about quite freely and no-one notices the way you're moving. Whereas, if you look more shapely, it's much more difficult because your body movements can suggest much more to the audience, especially to the men".

It is not only lead singers who worry about this:

H3: "This sounds ridiculous - but it's a real problem if you're drumming and you've got big tits. They're gonna go up and down (and) you're gonna draw lots of attention to yourself".

Feminist guitarists have, perhaps, the biggest problem - avoiding the male guitar-hero stance: guitar-as-phallus or guitar-as-woman, etc. For instance,

A1: "For guys, the lower you play it the more it is a phallus. It can never be a phallus if you play it high. It's the rock thing, when you have it slung right down there, where it becomes a phallus. Women don't often seem to play guitars and basses so low down...I don't think it's true that women can't do it. I think there are very few women who would choose to do it, feminist or not, actually...I think a lot of women find using your guitar like that very obnoxious or objectionable, and if you're a feminist it's that much worse, because you can see that much more in it".



On the other hand, some non-feminists did not object at all to looking "sexy". For instance,

S1: "L. and I get the necks of our guitars to play in time, and when we were playing in Spain there was an uproar - the guys liked it. I suppose that they thought it was quite sexy or something...I know some men I've spoken to think it's quite horny for women to play guitars...maybe they think that the guitar's a substitute for them".

The problem is partly one of a lack of female role models. Although a musician might not be consciously copying anyone, there is no doubt that unconscious influences are at work:

V2: "For women, there are very few people that you can identify with. It's just very difficult to look to other people for precedents and ideas. Most of the bands I look to are almost entirely male".

The middle-aged punk performer V1. developed a solution to this problem: irony. She subverted the meaning of macho guitar hero movements:

"I know when I go in for some big chords that this is what men do. And my feeling when I do it is irony, because I know that you don't have to strut around to make a good sound. I know that you can do it anyway. For boys to see a woman doing it is feeding them an image they haven't had before".

And in V1.'s case not only are the boys seeing a woman playing 'power-chords' but an older woman, at that.

HARASSMENT

Apart from the normal issues and problems which new bands have to deal with, all-women bands face an extra

dimension: sexism. The rock world is steeped in it, and it may be encountered amongst all role encumbents at the gig.

It is patently clear from my interviews that men have different expectations of women musicians because they are women. Women are defined primarily in terms of their gender; the category 'woman' obscures 'musician'. What exactly are these different expectations?

(1) Women are expected to be less good at playing than men, because 'rock musician' is seen as a male status.

(2) Women are supposed to be sexy and attractive, to wear revealing clothes and display their bodies. This is not surprising as women are pictured doing just that in the multitude of advertising images which surround us and subtly categorise women as 'bodies'.

In sum, a women's band is expected to be sexy and incompetent. These expectations form a de facto hurdle facing women musicians and, especially, all-women's bands. They represent a set of assumptions which must be coped with or combatted in some way. The audience must be won over from these sexist preconceptions. This may be difficult: if they expect an all-women band to be "bad", then that may be what they hear. On

the other hand, they might be impressed by the fact that women can play at all.

Probably the most rampant sexism is encountered in interaction with technicians. Engineers have considerable power over the total sound emanating from the stage and their role is crucial. A lack of sympathetic understanding between them and the band can ruin the evening. Women's bands often experience P.A. engineers and their roadies as hostile, seeing women as unwelcome intruders on 'male' terrain, and willing to exploit their ignorance and lack of confidence. They tend to assume that all women are technically incapable and that any man knows more than any woman. For example,

F: "They were questioning some things about the sound. And he said, 'That cymbal sounds good to me ...for the amount I know about cymbals - which is naff all!' So, basically what he's saying is that he doesn't know anything about it - but it sounds alright to him!"

I have experienced this many times. For example, when my band played in Clapham, the drummer took charge of the microphones and issued instructions to the in-house engineer. He totally refused to take any notice of her. He countermanded all her instructions for the band. He was insulted that a woman should be going to use "his" P.A. It undermined his status, that a mere woman should be in charge of his equipment.

My interviews furnished numerous illustrations of this kind of reaction. For example,

R2: "We phoned this very well-known P.A. company about three months beforehand, saying, 'we want this, this, this and that'. 'Fine', they said. She phoned up a week beforehand: 'Yes, yes, yes. We've got everything'...We went to pick it up. They said, 'What equipment?' They just hadn't taken her seriously on the phone 'cause it was a woman. They are one of the biggest equipment hire firms. They do that kind of thing all the time. They just threw something together and it was inadequate in the end. That kind of thing still goes on".

Some women's bands find male technicians openly laughing at their early efforts to get to grips with monitors, leads, etc. Other times they are patronised. For instance,

B2: "They think you don't know anything about your amps. For example, I had this amp that came out about a year ago...and it's got a D.I. output. And those roadies, they didn't know, and I said, 'Look, you don't need a D.I. box. This is the D.I. output'. And they just wouldn't listen to me. I said, 'Look, this is my amp and I know what it does'. They wouldn't believe it and I had to go and tell Joe. And Joe said, 'Look, this amp is new. This is the pre-amp and this is the D.I. output', and he just plugged it in. And they just kept quiet; he was the man, yeah? "

Other women agreed with this assessment:

J1: "P.A. crews are sort of macho. That is one area where rock and roll - the Rolling Stones - is very much where it's at. And I'm sure they all have a good titter about us. We're a particularly stropky band from the point of view of P.A. and lights. I know they think, 'Oh, this'll be a piece of cake. These girls won't know a monitor from a mike-stand. We can have a bit of a kip at the side of the stage'...(But) we're quite a bunch of hasslers and we show them that they can't get away with rubbish with us. And the band take great pride in upsetting

these people who think, 'Oh, we're onto an easy thing here'".

Other women's bands told me how they too had retaliated against this kind of behaviour:

S5: "Well, we've had some really, really heavy men being really condescending to us and patronising and heavy and nasty. Like, 'Come on darling, get on with it' stuff. We've had fights over things like that. Yes, the band often end up in fights!"

Sometimes crews simply hand out direct put-downs:

A3: "I can think of the P.A. crew that unnerved G. completely. They kept saying, 'Don't you play any faster than that, then?'"

Sexist attitudes of the P.A. crew can lead to women's bands being undersold on time and attention. They may get their soundcheck very late, when the audience is already present - which poses problems of negotiation of the two realities: practice and performance. This can be daunting, especially for novice bands. For example,

J2: "We didn't get a soundcheck 'till about nine o'clock. At the time we needed organising and none of us were prepared to say, 'Right, come on, let's do this'. We were just a bit polite about it. The whole audience was there!"

So sexist prejudice acts as a kind of handicap. Male bands do not face the same kind of hostility, sneering or jokes. Even women in mixed bands are singled out for differential treatment. For example,

V2: "People tend to take you less seriously. It's all very well for boys to be in bands; that's what

they've always done. But if you're a girl - oh, you're doing it because your friends are doing it, or because the person you are going out with is doing it. Therefore you are not taken seriously. Like, if you're talking to the P.A. they ask the men what sound they want. They don't ask you what sound you want. There have been many times when I've said, 'We want a sharper sound on the bass' or 'Take more off the bass drum', and the P.A. men turn round and look at you and think, 'How can she know about this? What does she know?'"

I have had experiences where I have given the man doing the mixing clear instructions - even written ones - and he has just ignored them. But it is extremely difficult to do anything about it when you are actually playing. The problems are most marked when playing support. In this situation the P.A. crew, perhaps hired by the main band or by the venue, often behave as if their job was only to mix the main band. They do not seem to care about the other acts. To save work, they set the controls as the main band likes them, and leave them set like that for the whole of the early part of the evening. What they should do is set the controls for each band and then write down all the settings so that they can reset the mixing board for each band's performance. 'Supportbanditis' does, of course, affect male bands too, as S1. was quick to point out:

"In the early days we used to get messed about and not get a proper soundcheck and things like that. I mean, I've watched male bands get treated really shittily. When the main band goes on, suddenly the kilowatt system rises to amazing levels and the sound gets amazing. You immediately think it's

because you're a female band. Maybe we got a little bit more than we would have done if we'd been a butch, tough-looking bloke band".

But, as V1. points out,

"If you're a woman, you are a support, anyway! They are interconnected. In the beginning they treated us shabbily and patronisingly, and we were always the support. It's difficult to work out whether it's to do with being a woman, whether it's to do with being older, or whether it's to do with being a support. As far as I am concerned, they're all the same: they're all part of a hierarchy and a system of privilege".

Some bands were fortunate enough to have a "tame" male P.A. engineer regularly doing their mixing. In the case of a few bands this was the husband or boyfriend of a band member (and more than one of these was a full-time P.A. engineer running his own business). These bands were extremely lucky:

J1: "So Joe does it quite cheap...he'll charge us less than he'd charge another band...He cares about us a lot...He's always rearranging gigs - ringing up other bands. He does too much, and he gets let down when the band says, 'Oh, those Fridays are off, Joe' and he's told lots of other people".

On the other hand, being in a relationship with the sound engineer can lead to role conflict:

J1: "I'm not happy with it because of having emotional ties with him. A band always slags off the P.A - 'terrible sound', 'I couldn't hear myself on stage'. And it's a bit funny for me, being emotionally involved with Joe".

But, for the band as a whole, the advantages of this situation were multiple. They would get a big P.A. at a cheap rate. Sometimes they would get the use of a

smaller P.A. for free, and even borrow bits of equipment for practices - like a small P.A. system for an immediate pre-gig rehearsal. They did not suffer from sexist jibes and patronising attitudes. Most of all, they had a guide into that mysterious and mystifying world of sound technology, and a caring, sensitive person who was 'on their side' at the mixing desk. Such a man was of inestimable benefit to the bands concerned. The women themselves would become more confident and capable of dealing with P.A. systems on their own, and in dealing with other P.A. crews, if they had to, as well:

J1: "Joe started up doing P.A. as a hobby. I used to go out with him; we did it together. And he explained to me how P.A.s worked. So he told me all the stuff that I then passed on to the band...I was going back to him every night, saying, 'Help, Joe, there's this funny noise. What does it mean?'"

One band had male friends doing all their technical tasks:

B2: "This guy Steve, he's doing our lights and he's doing our slides just for expenses...And John, he's got a video camera, so he's gonna do a video with us next weekend....This friend, he's got a 24-track studio and he's giving us time in advance...I've got a boyfriend. He does our mixing".

For any band, having the same person mixing at all or most gigs, is an enviable resource. They know the band's particular 'sound', the temperament of the various instruments (and players!), the length and composition of the set. They know the songs backwards.

Band members can relax and trust them to get on with it. Women can ask questions without fear of a put-down. Such an engineer will show them how to put up the equipment and explain how it works, give the women advice on their instruments and how to get the best out of them in the gig situation. S/he is an invaluable source of tips on 'bandcraft' - how to 'do' the leads, how to carry heavy things, how to interact with other P.A. crews for the best results, how to deal with promoters, etc. A band can learn to 'talk shop'.

Feminist bands playing women-only gigs have a particular problem: finding a female P.A. engineer:

A3: "There is only one female P.A. crew in the country and we have used them several times, but they don't know our music as well as Joe. So when we do women-only gigs we don't get as good a sound".

The only alternative is for the band to hire a P.A. and do it all themselves. This, of course, increases the workload considerably. It can also create role conflict, for one of the band members must take charge of the 'mix'. Plus, the sound balance cannot be easily altered once the set begins. This option is only available, in any case, for small gigs. Anything larger than a small room would require a full rig and a proper P.A. crew. Thus, large all-women gigs could only be held in London, where Britain's sole female

P.A. crew were based. (Being a gigging band themselves, they were loathe to travel far afield.) One band I interviewed told me they had waited thirteen months to get the crew up to their northern city in order to do a big women-only gig.

Other compromises were tried out by some bands, like getting a male engineer to set up the mix and soundcheck, and then leave, before the audience arrived. This was unsatisfactory because they could not alter the 'mix' during the performance. Besides which, it is a rare P.A. firm which will leave its expensive and sensitive equipment in the hands of a group of unknown people for the evening. On top of this, there is disbelief: 'Why do they want a women-only gig anyway?'. Occasionally a male engineer has been allowed to stay, discretely out of sight, at an all-women event. But this 'solution' has been rare.

Thus the chronic shortage of female technicians has posed a critical limitation on all-women gigs, and thereby limited the operations of all-women bands. But even when a women's band has got their own woman sound engineer the problems do not stop. If they are at a big gig, where a male P.A. firm has been hired to deal with all the bands, then they will have to deal with a male crew who may resent another person using their mixing desk. This resentment is even greater if the interloper is a woman. The technicians are likely to

doubt her skills and may be reluctant to let her near their equipment. For example,

F: "I've worked on a lot of P.A.s, but convincing blokes...it's very difficult. You have to really get into this frame of mind and go up to them. And sometimes I don't feel like that...If you eventually convince them you can do the mixing...you're sitting there and he's right behind you, waiting for you to make a mistake and go, 'Oh, no, you can't do that!' So it's really nerve-wracking".

Another reason for this reluctance is simply a sexist possessiveness which is actually more disturbed by female competence than ineptitude:

J6: "He was freaked out that there were all these women running around, looking as if they knew what they were doing. And he couldn't cope with it. I think a lot of men feel freaked out".

Understanding the complex, technical world of P.A. can give a feeling of power to those with this 'superior' knowledge. Sound technicians stand, at big gigs, in their own little enclosures. Few people are allowed in. I have often watched 'outsiders' attempt to enter this territory, inching their way over and being edged back again by the crew. It is a privileged space. Its boundaries are patrolled. And it is a male space.

Often a woman mixer is simply denied any form of access to the desk:

G: "They were making this awful balls-up of the sound. It was terrible. But they wouldn't let me be on the mixing-desk. They didn't actually give a

verbal reason. Just two men. Just consolidated themselves at the desk. They basically ignored me and I gave up in the end, totally frustrated".

At other times, male power is maintained in less blatant fashion. For instance,

F: "On one occasion recently...we hired the P.A. on the understanding that I was doing the mixing. And he set it up on the balcony of this hall and it was very dark up there...I was going to sit down and do the mixing and...he said, 'Oh, you'd better just tell me what you want, then'. I said, 'Hang on, I'm supposed to be doing the mixing'. And his excuse was that 'it's very dark up here'. We've got a light, so immediately someone went and got the light. So he couldn't say anything, and eventually he moved over".

Female musicians also often face sexism from male musicians who do not think women are able to play, or should be playing at all. They may resent the popularity of a women's band. For instance,

J1: "When I started off drumming I felt that there was an awful lot of hostility from local male musicians. And I think there was towards the band. And a lot of those musicians still don't like that band...And I think there's a lot of snidyness and you have to close your sensitivity off...You just become thick-skinned. You think, 'Well, look we've done a gig and the audience really loved it. And what are you doing?!' I think those particular men don't like the idea of women being musicians. And it is about being a woman; it's not about you as a person. They do think women can't play. And there must be a lot of other men like that".

Musicians in the audience can sometimes attempt to put a women's band down. On a number of occasions men came up to the band I used to play in, at the beginning, end, or even middle of the set, and

drunkenly tried to take over the drumkit, to prove how much better they were at drumming.

A1: "You sometimes get the Flash Harrys who come up and say, 'Oh, yes, that's nice. Let me have a go'. And then they go very fast up and down the neck, as if to show me how good they are".

Local bands are in a state of competition with each other - for gigs, reviews, 'headlining', and so on. Sexism gives male bands a built-in advantage in the musical market-place. On the other hand, male bands are quick to exploit the advantages of having an attractive young female in their band as a crowd-puller:

J1: "If I went along to an audition I think I'd be in with a bigger chance, because you stand out being a girl. They will probably think, callously, 'Hey, if we got a girl in the band that would be a good thing for helping us along'".

Promoters are a further source of problems. For example, A1. recollects the pre-punk mid-seventies:

"Promoters...didn't use to believe that a women's band could play. So they wouldn't want to take a women's band. Unless the women's group at the college would book you, it was difficult to get a gig".

K3: "We had lots of problems then, because the funny thing was, everybody said, 'Oh, girl band, great novelty idea'. But as far as trying to actually get gigs was concerned, it was very difficult because they thought, just 'cause you're all girls you're gonna be a load of rubbish, at that time".

Some of my interviewees mentioned the sexism of male D.J.s. I remember playing at a well-known London

club where the resident D.J. deliberately provoked the feminist audience by playing records with the most sexist lyrics he could find.

Even bouncers can be a problem as this quote indicates:

J5: "We've had trouble with bouncers being offensive to women. There was one instance quite recently where this bouncer smashed a woman's head against a table for no reason at all. So we had to sort him out a bit".

Lastly, women's bands have to contend with sexism from audiences. This comes in a variety of forms. One manifestation is the way that audiences typically expect women to be less good at playing:

A4: "I think some people expect girls just to be all lip-gloss and eye-shadow and pretty clothes, and yet can't play their instruments. They think, because you're a woman, they have to stand back and watch and see if you can play".

Because rock music is seen as a 'male' domain, men tend to feel superior to women. Sometimes, men who know nothing about playing, or the equipment used, will offer advice. A lot of women mentioned being patronised in this way.

S3: "When I first started playing the bass you'd get men come up after the gig and comment on your bass playing, saying how good it was. They were really just saying, 'You're a woman playing bass! This is amazing!' This was in 1976/77".

Men in the audience are much more likely to pass comment on a woman performer than a man:

H2: I've heard lots of remarks about, 'Oh, she can't play her instrument, she can't do this, she can't do that...She's a hopeless singer', from people who wouldn't normally pass any comment on men. And, in fact, specifically when there's a mixed band, they don't say anything about the men, positive or negative, but they make a point of saying, 'She can't do this, she can't do that'".

This also affects women doing the mixing, women who are often gradually learning to get confidence in the equipment. It is an extra obstacle that men do not have to face:

F: "There used to be a stage when a lot of blokes used to come up at mixed gigs and give their advice. They might know nothing about it at all, but they always thought they'd give their advice anyway...You can get a really hostile atmosphere from them, just because you're carrying out the gear and you don't need them to help you".

Women also get more comments made on their personal appearance than men do. (Feminist bands who do not conform to the normal trappings of femininity come in for a lot of criticism on that score.) The most common form of harassment is verbal abuse of the "show us yer tits" variety. This sort of abuse reflects the fact that women's place on stage is only legitimate if they take their clothes off: the most accepted form of female pub entertainer is the stripper. At gigs in the seventies you could sense some men's incredulity: if you were not going to expose your breasts, then what were you doing up on stage? A woman is as likely to be evaluated on the size of her breasts as on her guitar playing. Moreover, such comments are meant to

be heard by the performers. It can be startling and off-putting for the novice band to have to deal with demands that they strip. Sometimes the promoters of gigs have been partly to blame, by laying the emphasis so heavily on gender. For instance,

B2: "On the first tour the angle was, 'An all-girl band. Wow!' And we got to the place...and there was all the young punks and they said, 'Take it off! Take it off!' And K2. was saying, 'You go and take it off!' So they just backed off. There was so much anger".

Older female performers have to confront ageism as well as sexism:

V1: "I can't separate being female from being an old female. As you're about to go on stage - you know how you feel - some bloody little bugger at the side of the stage is saying, 'Here come the old age pensioners' or 'Who's that old bag?...Cor! She must be ninety years old!' Now, it just feeds my strength, but in the early days it put me off my stroke for the first few songs".

Pregnancy seems to be an even greater source for mockery:

A1: "We did a gig a few months ago at Bart's medical school. When we started, there was a row of medical students standing straight along the front...with their arms folded and a kind of sneer on their faces... X. was extremely pregnant at the time and a couple of them, particularly in front of her, were making laughs and jokes. You know, 'What a laugh - a very large pregnant woman playing saxophone!'".

Male hostility often makes women musicians determined to show how good they are, although there is usually an accompanying resentment. For instance,

J1: "'Get 'em down!' You don't get that at a male band's gigs...And they've only come along because 'Cor! It's an all-girl band!'. We probably all feel a huge amount of depression and a lot of aggression. We think, 'You bloody stupid idiots, we'll show you!' And we plod on throughout the set. Every now and then you feel your confidence wavering and you wonder whether you can do it. And then it comes back, you know, 'We're gonna play our songs' and 'We're a good band and you can like us or not!'"

Sometimes harassment goes further than verbal insults, to become physically threatening. For example,

J5: "In Amsterdam we were nearly beaten up, basically, I guess, because we were a women's band and a group of women who didn't need men. There have been some skirmishes. I've had quite a few".

If it is true that aggression stems from a dislike of women's independence, then it is not surprising that the feminist and lesbian bands have a lot of such stories to recount. For example,

T: "We were playing on a lorry and this male photographer was trying to get on the lorry with us. We were in the middle of a song and he wanted us to move something so he could get on the lorry. We said, 'Piss off!' And he was really put out. He couldn't believe that we wouldn't want him to take our photos. He made a swipe at somebody".

For some men, women-only gigs are like a red rag to a bull. They become incensed at being excluded. When I was playing in a women's band we did a number of women-only gigs which men tried to invade. On the worst occasion a crowd of drunks did manage to gain access. The women resisted and there was a serious

fight, during which our bass player was punched on the face, and our drummer was so beaten up she had to go to hospital. We were forced to cancel a number of gigs. All this stemmed, simply, from men being excluded. Other feminist bands have had similar experiences. For example,

R: "A bunch of cricket club boys tried to gatecrash when we were doing a gig in an education college. They broke windows. It was really heavy".

At mixed gigs the front of the stage is normally dominated by men. It can be very boisterous and women are often afraid of being hurt or getting drink spilt on them. However, women's bands often encourage the women in the audience to come down the front and take over some space. Our band used to say, 'Right, this next number's for all the women in the audience. Where are you all? Let's be seeing you!' It came to be expected at our gigs. Other bands encouraged this as well. For example:

B2: "As soon as we get up on stage (there is) a whole big movement in the audience and suddenly all the women are in the front. It's really good."

Men are not used to being excluded in this way. they are usually the dominant majority. So they react in various ways, sometimes aggressively. For instance,

T: "A lot of students from the Poly came down - male students. And the women had done what they quite often used to do in those days. They'd formed a semi-circle in the front and were dancing with linked arms. And the blokes linked arms behind them

and were dancing, kicking their legs up and were actually kicking the women and children. They were just being hateful. They were making fun of them. They just couldn't understand what was going on".

Indeed, it is often the women in the audience who become the victims of this sexual violence, rather than the band. My most frightening moment at a gig was when I was taking photographs of a women's band and, for no apparent reason, I was threatened with a knife.

However, bands do retaliate - sometimes verbally:

J1: "Normally someone in the band will make some vicious reply back. We normally say, 'You get yours down, right!', which is our way of handling it. You know, 'Got a problem with the size of your willie, have you?' or something like that. So we combat grossness with grossness."

At other times, physically:

S1: "There was one wally at Bristol that came up with a camera and said, 'Let me take a photo of between your legs' to one of us at the front. And we threw a bucket of water over him. And some girls that were fans of ours got hold of him and tried to smash his camera up".

Such dramatic incidents are rare, but all kinds of non-overt violence and general harassment are commonplace and taken for granted:

T: "There's always either a comment or some uneasy atmosphere or something. Every gig there'll be some little something that has to be dealt with. (But) a lot of women just have that experience happen to them so much of the time that they block it out. And it's the victim syndrome. It's like almost that you draw that kind of attention to yourself, that somehow women are responsible for those things. Or, 'Oh, it's not serious, dear. It doesn't matter'. We're so used to being harassed".

Notwithstanding all the sexism that women musicians encounter, some (less explicitly feminist) women laid stress on the advantages of being a woman in the rock world. They argued that women stood more of a chance of getting gigs because of their "novelty value" and their looks, and that women's bands are seen as "more commercial" by promoters. Women also stand out at auditions, simply because of their rarity. For instance S1. maintained:

"I think I've experienced advantages, because it's unusual for a woman to be doing it. You get scores of men trying to help you, which can be an advantage because it means you can get things done quickly. I think it's an advantage on the whole, really".

Notably, this position was not taken by explicitly feminist musicians.

WORKING CONDITIONS AND MASCULINITY

The rock lifestyle is a highly masculine one:

V1: "There isn't a changing room. There's beer spilt all over the place. You're gonna get gobbled on. Maybe, climbing into a van, without being able to change, and driving to somewhere where you're gonna sleep on someone's floor. Bad conditions. The lack of care. The lack of tenderness, warmth...The whole kind of macho thing of having to survive on a shoe-string and heroic treks through the bloody snow to get to a gig on time, or whatever it is. I think it's really awful."

But the important factor, here, is not so much the physical conditions per se as the value-system which

allows them to continue and even romanticises them. Tony Sheridan describes the attic flat he shared with the Beatles in Hamburg:

"There were no carpets and there was no heating - and no running water, just a basin and a stand, and a jug of water for washing...we kept our bedclothes for a month or so at a time...we always used to have the same meal. All the time, everywhere. Tea and cornflakes". (Tremlett. 1975. pp. 39-40)

Rock venues are organised entirely around the notion that rock bands are male. Inadequate dressing-rooms is a particular bugbear for women. Well-known and prestigious venues often lack even minimal facilities. This reflects the assumption that rock bands are male. For example, at one famous London club my women's band had to get changed in the toilet, which was tiny and smelt of Jeyes fluid. The official 'changing room' was dirty and full of beer kegs. We were supposed to change in there together with a 13-piece male band!

S1: "Dressing-rooms have never catered for women, because they've always catered for men. So they've never thought of a mirror, or a nice toilet. It's awful! I hate them".

Furthermore, it is not simply a question of clubs failing to provide reasonable facilities for performers. The behaviour of male bands is also a causative factor. By smashing up the facilities they

create a 'masculine' environment which works to exclude women. For example,

A1: "At the Greyhound one time they did up the dressing-room and it was quite nice. It had a basin and sink and a few chairs and it was quite reasonably decorated. And there was a toilet next door. Gradually over the months it deteriorated and deteriorated. They didn't bother to clean it up properly. And the bands who used it must have been really shitty, because there was graffitti all over the walls and the sink was permanently blocked. They never bothered to put soap or towel out anymore. And it was just awful in the end: the chairs were broken, the toilet smashed up. I hate that kind of thing. Men seem to be much more like that than women".

A number of the women musicians I interviewed made this point. For example,

J6: "I think, we, as women notice it more in those situations".

F: "Blokes don't seem to be bothered so much".

J6: "They'll just piss in the room. They just don't care. It's completely outrageous".

The point is the world of rock does not have to be like this; it could be changed and many women musicians do try to change it (insisting on a dressing room key, time for a meal, etc.)⁴ But the majority of musicians are male and do not contest such conditions, for they endow masculinity. The masculinist values underpinning the rock working environment make the life of a rock musician one which most women would not choose. It is, then, another way in which men exclude women from playing rock music.

GIGGING MOTHERS

I have already discussed how the role responsibilities of being a mother tend to interfere with band involvement. At the gigging stage these problems ramify. For example,

J3: "It makes life difficult with family. Because there were occasions when we had a couple of gigs a week and we had to have a practice. And then we'd be loading up the day before and it seemed to be taking the week over, and our life over...You get keyed up before a gig. You tend to throw everything else to the wind and concentrate on that...I do find it difficult when I'm full-time at college, having to fit family things in and kids".

As this example illustrates, being a mother and, either doing paid work or being a student as well, poses the most acute problems of all. Many women need their jobs for the money (which gigs do not bring in) but are restricted in the number of gigs they can do because of combined work and childcare commitments. It becomes a vicious circle. In fact, given these competing commitments, it is amazing that these mothers were playing gigs at all.

Rock venues are not usually places which can (or wish to) accommodate children. Many gigs take place in pubs, from which environment children are legally barred. Gigs are typically unsuitable for children from the point of view of health and safety, being dirty, cramped, and full of potential dangers: electrical cables, leads etc. Electric shocks are not

unheard of, people tripping up is commonplace. Aside from these physical dangers, the audience poses a possible threat. Thefts and fighting may occur. A baby could not be safely left in a changing room. Indeed, there is usually no safe place for a baby or young child. Some venues, even reputable ones, do not even provide performers with dressing rooms; they certainly do not cater for children.

Furthermore, these physical conditions are coterminous with traditional rock values: babies, nappies, and breast-feeding are anathema to the protagonists of the "heroic" vision of rock'n'roll life!

On the other hand, some women did take their children to gigs and on tour and thus showed that these hurdles could be overcome. For example, this single parent:

V1: "It hasn't limited my involvement with music because I haven't let it. I demanded that other people took responsibility...And, because of my commitment to the band, I demanded of my children that they respected my needs. Actually, it was a wonderful experience for them. Some of those gigs were frightening for me - where there was violence - and a lot of the time I was telling them to keep out of the way of the bogs and where there was likely to be scuffles...What gave me courage was the feeling that I was allowing my children to have some awareness of danger - that people were not always to be trusted, that fights did happen...And, looking at my children now, I feel good about what I did...They are really strong individuals".
(Both of V1.'s children have themselves become rock musicians.)

Women like V1. were fully aware of the role they were playing for other women - as was T., who felt it was important to "be gigging live and showing other women that it's possible to be a musician and a woman, including having babies".

A1. details the problems her band faced and how they organised to overcome them:

"Gigs vary. Some gigs are fine and some are extremely difficult. If there's a dressing room - at the moment he's very young, he's only a few months old - if he's not asleep, then we have to have somebody come and sit with him while we're playing...Or if the dressing room's near enough to the stage, and he's asleep, then he can be left for half an hour or three quarters of an hour when we're playing. But sometimes it's difficult. There's been once or twice we've come to gigs and it was entirely unsuitable...When I book gigs now I have to remember, that's another thing to mention, after you've discussed the money, the P.A., the dressing room, the lights, the stage, the times, etc, then I have to say, 'Right, the other thing is that we have a baby. And is there a suitable room? And if the baby's asleep will there be somebody who can sit with the baby?' Sometimes, like a pub, you just get a kind of blank look and they say, 'Oh, it's nothing to do with us'. So that's when you have to make alternative arrangements".

BAND MEETINGS

In the beginning, bands are often split about what is a "good" or "bad" gig. Some members might define a good gig as one where the band was well received by the audience, whereas others might define a gig as "good" when the band played well, despite adverse audience reaction. Arguments can erupt over these

evaluations. But as a band does more gigs, changes occur in a number of areas. Values, attitudes, perception, expectations and aspirations become transformed. A joint understanding is reached about what is a "good" or a "bad" gig, and other group definitions of this sort develop. Gradually, a shared (band) perspective emerges.

Band members learn from their experiences at gigs and the development of a shared view is accelerated by the post-mortems which inevitably follow: what was good, what was bad, how things could be improved, what is a good audience response, etc. Analysis of gigs takes place spontaneously on the homeward journey: in the van or in someone's house whilst unpacking. These discussions are important group learning experiences. Bands learn from their mistakes and from their successes; members pass comments on each other's performances. People are told to turn their volume up, or down, and not only is the playing a subject for minute dissection, but so is the total behaviour of all band members: what was said to the audience, why did so-and-so look sad, etc. Even bodily movements are scrutinised: how an instrument is held, which way someone is facing, etc. So is off-stage behaviour: who was not pulling their weight with roadying, who was late getting ready, who did not soundcheck efficiently.

Arguments often occur, and one area of common contention is, simply, what actually did and did not happen during the performance. For instance, the drummer and bass player may vociferously dispute whose timing was out. This sort of contingency leads to bands taping their gigs. In turn, this poses practical problems: where to place the equipment, the sound quality of the room, etc. Nevertheless, despite the problems in trying to get a reasonable reproduction of a performance, a more objective rendering is possible via the practice of taping ones gigs. (Some bands might also video their performances, although expense usually rules this out.)

What also increasingly happens is that bands feel the need to set up meetings where they can discuss what is going on, where they are going musically and career-wise. There is the need to analyse the band's past and present, and to plan for the future. Such meetings may also be used to air grievances, as in this example,

V2: "We have official band meetings about once every three or four weeks. Otherwise you get vibes and you get me walking around muttering, 'Why do I do everything?'"

In this way 'band meetings' become institutionalised as a normal part of band life. However, such meetings may begin to take up an increasing amount of time and this can cause problems, even precipitate a crisis. I

have already explained how time becomes increasingly taken up by rehearsing and gigging. Now meetings are added onto this. Consequently individuals have to re-order their lives and think seriously about their desires and commitments. There may well be objections from some members who would rather be rehearsing or who cannot see the need for meetings. Others simply feel they do not have any more time to give the band.

Given the importance of band meetings, especially for forward planning, a band which does not have them will be disadvantaged in career terms. Predictably, in my research, it was the band composed entirely of mothers who fell into this category:

J4: "We don't have discussions. 'Cause maybe we don't have the time to. It's not as if the band is our total existence".

This meant that the band's problems never got resolved, as another member explained:

S2: "We start talking about washing or nappies or something when it gets bad. We just fume quietly, I think, all of us. We just sit there and stew over things. It's terrible".

REMUNERATION

Bands just starting to gig tend to get little in the way of financial rewards. This is a factor which band members have to learn to come to terms with. Some

women are surprised by the paucity of payment, given the popular myth that rock bands are rolling in loot:

B1. was working in a day job in order to finance her playing and yet,

"people seemed to think the only reason I was playing was in order to make money! That's the crazy part about it".

There are also lots of hidden costs, to which non-performers are oblivious:

A1: "By the time you've rattled around a bit doing rehearsals, buying strings or sticks or whatever you need, getting to the gig, probably having something to eat, buying a couple of drinks - you've probably spent more than ten pounds (each)".

I remember being being somewhat shocked when, after my first gig, I saw what little was left after expenses had been paid out and the money split five ways.

A3: "You spend an hour playing the gig and then you spend anything from 12 to 15 - getting ready for it, or driving down, or humping gear, driving back...or whatever. And so the amount of work that goes into any one gig is phenomenal, really. And I don't think most people realise that. And the hourly rate that you get is probably, practically nil... I didn't do it for the money 'cause there wasn't any money!"

But, as this quotation illustrates, money is not the most important value, otherwise no band would ever get off the ground. Indeed, most bands starting out are so happy just to be playing that they are willing to do some gigs for no money at all. Enough reward comes from the playing itself.

J3: "You put a lot in and you don't get anything out. But you come to accept that quite early on - that you're playing for fun".

Yet a lot of women did voice dissatisfaction at the lack of remuneration, particularly as money was seen as a necessary resource in order for bands to progress - that is, to get better equipment, perhaps a van, their own mini-P.A. for rehearsals, or to be able to promote themselves better via professional art work. Most of all, money was needed to hire recording studios and make a demo tape (in order to get better gigs and/or a record deal). For example,

K2: "If we did have a little bit more money we could make our gigs a hell of a lot better...We want to use slides and we want to have a few extra things - certain pedals..just expand a bit on our sound...I think, if we had some money, the first thing we would get would be a van, 'cause every time we do a gig we have to hire one and it's really expensive...There's one or two P.A.s we've come across we really like, but we can't always afford them...And we want to go in a good studio, and work under circumstances where it's not the middle of the night, so we can do our best".

Lack of money was one of the reasons which led S2. to leave her band:

"Most of the time we've not got any money at all. Sometimes it's been so much of a hassle you just think, 'That's it. We're not doing it again'. If you can't even get your petrol money when you're as poor as we all are to start with...We've ended up paying out of our pockets and got minus a fiver each!...If you've got to pay for your petrol and your beer and you don't get anything back you wonder whether it's worth it...The most we've ever got was £8.50 each, and we thought that was wonderful. So we all went and got a bag of chips!"

Even at some well-known venues bands get so little money that they cannot cover costs. For example,

S4: "When we done the Greyhound we lost twenty quid on it. We paid twenty quid to play there!"

BENEFITS

These financial problems are ones which face male bands too. But one aspect which is more gender-specific is that all women's bands seem to find themselves being pushed towards doing lots of benefit gigs, whereas male bands (apart from specifically political ones and, interestingly, reggae bands) do not. Women and black musicians (both disadvantaged groups themselves) often feel morally obliged to do benefits.

Most of the women I interviewed had done benefit gigs. Some had done a large number. For example,

S5: "We've done lots of Rock Against Sexism and Rock Against Thatcher, Rock Against Racism...We've done rock against everything you can rock against!"

Benefits throw up particular sets of problems. Bands are expected to play just for "expenses". Yet some bands found they were not even getting this. Some of my interviewees felt that bands were undervalued and exploited.

T: "Women musicians are always being asked to sponsor everything - from one extreme to the other.

You get terribly ripped off. What they expect you to give up, of what is equivalently your wages, they would never dream of asking the people on the door to give up at all!"

Some women felt particularly indignant that they were sometimes taken for granted by other women. For example,

H4: "I got fed up with not getting any money. Like, people kept asking you to go places and saying that they'll pay you and it's, 'Oh, well, we didn't get enough people to this conference. We can't pay you'...It really gets up my nose. It's not as if you want to earn thousands from it. You just want a fair deal. (So, nowadays) we'll only play, not just for expenses, but for money as well, even if it's just a fiver each. We need to get paid. It's also just something about getting paid - I like the feeling of it".

Often the organisers of benefits are inexperienced and underestimate the problems such ventures involve. The gigs may be disorganised - with inadequate P.A. and lighting. They are often poorly advertised and the low audience turnout may mean they fail to make enough money to pay the band's expenses. Benefits sometimes lose money and benefit no-one.

S3: "The people that you're dealing with are even less experienced than you are, so you end up ringing up and saying, 'Have you done the publicity yet?'...It happens all the time - it's a shambles. You turn up and - God, it's the same story!"

Nevertheless, most women's bands I interviewed did do benefits. For a benefit gig was, after all, a gig, and for an unknown or new band, competing in a limited local market, gigs are often difficult to get. Also,

many band members believed fervently in the causes they were supporting and saw gigging as a way of giving those organisations large amounts of money - which would otherwise be impossible for them to donate. For some bands, a very large proportion of their gigs were benefits. Such bands tend to do benefits for broadly political reasons. Here, for instance, K2. explains why she likes doing benefits.

"You usually get really good audiences...you've already got a point of contact with them. If it's Rock Against Racism, then you're not going to get a bunch of racist pigs. And it's a very nice feeling to know that the money's going to something good. Because, otherwise, the money's just going into someone's pocket, anyway. And finance-wise they usually make sure your expenses are covered. With commercial gigs it's a totally different scene. You make a bit of money but, on the other hand, they don't give a damn whether you cover your expenses or not. The whole transaction becomes a big sort of 'I'll sell you this and you sell me that'. I'm not a great one for going on demonstrations...So it really makes me feel good that I can do a gig for a cause...and it's a much nicer way for me to contribute to it".

BAND FUND

In order to cope with the lack of money and to be able to accumulate enough funds to buy group equipment, recording studio time and so on, bands often develop a joint fund/ bank account. This pooling of resources marks a very important step in band development: the band has a financial embodiment as well as a social one. This development adds to the

band's stability. It represents a considerable financial investment on the part of each member. The possibility of collecting such sums from individuals as a donation would be most unlikely, but a regular sum taken out of band fees is usually quite painless:

B2: "We put (the money) into a fund...We get two quid every gig to give everybody pocket money. ...If we didn't have this hundred quid I wouldn't be able to buy video cassettes or buy make-up stuff (for the band as a whole). I'd have to go round and collect the money and it would be a big hassle: 'Oh, I've only got fifty pence this week'".

In one city the women's big band put all their fees into a fund which was also used by two other women's bands in the area. Splitting the big band's fee between twenty odd people would have meant each member receiving only a tiny sum. Pooling it, on the other hand, meant that a sizable amount could be accumulated, which could then be used to purchase equipment which would be of use to a lot of women.

The moment at which a band fund emerges is an important point of transition. The band is ceasing to play spontaneously just for the fun of it and considering long-term goals. It is precisely at this point that bands consider the question of management. Sorting out the band's finances is one important reason for getting a manager. Even if the band decides not to get a manager, someone will have to take on the task of administering the band fund, and perhaps

other administrative tasks as well. I shall defer discussion of this until the next chapter, however, as it is at this point that a band is on the verge of going professional.

RATIONALISATIONS

Band members expect to cover their costs and make some money on top. They also expect an audience, hopefully a large one, and to be received favourably. Often these expectations are not met. This precipitates a crisis. The perception of failure leads people to make decisions which determine whether the band will continue or not. There is usually a flurry of band meetings. Some bands decide that the returns (in all senses) simply do not justify the investment and they break up. Others decide to make a determined attempt to break out of existing limitations (local gigs, inadequate P.A, etc.) by stepping up the scale of the operation and investing considerably more time, energy, and money into the band. Those bands which take this path are making a commitment to some sort of professionalism.

But there is a third option, other than going professional or giving up altogether. Some bands scale down their aspirations, relinquishing all vague notions of "making it" and settle for playing "just

for fun". Music-making is conceptualised as a "hobby" rather than a possible career and a 'musician' identity does not emerge. Such an adaptation involves bands subscribing to a set of beliefs and values which, in a sense, rationalise their experience of failure. For example, disappointment at being badly paid may be offset by having a good time, as in this case:

K2: "We've done a festival in Cornwall which was only expenses. But we we had such a nice time on the beach. It was a nice experience".

A typical rationalisation is to view the gig as a "practice". This enables a band to carry on gigging in an otherwise unrewarding situation. For example,

B2: "(We) sometimes play for a London organisation who book bands that are crazy enough to play for very little money. But gigs are good practices. If we're not doing anything else we'll go and do it".

But not making money nor having fun erodes motivation. And lack of an audience is even more threatening to a band's continuance. In such a situation satisfaction can only come from aspects extrinsic to the actual playing and the gig itself. For example,

J3: "It was well publicised but no-one turned up. (We got) no money in the end but only five pounds expenses shared out between the band. (We) wouldn't have minded not being paid, but we didn't enjoy it either - which is most important...I wasn't disappointed because I always think the worst, after so many gigs where you turn up and there's nobody there. I always think it's going to be

hopeless, anyway. So if there's half a dozen people there it's quite nice!...Usually, however bad they are, you think, 'Oh, well, I had a good chat with so-and-so...'...Last night was a flop. But the curry was good - so it was worth it!"

This same band had, previously, undergone the humiliation of having to tout for business:

S2: "We did a pub in Manchester and there wasn't anybody!...We'd got the P.A. and it was going to be really good. And there wasn't a soul! And we literally went into the pubs and clubs and (said), 'Do you fancy coming to see a band? It's a women's band!' to try and get them there. We ended up with an audience and it was a right bunch - never seen such a mixture! But we had a good time in the end"

Continuance of this situation for any length of time will lead to one or members leaving and, indeed, this band was splitting up:

S2: "I'm leaving this band. I do like playing and if I felt that it was worthwhile...But we've had so many gigs like last night. They've nearly all been bad gigs. Nobody seems to be bothered. It's just pathetic. You put up all these posters; you make an effort and you want to do gigs so that people can have a good time, and nobody ever turns up".

The band did get an audience in their own town, but rarely managed to attract one outside of their immediate home area.

But, for most bands, gigs were usually fun and that was the major reward. For example,

J5: "It's a great feeling being on stage because we have a really good laugh and we have a really good time. I also think it is very special to play electric music with other women".

For the following band, playing music together as women was a very different kind of experience from their usual music-making context (in mixed bands). It was basically more pleasurable:

B1: "This is our relaxation! I think that is why it's working. We always thoroughly enjoy the gigs - even bad gigs, I've enjoyed - because on stage you get a good feeling going together. We know what's happening and we're all laughing at each other and it's great. It's good fun".

CONFLICTS AND CONTRADICTIONS

Various problems arise once the gigging stage is reached. Some revolve around the issue of power. Many male bands set out from the start with an established 'leader' whose band, in a sense, it is. Some mixed bands start on this footing too (and may have a woman as the leader), but women's bands tend to be more democratic. This may be partly due to the sheer lack of female musicians: a band may be composed of novices all learning together. But whatever the reasons, the absence of clearly defined leaders in all-women bands has a number of implications.

In a typical male band the existence of one or two highly committed people, who more or less 'run' the band, means that, so long as those people remain, a band can survive a high rate of turnover in its membership. The leaders "carry" the band. Thus, in a

male band personnel change is frequent and it is rarely composed of the same numbers at the moment of signing a record deal as it was when it started. Whereas, women's bands find it more difficult to survive the crisis of a member leaving. For women's bands rarely have clearly defined leaders and the shortage of female musicians means that members take longer to replace. (It can take so long that the band dissolves in the meantime.) Consequently, if a member signals that she intends to depart, the women's band faces a far bigger crisis than a male band typically would. Certainly the situation will be perceived as critical and members are unlikely to say to a woman who threatens to leave, "Well, go on then!"

Despite their democratic origins, however, over time bands tend to develop power imbalances. These may be based upon a number of things, for example the ownership of equipment or songwriting.

Once a woman becomes established as the main, or sole, writer, then power tends to accrue to her. (In male bands the 'leader' who sets up the band tends to be the songwriter from the start, anyway.) Over time it becomes apparent that not everyone is going to write or feel capable of writing lyrics. Thus one or two individuals tend to predominate. In arranging a song, the writer tends to have more influence than other band members. This is particularly true if there

is a lack of songs and band members are worried about their only source drying up:

S3: "I think the person who's written the song tends to have last say. Like it's their baby and if they really don't like it you won't do it".

Although band members may be aware of a growing concentration of power, there is often a disinclination to "test" the situation, for fear the songwriter will threaten to leave the band. Also, no-one wants the power spelt out, for it conflicts with the strongly-held norms of equality and democracy. Band members prefer not to acknowledge that power is becoming concentrated. They then do not have to face the political contradiction involved. Furthermore, once power has been proven, the songwriter may become more confident and push her influence even further. For, up to the point of challenge, she may not have been fully conscious of her influence.

Power may also descend upon those who work hardest, either in terms of administration or in terms of physical labour. But ability to work hard is often connected to the amount of time members have available. For instance,

V2: "The two of us who have the most power work (only) part-time. Therefore I think we expect the others to think about it as much as we do, to put more effort into it and be prepared to give up more time for it. Commitment's the main thing we argue about..I think everyone in the band wants to go in the same direction, but we push it along, just

saying, 'Now, we do need another practice next week'. When people might be saying, 'Oh, I don't think we really need it', we say, 'Yes we do need it, otherwise I'm not playing the gig'.

Thus, over time, as a band gigs more often, there may develop a split between those who wish to spend more time on the band and those who do not (or cannot). If such a split widens, the band will break up.

Another power base can be connected to the instrument played. In all bands, but particularly women's bands, drummers are in short supply. A drummer may therefore use her scarcity value as a way of obtaining influence, knowing (or believing) that if she were to leave, the band would finish. This is especially important when the band has a policy of being all-women.⁵

A further set of problems revolves around the issue of time. Once a band starts gigging there are (usually) more band practices and band meetings as well as the gigs themselves. The increase in time a woman must commit to her band is considerable and it is often on weekends. This means missed parties, discos, etc. For an unattached young woman this is the time when she might find a partner. At gigs there is not much time to meet new lovers, as musicians are tied up for most of the evening with the 'hidden' labour discussed above. Also, most musicians are pre-occupied with psyching themselves up (before the gig)

and evaluating their performance (afterwards). These are not the most propitious circumstances for making new friends. Whilst existing relationships may be threatened if the partner cannot adapt to the changed situation. For example,

A1: "It was something so separate from the woman I was involved with, there was nothing she could relate to, or be involved in. And it took up a lot of time and I was terribly excited by it, and it wasn't anything to do with her. People I know who are musicians who have relationships with people who aren't musicians find it very difficult".

Perhaps this is why most of the women I interviewed had relationships with other musicians, who would be more likely to empathise with the problems involved. For example, some musician husbands took on a greater share of domestic labour once their wives started performing:

S2: "I'm very lucky, because he's played in bands and he's had so much time, anyway, he can't really say anything! If he's working, I do everything, and vice versa. He does a lot of the housework if I'm busy. When he and I were both in bands together it was a real hassle getting babysitters and that was very difficult. But (now) if he's not playing he's quite happy to babysit. So most of the time it's been quite easy. And because he's self-employed he can always be home in time for me to go".

But others were not so fortunate. For instance,

J3: "He resents me practising with the band (and) he also resents me practising on my own. Because when he's here and I'm here he expects me to spend the time with him. I mean, he doesn't think anything of going in there and getting his guitar out. But if I was to go in there and start playing he'd be really pissed off: 'Not much of a life we

lead!' He'd start moaning about me not spending time with him".

Lack of time is not the only issue which places a strain on a relationship with a musician, however. For example,

K2: "There's this big battle of whose trip is more important. So I think my next boyfriend is not going to be a musician! Musicians are so selfish. To be a musician you've got to be really selfish. You've got to ignore everything".

Some women I interviewed said that they felt they could not afford to have a sexual relationship whilst in a band. For instance,

A3: "I think it was quite a factor in ruining our relationship and I haven't had any serious ones since. Because I did make a decision, after that, that I just couldn't cope with both. The band is like a relationship in a lot of ways".

Whilst other women discovered for the first time, through band membership, a new and rewarding emotional independence:

K2: "I think, what would have happened if I wasn't getting into any of these things. I'd probably get a boyfriend and I'd worry about 'what is he doing now? Where has he gone?' But now, because I've got something in my life, he doesn't come first. It changed my life. He can go off and not see me for a week. It doesn't bother me. I think it happens in a lot of women's bands. It's something fulfilled in your life. You have got something going for you. If you haven't got anything else, all you rely on is your love".

A more specific problem develops in bands over how to allocate the (limited) amount of time that individuals have jointly available. For instance, a

conflict typically develops between gigging and practising.

Before the first gig much time is spent practising and working on the full 'set'. However, once gigging becomes regular the need soon develops to write more material. This is to avoid boring the local audience (and band members themselves). It is also important to move with changes in musical fashion. There is usually a problem in finding the time to get a new set of numbers written, arranged and rehearsed. There is thus an ongoing tension between doing gigs and having practices. Sometimes a band may decide to refuse gigs for a period of weeks (or even months) in order to write more material.

A3: "We'd get offered more and more gigs and we'd have a lot of pressures to write new numbers. And I can't write new numbers to order at all".

One particular aspect of this conflict is the need to write and arrange 'new' material versus the desire to go over, and re-arrange, existing material. Personality clashes can also develop, because people become attached to particular numbers and are loth to see them dropped in order to make way for new ones. In a band where there is more than one lead vocalist, and (particularly) where the vocalists sing the numbers which they have written, there can be a further

conflict: the changing of the set affects who does how much singing.

Another tension often develops between gigging/practising and day jobs. There is a limit to the number of gigs a woman can do if she is working in a full-time job. For example,

H4: "I work shifts. I work 'till 9 o'clock some nights...That is one of the really hard things, trying to get everybody free at the same time. Also, if we've got a gig coming up we'll play twice a week and it's really difficult to get it all in. Sometimes I can't do them because I'm working and I can't always get somebody to swop with me".

And practising can also get frustrating. For example,

S3: "There's never enough time to explore. And we need to go further. And it's all down to time".

This issue of time, raises (again) the question of commitment and future aspirations. If the band decides to go professional, then members in day jobs will have to either relinquish those jobs or leave the band. (I shall explore this in Chapter 11.)

The time issue is linked to money. When a band is starting off, remuneration is typically low, and members cannot afford to give up their day jobs. Moreover, they need their wages in order to finance the escalating financial outlay of the band. Yet the band will only improve if it practises more. People find that the band is eating up their spare time and money. If the problem becomes too acute they may

leave. A4. could not practise as much as other band members because of her job. But she needed her wages in order to leave home, which would free her from the parental restrictions which were, also, hampering her involvement in the band.

Band members develop increasing aspirations. "Better" gigs are sought. For non-London bands this typically means out-of-town gigs. For London bands it means more prestigious venues. The snag is that, for such gigs, the band find they need to spend more money: a more expensive rehearsal facility, a high-quality demo tape, a bigger or better P.A. Thus, although the band may be getting more money for these gigs, most of it will probably be going on the increased expenditure which such gigs necessitate. For instance,

S4: "Our rehearsals cost us £20 every time. So we lose that money; that comes out of our own money. (Consequently, practices are rare.) Generally, about once every three weeks, 'cause it costs so much: four hours for twenty quid. We used to go to a place down Leyton...but we never used to get a good rehearsal. The place we go to now is (more expensive) and you've got to take all your own equipment. But it's such a good place".

This, then, is the central contradiction at the gigging stage: rewards are outweighed by costs. Band members quickly find that gigging is expensive and you actually lose money on it. Also, being in a band eats into all your spare time and completely disrupts your

social life. Band members start to ask themselves 'is it all worth it?'

There is a log-jam of bands all spending more and more money on better and better equipment in the fierce competition for gigs, record deals, etc. Only a few bands are able to break through this to the richer pastures where expenditure on the band is justified by the rewards, and the very first step on this path must be to go professional. For the only way to make a living out of music-making is to make it your sole career.

Notes:

1. See E.Wilson (1985) for an interesting discussion of this issue.
2. This was also the view of (male) 'pub rock' bands.
3. This argument comes close to the feminist one about being "natural". Early '70s feminist gigs sometimes used to involve the spontaneous shedding of clothes (in the safety of an all-women environment) as a way of saying, 'We are all women. We have so much in common. Let's shed the outer layer of differences which divide us'.
4. "...when women work in industry they put up a struggle to stay human" (Hunt, 1984. p.50).
5. Quite a number of bands which were originally all-women have lost their drummers and resorted to becoming all-female-plus-one-male-drummer.

Chapter 11. GOING PROFESSIONAL.

INTRODUCTION

"Going professional" is commonly held to mean making a living from music. It means giving up other, non-musical, careers or jobs in order to devote oneself solely to playing music.

Becoming a professional musician involves making a substantial commitment to music, which affects one's future options. It typically necessitates making considerable sacrifices in other areas of life. All other time-consuming commitments are pared down so that playing music can be pursued single-mindedly.

The most immediate sacrifice is often financial. A woman may leave a secure non-musical career in the certain knowledge that it would be difficult, or impossible, to return should her musical venture fail. For example, J1. relinquished a "marvellous career" in civil engineering. She knew she would be worse off financially, but she was willing to do it for the fun, excitement and satisfaction that would come from playing music full-time:

"I decided that that's what I wanted to do with my

life...So I've lost lots of money by being in a band...I think it's wrong if you think, 'I want to be a millionaire. I'll play in a rock band'. It's not the same. You think, 'I don't care if I'm starving. I'm gonna play in a rock and roll band'".

Making a living from music is quite an achievement, for it is the unrealised goal of innumerable local musicians. J1. was lucky in that her job had gave her financial security and the means to purchase high-quality musical equipment. The irony here is that it is, often, by having a well-paid non-musical career that a woman can get the necessary equipment in order to launch herself into a musical career.

The 'moment' of going professional is both a moment of choice and crisis. Immediate financial rewards are likely to be limited. So why do women do it? The decision comes with the dawning realisation that to 'succeed' one must move forward. Already, the semi-professional band will be faced with the escalating costs of "better" gigs and the perceived need for more expensive equipment. The band is taking up an increasing amount of time, often eating into band members' non-musical careers: making music and making a living are beginning to clash. Going professional is the logical next step to take.

Thus, paradoxically, it is the inability to make a living wage at the semi-pro stage, which makes band members give up all other forms of money-making

activity, thereby risking penury, and commit themselves to making the band a financial success.

Some bands consciously aim for commercial success right from the start, but the majority of women's bands do not. Women tend to drift into playing in 'local' bands without giving much thought to the long-term, or having any kind of strategy. Aspirations for 'success' are learned via the process of band involvement, through informal socialization. At first, getting paid very little for gigs is not perceived as a problem, for band members are simply glad of the opportunity to play. After a long succession of low-paid gigs, however, and with increasing sacrifices being made, the musicians expect higher financial returns. They come increasingly to resent the fact that their playing is restricted; that they need day jobs in order to support themselves.

Bands usually have some notion of 'success' in financial terms. It could be making a fortune with hit records, or simply making a reasonable living from playing gigs. Either way, it is the desire for success in the long-term that enables a band to survive short-term financial deterioration. But musicians will only go professional if they believe in their music and the potential of the band. They have to believe in themselves, regardless of the reactions of others.

This critical moment is the same for both male and female musicians, but women are less likely to take the plunge and give music their total commitment. For women musicians are held back by a range of factors, some external and others subjective. They are factors which have operated at earlier stages in the career process but which, at this point, become particularly crucial: lack of self-confidence, lack of role models, domestic and personal responsibilities, and so on.

One problem for bands is that the critical moment of going professional may evoke different responses from their various members. Some hate their jobs, and so going professional is not a difficult decision. For others, already committed to their non-musical careers, the decision may prove impossible. Some band members might wish to go professional but feel it would be too risky. They may, for instance, have a mortgage and family obligations which would limit their mobility. You cannot simply decide to give up being a mother, for instance. Many male musicians, especially in the world of jazz and improvisation, are financially dependent upon their wives. Although this is often hidden, it is seen as perfectly acceptable, for the man is assumed to have a special talent that must at all costs be fostered. In sharp contrast, although they may be supported in order to raise

children, women are rarely given such support in order to develop their musical talents.

Some women may realise that they do not wish to become professional at all. Others may decide that they do, but that their present band is not the one which will rocket them to success. They leave and join, or form, another band and work their way up the career ladder again.

Bands often become deeply divided on the issue of going professional and the ensuing arguments, in themselves, can tear bands apart. Some women may decide to drop out of playing music altogether. Often, at this moment, half a band's members leave because they do not want to go professional.

If a band chooses not to go all out for a record contract and commercial success, it may scale down it's aspirations and settle for just being a 'local band'. A band which starts off as a 'fun band' may not recognise its identity until this moment is reached. The notion of becoming professional is raised and rejected. But the band continues to play, far more aware of what it is engaged in: a hobby.

Going professional involves increasing expenditure on equipment, studio time, and rehearsal space. It may mean giving up a percentage of the band's income to pay an agent and a manager. It does mean entering

fully into the world of the professional musician, a world with its own culture. Most friends and acquaintances will, in future, be in that world, which means, consequently, being cut off from other worlds. And music will always come first. For example,

J1: "If you decide that it's your life and your career you haven't got time to do anything else: you're on call. If someone rings up now and says, 'You've got to do an interview in two hours time', I'd have to be there. It's my job. I'm available all day and every day".

Going professional entails ideological changes, in the sense that band members will see themselves as seriously engaged in a money-making career. A set of professional attitudes will be internalised, such as punctuality; deferred gratification; being "serious" about music-making; single-mindedness in the pursuit of success; hard work to improve one's musical skills. Only by giving up everything else can one hope to succeed in the competitive world of rock music, and this sacrifice and dedication is at the centre of the professional world view. All decisions, even about what to wear and issues of self-expression, are pivoted around this central motif.

Thus, apart from alterations in material circumstances, becoming a professional musician involves subjective changes: radical shifts in self-conception and ways of seeing the world. As Hughes (1937) wrote:

"Subjectively, a career is the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions and the things which happen to him". (See Becker, H. 1963. p.102)

Becoming a professional musician involves thinking about one's playing in the long-term; strategies emerge which inhibit the spontaneity of playing music as a day-to-day affair and make a band's orientation more business-like. Novice bands might smoke, drink, and have arguments within hearing of the audience. This kind of unprofessional behaviour has to change. The pre-professional band might not have replacement strings and sticks, whereas professionals have to be fully equipped for emergencies. Also, the acquisition of better equipment goes hand-in-hand with treating it more carefully.

Novice bands think week-to-week, whereas professional bands must think in terms of years. They will know what they are going to be doing in six months time; tours take that long to arrange. They have to save money out of fees for future tax and V.A.T. bills. Benefit gigs and gigs which pay badly are likely to be turned down. Headlining becomes an issue, for reputations have to be built up and sustained. (In the public's eyes, the band which plays last is best.) Bands argue about the playlist. A manager and agent are acquired and they, in turn, help to enforce professional behaviour, as 'significant

others' in this process of socialization. For example, a band cannot easily turn down gigs offered by its agency or it will be struck from the books.

I have already mentioned a number of factors, both external and subjective, which influence the decisions which band members take (either individually or collectively). But one factor which I have not yet discussed, and which becomes of greater importance at this career stage, is age. I shall therefore devote some space to it here.

Age.

Age is one of the perceived constraints within the rock world. The older a woman is the less likely she is to go professional. This is partly because age tends to bring responsibilities and obligations, both financial and social. But age also affects self-conception. Older women find it more difficult to see themselves as rock musicians. If rock is viewed as young people's music, and rock stars are expected to be young, then the older woman may feel pressurised to hide her age. She may be vague about it in interviews, and try to make herself younger by the clothes and make-up that she wears. She may even feel she should retire.¹ When J1. started playing she did not see rock music as her future career:

"It was just a hobby. I thought, when I started,

I'm learning far too late - I haven't got a hope...Ever since I started I thought 'I'm too old'. And I get depressed 'cause I think, 'what's the point of me working really hard? 'Cause my drumming career will end next year'. I have that dilemma and I really can't see how long I'll go on playing. I'd have never thought that I'd be playing drums in a rock band at 31. You wouldn't have thought it was possible, really. And I think, 'I will carry on, bugger it! I've got so far and in a year's time I'm going to be really proud of myself for doing something that I feel is worthwhile'".

If a lot of women (and men) feel age to be a constraint, not all do. If you are not bothered about commercial success it ceases to be such a problem. A1.'s band had no intention of signing up with a record company and so experienced none of these commercial pressures:

A1: "We're all around 30 and there's no precedent, really, for women musicians who aren't wearing dresses and doing harmonies. I don't know if we will, but I really hope we'll be going in ten years time, 'cause I think that's really nice - a band full of women who are 40".

One woman in a punk band has turned her age into a positive force. Although playing and selling records to a very young audience, she does not attempt to look younger than her 47 years. It is a political gesture:

V1: "I'm looking forward to be really old and doing it. There is a kind of power that will come because you're older. At the beginning I thought people would resent me for being older and say, 'Get off! This is a young person's music...It's like your bloody auntie turning up!'...But a lot of young people say they really like it. I think, that what ageism is about is the same as what sexism is about: the sheer waste. Half the human race being written off...It's the way that we're all divided against one another, compartmentalised into

marketable, manageable, manipulable groups. So, now, I feel the older I am the more power I'll have to put in - You know, 60 year old woman guitarist!"

Speed of Career.

Some bands are set up from the very start as professional. These are usually composed of musicians who have already been in professional bands; who already define themselves as professional. This situation is rarely applicable to women's bands, as professional women musicians are so rare.

A few other bands are precipitated into fame. For example, this women's band was rushed onto the professional circuit from their very first gig:

S1: "It was just to give us an idea of what playing in front of a few people would be like...and it was packed. They had to turn people away. We couldn't believe it! From the strength of that we went on a major support tour practically four weeks later".

But this kind of immediate success is unusual. The band just happened to spot a gap in the market. It was, furthermore, a time when the idea of an "all-girl band" was novel. Most bands have to 'pay their dues', playing for several years before going professional, let alone achieving any commercial success.

DEFINITIONAL COMPLEXITY

So far, I have simply defined professional as earning a living from music, and 'going professional'

as giving up all of one's non-musical jobs/careers. In practice, however, the distinction between 'amateur' and 'professional' is not all that straightforward and the transition from one state to the next is by no means an easy one to make.

Between playing in a band as a 'hobby' whilst supporting oneself from a non-musical job/career, and being a successful professional who earns all her money from music, there are a variety of states of existence. For instance, some women who do not earn all of their money from music nevertheless adamantly insist on being defined as 'professional'. This is possible for, as I have shown, being a professional seems to be not merely an objective state of existence, but also a state of mind. Sometimes the latter may be more important than the former. Often these are women who have given up something to play music - a career or well-paid job - knowing full well what they were doing and that they would be very lucky to earn a living wage from playing. (Sometimes these are women who reject getting involved with major record companies for ideological reasons.) They are prepared to go on the 'dole' or do a variety of jobs in order to support themselves. What distinguishes this group as professionals is their commitment to the musical path. They have chosen to devote themselves to

music and the role it entails, just as another person might devote themselves to art, or becoming a poet.

For these women, any non-musical jobs they do are seen as a form of 'moonlighting' from their musical career. Their hope is that some day they will be able to ditch all such part-time jobs (or cease claiming social security) and earn their living solely from music. Their identity is tied up in music, and the other jobs (even if full-time) are seen as insignificant. These women certainly see themselves as professionals. The fact that they do not live entirely from the proceeds of music-making is viewed as irrelevant. For example,

T: "It's my life...If you spend all your time doing it, then you're professional, as far as I'm concerned".

Often the financial pattern of such women's lives is a patchwork of gig money, part-time temporary jobs, and signing on and off the dole. One might get a run of good gigs and be able to "sign off" for a while, or give up one's temporary job; but one never knows how long this period will last.

Going on the dole, as a way of obtaining subsistence, makes sense, for it allows women time to devote to music. On the other hand, it give rise to problems. Gig money may only be covering one's expenses (petrol, vehicle hire, vehicle maintenance,

hire of P.A. and lights, stage clothes, etc.), but the D.H.S.S. is likely to dispute this. Therefore, many bands do not declare their gig earnings. Asking for cash payments can pose problems with, for example, student unions, who will often only pay via cheques. Eventually, a point is reached where such bands must "sign off", despite the fact that they may still be only just covering their expenses. If your name appears in the papers and you appear on T.V. everyone, from the taxman to the social security office, will think you are rolling in money, whereas you are probably only just surviving below the poverty line.

The thing which distinguishes this group of women as being professional is the fact that they have made the kind of commitment to music which I have discussed above. They are not involved in any "serious" non-musical career. They work part-time in jobs which are not important to them. These jobs are fitted around their music and not the other way round. This is what marks them off from the category of women who play as a hobby. Music is the central preoccupation and focus of their lives. Thus, the fact that not every single pound they earn comes from playing does not debar them from being considered professional musicians.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEING A PROFESSIONAL

In the world of pop, making money from music involves selling a musical service. This means coming into contact, either directly or indirectly, with the client/consumer of the service. There are a number of services which can be sold, and so there is more than one way of being a professional musician.

(a) Entertainment.

There are many bands which perform this function. It has been a tradition in rock from its earliest years; since its birth in showbiz. The problem for women's bands operating in this context is that, because of their rarity, they are typically seen as a novelty act and success based on novelty tends to be fleeting.

Women who see themselves primarily as 'entertainers' are unlikely to define themselves as "serious" or "proper" musicians, and there are very few women's bands which fall into this category.

(b) Craft.

Another group of women sell their musical skills in the studio as 'session' players, and are recruited to play on tour with various bands. These women (mainly vocalists) do define themselves as musicians and have a very high level of musical skills.

(c) Recording/Songwriting.

This is the way of being a professional musician to which most budding musicians aspire. This field is extremely competitive, yet it holds out the dream of great financial success. Very few bands succeed, but the ones who do get rich.

The goal is to get a contract with a record company and publishing company and live off of the 'advance' until, eventually, the royalties from the 'hits' are received. These bands tour in order to promote their records rather than touring for its own sake. The money is made on record sales rather than from gigs. Bands also make additional sums from T.V. appearances, radio performances, promotional advertising, etc.

Analytically, the three categories described above can be seen as distinct ways of being a professional musician. However, in practice, the categories overlap and the picture is complex. This makes it difficult to write about. For instance, a band may be divided about its function and goals. Band members may disagree. Some may see themselves primarily as entertainers, whilst others may see themselves as skilled musicians or, perhaps, 'artists'. Still others may wish, simply, to get lots of money and appear on 'Top of the Pops'.

Also, musicians may operate on more than one level. Some members may, for instance, also be session players. If the band has a recording contract this can pose problems. Musicians may have to change their names in order to engage in session work or to perform with another band. There might also be a clash of commitments and thus role conflict.

Furthermore, bands do not necessarily start off from a clear-cut premise about what kind of band they wish to be, and they may also change from one type of career to another. For instance, a band may have a period of brief success as a recording band and then change to entertainment or session work.

Similarly, women may combine one or more of these options with part-time music-related jobs. For instance, a sessionist may also teach. Women who are classically trained frequently do this. Others manage to squeeze a living out of music by combining gigs, recording, and doing technical work for other bands.

DIVISION OF LABOUR

When bands start out, they do everything themselves: roadying, driving, setting up their lights, designing posters, and all the other myriad administrative tasks which arise. At the opposite end of the career ladder, the successful 'name' band does

very little of this work. It has a manager, an agent, a road manager, etc. Artwork is contracted out or done by the record company's publicity department. Thus, the move along the career ladder involves an increasing division of labour. That multitude of tasks which could be called 'bandwork' is passed on to specialists and, as the band gets more successful, the division of labour increases.

One aspect of this is in the technical field. A band might do its first gig with just a single amp and two microphones. As the size of venue increases so do P.A. requirements. A proper mixing desk is hired and the band pre-set the levels before going on stage. The next step is to have someone doing the mixing whilst the band is playing. Getting a regular person to mix is quite crucial. S/he is literally the "ear out front" in the audience, adjusting the sound to how s/he knows the band want it, and able to embellish it in precisely the right places with space echo, delay, chorus, and so on. This process of specialization continues, until the band has a regular P.A. crew (itself divided hierarchically), an 'out-front' mix and an 'on-stage' mix, and roadies to move the equipment. In this way, band members rid themselves of various ancillary tasks.

Band members' increasing aspirations lead them to analyse where the band is going and how it is going to

be successful, which, in turn, leads to the decision to get a manager, an agent, hire a bigger P.A., and so on. These decisions, then, are made in the light of some long-term strategy based upon intensive discussion between band members. It is the decision to go professional which leads to much of this farming out of tasks. For example,

S3: "I think, when you go professional and you're working full-time at it, that's when you don't want to be bothered with (the practical) side of it, or you haven't got the time. That's what happened with my first band. I think that's the difference - doing it full-time".

But there is a dilemma here, for as the band gets involved with more and more intermediaries it risks losing control of its own destiny. The conscious aim of musicians is to employ a manager, an agent and so on, and yet retain control over their sound, their publicity, their finances, their general direction, etc. However, the more intermediaries that are employed, the harder this becomes. Power tends to leak away. It is for this reason that some women's bands choose not to delegate at all but to do all the work themselves. (I shall discuss this in Chapter 12.)

At the professional stage of the musician's career, she finds herself entering a whole new institutional world: the recording studio, the record company, the television studio. Important new roles are encountered: the producer, the studio engineer, the

press officer, etc. These people act as intermediaries between the band and its audience, and the band and its record company. But they also constrain the band.

GETTING A MANAGER

The actual order in which a band gets a record deal, manager and agent varies. Often, the manager is the first acquisition and then s/he tries to get the band a record contract. Indeed, that is often the initial reason why a band decides to get a manager. Having a manager with you when "signing" is a distinct advantage, particularly for a new band, whose members may not know their legal rights. For instance, B3. says that when her band signed they did not stipulate any conditions:

"I regret that we weren't tough about that, but we weren't able to, because we didn't have a manager and didn't know the business well at the time".

It is often at the point when a band begins to realise that they are getting exploited by promoters, and consequently losing money, that they decide to get a manager, but this also becomes a hallmark of their professionalism. It denotes a business-like frame of mind and a determination to make a reasonable living from music. It says that the band is organised and that they will not be "messed around". Occasionally, someone within a band takes on this role, often

gradually and imperceptibly over a period of time. The band begin to realise that they have a de facto manager: one woman is getting all the gigs, hiring the rehearsal rooms, arranging the practices, hiring the P.A., running the band's finances and collecting the band's fees. This woman may simply be declared the manager. Often, however, a crisis is precipitated. She is a musician and, maybe, has other commitments as well. Taking on this management role is often too much for her to cope with. She may also feel taken for granted and unrewarded for her toil. She may demand that the other band members do an equal share. The band may then decide that the situation can only be resolved by getting a "proper" manager:

B3: "Really, you need one, after a certain point, unless you're really well organised and very cool about the way you operate your business. You just make so many bad decisions and make so many mistakes".

Getting a manager is a key 'moment' in a band's career, and this step is only taken if band members have faith in their joint ability to progress: to get better paid gigs, to make records, to get 'hits'. Sometimes, it is the record company who suggest getting a manager. They may even recommend someone. Record companies expect bands to have managers; they prefer to deal with just one person:

K3: "We were doing it by ourselves and it was getting too much. We found we couldn't talk to

people - record companies - 'cause they just don't deal with bands directly. Well, they didn't then, definitely not then. We needed somebody to look after our affairs, basically, and help us along".

Another task a manager typically does is get the band an agency deal: simply having a manager gives a band status in the eyes of agencies. For example,

B3: "Nobody would take us on. Now, that's exactly where a manager would come in handy. The manager would walk into an agency and say, 'We've got this band who are very interesting'...We say, 'We're quite popular. People come and see us', but they don't know that (and they say) 'Why haven't you got a manager? You can't be that good if you haven't got a manager'".

A manager can give a sense of direction to a band and formulate a long-term plan of action. S/he can make the band much more efficient:

B3: "What a good manager does is have these ideas about how we're gonna operate and they can actually consolidate the whole business. Instead of us slopping along, putting out a record and promotion, and doing the odd gig here and there, with no plan".

On the other hand, managers are in a position where they can take advantage of their bands. Some bands are, indeed, badly "ripped off". For instance,

S1: We had a manager once who was incompetent. He'd say, 'Well, girls, all I want you to concern yourselves with is the music, and let me concern myself with everything else'. And he didn't! Things never got done. We found out later that we'd got offers and they'd never passed through, and all sorts of people had been phoning up, trying to get hold of us...And we found out that...money had been paid to us but it hadn't gone through the books. So he'd gone off with a couple of hundred pounds".

Thus, many women are wary of managers and emphasise the importance of finding someone trustworthy:

B3: "We are incredibly mistrustful of the whole business. (Sometimes) you get a manager who grows up with the band, so you all learn together and they end up being the manager...But we never had anybody like that around the band who was sensible enough to do it. So it didn't happen. And then, about a year ago, when things were getting really heavy for us, we thought we must get a manager. So we saw all these people and we just couldn't decide on who we trusted".

The way in which managers are paid varies a lot. An established management agency will take a fixed percentage, but an individual manager may be paid, say, on a percentage of each gig, or by a weekly wage, or (even) not paid at all. Someone might start off unpaid and then get waged once the band achieves commercial success.

Some bands, whilst recognising a need for a manager, have simply not been able to find the right person. For instance:

V1: "Nobody's bloody turned up who's willing to do it! Some people say that we are unmanageable, because we're not young and naive. But I'd love to have somebody who looked out for that side of things, and who worked with us. And I think that's essential, in a way. What I think we need to do is get a proper marketing policy and we are totally unprepared to deal with that side of it...It feels to me that we're not engaged properly; we are not in gear for a lot of the stuff we are doing, and so we are being ripped off and we are wasting energy".

On the other hand, some bands choose not to have a manager. It may be that they simply feel that they do

not need one. For example, S1.'s band felt quite able to deal with most of the administration by themselves, and they viewed management as an unnecessary expense. They did their own accounts, sleeve and poster design, and generally kept a watchful eye over everything. Meanwhile, their tour manager had an expanded role:

S1: "I felt there were enough people in the band that had their heads screwed on the right way. And we'd also got both our publishing and record deal by ourselves - which is another reason for having a manager - and didn't see any point in paying someone 25% for something we'd already done. We just needed this magical coordinator that could help keep us all together, do diaries with us, and just keep the whole band as one. (So) we don't have a manager as most people know it, who takes 25% of your earnings and ploughs money into you, and says, 'You will dress like this, girls' and 'You will do this!' What we do have, though, is an excellent tour manager...who manages us only after instruction by us. And we have the final say on everything".

However, even with an administrator, some members of this band found themselves very busy:

J1: "Doing accounts last time took about 10 hours solid. The time before it took about 20 hours. We worked until 5 o'clock one morning and we got up at 10 and we started again. That's just the monthly thing. It's just hours and hours of really hard work, and your head is swimming".

GETTING AN AGENT

As I have shown, a manager facilitates getting an agent. So does a recording contract:

B3: "Until our first record deal nobody would take us on...The first agency we had were really good, but when we got thrown off the record deal they didn't want anything to do with us".

Why do bands want an agent? There are two main reasons. Firstly, an agent relieves a band of the time and strain of trying to get gigs:

S1: "It's pretty well impossible trying to do it yourself. It takes up too much time. You could be clever and do it...but the time and the bother - does it pay in the end? Then, what happens to the songs? That's why we decided to go with an agent".

Secondly, individual clubs and circuits often engage all their bands through agents:

S1: "It's like a catch-22, you can't get in on those good gigs unless you are with an agency. We wanted to go into it far more professionally ...that's why we decided to go for an agent, especially as we didn't have a manager".

As this quote makes clear, having an agent is another hallmark of professionalism and helps the band get respect within the industry. Furthermore, if a band does not have a manager in the conventional sense, then an agent is clearly vital. Also agents can get bands better fees.

Luck and personal contacts help bands to get agents. For instance,

S1: "X...used to work for a booking agency. We went along and saw them. They don't have many bands and the bands that they have are very good. And we were very lucky to get on their agency".

The band got some good 'support' gigs from being with this agency, which, in turn, helped them to establish themselves and get a big 'following'.

S1: "They hardly ever put completely incongruous bands together just for the money's sake. They actually do try and provide a package deal or put us in a situation where we're gonna reap the benefits. There's been so much advantage just from being with that particular agency, because the bands that we've supported are huge".

But some bands are very opposed to having an agent, just as they are opposed to having a manager or major record deal. For example,

A1: "Politically, we'd have problems, because we're not an 'all-girl group' and we're not interested in being 'sold' in any kind of way like that. There are groups of women who are definitely used to promote an image of women which isn't threatening to men, very girly - a very sexist image - to make money. Record companies do it a lot, and agencies do it. We can't be associated with anything like that. We wouldn't have anything to do with it".

Apart from 'sexploitation', many bands fear being used and not getting anything out of it. For instance:

V1: "The trouble with an agency is that you become one of a bunch of bands and you've still got to work for yourself. I don't actually think that anybody will do anything for you. That's what's held us back from getting involved with any major deal with an agency or (record company)...Because they've got a stable of bands. Why should they look after you more than anybody else?"

RECORD COMPANIES

Bands want record contracts for a number of reasons: to widen their audience, for the 'advance'

money (in order to buy new equipment), for effective promotion (via the links record companies have with D.J.s.). Most of all, record contracts are perceived as the route to financial stability.

V1: "I think recording is essential and important. A lot of people who I want to address will not go to our gigs. A lot of women don't want to go to mixed gigs. A lot of people are too old to feel comfortable at our gigs. More than that, selling records, is the only way a band can hope to get some money together. And I know it's a chancy thing, but it's the only way that a band can make money. And I don't know any bands, apart from the very, very rare few, who can demand fees of any significance for performing".

To a new band, getting signed to a record company implies financial solvency: you get a big 'advance' and your troubles are over. In most cases, however, this is incorrect. Costs escalate. Some bands spend the advance on equipment. (It is ironic that megastars get free or cheap equipment from the manufacturers, in promotional ventures. The bands who need the equipment the most have no such subsidy.)

The band will also need to hire a better P.A. and higher quality rehearsal studios. For example,

J1: "Now we pay £30 a day to rehearse (and yet) most of the band haven't got anywhere to live! They haven't got any money to pay for a proper place".

There is an argument against the very idea of advances: that they inspire immediate gratification and an unrealistic feeling of wealth. There is

pressure to live up to the 'now we've made it, we're rock stars' expectations of the press and public:

J1: "Everyone says, 'You're rich now'. And we're not. We're miles off it. It's gonna be two years before we pay the record company back their money and start getting royalties through".

Even after a band has had a hit they can still be hard up. A whole string of hits is necessary before all the recording costs are paid. Also, covers bring in less money than original songs:

S1: "You see, this album's got so many covers on it, it doesn't leave us much of a chance to earn money. And then it's split between us".

Still, a record contract is a benchmark of progress in a band's career, taking it out of the league of 'local bands'. Even if the aim was not originally to go full-time, that desire may now develop within the group, being seen for the first time as an option. Indeed, the record company may suggest it. Thus signing a record contract is a crucial moment in the career of a band; crucial for its objective effects and for its subjective meanings and consequent implications for identity.

DOING A DEMO

A 'demo' tape demonstrates what a band can play like and is produced for one or two purposes:

1. To get better gigs. The tape is given to promoters or agents.

2. To get a record deal. The demo is sent, or taken round, to record companies.

Tapes may also be sent to D.J.s at local or national radio stations, rock journalists, etc. Often bands make a succession of demos. If a band is changing musically, a tape might be out of date before it has been sent out. Making demos can be expensive. The cheapest method is D.I.Y on borrowed or hired equipment. The revolution in recording techniques has made this possible. However, the quality of such recordings is inferior to that produced in the studio, where there are more 'tracks' available, sophisticated sound processing techniques, and skilled engineering staff on hand. Moreover, recording demos at home, although cheap, can be fraught with problems, especially if the musicians are mothers:

J3: "We'd play in the living room and we'd have the mixer out here (in the kitchen). And it took ages to set up...We'd start off at 9 o'clock in the morning, as soon as we'd got the kids to school. We'd all turn up, set the equipment up, get it all set out. And we'd just be playing the first number when it was time to get the kids back from school at 3 o'clock. It was totally frustrating. We had all the multi-core out the windows and coming through here! This table would be full of equipment. And the kids would come in and I'd try and get them some tea and get them to go out of the way somewhere. And we'd come back and carry on into the night".

Bands typically start with a home-produced demo and then, dissatisfied with the result, move on to hiring studio time. If they have no luck with their tapes then they hire an even better studio and do another tape. And so the process spirals - from 8-track to 16-track to 24-track and so on, the only break being lack of funds. Bands always feel that they do not have enough money to do justice to their sound.

A crucial resource in doing demos is a skilled and experienced friend who owns recording equipment and/or can mix. Usually this is a man.

GETTING A RECORD CONTRACT

The usual way of getting a contract is to hawk demo tapes around record companies. If an established company does not respond, you might still find a small entrepreneur who will act as your intermediary:

A3: "We sent the demo tape round and Joan replied and said, 'Yes, great!'...and she took us into a recording studio and we recorded a couple of numbers...At that stage she decided that she couldn't do justice to us, so she took the tape round to (an independent company) who'd expressed vague interest before, and they got quite keen. Eventually we signed with them".

Sometimes, a band is simply fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time:

B3: "Total and utter luck! We used to play The Moonlight every three or four weeks and A&R men used to get in contact with them, 'cause they

always had new bands that weren't really on the circuit".

The best position to be in is to be immediately popular from your first gig, as this puts you in a powerful position vis-a-vis the record companies, who will compete with each other to sign you. But this only tends to happen to established musicians

If a band gets no favourable response from record companies, they may consider setting up their own label as a stepping stone to getting a record deal. For example,

V1: "We took a demo tape around to the local label and they weren't interested. So we formed our own company and recorded the first record ourselves...When the company heard it again, through the grapevine, they said they'd like to join in with us".

THE RECORDING PROCESS

A band's first recording experience marks its entry into a new world; both a technological and a social one. It is, initially, both stimulating and intimidating. This is exacerbated by the way the recording process is divided up: each part is recorded separately, with only a backing track to guide the individual musician. This means that she is physically isolated in the studio, able to communicate with the producer/engineer/rest of the band only through a microphone. Alone in the soundproofed room, she has

time to worry and become self-conscious. After two or three 'takes' she may begin to lose confidence:

J1: "As soon as it says, 'tape rolling' and the red light goes on I just get so tense. And you think, afterwards, 'I could have done so much better'. And I find that a terrible pressure...When the red light's on and the tape's rolling I feel a bit inferior".

This insecurity is often increased by lack of time:

R1: "It was really terrible, a pretty bad experience, just 'cause there was such a lot of pressure. We'd learnt it and played it within two weeks...The numbers weren't bedded in at all. They were really still new. It was terrifying".

This time pressure is often due to lack of money. At the beginning of a session things might be relaxed, but towards the end short cuts are taken, and parts altered at the drop of a hat. For example,

J1: "You go into the studio and you play your particular part fairly badly and the time runs out: 'I'm afraid your time's run out for your guitar bit. We've been doing you for an hour. We've got to get the saxophones in now'. So the guitarist is left feeling, 'I haven't done my best'. Things that shouldn't be left on the record are left on because of time and money".

The studio brings out perfectionism in musicians, because they are aware that almost anything can be done with the sound: mistakes can be altered; parts can be cut up and done in tiny sections; the "good bits" from a number of takes can be simply welded together to make one version. The possibility for improvement seems infinite. Then the money runs out.

For this reason the atmosphere in the studio tends to change over the recording period, getting more tense towards the end. 'Lead' instrumentalists are usually left until last and get tired hanging around the studio all day (or night), and there may be only time for a few takes. This is particularly the case with demos, where a band can often only afford a studio for one day or one weekend. For example,

V2: "I didn't enjoy doing the demo...I was doing entirely the vocals on it and they were left to the very last thing of all. And I just found it really frustrating, sitting around for almost two days without doing anything. It meant by the time I did the vocals I was really tired. I felt they didn't work that well".

To save money, recording may be done in very cheap studios, which can be quite primitive and a world away from the lush comforts which rock stars enjoy. For example, the women's band I was in once recorded in an unofficial squat. There was no toilet, just a hole in the floor and a bucket of water to sluice it! And we recorded at night as it was cheaper.

PRODUCTION AND PROMOTION

Conflict often occurs between bands and record companies over who should produce the record. The producer can be the fulcrum of record company pressure on a band and influence over its artistic output. S/he has more power than any band member, able to help get

the band commercial success, or, alternatively, wreck the sound.

There are a number of different production options available to a band which first embarks upon recording, depending on whether or not a record contract has been signed and the wording of that contract.

At one end of the continuum, a band might choose to produce itself. Bands who are not signed but wish to make records often do this, but even bands who are signed may self-produce if they can convince the record company that they are capable of doing a good job. From the record company's point of view it saves on costs, though they are usually unwilling to allow an unproven band to do its own production.

There can be problems when a band produces itself. Individual members may disagree, and often bands find it easier when an outsider produces them. The more democratic the band, the more disagreements there are likely to be. Pressure of time may cut out democratic debate and this can be misunderstood and create resentment. It can widen latent splits within the band and even bring about its demise. For example,

A3: "We foolishly, naively, thought that we should produce our own records. So the agreement was that (our manager) and us would produce. But that just led to such rows as you could never have imagined, because people had different ideas about what they

should have sounded like. Different people wanted to do different numbers. Invariably, not everyone would like the mix, and you ended up mixing some numbers three or four times and still not being satisfied. And I now think that we should have just got a producer that we were vaguely happy with and left them to it. There was far too much (of) everybody wanting to sound perfect and you can't expect that".

Sometimes the band's manager wishes to be their producer. This can lead to friction and role conflict. If the manager has not produced before, then it is an act of faith on the part of the band to allow her/him to experiment with them. S/he may create a sound the band do not like. The band might value that person's work as manager and not wish to offend her/him by rejecting the 'mix'. Sometimes a manager is a frustrated musician and sees production as a way of being creative in the band. Management can be a pretty thankless task, whereas production is seen as exciting. There are two instances in my research where a female manager has wished to extend her role into production but been rejected by the bands concerned. In both instances the women felt taken-for-granted and hurt. Both bands experienced guilt but felt they had to put what they saw as the requirements of the music first. A career clash is involved: the band's career versus the producing career of the female entrepreneur.

The band and record company have to agree on who is to produce and sometimes this takes a long time. It is

affected by how democratic a band is and how many musicians there are to consult. This can hold up the recording process for months. For example,

A3: "I think (our record company) found us quite difficult to deal with because of the fact that we were so collective...(Our manager) had to go back to us all the time and say, 'This is what they think. What do you think?' And I think they got quite annoyed with that in the end. Probably, as a women's band, we were more collective than a lot of mixed or male bands".

This tendency for women's bands to be highly democratic has certain disadvantageous effects. The more a band is disunited, the more power they inadvertently hand over to the record company. Here is a good example,

J1: "In our record contract it says that we have 'mutual agreement' on a producer, which studio, what songs...The record company kept putting forward people and the band kept turning them down. Yet the band could not come to an agreement amongst themselves. We've got a democracy, but in fact it's a veto system as well, which it's not meant to be. Like one person in the band throws a complete wobbly...So, eventually, we came up with this completely unrealistic list. We went along to the record company and they said 'no' to the three people that we'd actually agreed on. And we'd been going around for three months rejecting the record company's people. Later on we were in the same dilemma of what producer we were going to use for our next record. The record company mentioned someone that we hate. So we said 'no' and they were furious. And that was two months suspended in the band's career, where nothing happened. So in the end, everybody said yes (to the company's choice)...So basically we start off saying no and, in every case, (eventually say yes)".

Divisions between band members prevent them from acting in a concerted way and developing a long-term

strategy, for both their future as a band, and for dealing with the record industry. Such disunity is based not only on democracy but also on diversity of musical tastes and the fact that women musicians are rare. As in many other women's bands, the women in J1.'s band all liked different kinds of music and they were only together because their individual musical careers depended upon the band's success. The lack of women's bands and the sexism of the rock world meant that there were few other musical options available to them. The fragility of the band also led to the avoidance of change:

J1: "The band is horribly weak. If it was a strong band we would say, 'No, we will not do another cover'. We could be sufficiently bolshie that they'd say, 'Well, get off our label then!', and we'd go to another record label. But the band would split up. The band is very fragilely held together. So, because we have to stay, we have to have money to survive, and so we're doing more or less what they want us to".

Some women felt that they had considerable power and freedom in their relationship with their record companies. For example,

S4: "When you're in a band and you've got limited recording experience, there's certain things which you don't understand, which have to be done - certain things that go on that you don't know about. But as time's gone on, the more we've got into telling him, 'We don't want this' and 'We don't want that'. We've got total control over everything we do. We do everything we want".

However, this band were lucky and they knew it, as the potential for control is built into the system:

S4: "You're in the producer's hands, really. You've got to trust him. 'Cause if you don't like him, if you don't get on with your producer, they do what they like".

S1: "In our contract we have agreements which are mutually agreed, but you know darn well that the record company has the last say...I've been very disillusioned. You run with the tide in the end. (It's) just the way record deals are done...You hear that they're poised to rip you off, and it's true. But when it's actually happening, it's done with such...you don't actually realise that it's happening. And, in a way, the other party aren't doing it deliberately. It's just part and parcel of the whole thing that's happened before. It's just an existing thing, and you try and get as many points as possible".

The very speed at which things happen in the rock industry can erode a band's influence vis-a-vis their record company. Bands are often faced with a fait accompli. Here are two instances from my interviews:

J1: "We're meant to be at the 'cut', when they cut the final master. (But) he's always told us that it's happening in half an hour's time, when we're doing a soundcheck. You know, we can't do it. We can't get there".

E1: "I think most of the album covers were vile. They were always being done at the last minute, and generally disorganised. It's quite possible that it was done earlier and they didn't tell us 'till the last moment so that it was too late for us to stop anything. I mean, that's quite conceivable. We did complain a few times. There's one single that had a cover of a woman with stilettos on her feet, tied together. We didn't like that at all and we made a bit of a fuss about that. But it was a bit too late at that point. If you're on tour for six months - like you've sorted your album cover out and you sort the single cover out and then you go off for a few months and then they want a follow up single. They release something and there isn't really time

for you to get back and they've got to send a picture out..."

GENDER AND RECORD COMPANIES

To what extent does gender have any bearing on the relationship between bands and record companies? Some of my interviewees did feel that they were treated differently from male bands. A few thought that being female was an advantage. For instance,

S4: "Because you're women, you can get away with certain things. I don't mean playing badly. I mean, we can get our way round him".

More bands saw gender as problematic, however. In getting a recording contract at all, for instance:

J1: "He was a bit dubious about signing us because ...he'd never signed another all-girl band before. Then he decided that we were going to make a lot of money and he'd better sign us, anyway, and we might be tricky to work with but that was too bad. (He was worried) and still is, that we're a load of irrational women and that we're not controllable ...I know he still thinks that we're a different cup of tea to a male band and it's because we're female".

Female musicians argue that it is important to challenge this sexist stereotyping:

S1: "We went into his office and said what we wanted to say, absolutely straightforwardly. And we get results...I think we've proved our worth, both as musicians and on the business angle as well - the fact that we did our own record deal and publishing deals. I think we have respect in that way. Rather than being the sort of little-girls-lost-in-the-studio, or have somebody do it for us -

You know, flutter-the-eyelids and trying to do it like that".

Other women tell of how they have challenged gender stereotyping by behaving, when the occasion has demanded it, in as aggressive a manner as male bands. For instance,

B3: "I have got a reputation. There's no doubt about it. It surprises me. I always hear it back - how "heavy" I am - 'what an unpleasant person she is, this man-hating feminist!' But I'm not a man-hater at all. I just don't like what they do to women".

She recounts what happened at a business meeting, by way of illustration.

"I left the room and after I'd left, Frank (her manager) was still there. And they started this conversation about, 'Who wants to give her one, then, eh? Come on! Don't lie to us, we know you fancy her!', in the most crude sort of fashion. What pissed me off...was that fucking Frank was sat there and didn't get up and say, 'Don't you talk about her like that!' He said nothing!"

I think it is true to say that women have to fight harder than men to avoid being controlled by their record companies. There are so few women musicians and the industry has only come up with a few stereotyped marketing strategies for them. As I have already said, any band which does not fall squarely into a pre-existing category (such as heavy metal) is edged into the 'girly' mould. J1. recounted to me the way in which her band has been subjected to such a moulding exercise. The record company told them what songs to

play: not their own numbers, but 1960s covers. They were told what to play on their instruments and, indeed, sometimes not allowed to play on the record at all. J1. viewed their records as "synthetic, commercial music", the final product of an alienated production process in which the artists had very little control:

J1: "On our last records I've done nothing, really, apart from programming the drum computer...We hate (our producer) because he makes you feel really low and inferior. And it might just be to do with being female, that he can't handle women. But I'll never know. He just makes you feel that you are a shitty musician and if only he could replace the whole band with session players and computers it would be much better...It's not the whole band playing together; it's a cold, calculated, commercial type of approach...The records that have had success haven't had much of the band playing on them. They haven't been a band sound. They've been a recording studio concoction job...I've programmed the computer and I've gone off, 'cause I couldn't stand listening to those awful songs. I can't take them seriously. I think what the band is doing at the moment is rubbish."

Yet J1. was trapped in this situation because the records were, in fact, successful:

J1: "The whole experience is just miserable and you feel like committing suicide at the end. And then you see your record in the American charts and you get your royalty cheque and you say, 'Oh, let's use him again!' And halfway through you think, 'Oh, Christ, I think I've got to kill myself. I can't carry on!' Then you go back!"

J1. felt that their record company had a very strong image of what the band should sound and look like. She felt the band were allowing themselves to be packaged and thus stunting their own creativity. If

they could bring their own songs out on record they would, she believed, be able to resist this moulding process and, at the same time, be able to express themselves artistically:

J1: "You very easily get out of the area where you're a musician and get into, what you could call the Bananarama-area, where you are merely a commercial entity...You don't write your own songs and you don't establish your own thing....Normally, (people) think if you don't write your own songs, you haven't got your own identity, your own style. And then, if you're a woman, you quickly get branded as being some sort of quick ruse to make money".

Record companies, do, of course, package male bands too, but the range of images and options is much wider. Companies faced with an all-women band often seem to automatically think, 'Ah, light pop music' and attempt to squeeze the band into this one slot; they cannot think of how else to sell a female band.

It also seems that, for various reasons, women's bands may be easier to manipulate. J1.'s band went along with what was happening partly because they lacked confidence in their own songs, ideas and musical skills. Also, they were, as explained, disunited and thus could not present the company with any alternative strategy which they all believed in. Furthermore, with mounting debts, they needed commercial success. Thus the temptation to go along with the 'master-plan' was too great:

J1: "We've been desperately short of money and it's such that we've had to try and have a record that sells. We could have said, 'No, we will not do one of your shitty, horrible covers!'...(But) the band do what we're told by the record company. The record company books all our radio, press, T.V. type things and we do whatever they say".

In Chapter 10, I discussed the way in which bands, via performing, develop a coherent image of themselves, and how group pressure may be exerted on individual members to conform to the band style. At the professional stage such pressure increases. There are more photosessions and promotional videos, in which appearance has to be considered and choices made. On top of this group pressure there is now the influence of managers, agents and, most of all, record companies. All-women bands are still a novelty. They may be edged closer and closer towards a more 'sexy' or glamorous presentation of themselves. At photosessions they will be expected to wear make-up and perhaps 'show a bit of leg' or other parts of their anatomy. To what extent a band willingly collaborates with this or, alternatively, resists it, depends partly on the extent to which members have a feminist political outlook. It is also affected by how desperate they are to make money or get out of debt. The record company may impress upon them the importance of sexually attractive photos on album sleeves and how these will boost sales. For example,

J1: "We had a photosession and the record company said, 'Let's use live snakes'. And I said, 'I'm going to leave the band if you have snakes in this photo-session'....Because it just seemed to me that we were getting so blatant-commercial-sex type thing that it was the end!"

Other women told me similar stories. For example,

K3: "We did have a bit of a problem when we signed to this American record company. They wanted us to change our image and be more glamorous and all that sort of thing. And we actually got a 'front' singer in then - a blonde front singer!...It was a total disaster! We weren't happy with it and we ended up parting with her. And now we're back to being how we were originally and we're getting a lot more success than we have had for ages, because we're back to being ourselves...They wanted us to glamorise ourselves. But it just didn't work. We're not into all that".

THE MEDIA

Bands who go professional find themselves inextricably involved with journalists, T.V. producers, and disc-jockeys who mediate between the music and its consumers. A band puts out a record, but without media attention people do not know of its existence. If a band wants its record to sell, it must have publicity.

As I have already discussed (in Chapter 7.), there is a tendency for women's bands and female performers to get trivialised in the media, being presented as sex objects in glamour shots, and as scatty girls in interviews. In fact, both male and female 'pop'

artists are treated in this way, whereas musicians who play 'rock' are treated more seriously. But, as I have shown statistically (in Chapter 2.), women are heavily concentrated at the lighter 'pop' end of the spectrum and rare at the other end. Consequently, there is a far higher proportion of female (than of male) performers who get the 'mindless pop' treatment.

Pop stars are simply not taken seriously. They are discussed in terms of their lifestyle and fashion, asked superficial questions about their taste in everything from clothes to food, whereas their music and skills do not get serious treatment. For instance, J1. found that her technical comments in interviews were completely ignored:

J1: "I was telling him stuff about the P.A. - information and plain, straight stuff, which they don't like...The general thing that comes over in all the interviews is, 'Here's a bunch of silly girls'...You can't do anything about it...They're gonna write, 'The sizzling sextrovert bunch of women...'"

Moreover, the tendency is for journalists, photographers and T.V. cameramen to concentrate on the 'front' glamour woman in the band, usually the lead vocalist. This is a taken for granted assumption, often barely conscious. It can be verified by watching any band on television. Rarely is the drummer shown. The cameras focus unswervingly on the singer, and

usually upon her face. In a democratic band this can cause much resentment. For example,

J1: "Everyone that wants to do interviews wants to speak to the lead singer, and the cameras are always on her...We have always wanted someone else along, but they're not wanted. All the questions are asked of her, and other people really have to fight to say, 'As the guitarist, I'd like to say...' The interviewers don't want to know and you have to push yourself in".

J1. would rather not do interviews with sexist papers, but the rest of the band do not mind:

"They'd do it whatever it was. Even if they said, 'They're awful and they can't play for toffee'. We say, 'Any press is good press' and we go for it".

But even those women who do not play light 'pop', but more "serious" music, complain about being trivialised. For example, heavy rock is taken seriously by music journalists, but those few women's bands who have ventured into this 'male' enclave have been treated as a sort of light relief, a novelty act; their gender seems to be more important than their music:

E1: "In the beginning we got a lot of press because of being female. We had lots and lots of music press and we wouldn't have got anything like that much if we hadn't have been women. But, at the same time...I don't think we were ever taken very seriously. It's much harder for people to take women seriously. So it's easier to get through the door, but then to prove that you're doing something worthwhile is a lot more difficult. And there's always this image pressure, of looking glamorous and beautiful. And I think that that's, perhaps, getting worse".

Disc-jockeys behave in the same way. When faced with women musicians they typically slip into talking about their bodies and "looks", rather than their music. Whereas, male performers seem more able to avoid being discussed in these terms.

It is only when a female performer becomes really successful that the image question ceases to matter so much. Women like Tina Turner and Joan Armatrading are taken seriously in terms of their musical skills. Lower down the career ladder a woman tends to be judged first and foremost in terms of her sexual attractiveness.

PUBLISHING

The common pattern amongst male musicians is to try to get a publishing deal before even thinking about a record contract. Selling your publishing rights is a way of solving immediate financial problems. The money is used to cover living expenses whilst gigging and doing demos. The bands I interviewed tended not to follow this pattern. With only one exception, all the bands I interviewed went for a record contract first, and only then sold their publishing. This may be partly due to ignorance of the financial importance of publishing deals amongst the (mainly inexperienced) musicians I interviewed. (A

woman who had done it all before would be far more likely to go for a publishing contract at the outset.) Things just seemed to "happen" to many of these bands, rather than their developing any clear-cut long term career strategy.

The problem with signing the publishing over to one's record company (almost as an afterthought) was that it made changing companies difficult. (Companies are more interested in publishing rights than in recording a new band.) Bands did not seem to anticipate this potential problem. For example,

A3: "The record company wanted to retain publishing on some of the songs...That caused problems, because we couldn't actually sign up with anyone else small until we gave them our publishing too. Because small companies tend to want both. So we had a lot of wrangles over that".

In the following instance B3. only succeeded in getting the publishing back by being very aggressive. Without warning, the record company had sacked the band because the woman they judged to be the main songwriter had left:

B3: "The hassles we had! The day he sacked us he promised us (the publishing). Then he went away for six weeks, and when he came back we were signed to (another company). We said, 'We need you to sign the release'. And he said, 'Oh, don't worry'. We had a solicitor at this point. He said, 'You've got to get it back off him now, because the moment you've got any product out you're finished!'...So I phoned him up and I was really heavy...I said, 'If I haven't got the publishing release tomorrow, in writing, I'm gonna be round your office and I'm not

gonna leave until I get it. And, really, you're not gonna like me!"

In the women's band I was in there was, at the point of recording, a discussion about credits. The majority of the band wanted all the numbers, regardless of who had actually written them, to be credited to the band as a whole. It was, firstly, felt that no matter who had come up with the lyrics and chord sequences, all band members had contributed to the overall song. For only very rarely would a songwriter compose the bass line, drum patterns, etc. (And such a way of writing would preclude democratic involvement in the composition process.) So to try and credit individuals would lead to endless wrangling about who wrote what percentage of which number. It was also felt that crediting the whole band would avoid arguments about which songs were to be included on record. Such decisions had important financial implications. In sum, the interests of the band as a whole were put before those of the individual songwriting members. There could, of course, have been some resentment, on the part of songwriters, that some members would be getting royalties who had not contributed much to the compositions. But, in our band, such resentment - if it existed - was not expressed. In my research this was the typical pattern amongst women's bands. For example,

K3: "It's basically me and the main guitarist who does most of the writing. In fact, X. hardly does anything at all! But we've always credited the other members on at least half the album. 'Cause if X. wasn't our drummer we wouldn't be the band we are. I always think it's astounding that a lot of these bands who are successful just have one songwriter who gets all the money, and yet if there hadn't been (that) band, then who's to say that they would be that successful? I think that's very unfair. So we've always credited".

Many male musicians see themselves primarily as songwriters. They arrange their own publishing contract and then set about forming a group to record their songs. In this situation the band is the vehicle for the the songwriter, the showcase for his material. There was not a single instance of this amongst the bands I interviewed. Women saw themselves as band members, first and foremost.

THE ORGANISATION OF TIME

Just as a band's finances become rationalised and systematised, so does their use of time. A policy is developed regarding gigging, recording and rehearsing (the band's three main activities). For example, policy covers which gigs to do, and when and where the band should play. Time and money are closely connected for the professional band. 'Kill time and you murder success' is a famous phrase in professional band circles, emblazoned on T-shirts and recording company walls. The professional band is reliant on playing

music for a living. Thus, their playing time is work time. They come to see time as money. Whereas the non-professional band does not have to structure time this carefully: gigs can be done at short notice, and time is conceived of in weekly terms. The professional band thinks in terms of years, however. Bands at the pre-professional stage tend to respond to the demand for their services on an ad hoc and spontaneous basis. When someone asks them to do a gig they can consider it in relative isolation from other gigs. It is simply discussed in terms of its merits and demerits. Professional bands, on the other hand, evaluate gigs in relation to other gigs and in terms of their overall strategy. For example, a particular gig might not be paying very much, but if that gig is in the same town as another (well-paying) gig and is on the day after that gig, then it will probably be accepted, for band costs can be spread across both gigs. Also, instead of just responding to people ringing up and asking for their services, as and when they do, the professional band goes out to get gigs at specific venues, and at specific times, according to a well-considered plan. For instance, the band will want a lot of gigs when it has just released a record. The band will need to perform in all major cities and not just in one part of the country. It will want to play in reputed venues with a high-capacity audience and

not in chilly church halls with bad acoustics. The professional band develops a long-term strategy. It is geared to fulfilling specific goals (especially record sales and audience-building).

Whereas the non-professional band tends to organise time on a weekly basis (for example, practice every Tuesday, gig every weekend), the professional band organises time in larger blocks. Gigs are grouped together into tours. Band members, having no other career commitments, are able to travel for weeks or months at a time.

Recording becomes the most important part of band work, for it is record sales which provide the band's income. Fees for tours may not cover costs, in fact, but such tours, although ostensibly making a loss, may be hugely successful in terms of record promotion. Time is allocated to recording as the number one priority. Touring and rehearsing come second.

Typically, a professional band's year is divided into discrete chunks of time. Months of recording are followed by months of touring. This is then followed by a period of songwriting and rehearsing, when the band is trying to build up a set of new numbers for the next record. Thus the cycle continues. This change in the overall structuring and rhythm of time has

effects on the very nature of what goes on at practices themselves.

PRACTISING

When a band first goes professional, practices become more frequent and longer. Practising takes up a larger portion of the week. It also changes in character, becoming more businesslike. A more serious attitude is required, for women have made sacrifices, in terms of other activities, money, social life, etc. Hard work, drive and commitment are expected. For example, good time-keeping is normative when you are paying for proper rehearsal studios which charge by the hour. If some band members deviate from these norms it causes bad feeling and resentment in others.

Practising in pre-professional bands often fulfils other functions, as I have shown. In professional bands, rehearsing is more concentrated. For instance,

A1: "We do organised rehearsals. It's not boring or anything, but we get there and we set up quickly, we do the stuff we want to do and then we go home. We work quite quickly and efficiently. I think we use the time well".

A practice becomes an event with a very specific purpose. No longer is it a multi-functional phenomenon. For instance, bands tend not to jam or play just for the sake of playing. For example,

S1: "When we're gigging we tend to rehearse just before we have gigs. Other than that, we try and songwrite. But if there was a whole period of time - well, there never will be now - where we were not doing either, I don't know whether we would rehearse for rehearsing's sake. We just tend to rehearse two days before a whole batch of gigs: two whole solid days".

At other times they will hire a studio, but it will be for songwriting purposes, a distinctly different function. Gone are the regular weekly general rehearsals. Time is divided up into distinct phases:

S1: "We have days where we run through the whole lot and we have to make a pact that we just run through everything once. Or we have a day where we patch up material and rearrange or write, and days where we learn new material".

GIGGING

The band that goes professional does more gigs and bigger and better ones. It must do this as members' livelihoods depend upon it. A critical problem is breaking out of the locality (and 'local band' slot) early enough to launch a national career. If this does not happen soon enough, band members will become bored and feel that they are not getting anywhere. They might leave and the band consequently split up. Also, local audiences may get bored and the band might find itself less popular - the overexposure problem.

Professional musicians are trying to earn a living solely from their music. They are less likely, then,

to do gigs for little financial reward than are bands at earlier stages of their careers. They are less likely to do benefit gigs. For instance,

B3: "It's quite a long time since we've done any benefits...We didn't want to get into doing indiscriminate benefits...We made that decision not to do gigs for nothing, because we made a living off the money we earned".

Many professional bands have a policy of this kind, especially bands who are not signed to a record company, and therefore do not have any 'advances' or recording royalties from records. For example,

T: "In the old days we were always doing things for nothing. But now I consider doing it for a fiver to be doing it for nothing...How are you supposed to live and eat? It's a job and it's fucking hard work! Do you think any of these women who organise these benefits do anything for nothing? They don't, you know. If they do a one-off benefit and they do it for nothing they think you should come and play for nothing. Well, it's not the same. You're not in the same boat. That's what you do all the time: you play music...People shouldn't do things for nothing".

T. saw no reason why benefits, if properly organised, should not be able to pay musicians for performing.

Doing a benefit always involves costs, sometimes quite large ones:

S1: I don't think...we could afford to do them. 'Cause it costs, even to get P.A.s and to travel there, and your time...We're on sixty quid a week wages. If we do things for a loss we're gonna be really in shit creek. I think it's completely necessary to do things where you don't make anything, just so you're out and about and in the right place at the right time, being seen. (But) I think you can overdo it by doing too many, and in a

small area, like London, you can exhaust yourself by doing lots of small gigs, earning nothing, and then exhaust the market".

On the other hand, professional bands do gain status from doing benefit gigs and, for important benefits with stars on the bill and media coverage, they get free publicity and have their name associated with more famous bands. Thus, one can take a more cynical view. For example,

J1: "We will not do any benefits. Policy; majority view...But we do any charity thing that's on radio. I said to the band that it's absolute hypocrisy. If you won't give up your time for a gig for expenses, you don't go to Capital Radio...We do anything like that; anything that promotes us"

Bands, at this stage, also have to consider carefully which venues it is worth their while playing, not just financially, but from the perspective of building up a following and making their mark. Fine timing is involved. If a band plays a prestigious venue before it has a big enough following, then it could ruin its chances for the future. For example,

S4: "We don't wanna play those places we're playing at the moment, losing twenty quid a gig! We wanna go a bit more upmarket. Like, now we can play the Moonlight and we want to do the Venue...We can have the Marquee any time we want. But, when you play the Marquee, you've got to have a certain number of people (or) they won't ask you back, and you won't be able to play there anymore. It's got to be worth your while".

In this sort of way bands become more calculating.

Bands aiming at commercial success also develop a policy regarding 'support' gigs. The long-term goal is to widen the audience by being associated with specifically chosen already-established acts. One of the ways in which a band measures its success is in terms of the famous bands which it has supported; the bigger the 'name', the more kudos is attached.

As the band plays better-known and bigger venues, there is a feeling of progress, of reaching important goals. It can be very exciting, and this in itself can offset financial difficulties. For example,

J1: "There's huge areas of negativity in being in a band...then, on the other hand, you think, 'Bloody hell, I've played to 15,000 people!'"

As gigs get bigger, so do costs, however. Bigger venues require bigger and better P.A.s, drum-risers, sax-risers, dry ice, backdrops, and so on. Audiences have higher expectations.

The escalating size of stages and audiences, and the increasing sophistication of sound equipment, combine to create a new problem, one not faced by local bands: physical isolation. For one thing, the band will never hear the 'out-front sound', even when they are soundchecking, for they will increasingly rely on a monitor mix. (This is why a good sound crew is so important.) So they are never hearing what the audience is hearing. Furthermore, they are unlikely to

be able to see their audience. The band playing in a local pub will be able to see everyone, whereas the band at a big venue will be a lot higher up than most of their audience, and further back. Moreover, increased use of lighting will reduce visibility to the first few rows at the very most. (This is why bands sometimes turn the lights onto the auditorium for one or two numbers.) It can feel as if you are entirely alone. Surrounded by a wall of sound of your own making, you could doubt the very existence of any audience. For example,

J1: "We were playing to 8,000 people and all of us were aghast. We came off stage and we hadn't known that we'd played a set. And you can't see them. You just see blackness that goes on and on and on. I thought I was going to vomit, because my nerves had left me...We all shouted and made noises on stage, 'cause on a stage like that you're so apart from everyone in the band you feel completely alone".

Thus, the big stage isolates band members, not only from the audience, but from each other. The sweaty, jostling intimacy of the local pub is replaced by yards of space. Bands have to adjust to this and, as the above quote illustrates, do develop strategies for dealing with it.

TOURING

For the band which makes records, touring is a necessity. Tours promote record sales. Sales abroad

need foreign tours. However, precision timing is important for tours to be effective. For instance,

J1: "The whole reason we did the tour was that we thought we must promote our E.P. and, in the end, it only came out in the last few days of the tour. So we'd slogged our guts out round England for six weeks to no avail".

Whilst, for the megastars touring is an air-conditioned, smooth-running and luxurious affair, at the level of the not-yet-successful band, it is often a gruelling experience. For instance,

K3: "We'd go for two days without anything to eat at all. We used to break down constantly in the middle of nowhere with no money. Sometimes we'd have enough money for a bed and breakfast. But quite a lot (of times) we didn't and we used to sleep on top of the gear in the van - all of us, with these two guys we had with us, too, our roadies. We had this great idea that we'd go away and do gigs and make some money. But things always turned out very wrong and we lost (money)".

Some women find they cannot cope with the pressure of touring and leave the band. For instance, this happened in J1.'s band:

"Halfway through the tour she decided that she couldn't stand it anymore. She hated touring, the rigours of the road and sitting in the minibus for six hours a day, travelling from one town to another, ending up in a shitty hotel...being cold, being hungry...So she handed in her notice".

Until a band is really successful, costs have to be cut as much as possible. When roadies are employed they are paid very little. Whilst commercially successful bands have 'guitar roadies', 'drum roadies' and so on, for bands lower down the career ladder such

specialisation does not exist. One or two roadies have to suffice for all tasks and band members have to set up and look after their own equipment. For example,

J1: "We've only got one roady, which is very dodgy, because sometimes both guitars' strings break at once and he's busy restringing one and we're without guitars".

The band with no recording contract, and therefore no advance, travels the cheapest of all. For instance,

B2: "We bought this 1956 ex-army bus. We did all our tours in the bus because we couldn't afford to stay in bed and breakfast with all our roadies and us. So we used to travel like a coach - all the back (full of) beds, cooking, everything".

Some bands lose thousands of pounds on tours. Even the most economical ones find it very hard to make ends meet financially from gigging:

V1: "There's no way that you can earn your living at it that I've found yet".

Bands which have signed to a record company may find themselves touring with other bands on that label. A women's band may be used as a gimmick to pull in the crowds for a male band. Certainly, being female can help a band get support tours. On the other hand, such novelty-value tends to be short-lived and may harm a band's long-term career. A band packaged in this way may not be taken seriously.

Another particular problem which women's bands can face is that of staying in the 'support' spot for ever:

E1: "People usually do one support tour and then start headlining. We did a lot of support tours...We went through quite a long period where we were supporting major bands before we started headlining the major circuit. Maybe at one point it was concerning - whether we'd be able to make that transition, really. We were very much the ideal support band...We weren't good enough, or professional enough, to blast the main band off, but we were good enough to bring people in".

PROFESSIONALS' PROBLEMS

The new way of organising time, although necessary for the long-term goals of the band, can cause unforeseen problems for band members. There is less chance for spontaneity, for 'play'. If the band is doing lots of gigging it can't also be doing much recording or writing. If a band has a newly released record then it has to tour to maximise sales, and during this period people will not have the time to write songs. If one of the reasons for being in a band is to express your creativity, then long periods where you do not have the time to either practise together or write new numbers can be very frustrating and a source of alienation. For instance,

S1: "We did about three or four tours. So that was a gig every night over periods of four to six weeks. Too many gigs and not enough working in a studio or working together as a band. Not enough

jams. Too much getting out there and just playing...I would have liked to have done a lot more experimental stuff, just jamming around with people, instead of just having to come up with finished products and out you go".

Another problem is that band members find it difficult to get much time to practice individually. For instance, S1. says that she only practises about once a week:

"Even less when we're gigging. 'Cause when we're gigging I'm either rehearsing (with the band) or I'm playing in the evening. I have a bit of a go just before a gig, even after the soundcheck".

And J1 says: "We hardly ever play, considering we're a full-time band. Interviews and photosessions take up so much time".

As a band moves along the career route, time and other pressures increase. What starts out, commonly, as a bit of fun turns into a very serious business indeed. Some women feel that they just cannot cope. It's easy to get burnt out. For example,

A3: "We started off just being amazed that we could actually play gigs at all...There was very little pressure at the beginning and it was a lot more fun before we started getting involved in all this record business and everything. On one level, I'm pissed off that we didn't get further, 'cause I think our music was good enough. On another level, I'm quite glad we didn't, because I don't know if I could have coped with that, personally. The pressures were bad enough as it was...If I was to play in another band now, I'd very much want to do it just as something I enjoyed and if I stopped enjoying it, then I would stop doing it".

But the contradictions and pressures are different for bands at different levels of 'professionalism'.

There is, in fact, far less pressure on the superstars for, as Frith (1983) points out, "the biggest acts have contracts that let them do much as they musically like". It is the bands lower down the ladder who are most constrained by pressure from the record company. It is not likely that they will have control over their own 'masters' or much control over their product. This is the level at which most bands (male and female) get stuck, but there are very few female bands who make it through to the next stage.

The role conflicts so far discussed in previous chapters - musician vs. mother, gigging vs. boyfriends, etc. - concerned the conflicts between various roles, and these conflicts are obviously exacerbated by going professional. Another sort of conflict also now emerges within the role of rock musician. As already discussed, gigging, recording and rehearsing are undertaken in a more systematic way and gigging becomes subsidiary to recording. This can present problems for those members who get their 'fix' from live performance and do not much enjoy the sterile conditions of the modern studio. Forced to spend more and more time in the studio, they may miss the experience that drew them into the occupation in the first place: live performance.

On the other hand, the really successful band may not wish to perform anymore. Musicians may prefer to

make records rather than endure the stress and disorientation of touring. If this is the situation, however, they will still be under pressure to perform, because touring boosts record sales and both record companies and fans expect it.

Another, quite subtle conflict is between the public's expectations of the rock performer and the studio's and record company's expectations: the romantic bohemian ideal versus the everyday realities of bandwork. I think there is an interesting contradiction here. The public values of rock and roll are all about youth rebellion against the adult structures of school and work. The manifest values are spontaneity, hedonism and a devil-may-care attitude. But the 'backstage' reality of rock as work is antithetical to those values. Success in the highly competitive world of rock music requires discipline, organisation, punctuality, persistence, and deferred gratification.

Now, it is true that bands' behaviour in studios can be notoriously riotous. But, on the other hand, each minute costs the record company (and, ultimately, the band) money, so there is also a pressure to be disciplined and work conscientiously. This is especially so today, for gone are the days of rock superstars spending enormous amounts of time in the studio to little productive effect. Record production

costs have escalated and companies have had to exert pressure on their bands.

The crucial point here is that people may get drawn into playing rock by a set of values which becomes increasingly counterproductive as they progress along the career path. This comes out in musicians' definitions of what makes a "good gig". For the novice in a local band a "good gig" may be one where she got drunk and had an enjoyable time, playing, dancing and socialising. But a professional attitude to gigs means, among other things, not allowing one's personal enjoyment to affect the quality of music being delivered to the audience. It might mean not drinking at all.

At the professional stage, all of a musician's life revolves around music. The distinction between 'work' and 'leisure' becomes blurred:

S1: "It's a social life that's part of my career. It's not a social life (where) you leave work and then you go out and have this other type of life. It's all part and parcel of the same thing. You mix with the same people. You go to gigs because it's part of what you should be doing; listening out for new bands and listening out for new sounds. And meeting people, and making sure your face is shown and you're seen to be out and about. Guys there with cameras; get your photo taken. It's proof that you were there. Because it's good press. It's great! It's a total thing".

MAKING OR BREAKING

In this section I wish to analyse the ways in which some bands succeed and others fail, why some stay together and others break up. But, first, the term "success" needs some discussion. Success means different things to different people, depending on their goals.

1) Commercial success is a taken for granted notion. A "successful band" is one which has sold enough records to get into the charts, done world tours, and become rich and famous. Getting on 'Top of the Pops' is a common measure of success in this sense. It means building up a large following, performing in front of tens of thousands of people, becoming a 'star' and having people request your autograph.

Success also means power, for, as discussed earlier, it is only the commercially successful musicians who can gain 'artistic control' from their record companies. Plus, the money they earn in royalties enables them, if they so wish, to set up their own recording studios and thereby gain control of the production process.

2) Craft success. For session musicians, success could mean simply being able to get plenty of work in recording studios and to be able to make a reasonable living from hiring out one's musical skills. It also

means getting very good at playing, so that other musicians recognise one's skills. For example,

B1: "Playing well enough to be respected by other musicians - that's my ultimate (goal) really".

3) Success as entertainment. For bands who follow the path of gigging rather than recording, success is being able to get regular gigs, which pay well and enable one to make a living just by playing. This is also the measure of success for a 'local band'. It means being very popular in one's locality, getting lots of gigs and having a loyal following.

4) Success may also be seen in terms of 'art', that is, making a creative contribution to popular music which will be memorable. This, also, is linked to the desire to be appreciated by other musicians rather than by the general record purchaser. For instance,

J1: "I would rather have made one Captain Beefheart record, personally, as my goal, something I regard as worthwhile, a valid bit of art...Being on 'Top of the Pops' is not one of my personal goals...Even if you get to number one in the American album charts, that is something to be ashamed of - 'cause they've got no taste - although you're very rich".

This quote illustrates the way in which band success and individual success can be quite different and even contradictory. One of the common reasons why bands break up is precisely because an individual's musical career comes into conflict with that of the band. Indeed, individuals often use bands as stepping stones

in their own careers (although there is not one single instance of this amongst my interviewees).

Within the world of popular music, success is an ambiguous and contradictory concept. For a professional musician, it may mean popular commercial success via making hit records, or it may mean being able to make a steady living from playing music and knowing that, for the foreseeable future, the wolf can be kept from the door. For many women it means both of these things, and yet these two forms of success are usually mutually exclusive. That is, a band with hit records may be living in poverty. There are production costs to be paid back, and royalties take a long time to come in. Moreover, the chart band is only as successful as its next record. Thus success, in these terms, is precarious and often fleeting. Yet bands who earn a good living from entertaining in their local pub, miss out on recording success and the fame that goes with it. So bands have to make a choice; they cannot follow both paths.

This leads me to another question: does success mean something different for women than for men? Is it defined in different terms than for men? Is there a feminist conception of success?

Some women regard success for female musicians as simply going out there and playing; showing your

presence in a 'male' world. Other bands believe that a feminist practice must be involved. Many feminists reject the mainstream path and develop alternative strategies towards alternative goals. (I will discuss these in the Chapter 12.) But most band members have probably not thought through what kind of success they are aiming at, and so many try to be commercial, but in a half-hearted way:

J1: "I think being in a local band is entirely valid, (but) there are a lot of people in local bands that are really stupid. That is really what they want to do and yet, at the same time, they're sending tapes off to record companies and failing horribly in the commercial stakes. Everyone vaguely feels that you've got to be successful, and you're a failure if you don't do this, that and the other. (But) it's two completely different things".

CONFLICT AND ALIENATION

Howard Becker's classic study (1963) of dance bands examined the conflict between the musicians' own artistic/aesthetic goals and the demands of audiences. Becker painted a picture of dance band musicians at war with their audiences. 'Art' and 'commerce' are shown as totally oppositional categories. The musicians were aloof and disdainful towards their fans. They did not wish to entertain but to pursue their 'art'. They were arrogantly out of touch with the market place realities within which they operated.

The potential for this antagonism also exists in the world of rock, but how much actually occurs depends partly on the historical period and partly upon how far up the success ladder any particular band is. It also depends on which kind of 'professional' musical practice one is discussing. 'Artistic freedom' versus control is a major issue for all professional musicians, but it is manifested in different forms for the three categories of professional musicians I have identified above.

(a) Entertainers.

M. and B5. saw themselves purely as entertainers and thus did not experience much alienation. But their band emerged in the early 1960s, a time when popular musicians had not yet taken on an 'artistic' attitude.

The basic dichotomy for Becker's dance band musicians was between popular music and jazz. By the late 1960s the opposition was between 'pop' and 'rock'; since punk, between commercial pop and 'cult' music. 'Jazz', 'progressive rock' and 'cult' music are all based on some kind of notion of 'authenticity' which is deemed to mark the music out as different from the mainstream. It is seen as unpolluted by commercial considerations, and as somehow oppositional.

Some of the women I interviewed were in cult bands. The basic contradiction was between wanting their music to stay 'pure' but at the same time desiring a wider audience and some kind of success, probably via making records (perhaps, even, with a 'major'). A widely popular cult band is a contradiction in terms. Some musicians in cult bands reject success for that very reason. On the other hand, others behave as if they are unaware of this basic contradiction. Sometimes a compromise is struck: a woman wants success, but not too much success. For instance,

V2: "I'd like to be in a band playing gigs in London - (but) not too high-powered gigs...It would be nice to have a recording contract, but only with someone quite small - one of the 'indie' labels. I wouldn't want the pressure of 'You must produce an album every year' or 'You must do this European tour'. I'd like a certain amount of freedom".

She was worried that, by signing with a major, her band would lose their integrity.

The more seriously a band sees itself in terms of art, the more of a conflict it would have in taking the path of entertainment. Thus, many women musicians firmly reject the option of becoming entertainers, despite the obvious financial advantages. For example,

S4: "If we wanted to do that, we'd do it. But we want to be someone. We want people to remember us in years to come. Not massive, but I'd like someone to have our record in ten years time".

Sometimes, however, 'entertainment' is seen as a temporary necessity which, although alienating, is worth doing in order to get some money. For example,

J3: "It would have been a working men's circuit. We were tempted, just to make some money out of it. 'Cause it was costing us a lot of money in equipment and we weren't getting anything back from the gigs we were doing...(But) we didn't want to change the music and we do all our own stuff, which they wouldn't have recognised. You have to do standards that they're gonna join in...We would have got a bit more experienced at playing other people's stuff, but it wasn't really what we wanted to do. So it seemed a bit of a backward step".

Many professional women musicians, who - with no record contract - rely on gigging for money, live uneasily within this contradiction. For instance,

A1: "I find it very hard when music has to be a way of earning money. It becomes very difficult. I think we should get paid for what we do, but I'm not sure about doing things purely for the money".

(b) Session Players.

This is potentially the most alienating form of professional existence, for the musician has to produce exactly the sound her employer (a band, record company, advertising agency, etc.) requires. In this situation creative free-expression is at its minimum level, but alienation may be diminished if the musician comes to perceive her playing less as an art form than as a craft.

Professional pride is built on the knowledge of having special skills. Doing sessions is quite an

achievement for a woman musician, as there are very few women in this position. It can also offer variety:

B1: "I want to remain a session person. I think that if we did get any form of (record) deal I would want to remain a session person...because I get bored sick in just one band!"

(c) Recording Artists/ Songwriters.

Most people aiming at going professional see this as the way to do it. On the other hand, my interviewees expressed concern over the way in which record companies (particularly the 'majors') could take over control of the music and music-making process. For Becker, the conflict was between artist and audience directly. Today that conflict is located between the artist and the record company.

The main objective of many of my interviewees was to earn a living solely from music. Some said that they would sign up with any record company, big or small, because that was what you had to do in order to make records and in order to make money. For example,

J1: "If you're going to try and sell records in large volume you've got to use a record company. I just feel realistic...I have no conflict with record companies as such. I feel it's just a business and people at the top of businesses are hard...They're not the nicest people in the world, because they wouldn't be doing what they're doing if they were...But you can appreciate them on that level".

Other women had reservations. They feared that, although their financial difficulties would cease,

they would lose their artistic freedom. Signing was associated with "selling out". For example,

H4: I can't imagine me wanting to get involved with people in the music business...I suppose I have a purist idea. I'd rather do it like I'm doing it now, with all its frustrations, and keep some sense of... sincerity...I just imagine they would want total control and tell us what kind of music to make and how to be".

Bands fear record company interference in areas well beyond the music per se. For instance:

A3: "we were quite worried that if we signed to a major they would try and change us beyond all recognition and, especially, try and present an image of us which we weren't happy with...like the Belle Stars, who all wear the same clothes on stage. We would never have done that! And I think they would probably have tried to make us do gigs that we might not necessarily have wanted to do".

B2: "We have to have some sort of control over lyrics and artwork and everything. But I think it's really difficult to get a deal like that with a big record company. And they tell you how to cut your hair and what make-up to put on, what to wear...".

J1., in a commercial band with a major record contract is the best example, in my research, of this kind of alienation. As I have already described, J1. had strong artistic goals. On the other hand, her financial security and possible future wealth clearly depended on the success of her band, which was producing records she disliked. Alienated from the music itself, she substituted financial rewards for personal fulfilment - "my musical principles have gone

by the board". (Eventually, the stress of living this contradiction led to her leave the band.)

J1: "I'm very confused...I think if you're out for commercial success, you should do it properly. On the other hand, I really want to make music which I personally feel proud of...It's relevant to the band that we've set out to be a commercial band and we're succeeding. But, to me, I don't care whether I never have another hit record...So when the band go bananas and say, 'We've done it. We've got on 'Top of the Pops', I think, 'But that song was shit'".

On the other hand, she gets some pride from the fact of being in a women's band:

"The Go-Gos do shit (but) at least people do respect them for being girls and doing shit, compared to being boys and doing shit".

Some women were prepared to sign a recording contract, but only on certain conditions, the main one concerning "artistic control". For instance,

K2: "I'll probably be able to negotiate something. I think I know a lot of the pitfalls, and I think we would (sign) provided we got artistic control...We would for the short-term, at least. "

The band had clearly spent some time working out exactly how they would get this elusive control:

K2: "We would put in a clause, then you know who's producing it. You put in all the possible things that could come up. Like, you say 'definition of masters'. If you don't put that you can make a master and they can say it's not a master, 'cause they're not gonna use it. And then you're in debt for the recording costs for a track that they're not even gonna put out. Or, we have the final say who's producing. If they come up with a producer we don't like then we can say no. That's artistic control...vetoing album covers..."

They also intended to erect a whole defence system to cover themselves:

"We wouldn't sign directly; we'd sign through an organisation that we'd set up ourselves. If we had our own publicist and our own organiser lying between us and the company, they'd be there every day, hassling and making sure things were done. You need that".

Other women were likewise cynical about the benefits which supposedly accrued from a record contract:

B2: "They've got a hold on you, but they don't actually think of doing anything. That's my experience. I've seen a lot of bands get mistreated. Record companies - say they've got a big main band - they put all their energy into that big band, and you're pushed about, supporting this and that. If there's a record company who's gonna spend a lot of time on us and do good publicity we will do it. But you can never guarantee that, unless we get a good advance...In the beginning we didn't jump. We could have signed up, because all-girl bands were terribly rare at that time".

S4: "We wouldn't sign to someone big because you're usually just a tax loss to people like C.B.S. or R.C.A."

Many bands, whilst rejecting major record companies, were prepared to sign with an 'independent' company. Indeed, many were keen to get a deal with an 'indie'. They believed that fewer compromises (whether aesthetic or political) would be involved, and that they would have more control over both the product and the production process. To sign with a 'major' was to sell-out, whilst to sign with an 'indie' was not:

K1: "Our view is that big record companies put you into packages and just get the most out of you they can. Whereas a small label are more interested in

you as a group and what you wanna do, rather than making money out of you".

In my research I found this view to be prevalent among women's bands who had not yet reached the recording stage or had only done one or two demos. Women higher up the career ladder did not tend to share this viewpoint. For instance,

B3: "You have to make more compromises with small labels. They're much more fascistic about it. I think it's because people who run small labels actually get more close to the bands. They feel that it reflects on them personally, what the band does. So, if the band is singing about things that they, personally, don't like, then they don't want it and they'll try and stop that. Whereas, on a major label it doesn't reflect back on anybody personally at all. When bands were going on about how you shouldn't sign to a major label I never once agreed with it. I always thought it was much better to sign to a major label, 'cause they'll give you the money. They'll tell you to go away and they'll leave you alone".

A particular drawback of signing with an independent company is that they tend to give bands smaller advances (or none at all). This makes it much harder for bands to pay themselves a living wage until they become commercially successful.

Success is, of course, always relative, and a band's goals change over time. The local band may see success as getting gigs in London and getting a record contract. But a band which has already been on 'Top of the Pops' will see success in more ambitious terms.

Also, a band's goals are affected by the kind of audience response they get. A band that starts out playing for fun may develop further goals if they find that they are being well-received. On the other hand, some bands feel unable to change their initial (limited) aspirations. A major reason is having children. Mothers have to think in the short-term.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

1) Luck is undoubtedly one factor: being in the right place at the right time, stumbling across the right person at that crucial moment, and so on. Some bands are able both to see the chance to become successful and to exploit it. This might be simply playing the right sort of music for the time.

2) Novelty value is linked to this. Being part of a new style or fashion in music and also being the first, or only, all-women band to play in that style is likely to speed up a band's career. For, a record company, realising the importance of a new style and finding an all-women band as one of its exponents, is likely to sign up that band as unique. So, being female can, in itself, be an advantage. But this is, with few exceptions, only true if the band exploits its femininity.

3) Commitment is crucial. If you want to be commercially successful you have to have that as an explicit goal, carefully develop a winning strategy and stick to it. You cannot be half-hearted. No matter how expert the band's playing skills, or how good their music, commercial success is not achieved without hard work and dedication. Of course, musical ability helps, but some bands reach fame and fortune with only the minimum expertise, just as many talented bands remain obscure.

4) Support is vital. A factor which has helped many bands is simply having a good P.A. engineer. Some have been lucky enough to have "grown up" together with their P.A. engineer. In such a situation band members totally trust the engineer and s/he gives the band complete commitment. This is particularly the case if the engineer is involved in a long-term relationship with a band member.

Similarly, good management is important. If the manager is a friend and s/he really believes in the band and goes out of the way to help them, then the band has a distinct advantage.

WHY BANDS FAIL

I mean by this, why do bands fail to be a commercial success.

1) Breaking Up and failing are inter-related. Some bands fail because they break up. Others break up because they fail. (I shall discuss breaking up in the following section.)

2) Bad Luck. Bands may be in the wrong place - a remote place, for instance, from which it is difficult to launch themselves commercially. Bands may, be out of step with current fashion - ahead of their time, or conversely, dedicated to a style of music which is going out of fashion.

3) Limited Aspirations will hold a band back. The band may simply not desire commercial success or have thought beyond the boundaries of local success. This is likely to affect women's bands more than male bands, for women tend to have lower aspirations.

4) Lack of Confidence is a factor which, again, applies more to women's bands than to male bands. Confidence and aspirations are inter-linked.

5) Lack of Commitment. I have shown how women's commitment to music is constrained by their commitment to other people (boyfriends and husbands, babies and children) and their general domestic role with its attendant responsibilities and obligations. Women are therefore far less likely than men to be able to give music 100% commitment.

6) Political Principles. Some bands feel that the very aim of commercial success is a form of political compromise. Many feminist bands have refused to take that route at all (and I shall discuss their alternative paths in Chapter 12). However, some feminist bands did want success in commercial terms. These bands fell between two stools. They were prepared to sign a contract with a record company but not prepared to make many compromises with their feminist principles (on lyrics, clothes, image, decision-making, etc.) For feminists, there is only a small number of options and therefore less room for manoeuvre. For example, a compromise on image is far more significant than for a non-feminist band; it could undermine their whole political stance. I think that this lack of malleability and refusal to fit into the ideological space reserved for "all-girl band" has acted as a brake on their commercial success.

WHY DO BANDS BREAK UP?

Bands stay together because they enjoy playing together, have fun together, and share the same aims. The average life of a band is probably only a year or two. Bands which last longer than this tend to be ones which have achieved some measure of financial success and whose continued success depends on staying

together as a band. Other factors include close bonds, especially between family members. In my research a number of women's bands included sisters. Such kinship connections weld the band together and enable it to weather the stormy patches in interpersonal relations.

Bands often break up when one or more people leave. Indeed, sometimes one person saying they are intending to leave precipitates others to quit. Someone leaving lowers the morale of the others, especially if the band has no manager. For band members' feelings are often mixed; at times they feel divided over whether to leave or stay. Many factors are involved in these decisions. So, although I intend to run through them one by one (for the sake of analysis), in reality more than one factor is usually involved.

One simple reason for someone leaving is accident or illness. This tends to happen more frequently in female bands than in male bands, because women, having the major responsibility for child care, are more affected by the illnesses of their children.

Another member might leave because she begins to feel too old to be playing rock music. She may desire security and want to "settle down"; buy a house or flat, have a child.

Lack of money may lead a woman to seek a full-time non-musical career. She may just get tired of poverty.

If her band suddenly becomes financially successful she might stay on, but she feels it is unlikely.

Some women, coming to the conclusion that the band is not going to be successful, develop an alternative career. They reach a decisive moment when they consciously make a choice to do something else. This alternative career may involve years of training and the demands may clash with the band. In my research one woman was training to become an acupuncturist, another to become a dietitian, and a third a herbalist. For these women, playing in a band did not seem to offer enough security.

Mobility may be a problem. Band members may move away and this will stretch their commitment to the band. Having to travel a long distance to rehearsals will strain their allegiance. Sometimes people do commute 50 or even 100 miles to band practices, but they do not keep this up for long - not surprisingly.

An individual may leave a band through lack of confidence that they will ever improve their musical skills. This factor affects women more than men.

A band may split up if there is great unevenness in terms of the amount of work the various members are putting in. Arguments may develop and those members who are doing most of the work may leave. Sometimes, some members of a band are committed to another

activity. In one band, for instance, half of the members were also part of a women's theatre group. There were clashes of gigs. Thus the band was divided into two camps. A gulf gradually opened up and eventually the band split up:

J5: "In the last year or so we've had to refuse a lot (of gigs), which is the main reason why June and I left the band - we wanted to play more. And we weren't rehearsing. At the start of the year we decided that we would like to get together a lot more stuff and move forward. We never did. Finally, we almost stopped pretending that we were going to. In other words, we'd settle for a good time, amusing people...but with exactly the same material. And I feel quite strongly about that - that's ripping off women. I just felt really frustrated and wanted to move on musically and do some new material".

Quite often a band starts off in a very unified way but camps develop over time. It is when communication breaks down between these groups and when the resentment and frustrations which build up are not expressed, that a band is in danger of having an explosive, and terminal, row. Endless rows can also wear a band out. For instance,

A3: "We had rows about very little things. And I think that was partly because you're in such a highly charged situation and so everyone's emotions are quite close to the surface a lot of the time".

Another difference that can develop over time is in musical taste; what kind of music band members think the band should be doing. There are a number of possible dimensions to this. It can be linked to growing musical skills. If members join as novices, as

they improve their playing abilities they may wish to branch out and play an entirely different sort of music. As confidence grows, conflicts become more manifest. A skilled musician may feel that the band is holding her back and this frustration may eventually lead her to leave the band. Or, she may wish to move in a more commercial direction than the others. Here is a good example:

T: "As we all got better musically, our musical tastes diverged. I felt very restricted...I wanted to explore other ways of playing...We were playing standards and we started to write our own music, but we had to play to the limits of the weakest member...We just grew apart...There had been a thing that we were intrinsically feminist and that meant we were not going to be commercial (and then) D2. said she really wanted to be famous".

Also, relationships change within bands. For example, lovers may fall out and the band end because of that. The power balance also shifts as women develop their musical skills at varying speeds. Musical expertise, song-writing and administration all have the potential for conveying power. For example,

V1: "It's very easy for someone to dominate. For a long time, because P. was the most experienced, he felt he had to compensate for our lack of musical skill. And then there came a time when B. got strong and I got strong, and he had to let go ...authority. And that was a difficult time for him, for us, because it meant that I had to turn my volume up, take some of that load off him".

Paradoxically, some bands actually break up at the point of 'signing', or at the moment of going fully professional. One or more members decide that they are

not prepared to take the risks involved, or not prepared to make the necessary sacrifices. Some women simply leave bands after a year or two as professionals because they get tired out.

Some of the factors mentioned above affect both male and female bands equally; others affect women musicians far more. For example, falling in love, a new sexual relationship, marriage and parenthood affect women far more than men. All of these events have the potential to interrupt or put a permanent end to a woman's musical career in a way that does not typically happen with men. And one clear difference between male and female bands is that, due to the shortage of women musicians, it is much more difficult to find a replacement for a women's band than for a male band. This is a major problem facing professional bands. For example,

K3: "We had to get a guitarist from halfway around the world! We held auditions (but) there was only about five (worth considering). The tapes we had sent in of girls were absolutely horrendous! They just couldn't play!"

The instrumentalist who is usually the most difficult to replace (because the most rare) is the drummer. For instance, this band was forced, eventually, to recruit a man:

B2: "In the beginning, when C. left us, we looked for a woman drummer for ages and ages. We spent

months looking for a woman drummer. There was none".

S1.'s band advertised in the national press for a woman drummer and only had five replies:

"And that was over a long time: about three months. We did get people from quite a long way away answering. And guys! Regardless of the fact it said 'girl'! Just 'cause we were a 'name' band, I suppose".

Apart from the rarity of competent female musicians, there is the added problem that female bands tend to be very close and so the new member must be able to fit in socially and personally:

K3: "It is quite difficult trying to find other people, especially when you've got to find somebody that you get on well with. Because we're so much involved with each other in the band. It's not like a band that comes together just to play gigs. It's our whole life. We go out for drinks together. We're always around each other's flats. It's that sort of thing".

Thus, one or two women leaving a band is far more likely to precipitate its demise than would be true of a mixed or male band.

For women's bands, then, breaking up seems to be more traumatic than for male bands. Firstly, women tend to be more emotionally involved with each other, than male musicians typically are. Secondly, women have fewer chances, than men, to join other bands. For some women it can mean ceasing to play music for years or even for ever. Thirdly, the very knowledge of the rarity of women's bands, and the problems of joining

another one, lead to group loyalty. (Many women would not feel able to join a male or mixed band for either ideological reasons, or lack of self-confidence or experience.) The continuance of the band is perceived to depend upon everyone staying committed. Thus, when a woman leaves it may be viewed as disloyalty or emotional rejection. It is seldom taken nonchalantly.

In contrast, male musicians have more of a sense of themselves as 'musicians', developing their individual professional careers. Men are more likely to start out thinking, 'I am going to be a rock musician and make hit records and become a star by the time I am 21'. If their band is not moving fast enough along the career ladder, then they will simply change bands. For men, learning to play chronologically precedes band membership; for women the two are often contemporaneous. Most of the women in my research joined bands first, and only then began to see themselves as musicians and think in terms of developing a musical career. Thus their band is not a mere staging post, but bound up with their very identity as musician in the first place.

K3: "We didn't think, at the beginning, 'We're gonna make an album and go to number one'...We took one step at a time...When we realised it was happening, we just thought, 'Great!'"

Many of my interviewees commented on the way in which a women's band is like a marriage. For example,

J1: "It's like being married...and the frustrations and the torment and the ups and downs...It's an emotional involvement with other people. There's so much at stake and you get so frustrated. You get really involved in the interpersonal thing".

And when bands split up it can resemble divorce:

J1: "'I hate you!' and 'Don't lay a finger on me!'...I thought, 'Why can't people react in a nice, normal fashion? Never again will I get involved with a bunch of women...that get so het up...and their emotions in turmoil'".

So women's bands seem to be welded together with a different sort of social 'glue' to male bands.

CONCLUSION

In looking at the issues and problems which women musicians have to deal with at the professional stage, two things strike me as important. Firstly, and surprisingly, there seem to be fewer difficulties which are specifically due to gender, at this stage, than lower down the career ladder. As a woman progresses in her career, she overcomes a whole range of obstacles which are tied up with her being a woman. Once at the professional stage, however, her problems become much the same as for men. In fact, women who have "made it" often speak as if there are no gender constraints in popular music. I would maintain that this is because they have either been lucky enough to have been relatively unaffected by such difficulties,

or, more likely, they were confronted and overcome so long ago that they have simply been forgotten.

Secondly, commonsense arguments (such as those fielded by some record companies and managers) that women cannot cope with day-to-day life in the world of rock (because they are too weak, incapacitated by menstruation, lack stamina, do not travel well, cannot carry heavy objects, and so on ²) simply do not hold up against the evidence. I asked my interviewees questions about physical limitations, but musician after musician denied having any. Many women were surprised at me asking the question. Those few physical things which women did mention as being problematic seem to have been very easily overcome. For example, difficulty in carrying equipment was neutralised by learning the skills involved in lifting heavy objects. (Moreover, for professional musicians, once you have reached a certain level of success, working conditions improve and roadies are hired to do all the physical work.) Similarly, having big breasts could get in the way of playing the guitar, but those women simply held the instrument differently. Some women had small hands, short fingers, and so on, but did not see this as a big disadvantage. Regarding periods, a phenomenon which has often been used to symbolise women's biological weakness, some women mentioned P.M.T. and/or menstrual cramps, but they do

not seem to have let this deter them from playing. Indeed, women described situations where they had ploughed on through a set with, for example, flu and a raging temperature. For instance,

A1: "The only time I can remember a person being ill in our band, or any physical thing, that wasn't anything to do with them being a woman. T. once had a shocking migraine, just before we played. And X. (the drummer) broke her foot once. She did her gigs with a broken foot".

The gender problems my interviewees did emphasise, again and again, were the social constraints: the definitions of 'woman' imposed on them by husbands, boyfriends and babies, on the one hand, and by the music business, men and institutions, on the other.

Notes

1. "Chrissie Hynde is 36. She can see a time not so far away when she'll have to put the guitar to bed and abandon the rock star's life.
'Yeah, 36. It's a cool age but one does start to think, 'Will people want to see a 40-year-old woman on stage singing in a rock'n'roll band?'"
Tom Hibbert. 'Rock'n'roll in Hynde Sight'. The Observer Colour magazine. Sunday 18th. October 1987.
2. The same sort of arguments are used about women in sport and in politics.

Chapter 12. ALTERNATIVES.

In Part 2. of this thesis I have primarily been describing the typical career of a rock band. In the process of this description, I have drawn attention to what seemed to be basic differences between male and female rock music careers: how the bands 'work', obstacles, problems, tensions, dilemmas and contradictions. This assessment is built upon a comparison of *my own research findings concerning* female musicians with what is known about how male bands operate. I have drawn on the handful of academic studies which exist, biographies and autobiographies of male rock musicians, journalistic accounts, and my own seven years experience in the world of rock bands.

Exactly how individual bands pursue their rock careers inevitably varies, but I have, so far, been solely exploring the main career 'path'. The typical band is aiming for commercial success, big money, fame, appearances on 'Top of the Pops' and, ultimately, superstardom. In order to reach these goals, the band has to get involved with a set of 'significant others' (producer, agent, etc.) and enter into a series of legal commitments. They try to

get "good" agency, recording and publishing contracts, and an efficient manager to help them get these deals.

The main path towards success is well-charted and is the route which the vast majority of bands set out to follow. It is, however, strewn with obstacles. I have tried to show how male and female bands come across different sets of difficulties, and also experience common problems in different ways.

In this section, however, I wish to turn my attention away from the main highway and towards the other paths which bands follow. Some of these paths lead, or it is hoped that they lead (for they are often uncharted), to the same summit. Other tracks, however, do not lead to conventional rock band success at all. That is, some bands (whether male or female) choose a completely different terrain; they reject the mainstream goal of commercial success and, instead, substitute other goals: 'art', musicianship, self-expression, exploration, *self-fulfilment*, *political* action, and so on. For example,

A1: "If you're in a 'straight' commercial band, you want a number one, or a chart single, or you want to sell x number, or you want to be rich, or you want to be famous. I don't have any of those kind of goals. I want to be able to play better. I want to learn more about music. I want our band to do a lot more: musically, do more; politically, do more; explore more things".

A classificatory scheme suggests itself:

		GOALS	
		mainstream	alternative
MEANS	mainstream	A	C
	alternative	B	D

Category A involves getting a manager, an agency, a publishing contract and a recording deal with a 'major' record company. It is the mainstream path which most bands follow.

Category B. Bands in this category are aiming to get commercial success but exploring alternative strategies to reach that goal. Signing with an independent record company is one such popular strategy. Many bands sign with indies with the aim of avoiding financial (and, particularly in the case of women, sexual) exploitation.

There are also other strategies. One such is D.I.Y. recording but signing a distribution deal with a major distributor. K2 describes her band's plan:

"What we're hoping to do is get a studio to let us in to do an independent record...Big studios sometimes do that. If...they feel your material stands a good chance, they'll let you use the studio in their time. Then you have to pay afterwards, when your income comes in. It's a gamble they take and that's why you have to impress them".

Many of the bands in this category are hoping to get signed to a major eventually, but are concerned about compromise. For instance,

V3: "We wouldn't want to compromise at all, but I think that in the last few years the independent labels have opened up a space for greater access and control over what you're doing. (It's) the thin end of the wedge, which we've been able to use to get a lever into the bigger labels, possibly, and still do things our own way. I don't know. I think you have to struggle".

Category C involves the strategy of signing to a major recording company, but with some other goal in mind than fame and fortune. Usually this involves some kind of political motive. It was, for example, the approach followed by some media-conscious groups (like Gang of Four) in the wake of Malcolm McLaren's exploitation of the mainstream media to 'shock effect' with punk. None of the women's bands in my research fell into this category, though it is possible that the all-female punk band, the Slits, had this in mind, and there were elements of this strategy in Chris Stein's and Debbie Harry's original idea of Blondie.

Category D involves a wholesale rejection of commercial success and stardom. Mainstream goals and

methods are seen as "straight". Some bands are not interested in more than local success and are satisfied making their own tapes for distribution at gigs. Other bands do not wish to record at all. Many bands, however, do want to make records and get national distribution. They are seeking an alternative way to be professional, finding other ways of getting finance, doing their recording, and getting their records 'cut', distributed and promoted. They are fundamentally opposed to the values which underpin the rock industry: hierarchy, competition, stardom, etc. For example,

B4: It's to do with trying to establish a way around the big recording companies. I mean, somebody sometime or other has got to start trying to carve out an alternative path, and opening up more venues, and really trying to operate with the idea that everybody should be able to work and earn enough money, and not contrive to support this whole superstar structure - which is just a myth, anyway, 'cause so few people ever get there. There's this idea that you sign your recording deal and this is it! And most bands, 99% of them, disappear without trace, and tapes sit on the shelves gathering dust".

Categories A and D represent the two poles of a continuum, along which bands can be placed. It must be emphasised, however, that, firstly, the differences between bands are both complex and subtle. Bands do not all fit neatly into these boxes; many are in the boundary areas. Secondly, bands may be moving between categories. For instance, a lot of bands, as I suggested in Chapter 11, hope to use independent

companies as stepping stones to the majors, thus moving from category B to category A. Meanwhile, some have been moving in the opposite direction, for example from A to D:

V4: "Some groups have thought the only way to change things is to work within (the commercial music industry), and some groups have felt that you can only work outside it. At the moment we've come to a point where we're actually working outside the commercial music industry. We used to be with a large record company, and we've been with a smaller record company as well. And both periods were very unsatisfactory from our point of view. There was a lot of pressure on us to change and do certain things that they felt we should. And I found that quite unacceptable".

My research includes bands which fall roughly into (and in between) categories A, B and D. It is category D, however, on which I wish to concentrate here.

Not all the bands who called themselves 'feminist' fell into this pigeon-hole, but it was certainly the bands with the strongest feminist identity that had offered the most opposition to the institutional complex of mainstream rock. They had developed a range of alternative strategies regarding lyrics, the music, venues, the norms of the gig, the norms of playing and relating to other bands, recording, record distribution, promotion, publishing, roadying, P.A. and 'mixing', clothes and image, management, and even the very notions of 'professionalism' and 'success'. I shall now deal with some of these issues.

GIGGING: COMPETITION AND COOPERATION

The vast majority of bands have little power over the work process in which they are involved. They do not own the means of performance. They own their instruments and amps but they do not usually own the P.A. equipment. Instead, they hire the services of a P.A. company and, in so doing, lose a certain amount of control over the live sound. Similarly, bands do not own venues. By playing in clubs and pubs, they create wealth for the promoters and club owners. Moreover, venues are scarce and so bands are pitched into competition with each other. This works very much to the advantage of the promoters and against the financial interests of the bands. The most prestigious clubs often pay little or no money. Bands are willing to play for the status value, or in order to get privileged exposure.

Joining the Musicians' Union has not proved an effective method of changing the situation, so far at least, for many bands do not belong, and so 'blacking' would be extremely hard to sustain. Musicians are selling their labour power on the market and, although it is skilled labour power, it is not scarce. This is because playing music is intrinsically rewarding and, thus, far more people wish to pursue careers in rock music than are able to do so. Furthermore, many bands just play for a hobby, accepting minimal financial

reward, and this works so as to undercut the fees of professional bands.

A1: "We've constantly pushed to try and get reasonable money and, of course, it's extremely difficult. We try to get M.U. rates. We'll always compromise, though, because it's not worth losing a gig".

It is only the few, very successful, musicians who can overcome these inbuilt problems. In general, the power of individual bands is very limited. However, various kinds of musicians' collectives have arisen to cooperate with each other, and to try and gain more control over the process of live music production.

These occasional attempts to join forces against promoters are usually based upon some other form of solidarity than simply being musicians, for example, feminism, anarchism, community politics. Shared defence mechanisms are developed: cooperative use of rehearsal space; the collective purchase, or pooling, of equipment; rotating gigs; and the establishment of alternative venues.¹

Collectives such as the Vaults (in Brighton), York Women's Music Collective, and Birmingham Musicians' Collective, have tried to limit the fierce competition between bands within their locality by sharing and rotating gigs.² Collectives may also try to get all bands the same fee. For example, this band refused to

do a gig unless the other musicians were paid as much per person as they were:

T: "Originally, there used to be a lot of competition among bands - as in the straight world - and bands were unwittingly undercutting each other. And we said, you shouldn't be victimised for the number of people you have. For example, we once did a gig with P.M.T., and they'd only asked for a very little. And I said, 'No. That's not right. They have to be getting what we're getting'".

Similarly, bands on the same 'bill' are, conventionally, competing for status. It is customary amongst many people to miss the first act(s) and merely turn up at a gig to see the 'main band'. Some feminist bands, have tried to abolish the 'headlining' situation, by rotating the order of play at various gigs between the bands. For example,

T: "We got fed up with this, 'Who's supporting?' and 'Who's headlining?'. And we say, 'As far as the women's movement's concerned, that's just straight shit! What we're gonna do is take it in turns'. And that's what we've done ever since...A band isn't headlining; what a band is doing is taking its turn playing last, or first. And sometimes it doesn't even matter, because it's according to what suits the band best. I really think that these are discussions that we have really prompted in the women's movement, that people really don't think about. They're really political in other aspects of their life, but when it comes to music they're really blocked. Any time we've organised gigs, this has been going on behind the scenes...Any bands that we come in contact with get told the same thing, and few of them disagree...That's how you deal with your sisters".

There have been similar attempts made by male and mixed 'anarchist' bands, where they have been able to work cooperatively in a particular local community.

But such cooperation is hard to sustain, as bands are forced into competition by the economic realities of the system within which they operate. None of my respondents articulated this problem as clearly as this woman:

V1: "It is competitive. That's the big contradiction (in) what we are trying to do, as an alternative - all of us (women's bands and alternative bands in general). There still isn't a way in which we're not thrust into competition with each other, whether it's to do with who gets the gigs in the first place, or, if you do get the gig, all this headlining crap and all the hierarchical stuff to go with it...We still haven't got out of that grip of the fact that we are thrust into competition with each other. And that's to do with the law of supply and demand; that there are far, far, far too many bands - and they're growing every day - (for the) places to play. So, if there's a way to break through all that, let me know. I'll be there!"

FEMINISM AND ALTERNATIVE VALUES

All of the women musicians in my research who rejected both the goals and strategies of the mainstream ('straight') rock world, happened to be feminists. Why was this?

I have already shown that feminism has been an important route into rock bands for many women. This is, I think, not surprising. Rock bands have been seen as male territory, and early feminism was marked by women's attempts to enter all such so-called male terrain, and to show that women could do those things

too. Feminists had a new sense of their creativity. They wanted to break down sexist stereotypes. They wanted to learn new skills and gain a sense of autonomy.

Feminists promoted alternative values: collectivism instead of competitive individualism, participative democracy instead of hierarchy, etc. (Many male bands had come to espouse such ideals during the radical late '60s, but feminists have taken them further.)

In entering such traditionally 'male' fields, feminists attempted to change them. They did not want merely to participate, but to create new forms of organisation and interaction. This was in line with the political background from which feminism emerged in the late '60s: on the one hand the New Left, and, on the other, the 'counter-culture'. The shared aspects of these 1960s political forms included a strong anti-hierarchical position. They were against any "leaders" and concerned about losing control to others. They believed in self-help, cooperation, democracy and equality. Feminism has developed the ideals of the New Left and counter-culture to a greater extent and for a longer time than any other movement, and it has been feminism which has developed the most radical alternatives within rock. Even punk, which has been described as the most oppositional force in rock history, despite its alternative lyrics,

record production, distribution, and relations with the audience, did not develop such alternative ways of working as feminists have.

The general feminist belief that 'the personal is political', when transposed into rock, worked to break down the barriers between band life and 'personal' life. The 'professionalism' of the typical band was rejected in favour of an approach which minimised the boundary between the band and the rest of women's lives. For example, children were brought to practices and gigs, and women sat knitting in the recording studios. Some of the early feminist bands were variants of 'women's groups' (in the general sense), deliberately engaging in 'consciousness-raising' as well as playing music together. This was a completely new departure for bands.

The politics of the personal was also reflected in the songs which feminists wrote. Love songs became heavily politicised. Also, songs were written about unprecedented topics: menstruation, housework, lesbianism, and so on. Writing your own music, and thus expressing your own creativity, was conceptualised as 'female', as against performing (male) standards. Thus songwriting became normative for feminist bands. If covers were performed, the works were invariably altered. For instance,

T: "Not just the 'he's and 'she's, but the political content. We didn't do anything that was about love and romance, or anything like that. We changed that kind of thing; subverted them totally. They were a good laugh".

Feminist bands also challenged the taken for granted spatial norms in the gig situation. They treated their audiences differently, and gigs were often physically transformed. By speaking and singing to the women in the audience, by prioritising them, women's bands challenged the traditional dominance of men at gigs. For example,

A3: "One thing I've found, women at mixed gigs tend to come up to the front. So the people who can actually see you are women...And I very much talk to the women. I play to the women, definitely ...because women have been ignored by rock music, generally, apart from just as sex objects, and it's nice to treat them differently".

Feminist bands have encouraged such a female colonisation of traditionally male space, as an assertion of power. For a change, it is men, rather than women, who get marginalised. This female-focus was particularly prevalent in lesbian feminist bands. For example,

S5: "We play to the women in the audience. It's totally crucial to my whole existence, my sexual identity, my sexuality, and my politics. They're all tied up. I think that's the same for everyone (in the band)".

The belief that one's methods of work tend to affect the product, has led to attempts to interact within bands in new ways. For example, "showing off"

is considered to be very deviant. Feminist musicians have been very concerned with the quality of their relationships, as well as with their music:

A1: "If you're a feminist, whatever you do you do in a feminist way...I have never been able to see a conflict between music and politics...As far as I'm concerned they're completely integrated...And the way you relate to people is political, even things like working cooperatively, and trying to help other women, and not trying to put other people down. I mean, that's all part of relating to each other in a feminist way. And that comes through in the music".

Feminist bands even have a political policy on roadying and setting up: everyone should do it equally; there should be no-one 'above' doing this manual work.

Now, I am not arguing that these feminist ideals are simply imprinted on (band) practice. But they are aspired to, and translated into everyday life to varying degrees. Inevitably there are contradictions and tensions. These have to be lived.

PROBLEMS AND CONTRADICTIONS IN FEMINIST MUSICAL PRACTICE

Some feminist tenets have been found to be problematic within the context of a rock band. Arguments revolve, for example, around the question of leadership:

S3: "There's this horrible thing in feminism, which

is that, because of the whole rejection of structures and hierarchies and leaders, people with experience get shouted down, because (it is held that) giving information is a leadership function. So, in the big band, in the early days, R1. had quite clear ideas about how she wanted things to sound, and she tried to tell people, 'Why don't you try this and that'. And they didn't really like it, because they felt she was being the leader and bossing them around. She got a lot of shit on it and she stopped. So there's this thing that you have to struggle and you pull each other up to the same level. And you just have to wait until everyone can appreciate that something would sound better if it was done in such a way. There's still a lot of tension around that".

Another key feminist value has been non-critical sisterly support, and the absence of both competitiveness and destructive criticism in women's bands has certainly allowed many women to be confident in their early playing experiences. However, the ability to give and take constructive criticism is important for the musical improvement of both individual musicians and bands, and a number of my interviewees spoke about this being a problem.

Another dilemma has revolved around stage presentation. Some feminists have worried about being seen as special or different from their "sisters":

A1: "I find it hard to get to grips with the whole thing about lights - if it's a bit 'starry' or something...I like doing gigs where we've got good lights. And yet we always used to feel uncomfortable, and I still do a bit, particularly if you can't see the audience. Then, it is something very removed from everybody else...When we first started the band, we found certain things very difficult. Like, we weren't sure whether we should play on a stage, and we weren't sure about having lights on us, and we didn't think the

audience should be in darkness...There's definitely a differentiation I've never been able to quite come to grips with: the whole thing between the audience and the group. Because you can't really get into this thing of 'we're all here together enjoying ourselves', because it's not quite like that...they've actually paid to see you and you're getting paid for playing. You're in a different position".

Similarly, 1970s rock band feminists did not want to wear stage clothes, because that was seen as 'starry', and yet they did want to look attractive in their own terms, and did often "get changed".

'Professionalism' has been another critical issue. Some feminist musicians who were trying to make a living from music by playing full-time had professional attitudes, in the sense that they strived to reach a high standard of musicianship. Many other feminists, however, were very opposed to this notion and, indeed, saw themselves as 'anti-professional'. One reason for this was that, by the early 1980s, 'professionalism' was being categorised (along with technology, science, objectivity, and a lot else) as essentially 'male', by the radical feminist stream of thought which was coming to the fore. Thus women were supposed to play in a different way, more concerned with expressivity than with skill. This way of thinking also had roots in punk (as I have discussed earlier). For example:

S3: "I don't call myself a musician; all that professional stuff is shit. I just hate it..."

Judging bands in terms of external standards, excludes what, for me, a lot of women's experiences are about - which is women playing music together...and relating to women. And the musical level doesn't matter. In the big band some of the people can't play, but so what? That is not what it's about. And I don't think professional women musicians would understand that. And men certainly don't. Even, possibly, professional feminist musicians wouldn't really appreciate it...because I think they've adopted that sort of value judgment".

Feminist musicians who were playing as a full-time occupation, however, were proud of their hard-earned skills and ability to play as well as men in a male-dominated field. They did not consider 'professional skills' to be 'male' or 'elitist'. For example,

J6: "A lot of women seem to be into this thing of just being able to play anything, without ever having played before. I agree, some people can do that and it sounds good...But I don't think any old kind of noise is music. I can't see the criticism of being 'too professional'...I know lots of women musicians who really want to improve their style, their technique and their playing. But, in some ways, they get criticised for that, because you should just stay on one level, so that everybody thinks they can do it...The times I've heard that criticism!"

Women like J6. commenced playing at the time when feminist values urged women's acquisition of traditional 'male' skills. Having daringly led the way into rock and developed considerable expertise, they then found themselves castigated as being "male".

Another, linked, problem for experienced feminist musicians, is simply the lack of a large pool of skilled instrumentalists to play with. Commitment to

playing only with women can clash with the desire to play with more talented musicians. For example,

E1: "The way to get better is to play with people who are better than you. And the trouble with playing in all-women bands, and restricting yourself only to women, is that, because there are so few women, there are bound to be some musical and personal compromises that you have to make. And the best people around are, generally, going to be men, because there are more of them who play. I'm not for one minute suggesting that women can't be as good as men, but because of numbers it works out that way. So, by restricting oneself to only women, you're putting yourself down, in a sense, by not having the greatest number of possibilities to expand your experience and talents. I think that's a big problem. And a lot of the best women, and the women that have got on best, have been one woman in a male band".

Perhaps the most interesting issue has been the music itself. There has been, in the past, a reluctance amongst some feminists to engage with rock music because of its loudness and the way in which the panoply of amplification devices can distance the performers from the audience. This is the traditional folk music criticism of rock, that the intimacy is lost. This is also linked, for feminists, with the association of 'loudness' with macho behaviour. 'Heavy rock' music has been taken as the epitome of this. When I was doing the main body of my research, a clear split existed. Many feminists felt that playing heavy rock was anathema, for this kind of music was 'male'. Instead, women should play some other kind of music: more essentially 'female'. However, this 'women's music' was (and still is) impossible to define. It was

far easier to specify what it was not: loud, noisy, driving, 'cock rock', etc. Thus, so-called female music had to be lighter and softer. But, beyond that, there was little agreement amongst feminists.

S5: "It's less heavy, less throbbing...there's a concern for lyrics to be heard and not just a technological slur".

K2: "Female music's a bit warmer. It tends to be less rock'n'roll. Women play less aggressively, generally. They caress it more, and men rock it and slap it. Women tend to like off-beat rhythms. That's why it's rare to find a women's rock'n'roll band".

Moreover, descriptions of music slid easily into discussion of performance, instead. For instance,

J5: "Well, all male music isn't, presumably, about wanking off on your instrument, but I think quite a lot of it is. And, maybe, competing with other players in the band - obviously, women's music isn't like that...It's definitely a thing apart".

Most feminists have viewed 'heavy metal' as quintessentially 'male', and only a minority of women have played in this musical style. This was true in the 1970s and it is still the case today. The all-women heavy metal band I interviewed told me that they had heard of less than half a dozen other female bands playing this kind of music. But they adamantly defended women's right to play it. Moreover, they saw no contradiction between playing heavy metal and feminism:

E1: "A lot of people see heavy metal as being very aggressive, and I don't see myself as being very

aggressive, really. I love all that racket. A lot of women...tend to play very sort of ethereal music, very spiritual. I like physical, lusty, earthy, passionate music. I was at a rhythm workshop a while back, and the woman who was taking it described the 4/4 snare drum beat as a white, male, militaristic, fascist, patriarchal rhythm, and I think that's a bit heavy, man!...Is there any such thing as female music and male music? I don't know. Women are seen as more intuitive, and I don't think this is a natural phenomenon. I think women and men have equal capacity for logic and rationality, and an equal capacity for intuition".

For feminists who took this position, what was important was how the noise was used; what the songs were about, for example. That is what demarcated feminist heavy rock from male heavy rock.

I think that this problem is an interesting manifestation of the wider contradiction within feminism of, on the one hand, wanting to do what men do, and, on the other, wanting to create something altogether different, which expresses women's 'femaleness'. In the early to mid-1970s breaking into male enclaves was the aim, and so just going out and playing rock music was enough. With the later development of radical feminism, however, a form of 'essentialism' began to dominate feminist thinking, which maintained the existence of a crucial (and, implicitly, inborn) difference between 'maleness' and 'femaleness'. Rock music got defined as 'male'. This was especially true of 'heavy' rock. Thus feminists were supposed to avoid loud heavy rock music and try to create something different. But some women have

strongly resisted the notion that women should play quieter, gentler music, arguing that it is based on the sexist stereotype of conventional femininity. For this feminist punk performer, playing raucous music has been a way of escaping from socialization experiences:

V1: "It took a year before I turned my guitar volume up...because I was still scared of it, of making a noise to that extent. I turned the knobs down on my guitar for a whole year. And, then, suddenly I thought, 'Fuck it. I'm not going to do that anymore...I get a buzz out of handling big energy and I think it can be subverted...I've learnt how to make a big noise only recently,' and I like it. And I'm not going to be told by any boy that I'm on their preserves and get off!...I don't feel that because I've got a big voice I'm any less of a woman...I mean, a woman lion can roar just as loud as a male lion...For me it's undercutting a whole lot of conditioning...And, I believe, collectively, women have a right to this....I feel it's some sort of celebration of something very animal and basic...I understand the function of men making a lot of noise...What I object to is that they do it on our backs, and at our expense, and keep us out. That's why the opposite of saying 'Get off our territory!' is I want every woman who wants to make a big noise to get on with it too".

For women like this, it is bad enough male musicians and male audiences telling them that they should not (or cannot), play heavy rock, without feminists reiterating the message. For example,

K3: "When we first started there were comments from extreme feminists, saying we shouldn't do it. But I think that's a load of rubbish. 'Cause we're into something that supposed to be so macho, showing that there's nothing women can't do. Why shouldn't we do it? We want to bloody do it! It's what we like doing. What right has anybody to say that you shouldn't be doing this? We don't flaunt our bodies or anything, we're just a band playing rock music

...If you listen to one of our tracks, it doesn't sound like women playing. But, then again, what does women playing sound like? It just sounds like someone playing. I don't think it makes any difference if it's a male or female. It all depends on the actual person themselves and how they play".

Within the question of what type of music should be performed, then, are played out some of the key paradoxes of contemporary feminism:

"It aims for individual freedoms by mobilizing sex solidarity. It acknowledges diversity among women while positing that women recognize their unity. It requires gender consciousness for its basis, yet calls for the elimination of prescribed gender roles". (Nancy Cott, in Mitchell, J. and Oakley, A., 1986.)

WOMEN-ONLY GIGS

This issue strongly divided the women's bands I interviewed. Those women who defined themselves as feminists were far more likely to be prepared to play at women-only events. Other women, however, were very hostile to the notion; they believed it was sexist, or simply could not see the point of it.

Female audiences were very important for the the emerging women's bands of the 1970s and 1980s. They gave such novice bands tremendous support. Women musicians who were learning their instruments, often from scratch, were able to make their public mistakes in a non-hostile environment. They were well-received for a number of reasons. Firstly, feminists believed

in supporting other women who were trying to assert themselves in a 'male' domain. As there were so few women rock musicians, those who did manage to get bands together were given huge encouragement. Secondly, there was a need for all-women bands to play danceable music at the multitude of all-women events which were springing up as part of the separatism growing within the women's movement, and the attempt to build a separate women's culture and institutional sphere. Lesbians did not want to watch men playing rock guitars all night; nor did lesbian musicians want to play to men. Indeed, some women's bands refused ever to perform at mixed gigs. Others, whilst not limiting themselves to women-only gigs, clearly preferred and prioritised them. For instance,

B4: "I prefer women-only gigs and I'm not particularly bothered what men think about the band. I don't think it's relevant to proselytise and try to convert men, and persuade them you can do it. I'm not interested in what they think. I mean, you do a mixed gig in case there are women who wouldn't come to women-only events".

The concept 'space' recurred when talking to feminist bands. For example,

A1: "I think a lot of women like to be at women-only events because men are used to dominating space; they're used to coming into a situation, feeling entirely confident, settling down, taking up a lot of room - physically, noise-wise, everything. And, I think, women have still got to be able to take the space for themselves. That's why I think women-only events are important. We support them very strongly. So the women can be on their own; take up as much space as they want".

Some musicians said they felt safer at women's gigs because there were less fights, violence, threats, etc. It was, in particular, safer to be "out" as a lesbian than in a mixed context.

There was a general agreement that audiences at women-only gigs (outside London) were far less critical than those at mixed audiences. For example,

T: "When you go to a mixed gig you're much more like on trial; you're being observed by the men...you've got to be good or better than the blokes. They assume you've got something to prove".

On the other hand, this lack of criticism was not always felt to be beneficial for the musical development of the bands. For instance,

A3: "We've played some pretty awful women-only gigs, and people have still said, 'Far out!' And that quite pisses me off".

It also had its political limitations. Playing to all-women audiences was felt, by many bands, to be restrictive. It was "playing to the converted", "playing in the gay ghetto".

There were also some practical considerations. Women's events were often benefits and suffered from the bad organisation I have already discussed. They were often held in inhospitable venues:

A1: "The horrible town hall, which has no atmosphere, no lights, no comfy chairs...and you're up on stage, about 10 feet up. The sound is appalling and it's echoing all round, which doesn't do anybody any justice".

In consequence, feminist musicians often held ambivalent feelings about women-only gigs, as this comment illustrates:

A1: "I feel mixed about them. I think it's really important that there should be women-only gigs, but they're not always good gigs for us".

One particular twist to this issue was that, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, all-women audiences tended to want dance music rather than anything else. This was because gigs fulfilled very important social functions, especially for radical feminists. For there were very few places where they could meet other women and relax in a safe environment. Listening to the music took a firm second place to dancing, meeting new lovers, dating, etc. Thus bands who played more "serious" music, bands you had to carefully listen to, were disliked. Furthermore, many of these gigs were at the end of events like demonstrations. Thus the emphasis was on the gig as a social event to wind up the day, and women were there who did not normally go to gigs and who, perhaps, were not all that interested in popular music. Some bands I interviewed said that they had not generally been so well-received at all-women events as at mixed ones. Ironically, this was the experience of a number of lesbian separatist bands. For example,

F: "Originally we played boppy music. We were a bop band for women-only gigs, and it was all wonderful.

But then the musicians got fed up with playing that kind of music, and they didn't want to do it any more. And we got a bit of criticism for that - that we were getting too professional...(Also) women said, 'Why don't you play that old stuff?' Our answer would be, 'What were you doing 3 years ago? Why aren't you still doing that?'...It was a false kind of audience, in a way. They went along for the gig, and it wouldn't matter particularly what we were playing. It was the gig, and for a women-only event, and for the women's movement".

However, it is not possible to treat women-only gigs as a simple homogeneous category. For example, women in both provincial and metropolitan bands mentioned the difference between playing London and the provinces. London audiences were "harder to please", "more critical". For example,

S5: "London feminists expect an awful lot. I think we're quite cosseted down (here), because people are our mates...We don't get much of a critical music audience, because we're getting people who want to see women's bands, and there's a certain sympathy there. And that's where I want to play. I don't want a critical music audience...The emphasis is on our fun as well as other people's".

J6: "It's just a broadening of the women's movement itself, really. Not every woman is the same; they've all got different tastes...For a long time women's gigs were rare events, and any band that played went down well, because it was just a joy to see women play. But now it's different, because there are more gigs for women. There's not a lot, but there's more than there was. And women are being able to choose more. And people don't take that into account".

P.A.

Because of the problems encountered with male P.A. crews, feminist bands have sought to take control of

their own sound. Having a woman doing the mixing, has been both a political principle and, for all-women gigs, a practical necessity. But there is an acute shortage of female P.A. engineers. Very few women can 'mix', let alone understand how all the equipment works. T. and A1.'s band, however, had a woman learning to do this from the band's inception. This proved invaluable, not only for their own band, but also for innumerable other women's bands. For T. and A1. set up their own P.A. company and went out to do the P.A. for women's gigs. A1.'s sister, F, did a course in sound engineering and became the 'mixer', but A1. and T. also learnt a lot about the equipment. Without this unique company, a decade of all-women events would have been in jeopardy. They also acted as role models for other women, showing that it was possible not only for women to learn to mix, but to carry heavy and unwieldy equipment (like speakers), understand and use small and large sound systems, and, if the need arose, competently troubleshoot.

A1: "We still seem to be the only group of women doing P.A. (Although) I've come across one or two other P.A. companies which have a woman working in them. We were just always convinced we had to have our own. There was no way we were gonna hassle around with male P.A. crews...It's very important to have control over your own sound. So, since we bought that P.A. you can go into a situation and you're in control of what you produce, which is very important as feminists, as well as women".

They have also trained other women in these skills.



However, running a feminist alternative P.A. company has not been unproblematic. They have sometimes been taken for granted:

T: "You get very little money for doing P.A. If people use you like a straight P.A. it really pisses me off, because I think that it's such a tremendous amount of work, and, invariably, the bands come away with more per member than the people who are doing the P.A. (Yet) you come before, and you leave after, everybody else...It particularly annoys me with benefits, when they hire these venues which are up 6 flights of stairs and down 27 corridors!"

Also, being the only all-women P.A. company in the country, these women have felt obligated to do more gigs than they otherwise might have wished. They get women ringing them up from all over the country:

F: "There's pressure on us to do the P.A. for women-only events. It would be so good if there were other women doing P.A.s, because you get somebody on the phone and they go, 'Oh, what will we do?' and we say, 'Well, we can't really do it. We've done so many, we can't face it'. It's interesting to see the women's bands, but it's so much hard work and so much driving...Out of all the women-only events where bands are playing, there might have been up to about 5, over the years, that I've been to, where I haven't been working at them!"

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Most feminist bands felt ambivalent about having a 'manager' as such. For instance,

A3: "Traditionally, a manager has been somebody who has a lot more power, really, in the sense of making decisions on behalf of the band without

consulting them necessarily; laying down the law for them".

The tendency has been for feminist bands, committed to a high level of democracy, to appoint an 'administrator' or 'coordinator' instead of a manager. The choice of name is not merely semantic, but implies a different role altogether: .

T: "We used to have an administrator, who was part of the band, and got the same money as everybody else...We always used the word 'administrator' and it was very clear...The administrator was not in a power position, because the decisions had to be made by the band, that is the people who made the music...There's no way an administrator could make a decision over your head. You give them the right to make (specific) decisions. Administrators don't have the power managers give themselves - which is like it's a boss and the musicians are employees. An administrator is like an equal member and never does anything without consultation, like collective meetings. And everybody knows what their job is. Nobody's less or more important than anybody else".

Unfortunately, in practice, these ideals did not always work out as planned. An administrator, although defined as simply an equal member of the band, does tend to be at the nerve centre of communication and that, in itself, leads to inequalities. For instance,

A3: "She definitely had some power, because she had access to information that we didn't necessarily have access to unless we tried to get it. Like the accounts, or that sort of thing...Because, obviously, it's a very powerful position, just by virtue of having knowledge that other people don't have...(And) other people haven't particularly taken any initiative in that way and haven't particularly wanted to be involved in the business aspects. (Thus) I'm not so sure how it works in practice, because my belief is that if you don't have any stated hierarchy, then you're gonna get

one, anyway. And the only way to prevent that happening is by everyone asserting themselves ... 'Cause I think if people stand down then nothing ever gets done. And people didn't assert themselves a lot of the time, with regard to getting information that they wanted. They just complained bitterly that they hadn't got it".

There is also the simple problem of finding someone to perform this administrative role: who is prepared to get involved with the band, do a lot of routine work (probably for little financial reward), forego the power normally accruing to the role and not get the special 'high' which the rest of the band obtain from performing. Feminist bands were well aware of this problem. For instance,

A3: "I feel quite guilty about it, in a way, because I think we have expected her to be a manager in all but name a lot of the time, and she has had to do a lot of the shitwork. I suppose that was her choice. She does have a very special thing about our music, for some reason. I think that's probably motivated her through a lot of it...It's just nice to have a non-playing member, in the sense that...it leaves us free to do the playing. 'Though it must be shitty for her sometimes".

This band was less lucky:

A1: "Everybody we got to be an administrator decided that they really wanted to be a musician, and fucked off!"

For, in women's bands (as in male bands) the people who get involved in non-playing roles are often frustrated musicians, seeking a chance to make music themselves.³

It is important to note that, despite the democratic ideal, and despite having no manager, it is difficult, in practice, to keep power evenly distributed amongst band members:

A1: "T. and I definitely have a lot more say. It's more at the organisational level. Because we were running the band for a long time before the others were in it. They're all relatively new...T. and I tend to organise the gigs. We do all the phoning round, the writing letters. We organise a lot of publicity, photos...We do all those kind of arrangements. I suppose you could say we manage the band, but I wouldn't use such a 'straight' term. I mean, everybody has a say in things".

As the previous quote shows, feminist bands, concerned about being 'packaged', and convinced that many of the standard rock 'service' roles are superfluous, often do without agents as well as managers. For example,

T: "How we get gigs is by hard work. You make lots and lots of phonecalls and write lots and lots of letters. We sometimes run off photocopies, about 200 or 300 photocopies of a letter, and out of that we may get 10 gigs. It's like a vicious circle: getting gigs begets more gigs. We don't need a booking agent. We've got to the stage, now, where we only need to rehearse once a week, if that. So the rest of the time we're perfectly capable of writing letters and making phone-calls. Why pay someone else to do it?"

RECORDING

Mainstream bands have little power over the work process in which they are involved. They do not own the means of (record) production (the studios and

recording equipment), nor the final 'product'. They must pay to get access to the recording process or, more typically, they are loaned money by record companies ('advances').

For any band, male or female, the clear-cut alternative to signing a deal with any sort of record company (major or indie) is to tackle record-making on a D.I.Y. basis. This means financing the recording costs oneself, from studio time to 'pressing'. It means setting up one's own label (in order to bring the record to the public), designing and printing the sleeve. It even means packing the records into the sleeves by hand. Then, once the records are ready, some kind of distribution network is necessary.

This D.I.Y. option is open to all bands - male, mixed, female, feminist and non-feminist, but out of all the bands I interviewed (or came into contact with during my 7 years of gigging), the only all-women bands who were doing this were explicitly feminist ones. One band, in particular, stands out for having developed alternatives to practically every aspect of the music business, and it is this band's experience on which I particularly intend to draw in this chapter. T.'s band saw record companies as being merely money-lending institutions, and they resented the idea that anyone should make money out of them:

T: "You don't need to work with record companies ...What record companies have is money. They're basically lending you money. When people sign a deal they get an advance. That money has to pay for the recording. It has to pay for the pressing. And it has to pay for their salary...We don't believe you need to do that kind of thing...You don't need to borrow money and give away power at the same time; it's not necessary. A lot of mystification goes along with what is involved in making records. And the truth of the matter is that, even people who are involved with very big companies, there are very, very few bands who are earning a lot of money. And there is this myth that propels most people along. Whereas, if they knew what the truth of the matter was, I think half of them would realise it was a waste of bloody time, and get on and earn their own money".

And the band would never sign any kind of contract:

A1: "We're really opposed to the straight music industry, the way it operates, the capitalism, the rip-offs and everything - not to mention the complete lack of understanding of anything about women...(Plus) there's this notion that you can get involved with record companies and somehow get your politics out. I don't think it works. Because I don't think any business that knows what it's doing is going to take on a group that is actually against them and against what they're working for. So I just think it would be an inevitable compromise and would just be watered down and pointless...With big record companies you never have control of what you're doing; they'll always control you".

So the band which A1. and T. belonged to brought out its own records on its own label:

A1: "T. and me started the record label 2 years ago...And the idea wasn't just for our band. It was a feminist label with a specific kind of feminist politics: anti-capitalism and the straight music business, and the charts, and all that kind of stuff...We just said, 'We're gonna have a label' and we did. That's all you need to do. We went along and copyrighted the name, and got somebody to draw a (logo) we liked. And that was it".

It is, I think, important to note that this band included women from upper middle class backgrounds, who had inherited a little money, which they had ploughed into the band at its inception. The D.I.Y. approach might be less possible for working class women. As it was, the band was facing financial problems. Yet they clearly felt that their strategy was worth all the financial sacrifice and effort. Besides, many musicians who had signed to majors never made any money either.

STUDIO ENGINEERING

Bands who have a D.I.Y. approach to recording tend to do their own production and engineering, or at least be in control of these crucial activities. However, as this quote makes clear, control can easily and imperceptibly slide from the band to the producer or engineer, unless the band are vigilant:

T: "We used this male engineer because he was a friend, and he took liberties. I think he felt a little threatened. There was a dreadful farty sound on the bass, so I said, 'I'm not happy with the bass sound at all'. He said, 'That's the sound of the bass'. So I said, 'Can't you E.Q.?' He said, 'I don't believe in E.Q.ing'. I thought, 'Fuck! This isn't your bloody record!' And I really had to insist...It was the sound of his equipment! Plus, it got to the thing where familiarity breeds contempt...I didn't want him to be telling us what we wanted or how our record was going to sound. So I think we want to make sure next time that we have much more (control). Well, we did have control; it just slipped away through familiarity".

DISTRIBUTION AND PROMOTION

T. and A1. objected to the normal way in which the major companies engage in record promotion:

T: "They give away a lot of free records, and what tends to happen is you get some terrible, greasy little bloke, with a case full of records, who they pay, and he goes and hangs over a D.J. and buys him a few drinks...It's just like big business...It's no bloody different! I mean, it's all terribly open to corruption, as well. They choose the records that they're gonna play and they just saturate the airwaves with it, and push people to buy it. For me, that's just promoting consumerism. It has nothing to do with what people would actually like if they had a choice".

Whilst it is true that record companies do not always actively promote all their records, promotion seems to be the main support (other than finance) which the D.I.Y. band misses out on. Often a band does not have the necessary contacts to get radio airplay. D.I.Y. promotion is very hard work. You are an unknown of band, competing to get your record heard against all the inbuilt advantages which the giant record companies have. But T. and A1. were quite prepared to tackle this task:

T: "We went around all the places by ourselves. We got the record reviewed. We've had the record played by the odd alternative thing. Giggling is how people see you; that should be your primary thing. People should buy your record because they hear you, liked you, and wanted to hear you at home as well".

The band also did its own distribution:

T: "We wouldn't sign a deal, but Rough Trade and

W.R.P.M. distribute for us. They just bought some records off us and distribute them. But a lot of the stuff we do ourselves. We take it round to a lot of shops round London".

W.R.P.M. is a feminist independent distributor of women's music. Retail outlets tend to be alternative bookshops rather than record shops. W.R.P.M. is an established and successful feminist alternative venture. The records they distribute do not get into the 'chart shops', and thus cannot become hits, but neither are they expected to be. Sales may be slow but women's music does get to be heard, in this way, around the U.K. The organisation sprang out of the same late '70s feminist culture which spawned so many all-women bands:

T: "I started a thing, with some other women, called W.L.M.P. - Women's Liberation Music Projects - which ended up bringing out a songbook. And we did a workshop. W.R.P.M. came out of that as well. (This was) December '76, 'till sometime in '78, I think. We wanted to put projects on that were to do with music, like workshops. We did a big workshop in the 'Music for Socialism' thing that happened at Battersea Festival. And that was a big breakthrough, because they weren't going to have a women-only workshop, and we had to really fight for that. And we used to put on some bops, and afternoon teas, and talked about music. Again, out of that came the Women's Music newsletter...(and) we did a Women's Music Weekend".

WOMEN'S MUSIC PROJECTS

Lastly, one of the most important things which feminist musicians have done is establish facilities

for girls and young women who wish to learn to play and record. I have shown that gender constraints operate most strongly in the early stages of women's rock careers. In Part 1. I argued that some of the important factors which constrain young women are lack of access to equipment, technophobia, and (not least) boys. Recognising these problems, feminists have struggled to set up various courses, workshops and recording facilities for young women. Some of these facilities are for boys too, but priority is given to women. Other projects are for women only. For example, this particular organisation, which focusses on providing cheap access to rock instruments and classes in how to play them, excludes boys over 12 years:

L: "No-one here has to be embarrassed or on their guard, and there's no way you'd be able to get that if it was a mixed project. The women don't have to be concerned about making fools of themselves, like if they don't know how to use a particular piece of equipment...The women don't have to battle for time. They don't have to battle for attention. They don't have to battle for space, for access to the equipment. They don't have to feel they are in competition with men".

If a women-only environment is important for learning how to play rock, then it is doubly important for learning sound engineering. There is at present only one women-only recording studio in the U.K. It is used by young women from as far away as Huddersfield. Running on a shoestring, and threatened by cuts in public expenditure, this studio offers women



subsidised access to recording facilities. It also runs courses in sound engineering, which are attended by young women who aspire to become sound engineers, and by women musicians who simply want to understand how the technology works so as to gain some measure of control when recording in a commercial studio:

R2: "One of the reasons for setting up was that nearly all studios are run by men. It's a very strongly protected male preserve still. Being musicians ourselves, we were very aware of the need and importance of having women-only environments for learning about music and creating music".

They have concentrated on getting good quality 8-track equipment, rather than expanding to 16 or 24-track:

R2. "A lot of studios get into this thing where bigger equals better; you've got to have the latest gadgets. But the pressure in straight studios means sacrificing quality. There's a lot of prestige attached to that sort of equipment. It's about control. People are mesmerised by the glamour of expensive sound equipment...We don't believe in that. We want to be understandable and accessible, so we keep it as simple as possible".

Great care is taken to avoid mystification and to provide an easy-going atmosphere:

R2: Women who've been in any other studio always comment. The emphasis is on trying to be relaxed. Women are different, generally, in the way they approach things. They have fun with it. They just have a real laugh. Whereas, with men it's dead serious; it's all so self-important...When there are men around technology there is often an element of competitiveness and women very easily feel intimidated and insecure. Women find in a women-only environment that they can generally focus on learning without those competitive things".

R2. and her colleagues strongly believe in the importance of a women-only learning environment for both recording and playing:

R2: "Women tend to be far less confident musically. The first thing men want to do is impress. They want to bash the drums. It doesn't matter if they make a terrible sound. They've got the confidence and they just want to make a racket to prove themselves. In a women-only environment, you don't get that. To have one man in a class doing that, even if there were 30 women, would affect the entire course of events. You are starting with this problem of an imbalance of abilities and confidence. You have to redress that, and you can't do it any other way, really".

Already, a number of women trained at the project have found employment as sound engineers at other studios. Indeed, one woman has set up her own studio. Although women-only recording courses are occasionally held, in London, only this one project seems to be making them available on a regular basis.

At the turn of the 1980s there seemed to be an increase in the number of women playing in rock bands and there was, at that time, a sudden outbreak of media articles on women musicians. It seemed that women were making a breakthrough into this solidly 'male' field. Many of the female musicians I interviewed in 1982 believed that in 6 or 7 years time there would be as many women playing rock as men. In retrospect, this seems extraordinarily optimistic. There probably are more women in rock bands, but (as I have shown in Chapter 2.) the disparity between the

sexes is still marked. Given the continuance of the gender constraints which I have discussed, I do not believe the situation will change until there are women's music projects, of the the kind I have been describing, in every city in the U.K.

FEMINIST ALTERNATIVES: AN ASSESSMENT

In this chapter I have shown that feminist musicians have been creating alternatives to nearly every aspect of the rock music world. They have written songs about topics other than the omnipresent theme of heterosexual romance. They have experimented with new forms of music and performance style. They have explored new ways of working together, based on cooperation and support rather than competitive individualism. They have challenged the normative context of the rock environment, developing new ways of relating to audiences and to each other, trying to create space for personal relationships and for children.

The establishment, during the last decade, of women-only music workshops and courses has been the crucial avenue into playing for many of today's female musicians. Similarly, women-only gigs, from the small local bop to the large concert, have provided the supportive and appreciative context in which women

have learned to perform in public. Women's bands, in themselves, have functioned as an alternative playing context and I, for one, would never have become a rock musician (or songwriter) had it not been for their existence.

However, there are a number of problems which need tackling. Perhaps the most important is the continuing absence of female music technicians. This has various consequences. Firstly, it limits the number of women-only gigs which are possible. Secondly, at mixed gigs, it leaves women's bands exposed to the rampant sexism of traditional male P.A. crews. Thirdly, no matter how competent their musicianship, in making records women are rarely in control of the overall sound. It is for these reasons that I think women's courses in sound engineering are so important.

In terms of recording, feminists have started to set up their own labels, and there has been for some time an alternative distribution system for "women's music". But this development has been nowhere near as vigorous as in the United States, where labels proliferate. D.I.Y. record production is viable so long as bands can get the finance together (usually via benefits, gigs, donations from friends, well-wishers, and charity).⁴ Costs are gradually recouped from record sales, but, as promotion is usually only in the form of gigging, this process tends to be slow.

The avoidance of conventional management and record company deals deprives feminist bands of finance, compounding women's relative lack of funds compared to men. Without the effective promotion and widespread distribution of major record companies, feminist records do not stand a chance of getting into the charts. Whilst getting a hit record and appearing on 'Top of the Pops' is not the avowed aim of feminist bands, by staying outside the mainstream, their audience has been severely curtailed. There has been a marked absence, for instance, of lesbian bands on the national media. In contrast, gay male performers and bands have had chart successes and appeared on television.

Faced with the ingrained sexual stereotyping and categorising of the rock industry, many feminists have felt that too many compromises are involved in signing a record contract. There seems to be an fundamental contradiction between being a feminist band and being a chart band. On the other hand, feminist musicians have shown that it is perfectly possible to establish a satisfying (if poorly remunerated) professional musical career, and a stable 'musician' identity, based primarily on gigging and session work. Moreover, in contrast to the many chart bands who have one or two hits and then vanish overnight, many of these

women have been playing for a considerable time and aim to continue for the foreseeable future:

A1: "I love playing music. It's what I love doing best. I love being in a band...I'm often very, very pleased with what we do. I think we've progressed a lot. I think I've improved as a musician over the years. We've been able to have a group where you can be fulfilled personally, where relations in the band are good, where you enjoy what you play, where you feel you are doing something that you really like doing".

Notes.

1. The widest of such attempts was the punk movement, which Frith (1983) describes as "an unsuccessful musicians' revolt". This was clearly an oppositional subculture of musicians, with a common music, common values and attitudes, and common alternative strategies for success. But this movement could not long survive the force of market mechanisms.

2. I showed in Part 1. how important such music collectives were for women becoming musicians.

3. A common pattern amongst male bands is having a male manager, who invests a certain amount of his money into the venture. My evidence suggests that this pattern is uncommon amongst women's bands, partly because women generally have less money than men, and partly because there are fewer female bands working at the professional level.

4. In particular, the Leonard Cohen Trust has provided money for a number of women's bands to make records.

Chapter 13. CONCLUSION.

In terms of their careers in rock music, women face a series of obstacles which men do not. In particular they have to cope with a range of sexist responses: obstructive technicians, prejudiced promoters, patronising D.J.s, unimaginative marketing by record companies, exploitative media coverage and, most of all, simply not being taken seriously. The status 'woman' seems to obscure that of 'musician'. Furthermore, unlike men, women have to carefully juggle the demands of family and career, personal and public life. As I have shown, women are typically unable to commit themselves to rock careers in the wholehearted way in which men do precisely because of these commitments elsewhere. In another way, though, women seem to be more committed than men: to each other in the band. Paradoxically, it is this emotional commitment to the band as a unit which often militates against their individual rock careers: women are far less likely to use bands as vehicles for their personal climb to the top. Women's bands are potentially more fragile than male bands for the simple reason that it is far more difficult to find

replacement musicians. Yet that very knowledge binds a band together in bonds of loyalty which transforms playing with another band into an act of infidelity. And I think it is this, in particular, which makes women's bands different from male bands.

Yet, despite these things, some women do achieve the heights of commercial success, although often at great personal cost. Relationships are sacrificed and the chance of having and bringing up children is foregone. In many ways, the nearer to the summit of stardom a woman gets the easier it becomes. The fact that very few female musicians make it to the top is simply a reflection of the fact that so very few get a foot on even the bottom rung of the ladder. So the important question becomes: why do so few women set out on the career of rock musician?

Many people argue that women are not biologically fitted to play in rock bands; that they do not have the strength and stamina to survive; that they are hampered by periods and hormones. My research shows such contentions to be false. There are no physical reasons for the lack of women in rock. Women are just as musical as men, and at any age they can acquire the strength and skills required to play any instrument in any style of popular music. Women are just as capable of becoming rock musicians as men are. Rock musicians

are made, not born. The reasons for women's absence are entirely social.

One's first thought might be that women actually have an advantage over men, in that far more girls have private classical music lessons during their childhood. However, my research indicates that such classical tuition has mixed effects. It gives girls an understanding of music and certain skills such as dexterity, and allows them to see themselves as 'musicians'. But, on the other hand, some of these skills are not easily transferred into rock. Furthermore, classical lessons breed a kind of slavish attitude towards written music and set up a serious block to improvisation and creativity. Classical music lessons seem to reinforce femininity, in the sense that they emphasise conformity and obedience, rather than personal creativity, adventurousness and rebellion. Also, young women are guided towards 'feminine' instruments, such as the violin, and away from instruments associated with men, such as drums and brass. Rock music is gradually becoming incorporated into the schools music curriculum, but this will not make much impact unless certain changes are made. Firstly, creativity, spontaneity and musical rule-breaking should be encouraged. Secondly, the gender stereotyping of instruments must be challenged. Thirdly, it is essential that classes are structured

in such a way that girls get (at least) equal access to the equipment as the boys.

Currently, then, music lessons are not an important aid in starting a career in rock. My research shows that a far more important factor is socialization. As girls grow up, their world of possibilities narrows. So-called masculine activities become out of bounds. Girls internalise gender norms and so do not desire to do masculine things. Rock music-making is perceived as masculine in terms of the artefacts, knowledge, and skills involved, and the very values embedded in the activity. This is confirmed by the absence of female rock role models. Thus most young women do not want to become rock musicians, and, even if they did, would not believe that it was possible.

However, socialization experiences vary, and many girls do grow up with wider aspirations than the narrowly feminine. Those young women who, by secondary school, want to play rock music face a series of obstacles, both material and ideological.

Compared to boys, young women lack money, time, space and access to equipment. They suffer from lack of confidence and technophobia. They are pressurised (by commercial teen culture and their peer groups) to get a boyfriend, and this relentless search uses up a lot of their resources. Romance becomes an obsession,

devouring their time, and they are far better prepared for the role of fan than for that of musician.

On top of all this, a girl has to contend with another major obstacle: boys. The would-be band member has to find others to play with. The vast majority of bands are male and many actively exclude women. She will be viewed both as incompetent and as a potential social menace; someone who might split the band. Furthermore, she will be perceived as a threat to the very masculinity of the activity itself. Women are seen as essential to bands, but as fans and 'outsiders', not as musicians themselves. Rock is seen as a quintessentially masculine assertion against the world of domesticity and 'settling down', and women are seen as very much part of that world; as girlfriends and wives who will clip your wings and mortgage your life.

One of the things, therefore, which this thesis has explored is the way in which young women are socialised in preparation for adult roles within the existing gender division of society. Society is divided into 'male' and 'female' spheres. Music reflects this polarisation: rock, is seen as masculine, whereas 'pop' is seen as female. The 'heavier' rock becomes, the more masculine it becomes and the 'lighter' pop is, the more feminine it

appears. I have tried to represent this in the (necessarily simplified) diagram (1) below.

One particular aspect of gender socialization is the way in which women are created as non-musicians. This thesis has examined the social setting within which gender socialization takes place: families, schools, peer groups, the mass media. The effect of this process of socialization is conceptualised as the internalisation of a series of constraints which limit women's opportunities to a restricted set of places within the overall social structure.

I have heard it argued that the lack of women rock musicians is simply women's "fault" and that all they need to do is just get up there and do it. This view rests on a lack of appreciation of the extent women are handicapped by their socialization. Family, schools, peer groups and the mass media restrict young women's choices, constrain their behaviour, limit their horizons, lower their aspirations, curtail their ambitions and generally pass on to them a spectrum of psychological handicaps which limit their achievements at school and for life. They are made 'feminine' within a society which values and rewards masculine traits and demotes and devalues their antithesis.

On top of these disqualifications, women face a series of external constraints: lack of material

resources, domestic obligations, restrictions on leisure, etc.

However, there is also a completely different side to the story. My thesis shows that, regardless of the personal characteristics and skills of the individual concerned, women face active exclusion by males from so-called male areas, such as science and technology. Specifically, women are excluded from music-making situations: in youth clubs, community centres, teenage peer groups, music shops, and (in particular) bands.

Later, for those women who do manage to join bands, this exclusion continues: *in the recording studio, and at gigs*. It is this element of exclusion which makes the careers of women musicians different from those of men. As women performers climb the rungs of the career ladder they gain more power. This, in turn, makes them increasingly less vulnerable to the sexism of male 'gatekeepers'. *This is the reason why women's rock careers become more similar to men's at the professional stage*. For instance, women in successful professional bands do not have to put up with obstructive sound technicians or road crew, because the band is in control; the ancillary staff are employed by the band and are in a dependent position. It is when women are starting out on their music

careers, and relatively powerless, that they have to deal with a barrage of sexual harassment.

Given the forces stacked against any woman becoming a rock musician it is, in a way, remarkable that any do. But socialization is not uniformly consistent and, anyway, it is a dialectical, rather than a mechanistic, process. What is interesting to examine is the way in which women are able to overcome or evade the restraints, constraints and exclusion. This fact of their successful struggle does not in any way diminish the effectiveness of those social forces working to keep women out of rock music. But it does show the women who do make it into rock to be special. It also shows that the sexual status quo is neither inevitable nor unchangeable - in either the particular case of rock music, or in general.

This raises the sociological question: under what particular social circumstances are women able to resist gender socialization and successfully break into a male enclave? How and why have they done it? What alternative strengths do they draw on to oppose gender hegemony? The answers to these questions hold out the possibility of a wider application, rather than simply to rock music. These questions are important, not least because they are rarely asked.

What emerged from my research was the importance of a series of 'spaces' within which women are able to struggle and develop a series of strategies to overcome their socially-produced handicaps. I have produced these in schematic form in diagram (2) below.

Usually, in sociological studies of family socialization, mother is assumed to be the more important parental role. My material suggests that more attention should be directed towards the role of fathers in the socialization of girls. The key factor was not the degree of masculinity or femininity of these men, as some might assume, but the amount of leeway they allowed their daughters from the constraints of femininity. Indeed, most of the fathers were quite traditionally masculine, but they related to their daughters as they would to boys. (Clearly, in some cases, the daughters were being treated as surrogate sons.) In those instances where girls were taught by their fathers things such as how to mend a fuse and how to use D.I.Y. tools, there was a good chance of technophobia being held at bay. The ramifications of this go way beyond the issue of rock music, for such young women often went on to do sciences at school and, later, traditionally masculine jobs. Thus, if girls are allowed to break gender codes from an early age, their ensuing confidence seems to be strong enough to offset the later combined

onslaught of school, mass media and peer group pressure. Many of my interviewees were rebels at school, but that rebellion seems to have been rooted in their early childhood. I would suggest that this phenomenon has been overlooked by sociologists and needs researching.

Another area which has been neglected is the extent to which families today continue to pass on a specific tradition, in this case a musical one. I found that a family background in popular music was associated with young women becoming rock musicians. In such a family the normal restrictions and restraints are lifted, and girls often get strong material and emotional support in their musical careers.

An unusual family background seems to be most important for working class women, as their period of freedom from family obligations is much shorter and they are steered, by the education system and by their own peer groups, towards a particularly narrow set of options. To set out to be a rock musician means breaking out of these cultural tramlines and seeing the future as offering more than an early engagement, marriage and motherhood. Interestingly, those working class young women who do manage to 'escape' tend to get a lot of support from their parents, who treat rock music-making more seriously as a way of making money than middle class parents do. It is also

important to remember that female working class culture (although under-researched) is not monolithic, and to note the existence of alternative subcultures such as the 'renees', which afford a group context in which to engage in masculine activities such as motorbikes and rock music. This is of further importance in that working class girls are less likely to make significant contact with feminism, which has been a largely middle class phenomenon.

Regarding education, my research lends some support to the argument that mixed schools hold girls back in traditionally masculine subjects. In an all-female environment young women have more of a chance to express themselves and gain the teacher's attention, and do not fear ridicule or humiliation from boys. However, even in an all-girls school, the pressure of the commercial culture of femininity, operating via peer groups, is strong. Resistance is, I believe, much affected by family background.

Women's music projects are a very significant development. They are rare, but where they do exist, they provide a safe atmosphere in which young women can learn to play traditionally 'male' instruments. Such projects offset material constraints by providing (free or cheap) access to equipment, space in which to be noisy, and music tuition. The tutors also act as role models, showing that it is perfectly possible for

women to play rock. In particular, these projects confront technophobia and give women both skills and confidence in dealing with equipment. Boys typically learn to play rock music in all-male peer groups. Girls are kept firmly outside of these male friendship groups and, in the absence of equivalent female music-making peer groups, lack any learning context. That is why women's music projects are so important.

Much has been written about how boys resist the pressures of mainstream society by the formation of youth subcultures. Little attention has been directed to girls and their struggles. In particular, the importance of lesbian subcultures has not been explored. Feminist and lesbian subcultures provide an alternative socialization experience which enables young women to resist the culture of romance by downgrading the importance of heterosexual relationships. They encourage women to centre their lives on themselves, rather than depending on men. The women's movement has been a continuous wellspring for the development of women musicians and, especially, women's bands over the last two decades. In turn, all-women bands give young women a chance to play, a chance they might otherwise never have.

Subcultural theorists have neglected bohemianism. My research suggests that allegiance to some sort of bohemian-artistic-rebel stance is more important as

an expression of resistance for young women than any of the youth subcultures usually discussed. Another neglected area is drama. This may be more important for the development of some sort of identity as a "creative" and "artistic" person than art in the more narrow sense.

The biggest obstacle which women face is simply that rock is seen as 'male'. There are few women role models; the overwhelming majority of rock instrumentalists are male. For a man, playing rock music enhances his masculine credentials. Whereas, a woman has to go against the norms of femininity in order to play a rock instrument: getting dirty, breaking her fingernails, and so on. For femininity involves a socially manufactured physical, mechanical, and technical helplessness. Similarly, for a man, expressing sexuality on stage is relatively straightforward, whereas for a woman it is tricky. How to hold a guitar, what to wear, how to stand - all these questions are problematic for women. Rock music is associated, in the public mind, with rebellion. To become a rock musician requires seeing yourself as a bit unusual: an 'artist', a bohemian, a rebel against 9-to-5 workaday normality. It is a deviant occupation. I would argue that, regardless of whatever else the rebellion is against, for women the rebellion is all that it is for men, plus an extra dimension:

resistance to gender norms. If male rock musicians are rebellious, then women are doubly rebellious, for femininity instils greater conformity. Therefore, any factor which acts to nourish and sustain the revolt against femininity will enhance the likelihood of women becoming rock musicians.

FINAL NOTE

I hope the day will come when there are as many women playing in rock bands as men. I look forward to this not merely because I want to see an end to sexist constraints on women, but also because of the effects this would have on rock as a discourse. In playing styles, men would no longer be the yardstick against which women are measured. If as many women played guitar as men, particularly lead guitar, then the instrument would no longer be seen as a phallic symbol. And playing rock would no longer denote masculinity if half the people playing it were women. Rock could still be about rebellion, but not necessarily a male one. Men might get involved in rock for other, new, reasons. Above all, the music would be sure to change - in unforeseeable ways.

Diagram 1.

	MASCULINE	FEMININE
general sexual division of labour	work producer	home consumer
personality traits produced via socialization	active aggressive leader scientific technical creative gifted	passive pacific follower non-scientific non-technical supportive nurturing
specific division of labour within the music world	musician music-maker instrumentalist	non-musician music-consumer fan vocalist
type of music	rock heavy hard anti-commercial rebellion	pop light soft commercial acquiescence
focal concern	sex	romance

Diagram 2.

CONSTRAINTS

childhood femininity
(via family)

technophobia
(via school)

teenage femininity
(via mass media &
female peer groups)

material constraints
(equipment space,
etc.)

ideological constraints
(dual standard of
morality, etc.)

exclusion by
male music-making
peer groups &
by male bands

exclusion by promoters

hostile male audiences

sexploitative
managers

sexist P.A. crew

female compartments
in the record
industry (esp.
light pop/vocals)

ESCAPES

tomboy
unusual family

unusual school
unusual family

bohemian/artist
rebel identity

feminist collectives
political collectives
women's music projects
unusual boyfriends &
husbands

feminism
lesbianism

women's music projects
women's bands

D.I.Y. feminist venues

women-only gigs

'administrators' &
collective administration

D.I.Y. feminist P.A.
Feminist courses in P.A.

punk, heavy rock, &
feminist alternatives
D.I.Y. record production,
distribution & promotion

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A SELECT DISCOGRAPHY OF WOMEN'S BANDS RELEVANT TO THIS THESIS.

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- the BODYSNATCHERS. Let's Do Rock Steady. 1980 (Two-Tone CHS TT9)
Easy Life. 1980 (Two-Tone CHS TT12)
- GIRLSCHOOL. Demolition. 1980 (Bronze. BRON 525)
Hit And Run. 1981 (Bronze. BRON 534)
Screaming Blue Murder. 1982 (Bronze BRON 541)
Play Dirty. 1983 (Bronze. BRON 548)
- the GUEST STARS. Guest Stars. 1984 (*Guest Stars GF 10*)
Out At Night. 1985 (Guest Stars GF 11)
Live In Berlin. 1987 (Eigelstein EF 2023)
- the GYMSLIPS. Rocking With The Renees. 1983 (Abstract. ABT 006)
- HI JINX. Steppin' Over And Out. 1984 (Hi Jinx) Cassette.
- JAM TODAY. Stereotyping. 1981 (Stroppy Cow SC JT1)
- The MISTAKES. Live At The Caribbean. 1982 (Mistakes Music MS1)
- OVA. Ova. 1979 (Stroppy Cow FC 22)
Out Of Bounds. 1982 (Stroppy Cow FC 66)
Possibilities. 1984 (Stroppy Cow F444)

Poison Girls with VIE SUBVERSA.
(N.B. Not a women's band, but led by a woman.)
Hex. 1979 (Xntrix)
Where's The Pleasure. 1982 (Xntrix XN2006/B)
7 Year Scratch. 1983 (Xntrix RM101)

The RAINCOATS. The Raincoats. 1979 (Rough Trade)
Odyshape. 1981 (Rough Trade)
Moving. 1983 (Rough Trade).

the SLITS. Cut. 1979 (Island)
The Peel Sessions Recorded 1977. Released
1987. (Strange Fruit)

Various. Making Waves. 1981 (Girlfriend) featuring,
the GYMSLIPS the (MISSION) BELLES
the ANDROIDS OF MU AMY AND THE ANGELS
the GUEST STARS MINISTRY OF MARRIAGE
REAL INSECTS THE NANCY BOYS
ROCK GODDESS SISTERHOOD OF SPIT

Various. Scaling Triangles. 1971 (Treble Chants ASN 1)
featuring, SUB VERSE SOLE SISTER
the PETTICOATS.

Note: A wide range of music by women performers is
available from W.R.P.M. (Women's Revolutions Per
Minute), Caroline Hutton, 62 Woodstock Road,
Birmingham, B13 9BN. (021-449-7041)

Appendix 1.

WOMEN'S BANDS IN EXISTENCE IN 1982

Androids	Modettes
Anna Rexic	Nancy Boys
Belladonna	Noisy Neighbours
Bellestars	Nouvelles Cyniques
Berlin Follies	Outskirts
Bleeding Wimmin	Ova
Bodyfunctions	Panthers
Boys	Pink Spots
Bright Girls	P.M.T.
Cast Iron Fairies	Raincoats
Contraband	R.A.S. Angels
Contradictions	Rash
Dollymixtures	Real Insects
Electronic	Red Roll-On
F.I.G.	Rock Goddess
Girlschool	Scissor Sisters
Guest Stars	Sisterhood of Spit
Harpies	Sole Sister
Jam Today	Southern Wind
Killer Koala	Straits
Limehouse	Streetwalkers
Marine Girls	Strumpet
Ministry of Marriage	Tango Twins
(Mission) Belles	Tour de Force
Mistakes	York Big Band
	York Street Band

N.B. The Androids, the Streetwalkers, and the Raincoats had one male band member.

Appendix 2.

LIST OF SOURCES USED FOR MEDIA SURVEY

RADIO ONE PROGRAMMES:

Andy Kershaw. Thursday 31/3/88. 10.00-12.00pm.

Singled Out. Good Friday. 1/4/88. 5.45-7.00pm.

Radio One Chart 40 Easter Sunday. 3/4/88.
4.00-5.00pm.

Steve Wright. Easter Monday. 4/4/88. 2.00-4.30pm.

John Peel. 4/4/88. 10.00-12.00pm.

Chartbusters. Tuesday 5/4/88. 4.00-5.00pm.

Simon Mayo. Wednesday. 6/4/88. 7.30-10.00pm.

Simon Bates. Friday 8/4/88. 9.30-12.30pm.

Gary Davies. Friday 8/4/88. 12.45-3.00pm.

TELEVISION PROGRAMMES:

Top of the Pops BBC.1. Thursday. 31/3/88. 7.00-7.30pm.

The Chart Show Channel 4. 1/4/88. 6.00-7.00pm.

Roxy - The Network Chart Show Central. 1/4/88.
2.50-4.20am.

America's Top Ten Central. 1/4/88. 3.20-3.50am.

Europe's Top Ten Central. 1/4/88. 3.50-4.20am.

Meltdown Central. 1/4/88. 4.20-5.00am.

The Tube Channel 4. Easter Sunday. 3/4/88.
12.00.noon to 1.30pm.

Daytime Live BBC.1. Tuesday. 5/4/88.
12.00.noon to 1.00pm.

Roxy - The Chart Network Show Central. 5/4/88.
12.05.-12.35am.

Daytime Live BBC.1. Thursday.7/4/88.
12.00.noon to 1.00pm.

THE MUSIC PRESS and PERIODICALS WITH MUSIC COVERAGE.

Melody Maker 2/4/88.

Sounds 2/4/88.

New Musical Express 2/4/88.

Record Mirror 2/4/88.

Q Magazines April 1988.

The Face April 1988.

Sky April 1988.

i-D April 1988.

Guitarist April 1988.

Guitar World April 1988.

International Musician and Recording World Late March
1988.

Music Technology April 1988.

Home and Studio Recording. (The Magazine for the
Recording Musician.) April 1988.

Rhythm. (Brothers in Arms.) April 1988.

Underground April 1988.

International Country Music News April 1988.

Blues and Soul and Black Music and Jazz Review. March
29th.-April 11th. 1988.

Echoes April 1988.

Solid Rock Late 1987-early 1988.

Local Support (Oxford's Live Music Paper.)
26th. March.1988.

Number One April 1988.

Smash Hits 23rd.March - 5th. April. 1988.

Number One Summer Special 1988.

Blue Jeans Spring Special 1988.

Mizz Summer Special 1988.

My Guy Special Summer 1988.

The Smash Hits Collection 1987: A to Z of Pop.

ENCYCLOPAEDIAS:

25 Years of Rock - John Tobler and Pete Frame. 1980.

Rolling Stone Rock Almanac - by the editors of Rolling Stone. 1984. Macmillan.

Appendix 3.

TOP 40 U.K. ALBUMS. March 27 - April 2, 1988.

1. NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL MUSIC 11. Various.
EMI/Virgin/Polygram.
2. THE BEST OF OMD. OMD. Virgin.
3. POPPED IN SOULED OUT. Wet Wet Wet.
Precious Organisation.
4. VIVA HATE. Morrissey. HMV.5.
5. NAKED. Talking Heads. EMI.
6. INTRODUCING THE HARD LINE ACCORDING TO
TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY. Terence Trent D'Arby. CBS.
7. THE STORY OF THE CLASH VOLUME 1. the Clash. CBS.
8. LIVE IN EUROPE. Tina Turner. Capitol.
9. HEARSAY. Alexander O'Neal. Tabu.
10. TURN BACK THE CLOCK. Johnny Hates Jazz. Virgin.
11. WHENEVER YOU NEED SOMEBODY. Rick Astley. RCA.
12. TEAR DOWN THESE WALLS. Billy Ocean. Jive.
13. HORIZONS/INNOVATIVE INSTRUMENTALS. Various. K-Tel.
14. WHITNEY. Whitney Houston. Arista.
15. WHO'S BETTER, WHO'S BEST. the Who Polydor.
16. THE CHART SHOW - ROCK THE NATION. Various. Dover.
17. UNFORGETTABLE. Various. EMI.
18. FROM LANGLEY PARK TO MEMPHIS. Prefab Sprout.
Kitchenware.
19. HEAVEN ON EARTH. Belinda Carlisle. Virgin.
20. TANGO IN THE NIGHT. Fleetwood Mac. Warner
Brothers.

21. TIFFANY. Tiffany. MCA.
22. GIVE ME THE REASON. Luther Vandross. Epic.
23. DIRTY DANCING. Original Soundtrack. RCA.
24. BRIDGE OF SPIES. T'Pau. Siren.
25. THE GREATEST LOVE. Various. Telstar.
26. CHALKMARK IN A RAINSTORM. Joni Mitchell.
Geffen WX141.
27. KICK. INXS. Mercury.
28. BAD. Michael Jackson. Epic.
29. ACTUALLY. Pet Shop Boys. Parlophone.
30. CHRISTIANS. THE Christians. Island.
31. NOTHING LIKE THE SUN. Sting. A&M.
32. HIP HOP AND RAPPING IN THE HOUSE. Various.
Stylus SMR 852.
33. THE JOSHUA TREE. U2. Island.
34. CHILDREN. the Mission. Mercury.
35. CIRCUS. Erasure. Mute.
36. TELL IT TO MY HEART. Taylor Dayne. Arista.
37. SO FAR, SO GOOD, SO WHAT. Megadeth. Capitol.
38. WILL DOWNING. Will Downing. Fourth & Broadway.
39. IN FULL EFFECT. Mantronix. 10 Records. D1X74.
40. IDLEWILD. Everything But The Girl. blanco y negro.

Appendix 4.

RADIO 1. CHART 40. Singles Chart
Easter Sunday. 3/4/88. 4.00-5.00pm.

1. HEART. Pet Shop Boys. Parlophone R6177.
2. DROP THE BOY. Bros. CBS.
3. DON'T TURN AROUND. Aswad. Mango.
4. COULD'VE BEEN. Tiffany. MCA
5. CAN I PLAY WITH MADNESS. Iron Maiden. EMI.
6. CROSS MY BROKEN HEART. Sinitta. Fanfare.
7. LOVE CHANGES (EVERYTHING). Climie Fisher. EMI.
8. STAY ON THESE ROADS. A-ha. Warner Brothers.
9. I'M NOT SCARED. Eighth Wonder. CBS.
10. I SHOULD BE SO LUCKY. Kylie Minogue. PWL.
11. ONLY IN MY DREAMS. Debbie Gibson. Atlantic.
12. TEMPTATION. Wet Wet Wet. Precious Organisation.
13. EVERYWHERE. Fleetwood Mac. Warner Brothers.
14. THESE DREAMS. Heart. Capitol.
15. PROVE YOUR LOVE. Taylor Dayne. Arista.
16. DREAMING. Glen Goldsmith. RCA.
17. WHERE DO BROKEN HEARTS GO. Whitney Houston. Arista.
18. BASS (HOW LOW CAN YOU GO). Simon Harris. ffrr.
19. AIN'T COMPLAINING. Status Quo. Vertigo.
20. WHO'S LEAVING WHO. Hazell Dean. EMI. EM45.
21. JUST A MIRAGE. Jellybean. Chrysalis.

22. THAT'S THE WAY I WANNA ROCK'N'ROLL. AC/DC.
Atlantic A9098.
23. GIRLFRIEND. Pebbles. MCA.
24. PINK CADILLAC. Natalie Cole. Manhattan.
25. SEX TALK (LIVE). T'PAU. Siren SRN80.
26. I GET WEAK. Belinda Carlisle. Virgin.
27. CRASH. The Primitives. RCA.
28. ARMADEDDON IT (THE ATOMIC MIX). Def Leppard.
Bludgeon Riffola.
29. PIANO IN THE DARK. Brenda Russell. A&M.
30. RECKLESS. Afrika Bambaataa featuring UB40. EMI.
31. I NEED A MAN. Eurythmics. RCA.
32. SIDEWALKING. the Jesus and Mary Chain.
blanco y negro.
33. SHIP OF FOOLS. Erasure. Mute.
34. I WANT HER. Keith Sweat. Vintainment.
35. JOE LE TAXI. Vanessa Paradis. Polydor.
36. I WANT YOU BACK. Bananarama. London.
37. TOGETHER FOR EVER. Rick Astley. RCA.
38. GET OUTTA MY DREAMS, GET INTO MY CAR. Billy Ocean.
Jive.
39. LOVE IS CONTAGIOUS. Taja Savelle. Paisley Park.
40. GET LUCKY. Jermaine Stewart. Siren SRN82.

Appendix 5.

INDEX OF RESPONDENTS

NAME	AGE	INSTRUMENT	MUSIC	LOCATION
A1	29	bass	jazz/latin/rock	London
A2	28	keyboards	rock	Yorkshire
A3	27	keyboards	rough pop	Midlands
A4	20	percussion	reggae	Midlands
A5	19	vocals/sax	post-punk	Midlands
B1	30	sax	various	Midlands
B2	25	bass	new wave	London
B3	29	vocals/guitar	new wave	London
B4	20s	vocals	jazz/latin/rock	London
B5	39	guitar	pop/standards	London
C	27	keyboards	post-punk	Midlands
D1	23	P.A.	pop	South
D2	20s	guitar	various	London
E1	27	bass	heavy metal	London
E2	15	participant at	young women's music	workshop Midlands
F	20s	P.A.	jazz/latin/rock	London
G	31	P.A.	various	London
H1	26	keyboards	pop	London
H2	33	drums	pop	Midlands
H3	22	drums	pop	Midlands
H4	37	guitar	rock	Yorkshire
J1	31	drums	commercial pop	London
J2	28	vocals	various	Midlands

J3	34	keyboards	pop	Yorkshire
J4	26	guitar/vocals	pop	Yorkshire
J5	27	guitar	pop	South
J6	20s	drums	jazz/latin/rock	London
J7	30	keyboards	pop	South
J8	30s	manager	various	London
K1	21	drums	rock	London
K2	20s	guitar/vocals/ keyboards	new wave	London
K3	28	guitar	heavy metal	London
L		administrator:	women's music project:	London
M	42	bass	pop/standards	London
N	15	participant at	young women's music workshop	Midlands
R1	30s	various	jazz/rock	Yorkshire
R2	30s	music tutor at	women's recording studio and music resource centre.	London
S1	28	guitar	commercial pop	London
S2	26	drums	pop	Yorkshire
S3	29	bass	pop	Yorkshire
S4	22	bass	rock	London
S5	30	vocals & percussion	pop	South
T	28	guitar	jazz/latin/rock	London
V1	47	guitar/vocals	punk/post-punk	London
V2	22	keyboards	pop	Midlands
V3	-	violin	new wave	London
V4	20s	drums	heavy rock	London

Note: Instead of the full schedule, shorter interviews, on specific issues, were carried out with A5; B4; D2; E2; J6; L; N; R2; V3 and V4.

Appendix 6.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.

SECTION 1

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What is the name of the band you play in?
4. What instrument do you play?
5. Do you play any other instruments in the band?
If 'yes', prompt:
 - (a) What other instruments do you play?
 - (b) On how many numbers of your current set do you play them?
6. Do you play any other instruments, or sing, outside the context of the band?
If 'yes', prompt:
 - (a) What instruments?
 - (b) In what context?
7. Do you sing lead vocals in the band?
If 'yes', prompt: On how many numbers in your current set?
8. Do you sing backing vocals?
If 'yes': On how many numbers?

SECTION 2

Introduction: I now want to ask you about your band, its organisation, type of music played, playing styles and so on.

1. When did the band form? Prompt: Which year/month?
2. How did you all get together?
Prompt: Via friends? Via an advert? By accident?
3. How long did it take to get the band set up?
4. (If relevant) Why did you set up an all-women band?
5. What is the instrumental line-up?

6. How many gigs has the band performed? Prompt:20/100
7. Have you done any benefits?
 If 'yes': (a) What proportion of your gigs are benefits?
 (b) Who have they been for?
 If 'no': (a) Why is that?
 (b) Have you ever been asked to?
 (c) Would you do benefits if asked?
8. Have you done any gigs for R.A.S. (Rock Against Sexism)?
9. Have you done any women's movement gigs?
 If 'yes': (a) How many. (b) Who for?
10. Have you done any support gigs?
 If 'yes': (a) Who for?
 (b) How did you get on with those bands?
11. How long does your current set last?
12. How many numbers does the band perform in the current set?
13. Do you use any (a) lighting effects? (b) slides?
 (c) films? (d) Other non-musical effects?
 If 'yes', (i) Who devises them?
 (ii) Who operates them?
14. Do you cover your operating costs via gig money?
 If 'yes', what do you do with any surplus money?
 Prompts: Divide it up between band members?
 Buy new equipment for the band?
15. What is the most money you have ever got for a gig?
16. What is the least money you have ever got?
17. How do you feel about getting nothing?
18. Is there any difference in what you get or lose between commercial and benefit gigs?
19. What equipment do you, personally, use? (Make? Model?)
20. How much did it cost?
21. How did you purchase it? Prompts: Cash? H.P.?
 Loan from a bank? Loan from a friend? Gift?

22. Do the other band members each individually own their own equipment?
23. Is there any equipment which was a group purchase?
24. Does the band have any philosophy or policy about equipment purchase?
25. Do you think that women have a similar or different attitude to men regarding equipment?
26. Do you have a manager?
 If 'yes':
 (a) Who is that?
 (b) How did you meet up?
 (c) Why do you have a manager?
 (d) How satisfactory has the relationship been, you think?
 (e) Do band members do any organisation work, as well?
- If 'no':
 (a) Who does the organisational work?
 (b) What is involved?
 (c) If the work is shared, which band members do the most?
 (d) Why don't you have a manager?
 Prompt: Is there are policy involved?
27. Do you have a booking agent or agency?
 If 'yes':
 (a) Who is that?
 (b) How did you meet up?
 (c) Why do you use an agent?
 (d) Do band members ever get gigs?
 (e) How satisfactory has your relationship been with this agent, would you say?
 If 'no: Why don't you have one?
28. Do you get gigs in any other ways than through an agent? If 'yes': how?
29. How many gigs have you done in the last month?
30. Could you tell me about them?
 Prompts: Where were they? Who promoted them?
 How did you get them?
31. Taking your last gig, could you give me more details?
 (a) When was it?
 (b) Where was it?
 (c) How did it come about? How did you get it?
 (d) How much were you paid?

- (e) What were your costs?
 - (f) Who supplied the P.A.?
 - (g) Which P.A. company was it?
 - (h) Who mixed for you?
 - (i) Who was the promoter?
32. Do you have a publicity agent?
If 'yes':
- (a) Who is that?
 - (b) How did you meet up?
Prompts: By recommendation? By accident?
 - (c) Why do you use one?
 - (d) How satisfied are you with her/his work?
 - (e) Does s/he publicise all your gigs?
If 'no': How are you gigs publicised then?
33. What do you usually do about P.A.? Who do you use?
34. Do you always use the same P.A. company?
35. How did you come to use them in the first place?
36. Who mixes the sound?
37. Is that a friend?
38. How did you meet her/him?
39. Does s/he have any special relationship to the band? Prompts: friend? husband? partner?
40. How often do you have band practices?
- (a) Less than once a week?
 - (b) Once a week?
 - (c) More than twice a week?
 - (d) Every day?
41. How long do your practices last?
42. Where do you hold them?
43. Is that satisfactory as a place?
44. Have you experienced any problems in finding places for the band to practice?
45. How often do you practice by yourself?
- (a) Less than once a week?
 - (b) Once a week?
 - (c) Twice a week?
 - (d) More than twice a week?
 - (e) Every day?

46. How long do band practices typically last?
47. Could you describe what happens at band practices?
48. Do you, as a band, write your own numbers?
 If 'yes':
 (a) How many of the current set?
 If 'no':
 (a) Why not?
 (b) Do you intend to?
49. What, if any, cover versions does the band perform?
50. How have they been changed by your doing them?
 Prompts:
 (a) Has the music changed much? (eg. do you keep the same solos in?)
 Have you changed the arrangements?
 (b) Have you altered the lyrics?
 How? Can you give me an example?
 Have you rendered the meaning anew by not altering the lyrics?
51. Have you personally written any of the numbers which the band performs?
 If 'no':
 (a) Have you tried to?
 (b) Have you ever wanted to?
 (c) Do you intend to?
 If 'yes':
 (a) Which ones have you written in the current set?
 (b) When you say "written", what does this mean?
 Did you write: (i) the lyrics?
 (ii) the melodic vocal line
 (iii) the chord sequences?
 (iv) the bass line
 (v) the drum pattern?
 If 'no' to any of (i) - (v) above:
 Who wrote it then?
 (N.B. If it varies a lot, just take the first and last numbers in the set.)
52. Has your personal material been changed by the band? If 'yes': How do you feel about that?
53. How do you feel about the material written by other people in the band?

54. Are there any conflicts about songwriting?
If 'yes': How are they dealt with? Are they resolved?
55. Do you think it is important for women's bands to write their own material? If 'yes': Why?
56. Do you ever write songs that the band does not perform, which you would have liked them to?
If 'yes' (a) Were they rejected? (If 'yes', why do you think that was?)
57. Do you write numbers for other bands/people to perform? If yes: Who for?
58. Do any of your numbers evolve out of jamming?
59. Do you use a tape recorder at practices?
60. Do you ever write down the music (on staves)?
61. What is your instrumental line-up?
62. Who fronts the band?
63. How would you describe the kind of music which the band plays?
64. How do you feel about the kind of music the band plays?
65. Is arranging done collectively by the band?
If 'no': Who does it then?
If 'yes': Does any one or more member contribute more to arranging? If 'yes': Who is that?
66. Does arranging lead to many disagreements or friction within the band?
If 'yes': Would you tell me about that?
How are such disagreements resolved?
67. In any group of people there tends to be conflicts or friction from time to time. In what situations does this arise in your band? Over what issues?
68. Does the band tend to fall into camps? If 'yes': Does it always fall into the same camps, or does it vary according to the issue? (Could you give some illustrations?)
How are such conflicts resolved?
69. Do you ever get together just to talk?

70. In general, in the band, does any one member, or couple of members, have more power?
 If 'yes': How is this power expressed?
 In what sort of situations?
 Over what sort of issues?
 On what is this power based?
71. Has the band made any records or been into a recording studio? If 'no': Would you like to?
 If 'yes': Would you tell me about that?
 (a) Which company did you work with?
 (b) How did you get involved with the company?
 How did you come to be recording?
 (c) What was the nature of the contract?
 Long-term? Short-term? How long exactly?
 (d) When did you sign the contract?
 (e) When did you go into the studio?
 (f) How long were you recording for?
 (g) Was any record released? If 'yes':
 (i) What was the name of the record?
 (ii) Was it a single? album?
 (iii) What was its release date?
 (iv) Were you satisfied with it?
 (v) Were the others satisfied with it?
 (vi) How many were sold?
 (vii) Who produced the record?
 (viii) Who decided who should produce?
 (ix) What about the recording process itself;
 were you satisfied with that?
 How did you feel about it?
 (x) What studio did you use?
72. What has your relationship been like with your record company? Prompts: Any friction or disputes?
73. Do you think the record company has treated you any differently because you are female?
 If 'yes': How?
74. Would you sign up with any record company?
 If 'no': Who would you not sign to? Why?
 If 'yes': Would you stipulate any conditions?
75. Speaking personally, what is your attitude to record companies?
76. Is that the attitude of the rest of the band, or not?
77. Do you have a publisher? If 'no': Why not?
 If 'yes': (a) Who is that?
 (b) How did your publishing deal come about?
 (c) Why did you choose that particular company?
 (d) Has the relationship been satisfactory?

78. Do you have a distribution deal?
If 'yes': Who with?
If 'no': How are your records distributed?
79. How does the band travel to gigs?
80. Do you drive for the band?
81. Do any other band members drive for the band?
82. Who does the roadying?
83. Do you get any help with the roadying?
If 'yes': Who helps?
If 'no': Is it shared out equally between band members? If 'no' Has this caused any friction?
84. Have you made any videos? If 'yes': What was the video for? Who directed/produced it?
What was the experience like?

SECTION 3.

I am now going to ask you some questions about your family and childhood.

1. How old were you when you first started playing?
(If more than one instrument is played ask about each.)
2. What made you take up the instrument in the first place?
3. How did you acquire your first instrument?
Prompts: where did you get it from? - a shop? - a friend? Did your parents buy it for you? Was it new? - second hand?
How did you pay for it? - cash? - H.P.? - a loan?
4. Was anyone in your family musical?
5. Did anyone in your family play an instrument?
If 'yes': Who? What instrument(s)? For how long?
Did they perform in public?
6. Did anyone in your family enjoy singing?
7. Did you have a piano in the house?
8. Did you have any other instruments in the house?

9. Were you encouraged by your family to (a) sing
(b) play an instrument?
10. (If it has not yet become apparent)
What was your father's job?
11. Did your mother work? What did she do?
12. When was the very first time you laid hands on the
(instrument)? How old were you? Can you remember
much about it?
13. Can you remember the first occasion when you
thought, 'That's it, I want to play/sing'?
(Prompts: Would you tell me about it?
How old were you?)
14. Can you remember the first occasion when you
thought, 'What I want to do is be in a band'?
(Prompts: Would you tell me what you remember
about that? How old were you? How did you get the
idea? Did you take any steps towards your goal at
that time?)
15. Did you go to a mixed or all-girls' school?
16. What were you like when you were 9 or 10?
17. What did you want to be when you grew up?
18. Did you change with puberty?
(Prompt: How significant was it for you when you
first started having periods? Did you have to
behave any differently?)
19. Did you buy pop magazines?
20. Did you ever put pin-ups pictures on your wall?
21. Were you a fan?
22. Did you ever want to be a rock star?
23. Were you an extrovert at school?
24. Did you see yourself as an entertainer? (Prompt:
Did you crack jokes and loon about with your
friends?)
25. Did you do much drama? (Prompt: Tell me about it)

26. Did you sing in the playground? Alone? With friends? If 'yes': Did this carry on throughout your adolescence, or did you change? (If so, when and how?)
27. Were you ever a tomboy? If 'yes': Between what ages?
28. Where did you live when you were a child?
29. How did you learn the very first steps in playing your instrument?
 Prompts: (a) Did someone show you?
 If 'yes': (i) Who?
 (ii) What was their relationship to you?
 (b) From a book?
 (c) From a record?
 (d) Some other way? (Please specify)
30. Did you ever have paid lessons?
 If 'yes': (a) From whom?
 (b) For how long?
 (c) How did you get to know the teacher?
31. Did anyone else teach you to play/sing for free?
 If 'yes': (a) Who?
 (b) What was their relationship to you?
32. Were you living with your parents when you first started to play? If 'yes':
 (a) What was their attitude to your learning the (instrument)? (Prompts; Were they hostile? Neutral? Supportive?)
 (b) Did they think it was a strange thing for a girl to be doing?
 (c) What kind of house did you live in?
 (d) Did your parents give you space to practice in? (Prompt: Did you have a room of your own?)
 (e) Could you make lots of noise? Were there any restrictions placed on your playing, because of noise or any other reason?
33. Did your parents discuss your playing (or singing) with you?
34. Did your family play much music at home in the form of records, etc.? If 'yes': What kind of music did they play the most?
35. Did you parents ever buy you records?
36. At what age did you first get into rock/pop music?

37. Did you have your own:
 (a) Radio?
 (b) record player?
 (c) Cassette player?
 If 'no': Did you have access to any of these at home?
38. What did your parents think about pop/rock music?
39. Did you have any brothers or sisters living at home? If 'yes': Did they play any instruments?
 If 'yes': (a) What ages were they?
 (b) What instrument(s)?
 (c) For how long were they playing?
 (d) What was your parents' attitude to them? (Prompts: Supportive? Discouraging? Neutral?)
 (e) Did your brother/sister have a good record collection?
 If it was a brother:
 (f) Were your parents' attitudes any different towards him playing compared with you?
40. How much housework did you have to do at home?
41. Did this affect the amount you played?
42. What was the first record you ever bought?
43. How old were you?
44. What was your musical taste when you first started buying records?
45. What was your favourite band?
46. How did you learn about this band?
 (Prompts: From the radio? T.V? Friends? Other?)
47. Did your parents mind you watching pop music programmes or listening to pop/rock on the radio?
48. Did you go to folk clubs?
49. Did you study music at school?
 If 'yes': (a) Until what age?
 (b) Was it an examination course?
 If 'yes': (i) What qualification?
 (ii) Did you pass?
 (c) Did you learn musical theory?
 If 'no': Do you ever think that you missed out?

50. Can you read music? If 'yes': How did you learn?
51. When you were at school did you have any friends who were musicians?
If 'yes': (a) Were they school or out of school friends?
(b) Was that girls or boys?
(c) What influence do you think they had on you?
52. Did you play any particular instrument at school?
If 'yes': (a) Which one?
(b) Between what ages?
53. Whilst at school, did you ever play in a band or group (eg. a recorder group, school orchestra).
54. Did boys learn to play the same or different instruments to the girls at your school?
55. Were you in the school choir?
If 'yes': Between what ages?
56. Did you attend church as a child? If 'yes':
(a) What sort of church?
(b) Between what ages?
57. Were you ever in a church choir?
58. At what age did you leave school?
59. What did you do then?
60. (If not already clear) Did you go on to higher education? If 'yes': (a) Which institution?
(b) Were you involved in music there, in any way?
61. Are you in regular paid employment?
If 'yes': What do you do?
If 'no': Are you on the dole? Supported by someone?
62. How old were you when you first went to a gig?
63. Which band did you see?
64. Have you ever been out with any musicians?
If 'yes': (a) Did s/he affect your attitude to music?
(b) Did s/he encourage or discourage you in your playing? (Get some details)
(c) Did you go to see bands with him/her?

- (d) Did you accompany him/her to his/her own gigs? If 'yes': What was that experience like for you?
65. Did you ever want to go out with rock stars?
66. What musical preferences do you have these days?
67. Which are your favourite bands?
68. Which bands or individuals would you say have influenced you the most in terms of your musical style?
69. Do you personally try to sound like any particular person? If 'yes': Who?
70. If you could be in any band (other than your own now) which would it be?
71. If you could play/sing like anyone else who would that be?
72. Do you go to gigs? If 'yes': (a) How often?
(b) Which bands have you seen in the last month?
73. Do you go to discos? If 'yes' (a) How often?
74. Do you read the music press?
If 'yes': Which publications?
75. Do you listen to the Charts?
76. What has been the attitude of your parents towards your playing in a band?
77. Have your parents seen you perform?
If 'yes': What did they think about it?
If 'no': Why not?
78. Have they heard your tapes/records?
If 'yes': What do they think of your music?
79. What are your parents' attitudes towards you playing in a band today?
80. Has anyone ever tried to discourage you from playing or being in a band? If 'yes':
(a) Who was that?
(b) Why did they try to discourage you?
(c) Did it have much influence on you at the time?

81. Why do you think it is that there are still so few women in rock bands?
82. How important was punk for you?
83. How important do you think punk was for women musicians in general?
84. How important has feminism and the women's movement been for you, from the point of view of your playing in a band?
85. How important, do you think, has the women's movement been for women musicians in general?

A few extra questions for singers:

86. Are there any problems, do you think, in having a woman's voice? (Prompt: Are there any things which you would like to be able to sing but which you feel you can't? What difference does it make having a higher register?)
87. Do you prefer, in general, women's or men's voices? (Why is that?)

SECTION 4

I am now going to ask you some more personal questions.

1. Are you married? If 'no':
 - (a) Are you living with anyone?
 - (b) Are you in a long-term relationship?
2. If 'yes' to any part of question 1: What is his/her attitude to your being in a band?
(Prompts: How much freedom do you feel you have to be in a a band? Do you ever feel under any pressure to limit the amount of time you give to music? Does s/he play music/ play in a band?)
3. Do you have any children? If 'yes':
 - (a) Are they predominantly your responsibility in terms of childcare?
 - (b) Do you find that this responsibility limits your involvement with music? If 'yes': How?
4. Did you experience any initial problems in joining the band?

5. Did you leap straight in or wonder whether you should get involved?
6. Do you perform at any women-only gigs?
 If 'no': Would you? (If 'no': Why not?)
 If 'yes': (a) How important are they for you?
 (b) What percentage of your gigs are women-only?
 (c) How are women-only gigs different from mixed gigs?

Prompts:

- (i) Is the atmosphere any different?
 - (ii) Does the audience behave any differently?
 - (iii) Do you feel that you are relating any differently to the audience?
 - (iv) Do you feel any closer to, or more distant, from the audience?
 - (v) Do you have more (or less) physical contact with them? Do you talk to them more (before, after, during gigs)?
 - (vii) Does it affect how you play?
 - (viii) Does it affect how you feel? (eg. more, or less, relaxed/ under pressure?
 - (ix) Do you generally enjoy women-only gigs more than/ less than/ as much as mixed gigs?
7. Who do you think your audience is? (Could you describe them?)
 8. Is your audience predominantly male or female?
 9. Do you feel that 'your' audience, in the sense of the one you care about the most, is predominantly male, female, or mixed?
 10. When you are writing a number are you thinking about a particular audience?
 11. How does your sexual identity affect your music?
 12. What trouble have you experienced from audiences through being a female performer?
 13. When was the last time at a mixed gig that a man put you off, or tried to?
 14. Do you think of yourself as a feminist? If 'yes':
 (a) What does the term feminism mean to you?
 (b) How long have you been a feminist?
 (c) Have you ever been in women's group?
 (d) Have you ever been involved in campaigning on feminist issues? If 'yes':
 (i) Over what issues?
 (ii) What did you do?

- (e) How does being a feminist affect you as a performer? (Prompts: Is it reflected in,
 - (i) the way you hold your instrument?
 - (ii) how you use your body and physically present yourself on stage? (Have you any thoughts about this? Are there certain things you wouldn't do, as a feminist?)
 - (iii) the lyrics you write/ sing?
 - (iv) the clothes you wear?
 - (v) how you relate to audiences?
- 15. Do you think sexual politics has much to do with playing music? If 'yes': In what ways?
- 16. What clothes do you, personally, wear on stage?
- 17. Why do you choose to wear those clothes?
- 18. Do you wear make-up on stage. If 'yes': Why? If 'no': Why not?
- 19. Do you wear skirts on stage? If 'no': Why not?
- 20. Do you wear stage-clothes? If 'yes': Why? If 'no': Why not?
- 21. How much do you think about what you wear on stage? Do you think it matters what you wear?
- 22. How would you describe the band's general image?
- 23. Thinking of yourself as a performer,
 - (a) do you feel confident on stage?
 - (b) do you ever feel shy?
 - (c) do you ever worry about playing 'bum notes'?
 - (d) do you ever have physical symptoms of unease (like a headache, stomach ache, etc.)
- 24. Do you think there are any specific problems involved in being in a women's band?
- 25. Do you get treated any differently in the rock world because you are female?
- 26. Have you come across any discrimination or cases of women's bands getting any rough treatment from
 - (a) P.A. crews?
 - (b) promoters?
 - (c) male bands?
 - (d) D.J.?
 - (e) audiences?
 - (f) managers?
 - (g) agents?
 - (h) anyone else? (please specify).

27. Have you ever played in a mixed band? If 'yes':
 (a) Which one(s)?
 (b) For how long?
 (c) How did it compare with this (women's) band?
 If 'no': Would you like to? (If 'no': Why not?)
28. Do you think that female bands differ from male bands or mixed bands? If 'Yes': In what ways?
 (Prompts: Internal dynamics? Competitiveness? Aggressiveness? Emotional expression?)
29. Do you think one can make a useful distinction between 'male' and 'female' music? Is there any difference do you think? If 'yes', please expand.
 (Prompts: Lyrics? Musical form? Use of voice? Musical texture?)
30. Do you think men and women play their instruments differently?
31. Do you think there are physical limitations or constraints in being a female musician?
 (Prompts: strength? Size? Periods?)
32. Do you think that women musicians have any physical advantages.
33. Do you think that women musicians have any social advantages compared to male musicians?
34. Do you think that they have any social disadvantages?
35. Have you experienced any of these problems?
36. Why are you in a band?
37. Why are you in a women's band?
38. Overall how have you found it?
39. What do you enjoy about the experience? Can you describe your positive feelings?
40. Do you have any dissatisfaction? Can you describe your negative feelings? (Prompts: The music? Your role? Your abilities/ skills? Social interaction. Money?)
41. To what extent are your musical tastes and direction expressed adequately within the band?
 (Prompt: Are there any compromises?)

42. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about being a musician in a band and how it has affected your life? (Prompts:
- (a) Do you feel more confident in your everyday life?
 - (b) Has it given you a direction?
 - (c) Has it affected your social life?
 - (i) Do you have less time available for social activities, seeing friends, etc.?
 - (ii) Do you find that most of your friends and acquaintances are in the music world in one way or another? (If 'yes' How do you feel about this?)
 - (d) Has playing in a band affected your personal relationships? (If 'yes': How?)

SECTION 5.

1. If you could improve your present performance, what would you most like to do/ sound like?
2. How would you increase your fulfilment and satisfaction as a musician now?
3. Where do you think you are going musically?
4. How long do you expect to be playing in a band for?
5. Do you think of yourself as a musician?
If 'yes': What does this mean to you? (Prompts: Is music your career? a hobby? a form of political action?)
- 6.(if applicable) Do you see yourself as a full-time professional musician in 5 years time?
7. If everything went right for you, what would you like to be doing in 5 years time?
8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?