

METAL MUSIC AND MASCULINITY IN THE 1980S:
CULTURAL MARKERS FOR THE END OF THE CENTURY

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Introduction

The blue skies radiated with sunshine as the backdrop of a lush green environment so beautifully breathtaking it could only be described as a paradise on earth. The glamour of Los Angeles in the 1980s that appealed to so many was embellished by the marketing of the region, although not everyone there was wealthy nor did they always live the life of excess that many had dreamed of. Migrant musicians seeking the excesses of the entertainment industry could be found on Sunset Boulevard immersing themselves into the Los Angeles music scene. In those days, Steven Adler and Slash from Guns N' Roses, along with many other upcoming rock artists could be found stumbling along Sunset Strip, however not always recognizably. One night Steven and Slash attempted to get into the Rainbow Bar and Grill on ladies' night, Steven was let in, but Slash was turned away at the door. He returned home, consumed more alcohol, and decided he would dress up as a woman to get access into the club and get Steven to hit on him before he realized who he was. Slash explains,

My mom thought my plan was hilarious: she outfitted me with a skirt and fishnets, piled my hair up under a black beret, and did my makeup. I couldn't wear her shoes, but the outfit worked – I looked like a chick...no I looked like a *Rainbow* chick...my inhibitions were nonexistent. I sauntered up to Steady [the Rainbows bouncer that denied him entrance] and nearly laughed in his face when he waved me in with no pause for ID. I was on top of the world; I had won – until I realized that Steven was nowhere to be found... I left. On the long walk back to my mom's car, I thought every shout was directed at me, I thought every laugh was at my expense; I thought to myself just how hard it must be to be a girl.¹

¹ Slash and Anthony Bozzo. *Slash*. (New York, NY: Harper Entertainment, 2007), 79-80.

These sorts of shenanigans were common throughout the 1980s in Los Angeles and it was exactly that for women...hard.

This thesis will analyze the music industry of the 1980s, the emergence of MTV and ideas of marketability that encouraged sexual ambiguity through the androgyny of “lite” metal and challenged female musicians to conform to the surrounding culture to gain any sense of credibility within the rock industry. First, the work explores the political and economic circumstances in the twentieth century and their effects on Los Angeles populations. Second, it will distinguish how hybrid heavy metal subgenres emerged into the music industry and how the ostentatious lifestyle adopted by rock and roll artists in previous decades would change the music industry and those connected to it. Third, this thesis will analyze the androgyny “lite”² metal portrays to society with their appearances, imagery, style and how it was juxtaposed with their heterosexual lyrical content and the objectification of women. It will also look at “lite” metal’s position against thrash metal due to perceptions of what constituted authentic rock. Finally, this thesis will analyze the impact “lite” metal had on the rock genre and the growing music industry, including the marginalization of women in the music industry.

² Deena Weinstein. *Rock’n America: A Social and Cultural History* (Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 225. Weinstein uses the term ‘lite’ metal when referring to the glam rock or hair metal of the 1980s because of the distinguishable musical differences of their sound in juxtaposition to the heavier, traditional sound of their heavy metal predecessors

Chapter 1

Background Information

The glamorized idea of California and a better life led to the continuous migrations into Los Angeles during the mid-twentieth century. At the same time, the United States was transforming from a period of post-New Deal governing during the 1960s and 1970s to a new route of conservatism that promoted tax breaks and investment opportunities that aided in the widening of socioeconomic gaps and reinforced tensions between the classes of Los Angeles. The social circumstances and the rise of a market economy contributed to the growth of heavy metal in Los Angeles in the early 1980s.

The many white, Hispanic, African American, and Asian migrants brought ideas and attributes that contributed to the evolution of the Los Angeles region into a diverse global city. Industrial work sustained the livelihood of the surging Los Angeles population throughout the twentieth century but as deindustrialization affected the nation in the latter part of the century, the demands for work became a real threat to the people of Los Angeles. While this had detrimental consequences for many cities in the nation, Los Angeles encouraged new means of economic growth focused around the intensive craft and entertainment industries. The music, film, and craft intensive industries emerging in Los Angeles separated low and high skilled labor widening the socioeconomic gap between the wealthy and the working class, which included many of

the migrants and the various racial and ethnic groups.³ While both poverty and opulence existed in Los Angeles in the 1980s, it was still mythically the place to go in search of a better life and a place to pursue fantasies of riches, sex, and fame. As the Red Hot Chili Peppers, sang in “Out in L.A.,”

We’re all a bunch of brothers livin’ in a cool way.
 Along with six million others in this place called L.A.
 L.A. is the place, sets my mind ablaze.
 For me, it’s a race through a cotton pickin’ maze.⁴

The decline of the Cold War in the 1980s severed the profitability of industrialization, displacing families throughout the nation as they searched for new jobs. Although the entire nation was affected, Los Angeles kept its head above water as Democratic Mayor Tom Bradley invested in and supported business development, which changed economic priority from industrial work to “labor-intensive forms of craft production (motion pictures) or flexible high-tech production systems (electronics).”⁵ The economy that emerged split high skilled and unskilled workers while shrinking the middle class. With the dissolution of unions, businesses began to grow their profits through cost cutting rather than investing into production. Businesses lowered salaries, wages, and facility costs to save capital and improve their financial stability. This left unskilled employees, who were often women and ethnic minorities, having to accept wage reductions.⁶ According to American Studies professor Gaye Theresa Johnson,

³ *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Allen J. Scott and Edward W. Soja. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1996), 12.

⁴ Red Hot Chili Peppers. *Out In L.A.* “The Red Hot Chili Peppers”. CD. EMI America Records. 1984. <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/redhotchilipeppers/outinla.html>

⁵ *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Allen J. Scott and Edward W. Soja. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1996), 12.

⁶ *Ibid*, 12.

There were gains for particular sectors of both the state and national economies of the 1980s. But those gains were concomitant with (and largely based upon) drastic losses for the working class. In Los Angeles, deindustrialization, exportation of jobs to low-wage economies abroad, and the sharp decrease in social spending led to a decline in real wages in traditionally strong union labor sectors.⁷

Thus, ethnic minorities, the white working class, and women were the majority of the low skilled workers suffering, while owners and managers were profiting from the economic changes.

The Reagan administration encouraged this growing division with the implementation of new economic policies in the 1980s. “Reaganomics” provided tax cuts to the wealthy as a solution to rejuvenate America’s faltering economy, utilizing the theory that with tax cuts wealthy individuals could invest in the economy creating a greater abundance of wealth for all socioeconomic classes. Los Angeles adopted this new philosophy, which also changed the music industry of Los Angeles. According to Barney Hoskyns, a music critic, writer, and the editorial director for *Rock’s BackPages* an online archive, there was no longer a sense of community around bands in Los Angeles because they were abandoning indie labels for the corporate profits of major record labels.⁸

Historian Daniel Rodgers explains the rise of these individualistic values in the *Age of Fracture*, arguing the disaggregation of the American culture in the late twentieth century where “Selfishness there was aplenty in the age of fracture [defined as the late

⁷ Gaye Theresa Johnson, *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2013), 129.

⁸ Barney Hoskyns, *Waiting for the Sun: A Rock ‘N’ Roll History of Los Angeles*. (Milwaukee, WI: Backbeat Books, 2009), 331.

twentieth century] and new institutional ways in which the powers of money could be exercised and magnified”.⁹ Daniels claims American society reached a pivotal period in the 1980s characterized by fragmentation and individualism, which came as a result of changing social and economic theories, presidential rhetoric, education, and the splintering of previously unified movements. President Reagan reinforced this sense of individualism during his presidency as he advocated for government programs to “empower individuals to help themselves... [And] lift themselves to self-sufficiency,” creating a sense of responsibility for oneself rather than to the nation as a whole.¹⁰ Therefore, Los Angeles was not alone in its reconstruction of the social contract in favor of the ideologies of conservatism, favoring individual success over collective wellbeing.

The diversity within Los Angeles challenged its citizens’ acceptance of different races, ethnicities, cultures, and beliefs. Reports of hate crimes increased dramatically and they threatened Los Angeles populations throughout the 1980s, because people felt threatened by the waves of migrants whose beliefs did not resonate with their own. Their dissatisfaction with the growing diversity came in a variety of forms ranging from graffiti and vandalism, to assault, occasionally accompanied by lifelong damage to the victim. Gay men also began to find themselves victims of violent hate crimes. Although records were not kept before 1987, the evidence of sexual orientation related hate crimes rose from 61 cases in 1988 to 86 cases in 1989, with more than 90% of the victims being

⁹ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture*. (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2011), 6.

¹⁰ Meg Jacobs and Julian E. Zelizer, *Conservatives in Power: The Reagan Years 1981-1989: A Brief History with Documents*. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2011), 138. Also, see Rodgers, *Age of Fracture*, as he discusses the changes in presidential rhetoric with Reagan and how it transformed politics and society during the 1980s.

male.¹¹ Assault accounted for 63.3% of these sexual-oriented hate crimes and graffiti only accounted for 28.6%.¹² Not only were sexual-oriented hate crime rates rising, “but violent acts played a role in the statistics, especially in crimes against lesbians and homosexuals”.¹³ In 1980, there were 26 religiously motivated hate crimes reported, which grew to 125 reports in 1989.¹⁴ Racial hate crimes also grew dramatically in this decade, in 1981 there was only 4 reported hate crimes but by 1989 that number grew to 167 reported hate crimes, which “reflected the tremendous diversity of the county, as 7 different racial and ethnic groups were targeted”.¹⁵ The crimes motivated, by race, religion, and sexual orientation, helped to further divide Los Angeles’s diverse populations.

Poverty and class division had always been prevalent in Los Angeles and the 1980s only widened the gaps separating diverse people. As economic advantages were minimal to minorities and hate crimes against targeted groups pinned people against each other, the struggle of integration was reinforced by the escalating crime rates and gang violence and the different ethnic groups continued to segregate themselves. For example, prior to the 1980s, Opal Jones, an African American woman, organized groups to utilize President Johnsons’ War on Poverty for the minorities living in Los Angeles. However

¹¹ Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. “Hate Crime in the 1980s: A Decade of Bigotry” (A Report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, February 1990), 13.

¹² Ibid, 14.

¹³ Sheryl, Stolberg. “Decade Ended in Blaze of Hate: Crimes: The Number of Threats and Assaults Against Blacks, Jews, and Gays Last Year Were Tops in the ‘80s, the County’s Human Relations Commission Says”. *LA Times*. February 23, 1990. (Accessed September 3, 2016).
http://articles.latimes.com/1990-02-23/local/me-1220_1_hate-crimes

¹⁴ Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. “Hate Crime in the 1980s: A Decade of Bigotry” (A Report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, February 1990), 15.

¹⁵ Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. “Hate Crime in the 1980s: A Decade of Bigotry” (A Report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, February 1990), 15.

according to historian Robert Bauman, “Jones headed an interracial and sex-integrated organization and found that interracialism was difficult to practice, particularly as the ideologies of Black Power and Chicano Power became more prevalent”.¹⁶ Thus, those minorities seeking equality in this volatile mix of conflict only further divided themselves through competitive pride motivated segregation. Gaye Theresa Johnson explains that simultaneously, there were others seeking to defend “the American way of life” as they challenged the multicultural and working class movements. Some people believed that the conditions of the working poor were not due to government policies or corporate capitalism, but rather the result of the working poor themselves.¹⁷ However, in contrast to this belief, David Bowie questioned the racial marginalization of corporate television station, Music Television (MTV) during an interview with MTV’s VJ Mark Goodman in 1983,

David Bowie: I am just floored by the fact that there are so few black artists featured on it. Why is that?

Mark Goodman: I think that we’re trying to move in that direction. We want to play artists that seem to be doing music that fits into what we want to play for MTV. The company is thinking in terms of narrow casting.

David Bowie: That’s evident. It’s evident in the fact that the only few black artists that one does see, are on about 2:30 in the morning til around 6. Very few are featured predominately during the day.¹⁸

¹⁶ *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History 1964-1980*, ed. Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2011), 211.

¹⁷ Gaye Theresa Johnson, *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2013), 131.

¹⁸ MTV News. “David Bowie Criticizes MTV for Not Playing Videos by Black Artists.” *Youtube.com*. 1983. Posted January 11, 2016. (Accessed October 21, 2016).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZGiVzIr8Qg>

Then Mark Goodman went on to claim that MTV must appeal to a nationwide audience and that areas in the Midwest would be terrified by Prince and other black artists. These theories, beliefs, along with corporate marginalization, stifled the rise of multiculturalism and only served to escalate racial tensions further.

Meanwhile, the white working class also felt exceedingly marginalized. In 1961, President Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925 that was supposed to remove racial biases from hiring and admissions practices. Affirmative Action went through a series of revisions with the presidents who followed Kennedy, but working class whites continued to feel threatened by the growing desire to diversify via the implementation of racial quotas. In 1973, white student Alan Bakke was rejected from attending the University of California–Davis, even though his achievement scores “were higher than the averages obtained by people admitted under the special program for minorities”.¹⁹ *The University of California v. Bakke* was a pivotal moment in the complex meaning of diversity, as Justice Lewis Powell Jr. explained his deciding vote,

...siding with those opposed to the UC-Davis plan... He argued that historical redress was not a constitutionally compelling basis for an affirmative-action program, nor was the pursuit of social or institutional diversity with race and ethnicity as the “determinative factor.” But he did believe that some consideration of race in admissions policies was appropriate... He argued that the goal of attaining a “diverse student body” was constitutionally compelling as long as the definition of “diversity” situated along racial and ethnic identity as only one of an array of distinguishing attributes that might be taken into account in admissions decisions.²⁰

¹⁹ Edward D. Berkowitz, *Something Happened: A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies*, (West Sussex, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 172.

²⁰ *America in the 70's*, ed. Beth Bailey and David Farber (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 2004), 50 – 51. Also see Berkowitz, *Something Happened*, 172.

This case is but one example of the judiciary and political confusion that resulted from the Civil Rights Movement and the attempts to mend the racial injustices of the previous decades. Furthermore, it represented the growing dissatisfaction between the white working classes and the diversifying economy that lacked the capacity to provide more jobs for young adults.

These circumstances helped build support for former California Governor Ronald Reagan, who like other republicans believed that the government did not have the right to intervene in “legal efforts to advance the rights of any group”.²¹ With the controversies surrounding affirmative action policies still fresh in the white working class mind, Reagan took advantage of this conservative rhetoric to ensure the removal of government policies promoting “special privileges.” Reagan along with other Republican leaders of the time,

...condemned affirmative action as, in effect, “reverse discrimination” against whites and men. The 1980 Republican platform stated the true “equal opportunity should not be jeopardized by bureaucratic regulation and decisions which rely on quotas, ratios, and numerical requirements to exclude some individuals in favor of others, thereby rendering such regulations and decisions inherently discriminatory.”²²

This was Reagan’s attempt to relate to and represent the white working class of the 1980s, but many of his initiatives opposing these government programs failed. Although, the reduced funding of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the appointing of conservative leaders meant affirmative action had lost much of its strength

²¹ Michael Schaller, *Right Turn: American Life in the Reagan-Bush Era 1980-1992* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 132.

²² Ibid, 132. For an expansion of the list of “discriminatory regulations” continue reading this section of *Right Turn*.

in employment, education, and several other sectors.²³ However, these small victories for the marginalized whites did not overshadow the transitioning economy and the lack of jobs.

Within all of this, Musicologist Robert Walser explains, the diversification and commercial growth of the entertainment industry during the late 1970s resulted in low record sales for the pioneer heavy metal groups like Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath.²⁴ Historian Greg Renoff argues that the drop in heavy metal record sales in the mid to late 1970s came as a result of the explosion of Punk Rock and disco into the American music scene.²⁵ The combination of these two factors spelled a drop in record sales, “in 1978, a total of 762,000,000 units [of recorded music] were sold”²⁶ and “the units sold declined 10.4% from 1978 to 1979”.²⁷ When early British Heavy Metal emerged in the 1970s, a loyal subculture of white, working class men were attracted to the genre. American music journalist and critic, Lester Bangs explains that American “metal merchants have, for the most part, remained solidly Industrial Working Class even if some of them did bathe in mascara”.²⁸ Deena Weinstein, a popular culture sociologist, states that “...the heavy metal subculture was a response to the collapse of the 1960s youth culture, it was

²³ Michael Schaller, *Right Turn*, 133.

²⁴ Robert Walser, *Running With the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), 11.

²⁵ Greg Renoff, *Van Halen Rising: How a Southern California Backyard Party Band Saved Heavy Metal*, (Toronto, Ontario: ECW Press, 2015), xiii-xiv.

²⁶ Deena Weinstein. *Rock'n America: A Social and Cultural History* (Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 185.

²⁷ Peter Tschmuck. “The Recession in the Music Industry – A Cause Analysis.” *Musicbusinessresearch.wordpress.com*. March 29, 2010. (Accessed October 24, 2016). <https://musicbusinessresearch.wordpress.com/2010/03/29/the-recession-in-the-music-industry-a-cause-analysis/>

²⁸ Lester Bangs. “Heavy Metal.” *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1976), 333.

also a response to the cultural marginalization of the working class” during this period of economic instability due to the decline in factory jobs.²⁹ Weinstein argues that the popularity of heavy metal was most strong in the Midwest Rust Belt region of the United States because of the conditions of deindustrialization. However, Los Angeles interestingly became the center of a renewed American Heavy Metal scene where fans and artists, many of whom came from those Midwest regions, fled out west to live out the fantasies associated with Los Angeles. For example, both Izzy Stradlin and Axl Rose of Guns N’ Roses moved from Indiana to Los Angeles in the early 1980s hoping to seek out their fame and fortune.³⁰ Others who fled to Los Angeles from the Midwest include guitarist Mick Mars of Mötley Crüe, singer Bret Michaels of Poison, drummer Rikki Rockett of Poison, guitarist Warren DeMartini “Torch” of Ratt, and many others. Aspiring musicians arrived in Los Angeles unaware of the reality of the city, which Guns N’ Roses refer to as “the jungle” in their hit *Welcome to the Jungle*,

Welcome to the jungle.
 It gets worse here every day.
 Ya learn ta live like an animal
 In the jungle where we play.
 If you got a hunger for what you see.
 You’ll take it eventually.
 You can have everything you want,
 But you better not take it from me.³¹

²⁹ Deena Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology*, (New York, New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 114. Weinstein also expresses that many correlate the class division in the United States but cultural aspects of the United States are not quite as divided as those studied in Britain, although she claims that Heavy Metal does, indeed, “have a class signification” (113).

³⁰ “Guns N’ Roses Biography,” *rockhall.com*, accessed March 24, 2016, <https://rockhall.com/inductees/guns-n-roses/bio/>

³¹ Guns N’ Roses. *Welcome to the Jungle*. “Appetite for Destruction”. CD. Geffen Records. 1987. <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/gunsnroses/welcometothejungle.html>

Those musicians who ventured into the heart of Los Angeles's vibrant, demanding, and turbulent environment faced homelessness, poverty and temptations that could derail their lives. For example, the Van Halen family moved from Holland to Los Angeles to pursue their musical careers and found themselves in an apartment sharing a bathroom with three other families and realizing the American or Los Angeles dream was not as easily pursued as believed.³² Before Guns N' Roses achieved success, Axl Rose was often homeless and lived with Slash and his family for a period of time.³³ While some musical migrants found themselves struggling financially and dealing with homelessness, others dealt with the self-destruction of alcoholism and addiction. Anthony Kiedis, the lead singer of Red Hot Chili Peppers from Grand Rapids, Michigan, recalls the downward spiral of addiction he struggled with in Los Angeles in his memoirs,

I had been fastidious about using sterile rigs and sterile cotton when I first started shooting up, but by now I didn't care much. If I had to, I'd use a syringe that I found in the street. Instead of sterilized cotton, I'd use a section of my sock or, more commonly, the filter tip of a cigarette. At first I'd use only sterilized spring water to dissolve the stuff in, but now I'd just pull the back off a toilet or look for a lawn sprinkler or even a puddle. This crazy behavior began to encroach on my professional life. I started missing rehearsals and writing sessions. Then I even began to miss some live shows...³⁴

Thus, the struggles of poverty for migrant musicians led them to morally compromising behavior to survive, often only resulting in a vicious cycle of drug and alcohol addictions, homelessness, and poverty.

³² Greg Renoff. *Van Halen Rising: How a Southern California Backyard Party Band Saved Heavy Metal*. (Toronto, Ontario: ECW Press, 2015), 3-4.

³³ Slash and Anthony Bozza. *Slash*. (New York, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 90.

³⁴ Anthony Kiedis and Larry Sloman. *Scar Tissue*. (New York, New York: Hyperion, 2004), 141-142.

The Sunset Strip in Los Angeles was where migrant musicians endured most of their struggles, because it was the home of the heavy metal scene in the 1980s. The article “The Hair Metal Diaries”, describes “hair metal in the early 1980s, when penniless rockers tottered up and down L.A.’s Sunset Strip, snorting, vomiting, papering lampposts with their band’s flyers, and mooching off inexplicably generous “chicks”.”³⁵

Hollywood’s legendary Sunset Boulevard provided aspiring musicians with over a mile-long strip of clubs and venues, including The Rainbow Bar and Grill, The Roxy, Whisky a Go-Go, The Sky Bar, and Gazzarri’s to practice and display their musical talents and attempt to get signed to a record label and acquire the luxuries that Los Angeles had to offer. The Sunset Strip paved the way to success in the music industry. Rock musicians notoriously “...associated [the Sunset Strip] with both finding stardom and experiencing the hedonistic excesses of ‘sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll”.”³⁶ The California music scene had developed in the 1960s separate from movies, when the counterculture moved in and revolutionized first San Francisco then Los Angeles. According to historian Domenic Priore, “the fruits of LA’s teen megalopolis, and the remnants it left behind, transformed the mid 1960s Sunset Strip into a fascinating artistic Mecca. During this moment, something actually displaced movies as the center of action in Hollywood: rock ‘n’ roll”.”³⁷ Sunset Boulevard was more than a road with concert venues and bars featuring

³⁵ James Parker. “The Hair Metal Diaries” *TheAtlantic.com*. May 2013. (Accessed September 20, 2016). <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/05/bad-hair-days/309289/>

³⁶ Nedim Hassan. ““Girls, girls, girls”?: The Los Angeles Metal Scene and the Politics of Gender in *Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years*” *Popular Music History*. January 2012. (Accessed July 24, 2016) <https://journals.equinoxpub.com/index.php/PMH/article/view/14175>.

³⁷ Domenic Priore. *Riot on Sunset Strip: Rock ‘n’ Roll’s Last Stand in Hollywood*. (London, England: Jawbone Press, 2007), 18.

live performances as it was often flooded with celebrities, talent agents, and producers. For example, the restaurant, Le Dome, on the strip was “...usually packed with Hollywood agents, producers, and music-industry names like David Geffen, Danny Elfman, and Berry Gordy”.³⁸ Rock musicians and fans crowded the streets, clubs, and venues in hopes of being recognized by the famous faces who personified the booming music industry amongst the chaos of Los Angeles.

Many artists made the strip their home in the apartments surrounding Sunset Boulevard. Joan Jett had an apartment across the street from the Whisky a Go Go while she played in The Runaways, an all-girl band performing from 1975 to 1979.³⁹ Another dilapidated party house on the strip, housing up and coming musicians, was the home of Mötley Crüe. Vince Neil explains,

...people would pour into the house, located near the Whisky a Go-Go, for after-hour parties, either through the broken window or the warped, rotting brown front door, which would only stay closed if we folded a piece of cardboard and wedged it underneath...the carpet was filthy with alcohol, blood, and cigarette burns, and the walls were scorched black. The place was crawling with vermin.⁴⁰

These living conditions were common among a large portion of musicians living on or near Sunset Boulevard in the 1980s, due to their lack of financial stability, even as they were making singles. The Sunset strip defined the excesses of rock and roll in the 1980s, as musicians struggled more than prospered, which resulted in depravity, debauchery, and

³⁸ “Sunset Strip History” *thesunsetstrip.com*, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://thesunsetstrip.com/info/sunset-strip-history#60>

³⁹ Joan Jett, Todd Oldham, and Kathleen Hanna. *Joan Jett*. (Los Angeles, CA: Ammo Books, 2010), Np. There are no page numbers to reference in the book.

⁴⁰ Tommy Lee and Vince Neil. *The Dirt: Confessions of the World’s Most Notorious Rock Band*. (New York: HarperCollins World, 2011), 2-3.

indecenty. Wild swarms of artists and fans crowded the streets, parking lots, and buildings to immerse themselves into the scene of the hair metal heyday. Many musicians struggled to find jobs to support themselves because of their androgynous styles that helped them stand out among the masses of artists. Their style furthered their economic hardship because of the lack of jobs and the unwillingness of employers to hire them, these styles often included features like those seen below, long teased hair, make up, studded belts, platform heels, and leather pants.



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Deena Weinstein argues that these debilitating factors of appearance for employment motivated musicians to throw everything they had into making their rock careers successful.⁴³ Jobless musicians seeking to make their fortune and fame would turn to

⁴¹ Photo from: <http://www.eonline.com/news/504731/motley-crue-announces-breakup-will-head-on-a-worldwide-farewell-tour-with-alice-cooper>

⁴² Photo from: <http://www.liketotally80s.com/2006/10/list-80s-hair-bands/>

⁴³ Deena Weinstein, *Rock'n America: A Social and Cultural History*. (Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 10.

their female fans, occasionally groupies, to support their lifestyle. One woman from a privileged household, referred to as Lex, in the article “Heavy-metal nation” says she refused to date anymore metal musicians because,

They’re really broke and really irresponsible...ninety percent of the guys are from the Midwest or back East. They see MTV, and they model themselves after Guns n’ Roses and Mötley Crüe. Then you have these repressed suburban Valley girls, and they want to be with a wild guy in a band...so they come out to the Roxy and the Whisky, all dressed up in their sleazy little outfits, and pick up these guys and pay for everything. And the guys fully take advantage of it.⁴⁴

This behavior and attitude regarding women was common, even for Mötley Crüe and Guns n’ Roses, especially during their pre-fame and fortune years. At this stage of their careers, the opulence of Los Angeles was nowhere in sight, but the poverty continued to be a threat to their existence as it pushed them closer to drug addiction and prosecution.

Consequently, from all these circumstances, the 1980s produced a musical culture that demonstrated a rejection to the ideologies of sexual repression and gender norms, with polarizing imagery of extreme masculinity, femininity, and androgyny. Accompanying their imagery was heterosexual lyrical content that would often degrade and sexualize women, for example, Mötley Crüe’s hit “Girls, Girls, Girls,”

Friday night and I need a fight.
My motorcycle and switchblade knife.
Handful of grease in my hair feels right.
But what I need to get me tight are those...
Girls, girls, girls.
Long legs and burgundy lips.
Girls, girls, girls.
Dancin’ down on Sunset Strip.
Red lips, fingertips.

⁴⁴ Lex is quoted in Rob Tannenbaum. “Heavy-Metal Nation”. *Rolling Stone*. September 19, 1991. (accessed June 23, 2016). <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/features/heavy-metal-nation-19910919>

Girls, girls, girls.⁴⁵

Lyrical content of this nature was common throughout the “lite” metal songs of the 1980s regardless of the male musician’s feminine appearance. Thus, this musical trend projected androgynous imagery through fashion, appearance, and lyrical content, which challenged the social conformity of gender roles of the time transforming the rock music industry.

Heavy metal subgenres reveal conflicting ideologies of identity, gender, and sexuality in the 1980s. However, understanding the rise of heavy metal in the 1970s is an important component to the understanding of the “lite” metal and thrash metal subgenres that proliferate in the 1980s. Heavy metal is a musical genre dominated by the idea of power and the bands began illustrating this idea of power through outlets, such as fashion, musical aesthetics, and behavior on and off the stage. For example, Ozzy Osbourne displayed his power when he bit the head off of a bat that was thrown on stage, which he claimed to believe was rubber.⁴⁶ Pantera released its *Vulgar Display of Power* album in 1992. Heavy metal bands rejected the earlier 1960s musical illustrations of peace, love, and utopian ideals, which had crumbled under the weight of its own self-indulgences and dissociation from its audience. However, heavy metal and its subgenres were born from the wealth of the 1960s rock industry even though their golden age would not come until the early 1980s. Additionally, this period saw the growth of the corporate

⁴⁵ Mötley Crüe. *Girls, girls, girls*. “Girls, Girls, Girls”. CD. Elektra. 1987.
https://play.google.com/music/preview/T66fz5jka7r55s3lwjw7nec3kha?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-songlyrics

⁴⁶ Walser, Robert. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 147.

music industry and the target audience of the rock genre, and the rise of technological advancements that allowed for concerts to grow without dramatically compromising the musical performance.

The music industry shifted away from the 1960s optimism, under the advancing heavy metal and punk rock influences. Famous music journalist and critic, Lester Bangs, explains he felt that heavy metal emerged, “in the primordial tar pits of 1968, early flurries of metal mutation appeared out of California”.⁴⁷ However, Steve Waksman, professor of American studies, argues that “the [heavy metal] genre assumed some sort of coherence only in the early 1970s”.⁴⁸ While Deena Weinstein argues that “Heavy metal was born amidst the ashes of the failed youth rebellion”.⁴⁹ Leading the up and coming heavy metal music scene were British bands like Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, and the Scorpions. The American music industry was prospering and thus, they began taking more risks with developing artists, considering the music industry had finally surpassed the movie industries profitability by the early 1970s.⁵⁰ The wealth of the music industry came at a time when corporations were reconciling the mistakes that lost them profits to indie labels previously. Weinstein points out that major labels began profiting off allowing people the opportunity to try and become producers and in return pulling

⁴⁷ Lester Bangs. “Heavy Metal.” *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1976), 333.

⁴⁸ Steve Waksman. *This Ain't the Summer of Love* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2009), 1. Waksman notes that Grand Funk Railroad contributed to the coherence of the genre as a whole.

⁴⁹ Deena, Weinstein. *Heavy Metal: The Music and It's Culture*. (New York: De Capo Press, 2000), 13.

⁵⁰ Deena Weinstein. *Rock'n America: A Social and Cultural History* (Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 130. Weinstein further explains that “record sales increased by 71.9 percent between 1968 and 1973”, however, this statistic included all records being sold not just the rock genre.

independent labels into the corporate world. She explains that, “if a producer had already started an independent label, the major bought it out and brought it into the corporation, allowing it to keep its name. In the 1968-73 era, the number of record label names increased while the number of record corporations remained nearly the same”.⁵¹ These methods allowed for producers to bring in more talent and thus the corporations acquired more wealth to continue producing new styles, technological advancements, and to fund the promotion of new bands.

In terms of technology, heavy metal musicians were no strangers to taking the old and applying the new. For example, the amplification of music for audio purposes was taken to new heights with the heavy metal genre by producing technological advancements in amplification for loudness but also for experimentation with different sounds that could be achieved from the combination of various amplifiers and instruments. Second, technological advancements with “whammy bars”, amplifiers, equalizers, and other electronic equipment encouraged further experimentation with sound technology. In particular, “earlier musicians or musical groups like Cream, Jimi Hendrix, and Led Zeppelin incorporated many new electronic “effects” into the production of their music. Heavy metal guitarists have been particularly well known to use nontraditional guitar techniques to produce unique sounds with electric guitars”.⁵² Arena rock developed out of both the technological advancements and the corporate idea of rock music as a commodity. Arena rock was an “expansive style of rock concert that

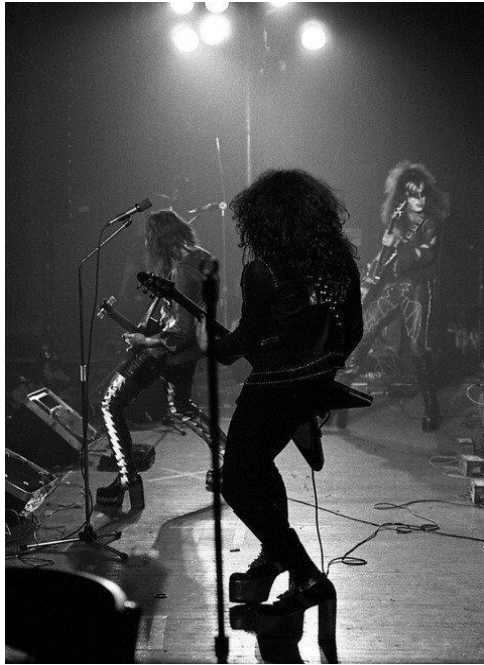
⁵¹ Deena Weinstein, *Rock’n America*. 132.

⁵² Bruce K. Friesen and Jonathon S. Epstein. “Rock ‘n’ Roll Ain’t Noise Pollution: Artistic Conventions and Tensions in the Major Subgenres of Heavy Metal Music.” *Popular Music and Society* 18, no 3 (1994), 8. EBSCOhost (Accessed October 26, 2015).

took shape in arenas and stadiums...crowds of thousands, or tens of thousands, became the norm rather than the exception, a standardized aspect of the rock economy and the concert going experience”.⁵³ Weinstein explains that the rise of arena rock contributed to the growth of rock subgenres that used extravagant imagery, flamboyant stage presences, or theatrical performances, such as glam metal, “lite” metal, and shock rock. She explains that “the other essential feature of arena rock was the visual equivalent of loud, eye-popping sights. Special effects, such as smoke bombs, strobe lights, and larger-than-life props, were ubiquitous”.⁵⁴ As a result, many musicians such as KISS and Mötley Crüe, used their fashion and body language while others, like Alice Cooper and Gwar, chose to create grandiose performances, often with thematic story lines. Below is an image of KISS (left) and Alice Cooper (right) showing the difference in arena rock performances.

⁵³ Steve Waksman. *This Ain't the Summer of Love* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2009), 10.

⁵⁴ Deena Weinstein. *Rock'n America: A Social and Cultural History* (Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 165.



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Musicologist, Robert Walser claims that the “incessant touring of these impressive shows built the metal audience in the 1970s”.⁵⁷ These performances allowed for the music industry to accumulate more wealth from touring, as audience attendance would be much greater and larger festivals could even reach above 100,000 depending on the venues. For example, in 1983 on Heavy Metal Day, where Ozzy Osbourne, Mötley Crüe, Judas Priest, Van Halen, Scorpions, and others played in San Bernardino, California, attendance reached 375,000 people.⁵⁸ The quality of technology could finally accommodate substantial crowds allowing concerts to bring in large profits for the music industry while

⁵⁵ Photo from: <http://superseventies.tumblr.com/post/3263918455/kiss-music-1970s-vintage-maks-entertainment-retro>

⁵⁶ Photo from: <http://www.tokyojournal.com/sections/music-gallery/item/333-on-tour-with-bob-gruen-elton-john-retrospective.html>

⁵⁷ Robert Walser. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 10.

⁵⁸ Joe Nelson. “Though a Commercial Failure, US Festival Broke New Ground in San Bernardino” *Daily Bulletin News*. September 1, 2012. (Accessed July 24, 2016). <http://www.dailybulletin.com/article/ZZ/20120901/NEWS/120909019>

also providing musicians with the capacity to expand their musical styles and differentiate themselves.

However, the thriving music industry enjoyed by thousands would soon face economic instability as the opulence disappeared in the late 1970s. The decline in the music industries could be attributed to fault of their own corporate tendencies to only promote artists who they were sure would bring in profit, which left what was left of independent labels to profit off of new artists, while major labels were left with the ‘has beens’, similar to the pre-1968 music industry.⁵⁹ Weinstein argues that another contributing factor was the commercialization of FM radio with the album-oriented rock (AOR) format many stations had adopted.⁶⁰ However, contrary to the changing radio format that led to heavy metals demise in the late 1970s, Walser points out that “Kiss, between 1974 and 1984, made nineteen albums, seventeen of which went gold (thirteen went platinum) with virtually no radio airplay”.⁶¹ Which could suggest that success could be achieved without radio play and that the new restricting radio formats were not a factor in the low record sales. However, this evidence does not refute Weinstein’s argument that radio’s changing formats had detrimental consequences for the decline of heavy metal in the late 1970s, because most artists and bands did not gain such a strong fan base from touring alone. Walser and Bangs claim that the drop in record sales was because rock was static,

⁵⁹ Deena Weinstein. *Rock’n America: A Social and Cultural History* (Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 187.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 187-189.

⁶¹ Robert Walser. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 10.

what little flair and freshness remained in heavy metal has been stolen by punk rockers like the Ramones and Sex Pistols, who stripped it down, sped it up and provided some lyric content beyond the customary macho breast-beatings, by now not only offensive but old fashioned.⁶²

In conclusion, it was a combination of factors that led to the late 1970s decline in the music industry, such as the turbulent economic and political conditions, the radio's new formats, corporation's refusal to take risks, and new artists being taken in by underground markets that led to the stagnant sounds of heavy metal. These factors led to the attention of heavy metal being directed toward other genres, such as punk rock and disco. While it seemed heavy metal was over, the early-1980s would usher in the New Wave of British Heavy Metal and by the mid-1980s, America would reestablish heavy metal as a popular and prosperous mainstream genre.

⁶² Robert Walser. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 11.

Chapter 2

Heavy Metal Subgenre, “Lite” Metal

By the end of the 1970’s, British influence again ignited the fuel of the American music industry. The New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM), led by Iron Maiden, Saxon, and Def Leppard took the country by storm. This music mixed components from various musical influences to produce a distinct new musical formula and was labelled “lite” metal. The New Wave of British Heavy Metal movement combined influences of heavy metal, glam rock, punk rock, and psychedelic rock to create a unique identity of sound and performance that led to the rise of “lite” metal, and combined with Music Television (MTV), promoted its growth. With it also arose the question of authenticity.

Heavy metal was the nucleus to the subgenre “lite” metal, from which it grew and incorporated many of its musical principals. Heavy metal, according to Lester Bangs, was most closely aligned with nihilism and identifies “with violence and aggression, rapine and carnage”.⁶³ These associations were linked to the behavior and lyrical content of 1980’s “lite” metal bands and their audiences. For example, in Uniondale, New Jersey at a Guns N’ Roses concert in 1991, Axl Rose jumped into the crowd to seize an unwelcome recording of their performance when security had done nothing to resolve the

⁶³ Lester Bangs. “Heavy Metal.” *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1976), 332.

situation when requested. The band could not continue for a two-hour set without their lead vocalist, so they had to leave the stage. Slash describes the outcome in his memoirs,

We went down the hallway toward the stage and it was like the scene in the Beatles' *Yellow Submarine* where they're walking through a hall and it's normal but every time they open a door and there was yelling, we'd open another and see people on stretchers, cops with blood all over them, gurneys everywhere, and pandemonium ... The St. Louis locals weren't having our cancellation – they tore the entire building apart ... We were trapped backstage, not knowing what to do. Doug [Guns N' Rose's manager at the time] suddenly appeared and said that he had to get us out immediately and that there was a police escort in the loading dock ... every shred of our gear was trashed in St. Louis; that show was a very expensive fluke, to say the least – the crowd did over \$200,000 worth of damage to the arena alone.⁶⁴

This is just one of many displays of aggression and transfers of power shared between metal bands and their audiences, which musicologist Sheila Whiteley describes as “a spectacle of male power and offers a musical means through which men can demonstrate their manhood”.⁶⁵ Similar celebrations of power were central to most of the “lite” metal bands, including Mötley Crüe, Poison, Warrant, and many others from the 1980s.

In addition to heavy metal's transfer of power, many “lite” metal bands adopted some of heavy metal's song and performance aesthetics. Such as their continued emphasis on the famous guitar solo, which for example, was the soul of heavy metal's musical aesthetic and described by sociologists Friesen and Epstein as “a controlled chaos”. It was also a key to “lite” metal performances.⁶⁶ They were also loud. Criticism surrounding heavy metal and its subgenres claimed that the music was just noise that

⁶⁴ Slash and Anthony Bozzo. *Slash*. (New York, NY: Harper Entertainment, 2007), 339-341.

⁶⁵ *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender*. ed by Sheila Whiteley. (London: Routledge, 1997), 29.

⁶⁶ Bruce K. Friesen and Jonathon S. Epstein. “Rock ‘n’ Roll Ain’t Noise Pollution: Artistic Conventions and Tensions in the Major Subgenres of Heavy Metal Music.” *Popular Music and Society* 18, no 3 (1994), 6. EBSCOhost (Accessed October 26, 2015).

sounded alike -- “a controlled chaos”. But as Lester Bangs suggests, the uniform loudness makes it sound like unchanging noise, and “only sound alike to the untutored ear. True, the dependence upon technology does foster a certain machinelike uniformity (if not precision)”.⁶⁷ Additionally, the guitarists choice in the technological equipment, such as whammy bars, combined with their personal technique which may include, hammer-ons, power slides, mutes, and more provided variation in heavy metal’s sound.⁶⁸ The combination of these guitar techniques in heavy metal resulted in some of the greatest rock guitarists, such as Eddie Van Halen and Randy Rhoads (Quiet Riot and Ozzy Osbourne).⁶⁹ Guns N’ Rose’s guitarist Slash was heavily influenced by Eddie Van Halen’s “innovative arsenal of guitar techniques”.⁷⁰ American Studies professor, Steve Waksman emphasizes these innovators’ importance,

their impact was such that the speed-driven style of rock guitar they cultivated earned its own appellation, shred, named for the way guitarists were prone to “tear” up the fretboard with their extreme technique. By the second half of the decade, shred-based, classically informed, hyper-virtuosic, guitar oriented metal became a phenomenon unto itself.⁷¹

Heavy metal influenced “lite” metal because the musicians applied heavy metal’s unique combinations of techniques to their performance and style.

⁶⁷ Lester Bangs. “Heavy Metal.” *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1976), 332.

⁶⁸ Deena Weinstein. *Rock’n America: A Social and Cultural History*. (Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 8.

⁶⁹ Both were recognized within the top 50 of Rolling Stones 100 greatest guitarists. “100 Greatest Guitarists” *RollingStone.com*. December 18, 2015. (Accessed September 15, 2016).

<http://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/100-greatest-guitarists-20111123?page=3&count=10>

⁷⁰ Steven Davis. *Watch You Bleed: The Saga of Guns N’ Roses*. (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2008), 22.

⁷¹ Steve Waksman. *This Ain’t the Summer of Love* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2009), 262.

In addition to guitar techniques, heavy metal also relied on a machismo persona and style which helped shape “lite” metal’s imagery. These contributions included fashion trends, such as leather jackets and song themes about anti-authority, sex, war, dominance and drug and alcohol use. By combining the “chaos” of musical aesthetics with a “Dionysian experience [in lyrical themes that] celebrates the vital forces of life through various forms of ecstasy. It is embodied in the unholy trinity of sex, drugs, and rock and roll”.⁷² For example, Led Zeppelin’s “For Your Life” describes the attraction to cocaine, while Guns N’ Roses “Mr. Brownstone” is about heroin addiction:

We’ve been dancin’ with
Mr. Brownstone.
He’s been knockin’.
He won’t leave me alone...
I use ta do a little
but a little wouldn’t do.
So the little got more and more.
I just keep trying
ta get a little better,
said the little better than before.⁷³

Drugs were a common song theme throughout both psychedelic and heavy metal and influenced “lite” metal’s songs about drug use, such as Mötley Crüe’s “Dr. Feelgood” and Def Leppard’s “High ‘n’ Dry”. These themes illustrated the challenges they faced in reality, as many of the musicians struggled with drug and alcohol addiction.

Another lyrical theme for “lite” metal that was also adopted from heavy metal was sex and the objectification of women. The German metal band, Scorpions

⁷² Deena Weinstein. *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*. Revised ed. (New York: De Capo Press, 2000), 35.

⁷³ Guns N’ Roses. *Mr. Brownstone*. “Appetite for Destruction”. CD. Geffen Records. 1987.
<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/gunsnroses/mrbrownstone.html>

influenced the sex theme more than most heavy metal predecessors with songs such as “Rock You Like a Hurricane” and “Tease Me Please me”. Kiss also sings “Let’s Put the X in Sex” but Mötley Crüe accentuates this lyrical theme for 1980s metal. In the words of Vince Neil in 1987 regarding Mötley Crüe’s songs, “our music’s raw, nasty, sleazy. It drips of sex”,⁷⁴ with songs like, “Girls, Girls, Girls”, “Sumthin For Nothin”, and “All in The Name of...”, all from an album titled “Girls, Girls, Girls”, which includes lyrics,

All in the name of rock ‘n’ roll,
For sex and sex I’d sell my soul.⁷⁵

Sex was not only present in “lite” metal’s lyrical content but also within their music videos, such as Whitesnake’s “Here I Go Again” video, where vocalist David Coverdale’s girlfriend at the time, Tawny Kitaen, is seen dancing promiscuously on two Jaguars.⁷⁶ Album covers also exhibited women in a sexual way, exemplified by Ratt’s album covers for “Out of the Cellar” (left) in 1984 and “Invasion of Your Privacy” (right) in 1985.

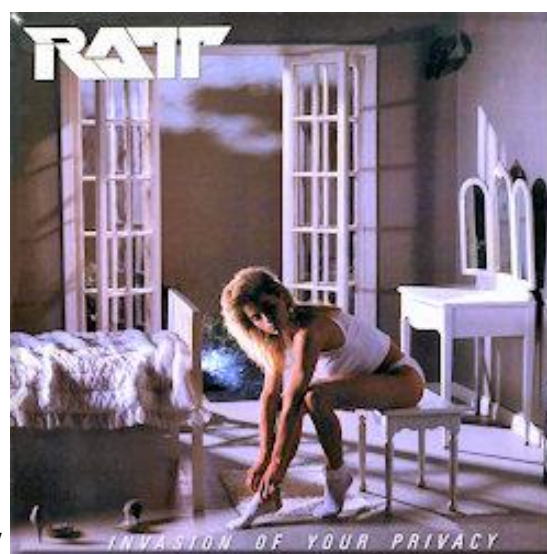
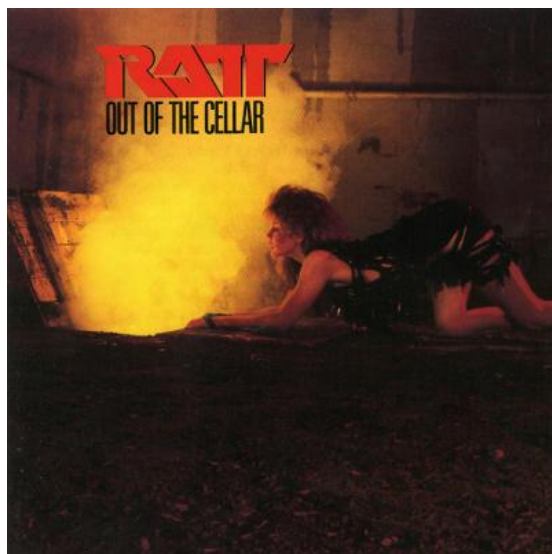
⁷⁴ Vince Neil qtd in Steven Blush. “American Hair Metal” (Los Angeles, CA: Feral House, 2006), 18.

⁷⁵ Mötley Crüe. *All In The Name Of...* “Girls, Girls, Girls”. CD. Elektra Records. 1987.

<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/motleycrue/allinthenameof.html>

⁷⁶ “Tawny Kitaen Reveals the Move She Can Still Do from Those Whitesnake Music Videos (Video)” *The Huffington Post*. Updated May 27, 2015. (Accessed October 3, 2016).

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/03/27/tawny-kitaen-whitesnake-music-videos_n_6951030.html



The objectification of women in photos, videos, and lyrical themes will be seen throughout the 1980s “lite” metal subgenre and will contribute to the marginalization of women in the “lite” metal rock industry, which will be discussed in further detail in chapter 3.

Sex provided a second influence to “lite” metal, rather than the mere objectification of women, romantic love was integrated into the sex theme. The powerful vocal abilities of metal musicians, such as Judas Priest’s lead vocalists Rob Halford, Guns N’ Roses’ Axl Rose, and Iron Maiden’s Bruce Dickinson, combined with lyrical themes about love and sex resulted in “lite” metal’s legendary power ballads, defined as “an emotional rock song, generally focused on love, delivered with powerful vocals”.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Photo from: http://www.metallibrary.ru/bands/discographies/r/ratt/84_out_of_the_cellar.html

⁷⁸ Photo from: <http://www.allmusic.com/album/invasion-of-your-privacy-mw0000195401>

⁷⁹ “Power Ballad” *yourdictionary.com*. (Accessed September 27, 2016).
<http://www.yourdictionary.com/power-ballad>

This also included, Nazareth's "Love Hurts", Poison's "Every Rose Has Its Thorn", Skidrow's "I Remember You", and Bon Jovi's "Bed of Roses",

Now as you close your eyes
 know I'll be thinking about you.
 While my mistress she calls me
 to stand in her spotlight again.
 Tonight I won't be alone
 But you know that don't mean,
 I'm not lonely I've got nothing to prove
 For its you that I'd die to defend.
 I want to lay you down in a bed of roses.
 For tonight I sleep on a bed of nails.
 I want to be just as close as the Holy Ghost is
 And lay you down on a bed of roses.⁸⁰

Both men and women responded to this theme. Many women were captivated by these power ballads and thus, the "lite" metal rock star attracted women despite their feminine appearance. Many of the power ballads were written about some of the musician's girlfriends or ex-girlfriends, such as Guns N' Roses, song "Sweet Child O' Mine" from their album "Appetite for Destruction". Axl Rose wrote "Sweet Child O' Mine" for his girlfriend Erin Everly. These emotional appeals humanized many of the musicians by making them appear vulnerable as they removed themselves from the tough, unavailable rock star status, but this only helped them to attract more female fans. Many musicians sought ways to appear available and unattached to attract more fans, for example Mötley Crüe's vocalist, Vince Neil had a marriage that was never "publicly acknowledged because [Nicki] Sixx had wanted the band to appear to have no attachments. In other

⁸⁰ Bon Jovi. *Bed of Roses*. "Keep the Faith". CD. Mercury Records. 1992.
<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bonjovi/bedofroses.html>

words, to maintain their image”.⁸¹ This available and unattached image was part of “lite” metal’s appeal.

Finally, anti-authority is yet another lyrical theme “lite” metal borrowed from heavy metal, which can be expected considering their common disregard for laws and social norms throughout the 1980s. This theme included songs denouncing political policies, social conformity, common laws, and more. Songs like, “Civil War” by Guns N’ Roses and “Public Enemy #1” by Mötley Crüe, and Twisted Sisters’ song “We’re Not Gonna Take it” off their 1984 album titled “Stay Hungry”:

We’ve got the right to choose and
There ain’t no way we’ll lose it.
This is our life; this is our song.
We’ll fight the powers that be just
Don’t pick our destiny ‘cause
You don’t know us, you don’t belong.
Oh we’re not gonna take it.
No, we ain’t gonna take it.
Oh we’re not gonna take it anymore!⁸²

This song epitomizes this idea because of the attention it gained by being on the “filthy fifteen” list during the 1985 PMRC/Senate Hearings. The filthy fifteen was a list of songs in a variety of genres that were considered the most offensive songs of the time and included Judas Priest’s “Eat Me Alive”, Mötley Crüe’s “Bastard”, Prince’s “Darling Nikki”, Sheena Easton’s “Sugar Walls”, W.A.S.P.’s “Animal (Fuck Like a Beast)”, Mercyful Fate’s “Into the Coven”, Vanity’s “Strap on ‘Robbie Baby’”, Def Leppard’s

⁸¹ David Handelman. “On the Road with Mötley Crüe: All in the Name of Rock & Roll” *Rollingstone.com*. August 13, 1987. (Accessed October 1, 2016). <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/all-in-the-name-of-rock-and-roll-on-the-road-with-moetley-cruee-19870813>.

⁸² Twisted Sister. *We’re Not Gonna Take It*. “Stay Hungry” CD. Atlantic. 1984. <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/twistedsister/werenotgonnatakeit.html>.

“High ‘n’ Dry (Saturday Night)”, Twisted Sister’s “We’re Not Gonna Take it”, Madonna’s “Dress You Up”, Cyndi Lauper’s “She Bop”, AC/DC’s “Let Me Put My Love Into You”, Black Sabbath’s “Trashed”, Mary Jane Girls’ “In My House”, and Venom’s “Possessed”.⁸³ The Parents’ Music Resource Center (PMRC), which included influential government figures, such as Tipper Gore (Al Gore’s wife and second lady from 1999-2000) and Susan Baker (wife of James A. Baker, treasury secretary in 1985),⁸⁴ who sought more control for parent’s over the “porn rock” that flooded the music industry by adding defined parental advisory labels which defined sex, violence, drugs and alcohol, along with the lyrical content to each album.⁸⁵

The Senate wanted Mötley Crüe’s, Vince Neil to testify, but “instead the senators got three well-spoken musicians to contend with: Frank Zappa, John Denver, and [Dee] Snider, a sober family man who could spar with the senators, speak to responsible parenting and defend his lyrics against the PMRC’s surreal interpretations”.⁸⁶ Not all the PMRC’s demands were met, but general parental advisory stickers were placed on albums. However, “The RIAA had already met with 19 labels who agreed to label albums with “Parental Advisory” stickers, and there was no legislation on the floor, so the hearing was meant to serve as a “forum for airing the issue itself,” as Committee

⁸³ Kory Grow. “PMRC’s ‘Filthy Fifteen’: Where Are They Now?” *Rollingstone.com*. September 17, 2015. (Accessed October 7, 2016). <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/pmrcs-filthy-15-where-are-they-now-20150917/twisted-sister-were-not-gonna-take-it-20150917>

⁸⁴ Robert Walser. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), 138.

⁸⁵ Kory Grow. “Tipper Gore Reflects on PMRC 30 Years Later.” *Rollingstone.com*. September 14, 2015. (Accessed October 7, 2016). <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/tipper-gore-reflects-on-pmrc-30-years-later-20150914>

⁸⁶ Kory Grow. “Dee Snider on PMRC Hearing: ‘I Was a Public Enemy’”. *Rollingstone.com*. September 18, 2015. (Accessed October 7, 2016). <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/dee-snider-on-pmrc-hearing-i-was-a-public-enemy-20150918>

chairman John Danforth said in his opening remarks”.⁸⁷ These hearings in 1985 provided an explanation to the backlash artists received for displaying such controversial issues in the lyrical themes they adopted, but as we’ve seen, lyrics weren’t the only aspect of their music that raised concern.

British, German, and American heavy metal provided “lite” metal with the foundations of some of its musical aesthetics, a foundation of lyrical themes, and finally some aspects of “lite” metal’s style had the masculine components from the machismo displayed by heavy metal forerunners. But the components of “lite” metal’s fashion trends were also heavily influenced by 1970s non-metal glam rock musicians, such as David Bowie, T-Rex, and the New York Dolls. These elements of heavy metal and glam metal form the androgyny that “lite” metal is notoriously known for. Androgyny, for the purpose of this study, is defined as “having both masculine and feminine characteristics [and] having an ambiguous sexual identity”.⁸⁸ In defining the meanings of masculine and feminine we must understand them from the context of the 1980s norms, since this study proceeds on the understanding that gendered identities are not concrete, but rather evolve and change over time.

The fashion components of glam rock in “lite” metal are displayed with their flamboyant makeup, big hair styles, and occasionally feminine attire. For example, in the following illustrations, bands Poison (top) and Mötley Crüe (bottom), wear eye liner, lip

⁸⁷ Kory Grow. “Dee Snider on PMRC Hearing: ‘I Was a Public Enemy’”. *Rollingstone.com*. September 18, 2015. (Accessed October 7, 2016). <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/dee-snider-on-pmrc-hearing-i-was-a-public-enemy-20150918>

⁸⁸ “Androgynous”. *Dictionary.com*. (Accessed September 15, 2016). <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/androgyny>

stick, and feathered hair styles that accentuates feminine styles of the time. They also wear feminine clothing pieces within their attire, as seen with Poison's purple lined vest and Mötley Crüe's platform heels.



⁸⁹ Photo from: <http://www.theglamnationnetwork.com/poison.html>

⁹⁰ Photo from: <https://samlovesbooksok.wordpress.com/author/samlovesbooksok/>

These styles often beautified and softened the machismo that was illustrated in “lite” metal’s heavy metal fashion influences, lyrical content, and routine behaviors of destruction and debauchery. Some “lite” metal bands, like Twisted Sister (below), took less of the beautification of glam rock and radicalized the flamboyant makeup, big hair and women’s clothing, removing almost all traces of the machismo present in its heavy metal origins.



These fluctuations and various combinations of stylistic ingredients created challenges in interpreting an over-arching combination of influences for the entirety of the “lite” metal subgenre, which may be an area that needs further study. However, the focus of this study is to analyze the androgyny of these groups and to better understand the impact of this imagery on the music industry and society in the 1980s.

⁹¹ Photo from: <http://jammagazine.com/main-features/mf201112-twisted-sister.aspx>

“Lite” metal was also influenced by elements of psychedelic and punk rock.

Many “lite” metal musicians took a less glam approach and wore long hair like musicians of psychedelic rock, such as Pink Floyd’s Rick Wright, Roger Walters, Nick Mason, and David Gilmour seen below.



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Both Sebastian Bach (left) from Skidrow and Axl Rose (right) from Guns N’ Roses, seen below, adopted a more psychedelic style for their hair. However, they did keep a feathered cut and occasionally added volume to establish a more glam appearance.

⁹² Photo from: <http://www.floydianslip.com/>



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Psychedelic rock also influenced “lite” metal’s musical aesthetics, introducing the idea of an instrument centered performance. The sound was often more important than the lyrics. Psychedelic rock utilized innovative electronic sounds and solos, because it “was intended primarily as an internal, individualized experience for both musicians and audience...psychedelic rock musicians usually appeared quite introspective on stage. They generally focused their attention on each other or their instruments”.⁹⁴ Most “lite” metal musicians were far more extroverted and theatrical in their performances than that of their psychedelic rock influencers, but their performances, such as with the guitar solos included the audience into the introspective focus of the musician with the instrument. Furthermore, some leading metal bands started out as psychedelic rock bands, such as Judas Priest.

⁹³ Photo from: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/31249256@N02/2927659709>

⁹⁴ Philip Auslander. *Performing Glam Rock: Gender & Theatricality in Popular Music*. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 2006), 16-17.

Punk rock contributed to the rise of heavy metal subgenres, even though they are often seen in opposition to each other. However, “early metal and early punk were, to no small degree, convergent rather than divergent occurrences. They converged at the point where rock was believed to be moving away from the governing values of the late 1960s”.⁹⁵ They emerged together against ideals of the counterculture of the 1960s only to split apart because of commercialization in the music industry and questions of authenticity. According to American music journalist Chuck Eddy, “punk rock should have killed off heavy metal, but, from London to L.A., what it really did was give metal a new point of entry. From there the genre went off in more directions than any cartographer could diagram”.⁹⁶ The splintering of heavy metal and punk rock because of commercialization is where the emergence of “lite” metal becomes evident. Musicologist Robert Walser describes in *Running with the Devil*, by the mid-1980s, as a result of the commercial success of new programs like MTV, bands like Mötley Crüe, Poison, Bon Jovi, and Warrant were receiving greater popularity from a larger portion of the population. “On the other hand, a different camp disparaged the newfound popularity of what they call lite metal or the music of “posers”,” which fabricated the emergence of another heavy metal subgenre thrash metal which continued the more punk influenced trends of underground, heavy music, with bands such as Metallica and Slayer.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Steve Waksman. *This Ain't the Summer of Love* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2009), 67.

⁹⁶ Chuck Eddy. “The Metal Explosion.” *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. Updated edition. (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1992), 465.

⁹⁷ Robert Walser. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), 14.

The definition associated with “lite” metal bands and their influences are challenging and scattered, because individual bands often varied in their components taking different elements from a larger range of influences to set themselves apart even more. Heavy metal continued to be the most significant influence that generated these subgenres, “from 1979 to 1983 metal undergoes a surge of growth in numbers of bands and numbers and kinds of fans, leading to an inward complexity and an expansion of its boundaries...[and] results in a rich diversity that crystallizes into fragments and subgenres after 1983”.⁹⁸ Therefore, an individual investigation of each “lite” metal band would be necessary to determine the exact influencers, because of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal movement that fostered the idea to adopt elements from various genres to generate a unique identity in musical style and performance.

In addition to the myriad of influence contributing to “lite” metal, the music and entertainment industries also helped shape the subgenre, such as with the emergence of MTV. In the 1980s, imagery became a vital selling point because music videos became a popular medium.⁹⁹ The record industries profitability was diminishing with the suffocating restrictions of the 1970’s album-oriented rock radio formats that depended on old and reliable hits rather than seeking new and upcoming bands. On August 1, 1981 Music Television (MTV) made its debut ironically with The Buggles’ music video

⁹⁸ Deena Weinstein. *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*. Revised Ed. (New York: De Capo Press, 2000), 21.

⁹⁹ Steven Rosen. *The History of Rock*. (New York, NY: Crabtree Publishing, 2009), 24.

“Video Killed the Radio Star”.¹⁰⁰ MTV nurtured the growth and commercial success of the “lite” metal subgenre, due to its dependence on imagery and visual performances.

The growth of heavy metal audiences can be correlated to the growth of MTV. Robert Walser argues against MTV music video’s significance slightly using a survey of fans who were familiar with MTV’s “Headbangers’ Ball”, concluding that “A significant number of fans (especially male) watch MTV seldom or never, and for many (especially female) the glossy photographs of rampant musicians to be found in the copious fan literature are more important sources of visual pleasure than videos”.¹⁰¹ He goes on to explain that its significance is not unimportant, but just not one of the most important contributions to heavy metal fans. On the contrary, MTV “initially broadcast to a mere two million households in the U.S., within ten years the audience would have expanded to 249 million households in forty-one countries”.¹⁰² Therefore, from the unprecedented growth of cable television and MTV into the homes of viewers across the nation in the 1980s, the fan base of heavy metal spread from a white middle class teenage male dominated genre and included older and younger audience members spanning class, race, and gender. Sociologist Deena Weinstein emphasizes the significant impact of MTV on the growth of heavy metal audiences,

the great discovery of MTV was that the styles, fashions, and symbolism of heavy metal attracted a far broader range of youth than those included in metal’s core...It was as though a broad audience had been waiting for a

¹⁰⁰ “MTV Launches”. *History.com*. 2009. (Accessed October 9, 2016). <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/mtv-launches>

¹⁰¹ Robert Walser. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, (Hanover, New Hampshire: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), 112.

¹⁰² Gillian G. Gaar. *She’s A Rebel: The History of Women in Rock & Roll*. Expanded 2nd edition. (New York, NY: Seal Press, 2002), 259.

new fashion, for the simulacrum of a youth culture combining glamour and rebellion, glamourized rebellion and rebellious glamour.¹⁰³

Therefore, the music videos broadcast on cable television reached audiences that it normally wouldn't have and contributed to the growth of the heavy metal music industry considerably. Especially in the subgenres, such as "lite" metal that fancied this mainstream popularity.

MTV helped shape "lite" metal bands as it emphasized the visual components of musicians and their performances. Music journalist Chuck Eddy explains this phenomenon among rock musicians as the mundane and earthy style and imagery influences lessened and "metal bands to benefit videowise took their hygiene aesthetic from Aerosmith and Kiss, then blew it out of proportion".¹⁰⁴ MTV encouraged the growth of glamour and flamboyance among the "lite" metal bands, because it was visually pleasing and with the newer audience, it helped grow "lite" metal's popularity in the 1980s, regardless of the album-oriented rock formats that inhibited radio airplay for many rock bands. For example, MTV played "Mötley Crüe, who started out pretending to worship Satan and then progressed to just-as-dumb (but more fun and funky) party material; W.A.S.P. (who used swear words), Quiet Riot (who covered Slade songs), and Ratt who were actually pretty punk (in the sixties sense)".¹⁰⁵ MTV began to change rock music, music critic Jim Farber stressed, "Not since the glitter movement of the early

¹⁰³ Deena Weinstein. *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*. Revised Ed. (New York: De Capo Press, 2000), 162.

¹⁰⁴ Chuck Eddy. "The Metal Explosion." *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. Updated edition. (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1992), 469-470.

¹⁰⁵ Chuck Eddy. "The Metal Explosion." *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. Updated edition. (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1992), 470.

Seventies had such values threatened to redefine America's rock orthodoxy".¹⁰⁶ The mainstream popularity enjoyed by many of the bands seen on MTV provoked questions regarding authenticity in rock music.

"Lite" metal videos with their appealing visuals and attractiveness dominated the MTV airwaves and as a result many other subgenres of rock denounced the authenticity of "lite" metal bands as they basked in the fortune and fame of 1980s corporate America. Many blamed MTV and video production for the loss of rock authenticity, New Zealand musician, journalist, and academic Matthew Bannister explains, "indie bands disliked videos – for them, MTV was a betrayal of the basic principles of rock and roll, not only because it was clearly industry-driven, but also because videos required fake performance (lip-syncing...) and emphasized personal appearance, as opposed to sound".¹⁰⁷

Arguments also surround MTV's blatant contribution to the marginalization of women in the rock industry, author Gillian Gaar explains that "for female artists who had been trying to question the focus on a musician's – particularly a woman's – appearance as opposed to her performance, the rise of MTV signaled a return to convention. Women who stressed substance over style were virtually nonexistent".¹⁰⁸ However with the idea of authenticity in rock music the blame was most commonly placed on musicians and

¹⁰⁶ Jim Farber. "MTV: The Revolution Will be Televised." *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. Updated edition. (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1992), 641

¹⁰⁷ Matthew Bannister. *White Boys, White Noise: Masculinities and 1980s Indie Guitar Rock*. (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), 81.

¹⁰⁸ Gillian G. Gaar. *She's A Rebel: The History of Women in Rock & Roll*. Expanded 2nd edition. (New York, NY: Seal Press, 2002), 260.

bands accused of “selling out” in this era, “by appearing too close to the music industry or by appearing to conform to a pop-friendly formula and make too much money”.¹⁰⁹

Oddly enough, however, these “lite” metal bands had embodied most, if not all, of the ideologies associate with rock and roll, some even adopting them as a lifestyle. These musicians challenged social conformities, resisted authority, indulged in sex and drugs, and once wealthy, lived lavishly. As explained previously, these artists relocated to Los Angeles, California because they were sold on the marketing of the fortune and fame associated with the hedonistically perceived region. It was marketed on people’s fantasies. Most musician’s goals upon reaching the apex of Los Angeles’s music industry was to be surrounded by sex, drugs, and rock and roll and to achieve such a status fortune and fame was necessary and celebrated. Therefore, because others felt that “lite” metal had not been the subgenre deserving of such recognition, they denounced its musical artistry in regards to rock and roller’s own idea of rock conformity. Music journalist Chuck Eddy argues this position in regards to “lite” metals legendary Guns N’ Roses. He explains that no one gave Guns N’ Roses the recognition they deserved for their 1987 album *Appetite for Destruction*, because “haircut metal [another term for “lite” metal] isn’t supposed to be where great rock & roll comes from”, he argues further that “truth be told, haircut metal had been the most fruitful guitar-rock genre for years. Unlike its artier cousin, haircut metal refused to succumb to self-limiting rules concerning “originality” or “integrity””.¹¹⁰ Therefore, not only did they challenge social

¹⁰⁹ Glenn T. Pillsbury. *Damage Incorporated: Metallica and the Production of Musical Identity*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 137.

¹¹⁰ Chuck Eddy. “The Metal Explosion.” *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. Updated edition. (New York: Rolling Stone Press, 1992), 473.

conformity of the 1980s by displaying androgynous imagery and style to youth audiences and include lyrical themes that made mothers squirm, but they also refused to stay within the boundaries that the rock genre set forth. “Lite” metal was the epitome of rock’s orthodoxy.

Other subgenre bands who denounced “lite” metal for their lack of authenticity because of their music videos could not resist the temptation of the undeniable over-indulgence that came with MTV music videos and mainstream recognition. Thrash metal band, Metallica, for example reportedly softened their style at the end of the 1980s and produced a music video for their song “One” in 1988.¹¹¹ They received a great deal of backlash from a portion of their fan base, as musicologist Glenn Pillsbury recounts, “making videos, indeed trafficking in the very symbol of the mainstream music business, therefore, not only broke the bond of outsidersness in the mid of fans...but it also exemplified the broader disingenuousness of Metallica in the 1990s”.¹¹² The successes accompanying music videos in the music industry that resulted from the emergence of MTV should not be seen as a lack of authenticity or as a band selling out. The goal going into a career is to become successful and the music industry is no different and musicians should not be held to such standards of restraint.

The rock industry flourished with the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, which encouraged the experimentation of combining musical aesthetics within the existing rock genres to create new and unique subgenres. Furthermore, the emergence of MTV

¹¹¹ Keith Kahn-Harris. *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*. (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 90.

¹¹² Glenn T. Pillsbury. *Damage Incorporated: Metallica and the Production of Musical Identity*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 152-153.

stimulated the popularity and shaped the subgenres and the attitudes toward rock authenticity, especially in “lite” metal. During this period the music industry with the advancement into music videos desired attractiveness and prospered on imagery, especially that of women. However, to female musicians in the music industry this was a disadvantage, as their already marginalized status in the “lite” metal rock industry continued to dwindle at the dawn of the 1980s because of the objectification of women and the androgyny that existed.

Chapter 3

Marginalization in the 1980s

The imagery that emerged with “lite” metals display of androgyny and the growing popularity of music videos came as a direct result of Music Television (MTV). Subsequently, women musicians were challenged by the objectification and marginalization within the “lite” metal subgenre, due to the emphasis on imagery and attractiveness rather than performance. An analysis of “lite” metals’ androgynous imagery, lyrical content, music videos, and visual representations, reveals the marginalization that women musicians struggled to overcome. To determine the ways women overcame these obstacles, Joan Jett and Lita Ford from the all-girl band the Runaways, who both went on to have successful solo careers will be the frame of reference for this study. Lita Ford assimilated to the culture of objectification by utilizing herself as an object by sexualizing her own visual appearance and reestablishing control over her assets to benefit herself, while in contrast Joan Jett responded by presenting a sort of reverse androgyny by wearing masculine styles and rejecting the objectification of women.

Women faced fierce opposition as they struggled to fit into a male dominated music industry, but “lite” metal had more hurdles for women than other genres that had gotten their start in the 1970s. The punk rock movement, which ascended to popularity at the same time as heavy metal, had integrated a greater number of women musicians than

did metal. These prominent punk women included singer/songwriter Patti Smith, Chrissie Hynde the co-founder of The Pretenders, Exene Cervenka vocalist for the band X, and Wendi O. Williams from the Plasmatics, Poly Styrene of X-ray Specs, Siouxsie Sioux, Deborah Harry, Gaye Advert, Kim Gordon, and all female band the Slits. Some critics claimed that the Runaways success were dependent upon the fact that they emerged at the same time as the punk movement, “which elevated amateurism, as well as plumb dumbness, to new virtues. The very simplicity of their material, coupled with its not particularly artful but fairly wide-eyed execution, made the Runaways, if the least skilled, the most influential all-girl band to date”.¹¹³ Therefore, to dismiss the talent within the punk rock movement because of its inclusiveness. The Dead Kennedy’s vocalist, Jello Biafra defends punk’s purpose as

an outbreak of new talent that happened all over the world and opened the door to a whole new generation of people who had ideas to replace the bankrupt swill that was being regurgitated [by those] who maintained a stranglehold on the airwaves in the seventies by churning out repetitive pablum and whatnot.¹¹⁴

Therefore, punk’s inclusiveness was not because of lack of talent but rather resonated with the idea that punk was a musical movement in response to the mainstream music industry politics that marginalized musicians who did not conform to the formats and aesthetics they knew would bring profits.

Although, the 1970s was a transformative decade for women with the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* case, this test of equality did not transcend into popular culture, even though “the

¹¹³ Deborah Frost. “Garageland.” *Trouble Girls: The Rolling Stone Book of Women in Rock*. Edited by Barbara O’Dair. (New York, NY: Random House, 1997), 420.

¹¹⁴ Jello Biafra qtd in Thomas C. Shevory. “Bleached Resistance: The Politics of Grunge.” *Popular Music and Society* 19, no. 2 (1995): 29.

ordinary occupational hazards of making it in a man's world predicated on sex, drugs, and rock & roll were even more painfully compounded in the dark ages prior to *Roe vs. Wade*".¹¹⁵ Furthermore, "the sexual revolution, which helped fuel the rock counterculture, was taken for granted" and therefore during the 1980s, rock musicians embraced the 1960s and 1970s sexual revolution over the other ideologies of the counterculture, because it had been ignored and not addressed in detail.¹¹⁶ This left room for rock musicians to establish a new way to reject social conformity and establish their own message which correlated to the growing desire focused on imagery and appearance. Regardless of the successes among women in society, women in the music industry continued to face great opposition in the American metal world as it lacked the inclusiveness enjoyed by female punk rock musicians.

American record producer Kim Fowley and artist Joan Jett collaborated in 1975 to create an all-girl rock band, the Runaways, and "their self-titled debut album was released in May 1976 by Mercury Records, who signed the band after witnessing a rehearsal session".¹¹⁷ Critics and the media often regarded the Runaways as a joke or a "novelty act".¹¹⁸ They were hardly taken seriously as musicians. Joan Jett expresses this struggle explaining past interviews,

we got a lot of slut questions. We got tired of being asked about sex. A writer asked me once, "Are you guys ever really cherry bombs?" I just

¹¹⁵ Deborah Frost. "Garageland." *Trouble Girls: The Rolling Stone Book of Women in Rock*. Edited by Barbara O'Dair. (New York, NY: Random House, 1997), 418.

¹¹⁶ Stephen Holden. "The Evolution of the Singer-Songwriter." *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*. Updated edition. (New York: Random House, 1980), 490.

¹¹⁷ Gillian G. Gaar. *She's A Rebel: The History of Women in Rock & Roll*. Expanded 2nd edition. (New York, NY: Seal Press, 2002), 182.

¹¹⁸ Mina Carson, Tisa Lewis, and Susan M. Shaw. *Girls Rock! Fifty Years of Women Making Music*. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 86.

said “When we’re not too tired.” We didn’t really have time for that shit. “Do you feel like a man or a woman when you’re on stage?” Those were the kind of questions I’d get. “Do you think, when men play guitar with male skin, and females play guitar with female skin, do you think it sounds different?” It would make my head spin...At interviews I waited so long for the questions to come about the music.¹¹⁹

The contributions to the music industry, their talent, and performances were often disregarded for the pressing desire to know about their sex lives, providing evidence for the objectification women received in the heavy metal genre before the emergence of MTV and “lite” metal. The Runaways were pre- “lite” metal, a mix of punk and hard rock, which often implements more blues guitar, influences during the dawn of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal movement. They optimistically led the way for future female rockers, as their song “Rock-N-Roll,” from their first album *The Runaways*, describes the way rock and roll can be just as influential to women,

Ginni said when she was five years old,
You know there’s nothing going down at all.
She turned on that radio
And there was nothing happenin’ at all.
She turned on that LA station
Couldn’t believe what she heard at all
She started dancing to that fine fine music
Her life was saved by rock and roll.¹²⁰

The Runaways were fashioned in such a way to challenge the gender roles of the mid 1970s. Anthropologist, Amber Clifford-Napoleone describes the fashion of women in heavy metal as an “image of feminine dominatrix”. In her study, she explains that the Runaways’, Joan Jett, wore a more masculine leather look against vocalist Cherie

¹¹⁹ Joan Jett, Todd Oldham, and Kathleen Hanna. *Joan Jett*. (Los Angeles, CA: Ammo Books, 2010), no page numbers.

¹²⁰ The Runaways. *Rock-N-Roll*. “The Runaways.” CD. Mercury Records. 1976.
<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/runaways/rocknroll.html>

Currie's lingerie during their performances. She argues that this was a symbol that "the cock-rock woman was, in rock's imagination, temporarily moved to the back so the corseted mistress could whip her male fans into shape".¹²¹ Both these representations challenged 1980s social norms and the gender roles of women as Joan Jett and Cherie Currie's style contrasted each other on two different sides of nonconformity during the 1980s.

The success of the Runaways in Europe and Japan contributed to the rise of women rockers throughout Europe, such as the all-girl band Girlschool and Doro Pesch of Warlock. The Runaways did not always receive the recognition they deserved as American Studies professor Steve Waksman points out, as they "sang about their femininity, but their status as girls was also something that was continually scrutinized...the story of the Runaways is in many ways the story of their struggle to define themselves in relation to the expectations held by audiences, critics, and Fowley himself".¹²² However, their time as the Runaways would be short lived because of the internal tensions and the excesses of the rock and roll lifestyle. In her memoirs, Lita Ford recalls these tensions leading to the breakup of the Runaways,

When Laurie joined, the Runaways were hanging on by a thread. Jackie, Cherie, Vicki, Scott, and Kim were gone. Joan was fucked up and pissed off. Toby was a pain the ass. John Alcock had turned into a nightmare. Sandy and I were going through the motions, and Sandy had started to lose her temper easily, which was unusual for her. She was tired and wanted a break. We all did...The pressures of Cherie's departure and John Alcock putting more emphasis on Sandy and me seemed to be getting to Joan. At this point she was doing way too many drugs and was getting worse by the

¹²¹ Amber Clifford-Napoleone. *Queerness in Heavy Metal Music: Metal Bent*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015), 38.

¹²² Steve Waksman. *This Ain't the Summer of Love* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2009), 106.

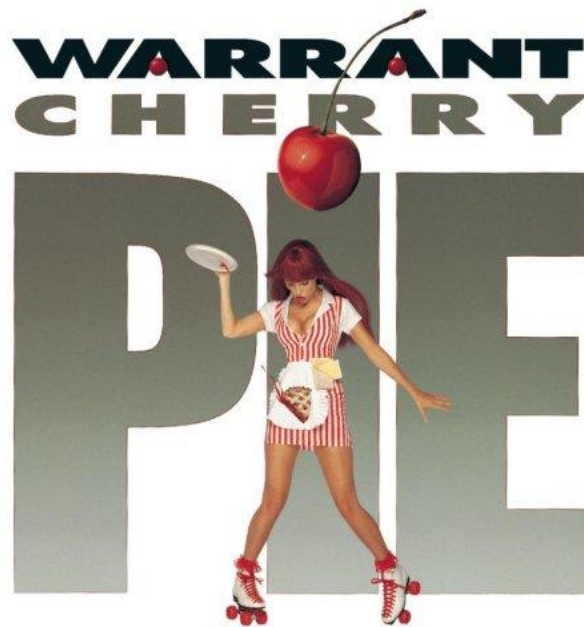
day. I saw her vomiting and in the middle of a conversation she would nod out. That was the end of the Runaways in a nutshell. One fucked-up person turning to another fucked-up person and wondering who was going to save whom.¹²³

Even though the Runaways were short lived, they had a lasting impact on the music industry. Both Joan Jett and Lita Ford had successful solo careers following the breakup of the Runaways in early 1979. These two women were iconic for the rock industry.

The 1980s introduced greater obstacles for women with the 1981 debut of Music Television (MTV), which reinforced the already marginalized place for women in the rock genre. They may have received airtime because of their attractiveness, but their respect and credibility as real musicians worsened. Data presented by a study to analyze sexism in MTV's rock music videos, shows four levels of sexism that videos fell under. This study determined that the most common form of sexism present in MTV rock videos, with 56.9%, was the level I sexism defined as; "the woman is portrayed as being less than a person, a two-dimensional image. Includes the dumb blond, the sex object and the whimpering victim...Here women are used as sexual objects, or are presented in roles where others do her thinking".¹²⁴ For example, in Warrant's "Cherry Pie" video, a blonde who is on roller skates serving cherry pie falls over the cord to the bands amplifier dropping the pie and throughout the video they only emphasize her appearance and their sexual relations with her. This objectification of the roller skating woman is also seen on their album cover seen below with the pie purposefully placed as a sexual innuendo.

¹²³ Lita Ford. *Living Like a Runaway*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2016), 82-83.

¹²⁴ Richard C. Vincent, Dennis K. Davis, and Lily Ann Boruszkowski. "Sexism on MTV: The Portrayal of Women in Rock Videos." *Journalism Quarterly* 64, (Winter 1987), 752. (Accessed October 26, 2016). http://www.academia.edu/498801/Sexism_on_MTV_The_portrayal_of_women_in_rock_videos



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These stereotypes stigmatized women in the music industry because women were not respected and were continuously represented as one of “lite” metals hedonistic desires rather than people or musicians. Videos displaying women as sex objects took up more than half of the videos that women were in on MTV. This sort of illustration of women in music videos reinforced the objectification of women and the marginalization in both society and in the music industry.

The second largest level at 17.1% was level II, in which they defined as; “some strengths, skills and capacities of women are acknowledged, but tradition also dictates “womanly” roles...A high emphasis on sexual attributes still is found here”.¹²⁶ For example, in Mötley Crüe’s “Looks That Kill” video in which a woman dressed in a

¹²⁵ Photo from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherry_Pie_\(album\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherry_Pie_(album))

¹²⁶ Richard C. Vincent, Dennis K. Davis, and Lily Ann Boruszkowski. “Sexism on MTV: The Portrayal of Women in Rock Videos.” *Journalism Quarterly* 64, (Winter 1987), 752. (Accessed October 26, 2016). http://www.academia.edu/498801/Sexism_on_MTV_The_portrayal_of_women_in_rock_videos

tantalizing warrior-like outfit frees the band members' woman slaves, which they trapped with their musical talents and then the members of Mötley Crüe display a sense of preying on the warrior-like woman because of their animal-like sexual desires. In level IV, which only accounts for 13.8%, women are presented as an equal and in a respectable way that has no reference to the stereotypical role of women.¹²⁷ For example, in Poison's "So Tell Me Why" video, men and women are working together professionally in a scientific field in the year 2060, studying a guitar that leads to them hearing Poison for the first time. At the end of the video one of the women lets down her hair and says "Primitive, play it again".¹²⁸ They presented these women as educated and equal without displaying them as an object of desire. Level III comes in last with 12.2%, which "emphasizes a dual role where a woman plays a traditional, subservient role while also displaying a certain degree of independence".¹²⁹ For example, Guns N Roses "Don't Cry" video, has women fighting both Axl and Slash throughout the video, in one scene Slash drives a car off a cliff with the woman and him still inside and then Slash is seen playing his guitar on top of the cliff after the crash. These women were displayed with greater degree of independence as they fought the challenges associated with being a rock stars' girlfriend, but they were not portrayed as equals or respectfully. Therefore, the rock music videos that MTV aired contained a significant amount of objectification,

¹²⁷ Ibid, 752.

¹²⁸ Emimusic. "Poison - So Tell Me Why." *youtube.com*. February 26, 2009. (Accessed October 26, 2016). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1NkhR5hFZE>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1NkhR5hFZE&list=PLIzPtI6YPmw5NIQr3iGFP4HBMWrgPXw91&index=11>

¹²⁹ Richard C. Vincent, Dennis K. Davis, and Lily Ann Boruszkowski. "Sexism on MTV: The Portrayal of Women in Rock Videos." *Journalism Quarterly* 64, (Winter 1987), 752. (Accessed October 26, 2016). http://www.academia.edu/498801/Sexism_on_MTV_The_portrayal_of_women_in_rock_videos

following a decade that was monumental for women's equality. MTV's intentions were not to objectify women, but sex sells and in business profits are necessary.

MTV's success depended upon the appearance and imagery of the artists they aired. Therefore, because of "the advent of MTV, image became everything, at least in the eyes of the music industry".¹³⁰ Musicians not only needed talent but now their success depended significantly on their appearance. According to Deena Weinstein, MTV "seemed to find extravagant hairstyles a good reason to include a band's video in its rotation, regardless of its musical style" and therefore, because "lite" metal had the extravagant appearance MTV sought after it was pushed into mainstream popularity because of the abundant airtime it received.¹³¹ However, these "lite" metal bands continued to objectify women in their music videos and other imagery based products, while their androgynous appearance shrunk the roles available for women to fill within the "lite" metal genre.

"Lite" metal musicians incorporated common styles for women in the 1980s into their appearance and objectified women in their music videos, lyrical content, and album covers which marginalized women as they sought to establish their own identity in the 1980s- "lite" metal music industry. "Lite" metals' appearance that incorporated women's style, included long voluminous hair, over the top makeup, and women's clothing such as heels, fishnets, and tight fitting pants. For example, Poison (top) displays this 1980s- feminine appearance which left little room for women to differentiate themselves from

¹³⁰ Mina Carson, Tisa Lewis, and Susan M. Shaw. *Girls Rock! Fifty Years of Women Making Music*. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 127.

¹³¹ Deena Weinstein. *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*. Revised Ed. (New York: De Capo Press, 2000), 46.

the men in the music industry, which can be seen with the late 1980s all female band Vixen (bottom), who could almost be mistaken as Poison from appearance alone.



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¹³² Photo from: <http://www.lostateminor.com/2013/11/19/8-awful-80s-band-photos-that-will-haunt-the-members-forever/>

¹³³ Photo from: <https://hairraid.wordpress.com/page/2/>

As a result of the resemblance in the music industries fashion and style, women had to find a way to appeal to audiences and the industry alike, to regain ownership of their own sexuality and overcome the marginalization created by the objectification and borrowed trends. Due to Vixen's comparable appearance they did not gain commercial success until 1988 when they signed with EMI, even though they were in Los Angeles playing since 1981.

Lita Ford (left) and Joan Jett (right) provided two very distinct routes into the music industry against the marginalization and objectification created by "lite" metals androgyny and MTV's emphasis on appearance.



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¹³⁴ Photo from: <http://flahstron.tripod.com/mujeresmetal/>

¹³⁵ Photo from: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/6122149463270407/>

The distinct approaches they took in terms of appearance and style can be deconstructed with these two photographs. First, their stances are very different, yet crucial to understanding the message displayed in their image. Lita Ford stands in a submissively that is more risqué as she stands in a sexually suggestive position with her hand placed on her knee below her skirt. In contrast, Joan Jett stands tall with her hips pushed forward and her hands on her hips displaying a more dominant and powerful appearance, which can be interpreted as more masculine or in accordance with heavy metals emphasis on power. Their clothing is also obviously different, but both almost entirely black. Joan Jett's black attire includes pants, a tank top with very little skin shown and tennis shoes. Lita Ford, however, is wearing heels, a short skirt, and a bra with just her arms covered by a jacket. These images suggest that Lita Ford embraced the objectivity as she utilized it for her own interests, for she did not want to be illustrated as a "cutesie little pop star."¹³⁶ In her memoirs she explains, "I liked the raunch, and the shock value of being eccentric and playing guitar".¹³⁷ She embraced herself as a woman and displayed the feminine sexiness that no "lite" metal male musician could, no matter how much make up and Aqua Net Hairspray they had.

Joan Jett on the other hand, used a sort of reverse androgyny that allowed her to illustrate a more masculine image against that of the "lite" metal male's feminine appearance. Her powerful poses provided a sense of masculinity. Joan Jett's comments on her masculine style suggest that the style came naturally to her, she explained "I'd get

¹³⁶ Lita Ford. *Living Like a Runaway*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2016), 129.

¹³⁷ Lita Ford. *Living Like a Runaway*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2016), 129.

really basic stuff – T-shirts with weird things on them, belts. Really, I just wore jeans and sneakers and a leather jacket and a T-shirt, you know. But that leather jacket, the dark hair, heavy makeup, it was kind of armoring because people were kind of afraid of me”.¹³⁸ Joan Jett’s approach to appearance provided a sense of empowerment and strength to overcome the obstacles of objectification, rather than embracing it and utilizing it for her own benefits.

In addition to the objectification and marginalization of women through imagery and appearance, “lite” metal further objectified women with their lyrical content. Many of these songs depicted women as a sex object rather than a love interest, mutual partner, or even to be respected. For example, Guns N’ Roses song “Rocket Queen” and “It’s So Easy”, and Mötley Crüe’s “Tonight (We Need a Lover)”,

Ninety thousand screaming watts
Honey dripping from her pot
Fill the cup to the top tonight
This deadly sin is all we know
Pleasure victim, who’s next to fall
The question is will you please us all?.¹³⁹

Not only did the lyrical content illustrate the lack of respect for women, but some of their musical content also contributed to the objectification of women. For example, Guns N’ Roses drummer, Steven Adler was caught cheating by his girlfriend Adriana Smith and as revenge she decided to have sex with vocalist, Axl Rose during the recording of Guns N’ Roses song “Rocket Queen”, to create live performance moaning that was integrated into

¹³⁸ Joan Jett, Todd Oldham, and Kathleen Hanna. *Joan Jett*. (Los Angeles, CA: Ammo Books, 2010), no page numbers.

¹³⁹ Mötley Crüe. *Tonight (We Need a Lover)*. “Theatre of Pain”. CD. Elektra Records. 1985.
<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/motleycrue/tonightweneedalover.html>

the song.¹⁴⁰ Each of these components further stigmatized women as “lite” metal musicians sex toys, which obstructed women musician’s ability to be recognized for their musical talent.

Sex being such a significant aspect of the rock culture, going all the way back to Elvis’s gyrating hips, female musicians had to overcome the belief that women in rock were groupies or sex toys for the male musicians. Women musicians had to make their own sexual desires known. Joan Jett and Lita Ford both accentuated their sexual fantasies with lyrical content, in songs such as Joan Jett and the Blackheart’s “I Love Playing With Fire” and Lita Ford’s song, “Hungry,”

I got an appetite for love tonight
 I wanna taste your sweet thing
 I wanna feel the sting of your sex, of your sex
 My body all painted lipstick red
 We ripped the sheets right off the bed
 My fingernails left fiery trails
 Across your back, oh, tell me baby
 How’d you like that little pussycat scratch
 I’m so hungry for your sex.¹⁴¹

Both Joan Jett and Lita Ford were bombarded with questions about their sexual fantasies by the press when they were in the Runaways, as if it was strange that they had any. However, Joan Jett and Lita Ford both combatted against the media’s obsession with their sex life while also embracing rock’s emphasis of it by continuing to write and play songs that accentuated a women’s sexual desires.

¹⁴⁰ Katherine Love, Wallace Morgan, Joseph Hudak, Keith Harris, Maura Johnston, Dan Epstein. “Spring 1987: Axl Rose Helps Add Sex Sounds to “Rocket Queen”.” *Rollingstone.com*. November 24, 2015. (Accessed October 27, 2016). <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/50-wildest-guns-n-roses-moments-20151124/spring-1987-axl-rose-helps-adds-sex-sounds-to-rocket-queen-20151119>

¹⁴¹ Lita Ford. *Hungry*. “Stiletto.” CD. RCA Records. 1990.
<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/litaford/hungry.html>

Joan Jett dove into deeper into the ideas of sexual desires, which accentuated her androgyny by playing songs like “Crimson and Clover,” originally by Tommy James & the Shondells. In her autobiography, she wrote about the androgynous nature of this song and why she loved it, saying, “I love the message of the song. I think it is really for me. You figure, if you can get these messages of tolerance early on, where people don’t make fun of people for being different, whether you’re calling them fat or calling them gay”.¹⁴² She clearly established her beliefs toward the LGBT community, she supported their sexual orientation, whether socially acceptable or not. Lita Ford did not represent these same sexual desires, possibly because she had not experimented with them like Joan Jett had. In her memoirs, Lita explained how she was introduced to homosexuality and bisexuality and why it made her uncomfortable at the time. She said talking about her former bandmates from the Runaways,

I just thought they were becoming best friends, but then it hit me: *they were all into girls*. All of them except for Jackie...Before then I didn’t even have a name for being gay or bisexual. I had never been around an openly gay person in my life. I know it sounds crazy now...It was 1975. Being gay or bisexual was considered “wrong” by mainstream society. Period. I’m sorry to say that it fucked with my head. If someone would have taught me that men sometimes slept with men and women sometimes slept with women, I wouldn’t have been so shocked. Instead, I was left to figure it out for myself.¹⁴³

Therefore, Joan Jett’s route into the music industry was more than just rebellion toward the objectification of women, but represented a rejection of the 1980s societal attitudes

¹⁴² Joan Jett, Todd Oldham, and Kathleen Hanna. *Joan Jett*. (Los Angeles, CA: Ammo Books, 2010), no page numbers.

¹⁴³ Lita Ford. *Living Like a Runaway*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2016), 29-30.

toward sexual orientation entirely as she engaged in and represented freedom of sexual expression.

Joan Jett's androgyny assisted her into a position of dominance among the heavy metal culture, due to heavy metal's sexual exclusiveness and masculinist acceptance.

Weinstein explains that acceptance among the heavy metal subculture is based on conformity to their masculinist culture,

females who do not flaunt their femininity, that is, who dress in jeans and black T-shirts, and who even more importantly display a love of the music, are often welcomed and treated as equals at such events such as concerts. Open hostility of various sorts is displayed toward females who do not conform to the dress and behavior codes... The distinction made by the metal subculture between women who dress and behave according to the masculine code and those who fit feminine stereotypes indicates that it is the culture of masculinity, not biological differences, that is the greatest significance.¹⁴⁴

Therefore, Joan Jett's natural style of black T-shirts, leather jackets, and jeans provided her the opportunity to break through the objectification and marginalization illustrated by "lite" metal, who had kept these masculinist ideologies from the heavy metal culture. She also aligned with the punk rock subculture, in 1979, following the breakup of the Runaways she recorded songs with drummer Paul Cook and guitarist Steve Jones from the Sex Pistols¹⁴⁵ and given its inclusiveness she gained greater popularity and became known as the "Godmother of Punk".

¹⁴⁴ Deena Weinstein. *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*. Revised Ed. (New York: De Capo Press, 2000), 105.

¹⁴⁵ Richard Buskin. "Joan Jett 'I Love Rock & Roll' Classic Tracks." *Soundonsound.com*. February 2010. (Accessed October 27, 2016). <http://www.soundonsound.com/people/joan-jett-i-love-rock-roll-classic-tracks>

Lita Ford, on the other hand, did not fit into the conformity of the masculinist culture that defined heavy metal, however, she still successfully combatted the marginalization manifested by the new-found emphasis on appearance and imagery during the 1980s. Instead of rejecting the sexualizing of women, she embraced her own sex appeal. She emphasized all the same traits that male performers would emphasize on the women they placed in videos or on album covers. For example, her album covers during “lite” metal’s pinnacle contained alluring images of herself, such as on her 1983 album “Out For Blood” (left) and her 1988 self-titled album “Lita” (right).



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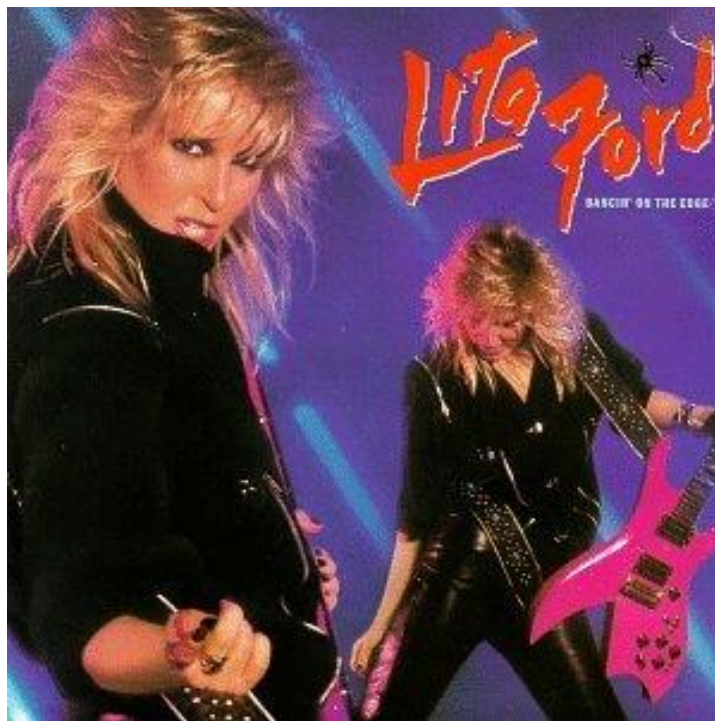
Lita took it upon herself to become the object, not only the object of performance and talent but the object on display.

However, her demonstration as a female musician with sex appeal during this period came with backlash, because she worked in an industry in which “tight-fitting

¹⁴⁶ Photo from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Out_for_Blood_\(Lita_Ford_album\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Out_for_Blood_(Lita_Ford_album))

¹⁴⁷ Photo from: http://ru.themusic-world.com/artist/lita_ford/albums

clothes indicated stud appeal in a man and slut appeal in a woman”.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, although she embraced her own sex appeal, her credibility as a guitar player would continue to be questioned. Although, there was a turning point as she describes in her autobiography “*Dancin’ on the Edge* was the first album that actually crossed over to the other side. I became a chick on guitar with credibility, and I wasn’t just a piece of ass”.¹⁴⁹ She had overcome the stigmas that the objectification of women in the “lite” metal industry had created in 1984 with her album “*Dancin’ on the Edge*”, which ironically had a vastly different portrayal of her on the album cover. She was seen here in tight clothes, however covering her body far more than the other album covers.



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¹⁴⁸ Gillian G. Gaar. *She's A Rebel: The History of Women in Rock & Roll*. Expanded 2nd edition. (New York, NY: Seal Press, 2002), 341.

¹⁴⁹ Lita Ford. *Living Like a Runaway*. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2016), 129.

¹⁵⁰ Photo from: http://ru.themusic-world.com/artist/lita_ford/albums

Her poses were not ones of sex appeal or submission but rather ones of power and dominance. The successful breakthrough she describes occurring with this particular album is a result of the representation of her appearance and her conformity into the masculinist culture of “lite” metal.

Therefore, the emphasis of imagery and appearance that led to the objectification and marginalization of women in the 1980s “lite” metal music industry was overcome by both Lita Ford and Joan Jett due to the ability to conform to the heavy metal masculinist culture. Once they had to portray themselves as one of the guys, who appreciated and respected the culture of metal music, they were more quickly to be accepted by the industry and audience alike. Even though they could keep their femininity alive in their everyday appearance, like Lita Ford. Men were not held to these same standards as they dressed femininely, because their lyrical and video content still provided the basic notions of a masculine culture as they regarded women as one of their excesses, that resulted from being a rockstar. While “lite” metal musicians were fighting to be respected against claims of inauthenticity, they would not allow women to emerge and not conform to the rock orthodoxy that was already in place. Therefore, both Joan and Lita’s success came from accepting the culture of heavy metal and conforming to the expectations to gain respect. Therefore, it was imperative that Joan Jett and Lita Ford were instrumentalists and not just singers. Musically, women had to respect the culture that heavy metal had defined before the emergence of “lite” metal because those cultural markers were embedded into the subgenres as they splintered during the 1980s era of imagery and appearance.

Conclusion

The Los Angeles music industry was influenced by the political and economic shift to a market economy, because it appealed to the dissatisfied white working class, who felt exceedingly marginalized in an era of diversification from the post-New Deal reforms. The New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM) influenced genres, like heavy metal and its subgenres and punk rock, to emerge against the 1960s utopian ideals a new rejection to the establishment surrounding ideals of nihilism, aggression, and power. Heavy metal established a new set of principles for their rock performers and audience that was based on masculinity and hedonistic values, these values were the foundation that led to the 1980s marginalization of women in the “lite” metal industry.

Punk rock and heavy metal separated because of the music industries shift toward corporate management and the splintering within the genres allowed for “lite” metal to emerge, utilizing the NWOBHM aesthetics and emphasizing image and appearance in the wake of MTV and the development of music videos. The “lite” metal subgenre honored the principles set forth by its leading influencer, heavy metal, which established a masculinist culture. “Lite” metal’s androgyny pushed the boundaries of the masculinist culture without exceeding its limits as it continued to indulge into the excesses of sex, drugs, and rock and roll. It did, however, create challenges for women musicians to differentiate themselves in the “lite” metal industry. Consequently, the guiding principles of heavy metal, the androgyny of “lite” metal, and the rise of music videos, left women

exceedingly marginalized within the “lite” metal music industry, because they were continuously portrayed as sex objects for the rock and roll lifestyle, rather than musicians or respectable individuals for that matter.

“Lite” metal’s androgynous imagery and appearance, along with their mainstream popularity that came as a result to their significant airtime on MTV, raised questions of authenticity within the rock genre. They were criticized by other rock musicians as being “sell-outs” because of their conformity to the corporate music industry and their growing popularity into mainstream culture. However, evidence provides that mainstream culture conformed to “lite” metal, although MTV helped shape its appearance and imagery, because this music continued to savor the hedonistic lifestyle that resulted from the principles established when 1960s counterculture ideals were rejected by both heavy metal and punk rock. “Lite” metal was consumed by the excesses of sex, drugs, and rock and roll. They were as authentic as rock could be, as they rejected social conformity and refused to conform to the rules established by competing rock genres.

Women’s marginalization was aided by this idea of rock conformity. Women who did not present themselves in accordance to the rock orthodoxy laid out by heavy metal’s masculinist culture were rejected by the “lite” metal industry. Therefore, Joan Jett’s reverse androgynous look helped establish her credibility, while Lita Ford struggled to own her own sexuality. Joan Jett and Lita Ford established their credibility as rock musicians by presenting themselves in a way that conformed to the nihilistic, powerful, and aggressive principles. Therefore, to reject social conformity and be accepted by the rock and roll community, musicians had to adhere to the standards of the rock genre. As

a result, female musicians, like Lita Ford and Joan Jett could overcome the objectification and marginalization by conforming to the masculinist culture that defined the “lite” metal music industry.

During my research, I was really interested in how the androgyny impacted the music industry. However, I found that the technological advancements, the heavy metal culture, and the arrival of Music Television (MTV) were more significant for the changes that were present in the 1980s “lite” metal industry. Due to the significant technological advancements, guitar centered rock began to decline during the early 1990’s because of the new appeal of electronic based music. Furthermore, I wanted to see Lita Ford establish credibility without succumbing to the androgynous imagery overwhelming the music industry and conforming to the masculine culture that existed within the metal industry. The research led me to the opposite as the androgyny and masculine culture triumphed.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, grunge emerges rejecting the beautification of rock that “lite” metal displayed. The grunge scene presented a very different perspective on rock excesses as their music was significantly more somber. Grunge, being greatly influenced by punk rock, was much more inclusive to female musicians, with artists such as Courtney Love from Hole, Mia Zapata from The Gits, Donita Sparks and Suzi Gardner from L7, and others. Upon heavy metals reappearance into mainstream popularity in the late 1990s with bands like Avenged Sevenfold and Halestorm, metal music became increasingly more inclusive for female musicians, such as Lzzy Hale from Halestorm. However, metal music has never reached the height of popularity that it reached in the

1980s again. Women even began to emerge as frontwomen without instruments, such as Maria Brink from In This Moment, and Hiedi Shepherd and Carla Harvey from the Butcher Babies. This may suggest the breakdown of the masculinist culture that once marginalized female musician's role in the metal industry or it may be due to the transformation of Music Television, in which music videos no longer dominate considerable airtime. However, this is an area for future study.

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