Paula ROWE, *Heavy Metal Youth Identities: Researching the Musical Empowerment of Youth Transitions and Psychosocial Wellbeing*

Secil Sen

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références contenues dans chaque article, résumées dans de longues bibliographies, fournissent de précieux repères pour explorer le récent foisonnement des études sur les musiques populaires et le metal.

Il semble cependant important de se poser la question de la cohérence ou des dissonances d'un courant de recherche qui rassemble un grand nombre d'approches autour d'une esthétique musicale. Si l'intérêt d'étudier un objet musical tel que le metal réside dans sa spécificité – et les représentations marginales qui lui sont rattachées – il est toujours nécessaire de se poser la question de la transposabilité de ces analyses à d'autres objets d'étude, afin de nourrir de nouvelles approches méthodologiques et théoriques qui ne parleraient pas qu'aux seuls initiés de ce registre musical. Ce que le metal peut nous apprendre sur les scènes, sur le genre ou sur le son, comme en témoignent bon nombre de contributions de cet ouvrage, tient précisément dans l'observation des formes de création, de production et de consommation qui s'opèrent aux marges des pratiques culturelles les plus partagées – tant qu'elles ne tombent pas dans une fétichisation de l'objet – et rendent identifiables des mécanismes qui peuvent s'avérer opérants dans l'analyse d'autres phénomènes musicaux ou culturels. C'est en œuvrant en ce sens que Global Metal Music and Culture représente un jalon important des « metal studies » et démontre la progression du champ qui, en cherchant à s'institutionnaliser sous la forme d'un réseau international et transdisciplinaire de chercheurs, de publications collectives et de colloques spécialisés (ISMMS), revendique tout autant sa visibilité que son utilité.

Paula Rowe, *Heavy Metal Youth Identities: Researching the Musical Empowerment of Youth Transitions and Psychosocial Wellbeing*, Bingley, Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018

Par Secil Sen

Since heavy metal emerged in the late 1960s, it has brought about several disputes among parents and political authorities as to heavy metal's assumed threat to social morals and child-rearing conditions. Heavy metal music was associated with drugs and promiscuous sex, meaning that the youth knew no boundaries (Weinstein, 2000: 3). Furthermore, because the lyrics in heavy metal music concerned parents, the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) requested in 1985 a US Senate hearing, so that it could be proven that the lyrics glorified suicide, incest, rape etc. (which was mentioned in detail in Weinstein's book *Heavy Metal: The Music and*

Its Culture [2000]). Young metalheads were assumed to be problematic and have lower success at school than others. Works such as *The Heavy Metal Subculture and Suicide* (1994) problematized heavy metal by showing a connection between young people who identified with heavy metal subculture and suicide rates. However, in her book, Paula Rowe focuses on the positive effects of young people's tendency toward heavy metal.

Rowe takes the topic of heavy metal and youth to another dimension by focusing more on the reasons why young people tend to construct metal identities and how they continue with these metal identities in their young adult years. She aims to enlighten what young people find interesting in metal music, what "being metal" provides them with, how their aspirations are shaped in the beginning of their working lives. The book starts with a personal and historical introduction. She recalls her own experiences as a metalhead and heavy metal's influence on the society with both political and societal consequences. She explains how she conducted an "insider" research, drawing upon her metalhead past, even though there is a 20 years gap between her and her interviewees. She collected data through in-depth face-to-face interviews and repeat interviews with the same participants. Her sample of interviewees consists in 28 young metal fans: 5 females and 23 males from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, but all aged between 18-24, and based in Adelaide, South Australia.

Paula Rowe divided her book into two sections. The first section focuses on "becoming metal" and the second on "being metal". In the first one, she examines how young people meet heavy metal and the reasons why they are attracted to it, how

they feel when they listen to heavy metal, how the others perceive their metal looks (especially at school) and how the feeling of belonging to the metalhead community generates positive effects on their lives. The section is itself divided into three chapters, where Paula Rowe analyzes each research participant as a specific case study. Through detailed narratives, she counters the traditional assumptions about young metalheads:

"Jake's and Alex's quotes don't align with the stereotypical profiling of metalheads as apathetic and demotivated that have been put forth in the academic and popular literature. Other participants further reported that listening to metal was a motivator for completing schoolwork, testing one's self physically and mentally and enhancing tenacity at a range of tasks. This may not be the case for all young metalheads, but those I came to know through this research certainly challenged the long-standing stereotypes of metal youth as being rather useless, showing that they are in fact quite capable of much more than some would believe." (48)

The author also points out that young metalheads manage to transform peer pressure to their advantage, which provides them with social protection. She writes:

"It was absolutely clear that the metal youth I spoke to absolutely felt that they had reconstructed the 'damaged stereotypes' assigned to them by more popular peers (or at least imagined) into 'chosen' identities that were capable of disrupting the dominant norms at school. The 'shy' became the 'shocking', the 'quiet' became the 'dangerous', the 'small' became the 'powerful', the 'fat' became the 'frightening' and the 'weird' became the 'mysterious' or 'unique'." (67)

Through her research, she proves that heavy metal helps young people protect themselves against their peers' offensive actions and gives them enough power and confidence to survive school years.

She also takes into consideration the participants' socioeconomic status alongside with their thoughts on young metalheads who listen to other subgenres. She draws the reader's attention to another aspect of the topic:

"Whereas L-SES³ and M-SES⁴ participants might not have enjoyed all the types of metal, they still considered themselves to be deeply connected to the entire global metal community (as they described it), and generously found merit in all styles of metal whether they personally liked it or not." (93)

"However, this was not the case for the H-SES⁵ participants who tended to construct 'community' and 'belonging' quite differently and, in effect, tried to narratively set themselves apart from the other metalheads." (92).

At this point, she only questions this situation and leaves it open for further research.

3 L-SES: Low Socio Economic Status

4 M-SES: Medium Socio Economic Status

5 H-SES: High Socio Economic Status

In the second section, Paula Rowe displays another aspect of her research, drawing on interviews she conducted with the same participants 5 years later. She focuses on their transition to working life, when the interviewees are done constructing their metal identities and start their adult lives. This section is divided into four sub-sections. She questions whether the participants have reached their life goals and how their metal identities helped them become who they wanted to be. Furthermore, she points out that, contrary to general assumptions, young metalheads can become responsible adults. As stated in the book, most of the participants had dreams of becoming huge metal musicians or aimed to choose music-related career paths where they could deal with what they love. Apart from that, some participants also mentioned that they wanted to organize metal-related travels, so that they could visit hometowns of their metal idols. Rowe recounts the stories of the participants in detail and emphasizes how heavy metal influenced their youth dreams and became the motive for their lives. She also investigates how parents' behaviors affect young metalheads. She writes:

"Stating that parents were 'cool' (or mostly cool) with metal preferences and activities was a very common theme among participants. Very few parents had outright objections, but a notable exception was Jake's mother who deemed it the 'devil's music' and did not want to hear it coming from his room. Some other parents made suggestions for their sons to cut their hair to improve their chances of finding work. But in the main, parents were generally regarded as 'cool' or 'chilled'. (146) The author questions being "cool" and "chilled" further by looking deeper into each participant's family dynamics. Furthermore, she categorizes parenting styles and siblings,

which enables us to see how the behaviors of parents and siblings can influence youth transitions negatively or positively.”

I suggest that analyzing the experiences of an equal number of female metalheads would have created a different overall picture. The author certainly includes female participants and their detailed interviews; however 23 participants out of 28 are male. She is aware that the gender balance unfortunately was not reached. But not working with an equal number of participants from both genders could still be accepted as a negative aspect of the research.

With her insider experience and research in the field of youth studies, no doubt Rowe contributes to metal music studies. She manages to show us that earlier research did not include the metal youth transitions and demonized “metal music”. Therefore, Rowe’s book is definitely very well written and includes a detailed research, which shows us the importance of heavy metal to young people. The book definitely brings up further topics to research about “being metal” that would require other resources: heavy metal lyrics and their effect on gender diverse metal youth and gender sensitivity, individualized social action and its influences in politics, skill development and family perspectives.

Bibliographie

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Pauwke Berkers & Julian Schaap, *Gender Inequality in Metal Music Production*, Bingley, Emerald Publishing, 2018

Par Charlène Bénard

La collection Emerald Studies in Metal Music in Culture, dirigée par Rosemary Lucy Hill et Keith Kahn-Harris, dont le but est d’encourager les études pluridisciplinaires sur le metal et de soutenir les jeunes chercheurs, fait paraître en juin 2018 son présent premier ouvrage, *Gender Inequality in Metal Music Production*. Écrit par le sociologue des arts de la culture Pauwke Berkers et son ancien doctorant (désormais docteur) Julian Schaap, il propose de quantifier ces inégalités à l’échelle mondiale. L’ouvrage fait suite à une première enquête réalisée sur YouTube (Berkers & Schaap, 2014), dont le but était d’éclaircir la manière dont les femmes utilisent Internet pour rendre visibles leurs compétences musicales, *via* des reprises vocales. Les auteurs parviennent donc à la question du présent ouvrage : combien de femmes sont réellement engagées dans la production de la musique metal ?

Il faut d’abord apporter une précision quant à l’emploi du terme « production », qui

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