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GRRRLS, GRRRLS, GRRRLS: INCORPORATING FEMINIST THEORY INTO PUNK ROCK COMPOSITION

By BRYAN MATTHEW WARING

A PRODUCTION PAPER

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in Commercial Composition & Arranging in the School of Music of the College of Music and Performing Arts

Belmont University

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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Submitted by Bryan Matthew Waring in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in Commercial Media Composition & Arranging.

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Introduction

This culminating project will describe compositional practices that are informed by research in the gendered performance of music. Music plays an important role in the creation of gender identity, and vice versa. Scholars have supported this claim, acknowledging that "given [music's] centrality in the manipulation of affect, social formation, and the construction of identity, music is far too important a phenomenon not to talk about" (McClary 1991, 26). If music is an avenue for gender identity and discourse, then it is also a space for feminist criticism. Feminism is a broad movement encompassing a diverse set of ideas used to challenge legal, economic, political, as well as social inequality on the basis of gender or sex to create a more inclusive and equitable society that is not marked by patriarchal oppression. Additionally, feminism has a long history within musical culture. As noted by Suzzanne G. Cusick in her article for *Grove Music Online*.

... feminism affected musical culture in the United States by sparking (1) historical and cross-cultural research on women's participation in musical culture; (2) spurring a body of critical texts that analyze gender, sexuality, and embodiment in relation to musical practices; and (3) instigating the emergence and implementation of compositional, performative, and institutional strategies that interrogate or transform hierarchical relationships based on sexual difference. (Cusick 2013)

My culminating project will touch upon all three of those avenues described by Cusick through examining women in the punk rock genre, analyzing aspects of gender performance in their music, and incorporating these findings into my own compositional and recording practices.

For this research paper, I begin by identifying some common misunderstandings of feminism as well as terminology used in feminist theory. Then, I introduce a problem related to the topic of gender performance in music and some options to remedy the situation. Next, I discuss scholars who have incorporated feminist theory into musicology and music analysis. Finally, I propose my tested theory for this culminating project as well as an outline of how the material will be further presented.

A commonly mistaken assumption is that feminism has one definitive meaning or course of action. In reality, the truth is that feminism can be unique or can change in response to factors like time, location, race, ethnicity, or class. Still, the common ground among all feminists is the goal of preventing discrimination based on the social constructs of gender and sex.

It is therefore important to understand the definitions of "gender" and "sex." Philosopher Judith Butler defines "gender" in her 1990 book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, as a performative act that is solidified and "constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler 1990, 25). The expressions to which Butler is referring to can encompass mannerism, fashion, choice of hobbies, career aspirations, and more. Just as popular music genres are defined and prescribed by a collection of performative acts, gender is a cyclical social construct constantly being restructured through repeated acts. While many people assume that gender refers only to the binary of masculine and feminine, gender is "not descriptive of a 'reality' but a construction that serves to delineate power" amongst a multitude of identities (McMullen

2014). It is important to be inclusive and uphold the notion of gender identity as a fluid scale with many possibilities in order to refrain from this binary mentality. Gender identities of the sort can include, but are not limited to: male, female, non-binary, genderfluid, transgender, genderqueer, agender, demi, androgyne, and Native American two-spirit.

Even sex—the physical body consisting of sexual organs, chromosomes, and hormones—is gendered by cultural norms. A common misunderstanding is to believe that gender and sex are independent constructs, or that gender identity is derived from sex characteristics. However, feminist scholars argue instead that sexual anatomy is classified by society's constructs of gender. Through biological reproduction, certain physical traits have been put into specific gender categories, such as male, female, and intersex. Just as certain clothes and hobbies have been gender-coded, so has the possession of specific genitalia.

The discrimination of a person based on their gender (expression) or sex (born anatomy) is called sexism. Sexism creates social inequalities and is pervasive in all forms of social activity—including music. Although sexism is not always highly visible and documented, certain phenomena can suggest that sexism is present. An example of this would be the low representation of women in the popular music industry. According to recent data published by the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, about 21.6% of all popular music artists in the past decade were women. In addition, women made up 12.6% of all songwriters and 2.6% of all producers (Smith et al. 2021, 3). By this evidence, we can see that the field of music is dominated by men, a fact that possibly stems from acts of sexism.

At the same time, sexism is not limited to simply marginalizing a group of physical human beings. Sexism can also include the prejudice against ideas that are associated with sex and gender. In the context of how certain aspects of music have been coded as "masculine" and "feminine," the prioritization of one over the other can be read as sexist. Rock music is a good example, evident in its near-exclusive male participation and its association with male sexuality. This statement does not assert that there have never been egalitarian rock songs written by men, because one can certainly argue that those songs do exist. Instead, this concept recognizes the long history of how rock music has been used as a means of reinforcing the patriarchy, either directly or indirectly. By incorporating semiotics—or the study of signs and their use or interpretation—into music analysis, conclusions can be drawn as to how gender is symbolized in the music. It is my goal through this project to find a compositional means of using or avoiding these semiotics in rock to create music that is not sexist.

One option is to make rock music with "nonsexist" values. In 1978, Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie co-published an article titled "Rock and Sexuality." At the end of the article, they list several interesting questions for the reader to ponder: "What would nonsexist music sound like? Can rock be nonsexist? How can we counter rock's dominant sexual messages?" (Frith and McRobbie 1990, 389). Frith and McRobbie propose the idea of a non-gendered and "nonsexist" approach to rock music to combat sexism. By discarding musical aspects in rock that have been gender-coded, rock would less likely be a medium for sexism.

However, as simple as it may seem in theory to castrate the masculinities from rock, this idea offers very little in terms of progress. To make rock music completely

non-gendered would deny all possibilities for healthy gender expression—masculine or feminine. What might serve as a better alternative for "nonsexist" rock would be to strive for "anti-sexist" rock. As Robert Walser and Harris M. Berger propose,

... instead of dreaming of a kind of music that might be both "rock" and "nonsexist," we can spot many extant examples of rock music that use the powerful codings of gender available in order to engage with, challenge, disrupt, or transform not only rock's representations of gender but also the beliefs and material practices with which those representations engage. (Walser and Berger 2014, 151)

Within this "anti-sexist" mentality lies an opportunity to find a compositional means of exploring rock's symbolic representations and codings of gender without upholding one against another.

Gender-coding—the process where signs and symbols are assigned along the spectrum of masculine and feminine associations in society—has been a thriving topic for research in music. Susan McClary was one of the first scholars to propose bringing this kind of semiotic analysis into musicology in what was first known at the time as "New Criticism" or "New Musicology." In her 1991 book, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality*, McClary describes a five-point method to tackle issues and questions of gendered semiotics. Those five points are: a) learning how codes of gender and sexuality are constructed in music, b) understanding how composers use these gender codes in music theory, c) analyzing how sexuality informs musical narrative and form, d) reframing music as a gendered discourse, and e) researching the discursive strategies of women musicians in history. McClary's goal was to "sketch out what several of these historical, analytical, and theoretical projects would look like," in her book and collection of six essays written from 1987-1990 discussing the gendered aspects of composers from the Western classical as well as popular music canons (McClary 1991, 30).

Another scholar who was part of the "New Musicology" movement was Marcia J. Citron. In her 1993 book, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, Citron talks about the issues of canon creation, how it reflects values of the time, and what can be done in the present day to reform the canon with respect to gender. Additionally, Citron discusses several points as to how gender played a role in formation of the Western classical canon. Some of those points include how women's creativity was restricted or negotiated in a patriarchal setting, how women found it difficult to be regarded as professional musicians under masculine authority, how music became a field for gendered discourse, and how music composed by women was received by men (Citron 1993).

As one would expect, there were many critics of McClary and Citron's writings. While their books do an excellent job of distinguishing between the masculine and feminine elements in music, critics felt their research did little to offer composers insight in how they can write outside of this gender binary logic (Sayrs 1993). In addition, some scholars did not find McClary and Citron's research to be all-encompassing. While McClary did apply feminist methodology to both classical and commercial music, critics have noted that not every musical element carries the same gender code across different genres (Gracyk 2001). For example, a piece of music set in a minor key is generally regarded as feminine within the context of classical music (McClary 1991). However, minor keys and modes are staples in masculine genres like heavy metal. McClary also wrote on how composers code their own gender and sexuality into the music. Recent studies have argued that the semiotics of gender in music are created more by the listener's interpretation than by a composer's intentional—or assumed—meaning (Sergeant and Himonides 2014).

Even though the term "New Musicology" has become outdated, many others after McClary and Citron have continued to expand on how to implement feminism and understand gender-codings in music theory. Some of those scholars include Suzanne G. Cusik, Jennifer Rycenga, Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, and Emma Mayhew. Drawing upon Butler's definition of gender, Cusik expressed how the performance of music is linked to the performance of gender. If gender is the categorization of bodily performance, and music entails bodily performance, then music is gendered to some degree. In addition, Cusik noted that bodily performance had been largely neglected in studies of music theory. When scholars focus more on the analysis of composition over performance, they prioritize the mind over "the bodies whose performative acts constitute the thing called music," and thereby ignore the feminine side of music discourse (Cusick 1994, 16). This mind/body duality is something many feminists want to dissolve, similar to the male/female gender binary. To be a feminist music theorist is to not just look at what is on staff paper, but to also take into consideration how elements of performance imply a gendered meaning in the composition.

Jennifer Rycenga supported Cusick's notion to abolish the hierarchies between male/female, mind/body, and composition/performance in music analysis, additionally calling to expand the dualities to include abstract/physical concepts as well. Rycenga also proposed in an article published in *Repercussions* a philosophy for compositional analysis that would be "a) non-dualistic, b) non-hierarchic, c) acknowledging (and even valorizing) the importance of material reality, d) listening and giving attention to the voices of women (linguistic and musical voices), e) dialogic, and f) respectful of the agency of others," (Rycenga 1994, 25). Marianne Kielian-Gilbert continued Rycenga's

idea for inclusivity. Proposed in an article published by *College Music Symposium*, Kielian-Gilbert lists several points regarding how feminist perspectives can expand the scope of analysis. This can be done by shifting the focus or emphasis away from masculine-centered logic, rejecting the notion of perfection, incorporating other kinds of radical discursive forms, ironically positioning oppositional procedures, configuring self-reflexive forms into analysis, and reclaiming male fantasies of the feminine (Kielian-Gilbert 2000). These philosophies for compositional analysis will, in turn, inform a composer about what musical choices to make.

Philosopher Emma Mayhew agrees that music should be more open beyond masculine-centered logic, but questions the idea of a female/feminine/feminist aesthetic in music composition. In her doctoral thesis exploring the representation of female subjectivity in popular music, Mayhew explains how the female/feminine/feminist ideologies are not as interchangeable as they sound. She notes that a female aesthetic is an impossible task because "femininity, and being female, is not a universal or 'pure' experience outside of patriarchal society" (Mayhew 2001, 95). Additionally, trying to pinpoint a precise definition for feminist music would be difficult due to the fact that positioning strategies against patriarchal discourses would eventually transform over time and situation. Also, the female subject is not confined to being feminine or being a feminist. Even though a feminist and anti-sexist aesthetic in music is situational, it does not inherently mean that composers or scholars should avoid it. Rather, feminist aesthetics should be explored to their fullest. If compositional trends as well as technological advancements in music are worth studying, the same should apply to gender and feminist expression.

While a large portion of earlier research that explores how people hear and perform gender through music has been examined more within the field of classical music than that of popular music, this state of affairs has recently begun to change especially in research on punk rock music. One does not need to look deeply into this genre to uncover the reasons why and how punk rock opened a space for all kinds of genders to participate. With its emphasis in DIY (Do It Yourself) aesthetics, its shockingly confrontational attitude, and its discontent for the current cultural establishment, punk music created a space in which many women felt that this scene was an open door to start a band as well as to create their own style of music. In addition, recent surveys have shown that the occurrence of feminist messages significantly outweighed sexist ones in the lyrics of punk rocks songs spanning from the 1970s to 2000s (Levine 2015). As Chrissie Hynde of the Prentenders said to the Guardian, "I am very grateful to punk, because I was a girl and I felt like if I got in a band I'd be kind of a novelty act, but punk was all about non-discrimination. No one cared, because it was punk, so you know anyone could do anything they wanted" (Hynde 2016). Likewise, in this project I am going to use the punk music genre and its aesthetic as a medium to transcend musical as well as gender boundaries.

My proposed theory for this project was that one can make rock music with antisexist values by implementing feminist criticism into the composition of punk rock
music. To test this thesis, I began by reviewing the history of feminism and its
implementation within music. Next, using feminist music theory as a lens for
observation, I analyzed several songs from female artists and mix-gendered bands from
the punk genre. This project covered a wide range of the history of punk music including

American proto-punk, the UK punk scene, the post-punk goth subgenre, avant-garde movements, and riot grrrl. Finally, these findings of feminist methods and aspects of gendering in music were used to compose original anti-sexist punk rock songs as a supplemental portion to this culmination project. The composition, arranging, performance, and recording processes were also documented.

Throughout this culminating project, many additional questions arose that I may not have fully answered, but are still worth addressing. Some of those queries include how these musical aspects in punk rock came to be gender-coded, how effective or reliable were these tactics for expressing gender through punk rock music, and how these gendered performances changed in response to the different waves of feminist movements beyond those in music. Further research should examine these premises because any kind of discoveries made would be a benefit to the discourses of gender and music.

It is worth addressing that there might be objections of gender or sex appropriation with my original compositions. My response to these objections is to assure that steps have been taken to educate myself on the matter. There has been a long debate about the role of men in feminism. Simone de Beauvoir was known to be hesitant about men having a say in what is feminist, often quoting François Poulain de La Barre in conversation that "whatsoever Men say concerning that, ought to be suspected; seeing they are both Judge and Party" (La Barre 1677, 70). In addition, the idea that my antisexist music could serve as something for women is partially flawed because some feminists believe that it is better to abstain from all non-female composed music (Bayton 1990). As a passing non-binary individual, I do benefit from privileges that these women

in punk music did not experience. Still, I do not think that my gendered experiences should deter me away from being a feminist or actively challenging the oppression from which I benefit. To quote Michael Kaufman, cofounder of the gender-based violence prevention organization the White Ribbon Campaign, "why should the onus be on women? Why should they be the ones cleaning up a workplace mess created by some men? The answer is simple: they should not" (Kaufman 2019, 89). I recognize that using a feminist means of composing punk rock music, something that many women have had to negotiate due to their gender, might receive less criticism and prejudice because I pass as a male. Ultimately, this project was not created for exploitive means. Some of the goals of this project were to recognize my privilege, mitigate issues of exploitation, and invest in the gender-coded compositional techniques that I have adopted to (hopefully) improve a wider cultural practice for all.

In Chapter 1, I discuss how bands of the proto-punk era explored female sexual *jouissance*, or pleasure, through their music. Analogous to how male sexuality has been coded as a single climax followed by an exit, the pleasures of female sexuality are coded in the open structures and multiple climaxes of these punk songs. Topics covered will be the use of drones in the music of the Velvet Underground and, more specifically, the motoric style of drumming provided by Maureen "Moe" Tucker. In addition, the lengthy beat poetry style, or what critics call "babelogues," of Patti Smith's music will be discussed regarding how they transcend typical masculine structures and narration. My composition, "Old Flesh," features drones, fluctuation in tempo, multiple climaxes, and repetitive drum parts to musically signify female jouissance.

Chapter 2 focuses on how acts of détournement by UK punk bands subverted masculine clichés in music. Détournement, or the process of creatively transforming art by disfiguring it, was an artistic practice developed by the Situationist movement in France during the late 1950s. X-Ray Spex, the Slits, and the Raincoats were prime examples of bands purposely incorporating feminine-coded musical elements into their compositional practices during the height of punk to confront how punk was becoming a "boy's club." My composition, "Wo-Mannequins," pays homage to their feminist acts of détournement with the use of spacious dub-influenced guitar parts, polyrhythms, mixed meter, and feminine-coded instruments.

In Chapter 3, I discuss how Siouxsie Sioux of the goth punk subgenre reclaimed the idea of the monstrous feminine through her music. Barbara Creed introduced the idea of the monstrous feminine in 1993, proposing that in horror films the portrayal of women go beyond the victim/hero binary to encompass women also as monsters. These ideas draw upon Sigmund Freud's theory of castration anxiety and Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection in effort to postulate why men are fearful of the female body. Instead of avoiding these musical conventions that relate to the monstrous feminine, such as the use of time-based effects and synthesized sound, Siouxsie Sioux takes a feminist approach by embracing what the masculine tries to avoid. Poking fun at men's logic of the woman as a monster, Siouxsie uses this idea through ironic subversion in her band, the Banshees, to produce her signature sound. My composition, "Prey For The Baby," adheres to Siouxsie Sioux's practices with a creative use of sound effects to emulate the fear of the monstrous woman.

Chapter 4 focuses on how avant-garde punk bands negotiated radical expressions of gender through their "noisy" musical performances. The word "noise" has a long history of being used as a pejorative to describe any sound that is not pleasing and thus should be avoided. Most musicians, composers, and producers are taught how to eliminate or properly resolve noise in their work. However, this creates a problematic binary of socially-accepted "good" and "bad" sounds. Similar to how a goal of many feminists were to dismantle the binary of male/female, these avant-garde punk bands sought to change the socially acceptable or unacceptable perception of noise in music. Drawing upon theories reframing noise for feminist purposes, I argue that artists like Crass, Lydia Lunch, and Sonic Youth purposely wielded noise as a creative tool not only to disrupt hegemonic and masculine tropes within punk music, but also to make their audience aware of painful topics in gender discourse. My composition, "Kookie Kut Life," directly taps into their use of atonality, prepared instruments, extended techniques, distorted timbres, shouted vocals, and guitar-driven feedback to embrace feminized dissonance.

In Chapter 5, I discuss how the appropriation of girlhood aesthetics in the riot grrrl punk subgenre served as a way for gender expression. Riot grrrl was a movement to radicalize people to take action against sexism and reclaim girlhood from predatory misogyny. Artists like Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, Hole, and Liz Phair did not adhere to the stereotype of the 1990s that women should make commercial pop or soft rock music. Instead, they used punk as well as a strategy of spatial entitlement—the creation and transformation of spaces (physical, sonic, metaphorical, etc.) to make room for new affiliations—in order to fuse gendered soundscapes and distort the patriarchy's fabricated

image of girlhood. My composition, "Pet," features these appropriated girlhood aesthetics with Teeny Bopper dance beats, pop harmonies, lo-fi imperfections, girly vocal affectations, and diary-esque lyrics.

In the conclusion of this thesis, I reflect on the production process for my original compositions as well as how my own performance of gender interacts with the songs.

Finally, I propose areas for further investigation that were not discussed extensively in this culminating project.

Chapter 1

Proto-Punk

This chapter aims to explore incorporating codes of female sexuality into the composition of anti-sexist punk rock music. Musical elements in rock that were codes of male sexuality were altered by proto-punk bands of the 1960s and 1970s to give a feminine approach. Some examples would include expanding typical rock song forms, having greater fluidity of the tempo, and utilizing harmonic drones. Refraining from the proclivity to compose exclusively with typical masculine structures and narration can be read as feminist in that it allows for more inclusion as well as diverse perspectives. Through analysis and incorporation, I have in turn composed my own song inspired by the Velvet Underground and Patti Smith.

Analysis

Proto-punk is an elusive genre term that was retrospectively created to denote "bands that followed in the wake of the first wave of garage rock" who existed before the 1976 punk explosion brought by the Ramones and the Sex Pistols (Kristiansen 2010, 16). Bands such as the Velvet Underground, MC5, the Stooges, the New York Dolls, the Modern Lovers, the Dictators, Television, Death, and the Patti Smith Group are widely considered to be part of the proto-punk era. However, it is still difficult to define proto-punk because it was not a cohesive movement. One aspect that contributed to this disunity was the fact that these bands all had different styles and identities. Musicians

involved in the proto-punk era came from diverse musical backgrounds that included blues, rock, folk, jazz, and avant-garde. Additionally, proto-punk was not limited to one geographical location. While proto-punk was mostly an American phenomenon, there were also some pub rock and glam bands from the United Kingdom that could be categorized as "proto-punk" because they served as inspiration for the upcoming punk boom. Still, the elements that unified the style of proto-punk bands included simplistic instrumentation, lack of technical skill, and "cool" deviant attitudes that marked the inception of a new counterculture.

Along with the history of proto-punk, the history of feminist ideologies need to be discussed as well for the purpose of analyzing gender performance in punk music and how those aspects will be incorporated into compositional practices. Occurring at the same time as the proto-punk era was the Second-Wave movement of feminism.

Momentum, coverage, and participation in feminism that were previously carried out in separate cultural areas were renewed in light of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s (McCann et al. 2019). While First-Wave feminists who had come before the Second-Wave movement sought to end gender oppression in specific areas such as voting access, rights to personal property, economic freedom, etc., Second-Wave feminists sought to broaden the scope even further by radically analyzing and uprooting the origins of gender oppression.

A large number of Second-Wave feminists pointed to the idea that oppression stemmed from multiple aspects of society being phallocentric, which is the focusing and prioritizing of the male sexual organ and masculine attitudes above all else in social relations. An area that they felt was in need of radical discourse to deconstruct this

phallocentric regard was sexuality. Sexuality, like sexual orientation, is a component of sexual desire and a part of a person's identity. To define the two, sexuality is "the capacity of humans to experience erotic feelings and responses as a consequence of interactions with others," ranging from asexuality to hypersexuality, while sexual orientation refers to one's specific preference ranging from heterosexuality to bisexuality, pansexuality, and homosexuality (Sergeant and Himonides 2016, 4). Second-Wave feminists believed sexuality was phallocentric in that the erotic "still centers on what would otherwise be considered the reproductive act of intercourse" (MacKinnon 1997, 163). This upholding of sexual activity that promotes reproduction and males' pleasure over females' has been known to cause a "pleasure gap." Despite only 50-70 percent of women reporting pleasure during intercourse (as compared to 95 percent of men), sexual education is still taught in terms of what is most likely to give a man pleasure (Castleman 2016). In addition, two archetypal labels of women in society, the virgin and the whore, are solely defined by the experience of phallus penetration (or lack thereof). This idea of phallocentrism will play a role in the examination of punk music and its role in supporting the patriarchy.

French feminists like Hélène Cixous (b. 1937), Julia Kristeva (b. 1941), and Luce Irigaray (b. 1930) attempted to dismantle the phallocentric order in sexuality by adopting Jacques Lacan's term of "jouissance." According to the book, *A Glossary of Feminist Theory*, jouissance "has no exact equivalent in English and has acquired many connotations. At its simplest it means 'pleasure'" (Andermahr, Lovell, and Wolkowitz 2000, 140). Purposely open and vague in definition, jouissance was reframed by these

French feminists as an act to help theorize what a female sexuality would be like outside of this phallocentric disposition. According to Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron,

This pleasure, when attributed to a woman, is considered to be a different order from the pleasure that is represented within the male libidinal economy often described in terms of the capitalist gain and profit motive. Women's jouissance carries with it the notions of fluidity, diffusion, duration. It is a kind of potlatch in the world of orgasms, a giving, expending, dispensing of pleasure without concern about ends or closure. (Marks and de Courtivron 1981, 36)

Calling attention to these notions of fluidity, diffusion, and duration, it is important to discuss why these words are descriptive of female sexuality. Biologically, the female sexual response cycle differs from the male in that females typically experience no or a short refractory period after orgasm. Hence, female sexuality has more longevity and flux between climaxes. Still, these notions of fluidity, diffusion, and duration should not be reserved to just talking about female sexuality. They can also be informative regarding how to write anti-sexist punk rock music.

If sexuality is phallocentric, it could be argued that so too are the semiotics of sexuality in music. Feminist musicologists and music theorists have noted the analogous connotations between sexuality and musical elements in popular music as well as the endorsing of the masculine over the feminine. From phallic musical phrases to spurts of instrumental solos and strict forms that resemble a progression of a climax followed by a quick release, the tropes of rock music seem only to cater to male sexuality. It is my goal to create a more inclusive anti-sexist version of punk rock through analyzing how artists like the Velvet Underground and Patti Smith expressed codes of female sexual pleasure in their music.

The Velvet Underground was formed in April of 1965 in New York City.

Although the personnel of the Velvet Underground changed over the many years it

existed before disbanding, many people agree that the "classic" lineup was during the production and release of their 1967 debut album, *The Velvet Underground & Nico*. Members of the band at that time included John Cale (bass/viola/keyboards), Sterling Morrison (bass/guitar), Christa "Nico" Päffgan (vocals), Lou Reed (guitar/vocals), and Maureen "Moe" Tucker (drums/percussion). For added star-power, Andy Warhol managed the Velvet Underground from January 1966 to July 1967. Despite not being commercially successful (selling only 58,476 copies of their debut album in their first two years), the Velvet Underground had a lasting impact on music with many later bands citing them as a creative influence (Gold 2013).

While the Velvet Underground might not immediately come to mind as a "feminist" group, they do feature interesting relations of gender and sexuality. One of the women in the band, Maureen "Moe" Tucker, played an important role in the creation of the Velvet Underground's unique sound. Tucker took up drums as a teenager, playing simple patterns to Bo Diddley and Babatunde Olatunji records. She also had an idiosyncratic drum setup and played with extended techniques, using mallets instead of regular drumsticks. What Tucker enjoyed most about being a drummer was the ability to stay in background, keep the tempo, and play a simple beat to accompany the other musicians (Witts 2006). Simplicity was a key aesthetic for Tucker, who went as far as saying how much she disliked drum solos. Critics have observed this simplicity, saying that the music of the Velvet Underground was "generated out of its own virtually immutable bass/drum pattern. Repeated over and over . . . All sounding mechanistic enough to be mistaken for electronics" (Pearlman 2005, 63). This "proto-motorik" drum style of forward-moving as well as repetitive patterns can be heard in songs across the

entire record, but is especially noticeable in "I'm Waiting For The Man" and "All Tomorrow's Parties." In "I'm Waiting For The Man," Tucker carried the pulse with a continuous eighth note beating on the snare and tambourine. For "All Tomorrow's Parties," Tucker alternated between hitting her propped-up kick drum and tambourine in a quarter note rhythm throughout the entirety of the track.

One can interpret Tucker's performance style as an expression of female jouissance in terms of duration. Instead of rushing to the climatic spurt with a drum solo, Tucker chose to prolong the pleasure of playing these simplistic drum patterns by repeating them over and over. This coding of female sexuality in repetitive percussion patterns has also been proposed in genres outside of punk music. In an article *to Popular Music*, Jon Stratton likens the radical definition of female jouissance to the endless groove in disco music, saying that they are "both products of the discursive transformation in the social experience of female sexual pleasure and, more specifically, the female orgasm" (Stratton 2014, 125). Using this notion as a precedent, Tucker's can be evidently read as gender-code for continuous orgasm in female jouissance.

Men within the Velvet Underground also contributed to this coded sound of female jouissance. While Lou Reed came from a background of performing folk, blues, doo-wop, and rock, he forwent many of those stylistic clichés in the Velvet Underground. Reed avoided the imitation of aspects found in Black musical style in favor of authenticity—unlike the many other proto-punk and rock acts at the time that were exploiting blues-based idioms for male white sexual expression (Rapport 2014). In addition, Reed had a small economy of chord use, opting particularly to use only the I and IV chords (Martin and Fripp 2015). John Cale, inspired by the avant-garde Fluxus

and neo-Dada movements, also incorporated elements that could be coded as feminine in the tropes of rock music. Unlike typical rock conventions, Cale added static harmonic drones and free-form improvisation to the music of the Velvet Underground. Examples can be heard in songs like "Heroin" and "European Son." For both songs, only the I and IV chords are used, creating a drone of the shared tonic within the harmony. Plus, both songs feature open forms flowing with spontaneity between parts of steady low-energy to chaotic noise. These aspects of duration in harmony as well as the diffusion and fluidity in form recall these descriptions about female jouissance.

Years after the Velvet Underground disbanded, their music made an impact on aspiring artist Patti Smith. Born in Chicago and raised in southern New Jersey, Smith was the daughter of blue-collar parents. After graduating from high school in 1964, Smith found a job at a non-union factory. During Smith's time at the factory, she experienced poor working conditions, isolation, and unsuitable pay. It was during these miserable times in her life that Smith turned toward the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud and the stories of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. She believed that these works expressed the powers of adolescence: the egocentric, desexed, gender-boundary-crossing life of being a kid (O'Brien 2002). With aspirations of pursuing a career in literature, she moved to Manhattan and gave live poetry readings on the side. In 1971, Smith met guitarist Lenny Kaye, who would help accompany her beat poetry performances with music. Later, a full band was assembled to better actualize her musical vision. By 1975, Smith was in Electric Lady Studios with former Velvet member, John Cale, to produce her debut record, *Horses*.

Altering rebel masculinities with a female perspective, Smith incorporated the feminine flow and flux of her beat poetry into this emerging wave of proto-punk music. In order to diffuse the structures of rock music to best accompany her beat-poetry-style lyrics, Smith resorted to simplicity in the harmonic palette and freedom in form. This method allowed Smith to achieve a sound that would otherwise be thwarted by strict rock conventions. Scholars have recognized this method, calling it "a classic example of the Velvet Underground's minimal-is-maximal approach—simplistic rock'n'roll repetition accumulating into an overwhelming gush and rush of sound" to produce something that could only be described as "oceanic" (Reynolds and Press 1995, 357). Smith acknowledged this particular Velvet Underground influence. Speaking to Rolling Stone magazine after the passing of Lou Reed, Smith confided that "One thing I got from Lou, that never went away, was the process of performing live over a beat, improvising poetry, how he moved over three chords for 14 minutes. That was a revelation to me" (Fricke 2013). Songs like "Gloria," "Birdland," "Free Money," "Land," and "Elegie" off the *Horses* record are examples of this oceanic sound.

Along with harmonic simplicity and free-form structure, songs by Smith also feature exciting utilizations of tempo shifts as well as changes in dynamics to produce changes analogous to consecutive sexual climaxes (Wendell 2015). In interviews, Smith would often compare these compositional choices with female jouissance. Quoted in an interview with Paul Rambali of *New Musical Express*, Smith says:

"We don't have a fixed set or formula. We're not like a male band either, in that the male process of ecstasy in performance is starting here,"—she starts jerking at the base of an imaginary giant phallus—"and building and building until the big spurt at the end. We're a feminine band, we'll go so far and peak and then we'll start again and peak, over and over. It's like ocean. We leave ourselves wide

open for failure, but we also leave ourselves open to achieving a moment more magical." (Rambali 1978)

Here, we see an explicit attempt by an artist to transgress masculine sexuality in musical form and structure.

While the music of Patti Smith can be interpreted in terms of female jouissance, attention also needs to be given to her lyrics—or what she calls "babelogues." As discussed by Simon Reynolds and Joy Press in their book, *The Sex Revolts: Gender, Rebellion, and Rock'N'Roll*,

... the Babelogue is the opposite of a monologue or soliloquy, forms that are centered and self-aggrandizing (despite that doubt and anguish that often inspires them). In her babble-ogues, Smith was attempting to recover the primal speech that existed before our fall into language (the Biblical collapse of the Tower of Babel). (Reynolds and Press 1995, 358-59)

This search for a primal language to express female jouissance had been a significant objective for French feminists during the Second-Wave movement. Feminist writer and literary critic Helène Cixous proposes the idea of the écriture feminine in her 1975 essay "Le Rire de la Méduse" (The Laugh of the Medusa), describing a written language that exists outside of the masculine symbolic order. She criticized how "men's writing and speech emphasize the importance of (male) reason over (female) emotion" and called on women to "intervene and rewrite the rules of writing, linguistics, and knowledge-making" with the écriture feminine (McCann, et al, 2019, 185). The écriture feminine would deconstruct the masculine form of writing and allow expression of repressed femininity by blending in poetry, fantasy, wordplay, conversational speech, etc. (Andermahr, Lovell, and Wolkowitz 2000). Kristeva expanded on this idea, saying that the écriture feminine also foregrounds the semiotic chora (the expression of a pre-lingual and pre-Oedipal stage of development dominated by egocentric drives). Furthermore,

Kristeva considered any art form—visual, theater, poetry, song, and dance—that does not sacrifice itself to social restraints of masculine order to exhibit a semiotic chora that becomes "the means—the only means—that jouissance harbors for infiltrating that order" (Kristeva 1984, 79). Smith's use of a beat-poetry-style babelogue over rock music is a clear example of using the écriture feminine and semiotic chora to open up the opportunity to express female jouissance. The babelogue resembles non-linear childlike rambling and effectively "demonstrates the way in which Smith feminized the sound and style of rock through an emphasis on the negative side of the chora" (Whiteley 2000, 105). Thus, Smith emasculates the importance of logic and straightforward narrative in contemporary rock lyrics.

Smith's theatrical performance of her lyrics also adds to this notion of the semiotic chora and female jouissance. Critics have observed that Smith's performances are a "balancing act between spoken and sung performance" in which she slips "into gendered 'characters' at corresponding points in the lyric" (Daley 1997, 238). For example, in the song "Gloria," Smith alters between breathy (female) and nasally (male) vocal tones depending on the character she's performing in her babelogues. Playful and gender-bending like her idol, Peter Pan, these are expressions of what could be considered a kind of gender independence.

Composition

I will now describe my anti-sexist punk rock song and the choices made after analyzing how these selected proto-punk artists expressed codes of female jouissance into their music.

The title of the song that I wrote is called "Old Flesh," and was partially inspired from reading Elaine Marks's 1986 article, "Transgressing the (In)cont(in)ent Boundaries: The Body in Decline." Although the article's premise was to discuss the works of Simone de Beauvoir and her fixation on mortality in the later part of her life, what grabbed my attention was a sentence about pejorative terms used to describe elderly people. When comparing these kinds of slang words used in the English and French languages, Marks says that "the word 'harridans' in English does not convey either the sense of physical disintegration contained in the French 'les vieilles peaux' (literally, the old skins) or the sexual overtones mingled with disgust' (Marks 1986, 185). I was utterly taken back by the phrase "les vieilles peaux" and how elderly people were reduced down to their physical appearance. Flesh that was once sexually adventurous had now turn vile in the eyes of society. In light of this subject matter, I decided to write lyrics that would reflect on how elderly women experience a unique kind of oppression due to their age. Still, there is more to the lyrics than just that. "Old Flesh" is a song that also reflects my own meditations on mortality. Even though I am fairly young as I am writing this thesis (25 years old), I have begun to think about getting older as less about getting wiser and more about getting more nostalgic for they ways things used to be. Aside from the lyrics, I wanted the music to symbolically represent aspects of old age and the performance of female jouissance.

To emulate the DIY ethos of punk, I did all of the recording in my small 9' by 8' bedroom space. Vocals were captured using a Neumann TLM 102 large-diaphragm cardioid condenser microphone going into a Scarlett 4i4 3rd Generation audio interface. In addition, a Shure PS-6 pop filter was placed in front of the microphone to lessen the

plosives of my voice. Because I did not own any studio-grade panels for acoustical treatment, I had to improvise by situating the microphone in a part of the room that would capture the least amount of reverberance as possible. Audio was recorded into my preferred DAW of choice: Logic Pro X. Plug-ins used on the vocal channel-strip were the Logic DeEsser 2 to reduce sibilance, the Logic Studio FET to imitate the sound of the Universal Audio 1176 Rev E compressor, the Waves J37 for tape saturation, the iZotope Vocal Doubler for extra depth, and the Artuaria Rev PLATE-140 for additive reverb. No auto-tune or pitch-correction software was used in order to retain an aspect of rawness in my voice.

The melody of "Old Flesh" stays low in my vocal register and within a limited range of a major sixth from A to F-sharp. This was purposely done so that I could have the ease of switching between my singing and talking voice. Similar to Patti Smith's sprechstimme-like vocal style, I wanted to play around with the alternation between gentle singing and dead-pan narration to give certain spots of the song different characterizations. Additionally, this theatrical performance of the lyrics ties back to notions of the semiotic chora and female jouissance. Similarly to how Smith emasculates the music by playfully slipping into gendered characters, I attempted to do the same thing with my phrasing and change in vocal tone.

After the vocals, the next instrument was the electric guitar. The guitar I used was my Gibson Flying V Reissue with Ernie Ball Extra Slinky nickel-wound strings.

Instead of recording the guitar with a microphone, I decided to record via direct input into the audio interface. To imitate the sound of a Marshall amplifier—a brand many British punk and heavy metal bands use—I experimented with the settings of Native

Instrument's Guitar Rig 6 MFX. By using the plug-in's features of a Jump headstock, a 2x12 British Amp CON 47 V1 matched cabinet, and a Tube Compressor, I came considerably close to the sound of the Marshall DSL 100H that I own. Some other plugins used on the guitar channel-strip were the Psyche Delay for reverse reverb, the iZotope Trash 2 for overdrive, and the Logic Vintage VCA to emulate the saturation of the SSL G Bus Compressor. Additionally, I bussed the guitar signal to an auxiliary track containing the Waves S1 Stereo Imager and Native Instruments Raum plug-ins for added stereophonic width.

I tried an atypical guitar tuning of (from low to high) D A D F-sharp B E for this song. The first time I experimented with this kind of tuning was after traveling to Scotland in 2017 and seeing Nathan Coley's outdoor sculpture entitled "There Will Be No Miracles Here." Coley's bluntly expressed message of the artwork juxtaposed with the outdoor scenery deeply moved me to the point where I sought to find guitar tunings and chords that matched my emotions. Considering the dismal emotions of the "Old Flesh," I determined that I should use a tuning that I personally associated with similar feelings. An asset of the D A D F-sharp B E tuning is that I can play a D 6/9 chord with all open strings. Plus, to play a G 6/9 chord, I simply have to barre everything on the fifth fret. While alternating between the I and IV chords of the song—a progression used commonly by Lou Reed in the Velvet Underground—I keep the lowest string open so the shared tonic can act as a drone. Here, I use the drone as an analogy for the duration of female jouissance, but it can also be interpreted as representing the sluggish nature of old age.

Instead of writing out the guitar part in detail (in terms of dynamics or articulation) before recording, I decided to play the guitar parts reactively to the emotions of the song. Whenever I felt I was reaching a climax in "Old Flesh," I would play louder or increase my strumming to thicken the texture. If the song was reaching a low point, I would play more softly and infrequent. How I chose to free up my playing style recalls ideas made about female jouissance and the fluidity between multiple climaxes.

Despite the rarity of a synth being featured in punk, I chose to do so in this project in order to bring unique timbres to the music. Synth parts were recorded with my Arturia Keylab Essential 61 MIDI controller. The virtual instrument I decided to use on this culminating project was the Arturia CMI V—an imitation of the famous Fairlight CMI. My decision to use the CMI V came from its association with Kate Bush. During my first year of attending Belmont University, I returned to my apartment after a long night of work and listened to Bush's *Hounds of Love* (1985) while folding laundry. I nearly quit my music studies under the impression that I could never obtain a level of genius she possessed. With this culminating project being about women in rock and feminism, I thought the CMI V plug-in would be a great choice as it personally reminds me of Bush's music.

Using the sample feature of the CMI V, I fused together different sounds from the virtual instrument's library with hopes of finding a timbre that would best compliment my song. I included the HARMONIUM sample because Nico of the Velvet Underground would often play the harmonium during her years as a solo artist. In addition, I included the KICHAPEE sample for its plucky attack sound and the HARPDOWN sample for some extra ambient noise. Like the guitar, the synth ultimately

plays a drone throughout the entire song. While the drone is analogous to female sexuality, the organ-esque timbre of the synth evokes a funeral-like quality to the music, which pairs perfectly with the lyric's topic of old age.

The bass that I used for this culminating project was the Ibanez TMB100M Bass Guitar. It came with a broken tone knob, which worked to my advantage in producing a naturally distorted sound. To make the bass sound much bigger, I used plug-ins of the Bass Invader headstock, the 1x15 Bass Vintage DYN 57 matched cabinet, and the Logic Vintage VCA compressor. Additionally, I duplicated the bass track and panned the two tracks left & right to get a wider stereo placement. This would also help instruments that are centered in the stereophonic mix (like the drums and vocals) avoid competing against the bass to be heard.

Having never played bass before, this was certainly a learning experience. My hands were way too small for the neck of the bass guitar, so I had to adjust my playing by sliding to the frets instead of reaching them with my fingers. However, I am not ashamed of this. I think this level of amateurism worked perfectly for the punk rock aesthetic. When composing the bass part, I found myself caught in a difficult situation. While I did not want the bass lines to be too simple where they would be boring for me, I also did not want them to be virtuosic and complex to a novice like myself. What I eventually wrote was a Motown-influenced bass line that does not require much dexterity and acts as a countermelody to what I am singing.

Last but not least were the drums. For the drum parts, I used Native Instrument's virtual instrument plug-in called Abbey Road Modern Drummer. As an additional percussive layer to the mix, I used the UVI Orchestral Suite's timpani and tambourine

samples. The timpani sample in particular was utilized to give a sense of openness to the kick drum—something that would be apparent in Moe Tucker's idiosyncratic drum setup. Other plug-ins on the drum channel-strip were the Logic Studio VCA to emulate the sound of the Focusrite Red 3 Dual Compressor/Limiter, and the Waves Lofi Space to replicate a saturated echo that would naturally appear in a recording studio setting.

Mimicking Tucker's style, the drum parts for "Old Flesh" are minimalistic and repetitive. The drum parts alternate between hitting the kick/timpani and the tambourine. Additionally, the tempo drags to symbolically represent the slowness of old age, fluctuating between 70-82 bpm. Analogous to female jouissance, the drums use the fluidity of the tempo to create multiple points of high and low intensity in the song.

Chapter 2

UK Punk

The goal of this chapter is to investigate how acts of détournement, or the process of creatively transforming art by disfiguring it, can be incorporated into the composition of anti-sexist punk rock music. As a counterpoint to the mainstream, women of the UK punk movement in the 1970s purposely subverted masculine clichés by adding elements to the music that were considered atypical to the conventional sound. In addition to sonic qualities, these women also détoured the lyrics of punk to highlight how they, too, were outsiders in the punk rock milieu due to their gender. I have composed my own song inspired by these acts of détournement from female-fronted bands like X-Ray Spex, the Slits, and the Raincoats.

Analysis

By 1976, punk rock music had become a popular phenomenon. Punk—a word with early connotations of a prostitute, a low-life, a homosexual, and a petty criminal—was now being used in journalism to denote this emergent counterculture and deviant genre of music in New York City (Ambrosch 2018). Bands that were part of this first wave of punk in America included the Ramones, the Runaways, Blondie, Talking Heads, and Richard Hell with the Voidoids. Punk was not an exclusively American phenomenon; many other countries had their own punk movements—albeit, for different reasons. While the punk scene in the United States was initiated by art students and

angsty middle-class teenagers, punk in the United Kingdom was instead championed by members of the working class who were going through hard times (Hannon 2010). The unemployment as well as the currency inflation rates rose, capping at about 1.5 million and 18 percent respectively by the end of the decade. In addition, the United Kingdom "had a national debt of £8.4 billion, and in 1976, the country had to be bailed out by the International Monetary Fund" (Fletcher 2018, 5). This financial crisis negatively impacted the youth, leading them to harbor a pessimistic view of the world. It would not be long before this nihilism would be channeled through music to dethrone society's status quo.

Credit for this punk uprising can be given to Malcolm McLaren (b. 1946-d. 2010). McLaren, former unofficial manager for the New York Dolls, returned to England after the band imploded due to heavy drug use and bad publicity. This fallout did not stymie McLaren's pursuit of a punk experience in the UK. An astute businessman, McLaren started recruiting teenagers for a band with aims to "cause some trouble and stir up some controversy, while also serving as an efficient and effective marketing instrument for advertising his clothing store SEX" (Kristiansen 2010, 17). The recruited teenagers were singer John Lydon (AKA "Johnny Rotten"), guitarist Steve Jones, bassist Glen Matlock, and drummer Paul Cook. Together, they were known as the Sex Pistols. Even though they were fabricated for the promotion of McLaren's SEX store, the band became figureheads for a generation trapped in class struggles as well as desolate nihilism. While the Sex Pistols were definitely the most famous group from the first wave of punk in the UK, there were many others. Some of those bands included the Clash, the Stranglers, the Buzzcocks, the Vibrators, X-Ray Spex, the Slits, the Raincoats, Generation X, the

Adverts, the Damned, the Pretenders, Essential Logic, and Delta 5. All of them sought to strike a nerve in society and rebel against the norm.

Punk's goal of dispelling the illusion of the status quo was partially inspired by Situationist International. Situationist International was an organization of avant-garde artists as well as Marxist philosophers from France in the late 1950s. Guy Louis Debord (b. 1931-d. 1994), co-founder of Situationist International, theorized that in societies where conditions for survival have been met due to the advancement of modern industry, life becomes a presentation of spectacles for the betterment of the economy (Debord 1967). These spectacles are social relations mediated by signifiers who present the idea of unification and satisfaction by owning commodities. However, this objectified world vision preys on the isolated and alienated by promising to reunite the separate through a "degradation of being into having" (Debord 1967, 5). To combat these spectacles, Situationists encouraged their followers to practice détournement—taking propaganda and corrupting it so the viewer can derive from it a new political slant. This act of recycling and plagiarizing art was viewed as necessary because it was a cheap form in which people of the working class could participate. It is also worth noting that détournement is not the same as parody. While both are subversive artforms, parody has exclusive connotations of humor and novelty—something Situationists strongly advise against in that the novelty could negate the intended radical message of the détoured work. In "A User's Guide to Détournement," Debord and Gil J. Wolman endorse the necessity of conceiving

... a parodic-serious stage where the accumulation of detourned elements, far from aiming to arouse indignation or laughter by alluding to some original work, will express our indifference toward a meaningless and forgotten original, and concern itself with rendering a certain sublimity. (Debord and Wolman 1956)

Although humor is acceptable, it must be properly balanced with political seriousness to avoid becoming novel entertainment.

Détournement can absolutely be seen in the ethos of punk. From fast overdriven rock'n'roll guitar riffs to transgressive and mocking lyrics, punks were corrupting the rock formula to highlight their dissatisfaction with the hegemonic norm. Additionally, détournement can be seen in the art of the punk movement. Jamie Reid, who is best known for designing the art for the Sex Pistols, was heavily influenced by the Situationist movement, creating punk's signature cut-up ransom note typography (Bird 2011).

Unfortunately, punk transformed into a spectacle itself after a year in the headlines. What was previously sold as an outlet for downtrodden and misfit youth of the UK became a cheap marketing act. As seen in bands like the Sex Pistols and the Clash, punk musicians started signing on with commercial record labels, renouncing their DIY roots. Women were aware of this manufactured escapism, but still recognized the punk genre as an opportunity. Lucy Toothpaste, producer of the feminist punk fanzine JOLT, proclaimed in an interview "rock is one of the ways in which women have been oppressed, I agree, but let's grab our chance to change that now" (Toothpate 1977). Embracing punk's ethos of breaking all the rules, women found a way of entering the rock music industry as well as subverting the industry's views of gender. Music journalists have called this an act of double-subversion, saying that it was "not only the subversion associated with the subculture itself, but also a subversion of sounds normally associated with 'male' music making in the pop and rock arenas" (McCookerybook 2013). Not only were these women outsiders because they were punk, but they were also outsiders because they were entering the "boys-club" of punk. These women took punk

and flipped it on its head, corrupting the music by parodying the culture's views of femininity while at the same time highlighting serious issues faced by women (Reddington 2018). I would argue even further that their acts of détournement are feminist. A theory or action is considered feminist if it sets out "to expose and critique the social effects of, and undo, the asymmetry of power relations that perpetuate the subordination of women and asymmetrical excesses of power" (Kielian-Gilbert 2000, 63). By that logic, these women's acts of musical détournement are feminist because they are purposely subverting the masculine clichés of punk by to détour a new meaning to gender issues. I will now analyze how bands like X-Ray Spex, the Slits, and the Raincoats expressed they were outsiders in punk through unique acts of musical détournement.

X-Ray Spex founder and lead singer, Poly Styrene (née Marianne Elliott-Said), was born in 1957 in Bromley, Kent, United Kingdom. Having a white mother and a Black father, Styrene was often excluded by others in early childhood for her biracial identity. By the time she was a teenager, Styrene ventured into musical projects, even recording a reggae song "Silly Billy" under the name of Mari Elliot (Sweeting 2011). It was not until she saw the Sex Pistols in 1976 that Styrene decided to embrace the punk music phenomenon and change her name to Poly Styrene, a play on words of the synthetic polymer. With her schoolfriend Lora Logic (née Susan Whitby), they formed the band X-Ray Spex—a name that not only evoked sci-fi futurism, but also critiqued society's consumption of commodities. After placing ads in a local magazine for additional members and rehearsing for a couple of weeks, the band began performing at

live venues. In 1978, they recorded and released their debut album, *Germ Free Adolescents*.

There were many unique aspects about X-Ray Spex's sound, all of which can be interpreted as acts of feminist détournement. Styrene's vocal register was high, shrieky, and declamatory. Her vocal approach was very bubbly and upbeat, which "provided a fun take, and pogo-ready" feel for punks to dance along to (Cochrane 2010). It was very unusual at the time for someone to incorporate a pop sound that so many other punk artists were rejecting. Logic also contributed to this pop and punk blend. While Logic was in the band for only a short while (getting kicked out and later starting her own band, Essential Logic), she had a lasting impact on X-Ray Spex's signature sound by playing bouncy melodic lines over the music with her saxophone. Incorporating pop into punk can be read as a feminist act of musical détournement. Within musical discourse, certain genres are positioned either as masculine or feminine, which can lead to a ghettoing of gender participation. As noted by Mayhew, "genres such as light rock, disco, pop, dance, country, etc. have more female participation than other loosely labeled rock genres such a thrash, heavy metal, punk, reggae, rap etc." (Mayhew 2001, 99). So, it would seem more fitting for Styrene to be a pop singer than a punk rocker. However, Styrene and her band situate themselves within punk and effectively subvert the masculine aggression of punk with a blend of feminine pop fun.

The lyrics of X-Ray Spex's music can also be recognized as an act of détournement. Besides anti-establishment frustration—a popular topic for many other punk bands at the time—Styrene wrote lyrics that talked about different issues such as consumerism ("Identity" and "Plastic Bag"), environment ("The Day The World Turned").

Day-Glo"), and gender ("I Can't Do Anything" and "Oh Bondage! Up Yours!").

Specifically with "Oh Bondage! Up Yours!," the title plays upon the male gaze and expectations of sexual pleasure. However, Styrene detours the meaning of the song from the bondage of BDSM to the de-bondage of women's liberation. In an article to *Revista de Musicología*, Simon Frith writes that in the perspective of a male audience "the song addresses an 'other' but we can only identify with the singer, with the voice, with the aggression" to which then offers "the exhilaration of female de-bondage" for these punk men to get behind (Frith 1993, 36). Instead of catering to the male gaze, Styrene reroutes her male audience from a point of sexual objectification to gender reformation.

Just as Styrene cast a historic legacy as a frontwoman in punk, the Slits would continue paving the way as the first all-woman punk band to come out of the UK punk boom. Their inception began when drummer Palmolive and singer Ari-Up met at a local punk concert. Despite Ari-Up being only fourteen at the time, her bombastic energy was enough to convince Palmolive to start an all-girl punk band. Initially, the Slits were made up of Palmolivie, Ari-Up, guitarist Kate Korus, and bassist Suzi Gutsy. Their name, constructed by Korus, was a double-entendre symbolically representing both a wound from a knife and female genitalia. Later on, Korus and Gutsy were replaced by Viv Albertine and Tessa Pollitt respectively. By 1977, the Slits had their first live concert, opening up for the Clash. Two years later, the Slits recorded and released their debut album, *Cut*.

What differentiated the Slits from their peers was their hodge-podge sound that came as a result from each member's unique background and interests in music. This can be observed in their inclusion (or exclusion) of instruments that were typical in the punk

rock genre. For example, Palmolive routinely avoided playing the cymbals and hi-hat on her drum kit, opting to instead keep time on the tom drums with the snare for accentuation. A small change in drum style should not be overlooked, as "this dismissal of one of the key defining elements of rock and roll drumming alone made the Slits stand out musically from their contemporaries" (Cogan 2012, 124). It should also be noted that this style of playing is best heard in their 1977 bootleg live recordings rather than in their debut studio album in which future Banshees drummer, Budgie, took over drums once Palmolive quit. Atypical instruments such as the recorder ("Instant Hit"), piano ("Love Und Romance"), and electroacoustic samples ("Newtown") can also be heard in their music. Additionally, even though Ari-Up was considered the primary "lead" vocalist, the band opted for "shared lead vocals, so that the tradition of having a diva-like front person was also disrupted" (Reddington 2018, 49). Even the slightest changes in conventional instrumentation can be read as strategic acts of détournement in that they challenge the accepted masculine hegemony of lead singer, guitar, bass, and full drum kit.

Similar to X-Ray Spex, the Slits incorporated elements from genres outside of punk into their music. While X-Ray Spex took more influence from pop, the Slits leaned heavily towards dub and reggae. Previously, reggae was situated on the masculine end of the spectrum in comparison to more "feminine" genres like pop, dance, and disco. However, even though reggae exhibits masculinity from within its own context, reggae is still considered "Other" in white British society and feminine in comparison to punk's unhinged aggression. The Slits exercised this "Otherness" that they particularly felt as women with an "attempt to distinguish themselves from the crowd and establish a new and less male-centric version of punk" by appropriating Black British reggae music

(Cogan 2012, 129). This appropriation of reggae and dub is best heard in Viv Albertine's style of guitar playing. Albertine has been explicit about this choice in opting for space and disjointed rhythms instead of buzzsaw eighth notes, believing that "female" rhythms are less steady than "male" rhythms (Cogan 2012, 130). Even band members and studio musicians that worked with the Slits agreed that "Viv's guitar playing freed you from this idea that you have to play every bar chord on every beat" (Gottschalk 2007). By utilizing the spaced rhythms of dub and reggae, the Slits subverted the masculine clichés of punk as well as performed an act of feminist détournement that highlights how they were "Other" within the music industry.

Even though Palmolive left the Slits before recording these songs on *Cut*, she continued to be involved in the punk scene with a new band called the Raincoats. The Raincoats first began as a duo between guitarist Gina Birch and bassist Ana da Silva, both of whom were attending art school in the late 1970s. Inspired by the punk movement, including seeing the Slits live, Birch and Da Silva formed their own band. After Palmolive joined the lineup, the group sought a violinist to complete the vision they had in mind for an unorthodox sound. Vicky Aspinall took the job after seeing a flier posted in her local record store (Raha 2005). Conditions at the time were tough, especially with many of the band members squatting in abandoned apartments (Pelly 2017). However, these imperfections in their lives and even in their musical abilities did not obstruct their goal of making music. Signed to Rough Trade records, the Raincoats recorded and released their eponymous debut album in 1979.

Like the Slits before them, the Raincoats wanted to embrace the freedom of punk rock while distancing themselves from the clichés. When talking to the press, the

Raincoats would often explain this mindset, saying that they "wanted to avoid those cliches, because they (the clichés) were male whereas they (the Raincoats) were all female" (Burt 1994). Aware that rock conventions were largely the result of the exclusion of women and the ghettoization of Blacks, the Raincoats set out to deconstruct the traditions of rock while highlighting important issues of gender (Reddington 2012). One way they accomplished this was through the inclusion of instruments that were outside of the tropes of rock music. Inspired by world music, the Raincoats featured instruments like the Indian shruti box and West-African balafon in their songs (Schemmer 2017). Additionally, they had Vicky Aspinall perform on the violin throughout most of their work. This can be read as a feminist act of musical détournement in that it corrupts the uniform gender coding of the rock ensemble. Within musical discourse, certain instruments are coded as either as masculine or feminine. In a 1951 survey conducted by Paul R. Farnsworth, J.C. Trembley, and C.E. Dutton, results showed that the bass, drums, French horn, oboe, trombone, as well as the trumpet were typically recognized as masculine. Conversely, the flute, harp, violin, and viola were coded as feminine (Farnsworth, Trembley, and Dutton 1951). By including the violin, an instrument that is commonly associated as being feminine, the Raincoats subvert the masculinist expectation of rock's standard instrumentation.

Rhythms in the Raincoats' music can also be recognized as an act of feminist détournement. Songs by the Raincoats frequently contain irregular rhythms that result from tempo shifts, mixed meter, and layers of polyrhythms. For example, in "Fairytale In The Supermarket," a song about women trapped in capitalism, the Raincoats make an abrupt change from the verse into the chorus as if the fairytale fantasy has been shattered.

The verse pounds away with guitar chords hitting every beat and the drums emphasizing the backbeat. However, in the chorus, the guitar switches to a reggae-like emphasis on beats two and four, while the drums fill in this space with sixteenth note tom rolls. In "Off Duty Trip," a song that criticizes army men's right to sex, the band plays at around 150 bpm during the verses, but unexpectedly drops as low as 94 bpm in the chorus. This fluidity and plurality in rhythm recalls observations made in the previous chapter about jouissance. Notions about the femininity of polyrhythms, tempo changers, and mixed meter has been discussed in other genres as well and can be used as a precedent. Citing the music of Joni Mitchell and Laura Nyro, Levent Donat Berköz likens it to jouissance in that variety in rhythms signify the "multiplicity of a woman's body and her search for a new language through which this plurality is scripted and celebrated" (Berköz 2012, 124). A fluidity in rhythm, tempo, and meter challenge the "oneness" of a singular phallocentric rhythm. I would expand that idea further, proposing that this is an egalitarian approach to beat hierarchy in which the Raincoats détour the phallic drive of the backbeat in rock music for polyrhythms that disperse power. Like the Slits, the Raincoats enjoyed reggae and dub music, and believed

... that a guitar could be wholly out of sync with the strong (first and third) beats in a measure, and the effect would be not chaos but openness. The drummer, Palmolive, learned that she didn't have to emphasize the strong beats at all: the loose, textural unaccented beats that showed up between the verses of a reggae number could be used to drive the whole song forward, and the space vacated by traditional "rock" drumming patterns could be occupied by thick, harsh, visceral swaths and sweeps from Vicki Aspinall's violin. (Burt 1994)

Whereas the Slits appropriated the rhythms of reggae to evoke "Otherness," the Raincoats did so to detour the phallic power of the backbeat for something more femininely dispersed.

Composition

I will now describe my anti-sexist punk rock song and the choices made after analyzing how these selected UK bands from the first wave of punk subverted masculine clichés with acts of détournement.

For "Wo-Mannequins," I was inspired by the topics of commodification and identity present in the lyrics of X-Ray Spex. After ruminating about what kind of commodities greatly impact a person's identity, I decided to go with fashion. Like many other things in the world, fashion is gendered along the binary of masculine and feminine. However, that feeling fashion was too vague of a topic, I decided to go one step further and make the song specific to underwear. Despite underwear being a source of comedic relief, there is still something greatly taboo about discussing underwear in public—hence the reason why underwear is commonly called "the unmentionables." That sense of taboo intrigued me about the possibilities of writing a song about underwear and what it could accomplish. On the surface, the song can feel comedic and tongue-in-cheek to grab the audience's attention. Underneath the surface, the song can present issues tied to feminism and gender expression in an act of détournement.

The lyrics of the song were based on broad observations I made about the American underwear industry through their televised ads and social media posts. I want to acknowledge that I am indeed not an expert in marketing or underwear, so my observations are entirely opinion-based and for the creative sake of this music. Overall, the song touches upon issues related to companies supporting the male gaze and women being objectified in underwear advertisements. That is why I chose to name the song

"Wo-Mannequins," to emphasize how women are not treated like real humans in the underwear industry, but rather as posable store-front mannequins.

When writing the melody for "Wo-Mannequins," I decided to keep it as simple as possible. The fact that this song does not contain a virtuosic melody is by no means a detriment. More so, there are a large number of assets to having an uncomplicated melody. One such benefit is that it can be easily memorized so that anyone listening to the melody could learn it immediately. Additionally, the simplicity of the melody helps me as a performer when experimenting with gendered characters and tone. Oftentimes, I would switch between a nasally and a breathy vocal style in the song to represent the masculine and feminine respectively. This theatrical performance of the lyrics is much more effortless when the melody is simple.

Not only did I record myself singing the main melody, but I also did so for the background vocals. My decision to have two vocal parts on a punk song comes from my analysis on détournement in this chapter. As discussed with the Slits and the Raincoats, the inclusion of multiple singers on a song détours as well as disrupts the masculinist tradition of having a single front person speak for the song. This can be best heard during the bridge section where two independent melodic lines writhe around each other to confuse the listener as to which one is the lead singer.

For the guitar and bass parts, I decided to keep most of the Guitar Rig 6 MFX settings on their channel-strips. In order to achieve a crunchier overdrive sound, I used a combination of both Native Instrument's Dirt and Waves' MDMX Overdrive plug-ins. Because "Wo-Mannequins" was written in the key of E-flat Major, I decided to make it easier on myself and use an alternative tuning to play the chords that I wanted. By

turning each string of my guitar down a half-step, I ended up with an E-flat standard tuning that better suited the key in which I was playing. The bass, however, remained in standard tuning because there was no need to play a low E-flat.

Inspired by the Slits' use of reggae rhythms to highlight their sense of "Otherness" in the punk rock culture, I chose to incorporate that element into the guitar and bass parts for "Wo-Mannequins." For a large majority of the song, the guitar plays skank-stroke rhythms on beats two and four of the measure. The bass also performs spacious rhythms common in the reggae genre. Personally, I found it weird to play a punk song with a lot of rest and space in the rhythm. Usually, I am much more apt for the buzzsaw approach by playing a constant stream of eighth notes throughout the entire song. However, I took this as a learning experience to challenge my proclivity to needing to play rapidly and within every measure.

During the bridge section, I play a triplet polyrhythm in the guitar against the drum's tom fill that was inspired by the Raincoats' fascination with irregular rhythms. The multiplicity of rhythms can be interpreted as an act of détournement in that it disrupts the phallic drive of the backbeat in rock music. This metric hierarchy also occurs during points in the song where I lyrically discuss disrupting the male gaze in the underwear advertisement industry.

For the synth parts, I experimented with fusing together different timbres in the CMI V's sample library. I started with the FLUTE2 sample as the main body for the sound. Flutes are typically gendered feminine, so I felt this was an appropriate sound to détour and subvert the masculinist expectation of rock's standard instrumentation. Then, using the CMI V's time-synth option, I created my own sample to add to the mix. The

sample was that of a saw wave edited at the second, fifth, sixth, ninth, eighteenth, and nineteenth partial. This created a mosquito-like timbre that the Slits were often fans of using (Albertine 2014). As a fun fact, the partials chosen also numerically align with the letters in the word "briefs." Although the synth is not featured as often as the other instruments in the song, the synth does provide an interesting interlude between the chorus and verse sections.

Finally, I recorded the drum parts. For the drum parts, I used Native Instrument's Abbey Road Modern Drummer. As an additional percussive layer to the mix, I used the UVI Orchestral Suite's triangle and ratchet samples. The triangle sample was chosen because it is a percussion instrument that is often pigeonholed for comedic purposes. Anticipating that the topic of underwear in "Wo-Mannequins" was likely not going to be taken seriously at first listen, I decided to embrace the full campiness of the song by featuring an atypical percussion instrument. A ratchet sound was thus chosen as an allusion to one of my favorite movie musicals: *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968). During the "Doll on a Music Box" song, actress Sally Ann Howes's movements are accompanied by a ratchet sound to give the illusion that she is an animatronic doll. Considering the song is called "Wo-Mannequins," a ratchet sound would give a nice word-painting to the music.

Drum parts were mainly influenced by Palmolive's work with the Slits and the Raincoats. Some songs that I used as a basis for my inspiration were "Shoplifting," "FM," "Love Und Romance," and "Fairytale In The Supermarket." This can be heard with the heavy use of floor toms to keep time and a relaxed reggae-like style. Other elements of Palmolive's performance style I attempted to include in "Wo-Mannequins"

was her fluctuation in tempo as well as her alternation between swung and straight-eighth rhythms. The variety in rhythms and tempo is an act of détournement in that it challenges the phallic "oneness" of singularity used throughout an entire song.

Chapter 3

Goth Punk

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the goth punk subgenre and incorporate its feminine-coded timbres into the composition of anti-sexist punk rock music. Siouxsie Sioux and her band, the Banshees, were some of the forerunners of this goth movement in the United Kingdom during the late 1970s post-punk era. Inspired by horror films and sexual taboo, the Banshees played with audio effects that not only altered the timbre of their instruments, but also evoked ideas of the "monstrous feminine"—a male's depiction of female sexuality as abject, threatening, terrifying, etc. The Banshee's choice to embrace—rather than avoid—the monstrous feminine can be interpreted as a feminist action in that it demystifies and reclaims female sexuality away from masculine logic. Through analysis and incorporation, I have in turn composed my own song inspired by Siouxsie Sioux and the Banshees.

Analysis

By 1977, the hype of punk was receding. Acclaimed author, Dave Thompson, remarked in his book, *London's Burning: True Adventures on the Front Lines of Punk,* 1976-1977, that "in 1976 we were creating a scene. In 1977, we were wondering who were all these strangers, and why did they all dress and sound the same" (Thompson 2009, viii). Punk—a counterculture that originally endorsed uniqueness and rule-breaking—had now become a marketing act to prey upon the UK youth's feelings of

alienation. However, a new dawn was approaching as the remains of punk turned into post-punk. Like proto-punk before it, post-punk is an elusive genre term to recognize bands that performed in the aftermath of the 1976 punk boom and attempted to retain punk's anti-commercial ethos while venturing out into different sonic territories. As such, post-punk encompasses a multitude of subgenres that splintered from punk, ranging from the abstract sounds of industrial rock to the acid-influenced music of neopsychedelia and shoegaze. New wave, a more pop-oriented post-punk subgenre, was also becoming in vogue with bands such as Blondie, the Police, the B-52's, Pylon, Adam and the Ants, Au Pairs, and the Go-Go's leading the way. Yet, there was a dark underbelly to these lighthearted and camp post-punk bands. They were known as the goths. Examples of goth bands would include the aforementioned Siouxsie Sioux and the Banshees, Joy Division, Bauhaus, the Cure, Cocteau Twins, and Sisters of Mercy. In comparison to punks, goths were a much darker, romantic, and introspective version of their predecessor. Visually, the goths sparked taboos by wearing all-black and BDSMinspired outfits "in a consciously anticonformist way, to play with the symbols of bourgeois culture" (Jerrentrup 2000, 26). Lyrically, they had a fascination with morbidity, covering topics such as

... surreal nightmares, the banality of urban living, jealousy and obsessive emotions, romantic love as salvation from death and despair, war and genocide, nuclear holocaust, fear of totalitarianism, alienation and anomie, abstract terror, scenes of murder and horror from a voyeuristic perspective. (Mueller 2012)

Their lyrics addressed the poignant emotions felt when reading a Gothic novel. What is more is that goths expressed the suffocating fears proposed by philosophers in the post-structural age with topics revolving around the "fear of technology, the Foucaultian oversurveillance of society, and lampooning masculine power" (Mueller 2012).

Aesthetically, the goths embodied the pitiable dread and the frightening shock felt by their generation as they looked ahead towards "no future."

Sonically, the music of the goths was just as horrific as how they looked and felt. To achieve these terrifying sounds, goths took inspiration from the technological advancements found in genres like reggae and dub. Instead of using the studio space and audio effects to create dance music or appropriate elements of racial "Otherness" (as in case with the Slits), goths used technology to conjure up ominous atmospheres. Audio effects such as hollowed reverbs and shapeshifting modulators (chorus, flanger phaser, etc.) became part of the hallmark sound for this goth punk movement as they assisted in creating a dreadful mood. Referring to Bauhaus's "Bela Lugosi's Dead," one of the most seminal songs in the history of the goth punk subgenre, Joshua Gunn notes that the song featured a "borrowing of punk musical elements (distorted guitar effects, reggae basslines), yet with a slower tempo and eerie atmospherics" (Gunn 1999, 37). This song, as well as many others by different bands, helped to craft and establish the trademark goth sound.

While it can be easy to assume that the harsh conditions faced by UK youth at that time played the largest role in affecting the visual, lyrical, aesthetical, and musical values of goth, it would be shortsighted as well as improper to ignore the influence that horror cinema had on the formation of goth. As noted by Isabella Van Elferen, within goth punk music "the eerie environmental sounds borrowed from horror cinema was immediately etched in the public ear as the superlative musical equivalent of goth darkness" (Van Elferen 2018, 27). Not only were the strategic use of elements found in horror films to

conjure ominous atmospheres, but they were also to confront societal norms at the time.

This was because

... horror films have traditionally been held in low esteem by British society so signifiers associated with such films carried pejorative and subversive connotations. Embracing Gothic aesthetics was an ideal way for English punks to anticipate and confront prejudice and attack mainstream English values. (Mueller 2012)

Consequently, goths wielded the subversive nature of horror in their visual, lyrical, aesthetic, and musical values to terrorize the hegemony of British society.

The goths took inspiration from horror films not only because of the genre's taboo and confrontational manner but also because of its gendered expression. Goth music has often been recognized for its celebration of femininity, placing "[lyrical] emphasis on gyno-centered traumas, portraying masculine sexual energy as a source of terror, and by shunning and ridiculing masculine conventions in rock music such as misogyny, instrumental virtuosity, and the obsession with authenticity" (Mueller 2012). This comes to no surprise as the horror film genre has a long history of feminist discourse. Despite gender disparities of representation in films across all movie genres, horror was the only genre to have female participation that was almost half or exceeding that of males. According to a recent GD-IQ based survey, female on-screen time as well as speaking time in horror films were 53% and 47% respectively—beating romance, comedy, sci-fi, drama, action, biography, and crime films (Google Editorials 2017). This can be interpreted from the fact that women have more options for significant roles in horror, ranging from being a Casualty or a heroic "Final Girl" that takes up the phallic knife to defeat the villain. However, those roles do not come without criticism. Whether dead (Casualty) or alive (Final Girl), they are both victims subjected to repressive power that

the slasher enacts upon them. As famously discussed by Carol J. Clover in her book *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror*, "killing those who seek or engage in unauthorized sex amounts to a generic imperative of the slasher film" as seen in titles such as *Halloween* (1978), *The Slumber Party Massacre* (1982), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), and *Scream* (1996) (Clover 1992, 34). Still, there is another role opportunity for women: the "monstrous feminine."

The "monstrous feminine" was coined by Barbara Creed in her 1993 book on the subject in which she attempts to "explore the representation of woman in the horror film and to argue that woman is represented as monstrous in a significant number of horror films" (Creed 1993, 7). Creed's argument that men depict female sexuality as terrifying was based on Julia Kristeva's theories of abjection and Sigmund Frued's theory of castration anxiety. Theories of abjection propose that men's fear of female sexuality stem from the release of bodily fluids (or even babies) that men do not possess—as seen with the menstrual blood in *Carrie* (1976) as well as the maternal body producing demonic children in *The Bad Seed* (1956) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968).

Castration anxiety is the conscious or unconscious fear of the phallus being harmed and is deeply rooted in the Oedipus complex. In addition, that fear can be triggered by the uncanny sight from looking at a nude woman and seeing that external genitalia are not present, or by the belief that entering into the unknown spaces of the vagina will castrate the penis (i.e. vagina dentata) (Creed 1993). Psychologists as well as philosophers have used this theory to rationalize why men are fearful of being seduced by women as well as entering into unknown places. This specific kind of fear can be seen in horror films with the mysterious femme-fatale in *Cat People* (1942), the female axe-

wielding beheader in *Strait-Jacket* (1964), the yonic caves in *Alien* (1979), and the unquenchable sexual desire of the female vampire in *The Hunger* (1983).

Whereas the Casualty and the Final Girl role types are results of repressive power against sexuality, the monstrous feminine role is born out of normalizing powers. Normalization is a social concept of conformity proposed by philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault was critical of Freud's ideas of sexual deviance being born exclusively from repression, arguing instead that society did not "censor" perversions, but rather "dedicated themselves to speaking of it ad infinitum, while exploiting it as the secret" (Foucault 1978, 35). Society—as Foucault expressed in his book series *The* History of Sexuality—entered an era of Scientia Sexualis in which the bourgeois, scientists, philosophers, and psychologists started searching for the "truth" of sexuality to form a knowledge-power. As a result, there was a hysterization of women's bodies, a pedagogization of children's sex, a socialization of procreative behavior, and a psychiatrization of perverse pleasure. Essentially, the intellectual elite constructed sexuality in discourse of what is "normal" and what is "Other." To connect this back to horror, the monstrous feminine itself is the labeling and embodiment of "improper" female sexuality that is used to reinforce the normalization of "proper" female sexuality in post-Victorian civilization.

There is an opportunity proposed by Foucault to disrupt and alter these powers. Foucault looked back at Ars Erotica (erotic art) with nostalgia saying that "in the erotic art, truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience" (Foucault 1978, 57). Instead of scientists labeling and qualifying sexual behaviors, the people who were performing those sexual pleasures were putting forth

their own truths into discourse. This can be seen in how the monstrous feminine is being reframed by horror audiences today. While the monstrous feminine does present itself as the "Other," its presence on screen does provide a way to "challenge the view that the male spectator is almost always situated in an active, sadistic position and the female spectator in a passive, masochistic one" (Creed 1993, 7). Meaning, there is a rare presence of agency by women which can also be taboo-breaking in that it offers personal truth of female sexuality into the matter (Berlatsky 2016). I argue that this feminist reframing and reclaiming of female sexuality is best represented by Siouxsie Sioux in how she embraces the monstrous feminine not only in her visual attire, but also in the timbres of her musical works.

Siouxsie Sioux (née Susan Janet Ballion) was born in 1958 and had an unusual upbringing. Aside from being a loner amongst peers, Siouxsie would surround herself with the disturbing works of Edgar Allen Poe and her father's books on Aztec mutilation rites—complete with detailed depictions of disembowelment (Savage 2010). Her sister was a dancer, and Siouxsie would often accompany her to the underground clubs in London as well as help her sew together risqué outfits. At these clubs, she was introduced to the music of David Bowie, Roxy Music, and Lou Reed. Additionally, Siouxsie met the likes of Steven Bailey, Billy Idol, and Sid Vicious. She and Bailey eventually started a band. Their initial sound imitated that of the Velvet Underground by shunning "connotations of authenticity, and virtuosity" as well as employing "drones, repetitive structures, and dissonant sound effects" (Mueller 2017, 2). Then, inspired by the title of the 1970 British folk horror film, *Cry of the Banshee*, Siouxsie decided to name the band as the Banshees. Bailey also changed his name during that time to Steven

Severin in reference to the character in 1870 novel that inspired the Velvet Underground's "Venus in Furs" song, as well as horror director Jesús Franco's 1969 film of the same title. However, the influence of horror and morbidity did not end there. Siouxsie soon started directing her band to sound like the scores of Bernard Hermann by incorporating the "jagged, disturbing atonal and tritone-based motives, startling glissandi, tension-filled tremolo, and other Hermann hallmarks" into their punk music (Mueller 2012). It did not take long for these frightening and gothic sounds to find their way to the stage. On September 20th, 1976, having done very little rehearsing, Siouxsie and the Banshees had their first performance at the legendary 100 Club Punk Festival (Raha 2005). Shocking audiences, Siouxsie even drew attention with her high-brow and lowbrow duality, combining glamorous kabuki-style makeup with raunchy S&M outfits. Neither exclusively catering to male gaze like contemporary female artists, nor imitating a homicidal slasher like Alice Cooper, Siouxsie Sioux carved her own path as an entertainer in something that can only be described as a sexually provocative witch that whole-heartedly embraced the role of the monstrous feminine.

Besides her visual attire, Siouxsie Sioux evoked the monstrous feminine through the timbres in her music. The Banshee's debut album, *The Scream* (1978), featured a heavy use of ghostly reverb effects. Songs like "Metal Postcard (Mittageisen)" as well as "Suburban Relapse" best illustrate this point with the instruments sounding completely disembodied and supernatural. Their following album, *Join Hands* (1979), experimented more with the fantastical effects of the flanger, conjuring *Twilight Zone*-like atmospheres in songs like "Regal Zone" and "Playground Twist." "Happy House" and "Christine," two singles from the band's *Kaleidoscope* (1980) album, used the uncanny sounds of the

chorus effect to accentuate how things are never what they appear to be. Indeed, other bands at the time used these kinds of audio effects, but "when they were employed by Siouxsie and the Banshees, however, the guitar sound was altered with modulation effects that turned the forceful progressions into splashes of color rather than hard-hitting riffs of masculine force" (Mueller 2017, 3). These sound-altering effects feminized the sound instead of adding a masculine element to the music.

To understand why these feminine-coded audio effects evoke the monstrous feminine, connections need to be drawn back to Freud's theory of castration anxiety. The fear of injury to the phallus was used to rationalize men's misogynistic fear of the yonic as well as the seductive women that draw men to it. Consequently, the fear of being seduced is embodied by the monstrous feminine. Philosopher Jean Baudrillard states in his book on the subject that "men, moreover, are never seduced by natural beauty, but by an artificial, ritual beauty" of makeup (Baudrillard 1979, 90). Makeup effectively blurs the lines between reality and illusion. Similarly, audio effects fuse together the sounds of the natural and unnatural, almost like sonic makeup. For Siouxsie and the Banshees, the "synthesized timbres celebrated artifice as a way to thwart masculine depth, an artifice used in the service of seduction rather than production" (Mueller 2017, 5). This timbral illusion to seductively lure the listener into a nightmare world is apparent in horror cinema as well. In A Nightmare on Elm Street, the film score relies on surreal sound synthesis as a way to simulate the nightmarish reworkings of reality (Buhler 2010). Every time Freddy Krueger captures his victims in their dreams, his theme—provided by a synthesized and reverberant violin—plays out in the background to hint at their approaching doom.

Reverb also has an effeminate quality because it is often associated with the yonic. Described by Rebecca Leydon in her article "The Soft-Focus Sound: Reverb as a Gendered Attribute in Mid-Century Mood Music," "the pleasure of reverberant sound acts as a model for other kinds of 'oceanic' musical pleasures, all of which ultimately stem from a nostalgia for an imagined 'prelinguistic' or womb-like state of oneness" (Leydon 2001, 103). Although Leydon associates the yonic reverb with pleasure, Freud would probably argue with his logic that the reverb instead triggers castration anxiety in men because it evokes the cavernous qualities of the vagina (dentata). Therefore, reverb should be approached with caution under masculinist logic.

Even though fears of the yonic and being seduced are founded on misogynist logic, Siouxsie Sioux's reclamation of these ideas are grounded in feminist action. As Foucault stated, trying to escape any sort of power relation would be impossible—much like the law of conservation of energy where energy can neither be created nor destroyed, only converted. However, participating in the process of forming one's own subjectivity in the matter can "unmask" the faulty notion that there is one singular truth (Taylor 1984). Thus, multiple truths disperse the power away from a single truth. Instead of avoiding any notions of the monstrous feminine, Siouxsie Sioux and the Banshees embraced it through their music as a way to demystify and reclaim female sexuality away from masculine logic.

Composition

I will now begin describing my anti-sexist punk rock song entitled "Pray For The Baby," and the choices made after analyzing how goth punk pioneers Siouxsie Sioux and the Banshees reclaimed the monstrous feminine with their frightening timbres.

One thing that I found difficult when beginning to write this song was the practicality of reclaiming the monstrous feminine as a passing non-binary individual. For Siouxsie Sioux and other goth women who define themselves as female, the plausibility of redefining the monstrous feminine trope is reasonably palpable. The misogyny that comes from men fearing femininity is something that women endure. As for myself who was born male and transitioned to non-binary, the concept is much more difficult due to my privilege of not experiencing that kind of sexism. Essentially, how can I reclaim something that I was never forced to identify as? My solution to this problem was to use an act of détournement. Instead of casting femininity as monstrous, I decided to portray sexism as monstrous in my goth punk song.

I began thinking of topics that I could discuss in which women are characterized as evil, but in reality, the ones who are passing this kind judgment on these women are wicked. At first, I thought about witches and inquisitors as a topic. During the days of witch hunts, many innocent women were accused and killed under suspicion of witchcraft. However, after I concluded that witches were a recurrent topic in goth music, I scrapped the idea. My next idea—which I eventually kept—was to focus on women who get abortions and religious conservatives. Almost like a modern-day witch hunt, women who get abortions are portrayed as child killers and some religious conservatives would even consider murder to prevent the abortion from happening. The irony is that to kill the person having the abortion would thereby negate the morals about which they preach. To be clear, I support religion, but am critical of religion being used as a means to justify discrimination or any form of harm against those who do not subscribe to the

same beliefs. That is why I wanted to write a song about how self-righteousness can become a monstrous means of pushing sexist agenda on women's bodies.

Just like how Siouxsie Sioux and many other goths were inspired by horror films, I wanted this song to be inspired by some of my favorite horror films. While not many of my favorites relate to the topic of abortion, some of my favorites discuss the horrors of childbearing, such as *Rosemary's Baby* and *Inside* (2007). In both films, a young woman is pregnant when an outside force (either a cult or a vengeful woman) tries to control the birth and owner of the child. I wanted my lyrics to tell a narrative similar to these films, but to recast the characters to reflect the dynamic between women who get abortions and religious conservatives. The title of the song, "Prey For The Baby," is a play on words and a reference to the tagline in *Rosemary's Baby*. Instead of "pray," the word is altered to "prey" to express how women who get abortions are at risk of being murdered by those who oppose it.

Compared to "Old Flesh" and "Wo-Mannequins," "Prey For The Baby" is more melodic. While it does not include a wide vocal range, it certainly contains more contour changes and less stagnation than the previous songs. When constructing the melody, I opted to include a lot of dissonant intervals such as minor second, tritones, and minor sixths. Additionally, I attempted to incorporate drama and theatrics into my performance of the lyrics. Like Siouxsie Sioux, I used a rounder vocal embouchure to produce a dark and hollow timbre that would best complement the atmosphere of the song. This can be best heard when I am singing "la la la la"—an allusion to the opening lullaby song from *Rosemary's Baby*.

For the guitar parts, most of the Guitar Rig 6 MFX settings were kept the same to give that signature Marshall amp sound. Additional plug-ins used on the guitar channel-strip included Native Instruments' Dirt, Electric Lady Flanger, and Psyche Delay effects. As for the bass, I used the Arturia Chorus JUN-6. These effects were chosen to create a womb-like atmosphere. Previously stated, reverb and other synthesized effects evoke this sense of the feminine and the yonic due to their ocean-like quality. These are in keeping with the topic discussed in "Prey For The Baby," considering its references to abortions (and the uterus).

Both the guitar and bass play in a register that is higher than usual. However, that is typical of goth music. The bass typically provides a pulsating and driving rhythm while the guitar supplies textural ambience. Besides harmonically accompanying the melody that I am singing, the guitar also does an imitation of an Andalusian cadence heard during the "la la la la" parts. Also, because the chord progression cadences on beat four of the phrase that I am singing—which is metrically the weak part of the bar—it can be recognized as a "feminine cadence."

In the spirit of horror films, I also tried to experiment with creating atonal and frightening sounds with the instruments at hand. This was done by scraping my pick against the strings, hitting the back of the guitar's neck with a drumstick, or flicking the broken tone knob on my bass. Plus, I kept my guitar in E-flat standard tuning. Even though I could have performed this song in regular tuning, my decision to tune all of my strings down a half-step assisted in creating dissonance anytime an open string would ring against a chord I was fingering.

The synth provides creepy melodic interludes between sections in the song. To create an eerie timbre, I used the sample feature of the CMI V. Sample of the FLUHARP was used as a basis because of its ominous and whispery sound. Next, I added the HARPSIM1 sample for its harpsichord quality and plucky attack. Finally, I added the following EEERRRY1 and WHISPIAN samples for extra ambience. The result was a ghostly piano sound.

Last but not least are the drums. For the drum parts, I used Native Instrument's Abbey Road Modern Drummer. As an additional percussive layer to the mix, I used the UVI Orchestral Suite's tambourine sample. The drums were bussed to a separate auxiliary channel containing the Arturia Reverb Spring-636. Once again, these reverb effects were used to create yonic atmospheres that invoke masculine fears of the monstrous feminine. Unlike the two previous songs, the drums in "Prey For The Baby" do not fluctuate in tempo. Instead, the drum part stays steady at an appropriately eerie number of 136 bpm. When composing the drum parts, I opted for parts that were much more abstract and cymbal-heavy to imitate that found in horror film scores.

Chapter 4

Avant-Garde Punk

The goal of this chapter is to investigate how the strategic use of dissonance and noise from avant-garde punk artists can be incorporated into the composition of antisexist punk rock music. Two subcultures of avant-garde music making emerged with the rise of new wave music in the post-punk era. These were the British anarcho-punk and the New York no-wave movement, both of which exhibited extreme forms of sonic experimentation. Anarcho-punk combined anarchist political philosophies with rudimentary skills to create abrasive music. No-wave was a nihilistic approach to music that sought the destruction of rock conventions. Although both of these subcultures came from different social and geographical backgrounds, they both pushed the limits of what could be considered "music" by their audience. Their actions can be read as feminist in that by eschewing musical consonance in favor of dissonant noise, there can be a disruption to the masculinist hierarchy within music as well as a promotion of egalitarian music making. I have composed my own song inspired by the use of atonality in the feminist works of Crass, Lydia Lunch, and Sonic Youth.

Analysis

A fundamental component to the music and the signature sounds of these avantgarde bands is the utilization of noise. To begin, I will discuss the definitions, aesthetics, and gender-codings of noise. The word "noise" has a long history of being recognized as

a pejorative term. As retold by Kim Gordon in her early days of performing with Sonic Youth, "Back then, noise was an insult, a derogatory word, the most scornful word you could throw at music" (Gordon 2015, 120). This comes as no surprise considering the Latin origin of the word, "nausea," is synonymous with sickness and negative feelings (Novak 2015). Not only is noise associated with nausea, but it is also associated with the feminine. Taking into consideration R. W. Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinity, masculinities are strategic acts that secure power over everyone else while femininities are acts of gender performance cast as "Other" due to hegemonic masculinity's delineation of power (Connell 1995). Under that proposition, masculinity is commonly upheld with a sense of goodness and acceptance. On the other hand, femininity is affiliated with inferiority and discontent. Consequently, the duality of consonance and noise in music map well onto the gender categories-codings of masculine and feminine, respectively. Discourse of these gendered musical constructs is discussed in detail by Marie Thompson in her 2016 article, "Feminised Noise and the 'Dotted Line' of Sonic Experimentalism." In it, Thompson states that "Eurocentric concepts of femininity have significant metaphorical resonances with notions of noise. The feminine shares with noise connotations of disorder, chaos, complexity and excess. Feminine silence has been construed as 'virtuous'" (Thompson 2016, 87). Thompson continues on, further emphasizing that "feminised speech, sounds and music-making" are generally acknowledged with the same vocabulary used to describe noise as "extraneous, improper, out of place, disruptive, loud, unpleasant and aesthetically displeasing" (Thompson 2016, 93). Specific to this culminating project, the music being analyzed in this chapter is the opposite of virtuous silence.

A band or artist's purposeful decision to submerge their audience in an unremitting amount of dissonance can be interpreted as a support for the feminine alternative to music. Thus, a strategic use of noise can be recognized as a feminist act in that it challenges conventional gender power structures. Thomas S. Caw has recognized this disruption of masculine authority by drawing upon Jacques Attali's theory of the "game of music." Attali's "game of music" is defined as strategies that are employed in tonal Western art music to cement what constitutes "dissonance," and how to properly resolve dissonance to achieve "consonance." With it, Caw suggests that "music that provokes disorder and anxiety without proposing the expected order, that embraces dissonance and tension without always delivering resolution, and that acknowledges problems without offering solutions subverts the 'game of music'" (Caw 2005, 24).

Hence, by subverting the "game of music," these bands are resisting the masculinist rules of how consonance and dissonance should be defined as well as treated.

It should be noted that the punk bands that I will be discussing were not the first to disrupt conventions or experiment with noise. Implementing noise in music dates back to twentieth-century compositions by John Cage and Luigi Russolo (Hainge 2013). However, when specifically taking into account Russolo's use of noise, the gender-coding of noise becomes much different. In the Futurist movement that inspired Russolo, noise acquired connotations of masculinity, racism, and nationalism. Although noise is gendered feminine in relation to music, it can also be gendered masculine if it upholds hegemonic values in securing power over others. Matthew Bannister connects this idea back to punk rock in his book *White Boys, White Noise: Masculinities and 1980s Indie Guitar Rock.* Since the inception of punk, the participation has been predominantly male

and white. As a result, the use of noise in punk became an act to assert white masculine power and authority despite its original anti-authoritarian ethos. The "white noise" of punk supports men's homosocial masculinity—functioning "as an idea of disruption and slippage, but not so well as a means of connection" with people outside the gender hegemony (Bannister 2006, 162). This poses a problem: there is now a binary of masculine and feminine noise.

To remedy this problem, I propose incorporating cybernetic definitions of noise into musical discourse. Cybernetics is a field of study referring to the science of communications in both machines and living beings. Considering that music can involve the communications (sound) of living beings (performers) and machines (instruments), cybernetic theories can have a place within musical discourse. According to cybernetic theories, "noise is a chaotic information source from which ordered patterns can be formed" (Rodgers 2010, 19). Instead of viewing noise as a mistake or a corruption, it can be thought of as a positive creation or communication. Additionally, "noise's 'positive' role co-exists with, and alongside, its 'negative' role. Likewise, noise can destroy or diminish the functioning of a system, but it can also force self-organising systems to reorganise with greater complexity and variety" (Thompson 2016, 94). Consequently, noise's role in both destruction (masculine) and creation (feminine) results in an ambiguous nature. Not only can noise be ambiguous in terms of gender expression, but so can the performers who create noise.

Although Bannister recognizes this ambiguous nature and gendering of noise, he states in regards to punk that noise still "ends up confirming male autonomy and power, because its indeterminacy can be used equally for subversive or conservative ends. Noise

is power, for good or ill" (Bannister 2006, 160). Nonetheless, this should not prevent the exploration of how noise can be used for radical and egalitarian means. Noise can be considered feminist if it works to "unsettle and transform normative gendered relations" (Thompson 2016, 87). Instead of upholding hegemonic values in securing power over others, noise can deconstruct and disperse this power amongst multiple gender identities. Just like post-structuralist feminists that "deconstruct gender as a site of authority and reconstruct it on autonomous non-hierarchical terms," these avant-garde bands dismantle the music and noise binary as well as promote feminist messages with their noise-based performance art (Nicholas 2007, 1). Analyzing the music of avant-garde punk bands will reveal how this was accomplished.

Avant-garde punk is an umbrella term used to denote experimental subcultures of music that formed during the post-punk era in response to the commercialization of punk. Although most other post-punk bands tried to retain punk's anti-commercial ethos while venturing out into new sonic territories, their attempts were ultimately foiled as a large majority of them signed to established record labels for production and distribution. Yet, there were other bands that truly took DIY aesthetics to heart. Some of those bands were part of a new movement gaining momentum in the late 1970s that looked at anarchy not as mere shock value, but as a true way of life. This was called anarcho-punk and it fit perfectly within the avant-garde category. Anarcho-punk is a UK-born subgenre that began in 1977 and peaked in popularity during the mid-1980s. Musically, anarcho-punk rockers were much more rudimentary in skill than their original punk predecessors. Additionally, they incorporated a greater amount of harmonic dissonance, shouted/screamed vocals with no discernable melody, and faster tempos into their

performances (Dale 2012). However, to only see this as a music subculture ignores its broad influences and cultural impact. Many of the people involved in the anarcho-punk community where not only musicians, but also progressive artists and theoreticians that drew inspiration from "Gandhian principles, radical philosophy, the aesthetics of the Beat and Bohemian poets, and the words of Rimbaud and Baudelaire, as much as from the formal anarchist tradition" (Dines 2016, 11). Principles of truth, anti-violence, free love, simple living, and antiestablishmentarianism are what the anarcho-punks lived for as well as preached by. Their advocacy for anarchy stemmed from an "enduring tradition of cultural radicalism" as seen in "the communes movement, in the avant-garde happenings of the 1960s counterculture, and in the 1970s free festival movement" (McKay 2016, 3). They positioned themselves as a backlash against modern punk's dependency on mainstream media to get their messages across. Running their own record labels, anarcho-punk bands had the liberty to advocate "a freedom of expression away from what they saw as the constraints of party politics" and promote egalitarian values through their music (Dines 2016, 10). Some of those values included Marxism, pacifism, vegetarianism, as well as fighting against racism, antisemitism, fascism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, and sexism. Feminism can be seen explicitly in the large participation of mixed-gendered bands like Crass, Poison Girls, Rubella Ballet, Lost Cherrees, and Chumbawamba.

Crass is often credited as the originator and a pioneer of the anarcho-punk genre. Formed in 1977, Crass was both a band as well as an art collective. Members of the band included Joy De Vivre (vocals), Mick Duffield (film), Phil Free (guitar), Steve Ignorant (vocals), Eve Libertine (vocals), N. A. Palmer (guitar), Penny Rimbaud (drums), Gee

Vaucher (artwork), and Pete Wright (bass). Their inception began at Rimbaud's rundown farmhouse in Essex (Raha 2005). He dubbed it the "Dial House" and turned it into an open-door commune, which in turn drew attention from his art-school colleagues, local misfit youth, and soon-to-be Crass members. Not long after the rest of the collective was pieced together, Crass began promoting their anarchist manifesto at music venues. Not only did they accomplish agitprop promotion through music, but also through their iconic band logo, promotional artwork, films, leaflets, protests, and live demonstrations.

The women of Crass made contributions that brought issues of gender oppression right to the forefront of their anarcho-punk music. Despite having female vocalists, there was an ill-conceived "perception of the band (and in particular their community of followers) as being unconcerned with the importance of gender politics" following their first two album releases (Reddington 2016, 104). Crass challenged this misconception with the release of 1981's Penis Envy. Unlike their previous records, Penis Envy was voiced entirely by Joy De Vivre and Eve Libertine while Steve Ignorant was asked to step aside for this album. Additionally, the lyrics were rooted in anarcha-feminist politics ("anarcha" being the feminine and lexical gender alternative to "anarcho"); such as fighting against objectification in "Bata Motel," stereotypical gender roles in "Systematic Death," and oppression within marriage in "Poison in a Pretty Pill" as well as "Berkertex Bribe." These choices sent shockwaves through the anarcho-punk community, as they were done during a time where fans were moving away from the "anyone can do it' empowerment ethos of its initial period towards the darker waters of the male-dominated Oi! and its association—rightly or wrongly—with far-right politics" (Solomons 2016,

29). To this day, *Penis Envy* remains one of Crass's most popular and agitating entries into their catalog.

Although anarcha-feminism was performed explicitly in the lyrics of Crass, it was much more discreet and inconspicuous within their music. Scholars have endorsed this observation, often saying that it is difficult to isolate the feminist activities of music making within the band because they are tied within a much larger egalitarian philosophy (Reddington 2016). There was no leader amongst the group, which allowed freedom for all band members to have a say in contribution—regardless of skill level or musical influence. The result was noisy and collage-like performance art that often gravitated towards the realms of experimental compositions of free jazz and musique concrète. This "angular" sound of Crass was "an attempt to evoke an unpleasant experience on the ear to shift the listening focus to the messages in the lyrics" (Licourinos 2017, 50-51). One can interpret these dissonant noises as an embodiment of the anarchist philosophy that they were promoting to their audience. I want to further note that I will not be going any further into ideas of anarchist politics; rather, I will use it as an analogy for their musicmaking practices. Essentially, to make proper mainstream music is to perform to a set of rules with skill gained by privilege. To make noise instead requires nothing beyond imagination and anarchist-fueled rebellion. By "deliberately avoiding certain capabilities they had for creating catchy, harmonically familiar and appealing music," Crass was practicing what they preached about a non-hierarchical and DIY way of life through music (Dale 2012, 145).

As the anarcho-punk movement was growing in the UK, so too was the abrasive no-wave scene in New York City. While it is usually categorized as a subgenre of punk,

no-wave should be recognized better as "anti-punk" that bears similarities with its predecessor only by its DIY aesthetics. No-wave not only denotes an underground music event, but also a radical art and film movement that coincided with it. The term "no-wave" originated in a 1977 magazine titled *No* and was a reaction against the growing new wave scene. Frustrated with how the punk bands of CBGBs had become commercialized acts, the people involved in the no-wave scene "maintained that 'music' was a very loose term, hence it should not be restricted to musicians because anyone can create it" (Machaň 2007, 33). This stance echoes the proclamations of punk.

Accordingly, no-wave bands prioritized performance art and rudimentary skills over virtuosity. In addition, they focused on using "rock's tools against itself" to challenge, threaten, and deracinate themselves from the musical roots of rock. As told by Kim Gordon in her 2015 memoir, *Girl in a Band*, she remembers no-wave as:

... how purposefully abandoned and abstract the music sounded. In a way it was the purest, most free thing I'd ever heard—much different than the punk rock of the seventies and the free jazz of the sixties, more expressionistic, and beyond, well, anything. In contrast, punk rock felt tongue-in-cheek, in air quotes screaming, "We're playing at destroying corporate rock." No wave music, was and is, more like "No, we're really destroying rock." Its sheer freedom and blazing-ness made me think, I can do that. (Gordon 2015, 101)

Besides common goals of creating "music that reminded of no other band or genre, [or] music that referenced nothing else" and bringing "punk rock to the limits of the *listenable*," there was no uniform sound within the no-wave scene (Machaň 2007, 34). Bands of the no-wave scene had their own unique fingerprint, ranging from the autodestructive sounds of Suicide, the flagellating cacophony of Mars, the trash funk of the Contortions, the shrieks of Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, the noisy atmosphere of Beirut Slump, and the dislocated grooves of DNA (Reynolds 2005).

Arguably, the most recognizable individual to come out of the no-wave scene and continue with a prolific career is Lydia Lunch. Born Lydia Koch, Lunch soon changed her name after running away to New York City and began stealing food for her friends. Upon arriving to the city, Lunch was figuratively "adopted" by Martin Rev of Suicide, who looked after her for a considerable amount of time (Reynolds 2005). Although initially inspired by the likes of the Velvet Underground, the Stooges, the New York Dolls, and Patti Smith, Lunch felt that punk had become too traditional. She believed that punk served its purpose in the beginning as an act of rebellion, but now the genre was just a recycling of old blues licks in a commercial showbiz performance. This outlook on the underground music scene changed after seeing the uncompromising nature of her caretaking friends in Suicide and another local no-wave band, Mars, perform live. Mars in particular distressed their audiences with untuned instruments and uncomfortable, out-of-synch playing. Additionally, Mars challenged gender roles by having the female members perform masculine-coded instruments (electric guitar, drums, low-register vocals) and male members perform feminine-coded instruments (bass, falsetto vocals). In response to this revitalizing experience, Lunch formed her first band, Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, and attempted to be something far more radical than anyone else (Machaň 2007).

Teenage Jesus and the Jerks was not only a disemboweling of rock music, but also an exorcism of personal insanity. As opposed to punk's political protests manifested as music, the Jerks sought to express their troubled mental psyche through music—albeit, many critics would disagree with using the term, "music." Even Lunch agrees that she sees herself more as a journalist or a conceptualist than a musician, merely appropriating

music as a tool to get the emotional intensity across (Reynolds 2005). The severe emotions harbored from living in the slums of New York City were conveyed by the Jerks through removing any hints of fun from the music, thus purposely alienating the audience. Oftentimes, Lunch would even play her out-of-tune guitar with a knife or broken beer bottle to create atonal and scratchy sounds. By fusing "thudding rhythms underneath dragging bursts of guitar noise, with Lunch's top-of-the-lungs vocal delivery," the ending result was pure cacophony for the Jerks (Raha 2005, 122).

After Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, Lunch began forming other bands, pursuing a solo spoken-word career, and collaborating with other contemporaries in the underground scene. While all of these projects sound sonically different from one another, there is a similar process in each one of them. Essentially, Lunch radically purges the masculine roots of rock, turning the music into a genderless blob of noise. Then, she immerses the audience in the resulting uncomfortable sounds to bring attention to the metaphorical pain of oppression. Having in fact been sexually abused by her father at a young age, Lunch dedicated herself to calling attention to and fighting against gender oppression (Raha 2005). Songs from her days in the Jerks, like "Baby Doll" and "The Closet," express the trauma of sexual assault with disturbing lyrics as well as the harsh sounds of her band. Works from the later-part of her career, such as "Oral Fixation" as well as "Conspiracy of Women," accomplish the same goal, but instead use crude spoken-word and dissonant ambience as accompaniment. This "kind of assault course of therapy: getting it out of her system by imposing it on the audience" can be interpreted as feminist (Reynolds and Press 1996, 257). By creating a noisy and emasculated version of punk rock, Lydia Lunch challenges gender hegemony as well as gives voice to victims of abuse.

I want to make aware that sometimes Lunch's approach to making dissonance can be interpreted as sadistic or tortuous. Personally, I do not believe this because I genuinely enjoy her music. However, I am intrigued by the notion of listening to her music as being synonymous to torture. To investigate this idea of music as torture, I turned towards Suzanne Cusick's study of music used in detention camps of Kandahar and Guantànamo. In addition to the disturbances in the body resulting from the loudness of the music, Cusick states that the music also caused disturbances in the identity of the victim. Forcing a person to listen to music at loud levels that they are unfamiliar with "target[s] the practices by which a human's being's cultural beliefs are embodied, performed, and made real as ethical practices" (Cusick 2008, 17). As a result, the listener can feel a sense of collapse or self-betrayal of identity when forced to listen to unfamiliar music. Connecting this idea back to Lunch's music, Lunch's goal was to destroy the masculinities of rock music. Due to rock music having a sacred place in masculine identity formation and sexuality, Lunch's deconstruction of rock could be identified as tortuous in that it threatens the gender hegemony that upholds masculinity over femininity.

As enduring and stable as Lydia Lunch's career was, many other acts from the nowave scene were not as fortunate. Overall, no-wave did not last past the early-1980s, and it gained very little press during the time it was proliferating. No-wave did, however, influence many people to start their own band and challenge the status quo of mainstream music. One of those bands that came off the heel of no-wave was Sonic Youth.

Comprised of Mark Ibold (bass, guitars), Kim Gordon (bass, guitars, vocals), Thurston Moore (bass, guitars, vocals), Lee Ranaldo (guitars, keyboards, vocals), and Steve

Shelley (drums), Sonic Youth paved a new path for punk music. Although Sonic Youth only caught the tail-end of no-wave when they formed in 1981, the band "carried forward several of the movement's anti-rock tactics—most notably foregoing hooks, riffs, blues-based structures, and a steady danceable backbeat" (Caw 2005, 21). Additionally, Sonic Youth played unconventionally tuned and prepared instruments to achieve abstract sounds not found in mainstream music. Their no-wave inspired approach helped conceive their signature indie noise rock sound.

Of all the band members of Sonic Youth, the one who is most associated with feminism is Kim Gordon. Born in 1953 in Rochester, New York, Gordon was the daughter of a sociology professor and a seamstress. After high school, Gordon alternated between colleges in Los Angeles and Toronto until finally committing to Otis College of Art and Design. While attending art school, Gordon experimented with collage styles and even participated in a performance art group (Raha 2005). This dabbling with music would continue as she moved to New York City after graduating. There, Gordon went to several no-wave shows and became involved with a band called CKM. CKM also did performance art pieces, including one collaboration with visual artist Dan Graham. Through her bandmates in CKM, Gordon became acquainted with Thurston Moore and Lee Ranaldo. By 1981, the group formed Sonic Youth.

Gordon's contributions were essential for the development of Sonic Youth's style. Music critics have noted her unique approach, saying that it is particularly "driven not so much by specific musical concepts as by an interest in subverting expectations around what art can be" and "invested in disrupting rock 'n' roll's habitual masculinity." (Mason 2015). Vocally, Gordon conveyed breathy and raw lines that felt more like cool spoken-

word poetry than saccharine melody. To quote Gordon, while "Thurston or Lee would usually sing the poppy, more melodic things from riffs one of them wrote; I sang the weirder, more abstract things that came out of all of us playing together and rearranging until everything jelled" (Gordon 2015, 145). Where she lacked in virtuosic skill as well as pitch, Gordon made up for in expression, timbre, and phrasing. This "idea of space, and in-between-ness, and the importance of phrasing" in her treatment of words was inspired from listening to female jazz singers from her parents' record collection at a young age (Fabčič 2020, 1). With her distinctive style of singing, Gordon delivered personal lyrics of experiencing sexism. Across the albums of Sonic Youth, Gordon tackled gender issues such as the objectification of women in the music industry ("Shaking Hell"), prostitution ("The Sprawl"), misogyny amongst celebrities ("Kool Thing"), sexual misconduct ("Swimsuit Issue"), and girlhood ("Panty Lies").

Not only did Gordon contribute vocals throughout Sonic Youth's discography, she also played bass and electric guitar. On bass, her lines were minimal—anchoring the rhythm section while the other men in the band would create abrasive sounds. Still, her bass parts were just as dissonant, adding "a guttural groove that sounds like an oncoming subway train" to the sonic palette (Bernstein et al. 2020). Like her voice, Gordon played the bass instrument without regard to technicality. Friends as well as contemporaries have addressed this before, often saying that Gordon "starts at a free and liberated point" and "paints with sound and emotion to make music" (Ratliff 2013).

Despite the fact that Gordon was involved with Sonic Youth for more than thirty years and participated in several side-projects, she does not label herself as a musician.

To be a musician promises the delivery of a product that can be recognized as "music"

from a conditioned audience standpoint. The denying of the "musician" label reflects

Gordan's perspective that she is more of an "artist." Within the noise-based punk music

of Sonic Youth, Gordon does not have to conform to any preconceived notions of

musicality. As described by Gordon herself in regards to circumventing virtuosity and

perfection,

At the same time, I was confident in my ability to contribute something good to our sound in at least an unconventional or minimalist way—a musicality, a sense of rhythm. All the No Wave bands, the jazz I'd listened to growing up, and the improv [my brother] Keller and I had done back in our childhood living room came back to me onstage, blurring with the rock-and-roll riff or theater Thurston always wanted to convey. (Gordon 2015, 146)

Gordon's style holds true to no-wave's egalitarian declaration that anyone can make "music,"—or at least contribute to the dissonant noise—and entertain an audience with a minimalistic approach.

Additionally, Gordon used the noise of Sonic Youth to create a new and anonymous gender identity. Because noise possesses an ambiguous gender under cybernetic theories, it can be effectively used for a feminist purpose to challenge typical gender structures. For Gordon, the noise allows her to escape patriarchal views of femininity. Gordon states:

Loud dissonance and blurred melody create their own am-biguity—are we really that violent?—a context that allows me to be anonymous. For my purposes, being obsessed with boys playing guitars, being as ordinary as possible, being a girl bass player is ideal, because the swirl of Sonic Youth music makes me forget about being a girl. I like being in a weak position and making it strong. (Gordon 2015, 182)

Here, we see an explicit statement in regards to how ambiguous noise can be used for a feminist purpose by taking the weakness associated with femininity and making it equal to the strength of masculinity.

Even though Kim Gordon and Sonic Youth were not part of the no-wave or anarcho-punk movements, there are similarities between each of them. Musical works by Crass, Lydia Lunch, and Sonic Youth all contain aspects of utilizing dissonance as well as noise to promote feminist ideologies. Crass created noise to support their anarchist and egalitarian manifestos by letting everyone have a role in the music making. Lunch created noise to purge the masculine roots of rock and put her audience in discomfort. Sonic Youth created noise to disregard any preconceived notions of virtuosity and to envelope in the ambiguity of the music.

Composition

I will now describe my anti-sexist punk rock song entitled "Kookie Kut Life" and the choices made after analyzing how these selected avant-garde punk bands disrupted the masculinist hierarchy within music as well as promoted egalitarian performance art making through noise.

As I started writing this song, I wondered how I could give the impression of a collective and egalitarian music making project despite recording everything myself. So, I decided to challenge myself with the task of making each instrument part have its own personality. In order to do that, I switched my mentality from that of a composer to being a director. I started to view each instrument as a unique character in a film based on the personalities and styles of famous avant-garde punk musicians. Additionally, I planned how these characters would act as well as interact with each other in the song. Once again, this was to subvert the patriarchal "oneness" of a song in favor of democratic plurality. Even if the resulting personalities of the instruments clash, the noisy dissonance would work toward my goal of creating anti-sexist punk rock music.

For the vocals, I wanted it to resemble Eve Libertine's style of singing. During her time in Crass, Libertine's voice had a very forceful and declamatory personality. Still, Libertine's tone was also sarcastic and silly sometimes when she parodied the performance of gendered identities. I tried to emulate this approach to singing by forgoing melody in favor of shouted speech-like vocals. Also, I added theatrical elements by playing around with exaggerated tones and expression while performing the lyrics. The result was noise in comparison to sweet melodic singing. However, this vocal noise can be interpreted as feminist in that it challenges to adhering to rules of consonance and perfect-pitch in order to be recognized as music.

The lyrics of this song are equivalent to that of a Trojan horse. At first impression, the title "Kookie Kut Life" comes across as very cute and frivolous. However, as the song progresses, it becomes anything but that. Inspired by anarchafeminism's views on marriage, I wanted to write a song that questions the role of marriage in preserving unequal gender roles as well as other forms of oppression. Usually, the wedding which marks the celebration of marriage is represented in music as a wondrous and ceremonious day. However, I détour from these ideals to highlight feminist issues.

Because "Kookie Kut Life" is about the criticism of restraints and strictly gendered boundaries, I thought it would be appropriate to jettison rules of proper song form. Both the verses and bridge sections are much longer than what they should be in a typical rock song. In addition, the chorus—which is usually a place of stability—is completely unpredictable. Each time the song returns to the chorus, I change either how long it is or what I say in the lyrics.

For the guitar, I wanted it to sound like Lydia Lunch's style of playing—abrasive, minimalistic, atonal, and desecrating. To achieve a really distorted tone, I kept most of the Guitar Rig 6 MFX settings the same with the addition of iZotope's Trash 2 plug-in. Also, I used an unconventional tuning of (from low to high) D A D G C F to help me voice some unique harmonies. This act of preparing my instrument with an atypical tuning can be recognized as a resistance against conventional tuning and consonant harmony.

Typically, the rock genre is a place where the (usually male) guitarist shows off fancy skill and complex riffs with dexterity. Instead of using the guitar to showcase virtuosity, I opted for simplicity and restraint. Harmonically, limited my harmonic vocabulary to the use of a C sus4 chord throughout most of the song. The C sus4 chord is neither a conventional triad nor a power chord, and purposely stands out in the context of rock music. To add some motion to this C sus4 drone, I added a Ring Modulator effect to the guitar channel-strip.

Inspired by Lunch's use of a knife or beer bottle to play the guitar, I wanted to take that a step further. During the mid-section portion of "Kookie Kut Life," I create atonal sounds by scraping and chopping a Christmas cookie-cutter against the strings of the guitar. This can be read as an allusion to the title as well as the cookie-cutting of gender roles.

To create the guitar's feedback, I bussed the guitar signal to a separate auxiliary track containing Artuaria's Rev Intensity. By automating the gain on the auxiliary track, I could control the volume of the guitar feedback produced from an infinite delay of the signal.

For the synth, I wanted it to resemble the minimal and destructive sounds Martin Rev brough to the band, Suicide. One of my favorite songs by the band is "Ghost Rider" with the jabs of fractured synthesized sounds against the programmed drums. Using the sample feature of the CMI V, I first started with the DOOR sample for its hard attack. Next, samples of ELECTRIX and REFLEAUTO were added for distortion. In addition, I used the CMI V's time-synth option to create my own sample to add to the mix. The sample was that of a square wave edited at the fifth, sixth, twelfth, and thirteenth partials. Together, the synth sounds somewhere between that of a printer malfunction or the Greek Emergency Alert System alarm. Either way, the timbre of the synth creates a sense of unease that the listener can understand.

The harmony that the synth is providing to the song is supposed to be completely fatuous as well as representative of the destruction to logic and reason. Although I strategically used a twelve-tone row of {084e1t362759} to dictate the synth's harmonic progression, the listener would probably find the nature of the harmonic progression to be superfluous because it does not follow tonal conventions found in most commercial music. In addition, the rhythm of the synth was chosen haphazardly and only slightly deviated from each section by phasing the second note by an eighth note.

Still, the structure and form of the synth parts becomes a little bit more stable during the mid-section point of the song. The mid-section has a rhythm similar to the wedding march of "Treulich Geführt" from Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin*. This is an allusion to the song's theme of marriage. However, chords that are played by the synth are based on a harmonized of the melody to C. W. Murphy and William Hargreave's 1903 song, "Little Yellow Bird." Murphy and Hargreave's song is about a sparrow

refusing a yellow canary's proposal for marriage, saying that the sparrow would rather keep her freedom than be stuck in a cage like a pet. This iconoclastic pairing of opposing views on marriage portrayed in song is supposed to offer conflicting ideas to the listener.

For the bass, I wanted it to sound like Kim Gordon's reactive style of playing. To do this, I decided not to write down a set rhythm. Instead, I chose to play the rhythm as I felt it —whether that was to play with the other instruments or play against them to create irregular polyrhythms. Throughout most of the song, the bass plays a melodic progression of F G A-flat E. However, it is disrupted by having the A-flat go up the octave. This was done to make sure there is no scene of melody in this noise-based avant-garde punk song.

For the drum parts, I used Native Instrument's Abbey Road Modern Drummer. As an additional percussive layer to the mix, I used the cymbals found in Logic's Retro Drum kit. Plus, I bussed the drums to a separate auxiliary track containing Arturia's Delay Tape-201. Performance-wise, I wanted the drums to sound somewhere along the lines of Ikue Mori's style of playing. During Mori's time in the no-wave band, DNA, she created an idiosyncratic style of playing resulting from fusing Japanese Taiko drumming with Brazilian rhythms. My take on this was to combine militaristic drumming with danceable clave-based rhythms. The result was really abstract and angular drum parts. This choice in drum patterns can be recognized as feminist in that it subverts the reliance on the phallic backbeat rhythms to make a song.

Despite all the different instruments having unique personalities and roles in the music, I wanted to still make them sound like they were working together to make one—

albeit heterogenous and noisy—piece of music. To accomplish this, I focused on playing with the other recorded instruments instead of against or separate from them.

Chapter 5

Riot Grrrl

This chapter aims to explore how women of riot grrrl and alternative bands appropriated bringing aesthetics of female adolescence into the composition of anti-sexist punk rock music. By using a strategy of spatial entitlement—the creation and transformation of spaces (physical, sonic, metaphorical, etc.) to make room for new affiliations—women of the 1990s punk movement brought the private spaces of girlhood and bedroom culture onto the public stage. Blending the private and public spheres of music making can be interpreted as a feminist action in that it challenges the gender binary. Additionally, it questions the belief that public spaces are domains reserved exclusively for male occupation and performance. By analyzing through the lens of spatial entitlement, I have in turn composed my own song inspired by the various girlhood aesthetics featured in the music of Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, Hole, and Liz Phair.

Analysis

During the 1990s, a new wave of feminism began to take form. This was known as Third-Wave feminism. Origins of the term "Third-Wave feminism" can be traced back to 1992 with the writings of Rebecca Walker—daughter of acclaimed feminist author, Alice Walker. A year prior in 1991, Walker was watching a broadcast of the Anita Hill Senate hearing. Hill testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee allegations of sexual harassment she had experienced from then Supreme Court justice

nominee, Clarence Thomas (Fossett 2021). Unfortunately, Hill's claims were dismissed. In response to this act of injustice, Walker wrote an article to *Ms. Magazine* entitled "Becoming the 3rd Wave." In it, Walker called "to search for personal clarity in the midst of systemic destruction, to join in sisterhood with women when often we are divided, [and] to understand power structures with the intention of challenging them" (Walker 1992, 41). Still, Hill's Senate hearing was not the only factor that motivated Walker's call to action. As scholars have noted, despite advancements gained from the Second-Wave movement of feminism in the 1970s, the progress "caused [the] patriarchy to double down on its oppression via media campaigns that claimed women were actually happier as second-class citizens" (Geffen 2020, 184-5). Consequently, the battle against gender oppression was far from over.

It would be shortsighted to recognize Third-Wave feminism as simply a response to a new force of misogyny. The new movement also sought to address issues within the feminist community. Although there were many positives to the earlier Second-Wave movement, there were also many criticisms. A large number of contributions from Black women—including Angela Davis, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, and bell hooks—were excluded from discourse. Also, many people felt that Second-Wave feminists were "man-haters" as well as enforcers of strict sexual behavior. Some of those regulations would be abstaining from heterosexual activity or anything that could cater to the male gaze (dressing up, stripping, prostitution etc.). Retrospectively, this would become known as the "sex wars" between feminists who believed that sex was what makes women submissive to men, and feminists who believed that it was a women's right to enjoy sex with a man (Snyder 2008).

Issues of choice that grew out of the "sex wars" became a focus for what eventually birthed the Third-Wave movement. Third-Wave feminists believed in the idea that "feminism requires not a particular set of choices, but rather acting with a 'feminist consciousness,' defined as 'knowledge of what one is doing and why one is doing it" (Snyder-Hall 2010, 256). Meaning, feminist ideology should not be based in a set of rules or actions, but rather in an understanding of how various societal structures and cultural traditions play a role in what a person chooses to do. In a way, Third-Wave feminists' choice to embrace femininity (wearing dressing, makeup, etc.) was an act of questioning why "girliness" was publicly unacceptable.

As time went on, Third-Wave feminists began to adopt agendas that were different from their Second-Wave counterparts. Some ideas they concentrated on were prioritizing anecdotal narratives within feminist discourse, taking direct action over theory, pursuing sexual freedom, and including minorities (Snyder 2008). Another item on Third-Wave feminists' agenda was the reclamation of childhood. For girls in particular, the innocent period of adolescence can also mark the beginning of experiencing objectification or other forms of oppression due to their gender. Third-Wave feminists thus set a goal to radicalize people to take action against sexism and reclaim girlhood from predatory misogyny. Gayle Wald discusses three different points in her article, "Just a Girl? Rock Music, Feminism, and the Cultural Construction of Female Youth," of how adults in the 1990s strategically appropriated girlhood in their mission, saying that it was used

... as a mode of culturally voiced resistance to patriarchal femininity; as a token of a sort of "gestural feminism" that is complicit with the trivialization, marginalization, and eroticization of women within rock music cultures; and as an

expression of postmodern "gender trouble" that potentially recuperates girlhood in universalizing, ethnocentric terms. (Wald 1998, 588)

Wald's first point is that appropriating girlhood was an act of escapism. It was a "kind of defensive retreat away from the possibility of being sexually labelled" as well as a nostalgic look back at a time of purity before conforming to standards of what it means to be a woman in patriarchal society (McRobbie and Garber 1981, 220). In Wald's second point, she recognizes that girlhood was co-opted by the media in an act of gestural feminism to market fun, but sexualized images of girl power (e.g. the Spice Girls). Lastly, Wald states that Third-Wave feminists' reclamation of girlhood allowed them to define it how they wanted to outside the typical tropes of a temptress Lolita or a dumb blonde.

The importance of reclamation cannot be overstated. As some scholars have addressed, "the spaces of youth (e.g., streets, bedrooms, etc.) and the forms of youth identification (e.g., fashion, music, etc.) have become battle grounds in the cultural processes of identification" (Kearney 1995, 90). No place of youth identification is more distinctive for girls than in the bedroom with "Teeny Bopper" culture. Teeny Bopper is an alternative subculture with a set of homosocial practices particularly prevalent amongst girls. Dating back to the 1950s, Teeny Bopper was a way for girls to escape the ogling of boys while connecting with other girls over shared interests in music, fashion, teen idols, etc. This kind of bedroom-based culture is extremely malleable and accommodating as "it does not operate any exclusion rules or qualification on entry" (McRobbie and Garber 1981, 220). All you needed was a bedroom, a record player, and friends to socialize with. Still, these spaces for girls were limited to private and domestic domains. In order for girlhood to be redefined publicly, Third-Wave feminists had to

break the binary of the private and public. To do this, Third-Wave feminists used a tactic of "spatial entitlement." Gaye Theresa Johnson first proposed the idea of spatial entitlement in her book Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles. While conducting her research, Johnson discovered a history of Black as well as Mexican-American activists, artists, and youths transforming the physical spaces around them to make room for new egalitarian relationships. Johnson makes clear that spatial entitlement is not limited to physical space, but also to music in that the "sonic realm is not merely a matter of frequency and vibrations in that it also entails the construction of social 'soundscapes'" (Johnson 2013, 29). Additionally, Johnson states that the strategic use of spatial entitlement helps the user "to perceive similarities as well as differences, to build political affiliations and alliances grounded in intercultural communication and coalescence in places shaped by struggles for spatial entitlement" (Johnson 2013, 30). Connecting this idea back to Third-Wave feminism and girlhood, riot grrrl—a radical punk movement founded by Third-Wave feminists—can be analyzed for its use of spatial entitlement. By sonically blending private bedroom culture with the public punk stage, riot grrrls uncovered differences between genders in the punk scene, formed alliances with other feminists, and communicated struggles against gender oppression through their music. I argue that analyzing the music of these bands through the lens of spatial entitlement will assist in my goal of composing anti-sexist punk rock music.

Riot grrrl was an early 1990s music genre as well as an underground social movement that explicitly combined Third-Wave feminist ideologies with punk rock.

Geographically, riot grrrl was founded in Olympia, Washington and Washington, DC.

These women's decision to base their music in punk apart from any other kind of genre was deliberate. Inspired by punk's legacy of DIY aesthetics and overthrowing social norms, riot grrrls sought to challenge sexism through music. Essentially, if "punk gave boys who defied their dominant gender norms a creative space," then the same opportunity should be granted towards girls (Briggs 2015, 5). However, that opportunity came with many hurdles and barriers. Although there is a long history of women in punk rock before riot grrrl, the presence of women pales in comparison to men. In addition, the dominant kind of punk at the time in the late-1980s and early-1990s was hardcore—a subgenre that favored masculinity and aggression. A hardcore punk gig would routinely have a large male attendance and violent dance forms like moshing. The homosocial atmosphere would contribute to a sense that this was in fact a boys' club. Consequently, many women were exposed to sexism and violence at these hardcore shows, which in turn deterred them from being part of the punk scene. As an act of resistance, riot grrrls set out to disempower the masculine toxicity of punk "in ways that subvert their initial meaning and by keeping enough of their content as originals, as prototypes, while silencing whatever could be seen as threatening and 'irrelevant'" (Kouvarou 2015, 457). By removing the sexist part of punk, riot grrrls wanted to encourage more women to join the music scene.

Not only did riot grrrls communicate their ideologies through music, but they also used zines. Zines, or fan magazines, have a long history within punk. It was an effective way for members of the punk community to write about and publish pieces that mass media usually wouldn't cater to. At the same time, the creation and sharing of zines also

calls back to the teenage pen-pal network of Teeny Bopper culture (Moore 2010), which gave girls the freedom to express and share desires with one another.

Despite the fact that riot grrrl is recognized as a music genre, it was never stylistically codified (Smith 2011). The sounds of riot grrrl ranged from hardcore, to pop punk, grunge, alternative, and avant-garde. Still, there is a common thread amongst all of them; namely, the appropriation of girlhood aesthetics into punk. To fend off the predatory misogyny, "riot grrrls chose to upset the status quo of power relations by rejecting the potential of desire, deviating from the conventions of femininity and female sexuality, and opposing to the objectification of female performers" (Mantila 2009, 69). By coupling their girlhood femininity with abrasive sounds, riot grrrls could upset the male gaze. Lyrically, riot grrrls often dealt with serious subjects of sexual abuse, harassment, men's depreciation of women, and other forms of oppression (Mantila 2009). But they also sang about more uplifting topics like empowerment, sexual liberation, lesbianism, and friendship. Ironically, by the mid-1990s the term "riot grrrl" itself was appropriated by the media to describe any women in alternative music. Acts usually labeled as riot grrrl (accurately or not) are Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, Heavens To Betsy, Excuse 17, Sleater-Kinney, Huggy Bear, Team Dresch, Hole, Babes In Toyland, L7, Lunachicks, the Donnas, and Liz Phair.

Both Bikini Kill and Bratmobile are credited for starting the riot grrrl movement. Bikini Kill was made up of Kathleen Hanna (vocals and guitar), Billy Karen (guitar), Tobi Vail (drums), and Kathi Wilcox (bass). The band's inception took place at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, where Kathleen Hanna was attending to study photography. Although focused in the arts program, Hanna spent time

interacting with other students and learning about feminism. Her education soon turned into practice as a response to the social climate believing that feminism was a thing of the past. Taking action to help girls "name [sexism], analyze it, and see how it was part of a system," Hanna began performing spoken word with confidence that educating others on feminism could save lives (Marcus 2010, 40). After being encouraged to transfer her talents from spoken word over to music, Hanna started performing with a short-lived band under the name of Viva Knievel. Around the same time, Hanna encountered a copy of Tobi Vail and Kathi Wilcox's feminist zine, *Jigsaw*. Inspired, Hanna asked the two to start a collaboration. Once Billy Karen was admitted to the entourage, Bikini Kill was finally complete. What immediately set Bikini Kill apart from other bands at the time was their emphasis on girliness. Vail often spoke about this in interviews, saying that previous women in punk denial of the "all-girl" label inadvertently implied that girls cannot be taken seriously in music (Marcus 2010, 44). But in fact, there was an audience out there that took Bikini Kill's music seriously. Allison Wolfe and Molly Neuman, two friends at the University of Oregon in Eugene, were motivated by the work of Bikini Kill. Together, the two published the Girl Germs and Riot Grrrl zines (Raha 2005). In addition, they formed a band with Erin Smith called Bratmobile to raise feminist activism through music. Even though both Bikini Kill and Bratmobile never received proper commercial success, they spearheaded a DIY movement that inspired a lot of people. Most notably, Kathleen Hanna and riot grrrl inspired Kurt Cobain—who later became the figurehead for the Seattle grunge scene with his band, Nirvana.

The music of Bikini Kill and Bratmobile showcases aesthetics of appropriating girlhood and using spatial entitlement. Despite Bikini Kill's aggressive and hardcore

sound, the band put an immense amount of effort into making the environment friendly and welcoming to all. At their gigs, microphones were passed around, "giving the audience a chance to participate in the show where they clearly felt comfortable recalling private and sensitive events" (Briggs 2015, 7). Plus, Hanna famously invited girls to the front of the stage so that they could be safe from men moshing or sexually harassing them. These efforts to make sure that everyone felt safe while attending the show can be analyzed as a strategic use of spatial entitlement that brings the harmless spaces of domesticity to the punk environment.

Bratmobile also used spatial entitlement, but in a different way. The band's music was a blend of punk with 1960s girl group and surf rock sounds—a throwback to the kind of music early Teeny Boppers would spin on their home record players.

Oftentimes, Bratmobile would alternate between those contrasting gentle and distorted sounds in their shows. Sara Marus, author of *Girls to the Front: The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution*, commented on this, saying

We might be tempted to read something into that duality: a band's attempt, perhaps, to find its own way through a musical landscape marked out on one side by the tunefully twee Beat Happening and on the other side by fuzzed-out grunge? An abstracted etude on rock structure? A comment on girl rockers' historical dialectic between naughty and nice? All these themes were audible in the song. Fundamentally, though, this was just a band learning to write songs for the first time and airing that process in public. (Marcus 2010, 61-2)

To call attention to the last portion of the quote, it should be noted that Bratmobile's display of their vulnerability and imperfection was deliberate. In fact, during interviews, they "explicitly stated the importance of learning the ropes and playing 'badly' in public, to show potential women musicians that everybody starts somewhere" (Geffen 2020,

186). These women showed that a person does not need to be as skilled as someone like Eddie Van Halen in order to be taken seriously as a musician.

Although Bikini Kill and Bratmobile did not sound the same, the two bands used a similar vocal style of imitating girliness. Essentially, they "took the most devalued female vocal affectations—valley girl uptalk, cheerleader chants, girlish squeals of excitement—and gave them teeth" (Geffen 2020, 187). Their decision to articulate girly vocal styles not only appropriates sounds of adolescence, but also transforms the public spaces of punk rock shows to give it new affiliations with private bedroom culture.

By the mid-1990s, riot grrrl was losing traction and force. However, this was not from burnout, but rather from the result of the backlash that riot grrrl bands were receiving. Many men retaliated and harassed or even threatened harm towards women in riot grrrl. In addition, the media was skewering the movement by taking riot grrrl's call for "girl power" and spinning out false narratives. The music industry even co-opted this idea of "girl power" to market to girls provocative and docile images through the likes of the Spice Girls. To further add insult to injury, some of the largest discontentment for riot grrrl came from women in the alternative music scene. Tamra Lucid, founding member of the band Lucid Nation, discusses the riot grrrl era, commemorating the movement for "freeing a generation of punk women who were uncomfortable with the athletic performance style of these [other rock] bands," but at the same time criticizing how it inadvertently shunned women who did possess great skill (Lucid 2016). Riot grrrl inadvertently caused division instead of perfect union.

Lucid is not alone in thinking this. Courtney Love, founder of the band Hole, seconded this notion. Love particularly has an interesting relationship with riot grrl.

Notably, Love and her band were an influence on Kathleen Hanna when starting the riot grrrl movement (True 2009). Although Love is cited as this precursor to riot grrrl (as with her former Sugar Babydoll bandmate Kat Bjelland—who later formed Babes In Toyland), she often mocked the movement. She even went as far as to write a song about her aversion to riot grrrl (Lankford 2010). Despite all of this, Love and her band share similar aesthetics found in riot grrrl that are important for this analysis.

Hole was a short-lived band that had many line-up changes. Although they only released four studio albums, Hole made a large impact on the punk scene. Their 1991 debut album, *Pretty on the Inside*, was a collection of abrasive songs that leaned heavily towards the hardcore sounds of riot grrrl. Elements of noise should come as no surprise considering that Kim Gordon produced the band's first record. For their 1994 sophomore release, Live Through This, Hole featured a drastic shift in their sound. Compared to their previous record, Live Through This took more of a pop punk direction with strong melodies and consonant harmonies. Ronald D. Lankford Jr. delivers an in-depth analysis of this record in his book, Women Singer-Songwriters in Rock: A Populist Rebellion in the 1990s. Lankford comments that this added emotional depth to Hole's punk music through the inclusion of pop sensibilities came at a time where Love was in emotional turmoil herself. In public on stage, Love was a grunge queen; in private at home, Love was a single-mother still dealing with unresolved childhood trauma. This fissure in identities bled into the music in that the "space between Love's private and public life allowed Love and the band to shift between different personas in different songs and between different moods in individual songs" (Lankford 2010, 78). Live Through This was an artistic expression of blending the vulnerability of girly pop with the resilience of

punk rock. Love's soft side was also showcased in her lyrics. Topics discussed in songs like "Miss World," "Asking For It," "Doll Parts," as well as "Softer, Softest" felt personal and almost like they were taken from pages of a diary. However, images of femininity and sweetness in her lyrics are paired with the harshness of rape, body issues, objectification, etc. Additionally, the lyrics are delivered with powerful and distorted vocals. Like other riot grrrl acts, Love is not afraid to scream. By alternating between tenderly singing and aggressively shouting the lyrics, Love "denies her audience the satisfaction of a pure pornographic/erotic moment by disrupting its sexual pleasure with a bunch of ugly noise" (Nicolini 1998, 103). She effectively wards off predatory misogyny just like other contemporary riot grrrl bands. Plus, screaming recalls back to the idea of girlhood. As Love's former bandmate, Kat Bjelland, expressed, screaming "is a cathartic release from childhood, when she was always told by her parents to shut up and was frequently locked in her room" and "represents a way to overcome the feelings of devaluation and worthlessness that childhood silence provoked" (Eileraas 1997, 125). Taken as a whole, all of these ideas relate back to aesthetics of appropriating girlhood and using spatial entitlement. Regardless of Love's view on riot grrrl, she too created music that navigated the sounds of her domestic and public life.

Over time, the label of riot grrrl was applied to any woman in punk, indie, or alternative rock music genres. A good example of this is Liz Phair. Even though Phair is a looser fit to the original riot grrrl definition, it is still important to analyze her music to trace how has the legacy of riot grrrl lived on in different forms.

Phair's involvement in music began around her years in college. While studying art history at Oberlin College, Phair decided one day to remedy her boredom by counting

how many women were included in the canon of her textbook (Wolfe 2018). Angered by the revelation that women were not validated as much as men, Phair felt the need to rebel against the dominant culture of patriarchy. After graduating from college and attempting a music career, she moved back to her parents' home in Chicago. Over the course of several years, Phair recorded close to forty songs on a four-track tape recorder in her childhood bedroom. Even though Phair intended to keep these recordings private, they were bootlegged, traded, and immediately praised by audiences. The *Girly-Sound* tapes, as they collectively came to be known, eventually landed her a record deal.

Although Phair was never a part of the riot grrrl movement, she was appreciative of the label. Commenting to Allison Wolfe of Bratmobile on whether she felt pigeonholed by the "riot grrrl" label, Phair stated:

Sometimes. I wish they'd done it more. I would've felt like part of the army. Riot grrrl became something that's still used to describe a woman with a powerful voice. It was a broad basket. I imagine for you it was distressing, but I loved seeing riot grrrl being talked about. You guys made me feel stronger about being me. Because you existed, I knew that there was this thing that I was part of that had my back. (Wolfe 2018)

This influence from riot grrrl can be identified clearly in the Phair's music, as she also has aesthetics of appropriating girlhood and using spatial entitlement. Lyrically, Phair addresses topics of sexual desire, intimate relationships, and experiencing the double-standards of sexism in a confessional manner. However, this vulnerability is not demure or submissive. Rather, her lyrics come across as shockingly frank, defying conventional ideas of female sexuality ("Fuck and Run"). Sonically, Phair taps into the bedroom aesthetic. In fact, several of her studio albums try to recreate the lo-fi style and imperfections heard in the *Girly-Sound* tapes. By emulating the soundscape of recording DIY in a bedroom, it helps "gain the impression that each song was a diary entry or

perhaps the social equivalent of a girl zine" (Lankford 2010, 66). The lo-fi sounds should come as no surprise, as it has been integral to the development of riot-grrrl—especially with indie bands like Beat Happening inspiring the likes of Bikini Kill and Bratmobile (Smith 2011). Additionally, Phair would play around with sounds of adolescence, using nursery rhymes ("White Babies") or patty-cake chants. What Phair is doing is carving out a sonic space in the world of punk and alternative music where she can reclaim the idea of being a girl. As Marlie Centawer comments in her article "Rock-and-Roll Kinderwhore: Gender, Genre, and 'Girlville' in Liz Phair's Girly Sound (1991)," Phair "lays down a new form of 'girl' music: an inclusive playground, Phair speaks freely of what she sees and experiences, without being overly concerned about what others think" (Centawer 2018). Through her lo-fi music, Phair brings the sounds of her childhood bedroom to the punk rock stage.

Composition

I will now describe my anti-sexist punk rock song called "Pet" and the choices made after analyzing how various artists associated with the riot grrrl movement appropriated elements of adolescence and used spatial entitlement in their music.

Compared to the other songs featured in this culminating project, this one has a long history. The song's inception began somewhere between 2014 and 2016 when I was watching news coverage of the Kesha versus Dr. Luke lawsuits. Although I was not a huge fan of Kesha's music at the time, I felt deeply sympathetic to her situation and distress. As soon as the news coverage ended, it was followed by a commercial break that featured a promotion of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. This juxtaposition between the horrors and triumphs experienced by women in the music industry on the

television stirred something inside of me. Suddenly, I began to hear a melody in my head. So, I rushed upstairs to my keyboard and plunked out what I had imagined. That melody is now the chorus for this song.

Years later, in January of 2018, I revisited this melody to see if I could transform it into a complete song. At the time, I was preparing for my senior recital at the University of Southern Maine and needed another original composition for the program. During that time, I was uninspired and confused as to what to write the lyrics about. That all changed in the following month of February. I began to come to the realization that I was in a toxic relationship with someone who was constantly gaslighting me. For years, I was experiencing emotional abuse that made me feel like I was paranoid or that my bisexuality was harmful to others. These lies and manipulation tactics infuriated me. In a fit of rage, I grabbed a pencil and wrote down the lyrics to this song.

This song would take on new meaning when I moved to Nashville. During my first year at Belmont University, I was in a living situation where I was subject to homophobic remarks and domestic abuse. It got to a point where it seemed like no matter where I would go, I would experience some form of abuse. At that point, I decided to rename the song as "Pet" to symbolize how I felt: I was always being controlled by someone else.

For my culminating project, I decided to take this composition and rework it into a post-riot grrrl song. Although the severity of the gaslighting that I received does not compare to the trauma of sexual assault and date rape described in the song, I wanted "Pet" to acknowledge the pain and offer something. I wanted "Pet" to essentially say that

I hear the words of sexual assault survivors, and that I want to fight with them to end this kind of oppression.

Although the lyrics of "Pet" have not changed much over the years, I did rewrite the melody for this culminating project. Originally, the melody was very stagnant and did not feature a wide range. For this project, I decided to do the opposite and make the melody very expressive and featuring a lot of contour changes. The intention was to make the melody sound like a repeated nursery rhyme. In addition, the wide range of the melody would allow me to play around with "girly" vocal affectations such as squealing and uptalk. Both the allusion to nursery rhymes and girly vocal styles can be recognized as incorporating elements of girlhood into punk rock music.

Unlike the other songs in this culminating project, "Pet" features an acoustic guitar. I used my D'Angelico Premier Lexington LS Acoustic-Electric Guitar and recorded directly into the audio interface. Few plug-ins were added onto the acoustic guitar's channel strip. To really limit the dynamic range of the guitar, I added both the Native Instrument Tube Amp compressor and the Logic Vintage VCA compressor. Additionally, I used Arturia's Chorus JUN-6, because Liz Phair often plays guitar with a chorus effect.

The acoustic guitar appears in the beginning of the song to set a story of going from the private (bedroom) to the public (rock show). Similar to what is heard on Phair's *Girly-Sound* tapes, the acoustic guitar is supposed to represent this lo-fi bedroom aesthetic. To further accentuate this element of girlhood, I play the guitar with my thumb instead of a pick. This creates a gentle strum of the strings that imitates the sound of an untroubled person playing guitar in their bedroom.

As the lyrics become more intense and vulgar, the noise of the electric guitar becomes more apparent. The electric guitar's distorted timbre was made using a combination of Guitar Rig 6 MFX, Native Instrument's Dirt, and Waves' MDMX Overdrive. This creeping-in of the electric guitar can either symbolize the insidious nature of abuse, the rising anger of the victim, or the transition from private to public issues.

Overall, the electric guitar plays the chords from the original version of the song written back in 2018. The only thing that is new is the contrapuntal line played during the chorus section. This was inspired by Sleater-Kinney and Carrie Brownstein's melodic guitar work with the band. When recording the guitar parts, I tried to play them without precision and allow mistakes to happen—similar to Bratmobile's deliberate display of their vulnerability as well as imperfection.

To balance the rough and distorted timbre provided by the electric guitar, I aimed to create something prettier on the synth. Using the sample feature of the CMI V, I started with the CELESTE sample as a base layer. Then, I added the TOYPIANO sample for some twinkly sounds and the GENDER sample for added warmth. Finally, I added the GLOCKHH1 sample into the mix for a stronger attack. The result was a toypiano-like sound that symbolizes the childish nature of adolescence.

The timbre of the bass is conventional. All the Guitar Rig 6 MFX settings are kept the same. Besides playing the root of the harmonies, the bass provides intensity to the song. At first, the bass starts with a relaxed quarter note pulse. Then, it gets faster with constant eighth note picking. Once again, this growing intensity can either symbolize the

insidious nature of abuse, the rising anger of the victim, or the transition from private to public issues.

For the drum parts, I used Native Instrument's Abbey Road Modern Drummer.

As an additional percussive layer to the mix, I used the handclaps and rimshot sounds found in Logic's Retro Drum kit. Drums are supposed to invoke the Teeny Bopper bedroom sound with drum patterns similar to the ones found in that 1960s genre. During the verse section, the drums play a rhythmic pattern heard in the Ronettes' "Be My Baby." In the pre-chorus, there are backbeat handclaps in the same rhythm from the Marvelettes' "Please Mr. Postman."

Conclusion

My starting thesis for this project was that one can make rock music with antisexist values by incorporating feminist criticism into the composition of punk rock music.

In order to test this thesis, I examined the history of feminism and its implementation
within musical discourse. Using feminist music theory as a lens for observation, I then
analyzed several songs from female artists and mix-gender bands within the punk genre.

This was done in order to find similarities in compositional practices of these punk
women that explore rock's symbolic representations of gender. Finally, I described the
choices made as a response to this feminist study of punk music during the composition,
arrangement, performance, and recording of my original songs that seek to convey antisexist values.

Although my culminating project is primarily focused on the compositional and recording process of my anti-sexist punk songs, I believe that it can offer information to future scholars looking to investigate areas of gender as well as punk within music. At least, this thesis can provide a bibliography of reference material that may aid current or future scholars of popular music. But at most, this project is a contribution to the often overlooked discourses of feminism and gendered performance in music history. Fellow musicians and composers can also find interest in the qualitative evaluation of my songs, as well as the compositional practices observed in my research.

Chapter 1 discussed how proto-punk bands explored alternatives to composing with masculine structures and narratives by incorporating codes of female jouissance into the music. Notions of female jouissance—fluidity, diffusion, and duration—can be heard in my song, "Old Flesh," with the use of drones, fluctuation in tempo, multiple climaxes, and repetitious drum parts.

In Chapter 2, I talked about how women who were part of the first wave of punk in the UK subverted the masculine clichés of punk with acts of détournement to highlight how they were outsiders in the scene. My song, "Wo-Mannequins," détours the standard punk sound by using spacious dub-influenced guitar parts, polyrhythms, mixed meter, and feminine-coded instruments.

Chapter 3 investigated how goth punk women—particularly Siouxsie Sioux—reclaimed the monstrous feminine with timbres associated with the yonic. While recording "Prey For The Baby," I experimented with effects like reverb, chorus, and flanger to assist in conjuring an eerie womb-like atmosphere.

In Chapter 4, I wrote about how avant-garde punk bands disrupted the masculinist hierarchy within music as well as promoted collective music making through noise and dissonance. Noise was created in my song, "Kookie Kut Life," with the use of atonality, prepared instruments, extended techniques, distorted timbres, shouted vocals, and guitar-driven feedback.

Chapter 5 examined how bands associated with the riot grrrl movement used spatial entitlement to appropriate elements of adolescence and other girlhood aesthetics into punk. Sounds commonly associated with girlhood—such as Teeny Bopper dance

beats, pop harmonies, lo-fi imperfections, girly vocal affectations, and diary-esque lyrics—are featured in my song "Pet."

While accomplishments and insights on how to incorporate feminist criticism into music composition were gained from this culminating project, there were also some mistakes made upon which I would like to reflect. One was my mindset when I was writing the songs. Even though the purpose of this project was to investigate the incorporation of feminism into the composition of anti-sexist punk rock songs, the incorporation part came much later in the writing process than it should have—almost like an afterthought. To be quite honest, I personally feel that I leaned more towards trying to sound like the bands I was analyzing, instead of attempting to implement their compositional practices into my music. A possible explanation could be that I "put the cart before the horse" by writing punk music for the first time without having found my own unique sound. Although it is important to recognize that many great composers and songwriters all came from a point of inspiration before creating innovation, this should not detract from the fact that my insecurities did get the best of me. My insecurities of diving into a genre I have never associated with previously resulted in having to imitate the bands verbatim. I believe that this reliance on copying the bands diluted some of the potential creativity of the songs. In hindsight, choices made by these punk women could have been slightly altered to better suit me as an artist. For example, instead of fusing reggae and punk like the Slits did, it would have been more opportune for me to combine elements of punk and disco—a genre that could have détoured the meaning to highlight my own bisexuality. Additionally, I could have used a vocal embouchure that would brighten the timbre of my voice to sound more feminine instead of imitating Siouxsie

Sioux's dark vocal timbre. If I was to do this culminating project again, I would start by finding my own identity as a punk artist first and build from there.

Another aspect upon which I want to reflect is embracing the imperfections of my music. Many moments during this project, I felt I had to live up to high expectations from myself and peers. Ironically, to accurately get this DIY punk sound, I had to forego my proclivity for perfectionism and virtuosity. While this was tough for me at first, I soon began to appreciate this lo-fi and raw aesthetic. In a way, my music felt more truthful by showcasing that I am indeed not a perfect musician.

In closing, I wish to propose areas for further investigation. Although this thesis discussed a considerable number of women in the punk rock genre, the majority of them were white and cisgender. Bands like Romeo Void, Shonen Knife, ESG, Skinny Girl Diet, Big Joanie, and the Linda Lindas that feature non-white identities can be analyzed in a future project to see how some non-white punk artists have chosen to perform race and gender through their punk music. To diversify the gender and sexuality angle, queer identities in bands like Gossip and Against Me! can be researched as well.

Appendix: Scores

- 1. "Old Flesh"
- 2. "Wo-Mannequins"
- 3. "Prey For The Baby"
- 4. "Kookie Kut Life"
- 5. "Pet"





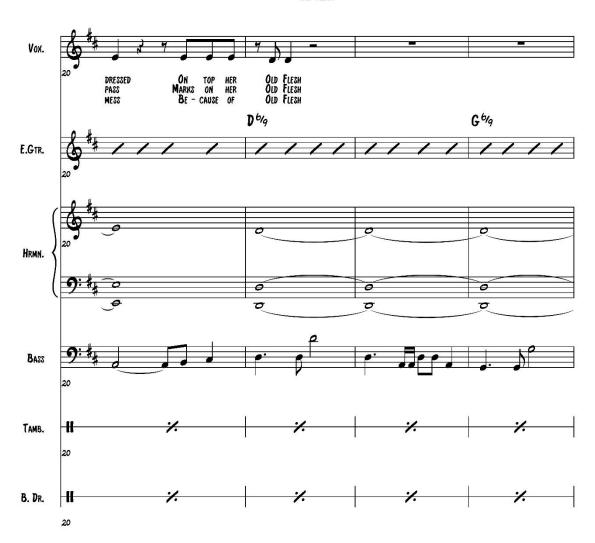
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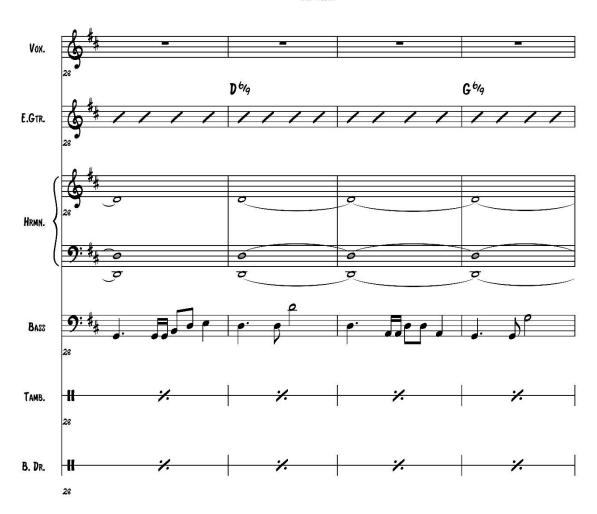


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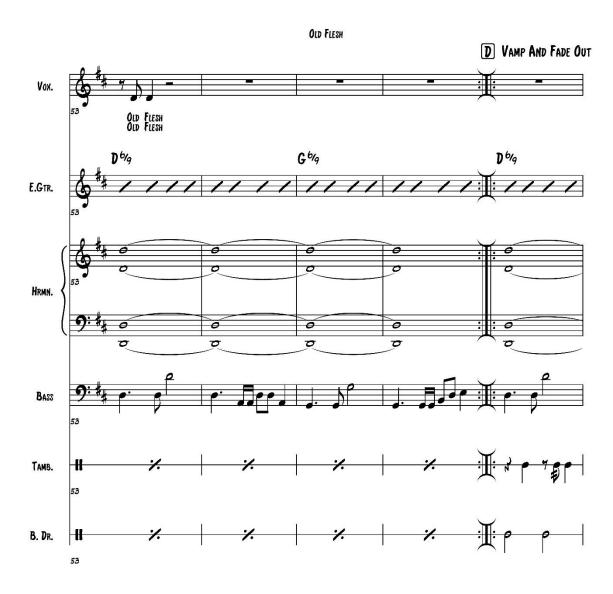




OLD FLESH















MO-MANNEQUINS





Mo-MANNEQUINS











MO-MANNEQUINS















PREY FOR THE BABY





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PREY FOR THE BABY

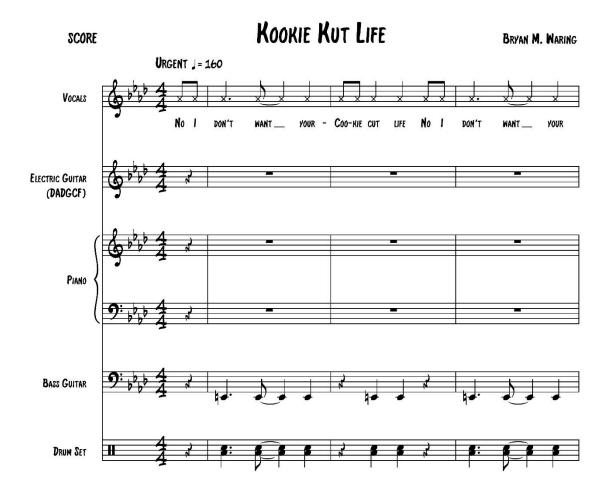




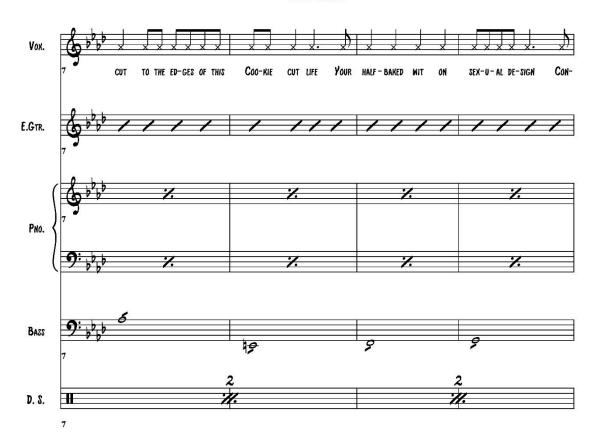


























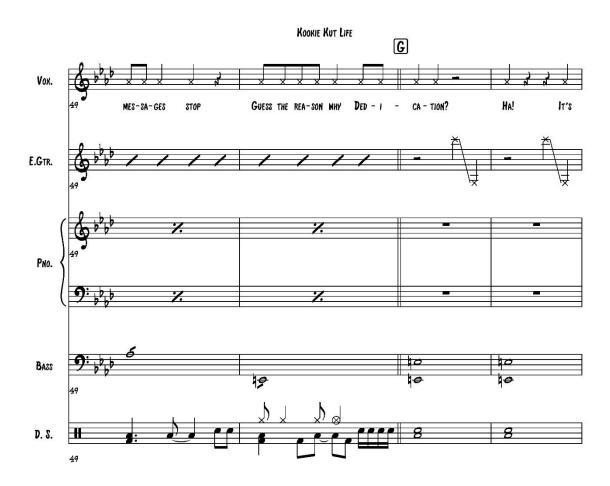






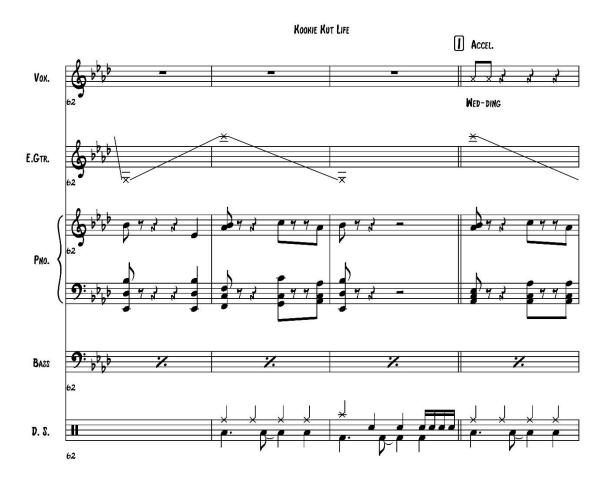






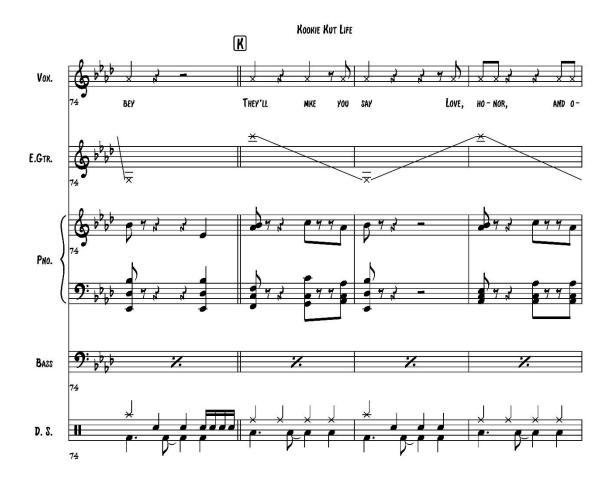








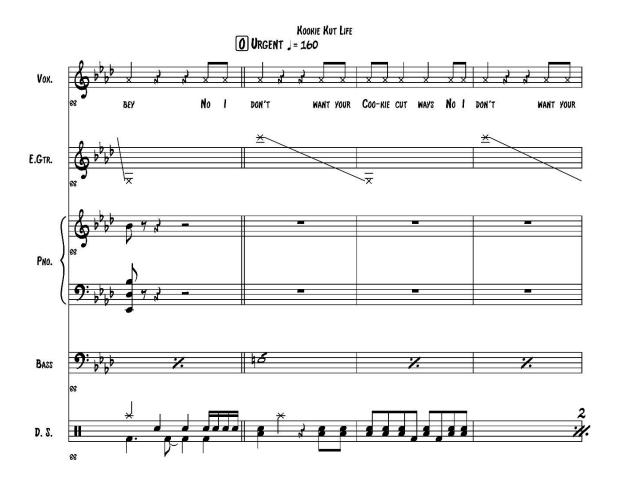


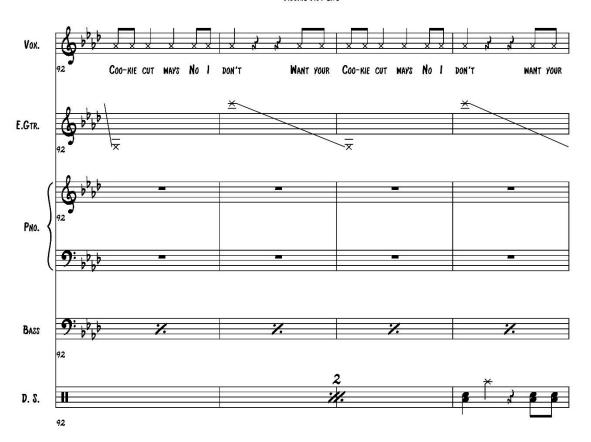










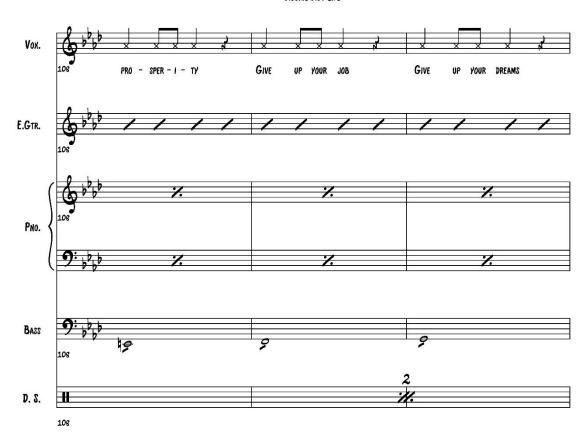


















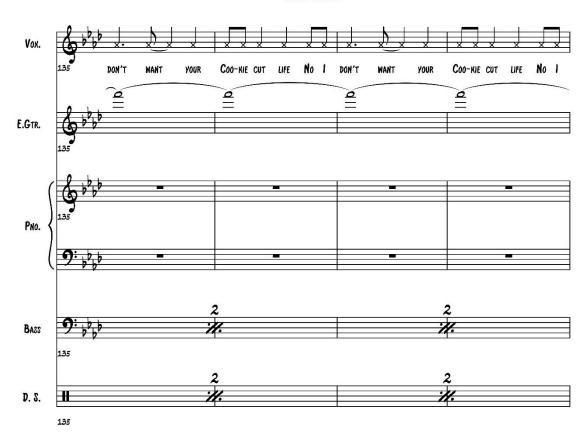
















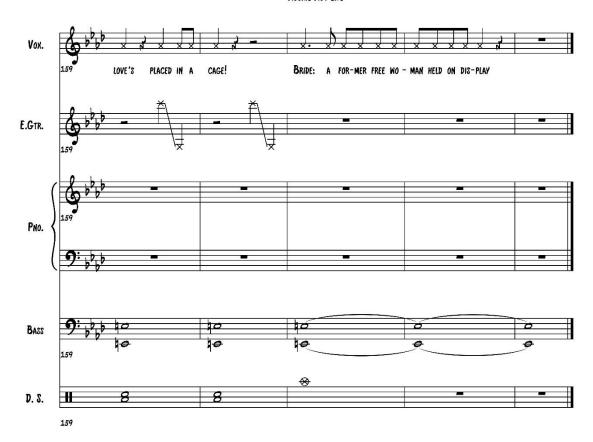








KOOKIE KUT LIFE























PET FEE-LING DEAD MORE THAN A -



PET __ BABE ____ TO-NIGHT ___

















LEASH AND COL-LAR ARE



















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