

Gender and Extreme Metal: Understanding Gender Relations in the  
Montreal Extreme Metal Scene With Schippers' Gender Framework

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## **Abstract**

### Gender and Extreme Metal: Understanding Gender Relations in the Montreal Extreme Metal Scene With Schippers' Gender Framework

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Extreme metal is a masculine space, yet more and more women join in. They face a contradiction: as women, they are expected to adopt feminine behaviours; however, they are part of a subculture that valorizes warrior masculinity. I sought to understand the gender expectations of the Montreal extreme metal scene and interpret the contradictions encountered by women in this scene with the help of Schippers' (2007) theoretical framework on gender. To do so, I conducted 16 individual interviews with women and men who take part in the scene. This research fills a gap in the literature on gender that derives from Connell and Schippers' writings and addresses issues that the field of metal studies has brushed over. I found that metal men are the "default" participants in the scene. They are expected to be fine music connoisseurs and even become musicians. In contrast, women's presence is heterosexualized and attributed to a romantic or sexual interest in metal men. Women are suspected of being "poseuses" or groupies with no real interest in the music until proven otherwise. To become legitimate participants, they have to overcome those expectations and prove that they are worthy of being viewed through the prism of masculinity rather than femininity. They do so by proving their exceptionality through manhood acts and distancing themselves from other women. Despite their gender transgressions, women's presence does not fundamentally question gender relations but reaffirms the overall primacy of masculinity over femininity.

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## Introduction

Extreme metal, as a musical subgenre and a collectivity based on the people who like the music, is infamous for its dark and sometimes violent imagery and tends to be considered as a masculine space (Dawes, 2012; Hill, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000). While the proportion of women is relatively low in most metal subgenres, they are at their lowest in extreme metal (Chaker, 2016). Yet, more and more women appreciate it and join in. The goal of this research is to develop a better understanding of the Montreal extreme metal gender power structure and gender expectations. This research will fill a gap in the literature on masculinities and femininities and address issues that metal studies have often ignored or brushed over.

Researchers apply Connell's (1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) theory of masculinities in a variety of domains, yet she has knowingly left femininities undertheorized. In response, Schippers (2007) articulated promising concepts of femininities that would complement Connell's theoretical framework. Schippers' framework, however, did not receive the same level of recognition as Connell's. Researchers seem to know a lot about masculinities, but femininities are still largely unexplored. While researchers studied women's presence in masculine settings such as the skateboarding subculture (Beal, 1996) or the gym (Coen et al., 2018), they generally read women's participation either in light of the dominant masculine expectations or emphasized femininity, and rarely look at different femininities and their relationship to masculinity. A few years before publishing the article in which she proposes a framework to understand the relationality of masculinities and femininities, Schippers (2000, 2002) studied gender constructions of Chicago alternative hard rock with the help of queer theory. However, she chose this subculture for its antisexist sensibility and its criticism of mainstream gender norms (Schippers, 2000, p. 749, 2002, p. ix). Few authors have used

Schippers' (2007) femininity framework so far. Those who have generally employed her framework in contexts where women are more numerous than men such as roller derby (Finley, 2010) and sororities (Stone & Gorga, 2014). Studying women without reducing or forgetting femininities has yet to be done in a predominantly masculine environment. Therefore, I aim to map out the different forms of masculinities and femininities within the masculine context of the Montreal extreme metal scene and show their complex relations.

## **Literature Review**

### **What Is Extreme Metal?**

#### *The Music*

Extreme metal is best known as a musical genre to the general public. It resulted from an amalgam of rock, classic metal, and hardcore punk of the United Kingdom in the 1980s. Over seventy subgenres of metal exist, but extreme metal typically includes thrash metal, death metal, black metal, grindcore, and doom metal (Allett, 2011; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Riches et al., 2014). These subgenres are “extreme” because they challenge the boundaries of Western musical aesthetics and conventions (Kahn-Harris, 2007, p. 6). They do it even more so than other metal genres. The structure of extreme metal songs generally rejects the verse-chorus-verse form (2007, p. 33). Its musicians favour minor and diminished chords, modes and scales associated with exoticism and orientalism, and dissonances that have historically been linked with danger and evil (2007, p. 31). Electric guitars, generally heavily distorted and downtuned, are often the most important instrument of the band (2007, pp. 31–32). Extreme metal singing generally abandons melody to adopt false chord vocals, and the screams and growls make the lyrics nearly impossible to decipher without the help of written lyrics (2007, p. 32). The rhythm is generally extremely fast. Ample use of the double-bass drums often complements complex rhythmic

patterns (2007, p. 32). Despite the impression of chaos that metal can give to the unaccustomed ear, instrument mastery and control are important to the musicians (2007, p. 33).

### *The Culture and Its Beliefs*

The foundational literature of metal studies designates the collectivity of people in metal either as a subculture (Purcell, 2003; Weinstein, 2000), a community (Hill, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007, p. 123; Purcell, 2003, p. 38), or a scene (Kahn-Harris, 2007). For this research, I may favour either one depending on the context. On a global level, forming a community that would entail durable cooperation is difficult because of metal's geographic dispersion and the lack of any clear political metal direction (Weinstein, 2000, p. 135). Extreme metal fans are present all around the world, and as Weinstein (2000) remarks, "the audience for heavy metal is more than an 'unorganized aggregate,' but it is not fully organized" (p. 97). The concept of subculture, in this case, can emphasize the specificity of extreme metal within broader dominant cultures: "The shared demographics and especially their valorization and culturalization serve to unite the subculture. They are the matrix in which the members of the subculture become an ongoing social formation with distinctive social practices that create a solidarity" (2000, p. 136). Although they do not have to form a unified community, the people in a subculture generally share certain traits and knowledges that relate to a broader culture. Participants of a subculture can articulate their distinctive understanding of the world through these shared understandings.

On the other hand, the concept of community may prove useful to imply a relatively cohesive situation where we find self-awareness, togetherness, and solidarity. Kahn-Harris (2007) sometimes uses this notion to highlight the sense of unity and the mutual assistance between extreme metal fans and musicians in certain contexts. Hill (2016) prefers the concept of "imaginary community:" "The concept of the imagined community shifts the emphasis away from the question of whether communities actually exist or not, or what the qualities of

communities might be, and places importance in the feeling of living alongside others” (p. 39). While I use the single word “community” rather than “imaginary community,” the distinction between “community” and “subculture” rests on this feeling of togetherness.

Kahn-Harris’ (2007) main analytical tool remains that of scene. Kahn-Harris studies extreme metal at a global level and needs a notion that allows him to transcend the localized settings of specific cultures. Speaking of scenes enables him to understand extreme metal as an international set of practices that relate to extreme metal music in general. The concept of scene gives him the freedom to travel fluidly between multiple levels of analysis, whether local or global. This concept allows us to understand how a local setting, like the Montreal metal scene, integrates itself within an international metal context without having to overemphasize how unified and normative those practices are.

When I brush extreme metal’s general traits as a subculture situated within a larger culture or within a web of cultures, I prefer to speak of subculture. This is the term that I use the most to report the writings of different authors in my literature review. Yet, the current research is sensitive to the specificities of extreme metal in Montreal. I usually prefer the concepts of community and scene to make sense of my data. Most of my respondents report a certain level of solidarity with the other metalheads of Montreal. Speaking of community allows me to highlight the cohesion and togetherness that respondents report in the local context of Montreal. Besides, my interviewees often inscribe their own practices in light of broader, international metal practices. When I wish to maintain a connection between extreme metal in Montreal and this broader “metalness,” I may favour the concept of scene.

Whether they prefer to speak of subculture, community, or scene, metal scholars (Hill, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000) argue that metal is made of the people who like the music and possesses its own specific set of rules, beliefs, and behaviours. For

instance, Weinstein (2000) refers to metal as “a total life-style that includes music as a prime component, but uses the music to express and foster a sense of life” (pp. 139-140). Similarly, Kahn-Harris (2016) stresses that “[t]o be metal is to be ‘true’ to oneself, to ‘live for metal,’ to be deeply committed to the scene” (p. 31). “Being metal” allows for a mutual sense of recognition between otherwise disparate people who share a love for the music, and a lifestyle based on their love of the music. Tompkins (2015) specifies that “being metal” also “encapsulates a broader ‘lifestyle address’ that invites viewers to identify with metal’s anti-mainstream ethos” (p. 178). This ethos refers to the idea that, by embracing the metal lifestyle, fans have to reject the “mainstream” and thus become “authentic” (Hill, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Tompkins, 2015).

The “mainstream,” in the context of metal, refers to the “normative” or the “popular” and is associated with fashion, herd mentality, consumption culture, passivity, superficiality, manufactured (Allett, 2011, p. 174; Hill, 2016, p. 62). In this logic, conformity to the mainstream reflects a fundamental lack of independence, taste, judgement, and individuality. In contrast, authenticity in extreme metal is a type of belief and disposition where fans reject the mainstream way of being in the world to embrace a particular, transgressive one (Hill, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007). Authenticity entails staying “true to oneself,” therefore creatively and intellectually autonomous, free from the “corrupting influence” of the mainstream (Clifford-Napoleone, 2016, p. 63; Hill, 2016, p. 53; Walser, 1993, p. 100). For metalheads, metal is valuable because of its countercultural, critical nature (Allett, 2011, p. 174).

Authenticity is the core value of metal as it establishes boundaries between who fits in – true metalheads – and who does not – mainstream people, poseurs – and thus preserves its integrity (2011, p. 174). For metalheads, authenticity also produces equality:

The community is portrayed as a ‘level playing field’ in which all members hold the same status in spite of differences of sex, race and sexuality, and despite disparities between

roles (musician/industry, worker/fan). It is represented as an authentic culture based on real talent, hard work and genuine appreciation. (Hill, 2016, p. 53)

According to this logic, everyone is accepted no matter who they are and what their background is, as long as they are authentic. Metal may be predominantly white, masculine, and heterosexual, but people who do not fit this description can join in and be accepted no matter what their race, gender, or sexual orientation is “if they follow the rules” (Kahn-Harris, 2016, p. 31). Therefore, fans view metal as a place where nothing “extra-musical” should come into play: everybody is equal and sheer musical talent, devotion, and authenticity determine one’s success or failure.

### **The Concealed Power Struggles**

According to metal scholars (Kahn-Harris, 2007; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000, 2016), metal may not be as detached from the dominant social structures of power as many fans and musicians believe it to be. Authors (Kahn-Harris, 2007; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000, 2016) who examine metal within its broader social context often realize that the subculture is subject to mainstream power relations, and even sometimes exacerbates them. Weinstein (2000, p. 101) asserts that the heavy metal subculture rose from a preservationist tendency following the decay of the 1960s youth culture dominated by white heterosexual males. The emergence of feminist, gay, and non-white movements in Europe and North America challenged the dominance of masculinity, heterosexuality, and whiteness. According to Weinstein (2000, 2016), metal was a place where young, white, heterosexual men could find refuge to vent their anger and feel powerful. Similarly, Hill (2016) explains that metal is similar to the rock tradition, which serves in “freeing men from societal constraints of caring and responsibility [...]. [I]n spite of its rebellious image and libertarian ideals, rock does not challenge all dominant repressive ideas: of the social constraints that rock rebels against, gender is not one” (p. 47).

Specifically, extreme metal tends to celebrate “warrior” characteristics associated with masculinity, such as strength, determination, endurance, aggressiveness, independence, and stoicism, all while rejecting what is socially associated with femininity, such as emotivity, drama, passion, and softness (Chaker, 2016; Hill, 2011; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Rafalovich, 2006; Turbé, 2016; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000). Therefore, still according to Weinstein (2000, p. 221), if a woman wishes to be part of the scene, she has to conform to the dominant masculine norms and either try to be “one of the boys” or appear as a “sex object.” Kahn-Harris (2007, p. 77) suggests that practices of exclusion and self-exclusion preserve the exclusivity of white heterosexual males. According to him, white heterosexual males have a predisposition for participating in metal (2007, p. 77). Women, non-heterosexual, and non-white people do not share this predisposition and will often refrain from joining in. If they wish to participate, they need to work harder to gain this disposition and have to face obstacles along their way.

### ***Feminist Authors and the Transformative Power of Women in Metal***

Walser, Weinstein, and Kahn-Harris observe power struggles in metal, but they do not account for the presence of marginalized people. According to these authors, non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual people seem to be almost absent from metal, and those who are present seem out-of-place and powerless. In response to this invisibilization, feminist scholars focus on the women who participate in metal to understand their presence. Namely, Riches (2011; Riches et al., 2014) and Turbé (2016) try to understand how women transform and are empowered by metal. They believe that women in extreme metal challenge its gender power relations.

For instance, Riches (2011; Riches et al., 2014) engages in a “moshography” (2014, p. 87): an ethnographic study on women who participate in mosh pits at extreme metal shows. Attendants create a mosh pit when an empty space forms in the middle of the crowd and people get into it to push each other. It is a display of power requiring strength and mastery of the body

(Gruzelier, 2007, p. 61; Kahn-Harris, 2007, pp. 44–45; Riches, 2011, pp. 315–316; Riches et al., 2014, p. 90). Few women dare to join in (2014, pp. 90–91). Therefore, the mosh pit is a homosocial space that reinforces solidarity between men. However, Riches explains that, when women take part in mosh pits, they transgress gender expectations and challenge homosociality. For Riches (2014), “transgression often involves creating new boundaries as it simultaneously destroys others” (p. 90). The transgression of women who take part in mosh pits challenge masculine exclusivity, thus destroy to the boundaries of homosociality:

As women enter into extreme metal scenes and participate in its subcultural practices, it indicates a change in metal’s demographic and reflects the amount of autonomy women have to engage in deviant, rebellious and masculine leisure undertakings. The emergence of new rules, social interactions and pit regulations within the extreme metal scene is indicative of women creating more spaces within the mosh pit and ultimately producing their own spatial arrangements in liminal spaces. (2011, pp. 329–330)

This rearrangement may begin with men being uncomfortable with the presence of women in mosh pits. At first, they may adjust their behaviour and be gentler or avoid women because they do not want to hurt them. After a while, men get used to bumping into women, stop modifying their behaviour, and ultimately accept their presence as legitimate participants. In this respect, the presence of women in mosh pits can be disruptive. Women master the originally masculine space of the mosh pit on the same level as men, thus disrupt the homosocial codes of the practice.

In a similar fashion, Turbé (2016) believes that women who adopt typically masculine behaviours in extreme metal blur gender expectations and transform the subculture. Turbé studies French women who listen to extreme metal and go to extreme metal concerts. For this author, women in extreme metal create a new form of gender that emancipates them from the expected expressions of femininity. If, for Weinstein (2000, p. 221), forcing women to either be a “sex

object” or “one of the boys” is problematic because it means playing by the men’s rules, Turbé disagrees. For Turbé (2016, p. 99), the opportunity of “playing men” is a chance for women to be critical of gender expectations and to use their agency to enact a new type of femininity which she calls the strong woman. Strong women disrupt patriarchy without reproducing hegemonic rules because of their very gender. Women playing men produce a new form of gender that is neither masculine since they are women, nor feminine since they enact something associated with men. This, for Turbé, creates a new, transformative, and deconstructive type of gender.

### ***The Limits of Women’s Transformative Power in Metal***

In contrast, other metal studies authors (Hill, 2011; Krenske & McKay, 2000; Nordström & Herz, 2013; Schaap & Berkers, 2013; Vasan, 2011) do not believe that women’s presence inherently challenges the gender dynamics in metal. They believe that women, as a subordinate group, are judged by men according to their conformity to masculine codes. Their level of compliance to these codes determines their level of acceptance. They add that intra-gender hierarchies exist between women and contribute to the reproduction of the hegemony of masculinity. These intra-gender hierarchies impact women’s reception and participation in metal based on their enactment of “appropriate” types of femininities.

Krenske and McKay (2000, p. 298) argue that “very feminine” women are at the bottom of women’s intra-gender hierarchy – for example, those who fit in the category that they call “glam chicks.” They display typically feminine behaviours and generally wear revealing clothes. Men and other women alike tend to discredit those feminine metal fans. They are deemed inauthentic, associated with groupies, and are thus believed to be pursuing sexual relationships with men rather than enjoying the music (p. 300). At the top of the intra-gender hierarchy, we find the “very masculine” women – Krenske and McKay’s (p. 300) “metal wenches” who wear masculine clothes and engage in socially masculine behaviours such as moshing and drinking.

These women achieve a similar standing to that of men by “masculinizing” (Krenske & McKay, 2000, p. 300; Vasan, 2011, p. 345). However, the ascension of masculine women in the metal subculture does not benefit women as a group. It simply reproduces intra-gender competition and reinforces the idea that masculinity is worthier and more authentic than femininity (Krenske & McKay, 2000; Vasan, 2011). Thus, women’s adoption of masculine behaviours in extreme metal is not inherently disruptive. The effects can very well be the opposite: through the valorization of masculinity and the rejection of femininity, women can contribute to the reproduction of inequalities in metal (Hill, 2011; Krenske & McKay, 2000; Nordström & Herz, 2013; Schaap & Berkers, 2013; Vasan, 2011).

### **Theoretical Framework**

While some metal scholars such as Krenske and McKay suggest that intra- and inter-gender relationships explain some of the power relations of metal, I wish to flesh out better these various types of masculinities and femininities within a unified gender framework. I will use a theoretical framework elaborated by Connell (1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and revised by Schippers (2007, 2016; Schippers & Sapp, 2012) to make sense of the multidimensional gender relations of the Montreal extreme metal scene and determine whether its participants reproduce gender inequalities.

Connell’s work is a cornerstone in men’s studies. While feminist studies focus on women as the oppressed group, men’s studies aim to understand men as the dominant group within the context of gender inequalities. Men’s studies move away from the traditional male-oriented scholarship to adopt a feminist criticism of gender relations (Brod, 1987c, p. 189). Although feminist and men’s studies scholars share an anti-oppressive perspective, they rarely come together to offer an integrated framework in which both masculinities and femininities are fully

relational, complex, and nuanced. Schippers' (2007) approach poses some of the necessary foundations to create an integrated framework.

### ***“Doing” Gender***

Groundbreaking authors West and Zimmerman (1987, 2009) understand gender not as a fixed identity or as an inherent quality of individuals, but as a social creation. They explain that gender is “an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society” (1987, p. 126). Building on West and Zimmerman, Connell (1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and Schippers (Kane & Schippers, 1996; Schippers, 2000, 2002, 2007, 2008, 2016; Schippers & Sapp, 2012) assert that femininity and masculinity are social categories. While people can endorse them as identities, they co-constitute and reinforce each other within power relations. This is why masculinity and femininity vary from one cultural context to another.

The belief that humanity is divided into two types of reproductive bodies – some with male genitalia and others with female genitalia, forcing people whose bodies are not typically male or female into either one of those categories – explains the binarity of the Western gender categories (Brod, 1987c, 2013; Connell, 1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kane & Schippers, 1996; Kimmel, 2010; Schippers, 2000, 2002, 2007, 2008, 2016; Schippers & Sapp, 2012; West & Fenstermaker, 1995; West & Zimmerman, 1987, 2009). Those two types of bodies are viewed as complementary and dichotomous to one another because of their reproductive capacities. People are invested with the often complementary and dichotomous roles and expectations that pertain to their corresponding bodily categorization, but “[g]ender practice might be organized in terms of three, or twenty, social categories” (Connell, 1987, p. 140). For

Connell, there could have been more types of genders, or genders could have been based on other characteristics than genitalia.

Furthermore, gender is relational. Men's studies authors (Brod, 1987c, 2013; Connell, 1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2010) state that masculinity needs a dichotomous opposite against which it can define itself. Femininity plays this role, as "[w]hatever the variations by race, class, age, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, being a man means 'not being like women'" (Kimmel, 2010, pp. 114–115). This process of "othering" organizes the social world into separate categories and leads to different outcomes for people who belong to those different categories, producing gender inequalities. Masculinity takes different forms across different times and places, but the dominance of masculinity in contemporary Western societies is linked to its opposition to femininity.

### **Definition of "Gender"**

For Connell (1987), gender is a practice "organized in terms of, or in relation to, the reproductive division of people into male and female. [...] It is about the linking of other fields of social practice to the nodal practices of engendering, childbirth and parenting" (p. 140).

Schippers (2007) recognizes that practices do have an influence on gender and impact various levels of the social life. Yet, for her, a practice is simply "the mechanism by which masculinities and femininities, as part of a vast network of gender meanings, come to organize social life" (p. 92). The relationality between, and meanings behind, gender practices is more central to Schippers than the practices themselves.

Schippers (2007, pp. 93–94) defines gender as a web of symbolic meanings embedded in and productive of power relations, leading to particular types of divisions of labour, imbalances in the access to power and authority, and unequal distribution of resources that generally benefit men as a social group and as individuals. Gender is then a form of relational discourse that

organizes the ideological landscape and orients social practices which, over time and repetition, produces and legitimizes the unequal relationships between men and women (2007, p. 94). As a rationale, masculinity and femininity justify people's practices; as a referent, genders orient people's practices and serve as standards by which everyone can interpret and judge their own practices as well as those of others in individual, local, or global settings (2007, pp. 92–93).

For instance, one gender is often made of, articulated with, justified by, and put in practice through what the “other,” or “opposite” gender is not. West and Zimmerman (1987, p. 138) use the example of women's “helplessness” next to flat tires to illustrate how differences between men and women are maintained. The same example can also illustrate Schippers' point. Femininity typically involves being fragile and helpless, especially when confronted with a masculine presence. Masculinity is constructed by its relative superiority over femininity, and the idealized quality content of masculinity consists of being strong and capable, especially when confronted with a feminine presence. Concretely, a man could be expected to, and justified for, saving a woman he sees grappling with a flat tire. The woman would be expected to, and justified for, waiting to be rescued from the situation by a man. If no discourses were implicating that someone – and specifying whom – desperately needs help, there would be no justification for someone else to save the said person. In this sense, for Schippers, idealized quality contents and practices contribute to articulating and perpetuating relationships, but masculinity and femininity cannot be reduced to specific practices or quality contents. The central element of genders is their relationality. What masculinity and femininity are and are not, have and have not, should and should not be, are constructed through their relation to each other.

This does not mean that, for Schippers (2007), the relationship characterizing genders is static. She says that behaviours, practices, and characteristics “defined as womanly and manly are constituted through the proliferation of a network of cross-cutting, sometimes contradicting

discourses. The production, proliferation, and contestation of the quality content of masculinity and femininity are on-going, dynamic, social processes” (p. 94). Her understanding of gender relations as dynamic opens up the possibility to appreciate how hegemony can be contested, disrupted, and transformed through the same discourses and practices that constitute them (pp. 93-94). Those shifts can create new configurations of gender. Schippers also pays attention to intra-gender inequalities between multiple femininities, as well as between masculinities. Not all men and not all women have the same degree of power, and a person who displays a dominant type of gender in one setting may not achieve it in another setting.

## **Masculinities**

### ***Hegemonic Masculinity***

Although masculinity holds dominance in gender relations as a whole, some men are more apt at gender dominance than others. Those who enact hegemonic masculinity are at the top of the inter-gender and men’s intra-gender hierarchies (Connell, 1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Schippers, 2000, 2002, 2007, 2008, 2016; Schippers & Sapp, 2012). The original formulation of hegemonic masculinity comes from Connell (1995): “Hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (p. 77). Connell’s definition inspires Schippers’ (2007) but, as previously explained, Schippers’ emphasis is on relationship rather than practice: “Hegemonic masculinity is the *qualities defined as manly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to femininity* and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women [italics by Schippers]” (p. 94).

Hegemonic masculinity constructs itself in relation to subordinated gender configurations and encompasses the qualities that, in a given setting, are deemed manly and pose femininity as

inferior (Connell, 1987, p. 183; Schippers, 2007, p. 94). Although hegemonic masculinity is the dominant gender type, only a minority of men may live up to it (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832; Schippers, 2007, p. 87). Gender studies authors (Anderson, 2009; Brod, 2013; Connell, 1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmel, 2010; Schippers, 2000, 2002, 2007, 2016) say that, albeit its relative statistical scarcity, it is highly normative: “[Hegemonic masculinity] embodied the currently most honoured way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). Connell (1987, p. 184) also insists that the word “hegemony” means subordinating alternatives rather than eliminating them. Researchers (Connell, 1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Halberstam, 1998; Kimmel, 2010; Schippers, 2007) agree that, in North America, the masculine standards that men measure up against are those which define white, middle-class, heterosexual, early middle-aged men. Aggression, authority, competitiveness, desire for the feminine object, dominance, physical strength, and professional success characterize contemporary Western hegemonic masculinity (Beal, 1996; Connell, 1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Halberstam, 1998; Kimmel, 2010; Schippers, 2000).

### ***Non-Hegemonic Masculinities According to Connell***

Some types of men – those capable of displaying hegemonic masculinity – hold dominance over other types of men – those who exhibit non-hegemonic characteristics, behaviours, and practices. Halberstam (1998) explains that masculinity, to be credible, has to seem natural and authentic, as opposed to forced or enacted. The impression of “nonperformance” is central to a convincing masculine performance (1998, pp. 234–235). Since the masculinity of white, heterosexual, middle-class, early middle-aged men is the standard, the masculinity of non-dominant groups often seems staged, less genuine, or suspect (p. 234). For

example, being gay may contaminate some men's otherwise masculine gender performances. Since being attracted to men is associated with femininity, they may not appear as "really" masculine, but rather as trying to compensate for their homosexuality so that "in them, masculinity tips into feminine performance" (pp. 234-235).

According to Connell, the most powerful form of non-hegemonic masculinity is complicit masculinity. Those who cannot fit with hegemonic criteria in a given setting can rely on their complicity with hegemonic masculinity to reap some benefits associated with it (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). They may align with the dominant narratives on masculinity and femininity and reject their association with their subordinate group. Connell does not give a specific example to her explanation, but I would argue that some homophobic gay men can be complicit. By agreeing with negative opinions on gay men as a whole, they may try to reject their association with homosexuality. Embracing ambient forms of homophobia and dismissing other gay men may allow them to avoid the inferiorization that these other gay men face. Although they may not be hegemonic themselves, they are closely aligned with hegemonic ideals and help legitimize its ascendancy. Complicit and hegemonic masculinities mutually reinforce each other, as complicit men validate hegemonic men even though they may not live up to their ideals. In exchange, they can avoid some of the subordination that they may have had to face otherwise.

However, not all men benefit from masculinity. In Connell's (1995) framework, at the bottom of the intra-gender hierarchy is subordinate masculinity, blurring with femininity. Homosexuality in men is an example of subordinate masculinity for Connell (1995): "Gayness, in patriarchal ideology, is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity [...]. Hence, from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity, gayness is easily assimilated to femininity" (pp. 78-79). As explained before, at the inter-gender level, women are the "opposite other." Subordinate masculinity serves the same purpose in Connell's masculine

intra-gender hierarchy. Subordinate men are the masculine equivalent of the “inferior other” against which hegemonic masculinity builds its dominance (1995, pp. 78–79).

Yet, for Connell (1995), some groups of men enact stigmatized forms of masculinities without performing properly feminine types of masculinity. Those are marginalized masculinities:

Though the term is not ideal, I cannot improve on ‘marginalization’ to refer to the relations between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups. Marginalization is always relative to the authorization of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group. (pp. 80-81)

For example, Connell explains that the marginalized status of black men generally informs their masculinity. Even though some individual black men are successful and famous, black men as a whole remain racialized and are unable to reap the same benefits associated with masculinity as white men. Their practices are not feminine, but racism prevents them from being hegemonic.

Connell’s (1995) protest masculinity, another type of non-hegemonic masculinity, manifests itself through the rejection of privileges associated with masculinity due to a situation of lack and deficiency. For Connell (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), protest masculinity is:

[A] pattern of masculinity constructed in local working-class settings, sometimes among ethnically marginalized men, which embodies the claim to power typical of regional hegemonic masculinities in Western countries, but which lacks the economic resources and institutional authority that underpins the regional and global patterns. (pp. 847-848)

In her 1995 book, her example for protest masculinity is a problematic one, as it depicts the gender performance of trans women from lower socioeconomic classes. Connell (1995) states that “their projects are shaped by the fact of class deprivation. They have constructed gender from a starting-point in poverty, and with little access to cultural resources” (p. 112). In Connell’s

explanation, people who enact protest masculinity come from socioeconomic backgrounds that do not allow them to benefit from hegemonic masculinity. Their masculinity becomes “compatible with respect and attention to women [...], egalitarian views about the sexes [...], affection for children [...], and a sense of display which in conventional role terms is decidedly feminine” (p. 112). In Connell’s example, deprivation informs protest masculinity and leads to the rejection of hegemonic masculinity and its privileges.

### *Non-Hegemonic Masculinities According to Schippers*

In contrast with Connell, Schippers (2007) takes a step back from those multiple masculinity types and claims that, to have a coherent, integrated inter-gender framework:

[M]asculinity must always remain superior; it must never be conflated with something undesirable. [...] Masculinity maintains its position of superiority in relation to femininity and men maintain legitimate possession of those superior characteristics regardless of who is embodying femininity or masculinity. (p. 96)

When a meaning, characteristic, practice, or expectation becomes undesirable or detrimental, it stops being masculinity. This precision bears significant implications for Schippers’ definition of intra-gender types. For her, maintaining Connell’s inferiorized masculinities such as the subordinate, marginalized, and protest types is counter-productive. In a unified and relational framework, associating subordinate masculinity with femininity but somehow considering them as different is problematic. It leaves researchers “with no conceptual apparatus with which to distinguish femininity from subordinate masculinities unless we reduce femininity to the practices of women and masculinity to those of men” (2007, pp. 87–88).

Furthermore, understanding racialized or unprivileged men’s – and trans women’s – practices as marginalized and protest masculinities leaves researchers with “the practices of particular groups of men [and women] rather than a configuration of practice [that] some, but not

all men embody” (2007, p. 88). Schippers believes that a specific type of difference may carry more implications in some settings than in other ones. They could have more or less impact on a man’s ability to retrieve benefits from masculinity according to the context. Forms of oppression and their impacts on masculinity may not always be the same for all men either. Black and Asian men may experience the intersection between race and gender differently, although both are racialized; the same applies to gay and bisexual men, although both are part of the sexual minority. The task becomes even more complex when we take into account layers of oppression within the same group. Focusing on the specificities of these intersections would mean engaging in an endless categorization.

For Schippers (2007, p. 96), what Connell calls subordinate masculinity is simply femininity enacted by men. Keeping the focus on the inequality of the relationship between femininity and masculinity allows her to avoid confounding masculinities with men or femininities with women, and prevents her from falling into the trap of multiplying gender configurations according to their intersections with other types of oppressions. For these reasons, in Schippers’ framework, there are no subordinate, marginalized, or protest masculinities. Yet, Schippers does not explicitly include or exclude complicit masculinity in her framework and she does not explain why.

In her reformulation, Schippers adds a type of masculinity that is absent from Connell’s framework. Schippers offers a form of “masculinity” that acknowledges the practices that do not reproduce the dominant power relations: alternative masculinity (2007, p. 97). Alternative masculinity does not situate masculinity as superior to femininity; does not benefit men as a social group; does not subordinate women as a social group; and is not inferiorizing for those who enact it. Alternative masculinity, then, has the potential to reduce gender inequalities because it does not comply with the dominant power relations. This type of masculinity can

disrupt gender relations and, if done by enough people, can lead to a restructuring of local, or even broader gender power relations (Schippers, 2002, p. xii).

## **Femininities**

### ***Hegemonic Femininity***

Despite Connell's (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) conceptualization of multiple masculinities, her framework only has one type of femininity. She left femininities undertheorized and is aware of it. With this in mind, Connell argues that hegemonic masculinity builds its dominance upon a complementary feminine opposite called "emphasized femininity." Connell (1987) uses the term "emphasized" rather than "hegemonic," as she does not want to couple "hegemonic" and "femininity" together: "There is no femininity that is hegemonic in the sense that the dominant form of masculinity is hegemonic among men" (p. 183). For Connell, all femininities are subordinate, and none has any real power, not even over other femininities.

Schippers (2007) suggests her own theorization of femininities. She starts by arguing that Connell's framework does not put genders in light of their relationality properly:

If hegemonic gender relations depend on the symbolic construction of desire for the feminine object, physical strength, and authority as the characteristics that differentiate men from women and define and legitimate their superiority and social dominance over women, then these characteristics must remain unavailable to women. To guarantee men's exclusive access to these characteristics, other configurations of feminine characteristics must be defined as deviant and stigmatized. (pp. 94-96)

Relationships between hegemonic masculinity and different types of femininities must be asymmetrical depending on how complying or threatening these femininities are to the gender order. Not all femininities are equal. For this reason, Schippers (2016, p. 5) defines the different

types of femininities according to how well they complement hegemonic masculinity, rather than how well they complement other forms of femininity.

Hegemonic masculinity requires some meanings, characteristics, and practices to remain unavailable to women; it also benefits from women having complementary normative sets of meanings to abide by. In that sense, one specific form of femininity holds a relative dominance over a less compliant type of femininity. This normative femininity has to be simultaneously different from hegemonic masculinity and closely related to it, almost mirroring it. Schippers calls it hegemonic femininity. Schippers (2007) uses the word “hegemonic” to highlight that, in addition to its normative ascendancy for women, it is complementary to hegemonic masculinity and legitimizes its domination: “Hegemonic femininity consists of the characteristics defined as womanly that establish and legitimate a hierarchical and complementary relationship to hegemonic masculinity and that, by doing so, guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (p. 94). This type of femininity does not hold dominance over masculinities but represents what women are socially expected to adhere to.

I wish to highlight the difference between “normative,” “desirable,” and “powerful” in the context of this study. In hegemonic masculinity, “normativity,” “desirability,” and “power” are confounding because this type of masculinity is both normative and desirable for men, and grants them the top position in inter- and intra-gender hierarchies. The situation is more complex for femininities. In Schippers’ framework, femininities, even when they are hegemonic, are inferiorized within the inter-gender hierarchy as a whole. Indeed, women can sometimes be rewarded for displaying characteristics associated with hegemonic femininity. However, the rewards are relative and only situate those women as more desirable than less compliant members of her own gender – not as more desirable than men overall. For example, a conventionally attractive woman who takes care of her physical appearance may gain access to more

opportunities, thus achieve an overall better social status than another woman who does not fit with beauty standards and disregards her physical appearance. In this situation, the first woman is presumably doing what a woman “should” do. She is rewarded for playing her complementary part in gender relations.

However, compliance with hegemonic femininity does not guarantee power over men and masculinity in typically masculine situations. I remember overhearing an elevator discussion during the 2012 Quebec election. A major party candidate was a woman. During my time in the elevator, I heard a man say something amounting to: “I’m not gonna vote for her party! We’re gonna end up with a ministry for shoes and makeup!” For a woman, complying with the feminine expectation of taking care of her physical appearance may be rewarding in typically feminine settings. Yet, those same expectations are deemed undesirable and incompatible with holding a position of power. Good leadership qualities such as confidence, rationality, strategy, or decision-making are generally associated with masculinity. Women are expected to be emotional, compassionate, intuitive, soft, irrational. These characteristics complement each other and justify men’s status as rulers, thus maintain men’s overall power in global inter-gender relations. Women can face difficulties when they try to defy gender expectations to hold a position of power.

### *Non-Hegemonic Femininities*

Schippers’ framework has two types of non-hegemonic femininities. The first, pariah femininity (2007, p. 95, 2016, p. 5), does not complement hegemonic masculinity. Pariah femininity concerns the unsuccessful adoption of values, attitudes, and behaviours that usually belong to hegemonic masculinity. While men are expected to display such characteristics, women are stigmatized when they do the same (2007, p. 96). Pariah femininity could threaten the gender order if it were to go unnoticed, as it would compromise men’s exclusive access to the

characteristics that ensures their position in the gender hegemony (p. 95). Therefore, women enacting characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity have to be feminized: “When a woman is authoritative, she is not masculine; she is a bitch – both feminine and undesirable” (p 95). Pariah femininity does more than simply make these otherwise manly characteristics feminine; it also contaminates the women who enact them, so that one such characteristic defines the woman who has it. The disruptive potential of pariah femininity is contained in this way.

Rather, subversion lies with Schippers’ (2007, p. 97) second type of non-hegemonic femininity: alternative femininity. Like alternative masculinity, alternative femininity rejects normative gender discourses and does not reproduce gender hegemony. It is neither advantageous to men nor detrimental to women because it does not situate femininity as inferior to masculinity. For example, “women can collectively deploy transgressive forms of femininity or counter-hegemonic meanings of ‘girlie things’ as a discursive tactic to disrupt gender hierarchies. [...] Reworking and/or deploying femininity rather than rejecting it is one effective strategy for undermining patriarchy” (p. 32). For Schippers, alternative gender configurations have the potential to disrupt gender inequalities and give new meanings to masculinity and femininity.

## **My Interpretation of Schippers’ Framework**

### *Clarification of Schippers’ Concepts*

I wish to add a few precisions and modifications to Schippers’ framework before moving forward. For Schippers, researchers should not fall into the trap of equating masculinity with men and femininity with women. Schippers’ framework is not incompatible with women being able to successfully adopt hegemonic masculinity, although she does not explore this idea explicitly in her papers. I argue that individual women can benefit from it in certain contexts, as long as they are perceived as an exception. When women successfully enact hegemonic masculinity, the perception that these women are atypical and singular – regardless of how many women really

benefit from hegemonic masculinity – limits the threat to men’s exclusive access to it. Only then can these women derive benefits from displaying gender characteristics that typically belong to men. The important point here is that hegemonic masculinity, even when successfully enacted by women, situates femininity as inferior. It does not challenge the gender order and remains unavailable to women as a group. Women who try to adopt those characteristics and practices but fail to prove their exceptionality end up discredited and feminized. Hegemonic masculinity turns into pariah femininity.

Similarly, Schippers does not say how men can enact pariah femininity. I propose to view pariah femininity as a form of “failed hegemonic masculinity.” It would apply to people of any gender who try to display behaviours, characteristics, or practices typically associated with hegemonic masculinity but ending up inferiorized, thus feminized. Men from marginalized groups can enact pariah femininity. Pariah femininity may result from a lack of credibility or a seemingly exaggerated performance – e.g., a macho gay man’s masculinity may be interpreted as parodic rather than “really” masculine.

Furthermore, Schippers does not address her adoption or rejection of the concept of complicit masculinity. Unlike Connell’s other non-hegemonic types of masculinity, complicit masculinity is not inferiorizing. Men – and women – can adopt it when they are not able to conform with hegemonic masculinity, but wish to escape subordination by distancing themselves from their marginalized group, and therefore reap some of the benefits that derive from masculinity’s overall ascendancy over femininity. I argue that complicit masculinity is compatible with Schippers’ theorization of gender relations. Complicit masculinity allows us to account for the instances where women and non-normative men distance themselves from femininity to avoid inferiorization without enacting hegemonic masculinity.

Finally, I wish to change the terms “alternative masculinity” and “alternative femininity” to the single “alternative gender type.” This type of gender is disruptive of power relations, so the words “masculinity” (connoted as superior) and “femininity” (connoted as inferior) lose their relevance.

### ***Additional Remarks***

When I am not quoting or reporting someone else’s idea, I refrain from using the words “male/female” and try to rely almost exclusively on “men/women” instead. Concretely, rather than speaking of “male/female metalheads,” I prefer to say “metal men/women.” This practice stems from the bilingual nature of my thesis: most of my interviews are in French, some in English; some parts of the literature that I rely on are in French and others in English. In English, “male” and “female” are commonly used as adjectives to designate the sex/gender of a noun. Nouns in English are not explicitly gendered, so we need to add an adjective to clarify whether we speak of a man/male or a woman/female. A “female metalhead” is thus a metalhead who happens to be a female/woman. Most English-speaking authors interested in gender studies would recognize that the words “male/female” are not the same as “man/woman,” the former designating sex and the latter gender. Nonetheless, most of the rock and metal scholars who also study gender (Davies, 2001; Dawes, 2012; Gruzelier, 2007; Hill, 2016; Krenske & McKay, 2000; Larsen, 2017; Riches, 2011; Schaap & Berkers, 2013; Schippers, 2002; Vasan, 2011; Weinstein, 2016) tend to use “female metalheads” to designate women in metal. This could be due to an English automatism. Maybe those formulations are difficult to overcome.

In contrast, most words in French are gendered and having a gender-neutral discourse is more strenuous than in English. There is no completely gender-neutral version of the word “metalhead.” A “male metalhead” is a “métallex.” A “female metalhead” is a “métallexe.” There is no need to add the adjective “male” or “female” to the noun “metalhead” because the

word itself already reveals gender. Here is the catch: words in French are gendered, but they do not necessarily refer to sex. I am not comfortable translating “métalleuse” into “female metalhead” because “métalleuse” implies the gender of the metalhead, whereas “female metalhead” implies the sex of the metalhead. The association between “mâle/femelle” and “sex/genitalia” is more direct in French than it is in English, and they have a zoological undertone. I am aware that seeing me going to those lengths simply to avoid saying “male/female metalhead” can be frustrating. Surrendering to their use would make my text feel more natural, but I hope that the readers will understand that I made this choice out of self-consistency.

### **Research Question**

Considering the current state of knowledge on gender in metal, and in light of the reflections on gender by Connell and Schippers, I wish to situate the specific gender dynamics of the Montreal extreme metal scene in relation to Schippers’ theoretical framework. I ask the following question: **How do the dominant gender expectations of the Montreal extreme metal scene compare to the gender types present in Schippers’ (2007) framework?**

The metal literature will help me make sense of my data, and Schippers’ framework will enable me to fill in the gaps on gender in metal; in return, those analyses will help me fortify the applicability of Schippers’ framework. Schippers<sup>1</sup> also informs the following subquestions:

- 1) What are the hegemonic masculinities of the Montreal extreme metal scene? That is, what attitudes, behaviours, and characteristics are expected in men and justify their superior position as a group? How do men and women enact them?

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<sup>1</sup> See Schippers: “1) What characteristics or practices are understood as manly in the setting? 2) What characteristics or practices are womanly? 3) Of those practices and characteristics, which situate femininity as complementary and inferior to masculinity? [...] [4] What characteristics or practices of women are defined as feminine, contaminating, or disruptive? [...] [5] What characteristics or practices of men are defined as feminine, contaminating, or disruptive?” (2007, p. 100)

- 2) What are the hegemonic femininities of the Montreal extreme metal scene? What attitudes and behaviours are expected in women and justify their inferior position as a group? How do men and women enact them?
- 3) Which are non-hegemonic gender types? Namely, which masculinities are complicit? Which femininities are pariah? What characteristics, beliefs, and practices disrupt gender inequalities and convey alternative forms of gender? How do they all translate into men and women's practices?

## **Methodology**

### **Semi-Structured Individual Interview**

To answer my research question, I have to understand what the gender types and expectations are in the Montreal extreme metal scene. I have thus conducted semi-structured individual interviews with 16 adult women and men who take part in the scene. Each interview lasted between one hour, and two hours and twenty-two minutes, for a total of 28 hours. Interviews are a collaborative space between the interviewer and the interviewee. The format of the semi-structured interview offers an attractive balance between the interviewer's control and the participant's freedom of elaboration of their narratives (Brinkmann, 2013). With the help of open-ended questions, participants can develop their narratives according to their experiences and points of views: "The subject behind the respondent not only retains the details of his or her inner life and social world but, in the very process of offering them up to the interviewer, stories the information, assembling it into a coherent account" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2012, p. 33). The meanings that people attribute to their attitudes and behaviours are central to this research. I wanted my respondents to have the space to elaborate on such elements.

## **Recruiting Participants**

I have interviewed a total of 16 respondents between September 2018 and February 2019. This is a sufficient number considering the limitations of a Master's research project, as I have had to contact potential interviewees, set up the meetings, interview the participants, transcribe their answers, and analyze the data alone. Although no consensus exists as to how many people are required to reach a saturation point (Brinkmann, 2013; Galletta, 2013; Gubrium, 2012; Paillé & Mucchielli, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2005), the authors debate around numbers ranging between six and 25 participants (Beitin, 2012).

To develop a complex understanding of inter- and intra-gender relationships within the scene, I recruited not only women but a few men as well. Out of the 16 interviewees, 13 are women and three are men. Framing a complex, multidimensional reality is possible with the help of various perspectives (Beitin, 2012, p. 248; Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 67). Since masculinities and femininities entail complex intra- and inter-gender relations, the perspectives of different women, as well as a few men, proved useful to expand my understanding of gender in metal. Authors on gender in metal have rarely considered the points of view of men and women participants within the same research. Still, since I situate myself in a feminist perspective and was afraid that I might encounter some difficulty recruiting women respondents, I deliberately reached out to more women than men.

The criteria for participating in my research were the following: 1) to be an adult of 18 years or older; 2) to consider oneself as a fan of extreme metal; 3) to be active in the Montreal extreme metal scene. Being active, in this research, means having gone to at least one extreme metal concert during the year preceding the interview. This definition of "activity" is sensitive to the fact that certain factors, such as geographical and monetary ones, may prevent some fans

from going to shows more frequently. Furthermore, I explained to the respondents that the interviews were confidential and I changed their names for this research.

I recruited all of my participants through snowball sampling. At the end of the interviews, I asked them if they knew other people who could be willing to participate in my research. I generally said that I was looking for men too, but stressed that I was looking primarily for women. I asked participants to initiate contact with potential new participants and verify that they agreed to share their information with me. When a potential new participant agreed, either the previous participant sent me the contact information of the new participant, or the new participant contacted me through email. From there on, I sent them an invitation letter explaining the participation criteria and what their participation would entail.

### ***Description of the Participants***

I recruited 16 participants for individual interviews. Among them, 13 are women and three are men. At the moment of the interview, four participants were between the ages of 20 and 29, eight between 30 and 39, and four between 40 and 49. Each of them had been listening to extreme metal between 10 to 30 years. Each participant attended between one and some hundreds of shows during the year preceding their interview. Regarding the types of metal that they listen to, the majority of respondents mentioned being well acquainted with more than one type of extreme metal, but most of the respondents identify primarily as death, thrash, grindcore, or doom metal fans. While some listen to black metal music, none of them predominantly identifies as a black metal fan. Specifically, nearly all of them – 15 respondents – mentioned participating in a death metal sub-scene. Three specified being acquainted mostly with melodic death; two with old school death; two for progressive death; two for deathcore; and one for technical death. Besides, four respondents reported listening to a lot of thrash metal, four grindcore, and three doom metal. Out of the 16 participants, 13 mentioned playing or having played at least one

instrument. Finally, two participants are primarily involved as fans; three work in the organization (e.g., booking agents, event planners, marketers, etc.); three are in a related sphere (e.g., art designers, journalists, light or sound technicians, photographers, filmmakers, etc.); eight are semi-professional or professional musicians.

### **Interview Questions**

I have to determine which characteristics, behaviours, or practices are manly and womanly in the context of extreme metal in Montreal and whether those characteristics, behaviours, or practices are desirable or undesirable, normal or exceptional, when men and women, respectively, reproduce them. To do so, I asked my respondents to describe the most desirable man, desirable woman, undesirable man, and undesirable woman in the Montreal extreme metal scene. Asking about ideal metalheads rather than concrete or average metalheads is an efficient way to sort out the general gender expectations. According to Connell (1987):

[T]he cultural ideal (or ideals) of masculinity need not correspond at all closely to the actual personalities of the majority of men. [...] The notion of 'hegemony' generally implies a large measure of consent. Few men are Bogarts or Stallones, many collaborate in sustaining those images. (pp. 184-185)

With this in mind, I can brush a portrait of the behaviours that express the dominance of certain types of genders by knowing what men and women are aspiring to, rather than what ordinary men and women do daily within the scene.

I usually started the interviews with ice-breaking questions on extreme metal as a musical genre. I asked which subgenres they listened to, how they would describe extreme metal music to someone who does not know what it is, and what they liked about it. These questions set the table for the interview and allowed me to know what part of the scene they were most familiar with.

These questions also allowed the participants to situate themselves within the scene and express how metal makes them feel regardless of the gender dynamics.

The second and third parts of the interviews focused on genders in metal. Since masculinity is often the default in metal, the first set of questions on genders was about men. The respondents had to provide me with their description of the ideal metal man – the type of man in the scene that other men admire and aspire to be like. Then, I asked them to describe the anti-metal man – the annoying, unpleasant type of participant exemplifying what a man should not do in the scene. The third part of the interview contained similar questions about women in metal. They had to describe an ideal metal woman, then an anti-metal woman. I ended the interviews with a few socio-demographic questions.

### **Limitations**

Due to my snowball sampling method, I interviewed people who know each other to various degrees. Although my sample is relatively diverse in some regards – fans to professionals; people from their early twenties to their late forties – it is homogeneous in other regards. Most of my respondents are white and heterosexual. I did not ask them directly about their race or sexual orientation. Yet, while some did not disclose this information to me, most ended up specifying it anyway. I cannot say with absolute certainty exactly how many respondents are non-white or non-heterosexual, but I am positive that my sample is predominantly white and heterosexual. Another element of homogeneity is the extreme metal subgenres that my respondents listen to. Nearly all of them have taken part in at least one death metal subgenre, and none identifies primarily as a black metal fan. Given my sampling method and my relatively small number of respondents, I cannot consider my sample to be representative of the whole Montreal extreme metal scene and I cannot infer my findings to broader contexts.

I wish to acknowledge that my analysis rests on interviews only. I rely on respondents' perceptions. As Hill (2016) explains, "we make sense of ourselves and incidents in our past, putting together events and using 'fictive devices' to construct a necessarily partial self tied together by limited memory" (p 9). My respondents offered their interpretations of the metal scene, memories, and impressions of what could happen in a given situation. I cannot measure whether there is a gap between what they say and do. Memories may be altered over time and perceptions can change depending on the angle in which we address them. The topic of gender relations is also sensitive to social desirability, especially that I am a woman and a graduate student in sociology, a field typically associated with feminism and the left. I tried to mitigate the risk of desirability as much as I could by making the interviews confidential, stressing that there were no right or wrong answers, and keeping a non-judgemental attitude throughout the interviews. Yet, I am aware that the respondents may not want to be considered sexist or bigoted for saying something they fear would be interpreted as such. Many respondents also claimed to never have thought about some of the questions before and gave answers based on their gut feeling, claimed not knowing why they were answering the way they did, or changed their mind while explaining their impressions. Had they have had more time to think about their answers, maybe some of these would have been different. Finally, as most of the interviews were in French, I have freely translated the quotations for this research into English.

### **Data Analysis**

I conducted a theoretical thematic analysis to understand the gender dynamics of the Montreal extreme metal scene. With this type of analysis, the aim is to go beyond the description of the interview content and interpret and analyze the underlying, latent systems of beliefs that they contain (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). Yet, as Geertz (1973, 2008) reminds researchers, interviews contain "a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed

upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which [the ethnographer] must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render” (2008, p. 314). Geertz (p. 318) says that ethnographic description is localized and microscopic. Gender in the Montreal extreme metal scene is not a miniature copy of the broader Quebec gender relations, despite their influence. I cannot conclude that a given practice has the same meaning in a mainstream context as in metal, and vice versa. My work, then, is to interpret some immensely rich, intricate, and complex realities, perceptions, and discourses about a small part of a localized culture, and to connect those discourses in a way that is practical to my analysis (p. 318). While the data has to be interpreted before being analyzed, “the office of theory is to provide a vocabulary in which what symbolic action has to say about itself – that is, about the role of culture in human life – can be expressed” (p. 321). My aim is not to pre-select the elements in my interviews that match the metal literature and gender theory. My interviews are sometimes consistent, sometimes contrasting with them. I wish to see how, on the one hand, the metal literature and gender theory can enrich my understanding of the data; and how, in return, my data can enrich the metal literature and gender theory.

Keeping those precautions in mind, I coded separately, in each interview, the characteristics, behaviours, and practices according to whether they fell under the category “womanly/femininity” or “manly/masculinity,” as well as “desirable” and “undesirable.” I tried to stay away from the literature during this process because I wanted to let the different types of masculinities and femininities emerge from the respondents’ accounts without interacting directly with scholars. Then, I gathered the information under the categories of “ideal metal men,” “ideal metal women,” “anti-metal men,” and “anti-metal women.” At this point, I realized that specific types of actors were recurring in the discourses of numerous respondents. Some even emerged as

representative composite portraits of those desirable and undesirable metalheads: the “revered musician” encapsulated the spirit of the ideal metal man; what respondents referred to as “douchebag” and “fanatic” exemplified anti-metal men; the “proven fan,” “tour mom,” and “approved musician” were three iterations of ideal metal women; finally, the “poseuse” and “groupie” were often cited as the main types of anti-metal women. I decided to create their respective portrait and work with those composite metalheads for the rest of the project. They became invaluable conceptual tools to connect a constellation of disparate characteristics, behaviours, and practices and translate them into intelligible, workable terms. Once satisfied with this assemblage, I came back to the metal literature to help me make sense of the trends and contradictions that I had observed in the interviews.

The next step consisted of bringing Schippers’ (2007) gender framework back into my analysis. To do so, I have had to search for the two main gender poles responsible for the reproduction of gender hegemony: hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity. There cannot be hegemonic masculinity without hegemonic femininity and vice-versa, as they co-construct each other by their complementary opposition. Schippers suggests that hegemonic masculinity is the most dominant type of gender and represents the most socially desirable way to be a man. For this reason, I decided to look for hegemonic masculinity in the most desirable type of man in metal. In return, anti-metal women seemed best suited as ideal men’s complementary opposite, so I expected to find hegemonic femininity in anti-metal women.

It is worth noting that the ideal metal man (i.e., the revered musician) is the type of actor in which I expected to find the highest concentration of hegemonic masculinity. This does not mean that he is hegemonic masculinity incarnate. He is a mix of various gender types. The same goes for anti-metal women and every other type of metal actor. I cannot say that any of the composite actors resulting from my interpretation of the interviews encapsulates perfectly

hegemonic masculinity, femininity, or any other type of gender. However, these imaginary actors can offer a glimpse of the main behaviours, characteristics, and practices of Schippers' gender types due to their respective association with men or women, their degree ascendancy relative to each other, and the very real implications that they have for the men and women who join the Montreal extreme metal scene.

## **Results and Discussion**

I will proceed in the following manner to determine whether the Montreal extreme metal scene reproduces the gender dynamics found in Schippers' (2007) framework: I will assemble, using quotations from my interviews, a description of the ideal metal men. At this point, I will give as much place to the respondents as I can. I will be relying on sometimes contradictory information, switching between imaginary conceptualizations (e.g., a metal man should be a certain way in an ideal world, regardless of whether or not real metal men are like that) and concrete examples from my interviewees (e.g., John is considered ideal and he tends to do this even though this practice is not ideal). These sometimes imaginary, sometimes concrete conceptualizations all entertain what being an ideal metal man means. Afterwards, I will interpret those results with the help of the metal and gender literature and brush out the gender types of the ideal metal men according to Schippers. I will repeat a similar process for anti-metal women, then for ideal metal women, and finally for anti-metal men.

### **Ideal Metal Men According to the Respondents**

#### *The Revered Musician*

##### **“Loud, Noisy, and Brutal:” A Shocking Musical Genre for Daring Intellectuals**

Nora (woman, October 2018) uses the words “[l]oud, noisy, and brutal” [1] to describe extreme metal music. Stephanie (woman, September 2018) calls it “energetic and intense,” [2]

and Audrey (woman, January 2019), “extremely intense, if you like metal, well, it’s like rock versus hard rock, you climb the steps and you get to the extremity kind of.” [3] Eve (woman, November 2018) believes that listening to metal music is “a bit like hem watching a gore movie.” [4] Metal men adopt a specific type of physical presentation that fits with the energy of the music and reflects their desire to support the bands that they like. Nora provides the following physical description for the ideal metal man:

‘Tall, long hair, black tee-shirt, beard, glasses,’ like it’s, ‘Ok! You just described 95% of the people in the room!’ But literally 95% of the people in the room. Hem. Yep, so the look it’s, it’s funny how the look didn’t evolve since the 80s, that’s like, it’s the good old, you’ll always wear band merch, support your favourite bands, the battle jackets, the leather jackets, it’s always, you know, stable. It’s a lot of leather, a lot of studs, tattoos, piercings. [5]

Together, the dark clothes with band logos, studs, tattoos, piercing, long hair, and beard may be intimidating, according to Naomie (woman, January 2019):

You know I’ve got very sweet friends, they’re good people. Anyways. I don’t have mean friends, you know, generally, but yeah for sure, when you see them hem, well maybe because of their clothing, they’re dressed in dark and all so for sure it may seem maybe like they have more hem, more strength of character, actually, with those colours. [6]

Similarly, Audrey explains that “it’s always like, the cliché: ‘Oh my goodness! That’s your friend! Is that your boyfriend? Is that your friend? My goodness he’s scary!’ ‘No! He’s nice! I’m telling you he’s nice!’ ‘You’re sure? He weighs 280 pounds, 6 feet 8, he’s got a big beard!’” [7]

Despite the aggressive sound of the music and the intimidating appearance of the metalheads, respondents insist that metal is a sophisticated musical genre. Naomie explains that “metal is an intellectual music. It doesn’t look like it, but with all the notes, it’s a music for the

head hem, also for the body, but the head has a lot to do with metal, especially when they headbang haha!” [8] Metal requires a high level of musicianship and a lot of discipline since it is a very difficult musical genre to master. Alice (woman, October 2018) explains:

Not only do you have to be able to play the instrument and play those simple songs, then if you wanna play metal, you now have to be on a whole other level. And I think that the expectations in musicianship are much higher in metal than most other, not, maybe jazz.

Say, jazz, classical, and metal, your level of musicianship has to be quite high typically.

Respondents believe that most metal men are so passionate that they often learn an instrument as well. Eve mentions that “it’s rare to meet a male metalhead who doesn’t play music,” [9] and Emily (woman, September 2018) that the average metal man “plays music and he’ll often try to have a band.” [10] Annick (woman, December 2018) believes that “if you sample ten people randomly in a show, they’ll all play music. Maybe they’ll suck, but they’ll all have tried.” [11] It follows that the best metal musicians are highly revered. Eric (man, October 2018) says that musicians “are in a position of authority, you know. And, and you’ve got a kinda notoriety that average people don’t have.” [12]

Beyond instrument mastery, composing metal requires a balance between the expression of intense emotions and the articulation of complex musical landscapes. Eric explains:

Composing metal music is so cerebral, eh, that it’s not, that you cannot let yourself go completely into the emotion. It’s, it’s that, how you put it, you organize it into art, you have to think about it. [...] You’re making art by putting order into something, you know.

So this, for me that’s more about reason that an, an, hem indulgence into emotion. [13]

The way metalheads address life and taboo topics illustrates their intellectuality. Sophie (woman, January 2019) says that the usual topics of metal tend to unsettle mainstream people:

Let's say older death, if you look at the lyrics you'll often see, someone that you've decapitated and it's a joke you know. Someone will read it and be like, 'Damn that's not right!' [...] Hem and maybe also black metal, black metal talks about satanism a lot and all. [...] Hem thrash metal is much more, it's for hem, denouncing a lot, a bit more political, I could say hem more than. Even gore. Gore haha! Death gore is pretty intense, you tell in detail, I don't know, someone self-mutilating or someone playing with their excrements, but in detail. So you know, these are all things that people don't really wanna, people a bit, not, normal, but everyday people aren't used to hearing. [14]

Most of those topics may not seem intellectual at first, but appearances are deceiving. Upon a closer look, those taboo choices reveal metalheads' open-mindedness, according to Eric:

They're able to discuss a whole range of topics without getting upset and without being, being, especially without being shocked by that. I think, I think that there's you know, there's that too. They cover so many varied topics in the lyrics that, you know, I think there's not, they don't have many taboos relative to the discussions that we can have on subjects like, hem, like I'm telling you, they're very open-minded, I think. [15]

Those taboo subjects expose a fundamental questioning of mainstream assumptions. For Nora, metal topics may be critical, playful, or metaphorical, but they are ultimately political: "If you say 'Ah! This band is misogynistic! Muhmuhmuh!' without contextualizing, who's the band, where do they come from, it all has to be taken into consideration. [...] It may not be explicitly political, sometimes it's a political undertone." [16] Similarly, Stephanie explains that the uncanny approach of metalheads allows them to explore and affirm their criticism of the world:

Often, they're not satisfied with hem, the very structure of society, so it goes further than mere politics. Hem, because we can agree, like, the average man and woman also tick a sort of identity box. Oftentimes, metalheads are sort of against that and they want, you

know? To change it. Hem, they're a bit existentialist too, hem they wonder a lot about, on hem you know, what is the notion of life, what it is, you know? So that's why we see so many topics on death in metal, you know? [...] They go and seek for very, hem, almost offensive topics, actually, to question the notion of censorship. [17]

Ideal men can come from various political horizons. A critical perspective of the mainstream unites them. Audrey believes that we can find, within the same group of friends, “die-hard anarchists, die-hard leftists, and you have others who are more, hem, conservative.” [18] Similarly, Claire (woman, February 2019) explains:

You can have people who are straight edge in the same band as someone who is an alcoholic, you can have people who are really feminist in the same band as somebody who's a male chauvinist hem. It's sort of, it's almost like all that stuff, you just leave it outside when it comes to making music.

Metalheads appreciate this diversity. They may be politicized on an individual level but, to preserve the diversity, ideal metal men sometimes adopt a “live and let live” approach, rendering potentially divisive political debates uncomfortable. Audrey explains:

People I know are quite politicized, quite. They follow the news. But [...] I go to a punk show, I expect that, between the shows, between the songs, they talk about, they debate on, you know, ‘Let's talk about what happened in the news today.’ I expect that. But hem, in metal, not so much. [...] I have a friend who's like that, but he's more into punk. Haha. But he likes to, he likes to provoke, and we talked about things, and ta ta ta, and yeah usually, when we, when we start debating with someone and it takes a more serious turn, then it's, people raise their voice a little bit, you know, some people, many of my friends, they don't like it! It's like a provocation, there's discomfort. [19]

Some respondents suggest that metalheads want to leave their political differences aside to focus on the transgressive commonalities that unite them.

**“He Impresses People but That’s Not His Goal:” Confidence and Authenticity**

For Annick, the ideal metal man corresponds to the following description:

A good musician, he’s good with PR, he leaves his mark and he’s cool, that’s his personality, and he’s good, he’s admired for his talent. So he’s talented. He doesn’t necessarily work out, for example, it’s that, he doesn’t have big arms, or care about his appearance, and I think that’s great, sometimes he seems like nothing. [...] He doesn’t do it to impress people, well he impresses people but that’s not his goal. He’s not the kind of person who does it to show off. He’s just a talented kind of person. [20]

These characteristics – impressive musical talent, aptitude for public relations, and cool personality – emanate from him but are not forced. A man may have the above characteristics without being ideal if he does not seem genuine and authentic enough. Alice was left unimpressed by an international musician that she met because, according to her, he was taking himself too seriously:

I’m like, God! Just ridiculous! Especially ‘cause they speak about it with such confidence and authority. [...] I really hate that. Like, yeah it’s a close-mindedness. I’m like, ‘Look, we’re all here for metal! Ok! It’s ok!’ And they’re like, ‘No. We’re not here for metal. It’s a lifestyle.’ You know when you look, yeah I met a guy who was in, he was playing with [name of the band]. And he’s this guy, just like, ‘I hate everything cause I’m from [place of origin].’ He literally said that!

Like Alice, Jennifer (woman, January 2019) believes that:

Guys who try, at all cost, to project this image [of being very masculine] and who take themselves seriously, well, often we laugh at them. Whereas a man who doesn’t try to

prove anything, well they'll be respected. [...] When you're self-confident, you don't have to prove to yourself as much, so you're a calmer person and you don't try to get attention by wearing bullet belts or corpse paint and stuff like that. [21]

Claire explains that a man will not lose respect for doing feminine things if he is authentic:

To me that's actually a sign of like stronger self-confidence and stronger masculinity when you're like okay with like, or you can laugh about feminine things or you can like, you know, you're not gonna be like, 'Oh I can't wear that! It's pink!' [...] If somebody ever does something like really masculine, almost like, what are you compensating for? It's much more attractive in, in terms of somebody's personality, who they are, if they're cool with, like, typically feminine things like eh they're not afraid to carry their wife's purse or wear makeup if they know how to, or like just, like, you know, I, nobody has to prove anything to me. Be yourself! Haha!

A few respondents mention examples of non-normative men being ideal despite their non-normativity, the most frequent one being Rob Halford, Judas Priest's singer. Claire says: "Rob Halford's gay. He's like the king. If you, it's almost like you have to say that you're okay with it because if you say you don't like Judas Priest, are you really a metalhead?" Similarly, Sophie says of Rob Halford that:

He's clearly gay, he assumes it and you know, when he revealed it, he was scared that his career would drop, 'Pfft!' Nothing changed! 'Cause he was a good singer. I don't care if he likes men. You know, there's so much respect for the music. [22]

Real "metalness," or metal authenticity, opens up the possibility to derogate from typical expectations without losing credibility.

In turn, Nathan (man, September 2018) explains how, for a man, being able to accept himself is crucial to authenticity:

I don't think that being a man prevents you from having emotions or whatever, some would even say that you have an alpha male and a female part inside of you, well I think that you're a mix of both and if you're not able to balance them out, well, that's when you start having problems, kinda? And I wanna say, I have nothing to prove regarding my sexuality or my belonging to whatever sexual minority, to anyone, so. You know, I mean. I'm a man, I know that I'm a man, that I'm heterosexual, I have no complexes regarding it, so. You know, we could say that I'm maybe less masculine than the average hem, metal man because I know that some are about domination and being an alpha male and all of that, but like, for me it's more, more a sign of, of personal insecurity than, actually, if you learn to know yourself, you know you don't necessarily have anything to prove. [23]

Incidentally, Alice believes that men who feel secure about their masculinity tend to have less difficulty being authentic:

I've noticed [the ability to do feminine things without losing credibility] more with the more kind of very tall, very big dudes who look, like with like long hair, hem you know, the guys wanna be them and the women wanna sleep with them, so maybe they have more confidence, yeah, maybe they feel more secure in who, in who they are and they know that, you know, 'I don't...', yeah, 'I don't have anything to prove.'

Therefore, authenticity is perhaps one of the most important characteristics of ideal men. Authenticity allows non-normative men to become ideal while normative men who lack authenticity lose credibility.

### **Sense of Community: Treating Men Like Brothers**

A non-negligible part of what characterizes the ideal metal man is his sense of community. Nathan explains: "I don't know if all or like most of those who listen to metal, extreme metal, seek something they don't find elsewhere, but there's clearly a sort of feeling to

be part of something greater than yourself, kinda like a team or a tribe.” [24] Audrey views metal as a place where commitment is important:

It’s a big part of, of your social life, definitely. [...] Involvement, yeah that’s it. It’s a lot, quite, you know, when you’re a young teenager, you give a lot of importance to your music but when we grow up, with metal, it’s like we never ever really lose it. We may lose it a little bit sometimes, as you know, you have a partner who dislikes it, you have children, but you know, you always end up coming back haha. [...] Commitment, that’s the word that I’m looking for. Commitment, yes, is pretty important. [25]

Ideal metal men are generally positive leaders within their local community. Sophie uses the words “extroverted alpha male” to portray them:

Most of those who are alpha, are the kind of people to make others laugh. I don’t know why. They’re like, ‘Hey you wra wra wra! Hahaha!’ You know? I don’t know why. Although you know, it’s, it’s so funny, you take pictures kinda and they’ll all be, they’re fooling like that. You spend an evening with metal people and often, dudes, they’re just hilarious, they’ll be joking like, but really, it doesn’t happen much but, some of them, well, most of the guys like, when they take a lot of space it’s to fool around, to make people laugh, to be funny, kinda, just to be a clown and entertain people and make friends. [26]

Loyalty is central in metal according to Audrey: “It’s about belonging to a group. [...] Being able to say, ‘I belong somewhere, I identify with something, I’m part of a group.’ And of course it’s pretty homogeneous, that, and it’s a loyal group, with loyal people.” [27]

Yet, competition also seems to be an important part of the scene. Jane (woman, January 2019) explains:

They're so passionate that it nearly becomes an obsession. When they like a band, they want every single thing from that band. So you know, they often view their collection as important, their limited edition pieces, you know? [...] I keep every flyer, album, tape, hem, vinyl, tape, CD, every version possible. And I'm not the only one with this condition in metal. But often, this condition is more often associated with guys than girls, but still. [28]

She continues:

There's a great sense of brotherhood, but there's still a competition, of, 'Oh yeah! He found the band tee-shirt that I was looking for since... Where the hell did he find this tee-shirt?' You know, during shows, they strut around. They wear either their oldest tee-shirt to show that they were there back then. Or often they wear the tee-shirt of a rare album, you know, and then, 'Oh shit!' Or a more obscure band, you know, to stand out. [...] So there's quite a little bit of competition on that level. Or else, musicians themselves. Which one will be the best bassist, the best guitarist, the fastest drummer, the most technical. [29]

Alice too believes that metalheads approach instruments – drums in her example – like a competitive sport: "Some guys, it's almost like a dick-measuring competition where they're like, 'I play this fast! I play double-kick this fast!' 'Oh I can go to 260!' 'I go to 265!' And it's a competition of who can play faster." Mosh pits are also a competitive, physically demanding space. David (man, September 2018) says that men in mosh pits tend to be "tall and big, and I'd say that there's a certain level of danger." [30] Due to their physical nature, mosh pits can result in injuries. However, Nathan explains that risks are controlled:

People, in general, are careful, you know. Even if we're there to let loose in the mosh pit, there's still a kind of awareness that kinda, 'We're not all there to fight, we're not there to hurt each other.' So yeah there's a kinda eh, holding back if I can say, in terms of the

application of strength. But there's no restraint, like. We push each other, we push each other, but there's a level of respect too. [31]

Besides collecting items, playing music, and taking part to mosh pits, Nathan explains that men sometimes compete for women's attention:

It shows a bit, kinda like we said earlier, the kind of, of, of superiority, if you will. You know if you're with your group of friends and everyone's like, 'Ah this girl's pretty!' And you're the one like, 'Well I'm gonna go and see her!' You know? Like, 'Ok this guy has balls!' Like, so there's already a kinda, not, not superiority but kinda, of a sort of, point to prove, if you will. But again, I think that it all depends on how it's done. [...] If there's a group of guys and they're all into a girl, well the guy who goes to see her first will be the kinda, the kinda cool guy, in a way, if I can say to make it simple, but, he's not necessarily the one who wins for example you know? Well, as if, as if it were a contest, hem pf. [...] The girl could turn him away as soon as he gets there, let's say. Well then he'll be the laughing stock of the group, you know? Well, without exaggerating either, they'll be like, 'Ah you got turned away, move on!' [32]

Nora says that men on tour sometimes compare nude pictures that they receive from fans:

Guys want something to pass time. [Girls] will send pictures of their tits so you know, it's back and forth. [...] The same girl texts 3-4 band members, forgets that they're all friends, and that backstage they compare notes! [...] You're sending a picture of your boobs to a guy on tour. Guaranteed, unless this is your fucking husband and even so. Guaranteed, they don't wanna date you and they're showing your booby pictures to everyone! [33]

Yet, when I ask what attitude the ideal man has with women in general, Nathan answers:

Nothing but respect haha. Hem yeah. I think that this has been a relatively recurrent conversation topic in the metal scene, we say, some people tell me like, 'Ah there are eight

dudes for one girl!’ You know? So there’s a kinda alpha male war to know who will be able to find a metal chick, if I can put it this way, but I think that yeah. The civilized guy in general will be more of a gentleman and just be respectful and considers the person as a whole person, and not as an object. [34]

Therefore, respondents suggest that there is simultaneously a competition for women’s attention and a sense of consideration that objectification is undesirable.

With this in mind, the types of competition mentioned above – playing music, participating in the mosh pit, and getting women’s attention – reinforce the complicity between men. Here, competition is bonding rather than antagonizing because participants view each other as allies rather than as adversaries. They challenge each other because they respect each other. According to Jane, men find typically masculine ways to express their appreciation for each other:

They fart and burp in each other’s faces. Hahaha! They’re very close, [...] in the sense that farting in each other’s face is a way to tell each other that they love each other. [...] The first one to fall asleep at a party, well you smear his face. But that’s because you love him! And you film it hahaha! ‘Hihihi!’ Then you put pizza on his face, you film and you laugh! Haha! But that’s because you love him! [...] It’s as though men had a bit, kind of, established a strength contest at the same time as a brotherhood. You know, it’s like, it’s like they’re all big brothers, you know, who slap each other but who love each other in the end. You know, they’re not able to say: ‘I love you.’ Sounds gay to say: ‘I love you.’ [35]

That is, for Audrey, the ideal metal man is typically “stoic, he’s rock-solid, you know, you’re not gonna make metal people weep, like! You’d better get up early and try really hard!” [36] He typically refrains from expressing openly softness, tenderness, sadness, or vulnerability. David believes that men can try to show that they are in control when they feel vulnerable, for example:

He feels the need to show that he's tough. That, not necessarily that he doesn't have emotions, but not necessarily that he's too close to his emotions either, in the sense that he's not someone, he's not emotive, not in the sense of sadness or like, in an inferior position. He'll be emotive by, by being superior, kind of, by trying to be over, not necessarily over but, by showing confidence. [37]

Yet, other respondents witness behaviours that derogate from those listed above. Nathan believes that channelling aggression and power is predominant in most extreme metal subgenres, but other scenes like doom metal allow people to express a wider palette of emotions:

If you're into death or black metal and other scenes like that, eh, the more aggressive than emotive genres, if I can put it this way, it's gonna be much more macho, if I can say, or more centred on dominance and: 'I am stronger than you,' or on, you know, not necessarily big pecs, but it's predominantly conveying that kinda like, 'I'm strong and be strong or die.' Whereas in doom, I think that actually the connection with emotions is more present, so we witness emotions actually, a broader spectrum of open emotions. [38]

I asked him to specify what he meant:

The woman who sings alone with her acoustic guitar and she's half crying and singing her song, well like, you get carried away and it's not, not any less great because of it. [...]

You know, to choose a very bold example, like, rape. It happens much more to women than to men. It's not a secret. So having a scene to talk about it makes so, I think it raises awareness already. [...] You still have more men than women who are into [doom metal], but I think it opens doors, to, having such a broad emotional spectrum, so that all sorts of people, and texts, and like, to have a musical diversification. [39]

Furthermore, Alice believes that metal men around her are opening up even more so than mainstream men when it comes to sharing vulnerability:

I can feel like metal guys are very open with each other. I think that they're probably more open [than mainstream men] with each other in terms of their feelings. [...] [A friend approaches and] like breaks down to us, he's really upset. Like, 'I just keep wanting to like sabotage myself, I'm really really depressed,' he completely opened up to us. [...] There's definitely, a number of guys who write posts on Facebook: 'Hey I'm going through a really tough time, thank you so much for supporting me!' Or eh, yeah, kind of open up about their issues, whereas I feel like I couldn't imagine somebody else doing that outside of the metal scene.

### **“Bros Before Hoes:” Being Chivalrous or Treating Women Like Brothers?**

Knowing how ideal men act around other men, I asked respondents if the brotherly interactions extended to women. It does not always seem to be the case. Nora says that the relationship between men is “[b]ro, bro, bro. Super bro. Yeah. It’s all about bromances in metal, especially in extreme metal, it’s endearing for the most part hem but yeah, for sure if you know, you’re a woman [...] you’re not immediately into the boys club.” [40] According to Melissa (woman, January 2019), “[f]or sure you know, guys are more eh ‘bros before hoes.’” [41] Following Jane’s anecdote on how men show their love for each other by smearing each other’s face with pizza, I asked her whether men also did it to women. Her answer is: “It can happen, yeah. Hahaha! [...] [With] some friendships that have lasted for a while, I’d say. But otherwise, they’re more chivalrous with women.” [42] Similarly, Eric suggests that men approach women differently depending on whether they project femininity or masculinity:

The attitude could be, maybe, different in the way that, all of a sudden, the man is confronted to a more feminine image, so maybe it’s not, in front of her that he’ll, I’ll say, I’ll put it this way, burp and fart, whereas the woman who chugs and has a tendency to,

‘Ahh buaahh!’ But with someone else, with a woman who looks more feminine, you know I don’t think that he will take the same liberties. [43]

Either way, women respondents say that their version of the ideal metal man should stand up for women when necessary without being patronizing. When I ask whether the ideal metal man should be chivalrous with women, Alice answers:

Yeah, yeah it’s not a to a point, not to a point where he thinks, ‘Oh I’m gonna do this for you because you can’t do it.’ He’s more the guy who like, could hold doors for you, I do it for everyone, I like when people do it for me. Yeah, who, yeah! Wants to buy me a drink, sure! You know hem, and eh yeah. [...] Not to the point where: ‘This is my place as a man, it’s your place as a woman, I’m doing this because I don’t think you can.’

Chivalrous or not, the ideal metal men described by women respondents treat women as sisters rather than love or sexual interests and may stand up for them when necessary. Nora recalls:

I’ve seen really atrocious things happen in metal, but I would say that the norm is closer to a chivalrous attitude. Hem, maybe it’s unique to Quebec rather than elsewhere, but you know I’ve seen more instances of, you know, where guys would, would defend women or step in, many instances where backstage, actually, you always have one or two assholes in a tour but you know it’s the, tour guys who stop something from happening. [44]

Alice recalls times where men stood up for her:

I feel someone just grab my butt, like, full-on. Like this. And then like, ste, and then like, just walk, just like, keep going. And I saw kinda who it was. [...] Usually I like, I can handle myself, but sometimes I just, I’d rather have someone else deal with it. So [friend, man] like found that guy, and he like, gave him shit, and he’s like, made him come and apologize to me. [...] It’s important to have men who stick up for women, because some of those guys will not listen to a woman, and unfortunately, I think that’s just how it is!

Some of these people, and, if they hear it from a man, they call them out and say: ‘Hey look! I’m just like you, but I’m also nothing like you!’

Similarly, Alice continues, some men stand up for women in virtual spaces too:

It’s really obvious online. If eh, you know, somebody sees that somebody is saying: ‘Oh women can’t be drummers!’ [...] Mostly men will say hem, you know, examples of amazing women drummers. [...] There’s a lot of [guys who stand up for women online]. Where they don’t care, they don’t care about looking cool in front of their friends. [...] You have other guys who come: ‘Oh you’re just being a white knight! You’re just saying it ‘cause you wanna get in her pants!’ And it’s like no man could possibly be a feminist. No man could possibly stick up for a woman and, like, not have ulterior motives. That really bothers me that this guy is putting himself out there and saying like, ‘Look I don’t care about masculinity, or being a dude or whatever. It’s like, this is wrong.’

Alice appreciates that some men are allies and support women when they need it. All in all, some ideal men may compete for women’s attention, but they can also be bromantic, chivalrous or stand up for women. Their attitude toward women depends on the man, woman, and context.

## **The “Boys Club”**

### *Hegemonic Masculinity and Homosociality*

#### **Warrior Characteristics as the Standard**

Before delving into a deeper analysis of the main gendered concepts of those interviews, I wish to begin by quickly situating my respondents’ overall descriptions within the metal literature to ground them within this academic landscape. As for metal men elsewhere (Hill, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Purcell, 2003; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000), the respondents I interviewed highlight how the music itself provides the listener with an intense experience similar to watching a gore movie. The physical presentation of Montreal ideal men is imposing

and expresses their atypical musical preferences. Exhibiting their love for metal implies having the courage to shock, as they know that their tastes are unconventional and widely misunderstood. Like the participants in other metal studies, my respondents express how mainstream people are disoriented and overwhelmed upon hearing metal, but metalheads can handle, process, and even harness the emotions the music elicits, and channel them into something both powerful and cerebral to express who they are. In contrast with pop music, which tends to aim for simpler musical structures, metal favours complexity. Getting to know metal, and especially play it, requires a great sense of discipline and determination. The music is a demanding genre for the listener. Grasping its opaque content can take hours of listening and deciphering. Metal is yet even more demanding for the musician. According to my respondents, playing metal music takes dedication and a certain level of strength and endurance. Metal music valorizes a type of musicianship that revolves around the expectations of the male physiological capacities and the expressions of primal masculine energy: low growls, high shrieks, and powerful screams are favoured over clean singing; heavy use of percussive instruments (and sometimes a percussive use of melodic instruments with riffs and motives as a form of percussion) and dissonances create an impression of aggressive, yet organized chaos.

Concurring with the metal literature (Hill, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Purcell, 2003; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000), desirable metal men in Montreal spend a lot of time, money, and energy listening to the music, analyzing its content, searching for collectibles and information on their favourite bands and albums, perfecting their instrument-playing, and going to events. They develop a strong sense of community by sharing a common object of devotion based on a common sense of transgression. Therefore, Montreal ideal men can be very loyal to fellow metalheads. Overall, my findings point to the fact that the Montreal scene values similar characteristics to those of other metal scenes described by metal scholars. According to the

literature, those characteristics usually situate “manliness” as superior to “womanliness” and correspond to hegemonic masculinity.

That is, similar to what metal scholars point out (Allett, 2011; Hill, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Purcell, 2003; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2016), my respondents depict extreme metal as a musical genre that requires a specific critical disposition. Purcell (2003) says that “gore lyrics might serve as a metaphor for endorsing alternative opinions and lifestyles. [...] In essence, such extreme lyrics bring one close to an ethical ground zero. They force the listeners to rethink the norms that are taken for granted” (p. 130). The essence of metal rests on its transgression from the mainstream. Metalheads question the dominant systems of values, beliefs, and assumptions to define their own – by and for themselves as a group, but also in resonance with their personal, self-reflexive individualities (p. 126). Metalheads hold individuality in high value since authentic – free, reflexive – individuality is the building block of their critical evaluation of the social world. Yet, my findings also suggest that metalheads generally valorize typically warrior characteristics such as aggressiveness, courage, determination, discipline, endurance, independence, stoicism, and strength (Chaker, 2016; Hill, 2011; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Rafalovich, 2006; Turbé, 2016; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000). Those are the critical tools available to the metalheads to undo, question, and redefine the mainstream values, beliefs, and ways of being in the world.

### **Homosociality and Hegemonic Masculinity**

We saw how, in Montreal as in other extreme metal scenes, typically masculine warrior characteristics seem to be the standard according to which people’s participation is measured. And in Montreal as in other extreme metal scenes, men account for the majority of participants. Virtually every one of my respondents refers to metal as a “boys club,” “man’s world,” or “male-dominated environment” at some point or another. Most of the time, men hang out with men,

play in bands with men, admire music composed and interpreted by men. In other words, men, as the predominant type of participant, formulate the valued masculine warrior standards and use them to judge the participation of other people, also predominantly men.

The concept of homosociality can help us make sense of this dynamic. Bird defines homosociality as the “nonsexual attractions held by men (or women) for members of their own sex” (Bird, 1996, p. 121). Homosociality between men can produce a form of gender segregation (Arxer, 2011; Bird, 1996; Blatterer, 2016; Flood, 2008; Hammarén & Johansson, 2014; Larsen, 2017). It implies the mutual recognition of men that “fit in” based on the masculine criteria of the given setting; the establishment of a formal or informal hierarchy between those men who fit in; and the othering of women as a group and of men who do not fit with the criteria. In highly masculine environments, researchers link homosociality with hegemonic masculinity because homosociality establishes a symbolic barrier between a masculine, desirable “us” and a feminine, undesirable “them.” To prove that they fit in, men have to put on what Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) call manhood acts: “All manhood acts, as we define them, are aimed at claiming privilege, eliciting deference, and resisting exploitation” (p. 281). A manhood act signals the possession of a “masculine self” and establishes someone’s admissibility for gender privileges (pp. 286-287). For Schrock and Schwalbe (p. 281), anyone can put on a successful manhood act, but having a male body is a helpful asset to do so with credibility. Bird (1996) identifies competition, emotional detachment, and objectification of women as the three main mechanisms that reinforce homosociality – three areas where men can put on manhood acts to prove their status as insiders.

### **Competition**

Saying that the revered musician is the most desirable type of man in metal implies that other types of metal participants are below him, ranging from highly desirable to completely undesirable. According to Bird (1996, pp. 122–123), competition is a way to set homosocial

boundaries and establish hierarchies among men. Competition simultaneously determines who fits in, where people belong in the order, and reinforces the sense of togetherness of those who fit in. Yet, competition has to be fair to reinforce homosociality. Explicit or implicit rules have to be known and respected by the participants. Those who play by the rules demonstrate their understanding of the codes and prove that they are part of the group. Those who ignore or fail to abide by those rules show their subcultural incompetence and reveal their status as intruders.

Concretely, in the Montreal extreme metal scene, collecting items, participating in the mosh pit, and playing an instrument are three ways in which metal men compete with each other and reinforce homosociality. Men demonstrate the extensiveness of their metal knowledge by owning an array of collectibles. Possessing rare items shows dedication and often creates envy among peers, thus gives a certain status to the owner. Being able to find a rare tee-shirt indicates a person's ability to mobilize privileged resources to get it. Showing envy also means being part of the group since it requires an understanding of the object's desirability. A similar phenomenon occurs in the mosh pit. Men measure up against each other, prove their toughness, and demonstrate the intensity of the feelings that they have for the music. The mosh pit shows men's willingness to take risks and their ability to endure exhaustion and pain. It is a bonding space because the participants trust that others know the rules and adopt a respectful attitude. Those who do not are immediately expelled. More importantly, respondents report that metal musicians often view music playing as a competitive sport. Metal music is sacred because it is the cornerstone of the metal subculture and the common denominator of all metalheads. According to my respondents, most men in metal learn of an instrument, but playing metal proficiently requires a high level of musicianship. It follows that being a skillful metal musician shows superiority over most metalheads and is worthy of praise and recognition. Being admired for their musicianship is perhaps one of the highest forms of respect that someone can receive in metal.

### **Emotional Detachment**

Emotional detachment is another mechanism contributing to homosociality. According to Bird (1996, pp. 122–123), emotional detachment in masculine homosocial spaces shows men’s adherence to hegemonic masculinity ideals and their rejection of femininity. It entails a certain control over feminine – mainstream, inferiorized – feelings such as sadness, vulnerability, or nearly anything related to love and intimacy. In the Montreal extreme metal scene, Audrey and David explain that men do not typically show weakness, sadness, or vulnerability. When they feel those emotions, they turn them into power or dominance instead. I argue that competition and emotional detachment go hand in hand. Thurnell-Read (2012) suggests that men’s affection for each other is often “played out through complex, embodied, practices” (p. 253). While competition determines who is part of the group and creates hierarchies between men, it also offers socially acceptable ways to express closeness. Mutual appreciation can find an expression via competitive activities such as playing music or moshing together. Jane observes that the men she knows are reluctant to express openly their feelings for each other – saying “I love you” sounds “gay,” thus feminizing. They find alternative ways to express affection by mocking each other and testing their patience and stoicism: being able to play the game and “be cool” when someone burps, farts or puts pizza in their face is a form of challenge. These actions express closeness without the feminizing implications that come with using direct or affectionate words.

### **Objectification of Women**

In addition to competition and emotional detachment, Bird (1996, p. 123) suggests that men establish homosociality through the objectification of women. This process poses women as fundamentally different, and this very difference justifies a romantic or sexual attraction to them. Objectification of women happens when musicians on tour compare their “tour girlfriends,” as Nora explains, or when men compete for women’s attention, as Nathan describes. In Nora’s

example, men entertain short-lived relationships of a sexual nature with various women. Sharing and comparing these girlfriends with their peers is a manhood act. It showcases their success in seducing women and proves their emotional detachment, as they find the woman sexually attractive without committing to her. Nathan too suggests that when men find women attractive in the scene, they may share it with friends. They establish their aim in women and may be rewarded by their peers for having the courage to ask the girl out, especially if the attempt is successful. If he “wins” the girl, he proves his manliness. Here again, emotional detachment is key and makes the objectification of women beneficial to homosociality. Expressing too much interest for a woman in whom another man is emotionally invested, like a girlfriend, could instill jealousy and hurt the relationship between these men.

Heterosexuality is the prism by which people usually read interactions between men and women in the mainstream world: “[W]hen people are asked to assign either ‘love’ or ‘friendship’ to stereotypical images of men and women arranged in pairs, they are likely to intuitively assign homosocial pairs (male/male or female/female) to the category ‘friendship,’ and heterosocial pairs (female/male) to the category ‘love’” (Blatterer, 2016, p. 69). Metal being predominantly masculine, heterosexual, and homosocial, the dominant gaze sees women as potential objects of sexual desire. Few cultural scripts offer clues on how to live or interpret non-sexual and non-romantic inter-gender relationships. This could explain why Eric and Jane say that metal men sometimes act differently with women with a masculine versus a feminine presentation.

Heterosexuality is an attraction to certain forms of gender differences. Very masculine women are less different, thus possibly less available for heterosexual projections. They are not posed as a “complementary other,” but as closer to “one of our own.” In their presence, men may fall back on the cultural scripts associated with platonic friendship or homosociality typically reserved for men, and be more friendly or bromantic. When confronted with a woman with a feminine

presentation, men can fall back on their familiar heterosexual reflexes. They may be more chivalrous, mindful of the woman's "womanliness," and aware of their own manliness.

### ***Hybrid Forms of Hegemonic Masculinity***

#### **The Holy Trinity: Authenticity, Nonperformance, Masculinity**

I wish to acknowledge that not everything my respondents said fits perfectly with competition, emotional detachment, and objectification of women. Alice, for example, witnessed moments where men shared vulnerability openly. It may be tempting to view examples like these as alternative gender configurations. Indeed, some instances may be just that – maybe some of the men in Alice's examples were themselves enacting an alternative gender type. Some moments of openness probably express shifting attitudes toward genders, a progressive rejection of emotional detachment, and a slow acceptance – or destigmatization, or "de-feminization" – of traditionally feminine behaviours. I do not want to rule this possibility out.

However, I cannot either rule out the possibility that, sometimes, non-hegemonic practices like emotional openness may be instrumental to hegemonic masculinity and reinforce homosociality. Demetriou (Arxer, 2011, p. 391; Demetriou, 2001, p. 348) believes that hegemonic masculinity can incorporate non-hegemonic characteristics in ways that reinforce men's domination over women and subordinated men. For Demetriou (2001), hegemonic masculinity is "a hybrid bloc that unites various and diverse practices in order to construct the best possible strategy for the reproduction of patriarchy" (p. 348). Sometimes, the "best possible strategy" implies integrating subordinate behaviours by valorizing those behaviours in normative men and devaluing them in women or non-normative men. For this reason, I cannot conclude that non-hegemonic practices are automatically disruptive of gender hegemony. My analyses suggest that, at least on some occasions, those behaviours can reinforce masculine hegemony in metal.

Authenticity and masculinity both entail nonperformance. According to Halberstam (1998), “masculinity ‘just is,’ whereas femininity reeks of the artificial” (p. 234). Sometimes, nonperformance signifies an authentic fit with expected forms of masculine behaviours, characteristics, or practices. Sometimes, the situation is more complex. For example, if a given masculine expectation cannot align perfectly with nonperformance, then “nonperformance” itself may take precedence and become a signifier of “authenticity,” rendering it “more masculine” than any specific idealized quality content (e.g., emotional detachment). Therefore, in certain types of people and certain types of situations, nonperformance can turn an otherwise non-hegemonic practice or characteristic into hegemonic masculinity. For instance, my respondents suggest if a man is trying “too hard” to hide emotions, he can seem inauthentic and insecure. He does what, on paper, is masculine, but his performativity and lack of authenticity feminize him. On the contrary, crying the “right amount” in the “right context” for a “good reason” becomes strength and confidence instead of weakness. For this reason, respondents report that men can get away with doing things that are connoted as feminine – e.g., sharing emotions, wearing pink, carrying their wife’s purse – and be rewarded in their masculinity for doing so. Those practices are interpreted as confidence and manliness as long as they seem authentic and nonperformative.

Linking nonperformance with authenticity and masculinity means that, sometimes, non-white, non-heterosexual, or otherwise non-normative men can use “authentic” nonperformance as a pivot to become hegemonically masculine in the metal sense. Here, I suggest viewing even non-normative ideal metal men mentioned by my interviewees, like Rob Halford<sup>2</sup>, as fitting with

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<sup>2</sup> Many metal scholars have been interested in Rob Halford’s homosexuality and metalness. Clifford-Napoleone (2015, p. 18) views metal as a “queerscape,” a space where queer people can articulate together their metal and queer identities and turn them into a queer metalness. She uses a 2006 *Decibel* magazine interview to show that Halford mobilizes his homosexuality to make sense of his metalness. In this interview, Halford explains: “There are still stereotypes that all gay men are effeminate and weak and queeny [...]. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth, which is why I think it’s unfortunate that that type of portrayal is still given to the straight general public. In my world, you couldn’t have anything stronger or more masculine and intense” (Bartkewicz, A. (2006). A Rainbow in

hegemonic masculinity. We often conflate non-hegemonic people with complicit masculinity, but the situation does not fully apply here. In my analytical framework, complicit masculinity is a defensive gesture and, when it is not a distancing from the subordinate group to which the person belongs or seems to belong, it is at least a distancing from a set of practices, characteristics, and values associated with a subordinate group. Complicit masculinity entails being somewhat aware of one's subordination and claiming privilege "in spite" of it, rather than "with the help" of it. When someone integrates their non-hegemonic characteristics to successfully assert dominance with it (rather than merely avoid subordination), we are in the presence of hegemonic masculinity.

As my respondents suggest, a gay man such as Halford will be fully accepted and even revered in metal as long as he is talented, devoted, and authentic in the metal sense. A given type of non-normativity may be more or less salient depending on the person and the context and may have more or less impact on someone's capacity to be hegemonic. In a metal legend like Halford, musicianship eclipses homosexuality or even turns it into a form of unique, authentic metalness. Kahn-Harris (2016) explains that "Halford 'got away with it' because his metal credentials were impeccable. His undoubted 'metalness' made his homosexuality almost irrelevant" (p. 33). When

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the Dark. *Decibel*, 23, September, p. 64). Of course, Halford's presence and visibility certainly did a lot for LGBTQ+ metalheads, and a full review of his gender performance would reveal far more nuances than this short piece of interview. Yet, I wish to pick up on this excerpt to offer a quick interpretation of why I support that he enacts hegemonic masculinity. Throughout his career, Halford certainly has had to mobilize complicit masculinity on various occasions. His emphasis that not all gay men are effeminate suggests a somewhat defensive posture in regard to homosexuality. Immediately after, however, he uses his homosexuality to affirm his manliness and claim that there is nothing stronger and more masculine. This is hegemonic masculinity because, in Halford, homosexuality is generally accepted as a part of his manliness. In a less revered gay man, this affirmation could seem performative, caricatural, or defensive. However, in Halford, it is not. He embraces his homosexuality so completely that, in him – but not necessarily in other people – homosexuality almost becomes "cool." Some may take his affirmation at face value and believe that homosexuality makes him truly manly – e.g., he is so manly that he does not need a woman in his life. Most may not take this affirmation at face value, but appreciate its boldness, especially coming from a legendary musician. Halford's take on his own homosexuality is generally perceived as self-affirming and is therefore overall effective at asserting his metalness and dominance. He is not merely complicit, as he embraces his homosexuality to affirm his manliness rather than merely escaping subordination; he is not alternative either, as his affirmation does not question the subordination of femininity, but reaffirms the primacy of masculinity.

he came out, he was already established as a legendary musician and embodied metalness so well that the news had little effect on his career. As Sophie suggests, “there’s so much respect for the music” that people cannot doubt him. He is otherwise so mightily authentic, so revered in his musicianship that he has virtually nothing to compensate for.

I believe that someone like Rob Halford – or else, someone like a normative white, heterosexual, manly metal man who shares his vulnerability openly – is usually enacting a hybrid form of hegemonic masculinity. Here, a non-hegemonic characteristic is turned into something hegemonic. This particular ability to coopt a non-hegemonic characteristic explains how “metal gods” like Halford may not have the same experience as less established homosexual men, for example. I do not insist on detailing examples of complicit masculinity in the section on ideal metal men because, in my understanding, the examples of my respondents rarely correspond with this type of gender. Even the non-normative ideal men seemingly manage to become hegemonic because they establish their dominance with the help of their non-normativity, which proves their authenticity, reinforces their manliness, and confirms their metalness.

Yet, seeming authentic remains far easier for normative men. Certain types of authenticities come across as more readily acceptable and when in doubt, masculinity is often read through a presumed “lack of.” For example, people in my sample predominantly take part in death metal, thrash, or grindcore sub-scenes. While some respondents listen to black metal music, they generally do not identify with this particular segment of extreme metal and express a dislike for certain black metal practices. For Jennifer, wearing corpse paint – a theatrical practice common in black metal – signals insecurity, because a confident man “does not” have to do this. Some men may be fully authentic and confident and choose to wear corpse paint because they truly like it, but the expectation is that they are compensating for something. This impacts how others perceive him. Going back to Alice and Nathan’s explanations, to be authentic, men have to

be comfortable with themselves and confident in their own masculinity. Yet, Alice and Nathan's descriptions of confident men match the idea of what a typically manly metal man looks like – white, cisgender, heterosexual, and all the better if he fits the tall, big, hairy, “the guys wanna be them and the women wanna sleep with them” description. Their manhood acts already seem more authentic, resulting in less scrutiny or second-guessing. In contrast, masculinity in someone associated with subordination often seems suspicious, unless they have priorly established their manliness and authenticity out of any doubt as Halford did.

Those examples show how authenticity entails a certain type of conformity with the transgressive, masculine metal ethos. Authenticity certainly allows some non-normative people like Halford to join in, and metalheads – or at least, my respondents – know it. Yet, authenticity can also bar access to “less acceptably” non-normative people. If authenticity were to allow one in and keep ten out, it would make metal seem like a level-playing space without being one. Despite highlighting its capacity to explore taboo subjects and transgressing the mainstream way of life, extreme metal is part of a broader cultural context and has to balance out its transgressive and mundane aspects. Often, this balancing act results in what Kahn-Harris (2007) calls reflexive anti-reflexivity: “If unreflexivity is ‘not knowing better’ and anti-reflexivity ‘not wanting to know,’ then reflexive anti-reflexivity is ‘knowing better but deciding not to know’” (p. 145). To put it simply, metalheads tend to be critical of the world, but not of the very toolkit they are using to criticize the world. Kahn-Harris (2007) explains that “[t]ransgression remains focused on targets where dangers are known and can be reflexively managed. [...] [R]eflexively anti-reflexive practice has tended to marginalize other forms of reflexive practice [...] because it fulfils a certain kind of ‘defensive’ function very effectively” (p. 156). Metalheads, Stephanie suggests, are “existentialists” who like to question mainstream values by playing with the boundaries of what is socially acceptable and defying censorship. However, according to Audrey,

metalheads are not necessarily comfortable engaging openly in political debates or addressing directly certain types of issues. Metal allows metalheads to question the external mainstream world, but this willingness does not always translate into introspection. Criticizing the mainstream world is metal, but criticizing metal is mainstream. Thus, it seems, metal often favours typically masculine types of transgressions to criticize the mainstream world without fully questioning the overall gendered implications of those methods.

### *Alternative Gender Types*

#### **Being Women's Allies**

Despite my finding that my respondents' ideal metal men generally reproduce the hegemony of masculinity over femininity, their descriptions are not monolithic. The gendered implications of the characteristics, beliefs, and practices of ideal metal men are not always reproductive of this hegemony. We have seen how emotional detachment is the norm, but instances of emotional openness sometimes happen. They may occasionally reproduce gender hegemony, but there are moments at which they do not benefit exclusively to men as a group. Specifically, the widening of the emotional palette that Nathan observes in doom metal could fit with alternative gender configurations. While Nathan depicts this scene as predominantly masculine and believes that men can benefit from the new emotional possibilities, in his account, women as a social group are not excluded. They can access these possibilities and benefit from them too. According to Nathan, women can express emotions that are connoted as feminine in ways that are also connoted as feminine, such as crying – doing it on stage furthermore – without losing credibility or being inferiorized. The situation may allow for a greater heterogeneity of perspectives, a diversification of the public, and shifts regarding gendered meanings, practices and, to some extent, power distribution. For instance, in and of itself, the topic of sexual assaults is common in metal, but it is usually approached from a masculine dominant standpoint,

sometimes that of the perpetrator. As many respondents have stressed, the texts in metal may be exaggerated to the point of ridicule. The bands who write them may use this imagery for shock value and condemn sexual assaults. However, down-to-earth feminine standpoints of victims/survivors and allies are less common. Nathan suggests that, in doom metal, musicians have more opportunities to adopt those standpoints. Women musicians can endorse a feminine – perhaps even feminist – approach to those topics without being taken any less seriously or being inferiorized. In Nathan’s example, the widening of the emotional palette is not exclusive to men and does not situate men and masculine perspectives as superior or more desirable than women and typically feminine perspectives.

Furthermore, respondents report that some men stand up for women and condemn other men’s problematic actions. Men stopping “something” – presumably a sexual assault – from happening backstage, as told by Nora, and men standing up for women friends in person and women musicians on the internet, as mentioned by Alice, can challenge gender hegemony. The men in Nora and Alice’s accounts are aware that women have to put up with problematic behaviours on men’s part, and they dare to disagree. Rather than silently tolerating sexist comments or behaviours, that is, rather than avoiding frictions with other men, they decide to call out the problematic views or behaviours of those men and show solidarity with women instead. Being an ally does not mean standing up instead of women or doing it thinking that women cannot take care of themselves. Being an ally is about using privilege in a way that reduces inequalities. Alice believes that some problematic men will not listen to women, so having allies signifying their disapproval is helpful in those situations. Practices like these can help challenge gender inequalities in the scene.

With these remarks on ideal metal men and the gendered implications of the values of metal, I will now turn my attention to women actors. For Schippers, genders are relational. I will

understand the implications of metal men and masculinities better once I also examine women and femininities. This will enable me to show why I sustain that, overall, the Montreal extreme metal scene perpetuates masculine hegemony.

### **Anti-Metal Women According to the Respondents**

While the revered musician is the most highly regarded type of metal man, two main types of women stand at the opposite end of the metal spectrum: the poseuse – I use this word as the feminine equivalent of “poseur” – and the groupie.

#### ***The Poseuse***

##### **“It’s Not a Disguise:” Being There for the Wrong Reasons**

A poseuse is a woman who tries to pass as a metalhead without really knowing metal. Like “true” metal women, she usually displays the typical metal attire – metal band tee-shirts, dark clothes, gothic-inspired dresses, fishnets stockings, combat boots – and goes to metal events. Yet she is not a real music fan. According to Stephanie, the poseuse is:

A girl who wears stuff from bands she doesn’t know, or that she’s like, she’s there for the wrong reasons or eh yeah. [...] There’s this idea that women come to the scene because it’s male-dominated so they want the attention, the hem male attention, like? So for them, that’s an opportunity to be looked at, to be flirted with, to, you know? Because they’re attracted to that type of man, but it does not mean that they’re sincere. [1]

According to Sophie, the poseuse “has a somewhat naïve personality. Or doesn’t have a personality at all. And she’s trying to figure out who she is, and wants, maybe, like a metal boyfriend, she’s desperately trying to figure out who she is.” [2]

The poseuse misunderstands the metal subculture and her attitude clashes with the values of the scene. Annick’s anti-metal woman goes to metal events but spends the entire time in front of the mirror instead of attending shows:

She spent hours and hours looking at herself in the mirror. Because sometimes I came back and she was putting makeup on, I ate, I went to see a band, I came back and she was still there dressing her hair. [...] That's pushing it to the extreme, all of it, appearance, whereas you're there for the music, to drink beer, to laugh, run everywhere, do the conga line in bars, you know, stuff where you don't have to, you don't have to worry if you look stupid. You have the right to look stupid. Metal's an escape. [3]

The perspective of being at a metal event but missing out on shows to get dressed does not sit well with Annick. By trying to fit in with their looks, poseuses turn metal into a fashion accessory and an instrument for selfish purposes. Annick compares the poseuse to a chameleon:

It's not a disguise either, you know? You don't have to dress like a metalhead, but if you are all about appearances and that afterwards, you are all about another type of look, then another one, like a chameleon, but in the end you've never listened to metal on your own, that's when it doesn't work. [4]

Therefore, poseuses are criticized for giving more importance to their looks than to the music and for using metal as a means to an end that has little to do with any real interest in metal.

### **“These Are My Boys:” Fighting With Other Women for Men’s Attention**

Anti-metal women do not fit with the group cohesion of metal. Sometimes, they tend to be possessive of men's attention, and therefore view other women as competitors. Alice explains:

I think that's a really big thing because I have met a couple of very competitive women in the scene where they're like, 'This is my place, these are my boys, and this is like, we don't need more girls or whatever.' I've only met a couple of these people. Hem. Yeah, I think competitive, yeah, negative, hem. When you're in a group, hem, makes eye contact with everyone except for you, especially if you're the only other woman in the group.

Sophie recollects her own experience with “new girls that I didn’t know” [5] which had a “negative attitude” [6] toward other people. She claims that:

They’ll be politically correct at all times, but you know, when you hang out with a group of people, ‘You know them? They really annoy me! Last time we did this and they decided that...’ And you’re like, ‘Hum hum.’ Ish! I don’t really like hem, drama like that. I try to stay away as much as possible. [7]

At other times, the poseuse may be too delicate and the contrast between her vulnerability and other women’s toughness can create clashes. Audrey explains:

If you’re a little withering, fresh flower eh, [...] a vulnerable and delicate person, that’s not well perceived you know. It’s, ‘Ah come on! Toughen up! What’s that!’ We’re pretty demanding with: ‘Ah, take charge, toughen up!’ So the, you know, kinda preconceived idea about fragile feminine women, yeah, that wouldn’t be too well perceived. [8]

Whether the poseuse complains, seems too delicate, or talks behind other people’s back, her general attitude does not express loyalty or solidarity but antagonizes people in metal.

Overall, Stephanie describes poseuses as being problematic for metal women as a whole: It’s hard for me to admit, but I think that it’s not as surprising if, let’s say, a girl does it. It’s like, we roll our eyes and we say, ‘Yeah.’ Because it’s a misconception, well it’s not even a misconception because in some cases it’s true. [...] When you see a woman who, let’s say, wears the shirt of a band she doesn’t know, it’s not as surprising as if it were a man because it’s like, ‘Ah another one who’s there for the wrong reasons.’ [9]

Similarly, Emily feels like poseuses perpetuate a stereotype regarding women in metal:

It’s okay if a girl is there to accompany her boyfriend, let’s say, she’s there to encourage a band and she’s not only there to attract other people’s attention. The woman who’s only there for attention, that would be pretty much it, the example of what not to do. I’ve never

ever seen one but people still have the impression that they exist. Maybe that's why we get more questions asked about our metal knowledge. People have the impression that women are there to get male attention instead of listening to the music. [10]

My respondents thus suggest that beyond being undesirable as a person, the poseuse also creates a negative impact on women's participation in the Montreal extreme metal scene.

### *The Groupie*

#### **A Musician-Lover Rather Than a Music-Lover**

According to the respondents, the groupie represents the culmination of anti-metalness. Unlike poseuses, groupies are not simply self-seeking or looking for a metal boyfriend. They are looking specifically for acquaintances with musicians, and the more successful the musicians, the more they desire them. My interviewees typically believe that, like poseuses, groupies do not genuinely care about the music. When they do listen to the music, it may be because it reminds them of their encounters with musicians. According to Sophie:

Often, groupies, what they want, is to sleep with the bands or to be with them and take selfies and [...] these girls at least try to sleep with one of the, one of the band members you know. And she, she wants, hem, she feels like she belongs, and she, she tells herself, when she goes back home, she listens to the album, 'Ah yeah, I slept with him.' [11]

Respondents claim that groupies are recognizable in a metal crowd because of how they dress and act. Claire mentions:

I can identify like, in any show, like, 'This is a friend of the band, this is a girlfriend of the band, this is a groupie,' like, just based on how they act, what they are wearing, how they talk, how they talk to me, how they talk to the, a guy, like I can identify like, 'Ok, she is a friend,' 'she works for the band,' 'she's that person's girlfriend,' or, 'she's trying to sleep with someone.'

Physically speaking, groupies tend to have a provocative presentation. Stephanie explains:

“When you see a really pretty woman, like you know, hem you know, let’s say she’s dressed really sexy or something like that, for sure we’re more prone to judging. Like, we wonder: ‘Is she a groupie? Is she a real one?’” [12] Sophie says that groupies act as if musicians were the only people around:

She’s just always there. I feel like, I feel like after a while, it becomes a blemish. That’s it. If at least the girl was, that’s because girls like that, if at least they were fun to talk with and all, but she was always just, ‘Ahhh!’ ‘There are other people around, hello? Are you aware that other humans are there too?’ [...] She doesn’t even watch the show. She’s only doing, ‘Hmm he’s handsome! Hmm!’ She goes straight to the guy, ‘Hey!’ [13]

**“You Can’t Fuck Every Band Member [...] and Wonder Why They Talk Shit About You”**

Respondents overall suggest that, rather than being their authentic selves, groupies are willing to objectify themselves to fit a stereotype that they hope will please men. Annick says that “[s]he’s pretty, she’s a super chick, but she is, she’s stupid ‘Gnihihhi!’ She doesn’t have a backbone.” [14] Nora tells an anecdote:

[A woman] hid the fact that she could play an instrument to musicians because she had entered the scene with her chick friends, you know, really like, wannabe models, and this group of friends used to go backstage and play stupid chicks. So, she wanted to meet band guys so she pretended to be a stupid chick. [...] Someday, by coincidence we got to know each other better. Then I understood! Wait! You’re fucking great! You’re interesting! You’re smart! [...] Just fucking be yourself! Like, not only will people still like you, but they’ll like you even more because they’ll see you as an equal, as someone who’s interesting and who they’ll want to be friends with. Not as a one-night chick. [15]

Some respondents add that groupies create drama in other people's relationships. Jane explains:

For some, it's like they're drama queens, you know, looks like they're just there, they stir shit! You know sometimes it's like it's intentional. Damn, you know, this girl only wants, there's an unwritten code that you can't get two guys in the same group. You can't do that, you know? But some girls take that risk, you know, and then they're labelled, and also some girls party, and then they don't have decency with anyone, you know? These girls also get labelled because: 'Ah yeah she sleeps with everyone!' [...] And you know, especially in the metal community, it's a brotherhood, like you can like, feels like you have to be careful when you end a relationship with someone, after that, you know, and who you get in a relationship with afterwards. [16]

Namely, Eric believes that a woman's reputation is affected more negatively by her sexual history than a man's:

It's the same everywhere. If the woman sleeps with lots of guys all the time, she's hem, I'm sorry for saying it, she's the one who's considered to be the slut. Not the guy that they're after. I don't think so. Hem, the guy, it's more like a trophy, 'Hey I've got that girl and that girl and that girl and that girl and yeah!' You know? Because, 'High five!' But for the girl it's like, 'Ha! She sleeps with everyone, fucking slut!' [17]

Being labelled as a groupie makes a genuine integration to the scene difficult, Nora says:

Make a decision. You can't fuck every band member that you meet and then wonder why they talk shit about you. [...] It fuels the old stereotype of, 'Ah the pretty girl cannot be, you know, the pretty girl cannot be intelligent, the pretty girl cannot be genuinely passionate about metal, ah the pretty girl does that because it's easy to be cute in metal, girls are, beauty standards are low so being pretty in metal is easy.' You know like that stereotype's still there. [18]

That is, the groupie, like the poseuse, is problematic for women as a whole in the scene. Stephanie explains that, because of the history of rock and metal, women are still suspected of being groupies until proven otherwise:

In the past, women in the scene were mostly, they were groupies. And with time, it lingers a bit, so I find that this idea is still a bit present, like girls who go to shows are only there to get men's attention, because that, it remains predominantly men. You have more women now than, than some time ago, but it stays predominantly masculine. So for me, like, when a woman acts like a groupie, I only find that it brings us backwards because it's like, it, I don't know, it makes us look as if we were part of that group. [19]

It is as though, according to Nora, groupies feel like they cannot be successful in the scene as fans or musicians, so they try to integrate the scene through their encounters with musicians:

You know when you come into the scene and you're not aware that there are so many women around, you're not aware that you know, they're human beings. When you still have this impression that: 'Rock star, as a woman, my only access to befriend these rock stars is to be cute and to be, you know, teasing, being a flirt, being this or being that.' [...]

You know I don't wanna shame like, 'Ah,' well you know I don't say that it's degrading to her, not at all like. Go for it, but own it. [20]

For some respondents, groupies are reminiscent of a time when women did not have access to masculine roles in the scene and had to associate themselves, presumably through flirting or sexual encounters, with men to join in. Now that women are more numerous and can fulfill a wider variety of roles, they are still facing difficulties. Groupies are criticized for justifying the perpetuation of an old stereotype that continues to hinder women's integration in the scene.

## **Fundamentally “Others”**

### *An Overview of the Femininity of Anti-Metal Women*

#### **Groupies, Poseuses, Teenyboppers, and “Girlfriends of”**

Many rock and metal scholars (Hill, 2011, 2016; Larsen, 2017; Schippers, 2002; Turbé, 2016) focus on the groupie without addressing the poseuse. When scholars include other types of marginalized women in their analyses, they generally mention the teenybopper or the “girlfriend of.” The teenybopper “acquires knowledge about the personal characteristics, especially the relationship status of her favourite musicians, talks about how cute and sexy her favourite musicians are, and aspires to have a relationship with or marry [...] a musician” (Schippers, 2002, p. 28). Teenyboppers are seemingly somewhat younger and more passive than groupies. Teenyboppers daydream about musicians while groupies spend the night with musicians. The respondents in my sample do not mention teenyboppers as a specific type of undesirable metal women in Montreal. I do not know if this is attributable to a bias of my sample, the specificity of the local metal scene, or simply that the more disturbing groupies overshadow teenyboppers.

I did not include a specific section on the “girlfriend of” either. My respondents do mention her on various occasions and she does influence gender expectations for women in metal. Yet, my respondents do not report her as being one of the main types of undesirable actors. Unlike the groupie and the poseuse, the “girlfriend of” knows that she is not a “real” metalhead. She does little more than accompany her boyfriend during shows. My respondents sometimes consider the “girlfriend of” as annoying, as we will see in the section on ideal metal women, but she does not elicit the same degree of aversion as poseuses and groupies.

#### **Anti-Metal Women as Fundamentally Feminine**

Anti-metal women often exemplify hegemonic femininity. As a reminder, in Schippers’ (2007) theoretical framework, this is the most dominant type of femininity and it encompasses

the characteristics, practices, and behaviours understood as womanly and complementary to hegemonic masculinity. In the metal literature as in my sample, metalheads believe that genuine love for music is the most valuable kind of fandom (Hill, 2016, p. 89). Although some rock and metal scholars (Hill, 2016; Larsen, 2017; Schippers, 2002) argue that many self-identified groupies are fine music connoisseurs, my interviewees typically believe that groupies and poseuses do not care about the music. This already situates them as inferior, thus feminine in the metal gender hierarchy. A true passion for the music is valuable because it is the ground on which a warrior, transgressive metal authenticity can grow. A passion for metal music is not superficial, empty, undesirable, or merely affective; it is the force that drives metalheads to develop their intellectual independence from the mainstream world, push their musical abilities to their full potential, and build solidarity with other people who share those tastes and values. Poseuses, in contrast, are there for the “wrong” reasons, says Stephanie. Some groupies only listen to the music when it reminds them of musicians, explains Sophie. In Nora’s experience, when groupies happen to be knowledgeable, they choose to hide it. For Stephanie and Emily, poseuses and groupies are there to get masculine attention instead of listening to music.

Respondents depict heterosexuality as the main point of connection between anti-metal women and the scene. Heterosexuality is the ingredient that turns men and women’s differences into complementarity, and that makes musicians interested in actors who, otherwise, have little to do with the core values of metal. Groupies find musicians attractive because they are different – successful, visible, manly. And musicians find groupies attractive also because they are different – admiring, fanatic, womanly. It is therefore through the prism of heterosexuality that anti-metal women can revolve around the world of metal. Yet, heterosexuality also cements ideal men and anti-metal women’s mutual otherness. According to Schippers (2002), “[b]y fusing sexual desire with masculinity and femininity, sexual desire becomes gendered and gender becomes

sexualized” (p. 31). Interviewees criticize anti-metal women in general, and groupies more harshly so, for participating in their own objectification, feminizing themselves further; but this practice is also the condition under which they can access metal.

Schippers (2002, p. 147) explains that women are often encouraged to look for men’s attention and may end up competing against other women for it. My respondents describe the same phenomenon, which further proves the otherness of poseuses and groupies. Contrary to the masculinizing and desirable homosocial competition between metal men, the competition between women for men’s attention is feminizing, problematic, and incompatible with homosociality. Ideal men compete with each other in ways that reinforce their sense of togetherness and express their appreciation for each other; the competition between women creates tensions and rivalries. Alice regards her experience with competitive women as “negative.” The underlying attitude, Alice suggests, is that these women feel possessive of the men around them and do not want “their” men to “share” their attention with other women. They want to keep the exclusivity that comes with being the only woman in their group. Alice’s testimony resounds with Dawes’ (2012). Dawes explains that minorities in metal can have the “only one” syndrome. As a black woman who likes punk, hardcore and metal herself, Dawes (2012) explains that “[m]en are used to seeing their ‘own’ at shows, and the image of the brotherhood is crystallized. Though I wish it were not even a factor, my presence at metal, hardcore, and punk shows is always felt” (p. 93). In her own experience and in the experience of other black women she interviewed, being the “only one” means being used to receiving more attention than the average normative metalhead. It does not always translate into solidarity when other black women join in because they may be territorial and possessive of their exclusivity (p. 96). Black women are fewer than white women in North American metal scenes – having interviewed a majority of white respondents, my sample reflects this reality. Yet, women in metal

– even white – are still a minority, and this may be enough to have the “only one” syndrome. In this context, competition means jealousy, rivalry, and exclusivity.

To refer back to Kahn-Harris (2007), where ideal metal men are reflexively anti-reflexive, anti-metal women are simply unreflexive. Ideal metal men may conveniently ignore their reproduction of certain types of mundane aspects of the social life into metal – sexism being one of them – but their overall perspective is a transgressive and critical one. Anti-metal women, in contrast, are of the mainstream world. Annick views metal as an escape from social pressures associated with femininity. For her, metal is an opportunity to have fun like men and free herself from worrying about her physical appearance. Anti-metal women carry the social pressures associated with femininity with them into metal. That is, rather than using the transgressive toolkit of metal (authenticity, warrior masculinity) to distance themselves from the mainstream, they are using a mainstream toolkit (superficiality, heterosexuality) to integrate the metal world. Anti-metal women, it seems, are unreflexive because they “do not know better,” to paraphrase Kahn-Harris (2007, p. 145). Their lack of reflexivity is not a strategic choice, but simply a manifestation of their fundamentally mainstream sense of conformity.

The practices, behaviours, and values of anti-metal women are feminizing. Upon deeper analysis, we can see that poseuses and groupies’ practices, characteristics, and values often oppose those of hegemonic masculinity, but they do not always mirror them perfectly. The femininity of anti-metal women cannot be solely understood in terms of hegemonic femininity. Pariah femininity may help us account for some of those practices, characteristics, or behaviours which are not complementary to hegemonic masculinity. Pariah femininity is an inferiorization resulting from the failure to assert power or claim superiority when using a practice, value, or characteristic usually deemed masculine. I will now explain more specifically how the poseuse and the groupie, respectively, move between hegemonic and pariah femininity.

### *Improperly Feminine, Yet Inappropriately Masculine*

#### **The Femininity of Poseuses**

The femininity of the poseuse often revolves around hegemonic femininity, especially when we take a close look at the specific practices that characterize her. Some respondents such as Sophie suggest that she has a naïve personality or no personality at all, and she is desperate to figure out who she is. Contrary to ideal metal men who have a burning passion for metal and fulfill themselves through it, metal is not a calling for the poseuse, but a shallow source of curiosity or an attempt to fill her inner emptiness and insufficiency. This shallowness, emptiness, or insufficiency that brought her to metal marks her participation. The poseuse refrains from participating too much because she would show her incompetence. For example, a poseuse cannot afford to discuss metal with other people, as she would demonstrate her lack of knowledge. She cannot compare her collection of metal items, as she cannot even appreciate the band on her own tee-shirt. The transgressive essence of metal escapes her and her participation is bound to remain superficial. Observing the dress code is one of the few elements within her reach. As Annick suggests, the poseuse can mimic the metal dress code like a chameleon at the best of her abilities, but it does not make her legitimate because her level of involvement is as superficial as it can be. Where metal clothes are a way for metal men to express their metalness and show their true colours, poseuses use metal clothes as a front to hide theirs.

Sophie insinuates that the self-seeking poseuse has little personality and that looking for a metal boyfriend may be part of her attempt to figure out who she is. Since metal men valorize a warrior, typically manly type of masculinity, it is possible to imagine that she is looking for a metal man to make her complete. Warrior masculinity, as previously seen, means self-confidence, control, strength. Those characteristics may complement her insecurity, comfort her, give her meaning, and validate her. It follows that her involvement in metal is not determined by

her preferences, but by her relationship to – real or imaginary – “manly” metal men. She dips into her ideal boyfriend’s world, hoping to gain direct access to the type of man that she is looking for. By conforming to a certain type of metal physical aesthetic, poseuses may fit in just well enough to access metal men. Yet, if a poseuse’s main goal is to remain romantically or sexually attractive, she may not want to be taken for “one of the boys” either. Hence the emphasis on a typically feminine type of metal physical appearance. Poseuses can play in the space between the metal masculine aesthetic and a mainstream feminine aesthetic by, as in Annick’s example, spending hours perfecting their metal look. Poseuses can preserve their otherness and heterosexual attractivity by paying close attention to their appearance and showcasing – voluntarily or not – feminine attitudes such as dependence, superficiality, emotional availability, or vulnerability.

These are all ways in which we can interpret the poseuse as hegemonically feminine. However, when we take a step back and look at the bigger picture, the overall presence of the poseuse in metal fits with pariah femininity. All the little things that she does feminize her in a hegemonic way, but she tries to infiltrate a homosocial environment despite her overwhelming femininity. By trying to pass as a metalhead, she claims an identity and a place that typically belong to authentic metal men – not to mundane, mainstream, conformist, unreflexive women. Because of her overwhelming femininity, the poseuse’s attempt at masculinity “reeks of the artificial” (Halberstam, 1998, p. 234) and further proves her inferiority, associating her with pariah femininity.

### **The Femininity of Groupies**

The groupie often corresponds to hegemonic femininity for reasons similar to the poseuse. Her presence revolves around men and she needs a musician to give her worth and meaning; her role consists of admiring men and being complementary enough to gain their attention. When

Nora explains that some women decide to become groupies because they think that, as women, seduction is their only tool to befriend successful men, she shows that some women are acutely aware of – or even blinded by – the gender boundaries of metal. Therefore, as Nora suggests when she says that some groupies are not “being themselves,” groupies feel like they do not have access to authenticity in the metal sense. Rather than “being themselves,” they may choose to conform to hegemonic femininity. They may decide to showcase the types of feminine characteristics that they think will complement those of successful musicians and that revered men may find attractive. As Nora and Sophie suggest, groupies can try to look naïve or stupid rather than embracing their true capacities. This, on the one hand, makes them seem unsuitable for conversations about metal, but on the other hand, comforts musicians’ intellectual and creative superiority. Groupies can dress in ways that will make them seem like a “super chick.” Provocative or revealing clothes, elaborate hairstyles, makeup, and accessories tend to be unpractical for moshing and headbanging but give a visual expression to their feminine heterosexuality.

This said, I wish to go back to how respondents often reproach groupies for not being authentic. This presupposes that: 1) if they were really being themselves, they would not become groupies, or; 2) if they were really being themselves and became groupies nonetheless because it really represents who they are, then they should at least “own it,” to use Nora’s words. The first situation refers to the inferiority of the groupie in the metal hierarchy and presupposes that, if they were true to themselves, they would prefer to adopt a non-inferiorizing position. However, regarding the second point, I argue that even if groupies were truly “owning it,” their actions would still be widely interpreted as inauthentic. In metal, being true to oneself allows for gender digressions only as long as the “true self” does not align too closely with femininity or the mainstream. A woman for whom the groupie lifestyle is a genuine calling is still actively

attracted to men, therefore not devoted to the music only; she may continue to compete with other women for men's attention; she may still rely on her looks to attract men. In the end, whether groupies are truly themselves may not matter much: their presence itself is antinomic with the metal definition of authenticity. Authenticity is bound to constantly escape groupies.

Groupies may be an object of masculine desire, but they are also actively desiring subjects. Because of their goal-oriented and active approach to men and the metal subculture, most of the gendered practices that characterize groupies tip into pariah femininity. Unlike the poseuse who may be happy with fans, musicians, or men occupying any type of role in metal, the groupie aims specifically for successful men. Claire believes that she can instantly recognize groupies in a crowd, which is understandable: groupies have to be distinguishable from the other women in the scene. They have to make themselves visible for specific men to notice them and understand their motives. It follows that they may be purposeful in their relationship with men and how they use femininity. To go back to Nora and Sophie who claim that groupies tend to act like they are stupid, clueless, and helpless even when they are not, some groupies perhaps present themselves as a complementary opposite to hegemonic masculinity to get men's attention.

Eric suggests that the sexuality of men and women is held to a double-standard. Highly sexually active men receive praise while highly sexually active women receive disapproval. For men, as we have seen earlier, objectifying and competing for women's attention are manhood acts showcasing emotional detachment and control, proving their manliness, and strengthening homosocial bonds. When men choose who they want to flirt with, they can decide to stay away from strategically sensitive choices such as wives, sisters, girlfriends, or any type of woman that could damage their friendship with other men. Women's sexuality, in contrast, is socially expected to result from love, engagement, and intimacy (Blatterer, 2016, p. 72). Passivity, restraint, and vulnerability underpin those expectations. Women are supposed to wait for men to

manifest their interest, and then hope that the interest will develop into a long-term, intimate, monogamous relationship. The contrast between men and women's sexual expectations allows men to stay in control of the emotional impacts of their sexuality and of the repercussions it has on their relationships with other men. This contrast also reinforces the power of men over women as a group by justifying men's control and activity, and women's vulnerability and passivity.

When groupies exhibit a strong sexual drive paired with emotional detachment, they usurp some of the control that typically pertains to men. Larsen (2017, p. 404) says that people associate groupies with hysteria. Hysteria is a fundamental lack of control. However, to me, the behaviours of those archetypal, goal-oriented groupies do not sound like hysteria, emotional vulnerability, or commitment. Their practices are, I argue, active, calculated, and show control over their own image and body. I do not mean that groupies cannot develop certain types of affective feelings for musicians. Sophie suggests that groupies can go to shows, watch and sigh at musicians, and focus on how handsome they are to point of forgetting everything else. They can also listen, perhaps with pride or nostalgia, to a specific album because it reminds them of their encounters with musicians. Yet, these practices are perhaps closer to men's when they view their past adventures with women as a series of personal achievements – or a collection of “trophies,” to use Eric's word. In this sense, the association between groupies and hysteria is spurious and mostly serves, I believe, to up-play their femininity, justify their subordination, and mitigate the threat of their vulnerability- and commitment-free sexuality.

That is, sexually active women like groupies are “considered a threat to these male bonds by creating sexual tension” (Schaap & Berkers, 2013, p. 104). They are commonly viewed as “predatory and exploitative of the hapless musicians whose artistry they cruelly ignore in their lust for celebrity sex” (Larsen, 2017, p. 398). The archetypal groupie is aware of the social expectations surrounding men's sexual propensity and seemingly uses this awareness to her

advantage without regard for homosociality. Jane mentions an unwritten code according to which women cannot enter a relationship or sleep with two men who are friends, as it amounts to “stirring shit,” to use her words. When “othered” women are the ones who choose who they want to flirt with, they can go for whomever they like regardless of the rules of homosociality.

This situation explains why “[n]o musician loses his place in any gender or rock hierarchy by doing his part in the musician/groupie relationship. In contrast, groupies are constructed as sexually promiscuous sluts and thus deserving of contempt, ridicule, or sexual exploitation” (Schippers, 2002, p. 27). The sexuality of the groupie is not feminine in the hegemonic sense, because she does not display restraint, emotional involvement, and passivity. Had she been a man sleeping with women, her sexuality could make her “one of the boys,” assuming that boys are socially rewarded for doing so. However, her sexuality is not properly masculine, as she sleeps with the so-called boys. She emphasizes her femininity in her interactions with musicians and she still is, in many ways, the heterosexual other that men typically like. For these reasons, her femininity often fits with pariah femininity.

#### **Anti-Metal Women as Unable to Access Masculinity or Alternative Gender Types**

All in all, the gender type of poseuses and groupies corresponds to an incongruous patchwork of mainstream femininity and pastiche warrior masculinity turned into pariah femininity. Masculinity and femininity are not usually meant to be conciliable within the same person, especially when “masculinity” is lacking credibility. That is, upon examining the gender dynamics of the scene, I realized that the actor who best represents hegemonic femininity is the “girlfriend of.” The archetypal “girlfriend of” conforms with feminine expectations and complements ideal metal men in virtually every way. Like the poseuse and groupie, she exhibits feminine characteristics such as heterosexuality, an attraction to metal men rather than to the music itself, and an overall conformist attitude regarding mainstream femininity. She is sexually

available to a man – her boyfriend. Yet, unlike the poseuse, she is not trying to take undue space. Unlike the groupie who goes from man to man, the “girlfriend of” is emotionally involved with her boyfriend. These reasons probably explain why, to quote Emily, “[i]t’s okay if a girl is there to accompany her boyfriend, let’s say, she’s there to encourage a band and she’s not only there to attract other people’s attention.” Even though she does not understand the music, she does not disturb anyone. She does not elicit the same degree of aversion as poseuses and groupies because her actions stay within the boundaries of proper femininity.

Poseuses and groupies find themselves in a very particular, unsustainable tension, as they are not content with being simply “complementary others” like the “girlfriends of,” but they fail to commit to the authentic essence of metal – transgressive values driven by typically warrior characteristics. It is as though they were trying to have it both ways, which makes them truly undesirable. When they transgress gender expectations, those transgressions do not translate into alternative gender configurations. Instead, they are brought back to their overwhelming femininity. They are so hegemonically feminine in forbidden ways that any attempt at metalness cannot be taken seriously. It follows that groupies and poseuses cannot access legitimately the characteristics, behaviours, or practices that typically belong to hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity, or even alternative gender type.

Anti-metal women are, furthermore, caught in the scene’s reflexive anti-reflexivity paradox. They encounter obstacles based on their gender but do not have the power to object to them. They do not have the credibility to question internal issues that would be difficult to address head-on even for legitimate metalheads. Anti-metal women serve as a reminder of how incompatible femininity is with the core values of metal. In return, this overall situation justifies a certain “bro before hoes” mentality to preserve the homosociality of the scene. Stephanie, Emily, and Nora feel this impact when they stress that poseuses and groupies hinder women’s capacity

to participate in metal. Since some women are deemed problematic, purposeful, and manipulative, men have to ensure that anti-metal women do not get free access to the scene. The peril that anti-metal women represent justifies metalheads' doubts regarding women's participation. However, keeping anti-metal women at the margin and tolerating interactions with them as outsiders serves in actualizing the boundaries between metalheads and non-metalheads, masculinity and femininity, authenticity and mainstream.

This said, if metal is so masculine, homosocial, and suspicious of women as a group, how can women become ideal metalheads too? The next step will be to see how women articulate masculinity and femininity in their own way to make themselves a place in a setting where hegemonic masculinity and feminine expectations are simultaneously normative for them.

### **Ideal Metal Women According to the Respondents**

When I ask respondents to describe ideal women in metal, one of their immediate responses is that the ideal characteristics of men apply to women. For Sophie, it is "the same thing as guys I would say;" [1] for Emily, "Like the metal guy. Respectful of others, involved, loves the music, encourages the bands;" [2] and Jane says that "there's not much difference, I think, between what I hoped to become as a metalhead, and what a dude hopes to become as a metalhead." [3] As for men, the defining characteristic of ideal women in metal is their love for metal music. Nathan says that she is a "[m]etal lover!" [4] Sophie that "[s]he loves metal intensely. She, she knows her metal." [5] Yet, differences between ideal metal men and women start to show in the way respondents develop their descriptions. When questions concern ideal metal men, the descriptions are relatively straightforward: respondents name and describe specific qualities that men should have or practices that men should do. When it comes to women, respondents define them in relation to the ideal metal man – which is not surprising considering that they have had to answer questions on men before – but also in relation to anti-

metal women, even though I had not asked about anti-metal women at this point of the interview. Respondents, like Stephanie, often use the negative to illustrate how women should “not be:”

For men, hem, to get the kinda respect or status, you have to play in a band. And for women, it’s like, you know, that’s it, standing out and say, ‘Hey I’m a real one you know? I’m not a...’ Well that’s it, so I think that this is the difference. Women have to stand out to show that they’re not groupies, and men it’s like, they want respect so they wanna be in great bands. [6]

Being an ideal woman sometimes means being “like” the ideal man; at other times, being something “in relation to” the ideal man; or else, “not being” an anti-metal woman. My respondents’ constant reflex to compare and contrast ideal women with desirable men and undesirable women shows how normative the gender characteristics of those types of metalheads are. Ideal metal women have to position themselves according to the masculine ideal, the feminine ideal, and the feminine undesirable. Thus, I categorize my respondents’ ideal metal women into three main types: the proven fan, the tour mom, and the approved musician.

### *The Proven Fan*

#### **“Who’s Her Boyfriend?” Facing Initial Doubts**

To become ideal, women have to show that they are not poseuses, girlfriends, or groupies by proving that they are “real fans” of the music. Melissa says that “we tend to associate the metal woman who goes to shows with her boyfriend,” [7] and Nora admits that:

I’m guilty of it too sometimes, that when you see a woman in a show, you wonder like, ‘Who’s her boyfriend?’ And hem you know, in a way, that’s true. You know, many women are introduced to metal because of their boyfriends, you know, when they are young they go to shows and they end up really loving it and they become fans. [8]

Audrey explains that she has had to prove her authenticity by going through series of tests:

If I'm with my friends, they assume that I'm there to accompany my boyfriend. That's nine times out of ten. 99 times out of 100. [...] And then they end up, like, just testing, to see, to make sure, to make sure that you really belong in the group. Are you credible, you know? 'Ah ok so you really like that for real? Yeah?' And then they test you. Test you. They test you, make sure that you're not just wearing a shirt but don't know the band. That's total treason! Total treason! A girl wearing a shirt without knowing the band! You're not part of the group! There you, there, you, haha! You're a, you're a wannabe, a poseur. [9]

Several women respondents report a similar experience. According to Emily:

It's sexist because a woman, yes, she will be asked more questions. She will be asked to name songs or albums to make sure that she really listens to them. [...] Women are tested more than men. We get the 'women's questionnaire' where you're asked quiz questions just to see if you really know it. Being taken seriously takes longer. [10]

Audrey believes that men do test each other's knowledge too, but they do so in ways that feel more casual: "They talk about what they like and the shows that they saw, but I always have the impression that I am undergoing an interrogation." [11] It is as though, for Stephanie, men were not comfortable talking casually about music when women are present:

I've already had this impression, that like we couldn't talk about music because I was there, you know? I think that this is a struggle for women. We're maybe taken less seriously than men, let's say, in that, if you want to have a conversation on music. [12]

Women have fewer occasions to discuss music casually and men stay with the impression that women do not know much about it. To dissipate their doubts, they test women directly.

### **“Not Like the Other Ones:” Demonstrating Their Passion for Metal**

Ideal metal women are demonstrative of their love for the music since it can help them prove that they are “true metalheads.” For example, a woman may headbang or participate in mosh pits, as Melissa explains:

I’ve been told, often, and I’ve seen it with other girls too, ‘Damn! She headbangs so much!’ This, it seems, is like a mark of respect. Headbanging, having fun at a show, and you’re not viewed as: ‘Oh the girl doesn’t love metal, she’s there with her boyfriend.’ No, no. She utterly loves the music. Hem. And I think that, it really does, you have, you have. There’s a link and they’ll make it. They can tell apart the girl who’s there because she loves it, versus the girl who’s there because hem, of the network, the hem, ‘We’re joining the family,’ and you have the, ‘I’m there because I’m with my boyfriend.’ [13]

Similarly, Eric says that people notice when women go in the mosh pit:

It’s rarer because it’s really physical, and, with the natural constitution, the, the, you know, I don’t like saying it but, physically, you know, with smaller arms, smaller sizes, guys are generally more, you know they’re bigger, they, we eat and at some point we get a belly and we take a lot of space, and I mean, it’s more hem, it’s tougher. But you know my first girlfriend went in the mosh pits and was like, ‘Watch out!’ Like. And even sometimes, like she was elbowed like any other guy, well she was glad about it and like, ‘Yeah! I did it!’ And for sure it was like an additional source of pride to be with a woman, it sounds stupid, but back then, who moshed. Because it was like, ‘My girlfriend is not like the other ones, my girlfriend moshes,’ you know? In a masculine environment. [14]

Respondents suggest that there are generally two main types of ideal women, one being clearly on the masculine side, and the other somewhat more on the feminine side. Eve explains: “Women I find are, are, either really tomboyish, in general, or either like chicks. You have in-

betweens, but fewer. I find that, often, some wear very heavy makeup and like hem, some are much more like, metal tee-shirt.” [15] When I ask them explicitly if one is better perceived than the other, many respondents initially say that both types are equally desirable. However, when respondents further continue their descriptions of ideal women, the more feminine type comes with caveats and heterosexual implications. Melissa explores this idea:

There are like two categories. Hem, a category of women for whom appearance is super important. So, she will, you’ll see her, hem, namely in black metal, you know, with the bullet belt, cleavage, leather clothes, big black makeup, hem kinda, big makeup, eh, you know, there’s a particular aesthetic associated with this genre. Then you have the type, eh, of girls with, kinda, combat boots, hem, construction boots, and eh, like, they’re dressed more masculine. So often you’ll either have the girl who’s more on the chick side, but she’s very situated in a particular metal genre, or you’ll have the woman who’s, like, she doesn’t give a fuck. I’d say, physically, I think it influences the personality a bit. Well, it expresses a personality. Hem, the metal woman who’s a bit more on the chick side has more of a tendency to flirt. [...] The girl who’s physically a bit more ‘neglected,’ quote, unquote, isn’t. She’s there because she loves metal. [16]

Adopting a masculine presentation simply means being like a typical metalhead, according to Eve: “Dressing like a man, in the end, would be, would be fine because that’s the way a metalhead usually dresses. In the end, the masculine extreme is simply more like someone who dresses, I think, casually, in this scene.” [17]

A feminine woman has to be careful not to be taken for a groupie while a masculine woman enters more seamlessly into the scene and raises fewer doubts. Stephanie suggests that some women may choose to be more masculine than feminine for this reason: “Many girls feel like, to be taken seriously, they shouldn’t be too pretty, not emphasize her features too much, not

too much, you know, almost looking like one of the boys.” [18] After hearing a similar comment by Alice, I asked her directly if women who are very masculine in their presentation and behaviours are generally better perceived than conventionally feminine women. Alice answered:

I think a hundred percent. I think that those of the women that have the most friends in the scene, men and women, are, their friends are metalheads, hem. They seem to do, yeah. They seem to do the best in the, in the community, hem yeah. They’re drinking beers, they’re hem, you’re, you know, one of the guys. [...] Maybe, some of the, some of the men might also feel more comfortable with that as well, because they feel like, hem, you know, you’re one of the guys, you’re one of eh my, my buds, hem, in a word, just hanging out, just having beers, where it’s like genders eh, sex is eh, a non-issue.

I also asked my respondents if a woman could be “too masculine.” Women respondents stressed that there is no limit to how masculine a woman can be in metal. For Emily, “[t]he main thing is being themselves and accepting oneself. A super masculine woman who acts like a man, who dresses pretty much like a man, that’s fine, that’s well accepted.” [19] According to Stephanie, a woman will have “[z]ero problem!” [20] if she is as manly as a man. Men respondents have a slightly different initial response to the same question. Rather than pointing out that women can be as masculine as they want, David and Nathan’s immediate reaction suggests that very masculine women may look like they are not comfortable with their femininity and have something to prove. David has some difficulty articulating his impression:

How can I explain it. The ideal woman in metal, let’s say, wants to, wants, damn, to be pretty but without necessarily, anyways that’s hard to say! Haha! I have images in my mind and I have a hard time putting them into words. A woman who swears a lot, you know, acts a bit like a man, that’s too much masculinity, yeah, anyways. [21]

Nathan suggests that a woman is too masculine when:

She'll try to show that she is more masculine, so she'll have hem, she'll try to chug more beer, she'll scream louder, and she'll try to, to show that she's, that she's tough too you know. [...] That's maybe also the, the fact that the, the scene is predominantly guys so she's probably more around men, and it ends up growing on them you know. I think that's simply a, a tribe attitude if you will, so to, so to make sure to be part of the group, well I'm gonna chug my beer too, but in the end no one asked her for anything. [22]

In David and Nathan's remarks, the issue with "too masculine" women is their lack of authenticity. Their gender performance seems caricatural because their masculinity is interpreted as an attempt to fit in with the group, rather than a representation of who they truly are. I cannot say whether most men would answer the way David and Nathan did. Nonetheless, I found the contrast interesting, as the women in my sample did not explain how masculine women could seem caricatural, whereas men respondents did.

### **Being Critical of Gender Expectations**

Whether they are leaning more on the masculine side or embracing a certain level of femininity, ideal metal women are critical of mainstream gender expectations. Naomie explains what can bring a woman to extreme metal:

She has been rejected and hem she doesn't recognize herself in, actually, what society expects of a woman. [...] Women, you know, we, we're being told since a very young age that we cannot be naturally pretty, that we need to put something on to be pretty. We've been so much hem, we have to emphasize our femininity, so it's so instilled I think, in us, hem since a long time, that we feel maybe naked when we don't have that. So a woman who doesn't want to conform to anything, maybe she can recognize herself more in an environment where, hem naturally, people do not conform with stereotypes. [23]

According to Emily, an interest in a masculine musical genre is, in itself, a rebellion against mainstream femininity: “The woman metalhead challenges mainstream society much more than the man metalhead. Men are already supposed to have feelings of aggression and violence, but not women. So being a woman in metal is being rebellious of those expectations.” [24]

Keeping this in mind, Nathan, Emily, and Naomie each mention spontaneously – that is, without me asking about it – that a woman who wears a flower dress at a metal show is rebellious because she is disruptive of the metal codes. Emily explains:

I have a flower dress and I never got to wear it at a show, but maybe I will. It would be very metal to go to a show with my flower dress [...] because it’s unusual. It would go against the expectations. It would be disruptive so it would be very metal. [25]

Nora has a similar discourse:

I find it funny, I can wear a pop artist tee-shirt when I go to an extreme metal show, or you know, I wear a dress, super girly dress to go to a brutal, grind show, and I find it funny because yeah, it pisses some people off. [26]

Similarly, Naomie sometimes liked to unsettle people by wearing feminine clothes at shows:

I always went and bought, before a metal show, a little dress that had nothing to do with metal. [...] Really, I was like the girl who was there, and you wondered: ‘What’s that!’ It has always been my goal. Hem, the dress was sometimes not too far from metal aesthetics, but I could sometimes arrive with a flower dress that wasn’t black. [...] It was funny because everyone always said to me, they were always surprised that I was a metalhead. [...] I didn’t care about what they..., I think it’s stupid to judge on that basis, honestly. [27]

The critical attitude of metal women toward femininity also manifests itself in their relationship with men. David and Audrey believe that ideal metal women are less likely to rely on or be intimidated by men. David explains his impression:

They tend to be assertive, so they hold their ground, their ideas and they have ideologies and they hold on to, hem, to those ideologies much more than, it seems, other women.

[...] Well, often, a man who tries to manipulate a woman, well you know, sometimes they succeed, it's not rare to see women being manipulated and in the end well, her own ideas that she had at the beginning, that she had, she leaves them aside for the man. Whereas a woman, often, who listens to metal, well she asserts her, her ideas much more. [28]

According to Audrey, metal women are feminists. She explains:

It doesn't mean that you say it out loud, but hem, you know, I'm sure that in my group of metal girlfriends that I have, there's more of them who don't have children. Not that it wouldn't be well perceived, but they're more the kind of women who do, who take care of themselves. With a career. Not the kind of girls to be a maid for their husband like. So feminist in that sense, to say hem, maybe not as traditional in their relationships. Maybe more hem, you know, who, not that's, who's stronger, but [...] she doesn't wait for the guy to open the door you know. [29]

Naomie as well explains that metal women are feminists:

You have to be strong, to be assertive, not being afraid of judgements, and hem, but also not viewing yourself as a weaker version of a man. Often that's what, right, being a feminist, often them, you know, we think of women as needing protection and all, so I think a woman in metal views herself as the equal to men, so necessarily a feminist. [...] We often think we want, that feminists are vindictive. Whereas from my perspective,

that's not being vindictive, that's simply taking one's place. It's to not, you know, I don't have to be sorry for being there. I breathe air, I have the right, like you. [30]

### ***The Tour Mom***

#### **The “Next Best Thing:” Taking on Active Roles**

Metalheads are often so passionate about metal that they want to take on active roles in the scene. For men, this generally translates into learning an instrument and playing in a band. Women's trajectory often differs in this regard, according to Stephanie:

Well I don't know why, but it's like, in the world in general, there are fewer women musicians than men musicians. Why? I don't know. Because music, you know, playing of an instrument doesn't have a gender, you see. So because fewer women play instruments, well the next best thing, like, the other way to integrate metal, would be actually to take part in logistic stuff. [31]

Women therefore often work in logistics and organization. Many become “merch girls,” booking agents, promoters, venue owners, or production managers. I refer to this type of ideal woman as “tour mom” because various respondents highlight her motherly approach, as she tends to bands' needs and ensures the smooth running of shows or tours. Stephanie continues and explains that taking part in the logistics may help some women to be taken more seriously:

I noticed that many women are, they're involved in the scene, let's say, by, by working in the scene. Like promoting, booking shows you know? Or even working in venues you know? I noticed that many women do that. And hem I think that, that it helps because it shows that they are really committed, that they're there for the right reasons. [32]

Even though tour moms are active in the scene and may gain credibility, Audrey reports that women who work in the industry still face suspicion regarding their abilities:

To be working there, to, to be a woman, was a really important limitation, obstacle.

Seriously. It's like shovelling against the wind. [...] Were I to only bend over to plug a wire, because I was a woman, 'Ah well! You're not able to plug a wire!' Well, well, he was sure, 'Step back, I'm gonna take care of the wire.' Hello hello! My name's not Roger, my name's not Roger but at the same time, we're in the 2000s and women can plug wires. But it's exhausting! All the time, you have to repeat it, you have to face it, you get treated like a miss, 'Listen, miss,' and, like when you buy a car, well it's like that. When you work in the music industry, that's the way it is. 'Listen, miss, listen,' mansplaining! [33]

Working in the organization requires resilience, confidence, and patience, especially for women who wish to make a career out of it. Nora says that, often, a woman who works in the organization is a "fucking scary mom, but she's mom." When asked explicitly what she means by that, Nora explains that the archetype of the woman who makes her proofs is:

Oh! A cunt! A cunt, like. [...] The truth is you have to be fucking above perfect. You know it's like, you have to be even more perfect than a man who does the same job. You have to be demanding, perfectionist, demanding as fuck, strict as fuck. [...] You cannot let them walk over you. That's true for anyone, but especially women because, 'Oh you know, it's just a girl, it's okay.' Nope. You have to go above and beyond to be harder, more demanding and all that. Still there, making your proofs, because when bands see that, 'Oh shit! She's a bitch!' Well, [...] she may seem like a bitch, but in the end, 'No not at all! She's not a bitch at all! She's just really much on top of things!' [34]

Yet, when they have made their proofs, women in the organization are highly appreciated because they take good care of everyone. Once they are accepted, their motherly side can start to take over. Melissa explains:

Women care a bit more, a bit more, about your comfort. So, example, if a show is organized by a woman, hem I find that there will be a bit more detail, attention given to [inaudible]. Women care a bit more about the bands who come. [...] When it comes to organization, bands are happy about it. And they mostly want hem, from what I understand, the North-American scene is more of a free-for-all, we don't give as much importance to the band's well-being as they do in Europe, for example, so it's really the promotor's job to make big efforts and satisfy the band, but you know, a very small thing to do like, 'You're gonna get carrots instead of eating pizza,' well that's a woman [inaudible]. And guys are super happy. So yeah, they maybe have this little side to them, appearing as a bit more like 'mommy,' and more women get involved at the organizational level and it's, no one complains. [35]

According to respondents, tour moms are assertive but attentive; demanding but patient; confident but caring; strict but accommodating. They work hard to prove themselves, but once they are admitted, their presence benefits the community as a whole.

### *The Approved Musician*

#### **Bearing Their Gender on Their Shoulders: The Need for a Symbolic "Seal of Approval"**

Contrary to men, becoming a musician is not the expected outcome for women.

Therefore, when they wish to do so, they have to overcome suspicions. Melissa explains:

For women hem, for sure if we talk about, except for singing, playing other instruments, organizing shows, hem, they may have quite hem, some clichés to knock down, like, 'You're a girl, what is it, you love metal?' Or, 'Ah you have to play better!' You know, 'Your drumming has to be super tight,' and you have the judgement from guys who judge

girls' musical quality, or like, who judge qualities, they'll just give an excuse, 'Yeah well you're a girl.' Well it's, it's that ridiculous, I think. [36]

Some women respondents report feeling like they need to get a symbolic "seal of approval" attesting that they are good enough to be accepted. Jennifer says that "I feel like when it's women, then we really check, 'Are they really good?' And yet, there's always a kinda, not taboo but there's a need to, officialize like, 'Okay, these are okay.'" [37] She explains:

You go for an audition, for sure, you're looking for a guitarist and then you have a woman coming for an audition, well guys will say: 'Oh boy! We'll see, you know, what she's capable of.' I think, I feel like they're not sure whether or not she'll be good enough. [38]

Therefore, some women have the impression that men – professionals and amateurs alike – feel entitled to judge their playing. Annick recalls an experience of her own:

There's a dude, and you know like half my age, who comes to see me and like, he loved the show and it's great, and then he comes to me actually to comment on the way I play, you know? What! 'But you know when you play a note, don't do this in front you know because I've already taken lessons and I'm wondering why you're playing like that.' Never would he have said that to another guy. Never. Ever. Never, ever. You know? He may have talked about, about technique or whatever, but not the way he did, where he came to question, like. It's really hem, really weird. Like, he analyzed how I played, and then he allows himself to give me his comments, you know. [39]

Women are judged by men's standards and have to live up to them or surpass them to be taken seriously. Eric explains:

Yes there still is the: 'We get compared to male singers, we have to sing lower like, trying to sing the lowest possible like the, other singers,' there's probably still some of that, because as I was telling you, it's, it's such a man's world that our basis to compare what is

being done, the bases are much closer to masculinity than to femininity. So that's what we use to evaluate all the rest you know. In a way, yes, they have to, you know when I say 'one of the boys,' you have to, this, especially if you're a man musician or woman musician, you have to be able to perform as well as a man. [40]

Becoming a successful metal musician requires years of practice and dedication, and receiving recognition is the crowning achievement of hard work. Yet, respondents report that people in the scene – sometimes themselves included – have the impression that the average woman musician in metal receives an undeserved amount of praise and attention. Eve says that:

Sometimes bands become big and I'm like, damn like, the singer is not really good but she's got big boobs. She's a chick. Well I find that metal's like that: 'Ah it's a woman! Oh wow! She plays bass! Wow she plays drums! Damn she's hot!' You know? And then sometimes I'm like, 'Yeah but that, if she were a guy, you wouldn't think he's good!' [41]

Metalheads often expect that instead of relying on talent, women musicians use their womanhood to access opportunities that would escape men with equivalent abilities. According to Alice, women musicians are so few that if one does not meet musical expectations, she may serve as a justification for the assumption that women cannot be good musicians:

It's weird, there are simultaneously lower and higher expectations, I think, for women. So, lower in that, well, 'I've only seen a couple of women drum.' It's like they generalize to the whole group. It's like, 'I've seen one woman drummer and she sucked, so women drummers suck. Women can't play drums.' So they generally generalize to the entire group, hem, based on one or two people. [...] I hate to say it, but I've had, well, me too, I see a woman drummer and I'm like, I hope she's really good! And it's not like, 'Oh I can't wait to see her!' It's really like, 'I hope she doesn't suck.'

Annick also reports feeling some pressure herself when she sees another woman playing live:

When I see a woman musician, I watch her. Even the fact that I watch her more than the others, because you know, I hope she's good because if she's not, it's like I have it on my shoulders too. That's weird hey, but it's as if I carried the weight of the world on my shoulders, not to make a mistake because it's like if we, we're so few, it's like we're bearing our gender on our shoulders. We have to set an example. [42]

Annick explains why she feels this pressure:

As soon as a woman's not good, you can see people's reaction right away, saying, 'Oh if you're not good, if you're not able to play well, stay home!' And all. So yeah, and you know actually you can see sexism surfacing because it gives them a nail to hit on. They're like, you can see that some people are glad because it justifies their opinion, that they may not say out loud but it's omnipresent, that women cannot play music. [43]

Women have to be irreproachable musically because any flaw may make people question both the woman's personal musicianship and the musicianship of women as a group.

Besides, Jane suggests that a "boys club" attitude can make the integration of women in bands more difficult: "Female friends who play in bands I mean, it's, it's harder. Because they have to kick asses. A woman guitarist has to be in a male band. Whereas an average man will be in the band anyways because they're buddies." [44] Similarly, Jennifer believes that:

A woman, if she takes her place and does the job, hem, I don't think that a band will throw a girl out just because she's a girl. But for sure, as I'm telling you, some men don't want women in their band. So for sure, being a guy, some doors are not shut at once. [45]

Annick shares an anecdote on this topic:

I'll never be in a band where there's no woman, I'm the woman of the band. I cannot do otherwise you know. [...] And then [bandmate 1, man] said: 'Hey, we could have another [musician, woman]?' [...] And when he talked about it with my [bandmate 2, man], he

said: ‘Ah you know we could ask this girl?’ And his answer was like, ‘Ah no! Not two girls in the band!’ Then I was like, ‘What! Dude! Did I hear you well? Are you kidding me?’ Like, ‘Why not?’ It was so stupid on his part! I’m like, what am I? I’m your marketing object? [46]

The respondents, therefore, say that women, to become approved musicians, have to prove their musicianship, but also find bands that allow women to join in.

### **Embracing Femininity: Personal Connection and Physical Attractiveness**

In addition to the “boys club” attitude of some men, other extramusical elements may hinder the integration of women musicians. People question the legitimacy of a “princess” or a “diva” even when they play music well. Those who act like princesses seem weak, fragile, needy. They constantly require other people’s help and attention. Melissa claims that:

The women who get maybe the worst press, if I use this expression, are girls who are princesses once outside of the stage. These girls are not well perceived in the community. Hem, simply because then it becomes: ‘Ah well you’re high, hem, high maintenance,’ you know, or things like that, and that, I feel like the metal community doesn’t really like this, this princess side. [47]

Women with a diva attitude, on the other hand, are entitled and demanding when they should be grateful. They are not appreciative of the recognition that people give them. Claire tells:

When people meet me or my girlfriends, they always wanna have much more of a personal connection than they would expect from anyone else, like when we do meet and greets, for example, so it’s me and the guys in my band, and every time, I have like, I’m like [in a soft voice]: ‘Hey how are you doing? Very nice to meet you! Thank you so much for coming!’ [...] The dudes in my band are just like, like they don’t say anything! Heh! And it’s not because they’re assholes, they’re just tired you know? And then still, I’ll

be the bitch or the diva or whatever when I'm just going so far out of my way to be really accommodating!

For Claire, women musicians have to go an extra mile to satisfy their fans:

If somebody doesn't like a male musician, they're more likely to criticize his music and shit, but if they don't like a female musician, they'll criticize her as a person. That I think is really eh interesting. Hem. I, I guess, it speaks to the fact that people want more of a personal connection out of women. [...] I make sure every person leaves happy, even though I don't have to do that. I don't have to do that. But I'll do it. And then I'll still get people complaining that I'm a bitch and a diva and stuck up and arrogant, it's like, 'What else can I do?' Haha! You know?

Women musicians' looks and sexuality are also delicate issues. The ideal ones, according to the respondents, are typically good-looking frontwomen. Eve explains:

So you know, like, they would have to be pretty women, not necessarily the, THE most beautiful, but especially if she's the singer, she has to be pretty. If you play the bass, you could be more in the background. You know, I don't know but it's often like that. Hem but well, if, if the girl is pretty and she plays metal, for example hey, hem, she's gonna be more successful you know? [...] It's about society and the image of women you know? That's really something. But yeah in metal it's always as present. [...] It's a masculine public so that's, that's what they're looking for. [48]

Although some respondents claim that they listen to music with their ears rather than their eyes, there is a consensus on this point. Nathan explains:

Hem that's stupid, but I think that physical appearance helps a lot for a woman in a scene, to become successful or not. Hem I think of some bands where they have singers who are at the front and every time they change their singer or whatever, well like the woman is a

stunner, like, I'll tell you. You know maybe she sings as well as the previous one, but she has bigger breasts so, actually, fanboys are very intensely fond of her, so they'll go see the show just to see the girl in real life you know. [49]

However, looking “too good” or “too sexy” seems suspect. According to Jane, “the girl who wears a tight little top though, for example, that’s marketing. That’s to sell. To get attention. That’s to sell. And sometimes, the girl didn’t decide to do it. Sometimes, the girl feels compelled to play this game.” [50] Whether willful or forced, hints of sexuality are condemned, says Claire:

People are so ready and willing to just crucify women based on their sexual, like, sure, like, ‘Oh she had to sleep with someone to get there,’ or, ‘She must have done this,’ or whatever. [...] So I think that if, if someone is overly sexual, that’s probably something that people will dismiss her: ‘Oh it’s just one of those, just one of those sluts.’

Namely, some women receive criticism because they represent a contradiction between “being serious musicians” and “displaying attractiveness or sexuality” – interpreted as emphasizing femininity to sell, obtain favours, or distract from a lack of talent. When Annick thinks of a band where women use sexuality overtly, she claims:

They piss me off because they’ve put two chicks at the front, and it doesn’t necessarily mean that they’re poseurs, but like hem, but you see, like, they don’t sing well. Listening to the album is one thing because now studios can work wonders, it’s like anything, we can fix anything, and I was watching the live videos and it’s like, ok you’ve got one with red hair, the other one with blue hair, well they’re really really hem, they look like porn stars, literally. So they sell the band through sex and that’s like ish! That, that’s something weird. Because it’s very mainstream. It’s very pop. It’s very marketing. And it works but for me that’s anti-metal. [51]

Claire's discourse contrasts with Annick's. Claire says that she understands women's general dismay when they see another woman embracing sexuality openly, because "when you work really hard at [not being taken for a sex object] for so many years, it can be kind of like, a slap in the face to have somebody just come out and be like 'Well I'm just gonna use [sexuality]!'"

However, in Claire's opinion, women who do embrace their sexuality openly are courageous:

I see it as them just being: 'Fuck you!' to the entire industry that says that, 'Oh women are just this and women just use their sexuality!' It's almost like, 'Yeah? Okay we'll use our sexuality because we can! We're women and we're powerful and now we're gonna perform a show that's so badass and so heavy that you're gonna have your face blown off, and you're gonna forget about boobs by the time we're here!' You know? [...] I know for a lot of people, they were like: 'Oh that's offensive! Oh! Youh! They're sluts, whores!' or whatever, but they put themselves out there knowing that they were gonna get called all that, just to prove, 'Yeah you are full of bias, 'cause we're the powerful ones! And it's your fault that you can't see past! It's not our fault, this is just who we are!'

Despite the discordances in some respondents' respective points of view, women musicians who want to be fully accepted usually have to look good while being careful so that their looks do not overshadow their musical abilities. They also have to make sure that their attractiveness does not impact their interpersonal interactions with men either. Namely, Claire explains that women often have to navigate highly ambiguous situations with men:

We were having problems because the guys in the band were hitting on me [...] and so I made the decision to just be really like, asexual, and aggressive, and like, like manly as a person, around my bandmates and around anyone in the industry. Just to protect myself from having potentially, like, professional relationships getting stopped because of weird emotions. [...] That was a conscious decision I made, actually, I was like, 'Well now I'm

gonna act not so girly because they're gonna treat me like a girl,' and to them, a girl is just, you know, they think: 'sex.'

Claire explains that women musicians often have to adapt their behaviour with the fact that they are in a predominantly masculine and heterosexual space:

It's almost like as a woman in metal you have to have this very in-depth understanding of human psychology and body language. And when it's a professional relationship with someone, I'm very professional. Very professional. [...] I just knew I was like, 'I can't count on, on these guys to control themselves, so I'm gonna be the one in control,' and so that's what I had to do basically the whole time.

Yet, being a woman musician in metal is a double-edged sword, because rarity means more visibility. When a woman overcomes the difficulties listed above, she stands out and can become successful very fast. According to Alice, women face certain disadvantages, but:

I think that it is an advantage in a way because people might stop, stop and take the time to check it out if they know there's a woman, especially if it's rare. So I've had people say hem, like, they eh, like they were at a show and weren't paying attention to the band, and then they were like, 'Dude there's a chick playing!' And then they watch.

Emily has a similar impression:

If you wanna become a musician, you have to go through more than a man. It's so much longer before getting recognition. In the beginning it's much harder for a woman than for a man who wants to succeed. You have to, in the end, once you get recognition, once you've gone through this tough step, you have much more visibility. From there on, it's easier to take off. [52]

Women have many hurdles to go through to become ideal musicians: they have to be outstanding at their instrument; find bands who accept them; be pretty enough to draw the attention of the

male-dominated crowd; stay self-aware so as not to come across as flirty; be considerate and grateful to their fans. Yet, when they succeed, they benefit from greater visibility.

### **Empowerment and Fulfillment Through Metal**

Despite the obstacles that women face to become proven fans, tour moms, or approved musicians, they can develop a deep sense of belonging and liberation when they join metal. At various points of the interview, Jennifer insists on reminding me that her overall experience of the scene is positive. She feels like people tend to emphasize the problematic aspects of metal while the positive aspects are ignored:

If you've had positive experiences on your side of things and you wanna talk about your positive experience, well then we'll point the finger at you because you diminish others' experiences! You know it's as though, 'Ah well it's dedramatizing!' [...] I understand that it can be frustrating, but on the other side, you cannot deny that there are women to whom it never happened, and who've had a super positive experience, and we should be able to talk about it equally on the same level, positive and negative. I feel like it's always either one or the other. [53]

Metal is, for many women respondents, empowering, fulfilling, beneficial, and even salutary. According to Alice, metal is an overall safe space for people, women included, when they feel like they do not fit with mainstream expectations:

Metal is a great place for people who are outsiders in other communities, and they feel like they've finally got a, it really is, it's a safe space for people who feel outcasts, they can go and just get out their aggression and their energy and they can just have fun, they're moshing, they're laughing and they're drinking beer. So I definitely, it's why I'm so involved in metal. It's because like I, I've had so many more good experiences and, and that so many awesome people are just having fun.

Namely, many women respondents report feeling safer in metal than in the mainstream society because of its strong sense of community. Melissa explains:

You are identified as a metalhead, it seems like by default, you're part of the family. There's a side to, there's a very welcoming aspect to metal. Hem. And actually, safety comes with it. Hem yeah I've heard stories about women in the, in the scene, you know, shit happened, but in proportion with all of the, you know, let's say, some other music communities, it's much safer. Hem I was never, ever afraid. [54]

Sophie has witnessed how much metalheads watch over each other:

I've never seen anyone letting someone else down. You know? Even when a girl smashed her head! Oh damn, she smashed her head hard! She was bodysurfing, she fell right on her head! And then we were all talking to her before the paramedics arrived and all, until they put her on the gurney. [...] People really watch over each other. You know, Montreal, on the contrary eh, you know I've already lost consciousness in the metro! Someone took me out but it took a while you know. I, I would have only done: 'Hiii!' during a show, people would have been: 'Are you okay? Are you all right? Do you need something?' [55]

Jane loves metal for "the energy? The community? Shows are like eh, they're an outlet eh, incredible outlet. I like need my fix once a month, singing, screaming, sweating, dancing, whatever, but you know, thrashing is like dancing in the end." [56]

Metal allows women to overcome some constraints of femininity, be themselves, and express emotions that they are not supposed to feel. This is why Annick feels at home in metal:

You actually get into metal because you don't care about how you look and you don't want to wear high heels and makeup you know. When I was younger, there weren't many of us in metal, but not even one of us wore makeup. We all wore x-large shirts even if we weighed 120 pounds, with Dr. Martens and we went moshing too, we drank beer, we

accidentally spilled some on ourselves, you know it was like hem, it wasn't hem, it wasn't poseur like, it wasn't: 'Shut up and be pretty.' We were there, we screamed, 'Argh!' You know? We looked a bit silly, but we could be ourselves. [57]

Metal offers women a sense of community and freedom that they usually cannot find through mainstream femininity.

### **Navigating Gender Contradictions**

I have shown in previous sections how hegemonic masculinity is the most common type of gender for ideal men, and how anti-metal women often fit with hegemonic femininity or pariah femininity. I will now explore the ways in which ideal metal women navigate the gender relations of metal. I will take a closer look at how they relate to hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity, hegemonic femininity, and alternative gender types.

#### ***Masculinity in Metal Women***

##### **Hegemonic Masculinity: Showing That They Are Like Men**

Leblanc (1999) says of punk girls that they often “accept, internalize, and project [masculine] norms, adopting many of these norms in their own assessments and expectations of other punk girls [...]. Punk girls, therefore, are likely to collude with, rather than resist the masculinism of punk” (p. 132). Similarly, the metal standards are typically masculine, and to become legitimate participants, women respondents have to prove that they can do things as well as men. Sophie, Emily, and Jane’s seemingly anodyne remarks on how the characteristics of ideal metal women are “the same thing as guys” are telling. This “it goes without saying” attitude illustrates how obvious it is, as though what applies to men should naturally apply to women as well. In a predominantly masculine setting, those implications are gendered.

We have seen earlier how men are the natural insiders of metal – the definition of authenticity in metal relies on the ability to transgress the mainstream way of life with typically

masculine warrior values and practices. Most participants are men and bond over a mutual, homosocial appreciation of their manhood acts. There is also a general reflexive anti-reflexive unwillingness to address frontally the import and reproduction of certain types of mainstream dynamics within metal, such as sexism. We have then seen how women are the natural outsiders of metal. Characteristics, behaviours, and practices of hegemonic femininity, such as romantic or sexual attraction to men, emotional vulnerability, and superficiality belong in the mainstream world and are antithetic with the metal authenticity. I have briefly addressed how “girlfriends of” are the closest representation of hegemonic femininity. They are not the most undesirable type of woman because they accept the gender boundaries of metal. In contrast, the “masculinity” in poseuses (who claim a place in a masculine space) and groupies (who are sexually active) threatens homosociality and has to be feminized. Anti-metal women justify the need to maintain gender boundaries to preserve the integrity of metal.

Because of their gendered association with “girlfriends of,” poseuses, and groupies, all women in metal are viewed as potential outsiders by default. People judge them based on their group category rather than on their individual characteristics (Schaap & Berkers, 2013, p. 105). “Womanhood” represents a peril to the integrity of metal, so women who wish to join in have to prove that they are “like” men and deserve to be at the top of the gender hierarchy with them. They have to fit with hegemonic masculinity. Putting on manhood acts can enable women to demonstrate their legitimacy and their eligibility for the privileges of membership that typically belong to men. For Schrock and Schwalbe (2009, p. 281), having a female – or non-male – body is a “liability,” but people of any sex or gender can achieve successful manhood acts and establish their similarity with the people situated at the top of the hierarchy.

Women can express their hegemonic masculinity with clothes and accessories (Hill, 2016; Krenske & McKay, 2000; Vasan, 2011). Many ideal women follow the usual metal dress code

which, as Eve points out, is typically masculine. Women respondents generally believe that the more masculine a woman presents, the fewer suspicions she may face – as long as she seems authentic since David and Nathan remind us that she may otherwise tip into the caricatural. Alice believes that a very masculine woman can become “one of the buds” more easily than a feminine woman. As Melissa says, physical presentation expresses a personality. Masculine clothes are signifiers of masculinity, suggesting a similarity with men. It goes back to a phenomenon that I have addressed earlier: metal being predominantly masculine and heterosexual, women are potential objects of desire by default. Heterosexuality is an attraction to certain forms of gender differences. When a woman has a typically feminine presentation, men are aware of her being a woman and a potential source of interest. By favouring a masculine presentation, some women can mitigate this obstacle to a certain degree. Since very masculine women are less different, they are somewhat less likely to be viewed as complementary others.

However, we have seen with the poseuse that dressing like a metalhead is relatively easy. Women also have to prove their authenticity in the metal sense by adopting the masculine codes of participation. Krenske and McKay (2000) found that “women who moshed and stage-dived ‘successfully’ were incorporated into the male-defined ethos of the subculture” (p. 300). Melissa explains that women who headbang gain respect because it sets them apart from other women. A man doing the same thing would go unnoticed, but due to gender expectations, seeing a woman headbanging is surprising. This action suggests that she feels the energy of metal and exteriorizes it through appropriate bodily expressions like men. Joining the mosh pit is another way for women to prove their authenticity. For Eric, having a girlfriend who was able to endure the emotional and physical demands of the mosh pit was a source of pride. She was “special” because she played the game by men’s rules and enjoyed it like a man.

Sometimes, proving their authenticity is not a choice for women. Metal scholars (Hill, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Nordström & Herz, 2013) remark that women in metal have to pass all sorts of sometimes overt gender-biased evaluations. When those moments happen, women have to rise to the challenge and remain stoic, in control of themselves, self-assured, and be knowledgeable. Fans get what Emily calls the “women’s questionnaire,” where people ask them questions just to make sure that they know metal for real and that they deserve to wear their metal tee-shirts like men. If it turns out that a woman lacks knowledge, then maybe she likes a band just because she thinks the cover of the album “looks nice,” and “maybe she is a poseuse.” If she expresses too much interest in musicians, then “maybe she is a groupie.”

Proving their authenticity is especially crucial for women who want to take on active roles and work in the scene. Audrey says that, in her experience, working in the scene entails enduring the notoriously sexist and patronizing type of attitude that women clients expect in car dealerships. Therefore, women have to make sure that their authenticity is solid and credible, and that they have the patience and tenacity that it takes or else the experience may be harrowing. Nora explains that a woman has to be a “bitch” to prove herself. Nora stands in contrast with a previous remark by Schippers (2007): “When a woman is authoritative, she is not masculine; she is a bitch – both feminine and undesirable” (p. 95). In Schippers’ example, the “bitch” illustrates pariah femininity. The word “bitch” marks her inferiority relative to authoritative men. This is not the case of Nora’s “bitch.” She is an example of hegemonic masculinity. Were her masculinity not credible, she would indeed seem like a “real bitch” or a “diva,” which are pariah femininity. However, when her masculinity is credible, being a “bitch” is desirable and masculinizing. In this context, the word “bitch” highlights a woman’s difference from “appropriately feminine” women who do not want to take too much space. Nora’s “bitch” gains respect for her ability to be “more perfect than a man who does the same job.” By being a

“bitch,” she assesses that she can play on men’s ground and deserves to be at the top of the hierarchy with men.

It follows that being a musician, the most highly regarded position in metal, is a serious matter. Women fans have to go through the “women’s questionnaire” and women musicians have to receive a symbolic “seal of approval.” Acquiring this “seal of approval” can be tricky. Jennifer believes that some men prefer not to have women in their band. In Annick’s experience, some bands may admit one woman, but not necessarily two or more. Jane adds that, because of the prevailing brotherhood in metal, men are more willing to accept another man in their band even if he is an average musician because they are “buddies.” He is already an insider and band members trust that he will fit with them. Women who want to prove themselves as musicians face a difficulty: “First, playing in a band is largely a male homosocial activity, that is, learning to play in a band is largely a peer-based – rather than individual – experience, shaped by existing sex-segregated friendship networks” (Schaap & Berkers, 2013, pp. 101–102). Women musicians have to work their way through a tautology: since few women can join bands, few women have the opportunity to gain this competence and prove themselves; in return, since few women have the opportunity to gain this competence and prove themselves, few women can join bands. This is why, like Nora’s “bitch,” women musicians have to “kick asses,” to use Jane’s expression. When a woman integrates a band, she joins in as – or instead of – another guy. Her abilities have to be impressive enough so that she can overcome suspicions regarding her instrument playing and her gender.

The process of surpassing the preconceived ideas that people have of her and creating new expectations is a continuous one. The evaluation of a woman’s legitimacy does not stop once a handful of men accept her. Annick says that she continues to receive gender-biased evaluations on her music playing by younger, less experienced men. Yet, if a woman is continually “fucking

above perfect,” to quote Nora, and maintains her hegemonic masculinity steadily and credibly enough, more and more people will change their pair of interpretative glasses and realize that she must not be judged based on femininity, but on masculinity. People will gradually stop viewing her as “another woman” and accept her as “one of the boys,” or at the very least, as a good fit with the boys, and she can reap the benefits of hegemonic masculinity.

### **Complicit Masculinity in Women: Showing That They Are Not Like Other Women**

In some situations, women are unable to fully overcome their association with womanhood and put on successful manhood acts. When they cannot show that they are “like” men, they can emphasize how they are “not like” other women. They can adopt complicit masculinity to escape the contamination of their association with “girlfriends of,” poseuses, and groupies. Complicit masculinity rests on an acceptance of masculinity’s ascendancy over femininity and contributes to men’s superiority over women as groups. Complicit people may accommodate or downplay their own subordinated characteristics in a way that does not penalize them, all while contributing to the subordination of other people with the same characteristics. Simply put, in hegemonic masculinity, the focus is on looking up at the top of the hierarchy to a group in which the person may or may not belong and wonder: what can I do to be like them? In complicit masculinity, the focus is on the subordinated group to which a person belongs or seems to belong. In this case, the person may ask: what can I do to avoid being subordinated like the rest of this group?

Many women respondents express complicity by supposing that most women who try to join metal are “girlfriends of,” poseuses, groupies, or bad musicians until proven otherwise, and express their disapproval of those women. Stephanie acknowledges the contaminating quality of groupies and expresses her disagreement with their presence because they “[make] [other women] look as if we were part of that group.” Similarly, Annick is suspicious of women

musicians and suggests that, when one is a subpar musician, other women “carry it on [their] shoulders too.” Therefore, she scrutinizes women musicians hoping that, against her expectations, they will be decent at their instrument. Some respondents are aware of those assumptions. This is the case of Nora, who admits being “guilty” of wondering who are the boyfriends of women she sees in the scene, and of Alice, who says that she “hates it” but has the reflex of being attentive to how well women musicians play. They may be aware of their complicity, but they share those views anyway as a defensive gesture. Those assumptions serve in establishing a symbolic difference between themselves and the undesirable characteristics of the subordinated group to which they belong.

Respondents’ efforts to conceal their sexuality is another example of complicit masculinity. Like Hill’s (2016) interviewees, my respondents “distance themselves from expressing sexual desire for musicians, but they also [distance] themselves from being seen to be sexual by male audience members at gigs” (p. 90). People are usually presumed heterosexual until proven otherwise and, for women in metal, “asexuality” is an effort to stay outside of the hegemonic “objectifying/objectified” dynamic. Because of women’s real or presumed heterosexuality, some heterosocial contexts make it very difficult for them to be taken for “one of the boys.” Attraction to men is feminizing de facto and, heterosexual or not, women cannot always get rid of the heteronormative assumptions that men have when they meet them. Because of this bias, some men tend to misread the behaviours of women as expressions of romantic or sexual attraction (Blatterer, 2016, p. 71). Since women are socially expected to be polite, nice, and attentive to other people’s needs, such qualities can be mistaken for romantic or sexual interest. Women respondents in my sample indicate that this type of misreading happens in metal. Claire has been walking on eggshells during her interactions with men because they sometimes applied a heterosexually interested interpretation to everything she was doing, regardless of her

real intentions. As previously explained with the groupie and the poseuse, seeming too flirtatious or too interested in men can impact a woman's ability to become a legitimate metalhead.

Heterosexuality is contaminating for women because it is strongly associated with the "girlfriend of," poseuse, and especially the groupie. To avoid this problem, Claire works hard to make sure that her actions cannot be interpreted as flirtatious by men.

The asexuality, aggression, and manliness that Claire adopts do not correspond to hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity in a romantic or sexual context implies the ability to position oneself as an active desiring subject and objectify a feminine object of desire. Here, asexuality, aggression, and manliness do not serve in signifying a masculine sexuality; they are defensive tools to resist objectification. Some may argue that, when women downplay their sexuality and refuse to play their part as heterosexual others, they embrace a form of alternative gender type. However, in the current situation, sexual unavailability is not an alternative, critical, or disruptive choice. This type of "asexuality" by metal women does not fundamentally question men's heteronormative assumptions concerning women as a social group. Sexual unavailability is an accommodation that individual women have to make to take part in metal, that is, to set themselves apart from their gender group.

### *Acceptable Forms of Femininity*

#### **Hegemonic Femininity: Ideal Metal Women Are Still "Complementary Others"**

We have seen with the groupie and the poseuse that femininity and "masculinity" (turned into pariah femininity) can be an undesirable combination within the same person. However, ideal metal women do manifest hegemonic femininity. Hegemonic femininity is acceptable, desirable even, in women who have established their legitimacy in the scene as long as their femininity reinforces homosociality. For example, physical attractiveness is desirable for women musicians. Eve mentions that frontwomen have to be pretty because this is what the masculine

public wants. Similarly, Nathan believes that being conventionally attractive may help a woman become more successful. Men will want to go and see her perform live because they find her pretty. These remarks may seem surprising after reading how hard metal women work to seem “asexual” and sexually unavailable. However, projecting sexual unavailability during interpersonal relationships is not the same as being unattractive to a masculine audience.

The difference between a man musician and a woman musician resides in that “[w]omen musicians are heterosexualised for a male audience and, although men musicians are also sometimes positioned as objects of desire, they primarily appear for a male viewer: as a warrior to be admired and emulated” (Hill, 2016, p. 72). The typical metal fan is a heterosexual man and the audience is predominantly composed of masculine desiring subjects (Larsen, 2017, p. 402; Schippers, 2002, pp. 28–29). Hegemonic gender relations actualize themselves when a mass of anonymous masculine fans pose women musicians as potential objects of masculine desire. Good-looking, unattainable women musicians are heterosexualized through the fans’ anonymous masculine gaze; those fans reinforce their masculinity and homosociality by bonding over their attraction for a woman musician without being threatened by her sexuality.

Her good looks have to stay within a “Goldilocks zone:” attractiveness is desirable in a woman as long as it remains passive and is not directed toward anyone in particular. Women musicians cannot purposefully use the heterosexual attraction that men have for them. As Jane suggests, being “too good-looking” or “too sexy” means being motivated by marketing considerations. Furthermore, a woman who looks “too good” will be suspected of using her sexuality rather than her talent to progress in the scene. The disagreement between Annick and Claire on women musicians who display sexuality openly illustrates this point. While Claire believes that women can use sexuality to criticize gender assumptions, Annick believes that doing so has the opposite effect and reinforces gender inequalities. For Annick, women

musicians who use sexuality tap into the mainstream femininity clichés and sell their music by catering to men’s sexuality. Either way, if a woman’s good looks appear to be too directed, calculated, or distracting, her presence will be interpreted in light of forms of hegemonic femininity that are incompatible with the metal authenticity (e.g., being too mainstream, lacking autonomy) or in light of pariah femininity (e.g., having a manipulative, predatory sexuality).

Another set of desirable hegemonic femininity characteristics in ideal metal women has to do with care and emotional intelligence: warmth, generosity, and selflessness. Claire explains that, in her experience, fans expect more of a personal connection with women musicians than they do with men musicians. People want women to be available and give them time and energy. According to Claire, people are more disappointed when a woman musician does not give them the attention that they want. Women who are not generous enough become divas.

Yet, the tour mom is probably the type of actor that best exemplifies a successful integration of hegemonic femininity in metal women. Melissa says that women who work in the organization are highly appreciated because they pay attention to people’s comfort and go the extra mile to make sure that everyone is happy. Like other ideal metal women, tour moms have to prove that they are authentic enough in their metalness to be legitimate participants. They have to show that they can be “like men” or “not like other women” when it matters – i.e., being truly passionate about the music, being strong and assertive, not being too overtly sexual. Yet, the roles in the organizational sphere fit the dominant notions of women’s abilities (Larsen, 2017, pp. 400–401). These roles have to do with caring for the well-being of the bands (mostly made of men), the crews (mostly made of men), and the audience (mostly made of men).

The best musicians have a lot of exposure and visibility, but the best-organized shows run smoothly and attendants forget about the people who make them possible. This difference in visibility has gendered implications. I asked the same questions to every one of my respondents:

what would an ideal metal wo/man be like? For ideal men, interviewees aimed high and the answers were straightforward: the musician. Most men in metal, it seems, entertain the fantasy of being a musician and learn to play music and join bands. Respondents rarely spoke of “tour dads,” or technicians, or men who work backstage. This does not mean that working in the organization cannot be a calling or a childhood dream for men and women alike. I simply wish to highlight the contrast: the tour mom is a recurrent type of desirable metal woman in my interviews. Respondents often begin by explaining that being a legitimate fan is a good place for a woman to start. Having established that she can be an authentic participant too, a woman may aspire to work in the organization. Finally, if she can handle it, then maybe she can hope to become a respected musician. This contrast shows how women tend to manage their expectations – or are expected to manage their expectations – even when it comes to describing their “most” ideal type. While many women can find inspiration in their favourite musicians, dream to be like them, dare to learn an instrument and join bands, gain international recognition even, reality seems to weigh more heavily on them as a group. People tend to adjust their notion of what an ideal involvement for women is in light of gendered expectations. In turn, the division of labour between men as performers and women as organizers comforts the gender hierarchy and benefits homosociality, as men can concentrate on creating and playing music while women are behind the scene, taking care of the logistics, and ensuring the smooth running of things. All in all, acceptable forms of hegemonic femininity rest on a delicate balance between being different just enough to reinforce the masculine homosociality of the scene, but retaining enough similarity and “insiderness” with men to be credible metalheads.

### *Alternative Gender Types and Empowerment*

#### **Alternative Gender Types: Rejecting the Mainstream and Metal Expectations**

I consider certain practices, values, and characteristics as examples of alternative gender configurations in light of how respondents situate them within the gender relations. Sometimes, the same practice can fit with masculinity, femininity, or alternative gender type depending on who does it, how, and why. The meanings, beliefs, and reactions surrounding these practices determine whether they can disrupt power imbalances or not. For example, wearing a flower dress at a metal show could fit with hegemonic femininity or alternative gender configurations depending on the context. The implications of wearing a flower dress are not the same for a “girlfriend of” or a proven fan. The “girlfriend of” could wear the dress because she knows that she is not a metalhead and does not feel comfortable wearing the metal attire. Her dress marks her non-metalness and her gender complementarity with her metal boyfriend, fitting with hegemonic femininity. In contrast, a die-hard metal woman who knows the codes of metal but decides to wear a flower dress anyway is aware that she goes against the expectations. She plays in a liminal space between masculinity and femininity: by choosing to adopt a typically feminine piece of clothing, she subverts the femininity associated with the dress, but her dress is not masculinizing or conducive of the masculine hegemony over femininity either.

That is, when Naomie wears a flower dress or when Nora wears a tee-shirt from a pop artist, they do it knowing that people associate flower dresses and pop tee-shirts with non-metalness. Nora knows that she “pisses [metal] people off” when she does it, and Naomie says that having people wondering what she is doing in non-metal clothes “has always been my goal.” They know that people find it disturbing. Yet, they do not justify their wardrobe in a way that would make them fit with the ambient discourses on masculinity or try to conflate this choice with warrior characteristics. They do not try either to distance themselves from femininity or

show their exceptionality over other women. Instead, they associate themselves with the very feminine or mainstream connotation of their clothes. Naomie wears those dresses because they show that “it’s stupid to judge on that basis.” This is a confrontational gesture against the prevailing masculine homogeneity of metal. By wearing non-metal clothes, Nora and Naomie refuse to choose between metal and femininity, or between metal and mainstream. They tell metalheads, to refer back to Alice on men who are allies to women, “I’m just like you, but I’m also nothing like you.” By refusing to conform with the homogeneity, homosociality, and gender boundaries of metal, they question them.

The same type of analysis applies to behaviours that typically pertain to hegemonic or complicit masculinity, although the boundaries between those masculinities and alternative gender configurations are more ambiguous. A legitimate metal woman displaying typically feminine behaviours or characteristics in alternative ways is easier to identify because she does something unexpected and twists its meaning so that it loses its inferiorizing effect. In contrast, masculinity is the favoured way of being in metal. Hegemonic and complicit masculinity are, most of the time, the norm. Were a characteristic related to hegemonic masculinity to fail, we would end up with pariah femininity. Seeing how one such action or characteristic can become alternative – both non-reproductive of the power relations and non-inferiorizing for the person who puts it forward – requires more interpretive effort.

Naomie suggests that women in metal are “strong, [...] assertive, not [...] afraid of judgements.” At first, those characteristics resemble the warrior ones valued by the metal culture and can fit with hegemonic masculinity. I have previously explained how being a “bitch” is a strategy to graduate from “feminine other” to “masculine insider.” Assertion can signify a masculine self and suggests that the person’s actions have to be read in light of masculinity. However, when those characteristics question the gender hegemony instead of establishing

similarity with men; do not contribute to the hegemony of men and masculinity; are not used by the participant as a way to prove her exceptionality or lift herself above other women and claim privileges; then we are in the presence of an alternative gender type.

When Naomie says that women in metal are strong and assertive, she does not interpret those characteristics as superior in light of the hegemonic masculine perspective. She interprets them as feminism, which means, according to Naomie, “not viewing yourself as a weaker version of a man.” By speaking of feminism, she associates herself with women as a socially subordinated group. Not viewing oneself as a weaker version of a man, here, has little to do with proving one’s own, individual hegemonic superiority. Rather, she suggests that women as a group should not be viewed as weaker than men as a group. With this remark, Naomie criticizes the power imbalances that restrict and inferiorize women and views strength and assertion as accessible and beneficial to women as a group.

Another alternative gender reading consists of viewing metal as a way to express someone’s “true” self without devaluing practices that are typically inferiorizing. Claire does not want to be perceived as sexual herself, but she formulates alternative interpretations of other women’s sexuality. She praises women who dare to play with the codes of femininity and masculinity in controversial ways. Claire believes that overt sexuality in women questions the dominant gender assumptions. They can show people how they are “full of bias [...] [a]nd it’s your fault that you can’t see past [sexuality]! It’s not [women’s] fault, this is just who [they] are!” Claire’s explanation does not situate these women’s sexuality as properly masculine, but not as inferiorizing, anti-metal, inauthentic, or less desirable than men’s either. She situates these women’s approach as a way to embrace an unhindered “authentic self” by refusing to choose between “being metal” or “being sexual:” they know that most people will not understand them, but still choose to do both regardless because this is who they are. Of course, not everyone in

metal agrees with Claire's interpretation. Alternative readings of women's sexuality do not seem to be widespread in my sample, but they open up the possibility to question gender dynamics nonetheless.

Still, the ability to formulate alternative views and produce alternative meanings and practices is a privilege. For one thing, a woman has to have established her authenticity before she can be credible in a flower dress. She may have had to demonstrate her similarity with men and her difference with undesirable women at first. A practice that is alternative for a legitimate metalhead may be discrediting and feminizing to a less credible person. Groupies and poseuses do not have access to alternative gender types because nearly everything they do results in hegemonic or pariah femininity, short-circuiting their ability to question dominant assumptions. As Hill (2016, p. 136) remarks, women's presence in metal is still overall conducive of the unequal gender power relations, even for those who adopt critical views of metal or exhibit alternative gender characteristics, beliefs, or practices. A single challenge in the meaning of a given practice may not produce an immediate or substantial change in gender relations as a whole. However, with time and through widespread adoption, alternative gender configurations can nonetheless lead to greater disruptions in the power balance between genders.

### **Metal as an Individually Empowering Space in a Sexist World**

So far, my findings concur with most of the literature on women in metal (Hill, 2011; Krenke & McKay, 2000; Nordström & Herz, 2013; Schaap & Berkers, 2013; Vasan, 2011). Women in the Montreal extreme metal scene have to navigate complex gender expectations and prove their masculinity or their femininity when it is appropriate. Women become legitimate metalheads on an individual basis. Therefore, individual women who succeed have more power than other, less legitimate women, but the otherness of women as a group is rarely questioned. It follows that women as a group hardly have any real power over men as a group. The conclusion

of my analysis could be, like Krenske and McKay (2000), that “women drawn to the [heavy metal] scene to escape one oppressive context merely inserted themselves into another” (p. 302).

However, I do not want to minimize the empowering potential that metal has for women. For one thing, despite the obstacles and the problematic behaviours of some men, women respondents generally feel welcomed and at home in metal. This research examines intra- and inter-gender dynamics and therefore makes power imbalances salient, but my respondents’ experiences are multidimensional and cannot be reduced to sexism alone. They find friends, allies, brothers, and sisters in the scene. Feelings of trust and solidarity, safety even, are the norm for the women I interviewed. Furthermore, for those who are able to join in, the experience can prove very satisfying. Once they overcome most of the obstacles, women musicians can see the light at the end of the tunnel and turn their disadvantage into an advantage, as their rarity provides them with more visibility, thus more opportunities.

Schippers (2002) wisely claims that “feeling powerful is not the same thing as being on the advantageous side of interpersonal or structural power relations. No matter how a person feels, she is still situated in relation to others interpersonally and structurally, and the distribution of power, prestige and resources stems from our place in the social structure, not our feelings” (pp. 122-123). This is true for women who feel empowered by metal; while many respondents insist on highlighting the overall positivity of their experiences, every woman I interviewed has gone through hurdles because of their gender and felt like their womanhood has impacted their participation at some point. Yet, I wish to acknowledge, like Hill (2016), that sexism is omnipresent in the mainstream world and that we should not be surprised to find it in metal too. Gender follows people in every aspect of their lives and “[s]exism is the background noise for *all* their experiences. [...] [M]etal culture can provide moments that feel ungendered, in which there

are no differences between men and women, and in which womanhood can recede into the background [*italics by Hill*]” (p. 152).

That is, we live in a world that is both sexist and individualistic. During the interviews, some women expressed that they did not know whether their difficulties were unique to them or were shared by other women too. People learn to view the obstacles that they face on an individual basis, sometimes as a result of their personal flaws, sometimes as singular occurrences specific to their journey. They may treat their ability to overcome those obstacles as a test of their personal character, masking or misinterpreting the social origins of those obstacles. With this in mind, I wish to quote Schippers (2002) on alternative rock once more:

We live in a culture that strongly encourages individualistic thinking, so thinking in terms of group membership is not commonsensical, especially when about issues of opportunity and violence. [...] [This] makes it very difficult for any individual to assert a structural interpretation of any form of sexism, and thus, in this silence, certain forms and manifestations of male dominance go unchallenged and are thus reproduced. (p. 172)

Disruption is not always a possibility, and when it is, it may not be a comfortable place to be in. Challenging the status quo can be exhausting for subordinate groups, “for to challenge the misogyny means being reminded of one’s gender and feeling thereby ‘marked’” (Hill, 2016, p. 154). Women who join metal juggle with possessing less power, having to overcome gender suspicion, proving their masculinity, and embracing acceptable types of femininities. They cannot bear alone the weight of rearranging a power distribution which they do not control themselves. For hegemonic gender structures to change, men too, as individuals but especially as a social group, will have to do their share of the work.

Meanwhile, women live in a predominantly individualistic world, and understandably put forward individualistic means to regain some of the power that eludes them. This is not a flaw on

their behalf: they use the tools that they have at the best of their capacity and adopt individual means to deal with problems that they feel on an individual basis. They find ways to move away from the limitations of their own feminine experience of the world, join men on their turf, and learn to play as well as them. Enjoying the boys' music without reservation, participating in the boys' practices, developing solidarity with the boys can all feel liberating and empowering. By playing by those rules, women can have a taste of genderlessness. Their experience may never be exactly like that of men, but this is perhaps as close as it can get. As Hill (2016) remarks, in "a society that is already male-dominated and that positions women as sex objects, finding a space that feels free from sexism is significant" (p. 155).

### **Anti-Metal Men According to the Respondents**

Not all men are desirable in metal. Certain practices, characteristics, and behaviours by some types of men can inferiorize them. The "douchebag" and the "fanatic" exemplify two main undesirable metal actors in my interviews.

#### ***The Douchebag***

For Emily, an anti-metal man is a man who is a "disrespectful douchebag. Who's not there for the music." [1] Nora gives a general description of this anti-metal man:

The 450 [area code of the off-island Montreal suburb] hem, the weekend metalheads. [...] People eh, south shore, north shore you know, who've listened to System of a Down on the radio so they're super metalheads from the bottom of their soul and you know, I'm not gonna call them poseurs because they support the scene as much as any super dedicated person, but you see the difference in aesthetic terms. You see the difference in terms of what they do the rest of the time. You know they come out for the Heavy Montreal once a year, that's pretty much it. See Metallica if they come. And they believe to be die-hards

but you know you never see them at shows. Often, those we call the 450 are the douchebags, really. [2]

For David anti-metal men are:

People who do not have the values to, to, to be educated, well not to be educated but to stay informed on what happens in the world, to stay informed on all of that, like, politics, you know, they don't stay informed on anything. [...] People who don't tend to, not to not open up to others, but to, not care about others and what's surrounding them. Often they have, are, often, they, personally, they have a circle of friends but when it comes to what happens outside, they don't notice what happens outside of their circle. And they don't care. And that's how they're comfortable. [3]

Melissa also associates anti-metal men with immaturity and a lack of refinement, education, and ambition:

There's like a childish side to him. He could be 45, 40 years old, it's like he's got an 18-year-old guy side to him. [...] Hem, drives a pickup truck, and hem has small manual jobs at 15\$ per hour let's say. Like a, he doesn't really want to develop his future hem, maybe even a drug user. [4]

Melissa says that anti-metal men can be inclined toward:

Excessive alcohol consumption, coke consumption, hem speed, etc. In fact, I find them more open to the idea of taking drugs even if, in the community, in general, there is drug use, hem they hide to use drugs by themselves. [5]

He does not respect his limits and his consumption impacts his ability to control himself during social interactions. Nathan describes the anti-metal man as:

A moron who's having too much fun and who, who, like, pretty much stirs shit up. [...]

Again, there's still a duality between the moron and the civilized guy who's able to listen, and the other one who'll be, 'Hey are you a fucking faggot?' 'Cause I've seen it too. [6]

Some of his undesirable behaviours are rooted partly in a misunderstanding of the rules of metal, and partly in personal insecurities, according to Sophie:

When someone falls [in the mosh pit], everyone gets him back up. And no one's like, 'Fucker!' You know? It's always like, 'Hey are you okay? I didn't see you!' You know? It's never like, it looks violent, sometimes it is, but no one's really there to downright beat people up wilfully for the fun of it. But often, those who end up doing it are those who never go to metal shows, and they're not used to, it's stupid but there are unsaid rules. And these people are also, I don't know, they're trying to prove themselves. [7]

The insecurity of the douchebag is often detrimental to others. He may try to diminish other people to raise himself up and assert his dominance, according to Alice:

It's like, you know, 'I'm, I am the top dog and I can do and have whatever I want and nobody's gonna...' Like, a wannabe, yeah like, the space is that person's, like everywhere, and there's none, no sense of, like, what the other person's thinking. I don't think this is an empathetic person at all, somebody who doesn't understand or care for what other people are thinking, or what matters to other people, or how they may feel.

Anti-metal men are also more likely to feel entitled or engage in inappropriate behaviours toward women. Jane says that some men take advantage of the physical proximity in certain settings:

Some dudes sometimes take advantage in the thrash to catch butts or breasts, 'Oh it happened like that! My hand just, oohhhh!' It, it happened to me. But it's not most of the

guys who, you know, do that, but yes it already happened you know. Guys take advantage of the thrash to grope. [8]

Claire recalls an experience with a man who misinterpreted her actions as flirtatious:

So we're starting to work [remotely] on this band, and then the whole thing fell apart super fast because he was so strange. At one point, he told me, and his voice was totally different, and he was like, 'Hey I just wanted to let you know that I cut my hair.' And so I was like, 'Ok? Cool?' Hem. 'Was it fun? Like, why are you telling me?' [...] I've never met him! And I didn't Google him, I had no idea what he looked like. He was like, 'Oh you're mean, you didn't look me out! You didn't...' I'm like, 'No I thought we were just making music. I don't really care what you look like!' Haha! And he was like, 'Well I had my hair down to my elbows and I just cut them short for YOU!' And I was like 'For ME? Why was it for me? I don't even know you!' And he basically started getting super pissed at me because he had been, in all our conversations about music, picking up on things that he thought were flirtatious. That absolutely weren't.

The anti-metal men described hereby view women as objects of desire, and assume that heterosexual interactions are interested without checking if women are on the same page. Overall, a lack of confidence and credibility shapes douchebags' anti-metalness. It also informs the image that others have of them and the way they interpret their actions.

### ***The Fanatic***

In addition to "fanatic," respondents use words such as "elitist," "purist," and even "extremist" to describe the second type of anti-metal men. Fanatics take themselves too seriously. Audrey remarks: "Even though I listen to extreme metal, we, often we end up doing a lot of self-derision in those genres, and some are, it's very serious for them, well we ostracize them a little

bit.” [10] Fanatics, like douchebags, are immature. Sophie explains that immaturity can be found in younger men, but also in older ones:

For some it’s like, ‘Ha these are all true, he is a true one, this is a true one.’ Being a true one? What does it mean? [...] That’s immature. I think these, these are often younger metalheads you know. [...] With the divergence of different genres too, it looks like some are kinda splitting like I was saying, you know, splitting couples with different genres, ‘Ah I don’t like that metal genre, that’s stupid.’ Especially for, the first real underground stuff, I think that, you know, dudes who say that, maybe that’s their way of saying that, ‘The real thing was at the beginning when the music was aggressive and I want it to stay that way. The gay stuff with the lala, I don’t like it, it’s not metal.’ [10]

They invest a lot of time and energy in metal, but not in social relationships. According to Jane, they are not interested in others, which in turn makes them uninteresting to most metalheads:

Some people are, hem a bit nihilistic too. You know? They’ve been attending shows for the last 20 years but they don’t talk too much. It’s as if, for them, specific bands were very very important, it’s all very coded, ‘I’m going to see this band, but not that band,’ he denigrates hem, he denigrates scenes, he denigrates bands. [11]

This type of attitude contrasts sharply with the ideal extroverted metal man. Sophie argues that:

Some people are completely stubborn. I met a guy for whom it was all about black metal and there was nothing else than black metal and as soon as he heard another genre well he laughed at the other genre. [12]

For this reason, respondents feel like fanatics are as close-minded. They have a very narrow idea of what “good” and “bad” music is.

They may dislike many metal bands and subgenres, yet when they like one, they love it intensely. Jane expresses:

Some are brown-nosers and they get on my nerves you know? ‘Ah my, I saw the guitarist and I have a, I have another pick for my pick collection!’ Well they call women groupies but, personally, they are not. They, personally, are not groupies. They, personally, are pick collectors! You know? So I, if go to see a band, that’s because I am a groupie but, him, if he does, that’s because it’s for his pick collection, you understand? [13]

Nora, who knew famous musicians, tells an anecdote about a guy that she was going out with:

I’ve never known groupie guys who were able to sleep with band members because, like it or not, it’s predominantly straight, like it or not. But groupie guys that if they could they would, well I’ve had a boyfriend [...] and I realized very quickly that he didn’t give a shit about being with me, he was impressed by the fact that I knew people from those bands. [...] You know I really saw quickly that it was like, you know he wanted to know if I had slept with those band members because it was one time removed. [14]

Whether they admire musicians to the point of secretly wishing to sleep with them or not, fanatics can be possessive of their favourite bands and view other people as competition. Sophie explains that, while she was waiting at the bar during a show, she realized that the singer of a famous band was next to her. A fan of the band was also by their side:

[The fan] was like, ‘Yeah! So, yeah! So take this!’ And you could see the singer was like pissed to hear him talk you know, [...] so he looks at me, ‘I love your tattoo! I love, what is it?’ And I start talking to him but the fanboy, he’s really pissed. He says, ‘Hey you! Hey you, you fucker! [...] Do you know who you’re talking to!?’ I was like, ‘He’s the singer of [name of the band].’ And he was like, ‘Yeah! Yeah! He’s God! And now you’re disturbing him!’ ‘But he’s the one who’s talking to me.’ ‘Ah yeah well you’re disturbing me ‘cause I was talking to him!’ And then the guy throws a tantrum like a little girl. [15]

Respondents suggest that, as for douchebags, fanatics' behaviours may come from personal insecurities. Show-offing is a way to mask their insecurity, according to Jennifer:

Well I have an example that comes to my mind. It would be, let's say, the arrogant guy who thinks he's better than everyone, and super elitist, who knows bands that no one else knows, and hem, 'He, he did that,' and he knows such and such, and hem, people who name drop, 'Ah I know the singer of this and the guitarist of that,' well no one cares. [...] That's a matter of confidence you know. When you don't have self-confidence, you need to say, 'Oh yeah I did that, I know him,' you know because you're not enough, so you have to tell everything you did and all of your credentials you know. [16]

Stephanie shares a similar impression:

I think that there are quite a few purists, who, who want, because now it's, now we're talking about identity, you know? Some people are not comfortable with their identity so they really try to make themselves fit into a frame, so I think that some metalheads are like that, they don't accept that they may have other musical, musical tastes. [17]

The fanatic is into his own metal bubble to the point of being disconnected from the community. He is socially awkward as he lacks social skills, he is annoying because he is possessive over his favourite bands or musicians, and he is arrogant to mask his lack of self-confidence.

### **Femininity in Men: A Few Words**

Anti-metal men are feminized men. Ironically, their gender per se does not inform their feminization. Other characteristics, such as age or social class, undermine their masculinity. According to Melissa and Sophie, some men are too young and immature to fully grasp what metal is about, or too old and set in their ways to open up to new ideas. A middle-class, consumerist, suburban lifestyle marks the preference for more mainstream and accessible bands of Nora's "450 weekend metalheads." Melissa's manual pickup truck guy belongs in a lower

social class and exemplifies a lack of education, ambition, and intellectual refinement. The immature youngster, stubborn old-timer, 450 weekend metalhead, and uneducated pickup truck guy's anti-metalness is less informed by sexism than by ageism or classism.

While ageism or classism may not be readily gendered, they can nonetheless feminize men by rendering their masculinity less credible. Their feminization does not manifest itself in the same ways as it does in women, however. As we have seen earlier, women, because of their gender, are not supposed to like metal or other types of typically masculine activities. People expect them to be somewhat superficial, mainstream, and even naïve, instead of critical, transgressive, and aggressive. From this perspective, their attraction to metal does not make sense. To apprehend the situation, people may interpret their interest in metal as proof of their womanhood and view it as an attempt to seek men's attention. Especially in younger women like teenyboppers who daydream about musicians, their attraction to metal would seem like a manifestation of burgeoning heterosexual desire, situating them as distinct both in gender and in age from the typically masculine, intellectually independent, emotionally detached, adult metal subject. For teenyboppers, a gendered reading is apposed on top of the ageist one. Youth manifests itself as naivety and immaturity, which are incompatible with credibility. Womanhood manifests itself as a heterosexual interest in men, which is incompatible with authenticity.

Like teenage girls, teenage boys may be ridiculed for their immaturity and naïve understanding of metal. However, people generally understand boys' attraction to metal as somewhat "normal," similar to an interest in violent video games or competitive sports. Metal can be formative for them. Rock stars can be models of masculinity. For teenage boys, their clumsy amateurism, rather than their gender itself, undermines their credibility. In that sense, immaturity feminizes them. As "aspiring metalheads," they do not have what it takes to embody hegemonic masculinity successfully yet, so their practices end up fitting with pariah femininity.

However, unlike teenage girls who may gain maturity but cannot easily get rid of their womanhood, teenage boys' immaturity can dissipate unhindered by their gender.

To take a closer look at douchebags, their feminization often coincides with the ageism and classicism described above. They perhaps fit with other types of non-gendered oppressions too, but this is not the main point of this research. The point is, no matter what those other types of oppression may be, douchebags generally mimic unsuccessfully the characteristics, behaviours, and practices associated with hegemonic masculinity, but tip into pariah femininity. According to Sophie, some douchebags take part in the mosh pits but view them as fighting pits rather than fair competing sites for homosocial bonding. Melissa explains that, like some ideal metal men, they consume drugs and alcohol, but too much, the wrong kind, in the wrong circumstances, and end up disturbing everyone. Jane and Claire suggest that anti-metal men try to be heterosexually active subjects and objectify women, but their methods are highly inappropriate. According to Alice, when they try to exude confidence and dominance in public, douchebags end up showing their self-centredness. These efforts come off as ludicrous attempts to compensate for personal insecurities, which betrays a fundamental lack of control, confidence, and power. All of these examples show that, by trying too hard to be masculine, their practices seem caricatural and become pariah femininity.

Like douchebags, fanatics are sometimes feminized based on non-gendered types of characteristics and end up being discredited for trying to act masculine, fitting with pariah femininity. However, more often than douchebags, fanatics adopt characteristics that pertain to hegemonic femininity. In those instances, they do not fail at hegemonic masculinity; they downright feminize themselves by acting like subordinate others, as women are expected to do. Jane's brown-noser, Nora's aspiring male groupie, and Sophie's annoying fanboy are overimpressed by musicians and overidealize them. Like anti-metal women, they do not care

about the cohesion of the metal scene as a whole and threaten homosociality by viewing fellow metalheads as competitors for musicians' attention. Rather than trying to make themselves a name with their own talent and merit, Jennifer implies that some fanatics elevate themselves through their association with important people in the scene, like groupies. They lack emotional detachment and their possessiveness borders on hysteria, as Sophie shows with her example of a fan throwing a tantrum – curiously, respondents often depict the groupies as somewhat more emotionally detached and calculating than fanatic men.

Fanatics often fit with the characteristics associated with anti-metal women, but Larsen (2017) makes a distinction between the “dysfunctional fan,” which resembles my description of the fanatic, and the groupie in the rock culture. According to her, dysfunctional fans:

[Are] so involved with the subject of interest that they perform antisocial activities, distance themselves from family and friends, and might enact behaviours such as violence, hysteria, and sometimes even stalking. Very often these are the same terms used to describe female fandom, and they are also often associated with ‘groupies.’ A key difference between a groupie and a fan is that the groupie has access to the musician when not on stage. (p. 404)

For Larsen, the relationship between the dysfunctional fan and the musician is devoid of the interactivity and sexuality that characterize the relationship between the groupie and the musician. However, Sophie's anecdote on a fanatic man interacting with a musician offstage and being possessive of his attention is an example of his capacity to have direct access to musicians. Here, the interaction is not necessarily sexual, but even the non-sexual nature of the relationship between the fanatic and the musician can be disputed in light of the answers of some respondents. Nora's somewhat original reading suggests that some fanatics' lack of sexual success with band members could be attributed to the overwhelming heterosexuality of the musicians, rather than to

an absence of interest on the fans' part. The groupie may be able to act on her sexual desire for musicians in a way that the fanatic may not, but this does not mean that men cannot have a – real or perceived, active or latent – sexual desire for musicians, further feminizing them. Even though fanatics are not readily situated as potential objects of romantic or sexual interest for musicians, respondents such as Nora suggest that there could be a sexual aspect to men's fandom that we rarely read about in the literature.

### **Conclusion**

This research aimed to determine whether the gender power dynamics of the Montreal extreme metal scene concur with those described by Schippers (2007) in her theoretical framework on masculinities and femininities. Qualitative analysis of 16 semi-structured individual interviews suggests that Schippers' framework is an adequate tool to understand the gender relations in the Montreal extreme metal scene, as its dominant gender dynamics resemble those she describes and result in similar power imbalances. Typically masculine values and practices are dominant in the Montreal extreme metal scene, and typically feminine ones are often othered and inferiorized. It follows that men as a social group hold most of the power to define the boundaries of what is metal, who is metal, and how to be metal, while women as a social group are excluded. To join in, women have to prove, on an individual basis, their compatibility with the masculine metal authenticity and homosociality.

That is, metal scholars argue that authenticity is a core notion of the subculture of metal (Allett, 2011; Hill, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007, 2016; Tompkins, 2015). The justification for practices of exclusion and self-exclusion often rests on authenticity – the idea that the main criteria to be a metalhead are a passion for the music, a commitment to the scene, and the adoption of its transgressive, anti-mainstream ethos. Incidentally, the notion of authenticity

contributes to preserving the exclusivity of white heterosexual men in the subculture. Some feminist metal scholars (Riches, 2011; Riches et al., 2014; Turbé, 2016) believe that women can disrupt the homosociality and masculinity of metal by their sheer participation. Most feminist metal authors, however, (Hill, 2011; Krenske & McKay, 2000; Nordström & Herz, 2013; Schaap & Berkers, 2013; Vasan, 2011) suggest that, while individual women are accepted in metal, they have to adopt the metal codes that pose women as a group as “others,” leaving the fundamental gender inequalities unchanged.

To get a better grasp of the issue, I turned to Schippers (2007), who further developed Connell’s (1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) gender framework. Schippers asserts that femininity and masculinity are socially created relational discourses on men and women, conceptualized as two types of separate and complementary categories of humans. Masculinity needs a dichotomous opposite against which it can define itself, and femininity plays this role (Connell, 1987, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Schippers, 2007). Schippers (2007, p. 96) insists that masculinity must always be superior and desirable. For her, there are no subordinate types of masculinities. When a meaning, characteristic, or practice is undesirable or inferiorizing, it is femininity.

There are several forms of masculinities and femininities, and their mutual relationships with each other define their quality content and their place in the gender hierarchy. Hegemonic masculinity is at the top of the inter-gender and intra-gender hierarchies and encompasses the qualities that are deemed manly in a given setting (Connell, 1987, p. 183; Schippers, 2007, p. 94). Hegemonic masculinity is normative for men, but I argue that women can also adopt it as long as their masculinity is granted on an individual basis and perceived as exceptional. According to Connell (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), those who cannot fit with hegemonic masculinity in a given setting may escape subordination and reap the benefits of masculinity by adopting

complicit masculinity which, as its name implies, entails sharing or agreeing with hegemonic views. Schippers does not say whether she keeps or rejects this concept in her framework, but I maintain it because it adds a layer of depth to my analysis.

Regarding femininities, Schippers (2007, p. 95) calls the most normative type of gender for women hegemonic femininity. The word “hegemonic” highlights its complementarity with hegemonic masculinity. It represents the practices and characteristics deemed womanly to which women are socially expected to adhere to. Typically, those practices and characteristics are complementary with those of hegemonic masculinity, and they reinforce the overall dominance of masculinity in light of the gender dynamics. In contrast, Schippers’ (2007, p. 95) second type of femininity, pariah femininity, does not complement hegemonic masculinity. It represents a failed, thus inferiorizing, adoption of values, attitudes, and practices that usually belong to hegemonic masculinity. These characteristics, practices, and behaviours ensure men’s dominant position as a group in the gender hierarchy. If women as a group were to have unrestricted access to those practices, they would compromise men’s exclusive access to them. Therefore, women must be feminized for adopting them. I add that people of any gender can fit with pariah femininity if their attempt at hegemonic masculinity fails and becomes inferiorizing.

Finally, Schippers (2007) adds new types of masculinity and femininity: alternative masculinity and alternative femininity. They do not situate typically masculine practices, values, or behaviours as superior to typically feminine ones, and do not feminize the people who enact them either. Yet, I argue that if “masculinity” is always dominant and “femininity” is always inferior, there cannot be an “alternative” masculinity or femininity. For this reason, I prefer to change the name of those concepts and talk about “alternative gender types” to avoid confusion.

With my theoretical framework in place, I turned my attention back to my primary aim, which was to determine how Schippers’ gender framework can help us understand gender

dynamics in the Montreal extreme metal scene. To do so, I asked 16 adult women and men who take part in this scene to describe the ideal metal men of the scene, anti-metal men (a “what-not-to-do” type of man in metal), ideal metal women, and anti-metal women. These questions helped me determine which characteristics, behaviours, and practices are manly and womanly, superior and inferior, contaminating and challenging to the gender expectations within the Montreal extreme metal scene.

I found that, as in the metal literature, being authentic in the scene usually means rejecting mainstream – typically feminine – expectations to embrace one’s – typically masculine – “true self.” The valued way of being in the world and transgressing the mainstream rests on the adoption of characteristics associated with warrior masculinity. The modalities of participation value manhood acts such as competition, emotional detachment, and objectification of women, which create a homosocial bonding space between men. In turn, homosociality preserves the boundaries between a masculine, metal “us” and a feminine, mainstream “them.” The quintessential ideal metal man, the revered musician, often represents hegemonic masculinity. That is, my findings coincide with Schippers’s work on gender (2007) as well as her previous research on alternative rock (2002) according to which cultural expectations depict the musician as a man and creator, embodying authenticity, and having visibility, authority, and respect.

My respondents position the poseuse and the groupie, the anti-metal types of women in the scene, in opposition with the musician. Poseuses and groupies, contrary to musicians, are consumers, anonymous, subordinated, and shamed for their lack of authenticity. However, poseuses and groupies represent a particular point of tension between genders, as they are not content with being fully complementary others. That is, a girlfriend who simply accompanies her boyfriend to events without claiming to be a metalhead herself is a complementary other who accepts the gender boundaries of metal. The poseuse and groupie, in contrast, try to integrate

metal without committing to the metal authenticity. The poseuse is an impostor who tries to pass as a real metalhead. She fits with hegemonic femininity on many points because of her lack of passion for metal music, her misunderstanding of metal values, and her heterosexuality. Yet, her overall presence fits with pariah femininity because she undeservingly claims a typically masculine membership in a typically masculine space, which makes her a threat to the integrity of metal. Similarly, the groupie, who comes in the scene because she finds musicians attractive, fits with hegemonic femininity because of her heterosexuality. Her attraction to men marks her as a complementary other, but she is sexually active rather than passive, somewhat like men. This makes her a threat to homosociality, which justifies her inferiorization and her fitting with pariah femininity. The incompatibility between those anti-metal types of women and the core values of metal justifies the maintaining of gender boundaries.

This does not mean that men cannot be feminized in the scene. However, men are typically not inferiorized for belonging to the social group of men per se. They can be feminized for adhering to hegemonic femininity by doing what a woman is expected to do (e.g., being a fanatic, somewhat like a groupie). In which case, their association with women explains their inferiorization. Often, their feminization is a side-effect deriving from other types of oppressions (e.g., being from a lower social class) and fits with pariah femininity. Here, their attempts at hegemonic masculinity are read through a “lack of” (culture, education, maturity) related to their belonging to a marginalized group, which makes them inadequate. In this respect, anti-metal men seemingly represent a threat to the boundaries of metal and may justify the maintaining of ageist, classist, or other types of non-gendered boundaries. These could be the object of another research. Yet, according to my findings, the presence of douchebags and fanatics does not justify the maintaining of gender boundaries, properly speaking, like that of poseuses and groupies.

When it comes to women, the logic goes that since groupies and poseuses supposedly try to infiltrate metal, then every woman is a potential anti-metal woman. Whether the threat is real, up-played, or imaginary, women are members of a gender that represents a danger to the integrity of metal. Therefore, women, to become ideal metalheads, need to prove that they do not share those undesirable inclinations, and they have to situate themselves within a range of sometimes conflicting gender expectations. They have to demonstrate their hegemonic masculinity by embracing the metal authenticity, rising above the expectations for their gender, and showing that they love the music. When proving their hegemonic masculinity is impossible, they may have to prove complicit masculinity by demonstrating their non-femininity. Yet, the typically feminine tasks of the scene usually devolve to them. In this regard, some women embrace a useful degree of hegemonic femininity which benefits the homosociality of the scene.

All in all, women, to become ideal, have to be flawlessly authentic, and their credentials, impeccable. They gain credibility on an individual basis and are perceived as exceptions. They may have to prove their exceptionality again and again when they enter new settings. Despite those observations, metal can be empowering to women. It grants them a semblance of genderlessness when they become successful participants and are accepted as part of the homosocial “us.” Their womanliness can temporarily recede to the background and cease to be a distraction. Metal offers them the possibility to feel primarily like a “metalhead” rather than a “woman.” Furthermore, I find that metalheads of every gender are open to questioning the gender power structures of their scene. Some women redefine the masculine or feminine meanings of certain types of practices or question the inferiorization and dismissal of certain types of participants. Men, it seems, are increasingly aware of the obstacles that women face. Some are allies or open up to practices that may have been previously feminizing.

Metal, despite its self-proclaimed critical and transgressive approach to the mainstream, is a porous microcosmos that exists within broader national and international cultural contexts. How a subculture such as metal can influence broader gender hierarchies remains ambiguous. Schippers' gender framework is helpful to identify situational gender disruptions, but it does not allow us to determine how effective a disruption is at redistributing power, at what scales its effects can be felt, or how these disruptions can go from having relatively small impacts to inducing broader cultural changes. Schippers' approach to alternative gender types supposes that every little step is a little victory. This is true, as even small disruptions are disruptions nonetheless. However, for a singular, relatively inconsequential disruption to entice greater changes in power distribution, more needs to happen. Everything in my interviews points to the fact that the mainstream world informs the power dynamics within metal. Metal certainly reproduces and exacerbates certain types of mainstream power dynamics, and perhaps challenges other ones. In return, it is difficult to tell if and how the metal gender disruptions impact broader cultural dynamics. This consideration still needs to be further addressed and could be the object of another research.

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## Appendices

### Interview Questionnaires

#### *English Version*

#### Section 1: Extreme metal in general

1. Which extreme metal genres are you are most familiar with?
2. How would you describe extreme metal to someone who doesn't know what it is?  
*Probe: What are its main characteristics? What is "metal" and what isn't?*
3. What attracted you to metal?  
*Ex: How did you discover extreme metal? Why do you still like it today?*

#### Section 2: Gender in extreme metal

##### Section 2.1: Masculinities in metal

4. From the perspective of someone who is in the metal community (not from the perspective of a mainstream person), how would you describe the perfect or ideal metal man in Quebec?  
The model to follow for other metal men.  
*Probe: What does he look like physically? What is his personality like? What attitudes, behaviours does he have or avoid? What are his values? What sort of involvement does he have in the scene?*
5. What sort of attitude does this perfect metal man have with other men in metal?  
*Probe: Dating/cruising, solidarity/bromance, mutual help, competition, chivalry?*
6. What sort of attitude does he have with women in metal?  
*Probe: Dating/cruising, solidarity/bromance, mutual help, competition, chivalry?*
7. How would you describe the "anti-metal man?"  
*Probe: A man who is part of the scene but exemplifies what not to do?*
8. Can you compare the perfect metal man to the typical, mainstream Quebec man?  
*Probe: How are they similar or different? What do metal men find in metal that they cannot find in the mainstream culture?*

9. In a different research, a man was interviewed at the Wacken festival and he told the researchers: “Well, you know, death metal is still real man’s music!” (Chaker, 2016, p. 147). Can you explain to me what this statement means to you? Does it apply to the Montreal scene?
10. In general, is the average man in metal more feminine or masculine than the average man in Quebec?
11. **For men:** Do you consider yourself to be more masculine or feminine than the average man in metal?  
*Probe: Does the possibility of being considered feminine or masculine influence your attitude or behaviour? Are there certain types of feminine or masculine things that you would not do, for example?*

Section 2.2: Femininities in metal

12. From the perspective of someone who is in the metal community (not from the perspective of a mainstream person), how would you describe the perfect or ideal metal woman in Quebec? The model to follow for other metal women.  
*Probe: What does she look like physically? What is her personality like? What attitudes, behaviours does she have or avoid? What are her values? How does she get involved in the scene?*
13. What sort of attitude does this perfect metal woman have with men in metal?  
*Probe: Dating/cruising, solidarity/bromance, mutual help, competition, chivalry?*
14. What sort of attitude does she have with other women in metal?  
*Probe: Dating/cruising, solidarity/bromance, mutual help, competition, chivalry?*
15. How would you describe the “anti-metal woman?”  
*Probe: A woman who is part of the scene but exemplifies what not to do?*
16. Can you compare the perfect metal woman to the average mainstream Quebec woman?  
*Probe: How are they similar or different? What do metal women find in metal that they cannot find in the mainstream culture?*
17. **For women:** Do you consider yourself to be more feminine or masculine than the average woman in metal? Why?  
*Probe: Does the possibility of being considered as feminine or masculine influence your attitude or behaviour? Are there certain types of feminine or masculine things that you would not do, for example?*

18. Do you believe that women face different obstacles than men in metal? Why? If they do, how can they overcome them?

*Probe: Are these obstacles the same for fans, musicians, organizers, etc.?*

19. If you were a man (for men: if you were a woman), do you think that things would be different for you in metal? Especially in the context of Quebec.

*Probe: Is there anything that you would be doing differently? Would other people act differently toward you? Do you think that it would have affected your metal trajectory?*

20. Do women go in the mosh pits?

*Probe: How do men act when women join in?*

21. In your experience, are women generally well received in the context of extreme metal in Montreal?

*Probe: How is the general feeling of safety for women feel in metal? Are women better/worst received in metal than in mainstream Montreal?*

22. Do you have a piece of advice or remark that, as a woman (for men: as a man), you would like men (for men: women) in metal to know?

### Section 3: Sociodemographic questions

23. How old are you?

24. What is your occupation?

25. For how long have you been listening to extreme metal?

26. Do you play an instrument?

27. How many shows have you attended in Quebec over the last year, whether as a member of the public, musician, organizer (or other position)?

## ***French Version***

### Section 1: Le métal extrême en général

1. Avec quels genres de métal extrême es-tu le/la plus familier/ère?
2. Comment décrirais-tu le métal extrême à quelqu'un qui ne connaît pas cela?  
*Probe: Quelles sont ses caractéristiques principales? Qu'est-ce qui est « métal » ou ne l'est pas?*
3. Qu'est-ce qui t'a attiré/e dans le métal extrême?  
*Ex : Comment as-tu découvert le métal extrême? Pourquoi aimes-tu toujours cela?*

### Section 2: Genre dans le métal extrême

#### Section 2.1: Masculinités dans le métal

4. À quoi ressemblerait, du point de vue des métalleux (pas du point de vue des personnes « mainstream »), un homme métalleux parfait ou idéal au Québec? L'exemple à suivre pour les autres hommes métalleux?  
*Probe: De quoi a-t-il l'air physiquement? Quelle est sa personnalité? Quels comportements a-t-il ou évite-t-il? Quelles sont ses valeurs? Quel genre d'activités fait-il dans la scène?*
5. Quel genre d'attitude ce métalleux exemplaire a-t-il par rapport aux autres hommes dans le métal?  
*Probe: Cruisage, solidarité, camaraderie, entraide, compétition, galanterie?*
6. Quel genre d'attitude a-t-il par rapport aux femmes dans le métal?  
*Probe: Cruisage, solidarité, camaraderie, entraide, compétition, galanterie?*
7. De quoi aurait l'air un « anti-métalleux »?  
*Probe: Un exemple à ne pas faire pour un homme métalleux dans la scène?*
8. Peux-tu comparer le métalleux exemplaire, idéal, par rapport à l'homme québécois moyen « mainstream »?  
*Probe: En quoi sont-ils semblables ou différents? Qu'est-ce que les métalleux cherchent dans le métal qu'ils ne trouvent pas dans le mainstream?*
9. Dans le cadre d'une autre recherche, un homme qui se faisait interviewer au Wacken a dit aux chercheurs: « Tu sais, le death metal, ça reste la musique des vrais hommes » (« Well, you know, death metal is still real man's music! ») (Chaker, 2016, p. 147). Peux-tu

m'expliquer ce que cette phrase signifie selon toi? Est-ce que ça s'applique à la scène montréalaise?

10. De façon générale, est-ce que l'homme métalleux moyen est plus féminin ou masculin que l'homme moyen au Québec?
11. **Pour les hommes:** Te considères-tu plus féminin ou plus masculin par rapport aux hommes métalleux moyens?  
*Probe: Est-ce que la possibilité que les autres dans le métal puissent te percevoir comme féminin ou masculin influence ton attitude ou tes comportements? Y a-t-il certains types de choses féminines ou masculines que tu ne voudrais pas faire, par exemple?*

Section 2.2: Féminités dans le métal

12. À quoi ressemblerait, du point de vue des métalleux (pas du point de vue des personnes « mainstream »), une femme métalleuse parfaite ou idéale au Québec? L'exemple à suivre pour les autres femmes métalleuses?  
*Probe: De quoi a-t-elle l'air physiquement? Quelle est sa personnalité? Quels comportements a-t-elle ou évite-t-elle? Quelles sont ses valeurs? Quel genre d'activités fait-elle dans la scène?*
13. Quel genre d'attitude cette métalleuse exemplaire a-t-elle par rapport aux hommes dans le métal?  
*Probe: Cruisage, solidarité, camaraderie, entraide, compétition, galanterie?*
14. Quel genre d'attitude a-t-elle par rapport aux autres femmes dans le métal?  
*Probe: Cruisage, solidarité, camaraderie, entraide, compétition, galanterie?*
15. De quoi aurait l'air une « anti-métalleuse »?  
*Probe : Un exemple à ne pas faire pour une femme métalleuse dans la scène?*
16. Peux-tu comparer la métalleuse exemplaire par rapport à la femme québécoise typique « mainstream »?  
*Probe: En quoi sont-elles semblables ou différentes? Qu'est-ce que les métalleuses cherchent dans le métal qu'elles ne trouvent pas dans le mainstream?*
17. **Pour les femmes:** Te considères-tu davantage comme féminine ou masculine comparativement aux femmes moyennes dans le métal? Pourquoi?  
*Probe: Est-ce que la possibilité que les autres dans le métal puissent te percevoir comme féminine ou masculine influence ton attitude ou tes comportements? Y a-t-il certains types de choses féminines ou masculines que tu ne voudrais pas faire, par exemple?*

18. Crois-tu que les femmes rencontrent des obstacles différents de ceux des hommes dans le métal? Pourquoi? Si oui, comment peuvent-elles les surmonter?  
*Probe: Crois-tu que ces obstacles sont les mêmes pour les fans, les musiciennes, les organisatrices de shows, etc.?*
19. Si tu étais un homme (pour les hommes: si tu étais une femme), crois-tu que certaines choses seraient différentes pour toi dans le contexte du métal au Québec?  
*Probe: Y a-t-il quoi que ce soit que tu ferais différemment? Y a-t-il quoi que ce soit que les autres feraient différemment par rapport à toi? Crois-tu que ça aurait affecté ta trajectoire en tant que métalleux/se?*
20. Est-ce que les femmes vont dans les mosh pits?  
*Probe: Comment les hommes agissent-ils quand les femmes rentrent dans le mosh pit?*
21. D'après ton expérience, crois-tu que les femmes sont généralement bien reçues dans le contexte du métal extrême à Montréal?  
*Probe: Comment est le sentiment de sécurité pour une femme dans le métal? Sont-elles mieux/moins bien reçues dans le métal que dans le Montréal mainstream en général?*
22. Aurais-tu un conseil ou une remarque que, en tant que femme (pour les hommes: en tant qu'homme) dans le métal, tu voudrais que les hommes (pour les hommes: les femmes) dans le métal sachent?

### Section 3: Questions sociodémographiques

23. Quel âge as-tu?
24. Quelle est ton occupation?
25. Depuis combien de temps écoutes-tu du métal extrême?
26. Joues-tu d'un instrument?
27. À combien de concerts de métal extrême as-tu été au Québec au courant de la dernière année, que ce soit en tant que membre du public, musicien/ne, organisateur/trice, ou autre?

## Original Quotations in French

### *Ideal Metal Men According to the Respondents*

#### **The Revered Musician**

*“Loud, Noisy and Brutal:” A Shocking Musical Genre for Daring Intellectuals*

[1] Nora: Loud, noisy, and brutal.

[2] Stephanie: Énergique et intense.

[3] Audrey: C’est comme extrême intense, si t’aimes le métal, ben c’est comme le rock versus le hard rock, ben tu montes les escaliers, pis t’es aux extrémités là.

[4] Eve: Un peu comme eh voir un film de gore.

[5] Nora: ‘Tsé y’est grand, les cheveux longs, tee-shirt noir, barbe, lunettes,’ like it’s, ‘Ok t’as décrit 95% du monde dans la pièce.’ Mais littéralement 95% du monde dans la pièce. Hem. Ouais faque le look tsé, c’est, c’est drôle comment le look a évolué, mais y’a pas évolué du tout depuis les années 80, que tsé c’est, tsé c’est le fameux, tu vas toujours porter la marchandise de band, soutenir tes bands préférés, les battle jackets, les leather jackets, c’est toujours, tsé, stable. C’est beaucoup de cuir, beaucoup de studs, tatouage, perçage.

[6] Naomie: Tsé j’ai des amis qui sont très doux là, tsé c’est du bon monde. En tout cas. J’ai pas d’amis métalleux méchants, tsé en général, mais oui c’est sûr que quand tu les vois eh, ben peut-être à cause de leur habillement, sont habillés en foncé et tout faque ça a l’air peut-être plus eh, plus, plus de caractère, justement avec le, ces couleurs-là.

[7] Audrey: Moi c’est toujours ça le cliché, ‘Ah mon doux! C’est ton ami! C’est tu ton chum? C’est tu ton ami? Ah mon doux y fait peur!’ ‘Ben non! Y’es gentil! Je te le dis, y’est gentil!’ ‘T’es sûre? Y fait 280 livres, 6 pieds 8 tsé, y’a une grosse barbe!’ ‘Ah non je te dis, y’est gentil, tu vas voir!’

[8] Naomie: C’est une musique intellectuelle le métal. Ça a pas l’air de ça mais c’est toutes les notes qui passent là, c’est une musique quand-même pour la tête eh, mais aussi le corps, mais la tête a beaucoup à voir aussi dans le métal, pis surtout quand qu’y font du headbang haha!

[9] Eve: C’est rare un métalleux qui joue pas de musique.

[10] Emily: Il joue de la musique et souvent il va essayer d’avoir un band.

[11] Annick: Si tu prends au hasard un échantillon de 10 personnes, dans un show, y vont toutes jouer eux-mêmes de la musique. Peut-être qu’y sont poches mais y vont avoir essayé!

[12] Eric: t’es comme en position d’autorité, tsé. Pis, pis, pis t’as comme une notoriété que le commun des mortels a pas.

[13] Eric: C’est tellement cérébral de faire de la musique métal, eh que c’est pas, que tu peux pas te laisser aller complètement dans l’émotion. C’est, c’est que la façon de le mettre et de

l'organiser en art, t'es obligé d'y penser. [...] C'est une mise en ordre de quelque chose pour faire de l'art, tsé. Faque ça pour moi, c'est davantage la raison que le, le, laisser-aller, tout simplement.

[14] Sophie: Mettons plus du vieux death, si tu regardes les lyrics souvent ça va être vraiment, quelqu'un que t'as décapité pis que c'est une joke tsé. Quelqu'un qui va voir ça va être comme: 'Ayoye mais c'est pas correcte là ce que je lis!' [...] Eh pis peut-être aussi le black métal, le black metal [...] ça parle beaucoup de satanisme pis toute ça. [...] Eh le thrash metal c'est vraiment plus, c'est pour eh, ça dénonce beaucoup un petit peu plus de politique, je pourrais dire, eh plus que. Même le gore. Le gore haha! Du death gore, c'est assez intense, tu parles vraiment en détail de ché pas moi, quelqu'un qui se mutile ou quelqu'un qui va jouer avec des excréments là, mais en détail. Faque tsé c'est toutes des affaires que les gens veulent pas vraiment, les gens un peu pas, normales, mais les gens de tous les jours, ont pas l'habitude d'entendre.

[15] Eric: Y sont capables d'aborder un paquet de sujets sans s'énerver pis sans se, se, surtout sans être choqués de ça. Je pense, je pense qu'y a, tsé, y'a ça aussi. On couvre tellement des sujets variés dans les, dans les paroles, tsé, que je pense qu'y a pas, y'a pas tant de tabous que ça dans les discussions qu'on peut avoir sur des sujets, hem, comme je te dis, généralement sont très ouverts d'esprit, je pense.

[16] Nora: Tsé, si tu dis: 'Ah! This band is misogynistic muhmuuh!' sans mettre en contexte, c'est qui le band, d'où ils viennent, toute ça ça rentre en compte. [...] C'est peut-être pas explicitemy political, des fois c'est un sous-entendu politique qui est là.

[17] Stephanie: Souvent eh c'est des gens qui sont pas satisfaits avec eh la structure même de la société, donc ça va plus loin que juste les politiques. Hem. Parce qu'on s'entend là, comme monsieur-madame tout le monde eux aussi ont comme un genre de case d'identité. Souvent les métalleux sont un peu contre ça, pis ils veulent, tsé? Changer ça. Eh c'est des gens un peu eh existentialistes aussi, eh ils se posent beaucoup de questions sur ça, sur eh tsé c'est quoi, c'est quoi la notion de vie, c'est quoi tsé? Donc pour ça qu'on voit beaucoup de sujets sur la mort dans le métal, tsé? [...] Ils vont aller chercher des sujets qui sont très eh, presque offensants, pour justement eh enlever la notion de censure.

[18] Audrey: des anarchistes finis, qu'y a des gauchistes finis, pis y'en a d'autres qu'y sont plus eh conservateurs.

[19] Audrey: Les gens que je connais sont assez politisés, quand-même. Sont au courant de l'actualité. Mais [...] je vais voir un show punk, ben moi je m'attends à ce que, entre les shows, entre les chansons, qu'y parlent de, qu'y fassent un débat de, tsé, 'Parlons de, de ce qui se passe dans l'actualité aujourd'hui.' Je m'attends à ça. Mais eh, dans le métal, pas tant que ça. [...] J'en ai un ami qui est comme ça, mais c'est plus un punk. Haha. Mais lui y'aime ça le, y'aime ça provoquer, pis on parlait d'affaires, pis ta ta ta, pis oui habituellement, quand qu'on, y se met à débattre avec quelqu'un pis que ça devient sérieux, là c'est, tsé, le le, le ton lève un peu plus, tsé, t'as du monde, y'a pas mal de monde en tout cas dans mon cercle d'amis, y'aiment pas ça! C'est comme une provocation là, y'a un malaise.

*“He Impresses People But That’s Not His Goal :” Confidence and Authenticity*

[20] Annick: Ça serait être un bon musicien. Ça serait quelqu’un qui est PR, ça serait un musicien qui, dans le milieu underground, a fait sa marque, et parce qu’y est très cool, c’est sa personnalité, et parce qu’y est bon, y’est admiré pour son talent. Faque ça serait quelqu’un de talentueux. Pas nécessairement quelqu’un qui s’entraîne, par exemple. Pis c’est là que, que, c’est pas quelqu’un avec des gros pipes, là, qui fait ben attention à son apparence, pis c’est ça que je trouve quand-même cool c’est que c’est comme du monde des fois qui ont l’air de rien. [...] Qui fait pas ça pour impressionner des gens, mais que ça va impressionner des gens, mais que c’est pas le but. C’est pas du monde qui cherchent à épater la galerie. C’est du monde juste talentueux.

[21] Jennifer: les gars qui vont essayer tsé, à tout prix, d’avoir cette image-là [avoir l’air très très masculins], pis qui vont se prendre au sérieux, ben souvent on va se moquer de ces gars-là. Tandis qu’un gars qui cherche pas à prouver quoi que ce soit, ben eux autres vont se faire respecter. [...] Quand t’as confiance en toi, t’as rien, t’as moins de choses à te prouver, qui fait que t’es quelqu’un de plus calme pis tu vas pas chercher à attirer l’attention avec des ceintures de balles ou du corpse paint, des affaires de-même.

[22] Sophie: Rob Halford dans Judas Priest, y’est clairement gai, y’est assumé gai pis tsé, quand il l’a dit, y’a eu la chienne que, que sa carrière, ça drop là, ‘Pfft!’ Ça a rien changé! Comme y’était bon chanteur, qu’y soit aux hommes, je m’en fous. Tsé y’a tellement un respect pour la musique.

[23] Nathan: Je pense pas que d’être un gars ça t’empêche d’avoir des émotions ou quoi que ce soit, même si y’en a qui vont dire que t’as ton mâle alpha pis que t’as ta femme en toi, ben j’pense que t’es un mélange des deux, pis si t’es pas capable de faire l’équilibre entre les deux, ben c’est là que tu vas commencer à avoir des problèmes là? Pis je veux dire j’ai rien à prouver au niveau de ma sexualité ou de mon appartenance à un groupe sexuel quelconque, à personne, faque. Tsé j’veux dire. Chuis un gars, je le sais que chuis un gars, que chuis hétérosexuel, mais j’ai pas de, de complexes par rapport à ça, faque... Tsé on pourrait dire que je suis peut-être moins masculin que la moyenne des, des métaloux parce que je sais qu’il y en a qui ont une grosse partie qui sont sur le sentiment de dominance pis du mâle alpha pis toute ça, mais comme, tant qu’à moi c’est, plus un signe de, d’insécurité personnelle que, justement, si t’apprends à te connaître, tu sais que t’as pas nécessairement rien à prouver là.

*Sense of Community: Treating Men Like Brothers*

[24] Nathan: Je sais pas si tout le monde ou genre la majorité du monde qui écoute du métal, du métal extrême vont aller chercher quelque chose qu’ils retrouvent pas ailleurs, mais y’a clairement comme un espèce de, de sentiment de faire partie de quelque chose de plus grand que toi là, comme un équipe, comme un tribu.

[25] Audrey: Ça prend une grande partie de, de ta vie sociale, définitivement. [...] Involvement, ouais c’est ça. C’est beaucoup, quand-même, tsé, quand t’es jeune ado, t’accordes beaucoup d’importance à ta musique, mais en vieillissant, le métal, on dirait qu’on perd pas ça vraiment. On le perd un petit peu des fois, des fois on va divaguer, genre tsé t’as un conjoint qui aime pas

ça, t'as des enfants, mais tsé tu finis toujours par revenir haha. [...] L'engagement, c'est ça le mot que je cherche. L'engagement, oui, c'est assez important.

[26] Sophie: Les métalleux, en majorité, en majorité qui sont alpha, sont du genre à vouloir faire rire. Je sais pas pourquoi. Sont comme 'Heille toé wra wra wra! Hahaha!' Tsé? Je sais pas pourquoi. Pourtant tsé c'est, c'est tellement drôle, tu vas prendre des photos genre pis y vont toutes être, y vont niaiser de-même. Tu passes une soirée avec une gang de métalleux, pis souvent les gars, sont juste crampant, y vont faire des conneries là, mais vraiment tsé, ça arrive rarement, mais y'en a, mais la plupart des gars, genre, si y prennent d'la place c'est pour dire des niaiseries, pour faire rire le monde, pour faire le con, genre, juste pour faire le clown, pis entertainer le monde, pis se faire des amis.

[27] Audrey: C'est l'appartenance à un groupe. [...] De dire 'J'appartiens à quelque chose, je m'identifie à quelque chose, je fais partie d'une gang'. Pis c'est sûr que c'est assez homogène, que... pis c'est un groupe fidèle, c'est du monde loyal.

[28] Jane: Sont tellement passionnés que ça devient presque obsessionnel. Quand qu'y aiment un band, y veulent toutes toutes toutes les patentes de ste band-là tsé. Faque tsé, c'est beaucoup des gens qui ont l'importance de leur collection, de leurs pièces édition limitée, tsé? [...] Je garde toute les flyers, les pochettes, les cassettes, le, le vinyle, la cassette, le CD, toutes les versions possibles. Pis je suis pas toute seule d'avoir cette maladie-là dans la gang métal. Mais souvent, cette maladie-là est plus associée aux gars qu'aux filles, mais quand-même.

[29] Jane: Y'a une très bonne fraternité, mais y'a quand-même une compétition, de 'Ah ouain! Y'a trouvé le chandail de tel band que je cherche depuis tel... C'est oussé qu'y a trouvé ça ce chandail-là?' Tsé quand y'a des shows, y se pavanent quand-même. Y vont mettre leur chandail soit le plus vieux chandail qu'y ont pour montrer qu'eux autres, y'étaient là dans le temps. Souvent y vont mettre un chandail d'un album rare, tsé, pis là 'Oh shit!' ou un band plus obscure, tsé, pour essayer de sortir du lot. [...] Faque y'a quand-même une petite compétition là-dessus. Ou sinon sur les musiciens en tant que tel. Lequel qui va être le meilleur bassiste, le meilleur guitariste, le plus rapide drummer, le plus technique.

[30] David: ben c'est des grands, pis c'est des gros, pis tsé j'imagine qu'y a certain niveau de danger.

[31] Nathan: Le monde, en général, font attention tsé. Même si on est là pour se défouler dans le mosh pit, y'a quand-même une certaine conscience de genre 'On est pas toutes là pour se battre', 'On est pas là pour se faire mal', faque oui y'a une certaine eh retenue si je peux dire ça en termes de force qui est appliquée. Mais y'a pas de gêne là. On se pousse, on se pousse, pis y'a un niveau de respect aussi.

[32] Nathan: Ça montre un peu, comme on disait tantôt, l'espèce de, de, de supériorité, si on veut là. Tsé si t'es avec ta gang de chums pis que tout le monde est là 'Ah la fille là-bas est belle' pis toi t'es le gars qui fait 'Ben moi je m'en va la voir' tsé? Comme 'Ok ce gars-là a des couilles!' genre, faque déjà là y'a une espèce de, pas de suprématie qui se fait, mais genre un espèce de, de point à prouver, si on veut. Mais encore là, je pense que tout dépend de la façon de comment que

c'est fait là. [...] Si y'a une gang de gars qui tripe sur une fille, ben le gars qui va aller la voir en premier va être comme le, le gars qui est hot là, d'une certaine façon là, si on peut dire ça pour simplifier, mais, pas nécessairement lui qui va gagner par exemple tsé? Ben comme... comme si c'était un concours... pff. [...] Ça se peut que la fille le revire de bord dès qu'il arrive aussi, mettons. Là ben ça va devenir la risée, tsé? Ben ça... sans exagérer non plus là, ça va juste être comme 'Ah! Tu t'es fait revirer de bord! Passe à autre chose.'

[33] Nora: Les gars, ils veulent de quoi pour passer le temps. Y [les filles] vont y envoyer des photos de leurs tits faque tsé c'est du back and forth. [...] La même fille texte 3-4 gars de bands, oubliant qu'ils sont toutes amis, pis dans le backstage they compare notes! [...] You're sending a picture of your boobs to a guy on tour. Guaranteed, unless this is your fucking husband pis encore là. Guaranteed, they don't wanna date you and they're showing your booby pictures to everyone!

[34] Nathan: Juste du respect haha. Hem ouain. Je pense que ça a été un, un sujet de conversation relativement récurrent dans la scène métal là, on dit, y'a du monde qui me disent genre 'Ah y'a huit gars pour une fille' tsé? Faque y'a un espèce de guerre du mâle alpha pour savoir qui va eh être capable de se trouver une chix métalleuse, si on peut dire ça de-même là, mais je pense que ouain. Le gars civilisé en général va être un peu plus gentleman pis, juste avoir un respect pis de considérer la personne comme une personne à part entière, pis pas comme un objet.

[35] Jane: Y se pètent dans face, y se rotent dans face. Hahaha! Y'ont une très grande proximité, je te dirais. [...] Dans le sens que se péter dans face c'est se dire qu'y s'aiment, tsé? [...] Le premier qui s'endort au party, ben tu y barbouilles la face. Mais c'est parce que tu l'aimes, pis là tu le filmes! Haha! 'Hihihii!' Pis tu y mets de la pizza dans face, tu filmes, pis tu ris! Hahah! Mais tsé c'est parce que tu l'aimes. [...] C'est comme si les gars, y'avaient comme un peu un, un concours de force qui s'installait, en même temps qu'une fraternité. Tsé, c'est comme, C'est comme toutes des grands frères, tsé, qui se tapent sa gueule mais qui s'aiment dans le fond. Tsé sont pas capables de se dire 'Je t'aime.' Ça a l'air gai de dire 'Je t'aime.'

[36] Audrey: C'est quelqu'un qui, qui est stoïque là, qui est comme un roc, tsé, tu vas pas commencer à faire brailler du monde métal là! T'as d'affaire à t'y prendre de bonne heure.

[37] David: Il va ressentir le besoin de montrer que c'est un dur. Que, pas nécessairement qu'il a pas d'émotions, mais pas nécessairement que y'est trop près de ses émotions non plus, dans le sens que c'est pas quelqu'un, c'est quelqu'un d'émotif, mais pas nécessairement dans la tristesse ou tsé, en position d'infériorité, il va être émotif tout en, en étant supérieur aux autres un peu, en essayant d'être au-dessus, pas au-dessus, mais en se montrant confiant.

[38] Nathan: Si tu vas dans la scène plus death, black metal, pis ces styles-là, plus eh agressifs qu'émotifs, si je peux dire, ça va être vraiment plus macho, si on peut dire, ou vraiment plus axé sur la dominance pis sur le 'Je suis plus fort que toi', sur les tsé, pas nécessairement les gros pecs là, mais c'est surtout ça qui est, qui est véhiculé genre 'Je suis fort et sois fort ou meurs.' Tandis que dans la scène doom, je pense que justement la connexion avec les émotions est plus présente, faque on, on assiste un peu à un peu plus d'émotions en fait, une palette d'émotions plus ouvertes.

[39] Nathan: La fille a chante eh tout seule avec sa guitare acoustique pis a braille à moitié en chantant sa toune, ben comme, ça t'emporte pis c'est pas eh, c'est pas moins hot à cause de ça. Au contraire, je pense que c'est ça qui est l'fun. C'est d'avoir une variété pis une palette complètement diversifiée de, de toutes les styles, de toutes les émotions, de toutes les, les provenances. [...] Tsé pour prendre un exemple ben bold là, genre le viol. Ça arrive pas mal plus aux femmes qu'aux hommes là. C'est pas un secret. Faque le fait d'avoir une scène pour pouvoir en parler à du monde qui écoute fait en sorte je pense que ça conscientise le public déjà en partant. [...] Encore là, généralement plus des gars qui vont triper, mais je pense que ça, ça rouvre des portes aussi, d'avoir hem autant une palette d'émotions, que de sortes de monde, que de textes, que genre, d'avoir une diversification au niveau musical.

*“Bros Before Hoes:” Being Chivalrous or Treating Women Like Brothers?*

[40] Nora: Bro, bro, bro. Super bro. Ouais. C'est des bromances en métal, surtout dans le métal extrême là, c'est endearing là pour la plupart, hem mais ouais c'est sûr que tsé une femme [...] c'est pas un immediate into the boys club.

[41] Melissa: C'est sûr que tsé, les gars sont plus eh 'bros before hoes.'

[42] Jane: Ça peut arriver ouais. Hahaha! [...] [Avec] certaines amitiés qui durent depuis longtemps, je te dirais. Mais sinon, si y sont plus galants avec les filles.

[43] Eric: L'attitude va peut-être être, différente dans, dans la mesure où là, tout d'un coup, l'homme est confronté à une image qui est plus féminine, faque peut-être que ça sera pas, devant elle qu'il va, je vais, je vais dire ça comme ça, roter pis péter, alors que la fille qui chug pis qui a plus tendance à 'Ahhh buahhh!' mais avec quelque chose. Avec une femme à l'apparence plus féminine, tsé, je pense pas qu'y prendrait les mêmes libertés.

[44] Nora: J'ai vu des choses vraiment atroces passer dans le monde du métal, mais je te dirais que la norme est plus portée envers l'attitude plus gentleman. Hem c'est peut-être plus unique au Québec qu'ailleurs, mais tsé j'ai quand-même vu beaucoup plus d'instances ou de, tsé de gars qui, qui défendent les femmes ou qui vont tsé step in, beaucoup d'instances dans les backstages justement où il va y avoir toujours un ou deux trous de culs dans une tournée mais tsé c'est les, les gars de la tournée qui vont arrêter quelque chose.

### *Anti-Metal Women According to the Respondents*

#### **The Poseuse**

*“It's Not a Disguise:” Being There for the Wrong Reasons*

[1] Stephanie: Une fille qui porte des trucs qu'elle connaît pas, ou que, qu'elle est hem, qu'elle est là pour les mauvaises raisons ou eh ouais. [...] Il y a comme une idée que y'a beaucoup de filles qui vont là-dedans parce que justement c'est dominé par les hommes, faque elles veulent eh l'attent, le, l'attention de l'homme, tsé? Donc pour elle, c'est comme une opportunité de se faire

regarder, de se faire cruiser, de, tsé? Parce qu'elles sont attirées à ce genre d'hommes-là, mais ça veut pas dire que c'est sincère.

[2] Sophie: [Une fille] qui a une personnalité un peu eh naïve. Tsé. Ou qui a pas de personnalité du tout. Pis qui se cherche, pis qui va vouloir, qui va vouloir, peut-être, genre avoir un métalleux comme chum, qui se cherche désespérément.

[3] Annick: Je l'ai vraiment constaté qu'a passait des heures et des heures et des heures à se regarder dans le miroir. Parce que des fois j'y allais, était en train de se maquiller, j'allais manger, j'allais voir un band, je revenais, était encore là en train de se peigner. [...] C'est poussé à l'extrême, toute ça, l'apparence, pis tandis que dans le métal c'est supposé être l'opposé de ça, carrément là. Que t'es là pour la musique, pour boire de la bière, pour rire, courir partout, faire le petit train dans les bars, tsé comme des niaiseries que t'as pas, justement, à, t'as pas à te soucier si t'as l'air cave. T'as le droit d'avoir l'air cave. C'est ça le, l'échappatoire.

[4] Annick: C'est pas un déguisement non plus, tsé? T'as pas à être habillée comme une métalleuse, mais si tu y vas à fond dans l'apparence pis qu'après ça, tu y vas à fond dans une autre apparence pis une autre, comme un caméléon, pis dans le fond, du métal t'en as jamais écouté chez vous, ça, ça passe pas.

*"These Are My Boys:" Fighting With Other Women for Men's Attention*

[5] Sophie: des petites nouvelles que je connaissais pas

[6] Sophie: de l'attitude poche

[7] Sophie: Y vont être politically tout le temps correctes, mais que tsé, quand tu te tiens avec une gang 'Tu connais tu ce band-là? Eux autres là, y m'énarvent. La dernière fois on a fait ça pis eux autres y'ont décidé que an...' pis là t'es comme 'Hum hum.' Hih! J'aime pas trop les eh, les dramas comme ça là. J'essaye le plus possible de m'en éloigner.

[8] Audrey: C'est sûr que si c'est une petite fleur fanée fraîche eh, [...] une personne vulnérable pis délicate, c'est mal vu là tsé. C'est: 'Ah come on là! Toughen up! C'est quoi cette affaire!' On est assez exigeantes au niveau de: 'Ah là, prends-toi en mains, toughen up là!' Faque la, tsé, l'espèce de préjugé de la femme féminine fragile, ça serait ouais, ça serait moins bien perçu.'

[9] Stephanie: C'est difficile de, de l'avouer mais je pense que c'est moins surprenant, mettons, si une fille fait ça. C'est juste comme, on roule les yeux pis on dit 'Ouais.' Parce qu'il y a comme eu une misconception, ben c'est même pas une misconception parce qu'il y en a que c'est vrai [...] Quand tu vois une fille qui, c'est ça, mettons, elle porte un chandail qu'elle connaît pas, c'est moins surprenant que pour un homme, parce que c'est comme, 'Ah c'en est une autre de comme ça qui est là pour les mauvaises raisons!'

[10] Emily: C'est correcte si une fille accompagne son chum, mettons, elle est quand-même là pour encourager un band pis elle est pas là juste pour avoir l'attention des autres. La fille qui est là juste pour attirer l'attention, ça serait pas mal ça, l'exemple à ne pas faire. J'en ai jamais vu sauf que le monde ont quand-même l'idée que ça existe. C'est peut-être un peu pour ça qu'on se

fait poser plus de questions par rapport à nos connaissances du métal. Les gens ont l'impression que les filles sont là pour attirer l'attention des gars au lieu d'écouter la musique.

## The Groupie

### *A Musician-Lover Rather Than a Music-Lover*

[11] Sophie: Souvent les groupies, ce qu'y veulent, c'est coucher avec les bands ou être avec eux autres pis prendre plein de selfies pis [...] c'est des filles qui essayent au moins de coucher avec un des, avec un des membres du groupe tsé. Pis qui, qui veut eh, qui va avoir l'impression d'avoir une appartenance là-dedans, pis de, de se dire que, quand a rentre chez eux, elle écoute l'album, 'Ah ouais j'ai couché avec lui.' Tsé? Y'a des filles de-même que tsé, c'est ça.

[12] Stephanie: Je pense qu'en général, si tu vois une super de belle fille, comme tsé, vraiment eh tsé, mettons est habillée vraiment sexy ou quelque chose de-même, c'est sûr qu'on a un peu plus de jugement. Comme eh on se pose plus la question : Est-ce que c'est une groupie, est-ce que c'est une vraie?

[13] Sophie: Est juste tout le temps là. Ça on dirait, on dirait qu'à la longue, ça devient une tache. C'est juste ça. Si au moins la fille était, c'est parce que les filles comme ça, si au moins était le fun à jaser pis toute ça, mais était tout le temps juste... 'Ahhh.' 'Y'a d'autres gens autour, allo? T'es tu consciente qu'y a d'autres humains ici?' [...] A regarde même pas le show là. A fait juste faire: 'Hmm y'est beau lui! Hmm!' A s'en va directe voir le gars, 'Heille!'

*"You Can't Fuck Every Band Member [...] and Wonder Why They Talk Shit About You"*

[14] Annick: A va être belle, ça va être une super pitoune, mais a va être, ça va être une cruche, 'Gnihihhi!' Justement, qu'a se tient pas elle-même.

[15] Nora: Elle cachait le fait qu'elle jouait de la musique aux gars de bands, parce que elle elle est rentrée dans la scène avec sa gang de filles pouponées tsé, vraiment, tsé des wannabe models là, pis tsé ste gang-là y se ramassaient backstage parce qu'y jouaient les poupones connes. Faque elle a voulait rencontrer les gars de bands pis elle jouait à la pouponne conne. [...] Un madné ça a comme adonné dans vie qu'on s'est connues. Pis j'ai vu! 'Attends! T'es fucking écoeurante! T'es intéressante! T'es smart! [...] Just fucking be yourself! Tsé tu vas savoir non seulement que le monde vont t'aimer autant, y vont t'aimer plus parce qu'y vont te considérer comme un égal, quelqu'un d'intéressant qu'y veulent être amis avec. Pas la pouponne d'une soirée.

[16] Jane: Y'en a que, on dirait c'est des drama queen, tsé on dirait qu'y vont juste être là... Y foutent la marde! Tsé des fois on dirait que c'est intentionnel. Tabarnouche, tsé, ste fille-là, a veut juste, y'a comme un code non-écrit de 'Tu peux pas te pogner deux gars dans même gang.' Ça se fait pas, tsé? Mais y'a des filles qui prennent ste risque-là, tsé, pis que là y sont étiquetées, pis y'a aussi des filles qui sont extrême party, pis que après ça y'ont comme pu de pudeur avec personne, tsé? Ces filles-là aussi se font étiqueter parce que 'Ah ouais elle a couche avec tout le monde!' [...] Pis tsé, surtout que la communauté métal, c'est comme une fraternité, là tu peux comme,

faut que tu fasses attention on dirait là, quand tu finis une relation avec quelqu'un, après ça, tsé, avec qui tu vas aller en relation.

[17] Eric: C'est de-même partout. Si la fille se pogne plein de gars tout le temps, c'est elle, eh je m'excuse de le dire, c'est elle qui est considérée comme la salope. C'est pas le gars qui se fait courir après. Je pense pas. Hem. Le gars, c'est plutôt, comme, un trophée. 'Heille moi j'ai pogné telle fille, pis telle fille, pis telle fille, pis telle fille, pis yes!' Tsé? Parce que 'High five!' Mais la fille c'est comme 'Ha! Elle couche avec tout le monde, l'ostie de salope!' Je pense qu'y a ça aussi, mais encore là. C'est pas différent parce que c'est métal ou pas.

[18] Nora: Fais une décision. Tu peux pas fourrer chaque gars de band que tu rencontres pis te demander pourquoi les gars parlent de toi de marde. [...] Ça nourrit le vieux stéréotype de 'Ah la belle fille a peut pas, tsé la belle fille ne peut pas être intelligente, la belle fille ne peut pas être genuinly passionnate du métal. Ah la belle fille a fait ça parce que c'est facile se mettre cute dans le métal. Les girls sont, les standards sont bas faque d'être une belle fille dans le métal c'est facile.' Tsé like that stereotype's still there.

[19] Stephanie: Dans le passé les femmes, dans la scène, c'étaient la majorité, c'étaient des groupies. Pis avec le temps, je pense que c'est, tsé ça, ça traîne un peu, faque moi je trouve que y'a encore un peu cette image-là, comme les filles qui sont dans, aux shows, sont juste là pour se faire regarder, parce que ça, ça reste que c'est dominé par les hommes. Y'a beaucoup plus de femmes aujourd'hui que, qu'il y a un certain temps, mais ça reste que c'est dominé par les hommes. Donc pour moi, comme, quand une fille elle fait sa groupie, je trouve juste que ça nous ramène par en-arrière, parce que c'est comme, ça, je sais pas, ça fait paraître ceux qui sont pas des groupies comme si y font partie de cette gang-là.

[20] Nora: Tsé, quand tu rentres dans la scène, pis t'es pas au courant du fait que y'a tellement de femmes dans les alentours, t'es pas au courant du fait que tsé c'est des êtres humains. Quand t'as encore cette idée de : 'Le rock star, et donc en tant que femme, mon seul point d'accès pour être amie avec ces rock stars-là, c'est d'être cute pis c'est d'être, tsé d'être teasing, c'est d'être un flirt, d'être ci, d'être ça.' [...] Tsé je veux pas faire le shaming de comme 'Ah', ben tsé je dis pas pour elle que c'était dégradant, pas du tout like. Go for it, mais go for it en l'assumant.

### ***Ideal Metal Women According to the Respondents***

[1] Sophie: La même affaire qu'un gars je te dirais.

[2] Emily: Comme le gars métalleux. Respectueuse envers les autres, s'implique, aime la musique, encourage les bands.

[3] Jane: Y'a pas tant de différence, je crois, entre moi qu'est-ce que j'espérais devenir en tant que métalleuse, pis qu'est-ce qu'un gars espère devenir comme métalleux.

[4] Nathan: Tripeuse de métal!

[5] Sophie: C'est une fille qui aime le métal à fond. C'est une fille qui, qui connaît son métal.

[6] Stephanie: Pour les hommes, hem, pour avoir l'espèce de respect ou le statut, c'est de jouer dans un groupe, pour eux. Pis pour les femmes, c'est comme, tsé c'est ça, nous démarquer pis dire: 'Heille moi je suis une vraie, tsé? Je suis pas une...' Ben c'est ça, faque je pense que c'est ça la différence. Les femmes y faut qu'y se démarquent qu'elles sont pas des groupies, pis les hommes c'est comme, y veulent du respect, donc y veulent être dans des bons groupes.

### **The Proven Fan**

*"Who's Her Boyfriend?" Facing Initial Doubts*

[7] Melissa: On a tendance à associer la fille métal qui s'en va au show avec son chum.

[8] Nora: I'm guilty of it too sometimes, que tu voies une fille dans un show, tu te demandes like: 'C'est qui son chum?' Pis hem tsé, dans un sens, c'est vrai. Tsé y'a beaucoup de femmes qui sont initiées au métal à cause de leur chum, tsé quand y sont jeunes, y vont voir des shows pis y finissent par vraiment triper pis y deviennent adeptes.

[9] Audrey: Si je suis avec mes amis, y vont assumer que je suis là parce que j'accompagne mon chum. Ça c'est 9 fois sur 10. 99 fois sur 100. [...] Pis là y vont finir par comme, juste tester, voir, pour être sûr, pour être sûr que t'appartiens vraiment au groupe. T'es tu crédible, tsé. 'Ah ok faque t'aimes ça pour vrai? Ouin?' Pis là y vont te tester. Te tester. Y vont te tester, être sûr que t'as pas juste mis le chandail mais tu connais pas le groupe. Ça c'est de la trahison totale! Trahison totale! Une fille qui met un chandail pis a connaît pas le groupe! T'es pas dans le groupe! Là tu vas, là tu vas, haha! T'es un, t'es un wannabe, un poseur.

[10] Emily: C'est sexiste parce qu'une fille, oui, on va lui poser des questions. On va lui demander de nommer des tounes ou des albums pour être sûre qu'elle écoute vraiment ça. [...] Les filles sont plus testées que les gars. On leur fait le « questionnaire des femmes » où on va te poser des questions de quiz pour savoir si tu connais vraiment ça. C'est plus long avant d'être prises au sérieux.

[11] Audrey: Les gars, je pense pas que les gars se font ça entre eux autres. Peut-être que ça se fait de manière plus naturelle. Y vont parler de qu'est-ce qu'y aiment pis de quels shows qu'y sont allés voir, mais moi j'ai toujours l'impression que je subis un interrogatoire, un peu comme eh : « Quessé tu fais ici? C'est pas ton chum? Ben là m'a te driller un peu, c'est quoi cette affaire-là! »

[12] Stephanie: Moi j'ai déjà eu cette impression-là, que genre on pouvait pas parler de musique parce que je juste là tsé? Je pense que c'est ça le struggle pour les femmes. On est peut-être moins pris au sérieux que les hommes tsé, mettons, côté, si jamais tu voulais avoir une conversation sur la musique.

*"Not Like the Other Ones:" Demonstrating Their Passion for Metal*

[13] Melissa: Souvent, je me suis fait dire, pis je l'avais vu avec d'autres filles 'Tabarnak! A headbang donc ben!' Ça, on dirait que c'est une marque de respect. De headbanger, de triper dans le show, pis t'es pu vu comme 'Oh la fille a tripe pas métal, est là avec son chum.' Nonon, a tripe foncièrement sur la musique. Hem. Je pense que ça, ça fait vraiment, t'as, t'as juste. Le lien est là,

y va se faire. Pis ça va distinguer vraiment la fille qui est là parce qu'a tripe, versus la fille qui est là parce que eh, y'a le réseautage, le côté eh 'On se rejoint en famille,' pis t'as le côté de 'Je suis avec mon chum.'

[14] Eric: C'est plus rare, parce que c'est très physique, pis, de par la constitution naturelle, les, les, tsé j'aime pas ça dire ça, mais les physiques, tsé les plus petits bras, les plus petites tailles, tsé les gars généralement sont plus, tsé sont plus gros, sont, on mange un moment donné on a une bédaine pis on déplace de l'air, pis je veux dire, c'est plus hem, c'est plus rough. Mais tsé, ma première blonde elle allait dans les slams pis c'est comme, 'Tassez-vous là!' Pis même si des fois, comme a mangeait un coup de coude comme n'importe quel autre gars, ben était contente de ça pis comme : 'Yeah! Je l'ai fait!' Pis c'était clair que c'était comme une fierté supplémentaire de sortir avec une fille, ça a l'air niaiseux, à l'époque, qui allait slammer. Parce que c'était comme, 'Ma blonde elle est pas comme les autres, ma blonde elle a va slammer,' Tsé? Dans un milieu d'hommes.

[15] Eve: Les femmes je trouve, y sont, soit comme vraiment tomboy, en général, ou soit super pitounes. Y'en a entre-deux, mais moins. Je trouve que, souvent là, y'en a qui sont vraiment comme super maquillées pis comme eh, pis y'en a d'autres qui sont vraiment plus comme, tee-shirt métal.

[16] Melissa: J'ai comme 2 catégories. Eh, la catégorie : 'filles pour qui l'apparence, c'est super important.' Donc elle va vraiment, tu le vois beaucoup eh, les filles eh au niveau du black metal, tsé, avec la ceinture à balles, les décolletés, est habillée en cuir, le gros makeup noir, un gros, quand-même un gros makeup, eh tsé y'a un esthétique associé au style. Pis eh t'as le côté, tsé, les filles avec genre des bottes à cap, eh, mais tsé de construction, pis eh. Faque au fond, sont habillées un peu plus masculin. Je te dirais, y'a comme, t'as un côté très eh, très 'petite fille,' t'en as un petit peu, mais pas beaucoup, mais t'as soit la fille un peu plus poupoune mais qui est très, située dans un genre, pis t'as la fille qui, eh, a s'en câlisse. Je te dirais, au niveau physique, je pense que ça influence un peu la personnalité. Ben ça donne une expression à la personnalité. Eh, la fille métal qui est plus poupoune a tendance à, elle, cruiser. [...] Ste fille-là qui est peut-être un petit peu plus négligée, entre guillemets, non. Elle elle s'en va là parce qu'elle tripe métal.

[17] Eve: S'habiller comme un gars dans le fond, ça serait ça, ça passerait bien, parce que c'est comme ça qu'un métalleux s'habille normalement. Faque dans le fond, le masculin extrême est juste comme quelqu'un qui s'habille, je trouve, plus normal, pour cette scène métal.

[18] Stephanie: Beaucoup de filles ont l'impression que pour être prises au sérieux, faut pas trop comme se mettre belles, faut pas trop se mettre en valeur, faut pas trop, tsé faut quasiment avoir l'air comme un des gars.

[19] Emily: L'important c'est d'être soi-même et de s'assumer. Une fille super masculine, qui agit pas mal comme un homme, qui s'habille pas mal comme un homme, c'est correcte. C'est bien accepté.

[20] Stephanie: Zéro problème!

[21] David: Comment je pourrais l'expliquer. Je sais vraiment pas comment l'expliquer. La femme idéale mettons dans le métal, va vouloir se, se mettre, câline, se mettre comme belle mais sans nécessairement se, en tout cas, c'est vraiment dur à dire là! Haha! J'ai des images dans ma tête pis j'ai de la misère à la dire en mots. Une fille qui va dire beaucoup de grossièretés, tsé des, agir un peu comme un homme là, c'est trop de masculinité là ouais, en tout cas.

[22] Nathan: Elle va essayer de montrer qu'elle est plus masculine, faque elle va avoir eh, elle va essayer de chuger plus de bière, elle va crier fort, pis elle va essayer de, de montrer qu'elle est, qu'elle est tough elle aussi tsé. [...] Je pense que c'est peut-être aussi le, le fait que la, la scène soit prédominée par des gars faque a doit côtoyer probablement plus de gars, pis que ça finit par déteindre sur elle aussi tsé. Je pense c'est juste un, un attitude de tribu si on veut, comme pour, pour être sûre de faire partie de la gang, ben je va chuger ma bière moi aussi, mais finalement y'a personne qui y a demandé ou quoi que ce soit.

### *Being Critical of Gender Expectations*

[23] Naomie: Elle a été rejetée, eh pis a se retrouve pas dans eh, dans justement ce que la société va attendre d'une femme. [...] Je pense que nous les femmes tsé on, on se fait dire, dès qu'on est jeunes, qu'on peut pas juste être belles au naturel, qu'y faut en plus se mettre quelque chose pour être jolies. On a été tellement eh, faut faire ressortir notre féminité, faque c'est tellement inculqué je pense, chez soi, eh depuis très longtemps, que on se sent peut-être tout nues quand on a pas ça. Faque une femme qui a pas envie de se conformer à rien, a va peut-être plus se reconnaître dans un milieu où eh, naturellement, les gens ne se conforment pas aux stéréotypes.

[24] Emily: La fille métalleuse conteste beaucoup plus la société mainstream que le gars métalleux. Les gars sont déjà supposés avoir les feelings d'agressivité, violence, tandis que les filles non. Faque être une fille dans le métal, c'est être contestataire des attentes.

[25] Emily: J'ai une robe à fleurs et je l'ai jamais mise à un show, mais peut-être que je vais la porter dans le fond. Ça serait vraiment métal d'arriver à un show avec ma robe à fleurs [...] parce que c'est pas habituel. Ça irait à l'encontre des attentes. Ça serait contestataire, donc ça serait vraiment métal.

[26] Nora: Faque je fais ça, je trouve ça drôle, je vais porter un tee-shirt d'un artiste pop quand que je vais dans un show extrême, ou tsé j'arrive en robe, super girlie pour voir un show brutal, grind, je trouve ça drôle parce que oui y'a du monde que ça leur fait chier.

[27] Naomie: J'allais tout le temps m'acheter avant un show métal, une petite robe qui avait pas rapport. [...] Vraiment là, j'étais comme la fille qui arrivait dans le tas, pis que tu disais : "Quessé ça!" Ça a toujours été mon but. Eh, qui était quand-même pas trop loin du métal, mais ça se pouvait que j'arrive avec une robe avec des fleurs qui était pas noire. [...] C'était drôle parce que tout le monde me disait toujours, y'étaient tout le temps surpris que je sois métal. [...] Je me fous un peu de ce qu'y..., je trouve ça niaisieux des jugements par rapport à ça, honnêtement.

[28] David: C'est des femmes souvent qui vont être vont avoir tendance à beaucoup plus s'affirmer, donc elles vont tenir beaucoup leur point, leurs idées, y'ont des idéologies pis y vont tenir eh, ces idéologies-là beaucoup plus que on dirait les autres. [...] Souvent, un homme qui

essaye de manipuler une femme, ben tsé des fois ça réussit, c'est pas rare qu'on voit ça une femme qui se fait manipuler pis que finalement ben, ses idées de départ, qu'elle avait, elle les laisse de côté pour l'homme. Tandis qu'une femme souvent qui va écouter le métal, ben elle elle va beaucoup plus affirmer ses hem, ses, ses, ses idées.

[29] Audrey: Ça veut pas dire que tu l'affiches, mais je, tsé, je suis sûre que dans ma gang de filles que je connais qui est métal, y'a ben plus de filles qui ont pas d'enfants. Pas que ça serait mal vu de, mais c'est plus des filles qui font, qui vont s'occuper d'eux autres. Qui vont faire une carrière. C'est pas trop le genre de filles à être bonniches avec son mari là. Faque féministes dans ce sens-là, de dire eh, peut-être moins traditionnelles, dans, dans la vie de couple. Peut-être plus eh, tsé, qui, pas qui, qui est plus forte, mais [...] elle attend pas que le gars ouvre la porte tsé.

[30] Naomie: Faut que tu sois forte, que tu t'affiches, que t'ailles pas peur du jugement, pis que eh, mais aussi, que tu te voies pas comme une version faible d'un homme. Souvent c'est ça hein être féministe, souvent les, tsé on voit la femme comme étant quelqu'un qui a besoin d'être protégé et tout là, donc je pense qu'une femme métal se voit comme l'égale de l'homme, donc forcément féministe. [...] On pense souvent qu'on veut, que les féministes, c'est revanchard. Alors que dans mon point de vue, c'est pas revanchard, c'est juste de prendre sa place. C'est de pas, tsé j'ai pas à m'excuser d'être là, là. Je respire de l'air, j'ai le droit comme toi.

### **The Tour Mom**

#### *The "Next Best Thing:" Taking on Active Roles*

[31] Stephanie: Ben je sais pas pourquoi, mais on dirait que dans le monde en général, y'a moins de musiciennes que de musiciens. Pourquoi? J'en sais rien. Parce que la musique, tsé jouer un instrument, ça a pas de genre tsé on s'entend. Donc vu que y'a moins de filles qui jouent des instruments, ben la prochaine affaire, comme, l'autre façon de s'intégrer, ça serait justement de participer plus dans les trucs logistiques.

[32] Stephanie: J'ai remarqué que beaucoup de femmes sont, y s'impliquent dans la scène en, mettons, comme, comme en travaillant pour la scène. Comme faire de la promotion, booker des spectacles tsé? Ou même eh travailler dans les salles de spectacle, tsé? J'ai remarqué que beaucoup des filles font ça. Pis hem je pense que ça, que ça l'aide, parce que ça montre qu'y sont vraiment committed, qu'y sont là pour les bonnes raisons.

[33] Audrey: De travailler, là, de, d'être une femme, là c'était vraiment une limite, un obstacle important. Sérieux là. C'est comme eh pelleter, mais dans le vent. [...] Si le moindrement je me penchais pour plugger un fil, là le fait que j'étais une fille, 'Ah voyons donc! T'es pas capable de plugger un fil!' Bon ben, y'était persuadé, 'Dégage pis je vais m'occuper du fil.' Allô! Allô! Je m'appelle pas Roger, là, je m'appelle pas Roger, mais en même temps, on est en 2000, pis les filles là, on est capables de plugger des fils. Mais ça, ça use! Tout le temps, d'avoir à répéter ça, pis à toujours refaire face à ça, de te faire traiter comme la petite madame, 'Écoutez ma petite madame,' là, quand tu vas acheter un char, ben c'est ça. Quand tu travailles dans musique, c'est comme ça: 'Écoute ma petite madame, écoute là,' le mansplaining!

[34] Nora: Oh! A cunt! A cunt, like. [...] La réalité de la chose c'est qu'il faut être fucking above perfect. Tsé it's like, y faut être encore plus que parfait qu'un homme qui fait la même job. Faut être exigent, faut être perfectionniste, faut être demanding as fuck, faut être strict as fuck. [...] You cannot let them walk over you. Ça vaut pour n'importe qui, mais surtout en tant que femme, parce que, 'Oh tsé, it's just a girl, it's okay.' Non. Il faut aller above and beyond pour être encore plus dure, encore plus difficile, tout ça. Encore là, de faire ses preuves, pis quand les bands ont vu que, 'Oh shit! C'est une bitch!' [...] Ça paraît bitch, mais finalement: 'Non pas du tout! Est pas bitch pour deux cennes! Est juste vraiment trop à son affaire!'

[35] Melissa: Les filles se soucient davantage, un peu plus, de ton confort. Faque, exemple, si t'as un show d'organisé par une fille, eh, je trouve qu'y va avoir un petit peu plus de détails portés à, d'attention portée au [inaudible]. Les filles vont faire plus attention aux bands qui viennent. [...] Côté organisation, les bands sont contents de ça. Pis y veulent surtout eh, de ce que j'ai compris, la scène en Amérique du Nord est un petit peu plus free-for-all, on accorde moins d'importance au bien-être du band, on a moins d'investissements aussi par rapport à ça qu'en Europe, par exemple, donc c'est vraiment au promoteur de faire des très gros efforts pour satisfaire le band, mais tsé, une toute petite affaire pour faire comme, 'Tu vas avoir des carottes au lieu de manger de la pizza,' ben ça c'est une fille [inaudible]. Pis les gars sont super contents. Faque ouais, y vont peut-être avoir ce petit côté-là, un petit peu plus 'maman' qui va apparaître, pis plus de filles qui vont s'impliquer au niveau organisationnel, pis c'est, personne se plaint.

### **The Approved Musician**

#### *Bearing Their Gender on Their Shoulders: The Need for a Symbolic "Seal of Approval"*

[36] Melissa: Chez les filles, eh, c'est sûr que si on parle, à part de chanter, de faire d'autres instruments, de, d'organiser des shows, eh, y vont peut-être avoir quand-même eh, certains clichés à abattre, comme, 'T'es une fille, c'est quoi, tu tripes sur le métal?' Ou, 'Ah faut que tu joues mieux!' Tsé : 'Ton drumming faut qu'y soit super tight,' pis tu vas avoir le jugement avec les gars qui jugent les qualités musicales des filles, ou comme, qui jugent des qualités, là y vont juste donner une excuse, 'Ouais ben t'es une fille.' Ben ça, c'en est risible comme ça, j'ai l'impression.

[37] Jennifer: J'ai l'impression que quand que c'est des filles, là on va vraiment checker, 'Sont tu bonnes pour de vrai là!' Pis y'a encore, toujours un le genre de, pas de tabou, mais on ressent le besoin de, d'officialiser là, 'Ok eux autres sont correctes.'

[38] Jennifer: Tu vas faire une audition, c'est sûr que, tu cherches un guitariste pis là t'as une fille qui vient faire une audition, ben là les gars vont se dire, 'Oh boy! On va voir, tsé, de quoi qu'est capable!' Je pense, j'ai l'impression qu'y seront pas sûrs si a va être assez bonne.

[39] Annick: Y'a un gars, pis tsé comme la moitié de mon âge, qui vient me voir pis comme, y a tripé sur le show pis c'est super bon, pis là y vient me faire justement un commentaire sur la façon que je joue tsé? Comment? 'Mais tsé quand tu fais une note, place pas ça avant, tsé parce que moi j'ai pris des cours [d'instrument] je me demande pourquoi tu joues comme ça.' Jamais y'aurait dit ça à un gars. Jamais. Jamais. Jamais, jamais. Tsé? Y'aurait pu parler de, de technique,

ou de whatever, mais pas de la façon qu'y l'a faite, où y vient comme interroger, comme. C'est vraiment eh, vraiment bizarre. Comme, y'a analysé comment je joue là, pis là y se permet un commentaire tsé. Pis y'a pas dit que c'était pas bon, mais la façon qu'y a scruté comment je jouais pis qu'y se permet de me donner son analyse là.

[40] Eric: Oui y'a encore le: 'On se fait comparer à des chanteurs, faut être graves comme, essayer d'être le plus grave possible comme les, les autres chanteurs,' y'a probablement ça encore aussi, parce que comme je te dis, y'est, c'est tellement un monde d'hommes, que nos bases pour comparer ce qui est fait, c'est pas mal souvent des bases qui sont beaucoup plus proches de la masculinité que de la féminité. Faque c'est de ça qu'on va se servir pour évaluer tout le reste, tsé. D'une façon, oui, faut, tsé quand je disais 'one of the boys,' faut aussi que ça, ça, surtout si t'es musicien ou musicienne, faut que tu puisses performer à la hauteur d'un homme.

[41] Eve: Des fois y'a des bands qui sont big pis je suis comme, ayoye genre, la chanteuse est pas très bonne, mais elle a des gros seins. Est chix. Ben je trouve que c'est de-même dans le métal: 'Ah c'est une femme! Oh wow! A joue de la basse! Wow a joue du drum! Esti qu'est hot!' Tsé? Pis là des fois je suis comme, 'Ouain, mais ça, si c'était un gars là, tu le trouverais pas bon!'

[42] Annick: Je vois une fille musicienne pis je va la checker. Juste le fait que je la check plus que les autres, parce que tsé, j'espère qu'a soit bonne, parce que si est poche, c'est comme si moi aussi je l'avais sur mes épaules. C'est bizarre hein mais c'est comme si j'avais le poids du monde sur mes épaules, de pas me tromper parce que c'est comme si on, on est tellement pas nombreuses, on dirait qu'on porte le genre féminin. Faut qu'on donne l'exemple.

[43] Annick: Dès qu'y en a une qui est pas bonne, tu vois tout-de-suite la réaction du milieu, de dire, 'Oh si t'es pas bonne, si t'es pas capable de jouer, reste chez vous,' pis toute ça. Faque ça, ouain. Tsé, pis là justement tu vois le sexisme qui remonte, parce que ça leur donne un clou à taper dessus. Sont comme, tu le vois qu'y a du monde qui sont contents parce que ça justifie leur pensée, qu'y disent jamais, mais qui est omniprésente, que les filles peuvent pas jouer de musique.

[44] Jane: Des amies de filles qui jouent dans des bands, je parle, là c'est plus, c'est plus difficile. Dans le sens que faut qu'y torchent en crise. La fille à la guit, faut qu'elle soit dans un band de gars. Tandis qu'un gars moyen, ben a va être dans le band pareil parce que c'est des chums.

[45] Jennifer: Je pense pas qu'un band va mettre une fille dehors juste parce que c'est une fille. Mais c'est sûr, comme je te dis, y'a des gars que d'emblée, y voudront pas de filles dans leur band. Faque c'est sûr qu'en étant un gars, y'a des portes que tu te fais pas fermer.

[46] Annick: Tsé moi je serai jamais dans un band qu'y a pas de fille, je suis la fille du band. Je peux pas faire autrement tsé, comme. [...]. Pis là, [musicien 1, homme] y'avait dit: 'Heille crise, on pourrait avoir eh une autre [musicienne, femme]?' [...] Pis quand y'en a parlé à mon [bandmate 2, homme], y'a dit: 'Ah tsé on pourrait demander à ste fille-là?' Pis sa réponse, c'était comme, 'Ah non! Pas 2 filles dans le band!' Là j'étais comme, 'Quoi! Man! J'ai tu bien entendu!

Tu me niaises tu?’ Genre, ‘Pourquoi pas?’ J’ai tellement trouvé ça cave de sa part! Chuis comme, chuis quoi moi? Chuis ton objet marketing là?

*Embracing Femininity, but Not Too Much: Personal Connection and Physical Attractiveness*

[47] Melissa: les filles qui ont peut-être, les moins bonnes presses, si je prends l’expression en anglais, c’est les filles qui sont princesses une fois rendues à l’extérieur du stage. Ces filles-là sont moins bien vues dans la communauté. Hem, justement parce que là ça devient : ‘Ah ben là t’es high, eh, high maintenance,’ tsé, ou des choses comme ça, pis ça j’ai l’impression que la communauté métal, on aime pas trop ça, ste, ste côté princesse-là.

[48] Eve: Faque tsé, comme, que ce soit des belles femmes, pas obligé d’être, d’être LA plus belle, mais surtout si c’est la chanteuse, faut qu’a soit belle, là. Si tu joues de la basse, tu pourrais être plus en arrière. Tsé je sais pas mais c’est souvent de-même tsé. Eh mais bon, si, si la fille est belle pis qu’a joue du métal, là par exemple heille, eh, a va pogner encore plus tsé? [...] Ça c’est quelque chose par rapport à la société pis l’image de la femme tsé? C’est vraiment quelque chose. Mais oui dans le métal, c’est toujours aussi présent là. [...] C’est ça le public. Y’es masculin, faque c’est, y vont chercher ça.

[49] Nathan: Hem c’est con, mais je pense que la, l’apparence physique aide pour beaucoup à une femme dans la scène d’avoir du succès ou pas. Hem je pense à certains bands que c’est des, des chanteuses qui sont en avant pis à chaque fois qu’y changent de chanteuse ou quoi que ce soit, ben comme la fille c’est un pétard là, on va se le dire. Tsé peut-être qu’elle chante aussi bien que l’autre d’avant, mais elle a des plus gros seins faque tsé, justement, des fanboys qui vont triper sur elle ben intense, faque y vont voir en show juste pour voir la fille en vrai tsé.

[50] Jane: Que la fille se soit mis un p’tit top moulant, par exemple, ah là c’est marketing. Là c’est pour vendre. Là c’est pour attirer l’attention. Là c’est pour faire vendre. Pis des fois c’est pas la fille qui a décidé. Des fois, la fille a se sent obligée de jouer ste game-là.

[51] Annick: Y me fatiguent pas mal, parce qu’y ont foutu deux pitounes en avant, pis ça veut pas dire justement c’est des poseurs, mais comme eh, mais hem, mais tu vois, comme, y chantent pas bien, de un. Si t’écoutes l’album, c’est une chose parce qu’astheur en studio on fait des merveilles, c’est comme n’importe quoi, on peut tout arranger, pis je r’gardais les vidéos live, pis c’est comme, ok t’en as une avec les cheveux rouges, l’autres avec les cheveux bleus, sont ben ben eh, y’ont d’l’air des porn stars, littéralement. Faque y vendent le band par le sexe, pis ça c’est comme, ish! Ça, ça je trouve ça spécial. Parce que ça c’est très mainstream. C’est très pop. C’est très marketing. Pis ça fonctionne, mais ça pour moi c’est anti-métal, parce que c’est pas fait pour être mainstream.

[52] Emily: Si tu veux devenir musicienne, il faut que tu passes à-travers plus qu’un homme. C’est vraiment plus long avant d’avoir de la reconnaissance. Les premiers temps sont vraiment plus tough pour une femme que pour un homme qui veut réussir. Sauf qu’en fin de compte, une fois que tu as de la reconnaissance, que tu as passé cette étape difficile-là, tu as vraiment plus de visibilité. À partir de ce moment-là c’est plus facile de décoller.

*Empowerment and Fulfillment Through Metal*

[53] Jennifer: Si toi de ton bord t'as vécu des choses positives pis que t'as envie de parler de ton expérience positive, ben là on va te pointer du doigt parce que là tu rends l'expérience des autres moins graves! Tsé c'est comme si là, 'Ah ben ça dédramatise!' C'est pas normal que je, je sois mal à l'aise de parler de mon expérience positive parce que d'autres ont eu des expériences négatives. Tsé. C'est que ça penche toute d'un bord ou toute de l'autre eh, au niveau féministe là, on dirait que c'est ça. [...] pis je peux comprendre que c'est sûr que c'est frustrant, sauf que d'un côté, tu peux pas nier qu'y a des filles que ça leurs est jamais arrivé ça, pis qui ont eu une expérience super positive, pis on devrait être capables de n'en parler au même niveau là, positif pis négatif là. J'ai l'impression que c'est toujours tout ou l'autre.

[54] Melissa: T'es identifié comme un métalleux, on dirait que c'est par défaut, tu fais partie de la même famille. Y'a un côté, y'a un côté très accueillant au métal. Hem. Puis, justement, y'a le côté sécurité qui va apparaître avec. Hem, oui j'ai entendu parler d'histoires de filles dans les, dans la scène, tsé, y'a même eu de la marde qui s'est passée, mais proportionnellement à toutes les, tsé, des autres communautés musicales comme ça, y'a vraiment un, un côté beaucoup plus sécuritaire. Eh j'ai jamais, jamais eu peur.

[55] Sophie: J'ai jamais vu personne abandonner personne. Tsé? Même une fille qui s'était pété la tête solide! Oh qu'a s'était pété la tête! A fait du body surfing, avait tombé directe 'sa tête là! Pis tout ça, on lui a toutes parlé avant que les ambulanciers arrivent pis toute, qu'y a mettent sur la civière. [...] Le monde se watch vraiment bien! Tsé, Montréal, contrairement eh, tsé j'ai déjà perdu connaissance dans le métro! Quelqu'un m'a sortie mais ça a été long tsé. Je, j'aurais le moins fait : 'hiii!' dans un show, le monde aurait fait : 'T'es tu correcte?'

[56] Jane: [Je suis dans le métal à cause de] l'énergie? La gang? Les shows c'est comme eh, c'est comme un exutoire eh, incroyable. J'ai comme besoin de ma dose une fois par mois là, d'aller chanter, crier, transpirer, danser, peu importe, mais tsé de thrasher c'est de la danse dans le fond là.

[57] Annick: Tsé c'est comme, tu vas dans le métal justement parce que t'as l'air du yâbe pis tu t'en fous pis ça te tente pas toi de mettre des talons hauts pis de te maquiller tsé. Quand j'étais plus jeune, on était pas beaucoup dans le métal, mais y'en avait pas une seule qui se maquillait. On avait toutes des chandails x-large, même si on pesait 120 livres mouillées, avec des Docs, pis on allait dans le mosh pit nous aussi, on buvait de la bière, on s'en renversait dessus sans faire exprès. Tsé c'était comme, eh, c'était pas eh, c'était pas poseur là, c'était pas: 'Sois belle et tais-toi,' là? On était là, on gueulait 'Arrrgh!' Tsé? On avait l'air un peu débiles, mais on pouvait être nous-mêmes.

## *Anti-Metal Men According to the Respondents*

### **The Douchebag**

[1] Emily: Pas respectueux, douchebag. Qui est pas là pour la musique.

[2] Nora: Les 450 c'est eh les métalleux de fin de semaine. [...] Le monde eh rive-sud, rive-nord que tsé y'ont écouté System of a Down à la radio faque tsé sont full métal dans l'âme, pis tsé, c'est comme, j'va pas les appeler les posers parce qu'ils font vivre la scène autant que n'importe quelle personne full dédiée, mais tsé tu vois la différence en termes d'esthétique. Tu fais la différence en termes de qu'est-ce qu'ils font for the rest of the time. Tsé ils sortent pour le Heavy Montreal une fois par année, c'est pas mal ça. Aller voir Metallica si y viennent. Pis y se croient des purs et durs mais tsé t'es vois jamais dans les shows. Souvent ceux qu'on appelle les 450 c'est vraiment les douchebags. Tsé c'est des, c'est des yo-bro pis tsé c'est les baveux de fin de semaine qui sont, comme j'ai dit, métalleux pour une fin de semaine ou deux par année là.

[3] David: C'est des gens qui auront pas, des valeurs de, de, de, s'instruire, ben pas de s'instruire mais de, tsé se tenir au courant ce qui se passe dans le monde, se tenir au courant de, tout ça là la politique tsé, y se tiennent pas au courant de rien. [...] Des gens qui auront pas tendance à, pas à s'ouvrir aux autres mais à se, faire attention aux autres qu'est-ce qui les entoure. Souvent c'est des gens qu'y ont, sont, souvent, y sont eux-mêmes, y'ont un cercle, mais ce qui se passe à l'entour, y l'voient pas. Pis y s'en foutent. Pis y sont bien là-dedans.

[4] Melissa: Y'a un côté comme enfant, y'aurait beau avoir 45, 40 ans, on dirait qu'y a un côté de gars de 18 ans. [...] Eh fait du pick-up, pis eh tsé, petite job manuelle à 15\$ de l'heure mettons. Genre un, y veut pas vraiment développer son avenir eh, peut-être même drogué.

[5] Melissa: De la consommation excessive d'alcool, consommation de coke eh, speed, etc. En fait, je les trouve même plus ouverts à l'idée de consommer, même si dans la communauté en général, ça consomme, eh, y se cachent pour consommer, pour eux-autres.

[6] Nathan: T'as le gros moron qui tripe un peu trop pis qui est, qui fout la merde. [...] Encore là, y'a toujours l'aspect des dualités entre le gros moron pis le gars civilisé qui est capable d'écouter, ou l'autre qui va répondre 'Heille crisse t'est tu fife?' Tsé? Je l'ai vu aussi faque.

[7] Sophie: Quand y'a quelqu'un qui tombe [dans le mosh pit], tout le monde le relève. Pis y'a personne qui est comme 'Mon tabarnak!' Tsé? C'est tout le temps genre 'Heille t'es tu correcte? Je t'ai pas vu!' Tsé? C'est jamais genre, ça a l'air violent, des fois ça l'est, mais y'en a jamais un qui est là vraiment pour fesser quelqu'un directement, avec la volonté de fesser quelqu'un. Mais souvent, les gens qui se ramassent à faire ça, c'est des gens qui vont jamais à des shows de métal, pis c'est des gens qui sont pas habitués, pis c'est con, mais y'a certaines règles non-dites tsé. Pis [les gens qui sont violents dans le mosh pit] c'est des gens aussi qui, je sais pas, qui essayent de se prouver.

[8] Jane: Y'a des gars des fois dans le thrash qui en profite pour attraper une fesse ou un sein « Oh! Ça a adonné de-même! Ma main a, ooohhh!» Ça, ça m'est déjà arrivé. Mais c'est pas la

majorité des gars, tsé, qui font ça, mais oui c'est déjà arrivé tsé. Des gars dans le thrash qui en profitent pour tripoter.

### **The Fanatic**

[9] Audrey: Même si moi j'écoute du métal extrême, on, souvent on se trouve à faire beaucoup d'autodérision dans ces styles-là, pis y'en a qui font, que c'est très sérieux pour eux autres, ben on les ostracise un peu.

[10] Sophie: Y'en a que c'est comme 'Ah ça c'est toutes des vrais, ça c'est un vrai, ça c'est une vraie' Être un vrai ou une vraie, c'est quoi? T'aimes ça? T'aimes pas ça? [...] Je trouve ça immature. Je trouve que c'est, c'est souvent des jeunes métalleux tsé. [...] On dirait qu'avec les divergences de différents styles aussi, on dirait qu'y en a qui se séparent un peu comme je disais, tsé, des petits couples qui se séparent, avec différent styles 'Ah moi j'aime pas ça ce style de métal-là, c'est cave.' C'est plus le, le premier vrai côté underground je pense que, tsé les gars qui se disent ça, c'est peut-être leur manière de dire ça. 'Le vrai, le début où est-ce que c'était agressif pis moi je veux rester de-même. Les petites affaires de tapettes avec les lala, j'aime pas ça, c'est pas ça du métal.'

[11] Jane: Y'a des personnes qui sont eh nihilistes un peu, aussi. Tsé? On les voit depuis 20 ans dans des shows, mais y jasant pas trop. On dirait que eux, pour eux, y'a certains bands que c'est très très important, c'est très codé 'Moi je vais voir ste band-là, mais pas lui', y dénigre eh, y dénigre les scènes, dénigre les bands.

[12] Sophie: T'as des gens qui sont totalement boqués. Moi j'ai rencontré un gars que c'était juste du black metal pis y'avait rien d'autre que du black metal pis qu'aussitôt qu'y entendant un autre style ben y riait de l'autre style.

[13] Jane: Y'en a des téteux là, ça m'énerve là! Tsé? 'Ah mon, moi je suis allé voir le guitariste pis j'ai un, j'ai un autre pic pour ma collection de pics!' Ben y vont traiter les filles de groupies, mais eux autres, eux autres non. Eux autres c'est pas des groupies. Eux autres c'est des 'collectionneurs de pics'! Tsé? Faque moi, si je vais voir un band, c'est parce que je suis une groupie, mais lui si y y va, c'est parce que c'est pour sa collection de pics, tu comprends?

[14] Nora: J'ai pas connu de gars groupies qui réussissaient à se pogner des gars dans les bands parce que veut veut pas c'est predominantly straight là, veut veut pas. Mais des gars groupies que if they could, they would, moi j'ai eu un chum, [...] j'ai réalisé très rapidement qu'il s'en câlissait d'être avec moi, il était impressionné par le fait que je connaissais les gars de bands. [...] Tsé j'avais vraiment vu rapidement que c'était comme, tsé il voulait savoir si j'avais couché avec des gars de bands parce que c'est one time removed, faque les gars de-même j'en ai beaucoup connu.

[15] Sophie: [Le fan qui était à côté était comme]'Yeah! So, yeah! So take this' Là tu voyais que le chanteur était comme écoeuré de l'entendre parler tsé [...] pis y me regarde 'I love your tattoo! I love, what is that?' Pis là je commence à parler avec lui, mais là le fanboy, y'est en tabarnak. Y dit 'Heille toé! Heille toé là, crisse! [...] Tu sais tu c'est qui lui!?' Là j'étais comme 'C'est le chanteur de [nom du groupe]' Pis y'était comme 'Ouain! Ouain! C'est Dieu! Pis là t'es t'entraîn del' déranger!' Mais... 'Pourtant c'est lui qui me parle' 'Ah ouain ben là tu me déranges moi,

parce que moi j'étais en train de parler avec lui!' Pis là le gars me pète une crise comme une petite fille.

[16] Jennifer: Ben j'ai un exemple qui me vient en tête. Ça serait, mettons, le gars arrogant qui se pense meilleur que tout le monde, pis super élitiste là, qui connaît des bands que personne d'autre connaît, pis eh lui y'a fait ça, pis lui y connaît tel, pis eh. Du monde qui name dropent 'Ah moi je connais le chanteur de ci pis le guitariste de ça.' Ben tout le monde s'en sacre. [...] Pis ça revient à une question de confiance, tsé. Quand t'as pas confiance en toi t'as besoin de dire 'Oh oui j'ai fait ça, je connais lui' tsé, parce que toi c'est pas assez, faque faut que tu cites tout ce que t'as fait pis tous tes acquis tsé.

[17] Stephanie: Mettons, je pense qu'il y en a quand-même des puristes là, qui, qui veulent, parce que là c'est, là on commence à parler de question d'identité, tsé? Il y a des gens qui sont pas à l'aise dans leur identité donc ils essayent vraiment de se former dans un cadre, donc je pense que y'en a des métalleux comme ça, qui vont pas assumer qu'ils ont d'autres goûts musical, musicaux.