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"STATEMENT OF VINDICATION": A FEMINIST CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF KATHLEEN HANNA'S LYRICS

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“Beware; for I am fearless, and therefore powerful.”

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

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Resumen

La música puede estudiarse y abordarse no sólo como un modo de expresión e interacción, sino también como una herramienta de activismo, reivindicación y entendimiento. Esta conexión entre la música y los aspectos sociales, políticos y culturales ha hecho que, analizándose desde un punto de vista feminista, se pueda observar la posición social que las mujeres han adquirido en la música a lo largo de la historia, a la vez que se muestra que, a pesar de ser sujetos activos en su producción, sus contribuciones han permanecido silenciadas. Así, la música se convierte no solo en una herramienta que refleja las distribuciones desiguales de poder, sino también en un instrumento que sirve para revisar y desafiar la invisibilidad de las mujeres en este campo. En este contexto, la crítica teórica feminista tiene una influencia directa en dicho cometido para examinar las condiciones sociales y culturales que contribuyen a esa exclusión, reivindicando su implicación en el arte y visibilizando sus trabajos.

Mi primer y principal objetivo en este trabajo es estudiar el poder político y social de la música para transformar, trasmitir mensajes políticos y trabajar en favor de la igualdad. De hecho, muestro que las letras de canciones son una producción cultural y artística que ayuda a la expansión de los Estudios de Género. Mi segundo objetivo es buscar características dominantes que tengan relación con el feminismo en las letras escritas por la cantante y compositora norteamericana Kathleen Hanna, en las bandas Bikini Kill, Julie Ruin y Le Tigre.

Bikini Kill (1990-1998) es considerada una de las bandas pioneras del movimiento Riot Grrrl. Famosa por sus actuaciones en el escenario y el contenido de las letras feministas radicales, aún hoy es considerada como una de las principales influencias de una generación. Más tarde, en el proyecto solista de Hanna en 1998, Julie Ruin, la cantante continuó con la esencia que hizo famosa a su banda inicial: sonidos rápidos, letras políticas y una fuerte personalidad. La banda de electro-punk y contenido feminista Le Tigre, por su parte, empezó a tocar en un momento en el que algunos expertos anunciaban ya que el Riot Grrrl había terminado, a principios del siglo XXI (1998-2006) y se consolidaron como un conjunto conocido y celebrado por la crítica musical gracias a sus interpretaciones y también debido al contenido de sus letras. En esta exploración, pretendo examinar si hay un progreso en los temas feministas que se cubren a lo largo de la extensa trayectoria como compositora y cantante de Hanna.

En tercer lugar, con esta contribución trato de distinguir el lugar que ocupa la obra de Kathleen Hanna en el movimiento Riot Grrrl, (del que es representante), la escena punk y, también en el contexto de la tercera ola del feminismo. Todos estos escenarios son de vital importancia para entender el contenido de las letras. Para completar estas metas, llevo a cabo un análisis crítico del discurso con perspectiva feminista (ACDF) de un corpus de texto formado por una selección de letras de canciones, con el fin de estudiar cómo las relaciones de poder son producidas, reproducidas y/o refutadas en el trabajo de Hanna. Para realizar este análisis recurro a nociones que autores y autoras como Norman Fairclough, John Langshaw Austin, Pedro Santander, Teun A. van Dijk, o Michelle M. Lazar explican en sus respectivas obras.

Mi hipótesis es que las letras de canciones contribuyen a la examinación de la experiencia de las mujeres en el arte; en particular, en la música. El ACDF se basa en la búsqueda de evidencias o pistas que descubren cómo un texto contribuye al discurso feminista, y mi intención es probar que hay maneras de reapropiarse del discurso y transformar sus características ideológicas para que sirvan en la lucha por la igualdad. La aplicabilidad de este tipo de análisis al carácter multidimensional de mi estudio representa nuevas direcciones y amplía las posibilidades a través de las cuales se puede estudiar la música.

Para contextualizar mi estudio, comienzo la sección 2 de éste haciendo una distinción entre sexo y género, dos categorías relacionadas que adquieren mucho significado dentro de la complejidad del análisis. Refiriéndome a los trabajos de Judith Butler y Candace West y Don H. Zimmerman, comienzo explicando que ambas categorías y las expectativas y estereotipos derivados de ellas ejercen una gran influencia, especialmente en las mujeres, y más particularmente explican su ausencia en una tradición histórica de géneros como la música punk. Así pues, se toma al sexo como una categoría asignada al nacer y basada en características anatómicas y biológicas que diferencian al sexo masculino y femenino, mientras que el género es un constructo social adquirido e interiorizado por todas las personas de la sociedad y que, a su vez, se cruza con otras categorías, como pueden ser la orientación sexual, la raza, o la clase. Las normas basadas en el género se incluyen en la división binaria hombre/mujer y masculino/femenino, y pese a que éstas difieren dependiendo de cada cultura, en general, cuando una persona no encaja en dicha clasificación puede ser discriminada o estigmatizada. Partiendo de esta diferencia entre sexo y género, se toma este último como un constructo opresor que abarca desde los estereotipos que definen lo masculino (productivo, activo, racional, independiente, etc.) o femenino (reproductivo, pasivo, emocional o dependiente), hasta estructuras más complejas, pasando por todos los estratos y dominios de la sociedad, donde el arte (en este caso la música) no es una excepción. De este modo, la música es una expresión artística que reproduce y perpetua ciertas convicciones fundamentadas en la desigualdad.

En la sección 3, centro la atención en el contexto teórico feminista. El feminismo es un movimiento político y social cuyo fin es conseguir la igualdad de derechos y oportunidades para las mujeres en las áreas personales, políticas, culturales, económicas y sociales. El feminismo surgió hace tres siglos y desde entonces ha evolucionado en lo que se conocen como las diferentes olas del feminismo. Si bien el feminismo empezó con ciertas reivindicaciones esporádicas en siglos anteriores, es a finales del siglo 19 (1830-1920) cuando las mujeres empiezan a organizarse de manera más activa y colectiva para poner de manifiesto su derecho al voto y su condición de sujeto racional. La convención de Seneca Falls de 1848, que tuvo lugar en Nueva York, significó un punto de inflexión y, en Europa, la primera década del nuevo siglo estuvo marcada por la formación del partido WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union). La segunda ola de los años 1960 tuvo un impacto mayor, especialmente en los Estados Unidos. Las reivindicaciones, esta vez, estaban relacionadas con la discriminación social y económica que sufrían las mujeres, el derecho al aborto y la salud reproductiva, la distribución del poder, y la diferencia, un concepto de gran relevancia dentro de esta segunda ola. También se comenzó a poner el foco en los asuntos y violencias que tenían lugar dentro del domicilio conyugal o familiar, pasando así lo "personal" a ser "político". Otras teorías como las centradas en denunciar al patriarcado

(constructo social basado en prácticas que garantizan la dominación del hombre y la subordinación y opresión de la mujer) también adquirieron gran relevancia.

Seguidamente, la tercera ola tomó un carácter más global, y las agrupaciones feministas se comenzaron a producir en todo el mundo y, a diferencia de las olas anteriores, la edad de las personas que las conformaban también sufrió alteraciones, ya que mujeres cada vez más jóvenes se unían al movimiento. Esta ola denunció la falta de inclusividad dentro del feminismo, y reivindicó la influencia de otros aspectos como la raza o la clase, los cuales se solapan con el género y afectan a la condición de las mujeres. Así, el término "interseccionalidad" fue acuñado e incluido como concepto básico de la tercera ola y el foco pasó de denunciar al opresor para centrarse en observar las identidades diversas de las personas oprimidas.

Esta ola se enfocaba en ideas nuevas y revolucionarias como la teoría queer, la diversidad sexual, el uso del lenguaje, el acoso sexual, los estereotipos, la violencia de género y, de hecho, estos conceptos también fueron de gran relevancia para el movimiento Riot Grrrl y se puede observar cómo también están presentes en las letras de las canciones analizadas. Si bien la teoría feminista y su evolución nos sirve para comprender de manera más precisa el contexto en el que surge la obra de la cantante Kathleen Hanna y sus reivindicaciones, también es necesario hacer un recorrido general por la historia de las mujeres en la música.

La sección 4 abarca cómo el trabajo de las mujeres cantantes, compositoras e instrumentalistas en la música occidental no está tan documentado como el de los hombres, pese a haber sido sujetos activos en la creación de música. Para ejemplificar esto analizo algunas de las principales razones de esta invisibilización. Una de ellas está fundamentada en el carácter excluyente del canon musical (principalmente formado por hombres blancos de clase media), el cual se basa en sistemas desiguales que tienden a resaltar y apoyar el trabajo de los hombres y silenciar el de las mujeres. Hasta bien entrados en el siglo 20, este canon nunca fue puesto en duda, pero es a partir de 1990 cuando la crítica musical feminista desarrolló un interés por encontrar mujeres músicas que estuvieran involucradas en la producción o distribución de música y decidió deconstruir esas narrativas desiguales en dicho campo.

Gracias a esas investigaciones se han podido conocer algunas de las diferentes razones que limitan la autoridad de las mujeres en la música. La primera es la educación y la dependencia económica, ya que el acceso a una buena formación y una economía solvente empoderan a las mujeres y les permiten contribuir mediante la toma de decisiones. Una segunda restricción es la maternidad, que todavía se venera como la condición más importante (y satisfactoria) en la vida de una mujer, pero que limita su poder de creación, ya que algunas se ven en el dilema de elección y otras se ven obligadas a intentar encontrar un equilibrio entre el trabajo y la maternidad. En tercer lugar, la música tiene una gran influencia en la construcción de la identidad como individuos e influye en la manera en que las personas se ubican dentro de una sociedad o grupo y en cómo conectan e interactúan con el resto. La adolescencia es una etapa clave en la que las y los adolescentes están expuestos a enormes tipos de insumos y, en el caso de la música, las niñas encuentran más problemas para identificarse con algunas formas de música como el rock o el punk, ya que carecen de modelos a seguir o mentoras que las precedan en esos géneros. También se ha estudiado cómo se suele animar a los niños a indagar en formas de música agresivas o de carácter fuerte (lo que reafirmaría su condición masculina),

mientras que la exposición de las niñas a géneros como el pop, por ejemplo, es mayor ya que sus características musicales se consideran más congruentes con su feminidad.

Además, una de las mayores limitaciones es la dimensión pública que conlleva la música. En general, las mujeres siempre han estado asociadas con valores tradicionales como la obediencia y la tranquilidad y se consideraba que aquellas mujeres que decidían ser músicas estaban realizando tareas poco femeninas. Para ejemplificar esta limitación, recurro a Lucy Green y su uso del término "exhibición" o "demostración" para dar evidencia de las tres posiciones diferentes que una mujer puede demostrar en la música (cantante, intérprete y compositora) y las derivaciones que puede tener en ellas.

Teniendo en cuenta estos obstáculos, aquellas mujeres que se atreven a participar y buscar una carrera en la música rock son comúnmente etiquetadas como "subversivas", acusadas de desempeñar roles que no están englobados dentro de las definiciones culturales convencionales de feminidad. A su vez, los críticos tienden a categorizarlas dentro de un género particular como "mujeres en el rock" o "mujeres en el punk". El requerimiento innecesario de agregar la palabra "mujer" a cualquier categoría refuerza la idea de que los hombres son lo natural y la norma dentro de ese campo. Por tanto, la actividad y la contribución de los hombres a la música se consideran estándar y la de las mujeres como algo especial e inusual que necesita un reconocimiento excepcional. Estas etiquetas pueden parecer resistentes en cierto modo, pero, al mismo tiempo, marginan a las mujeres, que se convierten en lo diferente, lo "otro", lo raro.

En la sección 5, hago un viaje por el movimiento punk y Riot Grrrl. A pesar de ser consideradas insurgentes y rebeldes por participar en ciertos géneros musicales, las mujeres jugaron un papel crucial en estos movimientos y sirvieron de base fundamental para sus reivindicaciones en la música. Para empezar, el movimiento y la escena punk valoraba la expresión original y no convencional y no otorgaba importancia alguna a la competencia vocal o el dominio instrumental. No había límites ni reglas establecidas en cuestión de estilo, aunque primaban los ritmos rápidos, expresivos y agresivos y las canciones cortas, evocando urgencia y basadas en una simple combinación de acordes. Pero el punk no solo determina la tendencia musical que cronológicamente nació alrededor de la década de 1970, sino que también incluye el movimiento estético y cultural DIY (Hazlo Tú Mismo) que acompañó a la producción musical. La actitud transgresora del punk y su filosofía poco convencional brindó más oportunidades para las mujeres, ya que les permitió mostrar un comportamiento más agresivo o sexual en el escenario y rechazar las normas culturales y las nociones tradicionales (la mayoría ligadas a su género). En general, podemos decir que el punk se convirtió en una oportunidad para que las mujeres saltaran algunas narrativas y discursos desiguales y sexistas que encontraban al participar en otros géneros musicales.

Sin embargo, a pesar de que la música punk ha sido descrita por su espíritu alternativo e inclusivo, las mujeres encontraron nuevos desafíos en su camino. Por un lado, algunas personas que han estudiado esta época e incluso sus protagonistas han afirmado que la música punk y su escena ha estado mayoritariamente representada por la configuración masculina, dejando de lado o silenciando a una gran variedad de bandas. Por lo tanto, son generalmente las historias de Sex Pistols, Ramones, The Clash o Dead Kennedys las que se

publican y contabilizan, pero menos personas reconocen o han oído hablar de grupos igualmente importantes como Los Crudos, Spitboy o Babes in Toyland, compuestos por mujeres o minorías étnicas.

Por otro lado, a principios de los 80, el hardcore ganaba terreno en Los Ángeles y el punk se convirtió en una escena más física (representada por sonidos más rápidos y agresivos). La escena estaba principalmente orientada a hombres blancos-heterosexuales y muchas mujeres se sentían inseguras o excluidas y se oponían a la dirección que estaba tomando esta escena musical. Como resultado, muchas se reunieron e iniciaron una red de activismo feminista que unía expresiones artísticas y teorías feministas: el denominado movimiento Riot Grrrl.

El Riot Grrrl surgió en la década de los 90 y fue un movimiento conformado por políticas feministas que redefinió la escena punk a la vez que alentó a las niñas a participar en la producción cultural de música o fanzines. Quienes participaron en ella encontraron un espacio seguro y rompieron el enfoque estereotipado de género del punk y algunas de sus narrativas excluyentes. Las bandas que nacieron del Riot Grrrl utilizan las letras de canciones como una forma de expresión y con ellas comparten experiencias personales y políticas. Muchas bandas como Bikini Kill, Bratmobile o Huggy Bear subvirtieron las nociones tradicionales de feminidad y articularon narrativas nuevas y revolucionarias. El movimiento contribuyó a un despertar sólido y poderoso del feminismo y puede ser retratado como un movimiento musical radical que, sin duda, contribuyó y estimuló la participación de las mujeres en la política feminista. Sin embargo, el Riot Grrrl carecía de un enfoque interseccional y ha sido duramente criticado por no incluir las realidades de las mujeres que difieren de las de las mujeres blancas de clase media que originalmente formaron el movimiento. Lo que no se puede negar es que ha tenido un impacto duradero y muchos protagonistas han confesado la enorme influencia que han tenido tanto el movimiento en sí como algunas de las bandas incluidas en él, Bikini Kill entre ellas, así como las letras de las canciones que hicieron populares a esas bandas.

Con respecto a las letras y la discusión formal sobre si carecen de calidad literaria para ser consideradas un campo digno de análisis científico, en la sección 6 de mi trabajo me centro en este debate, el cual resurgió a raíz de que el cantautor estadounidense Bob Dylan ganara el premio Nobel de literatura en el año 2016. Desde entonces, crecieron las opiniones y argumentaciones en la academia en relación a las letras y su carácter literario. Mientras que algunas personas consideran que las letras de las canciones y la poesía escrita están conectadas, otras argumentan que son dos géneros diferentes. Los trabajos de autores como Adam Bradley Lars Eckstein o Charlotte Pence arrojan luz sobre el tema y algunas de sus conclusiones son relevantes en mi estudio.

Personalmente, creo que estos dos géneros son diferentes, pero no excluyentes, y que las letras se pueden analizar con el mismo rigor académico que se aplica al análisis de la poesía. Es decir, al igual que analizamos el contenido literario de un poema (por ejemplo, su uso específico de la métrica o del lenguaje figurativo), y su repercusión en el o la receptora, también podemos estudiar esos rasgos en las letras de canciones. Como muestro con el ACDF, las letras son una plataforma efectiva para abordar asuntos sociales, políticos y culturales o para oponerse a las resistencias que se encontraban en la ideología patriarcal imperante, que también afectaba a la música. Bandas del movimiento Riot Grrrl como Bikini Kill emplearon las letras de

canciones para representarse como agentes activos, figuras poderosas, involucradas política y socialmente o disidentes contra el sistema.

Una vez argumentado esto y habiendo ahondado en el contexto que precede y en el que surgen las letras de la compositora Kathleen Hanna, el siguiente paso en mi trabajo y que abarca la sección 7 consiste en crear un corpus particular de textos basados en su contenido feminista. A su vez, divido mi estudio en unidades temáticas que se pueden encontrar tanto en la historia del feminismo como en la selección de las letras. Estos son: espacio y sororidad, patriarcado, poder, alienación y pensamiento binarista, lenguaje, sexualidad, violencia de género, política y revolución feminista. Una vez hecha esta clara clasificación, hago una lectura atenta de las letras y completo su análisis lingüístico prestando atención a elementos como la focalización, lenguaje figurado, dicción, prosodia, sintaxis o la estructura. Paralelamente estudio el discurso presente en ellas a través del ACDF.

De mi disertación concluyo que la música está enraizada en la vida social, desde su relación histórica con el entretenimiento y la cultura hasta su vínculo con las subculturas o como expresión de protesta. Es en esta última aproximación a la música donde yo sitúo mi estudio de las letras de canciones de Kathleen Hanna en Bikini Kill, Julie Ruin y Le Tigre como posibles discursos feministas. Tras el ACDF (que se acompaña con un necesario análisis contextual del periodo, entorno y ámbito cultural en el que se escribieron las letras) puedo afirmar que el trabajo de Hanna ocupa un lugar influyente dentro del movimiento Riot Grrrl, el punk y la tercera ola del feminismo. Su contribución representa la capacidad, agencia y poder de las mujeres para ocupar lugares y puestos (públicos) donde su presencia era limitada (o incluso negada) debido a razones ligadas con su sexo/género. Por ello y también por el carácter feminista de su producción, su obra literaria se relaciona con las cuestiones de política de género, y muestra que las letras pueden servir como un altavoz desde el que hacer reivindicaciones políticas.

1. Introduction: Music, a Tool for Understanding and Social Change

"Girls don't play rock and roll". That is what a male teacher said to a 13-year-old Joan Jett in her first guitar lesson (Tolinski). Fortunately enough, she did not listen to him: only two years after that she formed her own rock band, which was to become the most famous all-female[1] American rock band of the 1970s, The Runaways. Based on socially constructed gender prospects, women have always been told what they cannot do and what they must do. Patriarchal and socially constructed gender conventions are strongly rooted in all societies and domains and they affect women's agency as artists in different spheres. Music is no exception: "Girls can't play rock and roll", "Not too bad for a girl" or "This is not a place for a girl". This is just a little sample of what a woman has to hear when she tries to get involved in popular music.

In academia, the connection between music and the social, political[2] and cultural spheres has broaden diverse research fields. In the last decades, music has become a fundamental area to cover gender-related topics. Music, thus, becomes a crucial instrument to challenge women's invisibility in some genres like punk music and a tool to reassess women's active (but not entirely documented) participation in it. Some of these approaches[3] open up debates concerning women's participation in the underground and they also present the (political and social) potential embedded in lyrics. Writing songs denotes, in most cases, a strong level of implication and involvement. Songs do not only provide meaning, they also convey emotions. Music becomes a way to express and interact and it can be (un)intentionally used as a tool for understanding and vindication. Indeed, in his book *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, French economist and writer Jacques Attali affirms that our modern world is rather audible than legible, as it was thought to be centuries before: "For twenty-five centuries, Western knowledge has tried to look upon the world. It has failed to understand that the world is not for the beholding. It is for hearing. It is not legible, but audible" (3). Attali suggests that we should try to judge a

[1] I am aware of the fact that my use of the expression all-female band to describe bands with all the members being women may be seen as a paradox when, in this dissertation, I will be exploring and criticizing the gendered conceptualization of music. However, I use this term for the sake of clarity and with an explanatory aim, being very conscious of the undertones that my use may carry within. Besides, I need to clarify from the very beginning my use of two different expressions when wanting to describe those bands that were formed by female members only. Sometimes, I will use the expression all-female bands in a graphic and informative way, as I already explained. However, when referring to those bands catalogued within the label of Riot Grrrl, I will choose the term all-girl bands instead. In my exposition of the Riot Grrrl movement, I will explain how the word "girl" was endorsed with certain overtones and qualities that, to a certain extent, embodied the main characteristics that defined the movement. Consequently, I decided to use these two terms in combination.

[2] It is probably not necessary to specify what I understand by political, but I will still do it, just in search of clarity and exactness. And I do it to explain that my understanding of the word political is broad and complex. As I explain in my introduction to feminism, the second wave put in fashion the motto "personal is political". I do also apprehend the political as an extension of both the individual responsibility and the effects on the collective. I do not see political as what corresponds to the party alternatives in a given political system. Instead, political, in this dissertation, asserts the personal and collective preoccupations of a creative mind in their awareness of the social and cultural problems that affect their lives and the lives of those around them.

[3] Just to set some recent examples, *God Save the Queens* (2019) includes interviews with women that shaped the Spanish, Portuguese, British and American punk scenes. *Political Rock* (2016) focuses on politicized music. Similarly, the special issue of the journal *Young*, entitled "Songs that Sing the Crisis: Music, Words, Youth Narratives and Identities in Late Modernity" (2020) is devoted to the examination of protest songs and it includes articles directly related to the Latin world, namely Spain and Portugal.

society by listening to its sounds, by its art, and by its festivals, rather than by its economic or social statistics. According to him, by listening to noise we can better understand where the folly of men and their calculations are leading us, and what hopes are still at hand to be achieved (3). Hence, music turns out to be more than an object of study, and it becomes a way of perceiving the world and a "tool of understanding" (Attali 4). Moreover, music emerges not only as a personal or sociological tool but also as a non-objectified reflection of political power: "Listening to music is listening to all noise, realizing that its appropriation and control is a reflection of power, that it is essentially political" (Attali 6). The composition, production, distribution and consumption of music ascertain the latent structures of power that sustain the system. In that sense, music becomes a political tool as well. For instance, if men control the production of a record, we can assume that potential women's perspectives will be diminished or belittled; if only middle-class white people participate in the distribution of that same record, it is quite probable that working-class African American people will not be targeted as main consumers; hence, that record will probably fail to address them. In this regard, music can also be a construct that reflects political, social and cultural powers.

As British journalist and writer Lucy O' Brien describes, music becomes a practical channel that reveals political discourses: "Political dissent has always been a rich strand within pop music. From the angry blues singers of the 1940s to Communist folkies in the 1950s and the various vast stadium Aid spectacles of the 1980s, performers have used the medium of rock as a mass vehicle for protest" (306). Music, for instance, has always played an important role in political demonstrations. Protest songs have accompanied activist movements since the beginnings of social action, representing the view of people and achieving the status of anthems; for instance, John Lennon's anti-Vietnam war "Give Peace a Chance" (1969) or Nina Simone's "Blacklash Blues" (1967) in the civil rights movement. Activism, in general, has always relied on music to voice its many denunciations. As Attali, again, explains, music becomes a way of comprehending the politics of the world when it takes a mirroring role: "in which every activity is reflected, defined, recorded, and distorted" (5). On top of that, and as musicologist Susan McClary suggests, music does not just reflect society[4] in a passive way:

> Like any social discourse, music is meaningful precisely insofar as at least some people believe that it is and act in accordance with that belief. Meaning is not inherent in music, but neither is it in language: both are activities that are kept afloat only because communities of people invest in them, agree collectively that their signs serve as valid currency. Music is always dependent on the conferring of social meaning . . . the study of signification in music cannot be undertaken in isolation from the human contexts that create, transmit, and respond to it. (*Feminine* 21)

[4] Many different authors have worked on the bonds between music and society. Joseph Kotarba and Phillip Vannini, for instance, explain in *Understanding Society Through Popular Music* that "popular music is one of the most important sources of culture in our society" (Kotarba xii-xiii); and Charles Hiroshi Garrett, whose focus is on American culture and music, states that music has the power to "act as an essential bearer of social, historical, and cultural knowledge" (5). In that same line, Simon Frith opens *Taking Popular Music Seriously: Selected Essays* by stating that "whether as an idea, an experience or an activity, music is the result of the play of social forces" ("Introduction" ix).

In this sense, music dilates and spreads and it can also become a socially-constructed discourse and an unquestionable source of power that influences audiences that "not only love the music, they relate to the artist's political message as well, and integrate it into their political lives. Life, lyric, sound, and movement are integrally connected. If we ignore any of these elements, we fail to properly "decode" the meaning of the music, much less its social functions" (Pedelty and Weglarz xvi). Some scholars, in fact, describe music as a "political issue" (O' Brien 15) that "changes the world in political terms" (Carson et al. xii). From a feminist perspective, music serves as a public platform in which different models of gender organization are adopted, affirmed and/or contrasted. Throughout history – especially through Western history – music has led to intense controversy in terms of gender identity (McClary, *Feminine* 8). Exploring popular music (even the music that is specifically related to a certain period and place) through critical and/or academic lenses can be one valuable way in order to study the foundations of cultural configuration, more so in respect of women. As a matter of fact, music has a lot to tell about the social position that women have historically enjoyed. In other words, women's absence in music history uncovers the social, cultural, political and economic mechanisms that have contributed to women's relegation and curtailing in society at large. Music, thus, has come to be considered as a significant stand in which gender inequality is not only adopted but also perpetuated (McClary 1991; Carson et al. 2014; Kearney 2017; Green 1994). In fact, when wanting to study women's historical past in music, potential researchers may find themselves at a crossroad: in spite of the active participation of women in music, in many instances, women's works and merits have remained silenced or cornered. Bowers and Tick say that, if history implies an attentiveness to past events, women face that history does not pertain to them, that their past has been rejected or forgotten, that their works have been ignored and their presence not included within the historical accounts of western music:

> What is history if not the special caretaking of what has gone before? For women in music, this past has been untended, uncared for, certainly absent from the conventional mainstream music history books from which most of us acquired our knowledge of Western music. (3)

Many women were ignored when storing the growth of music when revealing the foundational past; they were left out from "official" versions or slipped away from the canon. Thus, the work of female singers, songwriters and instrumentalists in popular music is not as documented as men's:

> It takes as its premise the notion that while women may have been pushed to participate in music through narrower doors than their male peers, they nevertheless did so with enthusiasm, diligence, and success. They were there in many ways, but as women's lives were fundamentally different and more private than men's were, their strategies, tools, and appearances were sometimes also different and thus often unstudied in a historical discipline that primarily evaluated men's productivity. (LaMay)

As LaMay suggests, up to a certain extent, women's participation in music was different to men's because women have occupied the private sphere. However, Susan McClary offers a different view when she declares that male musicians have defined music in a way that has denied or hindered female participation:

> Male musicians have retaliated in a number of ways: by defining music as the most ideal (that is, the last physical) of the arts; by insisting emphatically on its 'rational' dimension; by laying claim to such presumably masculine virtues as objectivity, universality, and transcendence; by prohibiting actual female participation altogether. (*Feminine* 17)

Indeed, female musicians have been excluded and put aside in music for a long time now. Some important figures, including the names of Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday or Peggy Lee, spontaneously lighted up women's way in music from the 1920s onwards, but still, their presence in the music industry was minimal. Cultural configuration, plus patriarchal and gender based limitations, were strongly rooted in music. This made it very difficult for female musicians to break restrictions and claim an active role. Some, as the previously mentioned Joan Jett, did dare to go against the grain, made clear "statements of vindications"[5] with their music and succeeded. Others were alienated and were absorbed or silenced deep within the system.

However, in spite of the lack of information regarding the contributions by many, women have always pursued music careers. In the American context of the past century, women's inclusion in the labour force and the subsequent economic independence allowed them to be more active in music and, therefore, their works also gained visibility and grit. This happened progressively, in different music genres and in subsequent generations. As Kristine H. Burns explains, in the last decades of the 20th century, women have been present in different roles in pop and rock music and she gives the following examples:

> the women who sang the blues, to the girl groups, Motown, and the folk rock and counterculture scene of the 1960s; the feminist music movement, singer-songwriter phenomenons, and punk rebellion of the 1970s, to the bad girl bands of the 1980s to the women rappers and hip hop artists: and underground and indie artists and business-savvy megastar pop icons of the 1990s. (574)

In spite of the fact that women's involvement in music started to increase from the 20th century on, some still found a "glass ceiling" that was blocking their development as artists in genres such as rock music: "In the history of supergroup stadium rock, only a handful of women have emerged with any lasting impact . . . in this area, more than any other genre, there exists a glass ceiling for women" (O' Brien 91). To confront these issues, in the 1970s, the emergence of a solid feminist criticism would start to contribute to the review and redefinition of critical approaches to popular music, focusing specifically on the revelation and vindication of women's contribution and their relevant role in music. In order to see more women as subjects of study in musicology,

[5] A reference to the Bikini Kill's song "Statement of Vindication" included in the album *Reject All American*¸1996.

Jane M. Bowers highlights the need for a new standpoint that studies the correlation between music history and social history, and also music and its relation to culture (*College* 84). In fact, in order to reveal popular music's patriarchal foundation, different feminist scholars in the second half of the 20th century, for instance, demand a redefinition of the otherwise almost all-male musical canon that had marginalized women's production. In this way, feminist critical theory examines the social and cultural conditions that contribute to the exclusion of women from visibility and recognition, pronouncing their participation in music history and highlighting specific works by female artists within the still demanding criteria of quality.

1.1. Aim and Methodology

This dissertation aims at contributing to the research tradition that has explored women's participation in popular music. My main purpose is to study the power for social and political transformation with which music can be performed, especially through a lyrical analysis. I seek to expound music's force to communicate beliefs, perpetuate/redefine stereotypes, invigorate activism and, specifically, how it has been exercised, sometimes, in order to celebrate women's experience. In my work, I explain why the study of music, more particularly the analysis of song lyrics[6], may be of great relevance, not only for Cultural Studies but also within the field of Gender Studies, as the lyrics that I analyze here share matters that have been traditionally interesting for feminism. I believe that lyrical content can be effectively used to convey political messages in a conscious manner; and, from a feminist perspective, I consider that music contributes to a solid and efficient examination of womanhood.

Within this broader context, I have decided to focus my analysis on the work done by American singer, songwriter and feminist activist Kathleen Hanna (1968-), lead singer in the iconic feminist bands[7] Bikini Kill (1990-1998), Julie Ruin (1998) and Le Tigre (1998-2006), and who exerted a big influence on the 1990s' Riot Grrrl movement[8]. Bikini Kill (1990-1998) is considered as one of the pioneers of the Riot Grrrl movement. Formed by Kathleen Hanna, Tobi Vail (drums), Billy Karren (guitar) and Kathi Wilcox (bass), they emerged as an important band in the 1990s popular music scene due to their performances and the content of their radical feminist lyrics. Even today, they are addressed as one of the main bands of the period, having influenced a

[6] I use the terms lyric(s) and sometimes lyric content or song lyrics to refer to the textual content of songs.

[7] At present, Hanna is involved with the band The Julie Ruin, formed in 2009 by Bikini Kill's ex-members Hanna and Kathi Wilcox, and also including Carmine Covelli, Sara Landeau, and Kenny Mellman. Together, they have released two albums: *Run Fast* (2013) and *Hit Reset* (2016). Besides, Hanna has occasionally reunited with Le Tigre and Bikini Kill's members to perform particular projects (like touring or the recording of audiovisual materials). I chose not to include The Julie Ruin in this dissertation because their lyrics do not exactly match the focus and concerns of my analysis. Yet, it is true that they may be of academic interest for different projects and purposes. Moreover, I consider their work to be out of the particular timing that I aim at studying here. That being the span of time that goes, from Bikini Kill (1990s), when Riot Grrrl was high-spirited, all through Julie Ruin's solo project (1998) to Le Tigre (2000s). I find that this span of time is apt and distinctly circumscribed because it is sharply delineated and it discloses significant progress and contrast that can be appreciated in Hanna's songwriting.

[8] I use "Riot Grrrl" and "the Riot Grrrl movement" to refer to the scene and "riot grrrls" and "riot bands" for those belonging or linked to it.

whole generation. Hanna's music career did not stop here though. In 1998, she began a solo project under the name of Julie Ruin, a transitional period before starting a new formation, Le Tigre. In these new projects, Hanna continued with the essence that turned her into a celebrated and recognized icon after the success of her first band: fast sounds, political lyrics, and a strong personality. The electro-punk and feminist band Le Tigre (Kathleen Hanna, keyboardist Johanna Fateman and guitarist JD Samson) started playing at the turn of the century (1998-2006), a time that some critics have already labelled as beyond the Riot Grrrl movement, which they saw as already dead. Le Tigre achieved a certain notoriety, again, due to their well-known and celebrated live performances and the lyrics' content. In general, Hanna's work extends over a period of time of more than two decades, and, in this dissertation, I specifically focus on the first decade and a half (1990-2006).

My study of Hanna's lyrics is contextualized by an examination of the Riot Grrrl movement, which shows perfectly how songs, politics and individual and communal identities can merge. Riot Grrrl is a strong example of the power of feminist activism; a distinct illustration of how music works against sexism and inequality. Hanna's lyrical work is very representative of this period. Through a disclosure of her commitment to social issues and her articulating of feminist concepts, she offers a different angle to understand popular culture, feminism and music. By doing a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of the lyrics I show how music can be inspiring, transformative and determining in the constant search and challenge to achieve a society that is just, more particularly in what concerns the women's movement. Therefore, this study develops from a threefold-layered structure: punk music, lyrics and feminism (Fig. 1).

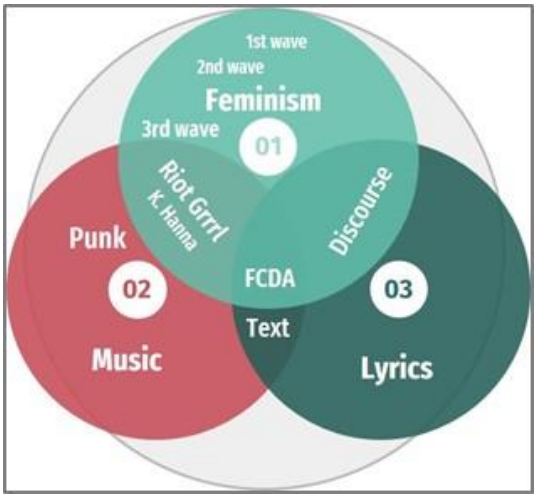

Fig. 1. Conceptual map.

The essence of my analysis lies within the understanding that music carries with it a political dimension in which power is evaluated, contended or perpetuated. Consequently, I have selected feminism as a framework for discussion. My first and main goal is then to show that researchers can find in lyrics a solid and fruitful cultural production that contributes to the development of Gender Studies. Feminist questions and preoccupations can also be attested from the critical expertise that popular songs can bring to the academic conversation. My study then gravitates around a Critical Discourse Analysis of the lyrics from a feminist perspective and, in consequence, I feel that it is appropriate to clarify some concepts that are related to this approach before I

proceed to the analytical part. That is why I start mentioning text, discourse, discourse analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis as fundamental and correlated terms that will pop up throughout my dissertation. I start, thus, mentioning text. This is the main part of a more complex jigsaw corresponding to the subsequent analysis (Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis). This being the approach that I employ to analyze Hanna's lyrics, I broadly mention the qualities that all these previously mentioned notions entertain and how they contribute to this approach.

First of all, the first distinction that should be made is the one between text and discourse. Helena Calsamiglia and Amparo Tusón Valles explain that a text is formed by combined verbal elements which produce a communicative, intentional and complete unit (17). A text, then, is the oral or written product used to communicate meaning or feeling. In my study, the texts correspond to the corpus of written lyrics. Yet a text only acquires its whole sense when discourse is considered. In these lines, Norman Fairclough defines discourse as "the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part. This process includes in addition to the text the *process of production*, of which the text is a product, and the *process of interpretation,* for which the text is a resource" (24). Therefore, the text is just a part of a more complex process in which we come across contextual factors – such as the conditions of production of a text and the process of its interpretation – that determine its meaning (Fig. 2).

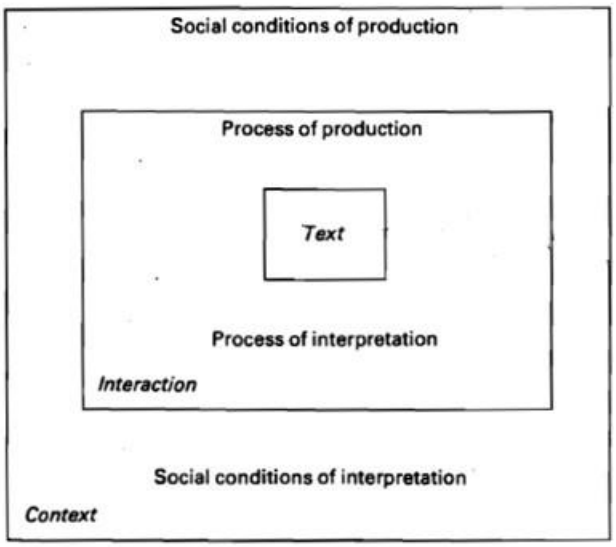

Fig. 2. Discourse as text, interaction and context (Fairclough 25).

This shared idea is key for the Discourse Analysis approach (hereafter DA) which was strongly developed in depth at the end of the 1960s when language was no longer considered just a capacity to communicate and it started to be taken as an act in which social practices are developed. Many authors agree on the strong bond of society with discourse. For instance, Mario De la Fuente García mentions that a discourse can be studied from its relation with the social context, where it is created. He believes that when speakers communicate a discourse they also perform social actions (408). Similarly, in *How to Do Things with Words*, John Langshaw

Austin focuses on this and expresses that when one person says something, they are doing it (6). To clarify this, he sets the example of the baptism of a ship and explains that to name a ship is to say in the appropriate circumstances "I name" (6). Austin calls these sentences "*performatives*" (6), which implies that expressing something in a particular and proper situation means doing it. In this sense, language is the vehicle through which social reality is constituted. Pedro Santander shares this idea and argues that language does not only express and reflect ideas but also participates in the creation of social reality; consequently, he emphasizes the efficacy of evaluating the use of language to read that social reality (209). DA focuses on a broader dimension, one in which a text is produced and it helps understand those discursive practices surrounding the creation.

This idea is crucial for my analysis. The lyrics that I explore here get an absolute significance when contextual factors that directly affect their sense and purpose are taken into account. Nevertheless, the main purpose of my dissertation spreads from different origins and combines diverse perspectives. I only have a partial approximation to these notions, because I seek to clarify certain terms that are important in the analytical part. Because of that, sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of my dissertation proceed to contextualize the surroundings of my topic, in the belief that those contextual factors, as I say, will affect my subsequent analysis of the selected lyrics. Thus, in those sections, I endeavour to provide a useful background on the most significant events to explore the different waves of feminism, women's role in music from the early ages, their presence in punk music and the origin and influence of the Riot Grrrl movement. All these sections, I believe, will be key to better understand Kathleen Hanna's work and they will serve as an appropriate background to fully understand the real complexity of the lyrics. Moreover, in order to *read* social reality, I will try to answer some of the following questions: How does music work in its particular historical and social context? What effects does Hanna's work have in society? How does the literary work relate to matters on the politics of gender? To find accurate answers to all these inquiries a rigorous DA is needed and for that, it is necessary to consider the social conditions that concern and influence the writing of lyrics.

In general terms, there is not a unique model to carry out DA. Many authors suggest diverse strategies to approach it[9]. However, two methods are the most common within the field. The first is focused on linguistic theory and the processes and functions of the different syntactic, semantic and rhetoric structures in discourse. As Calsamiglia and Tusón Valles explain, there are some grammatical elements in texts – called signs or indications – used by the addresser that work as instructions to the addressee/participants through the discourse (18). Thus, one can concentrate on studying the lexical, syntactic or semantic strategies, paying attention to the vocabulary, grammar, and rhetoric devices used to communicate a message.

[9] Some examples would be Adele Clarke's work "Situational Analyses: Grounded Theory Mapping After the Postmodern Turn" (2003), which approaches grounded theory and offers three kinds of analytic situational maps (concerning situations, social worlds and arenas and positionality) that help understand the complexities of social life. With a different focalization, Norman Fairclough's *Language and Power* (1989) is an essential introductory work to Critical Discourse Analysis (that I will discuss in depth later) where the author addresses the importance of language in the production and maintenance of relations of power. Fairclough presents a selection of ten questions and subquestions that can be asked to a text, concerning vocabulary, grammar and textual structures. I find that this guidance material is clear and it can be a good base for the analysis of lyrics.

The second method centres on discourse as a social practice and the relationship between discourse and society that I explained before. It is here that I would like to introduce Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA from now on), as it is an orientation that concentrates on discourse as a social practice produced *by* and *in* society. This constituent and constitutive character is essential for this recent approach, which does not give strict instructions on how to do discourse analysis; rather, it offers a new focus of application. In fact, in order to show a richer approximation, CDA takes an interdisciplinary orientation: it includes basic particulars from different disciplines, such as pragmatics, ethnography, rhetoric, philosophy, sociolinguistics or anthropology.

The main point of CDA is its critical character, as the purpose is to find the social and ideological repercussions of a discourse. Within the different schools that work on CDA (from the French to the Frankfurt school), leading figure Teun A. van Dijk defines CDA as a "discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (466). With the aim of distinguishing the manner in which discourses reproduce those social inequalities, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) have labelled the basic principles of CDA in eight main points:

1. CDA addresses social problems
2. Power relations are discursive
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture
4. Discourse does ideological work
5. Discourse is historical
6. The link between text and society is mediated
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory
8. Discourse is a form of social action

These eight main points address the vigorous bond between discourse and society and they place the first as a form of social action in which power and ideological relations occur. Besides, discourse comprises culture and I believe that CDA can be an appropriate strategy to study and confront inequalities (social, cultural, racial…) that are addressed as a topic in cultural forms such as music. That is the reason why I consider that CDA becomes an apt tool to carry out my analysis of the selected lyrics. With it, I aim at contributing to the debates around CDA and encourage new interpretations of lyrics as a source of meaning and an element for change.

In the context of my study, I found it convenient to bring CDA and a feminist perspective together. My specific analysis of the selected songs, therefore, is bounded by a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). FCDA searches those discourses that maintain a patriarchal social order in which women are disempowered. This approach "contributes to (critical) language and discourse studies a perspective informed by feminist studies, and on the other hand, it suggests the usefulness of language and discourse studies for the investigation of feminist issues in gender and women's studies" (Lazar 142). Nowadays, the works in this field are more abundant (Lazar, 2007; Kendall and Tannen, 2001; Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2002; Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2003). With my analysis, I plan to set an illustrative example of how an FCDA of lyrics can be instrumental to observe how feminist concepts and values are enunciated in Hanna's songwriting; and how the

content of the songs may unveil women's fight for equality, simultaneously shaping music and the feminist movement.

As I have mentioned before, discourse is constitutive of social practices. As Susan McClary states, "until there exists some way of dealing with music in general as a social discourse, gender will remain a non-issue" ("The Blasphemy" 52). Following McClary's claim for that discourse-oriented exploration, I offer a solid approach following this perspective. My intention with the analysis of the lyrics based on FCDA is to prove that there are ways to re-appropriate discourse and transform its ideological and powerful characteristics in favor of equality. Hanna's lyrics show that discourse can be used as a tool that informs on the different ways of discrimination against women. Music thus becomes a cultural platform that assists women in their fight. I must say that the FCDA of lyrics is based on the search for clues and pieces of evidence that contribute to the context of the discourse. When doing the analysis, I try to give my personal interpretation of all those direct or indirect clues and these may differ from Hanna's real intentions. As Wulf Oesterreicher explains, in written communication, we only find proofs and evidence, as it is not possible to fully understand the "real spoken" language in a text, so we must try to work with those pieces of evidence, which may be indirect:

> Hablo de *evidencias,* porque en una comunicación escrita *nunca* encontramos lo hablado en estado auténtico, puesto que la comunicación escrita implica, *per definitionem,* la existencia de unos valores paramétricos de las condiciones comunicativas que definen la 'distancia comunicativa' . . . Esto significa que nunca podemos captar directamente la manifestación del lenguaje hablado auténtico en textos — y esto es válido incluso para las transcripciones de un diálogo o de una narración hechas por lingüistas. Hay que contentarse, pues, necesariamente con evidencias más o menos *indirectas* (323).

I completely agree with this opinion. I do not aspire to guess Hanna's real intentions and purposes while writing the lyrics nor to speak on her behalf. Following Fairclough's division of discourse as text + interaction + context, it is then evident that the social conditions of interpretation and the process of interpreting the lyrics from my point of view will surely differ from someone else's in a different context and situation. Lyrics are subjected to large interpretative analysis and this cannot be entirely unequivocal. My only purpose then is to interpret the lyrics and claim that music can serve as a cultural manifesto.

To do the analysis, I apply the two methodologies that I mentioned before (one based on linguistic theory and a second approach that studies discourse as a social practice). I consider that the linguistic and the critical approaches are not exclusive or excluding and both collaborate to fulfil the final objective of analyzing the emotional, political or cultural foundation of Hanna's lyrics. To carry out this approach, three introductory sections of my dissertation pertain in order to draw the context that surrounds the writing of the selected lyrics, including the three waves of feminism, women's role in music and the Riot Grrrl movement. This movement is straightforwardly connected to feminist dialogue and that could be the most manifest and logical reason to frame this study within the bounds of feminist studies. Womanhood is a thematic ingredient in the lyrics of many riot

grrrl bands. However, broadly speaking, I reckon that music and feminism do also converse beyond Riot Grrrl and its heritage. I believe that feminism, as a critical tool of analysis, can be applied to different cultural perspectives (not only on the most popular and traditional literary genres). Music meets the criteria to be evaluated from a feminist point of view (and the other way around).

After taking the lyrics' background into account, I focus on the close reading of them to study their linguistic features. Because there is not a single procedure established to do FCDA, I have created a table with some points that I found useful in order to develop the linguistic analysis. As it can be observed, it is quite particular: the elements that I have included directly match the purpose of my investigation. Nevertheless, any other element could be added in order to get a wider perspective and a more precise critical analysis.

Focalization	The perspective through which the story is presented in the song. - First- person: the singer works as a character in the story and sings directly to the audience. - Third-person: the singer is a storyteller and points to a scene in the distance. - Direct address: the singer (employing a first person *I*) is talking to some second person (*you*), or right to the audience.
Audience	Whether the singer addresses the audience in a conscious way or not.
Figurative Language	Some technical devices that go beyond the literal meanings of the words and provide new insights. E.g.: imagery, symbolism, metaphor, simile, allusion, irony, or anaphora.
Diction	The choice that the author makes of vocabulary.
Syntax	The grammatical structure and arrange of words in a sentence.
Prosody	The elements of speech (for example between music and words) that together support the central idea of the song.
Structure	All the elements that offer coherence to the work. E.g.: Verse, bridges and chorus, or number, length and rhythm of the lines.

Table 1. Linguistic Analysis.

Additionally, I believe that my analysis contributes to the extensive scholarly conversation between different cultural productions, in this case, music and literature. In fact, the strong connections between music and poetry surface in my work. Additionally, I aim at achieving conclusions in relation to the contemplation of song lyrics as literary pieces and as a powerful means for the voicing of those who have remained silenced. Blending literature, music and feminism, in my opinion, provides an innovative viewpoint that, however, is not exactly new, of course. This combination has been employed before in academia and I want to contribute to its development with this dissertation. My work, as it usually happens with every Critical Discourse Analysis, takes an interdisciplinary tone that relies on the convergence of a variety of approaches and sources such as Gender Studies (hooks 2000; Morgan 2003; Millet 1970; Butler 1988), Narratology (Lanster 1986), Musicology (McClary 1991; Citron 1990), Popular Music Studies (Frith 1981,1998, 2007; Pence 2012; Bradley 2009, 2017), Sociology (Holmes 2007; O'Brien 2012), and Linguistics and Rhetoric (Eckstein 2010; Cixous 1976; Kristeva 1981). In order to properly assemble such a varied group of critical tools, I follow a solid and cohesive structure aimed at balancing the complex and varied layers of approximation that imply the different critical frameworks. Next, and even though in the previous section I have been disclosing it somehow, I will focus thoroughly on explaining the structure of this work in order to anticipate how I have assembled the different parts in this dissertation, seeking to facilitate the subsequent reading of the development.

1.2. Structure

The structure of this dissertation is divided into three main parts. The first one corresponds to music and feminism, from a broader perspective to a more specific one. The second focuses on the historical contextualization, the selected author and the specific cultural period. The last one corresponds to the analytical part. All three sections are approached through the combined and multi-faceted methodological approach that I explained before.

Thus, I open my dissertation with section number 2, in which I explore the idea that music is a gendered art that limits women's agency as artists. For clarity, I found it necessary to include a brief but clarifying distinction between sex and gender and the implications that nowadays this distinction still has. For that, I rely on sources by Judith Butler or Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman, who explicitly show the difference between those two terms at the same time that they highlight the sociocultural character that imbues the subsequent construction of identities. Then, I show how musical instruments, which objectively are supposed to be genderless, also affect women's role in music, since their personal elections seem to disclose a certain pattern. Additionally, I examine how music genres such as pop and rock have also come to be influenced or shaped by gender assumptions; being, for instance, the first connected to feminine attributes and idealizations, and rock and roll with masculine qualities or conducts.

Next, I provide a view on the socio-cultural and historical contexts in which Kathleen Hanna's lyrics can be inserted and, for that, I approach feminism and its three different waves. It should be stated that from

Victorian women to the 21st century feminism of today, the fights that reveal the concerns and sufferings that affect women have had diverse purposes, but all of these struggles asked for equal rights for women, and all have lean on a feminist critical theory that considers their sexual condition. Actually, feminism becomes an unequivocal way out for women who believe that the treatment that they are receiving as artists is unacceptable. Indeed, women working on music also resort to it in order to be equally accepted in the music world, and also to make their presence more visible and accepted. Thus, in section 3, I offer a brief overview of women's vindications and achievements in the first, second and third waves of feminism and I develop it by benefiting from the work by some of the main scholars, writers or activists categorized within each one of those waves.

In fact, some points and appellations that will be discussed in this section may appoint issues that seem to be long overcome. However, the truth is that they are active concepts today, acting upon certain contemporary attitudes and affected by modern politics in the 21st century. However, I pay stronger attention to the third wave of feminism as this is the movement in which Riot Grrrl could be contextualized and the wave in which Kathleen Hanna's feminist position best fits. To illustrate it, I discuss and use the work of relevant feminist authors (e.g., Betty Friedan, Simone de Beauvoir, bell hooks…), based on the fact that Hanna's songs are influenced by feminist ideas and many of the issues that these feminist women address are also projected in the lyrics. It must be said though that I do not aim at providing an extensive and thorough scientific covering of feminism, its history and its development, even though I try to keep a solid discursive development in which I explore its complex processes. What I pretend here is just to give a proper context to my work, which requires a connection to feminism for a complete observation.

The outline of these concepts of feminism will be fundamental to exercise my following literary analysis. I believe that these sections function as a pertinent opening, but also as a useful background that will surface later when I reach the heart of my analysis. Not leaving behind the feminist background, but paying special attention to the participation of women in music, the next section of my work (section 4) is the result of having approached music (section 2) and feminism (section 3) before. This section deals with an intensified combination of cultural and feminist approaches. I focus on women's role in music since the early ages, and, especially, of course, in the United States of America, because this is the geographical and cultural background that enfolds Kathleen Hanna's work. I mention some of the works on the field that have proved that different obstacles and limitations have prevented women from participating strongly in music and/or literary production. As an example, Susan McClary argues that most of the constraints that women faced in the past have been institutional, as women have been denied professional training and their music has been misconceived under certain stereotypes (*Feminine* 18). Specific music genres, the public dimension that performances entail, economic or identity resistances, and the male-oriented canon are some of the features that determine gendered experiences of music and that have consequently prevented women from participating in music in equal terms. All of them will be mentioned and/or explored in this section. In general, it can be said that the musical canon has excluded women and very few women appear in charts or have been appropriately catalogued when memorizing music, at least, when compared to men. However, as Jane Bowers and Judith

Tick explain in *Women Making Music. The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950,* this imbalance is not a reflection of their absence in music at all:

> Rather, the questions so far asked by historians have tended to exclude them . . . Musicologists have paid little attention to the sociology of music, whether this be concerned with the social class and economic status of musicians, stratification in the professions, or access to educational opportunities . . . musicologists have emphasized the development of musical style through the most progressive works and genres of a period, whereas most women composers were not leaders in style change, in part, at least, because they were excluded from the professional positions that engendered new developments. (3)

Yet, as women prospered, occupying space in the musical domain, artistic industries got radically transformed. Around the 19th century, many women started opposing male's norms and challenged the establishment by working on their own in literature, painting or music. Still, it will be around the end of the 20th century that women's cultural initiative discovered a strong foundation in the assistance of feminist critical theory. It is in this century that women's bursting on music became more obvious and punk music helped them blaze a trail for equality. These discordances and the historical approximation to the role played by women in music will be at the core of this section.

In the corresponding pages for section 5, I approach punk music and the role that women had played within it. Firstly, punk music is based on a strong sense of self-expression and a solid understanding of communal organization. In punk, codes and rules are revisited or rejected and professional skills were not a requirement. Defined as a genre where "Musical competence, gender, style and content were arbitrary" (Reddington 41), sometimes women's participation in it was questioned and some had to struggle for a place in it. As Maria Raha states in *Cinderella's Big Score. Women of the Punk and Indie Underground*, ". . . women needed to express aggression, too, but were relegated to the sidelines, either by individual self-censorship, the lack of other successful female musicians to act as role models, or the scene's own culture of female exclusion" (xiv). Apart from emphasizing the consequences ensuing from their feminine condition, I discuss some other reasons that explain why women in punk music are trying to re-write a past that leaves them in relegation regarding their talents as artists. With that goal, I examine some basic notions about punk music, including its origin and ideology. However, I focus more precisely on the works that analyze the presence and role of women in it and, also, the birth of the Riot Grrrl movement, whose foundations are closely related to the so-called second wave of punk and the hardcore scene that was developed afterwards.

Also, having been Hanna the lead singer in Bikini Kill, a symbolic band for the movement, Riot Grrrl emerges as the proper cultural context for the subsequent lyrical study in subsection 5.2. Consequently, I include some space for a specific examination of this movement, a section in which I point out its main definitions, characteristics, and the similarities and differences between the movement and the third wave of feminism. Some argue that the Riot Grrrl movement and this wave developed simultaneously, even though they

consider Riot Grrrl as an independent process (Carter 2010). Others, in contrast, think that Riot Grrrl is an extension of the third wave of feminism. In any case, thanks to the Riot Grrrl movement many girls were able to develop their musical skills and Hanna was among them. Apart from breaking the traditional silence upon the contribution of women in music, it also served to unveil women's voices and their assertive vindications. Mixing feminist theories and American girls' realities, bands belonging to the Riot Grrrl movement attempted to inspire girls to participate in the music scene. Those bands call for a revolutionary attitude. In a male-dominated punk scene, female audiences were not addressed or recognized. The possibility of a girl becoming a band's leader was frowned upon. Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, L7, Hole or Babes in Toyland called into question all this. They began a movement that would soon be considered as the feminist revolution of the 21st century. I believe that it is necessary, again, to explore this historical and socio-cultural atmosphere in order to develop my literary analysis in all its complexity.

These five introductory sections correspond to the contextual approximation, which is needed so as to get a complete understanding of the lyrics and songs that will be analyzed later, as I have constantly repeated, as much as it will also help to anticipate and illustrate their cultural relevance in a broader spectrum. Once I set the contextualization, I make a textual and discursive analysis of the lyrics (section 7), paying special attention to their thematic and stylistic originality. As some may wonder, and as Charlotte Pence does in *The Poetics of American Song Lyrics*, it is difficult to discuss lyrics without the music that accompany them (xi). When doing a critical appreciation of poems and songs, most critics agree that written poetry and song lyrics are not entirely the same and, in section 6, I discuss some of the explanations that scholars and experts provide to determine that statement. In general, authors such as Simon Frith consider that ". . . to treat the distinction between poetry and lyrics as a distinction between the written and the spoken word is aesthetically misleading. There is, to put this another way, a continuity between poetry and song, rather than a clear division" (*Performing* 178). Similarly, some complain about the fact that lyrics do not get the same respect or attention that poetry enjoys. Lars Eckstein, in *Reading Song Lyrics*, goes further and states that despite being considered ordinary, those who sanction poetry and lyrics differently, might be also committing a functional mistake: "and fail according to the standards of received literary analysis and aesthetic judgment. Such readings, [lyrics] however, overlook that what is negligible as a poem may be intricately functional at the intersection of sonic, social, bodily and media discourses" (14). In my opinion, lyrics deserve the same attention and critical scrutiny that have been traditionally bestowed and applied to other literary pieces. I believe that this study proves appropriate to vindicate the usefulness of lyrics' analysis as a potential literary paradigm that reflects social and cultural themes that are worthy of scholarly examination.

In that context, Kathleen Hanna emerges as an important figure. Her lyrics do not only represent a certain set of ideas; they also stand scrutiny as literary pieces. Additionally, her work resists a combined approach in which music and literature can be observed from the angle of cultural intersection. I decided to study her work within the Riot Grrrl movement because, first, she became an icon for those that were engaged in that movement; and, second, because that movement eventually becomes a solid and efficient channel to communicate specific feminist ideas from the 1990s. In this manner, I consider that the lyrics' content that I

explore in here reveals how songs can be perceived as a relevant cultural production for the feminist movement, offering alternative discourses that stand in favor of equality. Their impact and representative power within this specific cultural generation are manifest. In any case, I would like to make it clear that Hanna's work is just an example. It is not my intention to set her as the unique role model of the movement. Likewise, I think it is important to clarify, before I proceed with the development of my work, how I have resolved to grant the authorship of these songs to Kathleen Hanna. In music, sometimes, authorship reveals the importance given to teamwork and, consequently, the individual engagement is strenuously discerned. However, I made a strong effort to confirm my assumption that Hanna is the main author of those lyrics and, all through this work, I refer to Hanna as so. However, the lyrics are signed in group and attributed to the bands[10], whether Bikini Kill or Le Tigre. In the case of the album recorded under the name of Julie Ruin, Hanna is registered as the only writer of the lyrics.

Besides, the analysis that I carry out should be taken as one of the many interpretations that may have been drawn from these lyrics. As I stated before in the methodological part, the FCDA that I plan to do is based on personal readings of the lyrics and all my conclusions will be drawn from explicit or implicit clues that can be found on them. My analysis is then a biased vision. It is, of course, mediated and inclined on my personal circumstances (remote from the United States of America and from the decade that witnessed the birth of Riot Grrrl). Nonetheless, I truly believe that such an outsider perspective can provide a fresh and enriching angle.

Section 7 is devoted to the FCDA. It is important to note that I am not making a musicological approach to the songs. I just focus on the written lyrics. Notions of rhythm, musicality or instrumentation are not discussed in depth, but, still, I use them when they help clarify the content and the structure, the impact and the emotion of the songs. I choose a specific corpus of texts, based on the content and their feminist thematic pertinence. First, I consider Kathleen Hanna's lyrics for her first band, Bikini Kill: *Revolution Girl Style Now!* (1991), *Bikini Kill* (1992), *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah* (1993), *Pussy Whipped* (1993), *The CD version of the First Two Records* (1994), *Reject All American,* (1996) and *The Singles* (1998). Then, I study Kathleen Hanna's solo project Julie Ruin, with the homonymous *Julie Ruin* (1998). Finally, I move on to Le Tigre's work, which includes *Le Tigre* (1999), *From the Desk of Mr. Lady* (2001), *Feminist Sweepstakes* (2001) and *This Island* (2004).

[10] In order to firmly state that all the lyrics in Bikini Kill and Le Tigre had been written by Kathleen Hanna, who, conventionally, was appointed as the author, I decided to contact her. I emailed publishing@kathleenhanna.com and publicspeakingagent@kathleenhanna.com to confirm the authorship of those songs. The answer that I received from Lauren Ross (director of operations at the music marketing brand Terrorbird Media) was this: "Any of the Bikini Kill songs that Kathleen sings lead vocals on (which is nearly all of them) can be credited as lyrics by Kathleen Hanna." Consequently, I decided to state that Hanna is the writer of the lyrics for all the songs by Bikini Kill. In the case of Le Tigre, I also tried to substantiate my assumption. In the band's blog, they mention that all the members take part in the different artistic creations: "Le Tigre is not like a normal band that practices and jams to write new songs. We all sit in our apartments late at night sampling stuff off records and writing lists of ideas that we bring to our Le Tigre brainstorm sessions. The structure of our collaboration varies from song to song with each of us taking the lead on beat making, lyric writing, video editing, etc at various times" ("Questions and Answers"). In consequence, whether in team work or as a single enterprise, I understood that Hanna's involvement in the creation of those lyrics was also testified and acknowledged. Moreover, and as I will show in my specific analysis of the songs, there are other pieces of evidence that drove me to stipulate that Hanna's creative mark is apparent in the selected songs, among them, thematic and stylistic correlations between Bikini Kill's and Le Tigre's songs, personal and/or biographical references that permeate those songs and other additional signs.

Le Tigre's music project was inaugurated when already in the new millennium, a time when Riot Grrrl was claimed to be finished, as I already explained before. From my point of view, however, Riot Grrrl was more than just a movement that took place in a particular time (1990s) and Le Tigre is a good example of that. Even though the band does not explicitly correspond to Riot Grrrl, Hanna's work here is still related to the movement. That is why I considered it important to analyze these lyrics and their content as well. When asked about the movement, Le Tigre answered the following:

> We are proud that Le Tigre is often considered one trajectory of Riot Grrrl, i.e. we are one art-damaged, deconstructive, performance-art, electronic pop off-shoot of the grassroots punk feminist organizing and cultural production of the nineties! This is not to say that Riot Grrrl does not exist anymore – we still hear of local chapters that are active – but the members of Le Tigre are not personally involved with Riot Grrrl now. ("Questions and Answers")

Also, and as I have mentioned before, not all her songs are analyzed here. I have obviously selected those that contain topics and themes that are relevant and pertaining to my study, which, I believe, are a major body in her complete work. In other words, I had a solid foundation to conclude that this analysis that I applied to Hanna's music was not only suitable but also pressing, and always captivating. Of course, there was a number of songs (in this case, I insist, a minor body if one considers Hanna's musical career in its entirety) that would not fit into the thematic criteria that decided my selection. Nevertheless, those lyrics on which I will not concentrate may serve as secondary academic routes for extended studies on other topics (e.g. the lyrics belonging to Kathleen Hanna's latest band The Julie Ruin). Besides, apart from the EPs, LPs, demo and compilation albums in which Kathleen Hanna has taken part, I also use some other audiovisual material such as online databases, YouTube videos, online or magazine interviews, blog postings, documentaries, and films. All these materials contribute to this work by providing aid in order to get a better understanding of specific portions in Hanna's work.

Specifically, in this work, I want to see how feminist concepts are enunciated in the lyrics and the implications that they may have in music and in society. Thus, the second aim of the study is to search dominant traits concerning feminism in the lyrics. It is also my aim to observe how Hanna's personal vindications (mostly concerning feminism) fluctuate (if they do) in time. In other words, I aim at exploring the progress or evolution of those feminist topics in her music, analyzing, at the same time, the consequences that discourse may have on the condition of female artists. Indeed, while analyzing Hanna's lyrics, some themes, such as patriarchy, power, sexuality, violence against women or politics transpire in the songs repeatedly. All these themes can also be found on the interests and concerns shown within the historical development of the different waves of feminism. In that manner, I had made a selection of topical items that I have employed to organize my analysis and focalize properly the specific study of the lyrics. These are the following:

Space and Sorority	
Patriarchy	
Power	
Alienation and Binarism	
Language	
Sexuality	
Gender-based Violence	
Politics	
Feminist Revolution	

Table 2. Subject matters.

These themes were not selected whimsically. They are constantly referenced in the selected lyrics and their echo is repeated throughout Hanna's work. Besides, they are all topics with relevance and impact on the feminist agenda. Each one of these issues becomes of decisive importance for feminist music (and literary) criticism as they directly affect women. Space and a feeling of bonding, community and sorority are relevant topics for feminism and riot grrrls as well, since they relentlessly asked for places where they could safely create artistic works. Patriarchy, power, and the alienation derived from the binarist thinking and the unequal distribution of power are interrelated issues that affected women's condition throughout the different waves, but, at the time that the third wave was taking speed, these concerns were indeed made more visible; and the Riot Grrrl agenda made direct references to them. Regarding language, sexuality and gender-based violence, they were also distinctive concerns for the third wave of feminism, when women started to centre on them as influential and limiting agents. Lastly, politics and feminist theories have always played a role in women's fight. Riot Grrrl did also approach it frankly and openly, offering new insights as they used music to explore them. For these reasons, I decided to converge my analysis on these particular subject matters. Hence, I make a division of the main topics/subject matters that are mentioned in the lyrics in order to have an organized corpus of texts. At the same time, I show how themes and motifs that seem so paradigmatic in feminist ideologies are then mediated and articulated in a mode of expression and creativeness so specific as that of (punk) music. I must admit that these motifs may be found in more than one song. As a matter of fact, one song may cover different themes and motifs.

In addition to this, through my analysis of Kathleen Hanna's lyrics, I also try to achieve a third goal. In connection to the cultural and ideological contextualization that I expose in the first part of my work, I also pretend to discern the place that Hanna's work occupies in relation to the historical impact and influence of the

Riot Grrrl movement, punk music and/or in the context of the third wave of feminism. Do the lyrics provide fun, knowledge or education? What are the arguments for the academic interest in Hanna's work? These doubts are inherent to the literary and cultural analysis ingrained in my work and I do also try to find an answer for them. I think that those questions could have been asked to any woman who has taken part in punk music or in the Riot Grrrl movement and for that matter, to any female musician. That expansive dimension, it is my belief, may provide an extensive reading of this work, one in which women's presence in music gains the visibility and recognition that it does not usually enjoy.

To finish, I provide some conclusions to close my study. In that final section, I summarize the basic and most important conclusions from the textual and discursive analysis of the selected lyrics. Additionally, I explain the role that women have enjoyed in music (more precisely in punk-rock music) and the resistances that they face, including a reference to why I consider that women's presence and active role in music has remained non-studied and undervalued. Apart from this, I focus on the Riot Grrrl movement and I explain the political, social or cultural power that music exerted in this period or movement, trying to display the academic significance that the lyrics written at that time (and for that matter, songs and lyrics at large) have and how they are worthy of scholarly examination.

Before I proceed with the development of my work, I think that it is necessary to clarify some formal and technical features in this dissertation. Before anything else, I would like to mention that only the most significant verses and lines for each studied lyric would be included in-text. This is, I will quote small or long portions of the songs within the development of the main analysis. I chose this procedure, instead of referring the reader to an appendix where he or she could find all the lyrics in storage, so that the readers can have easier and more direct access to the specific lyric from the very beginning, at the exact moment in which I am providing my interpretation of that precise song. I believe that with this direct recourse to the specific portion my analysis will be more effectively exposed and explained. Additionally, I think that it is also important to clarify that when starting my analysis of a given song, when naming that song for the first time, it will always come accompanied by a set of information in between brackets, including its most basic information in the following format: ("Song", Band, *Album*, year). Even if I may fall in repetition, I wanted to provide this information upfront so that the reader can easily establish a line of comparison between the bands and the periods. The specification and registration of complete lyrics in this work, I believe, would have only become a generous and unnecessary extension of paper and appendixes. The complete lyrics for every song that I mention in this work have been gathered in an online database that I have implemented myself for a better manipulation and examination of the material. Using the web application Omeka, a free open-source content management system, I have collected all the lyrics for every song and I have included useful information about them concerning format, duration, publisher or topic. In fact, what is visible in this dissertation is just the final practical employment of that previous work, and how that process of analysis and archiving articulated my critical reading of the lyrics. I will include a thorough explanation and a visual illustration of that process in an appendix for further consideration and appreciation. This tool facilitated my analysis, as all the songs are organized chronologically and tagged according to their main themes. Apart from this, from a formal perspective, it is also

necessary to mention that all the citations and quotations in this paper follow the style and conventions proposed by the MLA (Modern Language Association) 8th edition. In consequence, the general style of this dissertation and every book, article and material catalogued in the final bibliography will be referenced in accordance with the MLA.

In this work, I try to make a non-sexist use of language because, in essence, this dissertation has also a personal and committed perspective. Apart from demonstrating my research skills and my merits and aspiration to fulfil the requirements of a PhD, it is also true that I feel a personal engagement here, one in which my own intimate experience as a woman in present-day society finds a way to express itself. In other words, through this work, I also aim at taking feminist concerns to the front in order to offer my critical and analytical expertise as a testimony of commitment and individual engagement.

2. Music Is a Gendered Construct

Women's lack of historical tradition in music (and especially in particular genres such as rock or punk) originates from patriarchal arguments which, based on sex/gender prospects, have deliberately erased female musicians' participation and contributions. Thus, music emerges as a gendered artistic expression that reproduces and perpetuates social and culturally-enacted convictions that have been grounded in inequality. In the past, most women did not have access in equal terms to music, and today some still face sexist behaviors when trying to pursue a music career. Gender, in general, has exerted a great influence in the production, consumption and reception of music, reducing women's visibility.

In this section, I focus on how stereotyping has prompted me to understand music (from the gendered use of instruments to the stereotyped conceptualization of diverse music genres[11]) as a gendered construct, transforming or altering women's agency in the field of music. I start by clarifying my use of certain basic concepts. On the one hand, I find it necessary to open by establishing the differences encountered on the fundamental use of the dichotomy sex versus gender, and I do it by resorting to the work by Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman, together with Judith Butler's notions on gender. Secondly, I also summarize the main conventions that shape the understanding the concepts of manhood and womanhood. By having a look at the cultural categories attached to sex/gender, I think that it will be easier to understand why those conventions put limits or shape the involvement of musicians in the field, musicians who find hindrances that also affect the characterization or definition of music genres and the use or selection of instruments. To explain this notion better, I illustrate my explanations and reflections with a specific study of the topic in the genres of pop and rock music, which I view as gendered music genres. I then provide some instances to expand on my previous statement that, usually, some common instruments employed in these music genres are eventually considered feminine or masculine in a cultural and social configuration that relates to the feminist themes that I aim at exploring in this dissertation. All this will later play a part in the Riot Grrrl movement: not only Kathleen Hanna, but many other girls too had to negotiate a place in punk music due to their gender. That is why I believe that it is convenient to make a short but thorough introduction to the gendered conceptualization of music and the implications that this has for individuals who attempt to engage in it.

[11] I use genre and music genres to refer to pop, rock or punk music. According to Roger Dannenberg, a genre is "a category of music characterized by social conventions, marketing, association with a particular artist, and other external influences" (2). In a similar manner, Jim Samson concludes that genre is a "more permeable concept than either style or form because a social element participates in its definition" (213).

2.1. Sex and Gender. An Explanation

It is necessary to clarify my assumption that music is gendered, and it is appropriate to begin from the very source, explaining what I understand by gender or how I apply this concept in the context of my work. In "Doing Gender" (1987), Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman define gender in opposition to sex. Sex is defined as a category assigned at birth and based on a binary criterion that classifies people as males or females according to biology – anatomy, hormones, and physiology (125). On the other hand, gender is a status achieved through cultural, social and psychological means (125), an outcome that develops from social situations and interactions in/through which we "do" gender. In a similar way, in "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" (1988), gender theorist and philosopher Judith Butler described gender as a non-stable identity which is created in time as a result of a repetition of acts (519), which according to her are expressive of a gender or identity and may conform to an expected gender identity, or challenge it (527). Butler also explains that those expectations are first based on the perception of the sex (527), and in order to fit in the sex category man/woman, male and female must accomplish social and cultural gendered standards, such as, for example, traits related to each personality or roles assumed as feminine and masculine. In this sense, and as Butler states, the behaviour that we display creates our gender: "Just as a script may be enacted in various ways, and just as the play requires both text and interpretation, so the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives" (526). These directives that the author signifies are "manlike" and "ladylike" roles adopted by men and women throughout history and they have always stood out because of their noteworthy binarist differences. In the following example, West and Zimmerman clearly illustrate these sexually-based expectations or assumptions related to gender configuration:

> . . . doing gender merely involves making use of discrete, well-defined bundles of behaviour that can simply be plugged into interactional situations to produce recognizable enactments of masculinity and femininity. The man "does" being masculine by, for example, taking the woman's arm to guide her across a street, and she "does" being feminine by consenting to be guided and not initiating such behaviour with a man. (West and Zimmerman 135)

When West and Zimmerman define gender as the product of social doings and Judith Butler as a performative construction, they imply the idea of emulating socially constructed behaviours or acts. These fit with the socially standardized masculine and feminine expressions that are assigned to man and woman and which are based on binary thinking: the basic ideological foundation for western thought. Binarism is deep-rooted in western cultures and we take it for granted as a veritable way of thought and an efficient method of analysis. Teaching and learning have been traditionally based on dichotomies. We learn that something is good because it has specific characteristics that make it not bad. Western culture's binary conceptualization is constructed through

the opposition of pairs, where one has a positive connotation and the opposite earns a negative one. Thus, a hierarchical order is established when one of the terms governs over the other. Referring to women, within that binarist paradigm, a woman becomes the opposite of a man as long as she lacks the phallus that makes man *a* man. According to Simone de Beauvoir:

> Humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him . . . She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other. (De Beauvoir xvi)

Thus, a woman is understood as a particularity because she lacks the genital organs that make the male a male. Being a male is the reference and the norm; what means that a female is, in turn, alien or Other. In Kate Millet's ideas, it was patriarchy (I will thoroughly explain my use of patriarchy in the context of this dissertation later) that contributed to this configuration. Patriarchy has shaped the definition of the female and the images that cast it. Men have designed all the cultural notions delineating womanhood, and "the image of women as we know it is an image created by men and fashioned to suit their needs" (Millet 46). This feeling of alienation is discussed by different feminist theorists and, as I will study later, it is also mentioned in some of Bikini Kill's lyrics; in songs such as "White Boy" (*Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah*, 1993) or "Alien She" (*Pussy Whipped ,*1993), for instance.

Among the conventions that have shaped the understanding of womanhood, I dare highlight how women have always been said to occupy the private sphere, follow beauty conventions, accomplish domestic tasks and take care of the children; whereas men occupy the public space, demonstrating their mastery with determination, being economically autonomous and productive. Sometimes defined as the "weak sex", women's assigned principal characteristics and/or attributes are usually described with adjectives such as weak, passive and dependent, while men would be labelled or defined as strong, active and independent. Also, a special emphasis is made to link women to their bodies (and physical appearance), and describe them as emotional or irrational; men's power, on the contrary, is projected on their ability to use the mind: rationality is thus the defining attribute for males. This stereotyped gendered configuration is perpetuated since childhood and affects every aspect of life, setting limits to both men and women and dividing society (Millet 31; West and Zimmerman 127).

In the case of music, a double standard is applied, since, when musicians perform, they are performing both their gender and also the music (which is also gendered, as I have defended previously). In Philip Auslander's words: "Popular music performances are always double-coded with respect to gender identity and sexuality since they refer both to general social codes and to genre-specific codes that signify within particular musical and cultural categories" (6). In this sense, not only are performers and musicians limited by the cultural categories attached to their sex/gender, but also by the gendered-related characteristics that affect music. As Renée Cox Lorraine explains, many experts are drawing attention to the strong relation between music and the personal, social and political processes (where sex and gender play a significant role) and there is a present

tendency to study "the relation of aesthetic properties to socially constructed gender characteristics or the musical reflections of such gender characteristics" (3). In general, we could conclude, gender expectations condition musicians' agency from the moment they grab an instrument or devote themselves to a particular music genre. But, as I will explain later, the limitations are greater in the case of women.

2.2. Pop and Rock Music. Two Gendered Music Genres

The sex-based distinctions mentioned above are strongly rooted in personal growth and individual identity formation, affecting men and women in all domains. Music is not an exception. In this sense, women's tuition and access to music have been affected by the sex-based social roles assigned to them: ". . . sex has not just been an accidental and incidental aspect of a musician's make-up, but rather one of the most essential elements in determining an individual's access to music education, musical instruments, musical institutions, employment opportunities, and entire cultural spheres" (Bowers, *College* 85). The relationship between sex and music goes back to ancient times. In Greece, for example, authors such as Plato, Clement or Aristotle connected masculine music with attributes or concepts such as reason, control and order, whereas characteristics like sensuality, hysteria or passion were identified with music related to women or effeminacy (Cox Lorraine 3). These suppositions remained solid and at work in music. When music criticism developed in the 19th century, instrumental music was also classified in terms of femininity and/or masculinity:

> . . . in nineteenth-century Germany, "strong" instrumental music such as symphonies, concerti, and operas was considered masculine, and "sentimental or melodious" music was considered feminine. More active = masculine: more passive, more lyrical = feminine. Femininity in music was equated with beautiful melodies, refinement, and sensitivity. (Jezic 4)

In *College Music Symposium*, Jane M. Bowers displays the following distinction between the model of gender-assigned musical tasks for men and women and clarifies that this classification often depends on different factors such as context, time, class, age, race or marital status. Bowers also explains how, normally, men have occupied all the categories in the list, whether falling on the women's column or on the men's column, whereas women's incursions in men's lists are less habitual (86):

Women	*Men*
Singing	Playing instruments
Performing	Composing
Soft instruments	Loud instruments
Supporting roles	Leading roles
Domestic	Public

Amateur	Professional
Limited training	Higher education
Secular	Sacred

In this way, I dare say that stereotyping in music is manifest and it has been consistently exercised all throughout music history, establishing a stable pattern that has reached as far as today, informing also the understanding of modern genres like pop and rock, as I will show later. I find it very significant how both musical instruments and music genres have been labelled as feminine or masculine by stressing a given set of (socially constructed) characteristics, what undoubtedly alters musicians' experiences and reproduces and perpetuates gender stereotyping. Combining feminist theory and music in *Gender in the Music Industry. Rock, Discourse and Girl Power* (2007), Marion Leonard analyzes the gender conditioning that marks the experiences of musicians to come to the conclusion that gender is produced and sustained by individuals, groups, institutions and discourses in the music industry. According to her, this gendered design of both rock music and its industry ". . . reflects and serves to constitute the gendered character of wider social and cultural realities and structures" (Leonard 2). In short, we can conclude that the gender stereotyping of music originates in long socially created and accepted binary perceptions and that it has been institutionalized and internalized in a manner that affects women and men in every social, economic, political or cultural aspect (music included).

Music genres play a significant part in women's agency since, as I have stated before, they are defined by and through the employment of stereotyping strategies. That is why riot grrrls like Kathleen Hanna did have to negotiate a place for themselves in punk-rock music, at the same time that they had to break with the premises that linked their feminity to pop music. In the next section, I illustrate with specific examples and concise definitions the impact of the gendered qualities of two big genres such as pop and rock and the implications that they carry for women. Also, I give more specific examples of how instruments are gendered too and the connotations that a particular election of instruments may carry for musicians.

2.2.1. Gender and Expectations in Pop and Rock Music

Here, I use pop and rock as the two big categories that dichotomize music in order to achieve clarification and straightforwardness. However, I reckon that such a broad classification may fall in generalizations, due to its simplistic configuration. Labelling is always risky, and this binary opposition, in music, can be easily questioned. Complexities surface within this broad classification, as genres in music are always executed with liberty and a tendency for mixture and combination. Nevertheless, I will use it with awareness and a critical view, searching to offer a solid and clear illustration of my previous statements. It is not my interest to expand my discussion into a deep analysis of the technical, cultural or aesthetical differences that define rock and pop as labels, but I think that it was required to provide some specific, however incomplete, explanation of how these two labels are usually employed to characterize, define and categorize music, establishing certain expectations and

conventions. In what follows, I will focus on the characteristics and attributes more commonly related to these genres, specifically when those refer directly to the crossroads between music and gender, which is the real interest of this work. To start with, Simon Frith employs the following description of pop music:

> Pop can be differentiated from classical or art music, on the one side, from folk music, on the other, but many otherwise include every sort of style. It is music accessible to a general public (rather than aimed at elites or dependent on any kind of knowledge or listening skill). It is music produced commercially, for profit, as a matter of enterprise not art. Defined in these terms, 'pop music' includes all contemporary popular forms – rock, country, reggae, rap, and so on . . . When in 1990 British legislators (concerned to regulate the content of music radio) defined 'pop music' as 'all kinds of music characterised by a strong rhythmic element and a reliance on electronic amplification for their performance', this led to strong objections from the music industry that such a musical definition failed to grasp the sociological difference between pop ('instant single-based music aimed at teenagers') and rock ('album-based music for adults'). ("Pop Music" 94)

In fact, Frith's use of pop music here is more expansive and unifying. His use of pop music refers to contemporary popular forms, a much bigger container in which we could include both pop and rock, genres that I am comparing and contrasting here. Still, we perceive the complexities of definition and the struggle to establish cohesive criteria for denotation. This can be taken as an opportunity to permeate certain genres with connotations that are purposefully established. As a matter of fact, pop is many times taken as a more trivial and entertaining genre in which women successfully find a niche, whereas rock is usually characterized for its political content and attached to masculine attributes. Mark Pedelty and Kristine Weglarz state that, in the 1960s, rock became, for the first time, connected to politics: "1960s' activism ended in frustration, political passions dampened by war without end, the failure of movements to evidence immediate results, and a growing sense of environmental calamity. In the early 1970s a new wave of political rockers took stage while the old guard changed tune" (xvi). Music and political movements evolved as intertwined forces and, as I will show in the following sections, then, the punk counterculture shaped and challenged this genre as never before, adding more political connotations to it and turning music into a public political hardware that many used to oppose the status quo. Probably because rock became related to these subversive and/or rebellious connotations, pop music has been somehow procured as an opposition or alternative, as many scholars have appointed (e.g. Hesmondhalgh 1996; Shuker 2005; Larson 2016). Rock has been associated with misbehavior, transgression and male manners, while certain characteristics[12] of pop music (which, as I will try to show next, are pre-

[12] Needless to say, I do not mean to enter into any discussion about the worthiness of the two genres. I only try to present their main differences, the reasons why critics usually place them as opposites and, above all, how this is related and connected to gender attributions that affect or informed these genres.

established under gender considerations) were purposefully remarked or emphasized to be analogous to women and femininity.

In general, rock is usually considered authentic, rebellious, "self-determined, resentful of authority, and defies subordination" (Larson 3), a definition that is usually accepted and welcomed. It also comprises the elements of other genres such as blues, folk, country, western music or jazz (Shuker 202), whereas pop is sometimes said to "have emerged as a somewhat watered-down, blander version of this, associated with a more rhythmic style and smoother vocal harmony" (Shuker 202). Other scholars follow this line and define pop as conservative, artificial, and audience-oriented.

In the book *Pop Music - Technology and Creativity: Trevor Horn and the Digital Revolution*, Timothy Warner outlines the main general differences between pop and rock music. According to Warner's outline (see below), we can draw the conclusion that pop music is more mass-oriented and that is why the emphasis on the recording process and the use of technological gadgets to produce flawless music is essential. In fact, that technological intervention, for some, may be the cause that makes the music to apparently sound more artificial, less authentic, and ephemeral. In the case of rock, music is characterized by real performance, where musicianship and originality would make albums last in time:

Pop	*Rock*
Singles	Albums
Emphasis on recording	Emphasis on performance
Emphasis on technology	Emphasis on musicianship
Artificial	Real ('authentic')
Trivial	Serious
Ephemeral	Lasting
Successive	Progressive

Fig. 3. Distinctions between pop and rock (Warner 3).

Similarly, in *Rethinking Popular Music after Rock and Soul,* David Hesmondhalgh does a similar set of oppositions. He summarizes the main characteristics of both genres by following a pattern similar to the one proposed by Warner. Rock is defined here in the right column and the defining attributes for pop are gathered in the left column (Hesmondhalgh 195):

Mass	Community
Commerce	Creativity/Art
Artificiality	Authenticity
Large record companies	Small Record Companies

Having a look at these comparisons, I can conclude that classifications can lead us to the final assumption that pop lacks a more serious consideration, or that it is usually linked to business and the market. Mary Celeste Kearney explains how pop is believed to be conservative and superficial because of the commercial perspective that moves its charts (93). It is true that nowadays women occupy visible and privileged positions in most pop charts, due to their leading roles as performers and/or lead singers. Names such as those of Beyoncé, Rihanna, Taylor Swift, Lady Gaga and the crowned queen of pop Madonna are dominating Number One charts in America. It is also a fact that the first manifest role that women acquired when they started to gain visibility and recognition within the music industry was the one provided by their role as (pop) vocal/singer, a traditionally feminine position which is considered quite conservative and influenced by beauty standards. As I explain later in the section concerning the public dimension that music entails (subsection 4.2.4), the role of lead-singer is also affected by the gender expectations that confine women.

In any case, apart from the more technical differences between these two genres, the separation of pop from rock also comes from conservative judgments that are based on the sex/gender distinction, which contributes to the genderization of music. Different scholars have articulated a perspective in which they envision pop and rock as a cultural construct in which gender is effected, perpetuating stereotypes that affect both men and women:

> Rock is presented as progressive, moving culture and society forward, and pop is constructed as conservative, helping to maintain the status quo. Gender ideologies have been mapped onto this rock/pop binary, with rock constructed as masculine and pop as feminine. Buried in such gendered construction is the sex/gender system's conservative politics, which have contributed to the difficulties faced by female and gay male rock musicians. (Kearney 93)

This mapping exerts an important influence both on musicians and audiences. Just to set some examples, back in 1973, Patti Smith, one of the biggest precursors for those women who would later involve themselves in punk music, said that "Rock 'n' roll is for men. Real rock 'n' roll is a man's job. I want to see a man up there. I want to see a man's muscles, a man's veins. I don't want to see no chick's tit banging against a bass" (Janowitz 60). Ironic as it may seem, Smith expressed with words a thought that many still accept as a reality: rock & roll is exclusively for males. Close to this idea, on August 2014, an article[13] for *The Guardian* by Caroline Sullivan started with a catching headline that evokes the gendered characteristic of pop: "Female rock fans shout out: 'I shouldn't have to like pop just because I'm a girl'". In the rest of the article, the reader could find testimonies of girls who like genres that are usually linked to men, as it is the case of rock or metal. In the opinion of Kirstie Southcott, "If you're a girl and you like metal, it's frowned upon. People expect me to be into Justin Bieber and One Direction and, when I say I go to metal gigs, they think I'm strange" (Sullivan). Strange, marginalized or oppressed feelings are common among girls who like guitar riffs, screaming voices and rebellious lyrics. These

[13] The article can be accessed here: www.theguardian.com/music/2014/aug/14/female-rock-fans-i-shouldnt-have-like-pop-just-because-im-girl-radio-1.

perceptions are a result of the sex/gender based conceptions that categorize some genres (such as pop, as I have tried to show here) as more appropriate for girls. For Helen Reddington, "it is hardly surprising that girls are seen as consumers of pop whereas boys are seen as connoisseurs of rock" (3), and that distinction that aligns pop with females and rock with males is based on the gender differences that affect music and direct women to "women oriented" fields. But, what are the underlying politics in pop and rock that make them be categorized as male or female-oriented?

2.2.2. Public Display in Rock Music

Rock music is usually linked to a masculine discourse, as I have previously anticipated. For Philip Auslander, "In this critique, rock is characterised as a fundamentally male enterprise: the music was (and largely still is) created by men, reflects masculine concerns and sexuality, and tends toward misogyny" (4). Men perform rock music for other men (and women), speak from a men's perspective and display male attitudes on stage. In sum, rock is asserted as an exclusively male terrain. Helen Reddington, for instance, agrees with this assumption. She uses a simile between rock music and warfare in order to suggest that rock is characteristically masculine, alienating women from it:

> Rock music has many of the characteristics of National Service: leadership, noise, "desirable" phallic weapons, male camaraderie, capture of and expansion of territory, power struggles and a distance in relationship to the opposite sex (women); it also takes on the role of expressing anger for *all* young people, just as war consist of national representatives sent to vent anger on other peoples in other locations. As with warfare, the representatives of dissatisfaction were predominantly young men; in rock music terms, young men signify anger and unrest, and young women signify peace and tranquility. (126)

In fact, the exhibition of outraged behaviour on stage is a focal characteristic that illustrates how music genres are gendered. In this sense, rock music is a good platform to showcase authenticity and emotions:

> Moreover, rock has been perceived as a vehicle for genuine emotional outpourings, which, because of their authentic nature, are not sullied by their dissemination through a capitalist industry. Thus, the concept of authenticity is articulated not just in the music form or text but also in the body of the performer, who is understood to communicate directly to their audience. (Leonard 32)

Within the multiple feelings revealed on stage, the expression of anger and the active display of bodily movements are dimensions and precise examples in which that gendered view of music is performed and enacted. First and foremost, anger comes as a quality that is exemplary of how certain attributes or attitudes

are related to gender. If we take rock music as a field in which leading men express (between many other things) anger through a noisy way of rebellion, then it is conceivable that women (socially opposed to the characteristics of leadership, anger, noise and rebellion) will not find a space on it. Indeed, anger is probably the emotion most attached to masculinity, and thus, it has not been appointed as a characteristic that could be naturally assigned to femininity, creating the expectation that women are less prone to display those emotions in public performances. As Neil Nehring states, "[i]n both academia and the culture at large, anger has been the only emotion approved of in men . . . but in women, anger is simply considered an abnormality that must be suppressed" (xxi). As a rule, rock is perceived as a domain where it is acceptable or prospective to express emotional outbursts. Consequently, women, who have been traditionally characterized as passion controllers, are somehow forecasted out of this pattern, since, as I say, it has been traditionally argued that female performers should control their emotions and those who do not control them gently on stage are then going "too far" or acting in an objectionable aggressive way.

In this sense, corporal expression and the body become central in order to communicate emotions in rock music. Consequently, based on those gendered distinctions that I explored before, the socially constructed characteristics that define *a* man and *a* woman (where the body would correspond to the latter and the mind to males), it is interesting to see how women's agency is restricted by the same element that shaped or determined their narrow circumscription. In the "The Laugh of the Medusa", Hélène Cixous explains how the female body has been articulated to confine or restrict women. The body then is an important element for women's linguistic freedom, as it is a source of inspiration and power, a source that has been denied to them and for which women have been persecuted and/or condemned: "For a long time it has been in body that women have responded to persecution, to the familial-conjugal enterprise of domestication, to the repeated attempts at castrating them" (Cixous 886). On top of that, Cixous equates women with servants, because when being deprived of their bodies, they cannot be active participants in any potential struggle: "A woman without a body, dumb, blind, can't possibly be a good fighter. She is reduced to being the servant of the militant male, his shadow" (Cixous 880). Taking all these reflections by Cixous to the field of music, it is important to underline how the body becomes an important means of physical expression for women on stage. Based on the cultural standards that women have to follow, their attitude on stage will be judged and their freedom will be constrained. In sum and from this premise, gender becomes the main agent in women's exclusion from some music genres such as rock, where musicians express themselves through the voice (that comes from within the body too) and the body itself.

The cultural and political assumptions that we can derive from the expression of anger and the use of the body on stage are the source of the gender problematic that I am addressing here. Rock entails[14] physical and sexual manifestations that women are not supposed to perform in consonance with gender expectations.

[14] To provide another specific example, cock rock is a subgenre of rock music that developed in the late 1960s, being known for its emphasis on the display of male sexuality. Frith describes this performance as an "explicit, crude, 'masterful' expression of sexuality" (*Sound Effects* 227), and he argues that these performers are aggressive and boast their control and power through the use of phallic symbols (mikes and guitars), arrogant lyrics and screams, which is in accordance to the expectations of their gender (*Sound Effects* 227). It reproduces and perpetuates the gender discourse that society dictates and it turns explicit that women should stay out of this domain.

That is the reason why the ones who separate from this pattern and get involved in rock scenes end up experiencing the consequences of crossing the sexual and social lines delimited by their sex: "Rock has always served as a harbinger of contemporary sexual and social boundaries, but this type of hollow hedonism merely reflected the social confines of beauty for women in rock – submissive, white, thin, and existing mainly for men's physical satisfaction" (Raha 111). When on stage, women are supposed to act in accordance with stereotypical assumptions (such as the beauty conventions and manners): be quiet, fashionable, passive and fundamentally aware of being observed (women have been usually objectivized as the retainer of male gazing and desiring rather than subjectivized as the active producer of action). Their role in music is also described as "de-sexualised earth mothers, fantasy figures and easy lays" (Whiteley 51), sexist and misogynist adjectives that infer how female musicians had an arduous way ahead to demystify and break traditional stereotypes attached to their femininity.

Within these confinements and following Judith Butler's notion of "performativity", the exhibition of certain behaviours on stage plays a significant part (as some are taken as innate female or male) when a woman is performing rock, because, somehow, she is performing masculinity. As a matter of fact, not properly-lady, "unladylike"[15], "subversive" (Leonard 91) and "transgressive" (Raha xv) are some of the adjectives that women receive because of their performing a genre that seems not to match sex/gender description. Women in rock music are defiant in a broader sense than men because apart from belonging to a rebellious genre they also oppose a socially and culturally established femininity:

> . . . regardless of whatever else the rebellion is against, for women it is all that it is for men, plus an extra dimension – resistance to gender norms. If male rock musicians are rebellious, then women are doubly rebellious so that any factor which acts to nourish and sustain the revolt against hegemonic femininity will enhance the likelihood of women becoming rock musician. (Bayton 194)

In sum, we could say that rock is a realm in which, traditionally, masculinity has been enacted and performed. Consequently, women have been cornered or belittled, forcing them to break normative sex/gender-based boundaries. Maria Raha in *Cinderella's Big Score. Women of the Punk and Indie Underground* (2005) complains that only men are active participants in rock music (7). She explains that, due to their gender, women's expectations are more established than men's and, as a result, they have to walk a "thinner line" (xix). Mina Carson, Tisa Lewis and Susan M. Shaw describe that same idea[16] in the following passage: "To a great degree,

[15] A term coined by Mina Carson, Tisa Lewis, Susan M. Shaw in *Girls Rock! Fifty Years of Women Making Music*. It is used to describe the attitude that some women displayed on stage in the American society of the 1950s: "Unfortunately, the United States in the 1950s was not ready for women who could growl, shake, moan, and demand their share of the fun (sexual or otherwise) with the best of male rock 'n' rollers. Rejecting postwar notions of femininity, rockabilly women asserted themselves in both their lyrics and their performance. They were sassy, sexy, aggressive, and decidedly 'unladylike'" (Carson et al. 2). This term is significant in my work because it summarizes my understanding of how attributes, mindsets and cultural characteristics define expectations for women in music.

[16] They even go a bit further and state that apart from a "male terrain", rock music as a cultural form also comprises other power structures – such as race – that are significant for the understanding of the marginalization of some groups: "Rock was also, ironically, white terrain – ironically because, of course, the musical and lyrical languages of rock were those of

the (white, male) sexuality of rock 'n' roll results from the social processes and relationships that construct gender and sexuality . . . On the whole, rock 'n' roll has provided a stage on which masculinity and male sexuality have been enacted" (32). In a similar manner, Helen Reddington argues that rock is understood as "macho and exclusive" (12), and that it is opposed to the also perceived "flufflly and girly" pop (12). Thus, for women, a double ethic applies as they are transgressing the norms twice. Within this struggle, many female musicians opt for a gender-play and celebrate the multiple displays of contradiction within the norm.

Broadly speaking, women in rock, at first, had two choices of public showcase; some showed feminine characteristics and dependence, supporting thus patriarchal attitudes; while others mimicked men's performances**.** Diane Peacock Jezic refers to this as the "double bind" (5). She explains that when women composers dedicated themselves to "feminine" genres, and when they focused their effort on writing songs, playing the piano or contributing to salon music (tasks that were socially acceptable for women), at the same time, they were preserving the myth that established their incapacity to work on different areas and genres. Similarly, if women focused on larger compositions, it appeared as if they were becoming against feminine identity (5). In the *Girls Rock! Fifty Years of Women Making Music,* the authors explain that many women facing that "double bind" have to negotiate their display on stage and the only choices left for them are to represent male models of rebellion or aggressiveness or to present their own identity as a caricature of women's femininity (Carson et al. 70). However, as women's presence in rock music became more visible, many decided to subvert these two types of performance, taking advantage of the rule-breaking role of rock to vindicate new images of femininity:

> In the world of popular music, a growing number of female performers have been able to use the system to their advantage, openly incorporating gender rebellion into their art. Consequently, young women looking for popular culture that reflects their lives are no longer caught between two unsatisfying alternatives: a world of romance that embodies female dependence and a world of rock 'n' roll that glorifies male separation. They have a greater variety of images of femininity available to them. (Stein 225)

In the 1960s, Janis Joplin or Patti Smith (see figures 4 and 5) were good examples of how expectations could be challenged on stage. Their performances could not have been described within the standards that lady-like prospects determined, occupying different gender positions. From the standards arraying the expectations on female performance at the time, theirs were disrupting and uneasy. They exhibited sexual, experimental, political, masculine and emotional behaviours in a transgressive and revolutionary way: "She [Patti Smith] was able to play at being this male presence, sort of alternatively female and male, or androgynous … During that

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the rebel and the outsider, and the building blocks of rock 'n' roll were jazz, blues, and gospel music – all written in the syntax of black American experience" (Carson et al. 21). In fact, and as I explain later, the convergence of gender, race and class affects women in particular, making it harder for them to be included in those domains that have been historically related to "white-male-middle class".

time feminism was really rising as a public discourse, and I don't think they ever cited Patti as one of their favorite authors, ha ha ha. But I think that was part of her appeal- she could be one of the guys" (McNeil and McCain 141). Similarly, Joplin's aggressiveness marked her as uncontrollable, unnaturally energetic, and earthly. Hence, she was pigeonholed outside the dominant symbolic order of her gender. More often, her art was seen as "mannish", with the inevitable consequence that Joplin's wildness and assertiveness, instead of being understood in equality to other male artists' adoption of this same attitude, was turned into an account that depicted her as degenerate (Whiteley 66).

Fig. 4. Patti Smith cover for *Horses*, 1975.

Fig. 5. Janis Joplin, Woodstock 1969. Photo by Henry Diltz.

In a similar manner, Chicana punk musician Alice Bag's music and performances were characterized by an aggressive and powerful attitude when on stage, which, to a certain extent, opened the way to hardcore music, a new version or style of punk music that won popularity in California during the second half of the 20th century. Bag's involvement in music does also go beyond music itself in order to become a personal and spiritual choice, bringing forward overtones of ideological and social transcendence (see figure 6). As she mentions in her autobiography *Violence Girl, From East L.A. Rage to Hollywood Stage* (2011), her performances were not "ladylike" and that led to comments on her attitude on stage: "I was often accused of being too masculine in my performances. It wasn't that I was too sexual; rather it was that I was too aggressive, too violent, too in your face for a girl" (Bag 221).

Fig. 6. Alice Bag at the Hong Kong Cafe, 1978.
Photo by Louis Jacinto.

As these examples show, some musicians opted for the opportunity to defy the traditional gender stereotypes assigned to women (being quiet, passive; taking the role of muse; etc.), and, in turn, they chose to experience new and different ways in which they could present themselves on stage. In a way, these musicians were following Hélène Cixous's idea that women's bodies are a root of power (880), that gender-playing is a synonym of empowerment for women. In the same line, this modulation of identity in performance is also connected to the performativity of gender proposed by Judith Butler. In Butler's opinion, the use of the body constitutes our gender: "Gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered" (Butler 519). By adapting their bodies, many female musicians chose to exaggerate the traditional notion of femininity, others to imitate the rebellious attitudes of men, and some, as in the case of Kathleen Hanna, to profit from the liberation that punk entailed in order to purely and candidly express themselves. Women as the ones mentioned above commanded and regulated their own image and by doing it they empowered other women that were positively influenced by those attitudes that were manifestly rejecting "ladylike" conventions. Yet, they were not exempt from criticism and, instead, they got what Joan Jett would very well denote in her famous song with the expression "bad reputation".

Influenced by their gender prospects, women deal with an extra challenge on stage when it comes to their bodies and how it articulates their identity display. An extra challenge that men usually do not have to face, or, at least, not as strongly as their female peers. As I have tried to show in this section, music genres carry within a gendered arrangement. It is my belief that it is also accurate to state the same about how women would feel and make choices when it comes to playing an instrument. Instruments, to follow my previous approach to this topic, are also gendered. In other words, they can also be employed as a specific example of how gender issues act on different dimensions within the realm of music.

2.3. Gender Stereotyping of Instruments

The gender associations of musical instruments, that is, "the labeling of instruments as being primarily male or female" (Steblin 128) has become, as Rita Steblin explains, "an aspect of the sociology of music which has had an enormous impact on the role of women in music history" (128). It is an opinion generally established that some instruments are deliberately considered as feminine whereas others are dressed or bestowed with traditional masculine conventions or attributes. Given the broad body of works that address the gendering of instruments, I will just mention some general facts and examples to illustrate that argument. However, even if I resort to brevity and broadness, I believe that it was pertaining to tackle this issue since it connects with what I have previously explored about the strong relationship between gender issues and music, and it will be representative of what I aim at developing later on my study.

Veronica Doubleday, in "Sounds of Power: An Overview of Musical Instruments and Gender", explains that there are instruments more obviously gendered than others because the gendered meanings in some are occasionally masked (6). However, she suggests that it is quite normal that an instrument is conferred with gendered associations that affect or spread to the performer:

> If an instrument has its own gendered identity-by virtue of links with gendered spirits, say-this may support the claim of people of that gender to play it. Circular arguments may be used, along the lines of: 'This instrument is played by men, it is therefore masculine, and therefore men have the right to play it, and to exclude women from access'. Whatever the underlying construction of meaning, it is common for a performer to play a 'same-gendered' instrument. (Doubleday 14)

Thus, when an instrument is mostly played by one of the two sexes, it automatically becomes associated with it and it is consequently labelled as "masculine" or "feminine". Certainly, the majority of all of the musical instruments at hand now and in history have been (and can be) played indistinctly by men and women. Yet, it is also true that men have played all of them regularly and with visibility, whereas women have had access to a few of them, at least with frequency and the opportunity to gain dexterity and excel.

In the essay "The Gender Stereotyping of Musical Instruments in the Western Tradition", Rita Steblin evidences the gender stereotyping of musical instruments in the German, Italian and English societies from the Renaissance to the 19th century and she exemplifies how women's participation in musical activities has been restricted. In ancient times, women used to play wind instruments, such as the aulos, and men would play stringed instruments: the harp or the lyre, for instance (Steblin 130). Later on, during the Renaissance, women took up the stringed ones (the harp, the lute or the guitar) and men enjoyed the wind ones (Steblin 131). In reference to the trumpet and the violin, the author explains that the first one has been associated with the military world and the last one with the dance floor, conveying thus the reasons why women would eventually

be unfamiliar with their use (Steblin 131, 133). On the contrary, women were encouraged to play the virginal, the piano, the lute and the harp (Steblin 138) and both the virginal and the piano were seen as proper instruments for women, as they would be usually located at home, a private space that would keep them in anonymity. Yet, other instruments like the violin, brasses or winds were restricted for them because they implied that performers could develop and improve their skills and gain public visibility (Steblin 144). However, nowadays, woodwind instruments, such as the violin, are gendered feminine due to the high pitch and soft sound that they produce (similar to a woman's voice) and also because they are small and light, what makes it easier for women to carry. On the other hand, string instruments such as the electric guitar or the bass are gendered and categorized as male because they are heavier, their low pitch is comparable to a man's voice, and they produce more aggressive or heavy sounds (Kearney 134).

The same happens with percussive instruments. In pre-modern societies, playing the drums was considered a feminine practice. These instruments were associated with the feminine because women were usually related to the rhythms of nature: "particularly menstrual cycles but also those of the sun, moon and seasons. Moreover, in the ancient civilizations of Rome, Greece, Egypt, and India, drumming was a sacred practice performed by women during healing, religious, and agricultural ceremonies" (Kearney 137). Yet, nowadays, percussion is usually associated with masculinity:

> A common idea has been that women lack the physiological strength to play a particular instrument; this is often confounded by fact once women gain access to it. Another consideration is that certain instruments have been seen as unsightly for women to play, either because their presence interferes with men's enjoyment of the female face or body, or because a playing position is judged to be indecorous. (Doubleday 18)

Mastering the drums is now firstly and usually tied to being strong, even though having an extraordinary strength is not a requirement for playing it. Second, one who plays them masters more than one percussion instrument at the same time (bass drum, side drums and cymbals), and that same person is normally able to use both hands and one foot at once. This practice generally makes the instrumentalist sweat, as a result of the constant movement of the extremities. These three characteristics -strength, mastering and sweating- are attached to masculinity, so playing the drums becomes a masculinized practice: "Male musicianship is intimately connected with masculinity, and when men maintain musical instruments as their exclusive cultural property, they make assertions about masculine identities and roles" (Doubleday 17). In this sense, girls and women who want to get involved in the practice may feel that they are subverting a specific role to which they had not been endorsed, consequently going against the feminine expectations of their gender. That is why all the examples of female drum players, for instance, that we can find in rock and roll music, from Karen Carpenter to Meg White all the way through Maureen "Mo" Tucker or Sandy West in The Runaways, are still, in some contexts, presented as

exceptional examples or peculiarities[17]. My generalization of the gendered nature of certain genres and instruments does not imply the absence of examples that dispute those broad assumptions, but we need to consider how these examples are observed as anomalies or deviations, singularities that confirm the average and ordinary pattern that is assumed as a norm or a given. Also, it would be necessary to examine the fractions of participation for each gender and the processual development in the increase and visibility of those examples. Music could be described in many different ways due to its musicality, lyrics and performance (no matter if the singer who is performing is a man or a woman). The problem lies in classifying it based on the binary construct defined as feminine or masculine. Both men and women may be exercising their own identity and emotions in that particular moment, and both risk being labelled in terms of gender expectations, yet, women must negotiate a resistance that challenges their musicianship in a broader way.

This gendered view on instruments is very symbolic. It helps us to better understand the relevance of those choices made by girls getting involved in the Riot Grrrl movement. Playing instruments such as drums or the electric guitar will significantly turn into a gender and identity vindication. In music then, gender becomes a construct that, as I have shown, contributes to stereotyping music genres or the individual preferences for a particular instrument. It is evident then that riot grrrls like Hanna noticed how gender was a major issue for women in genres like punk music:

> How could gender be irrelevant when so many girls were coming up to Kathleen in tears; when an AC/DC cover band had the nerve to accuse Viva Knievel [Hanna's former band] of being a novelty act because there were two women in the group; when Kathleen and her bandmate Louise were so often the only women on stage the whole night; when they had to open for a band in Ohio whose singer blurted, between songs, "incest is best, put your sister to the test"; when Kathleen felt a terror in dark alleys behind rock clubs that the men in her band never experienced?. (Marcus 42)

I do believe that gender is produced individually and maintained collectively. If we understand gender as a social construct that may vary in time, then we will find an apt opportunity for revision and transformation. In music, and more so in certain historical periods or cultural contexts, as I will explore later, feminist theory plays an important role for the artistic expression of change and modification. I completely agree with Jane M. Bowers when she says that ". . . feminist music critics have demonstrated that when gender is added as an analytical category in probing a given musical work, an entirely new dimension is added to our understanding of that work" (*College* 92). Indeed, riot grrrls relied on feminism to oppose those attitudes and by incorporating feminist

[17] Michelle Cruz Gonzales, drummer in the punk-rock band The Spitboys, published *The Spitboy Rule: Tales of a Xicana in a Female Punk Band* in 2016. Her recollection of her first experiences as a punk drummer support the gendered assumptions that I explore here and resonate with the same significance that the previous examples already disclosed: "Playing punk rock drums and singing does, however, take a great deal of cardio endurance and stamina. These things would not be difficult for me, but there were other things about playing drums that would be because I was not just a drummer, I was a female drummer. Being a female drummer requires a something else all together –patience. "You hit hard for a girl". I got that comment a lot from young men after nearly every show. The comment made me want to punch each guy who said it in the face" (Cruz 31).

theories within punk discourse women changed the music scene and gave feminism a fresh, unique and revolutionary note.

3. Feminism: An Overview

Feminism stands as the main component in the foundation of the Riot Grrrl movement and many bands that were included within this movement (Bikini Kill among them) were greatly influenced by feminist theory, their songs being affected and inspired by feminist values and the vindication and defence of women's rights. By adding a feminist approach, many female musicians were able to break barriers and offer new views into genres such as punk music. In this sense, feminism works as a fundamental background for the music of the movement.

Even though Riot Grrrl is usually linked in time to the third wave of feminism, it was still based on some notions that started with the first and second waves. This is why this section is divided in three main parts, as I travel through a detailed retrospection of the different commonly-named waves of feminism. There has been criticism[18] and certain reticence about the adequacy of this triple division and, consequently, other alternatives have been proposed. I partially agree with this evaluation. I believe that each wave represents a historical period with particular demands for women, but that, at the same time, each section overlaps with the next, adding a legacy of significance for future generations. Still, I will follow this grouping because I consider that it is still efficient and practical to discuss the historical development of feminism, revealing key concepts for my posterior analysis of the selected lyrics. This whole part plays a vital part in my study. The feminist movement has a seminal role both for the general frame in which I insert my research and for the examination of the specific lyrics, which, simultaneously, stem from a very specific cultural and social context in which feminist issues and concerns became instrumental items of political and cultural identity. In the next pages, I discuss the origins of feminism, its development as a movement, and its current situation. I have consciously decided to provide a thorough overview of the whole feminist movement, instead of taking for granted the traditional notions of feminism, because I truly believe that the Riot Grrrl movement, the idiosyncrasies of the bands that took part in this movement, and the work by Kathleen Hanna herself are mediated and ingrained in the historical development of the movement. Risking the possibility of going too far or being too broad, I wanted to show the whole development of feminism and feminist criticism to disclose the complete ideological progress and thus forge a solid foundation for the particular period in feminist evolution in which I place Kathleen Hanna's work. In other words, in my final part, I explore more deeply the third wave of feminism, as its cultural impact is decisive in the formation of the individual identity and the attainment of women's artistic development.

[18] To set a few examples, in the introduction for *Sisterhood is Forever. The Women's Anthology For a New Millennium,* Robin Morgan considers that the wave classification is accurate if feminism is taken as something narrow (xxix) and she prefers to consider its evolution as a "*tidal* wave that keeps on rolling" (xxx). In "Women's Time," French philosopher, semiotician, psychoanalyst and literary critic Julia Kristeva selects the word "generation" as it "implies less a chronology than a *signifying space*, a both corporeal and desiring mental space" (33). And, more recently, Ednie Kaeh Garrison defined the advancement of feminism in terms of radio waves ("U.S. Feminism-Grrrl" 151) that grow stronger and reach wider audiences.

3.1. What Is Feminism?

To start this journey through feminism, I think that it is necessary to specify its most elementary and operational definition. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines feminism[19] as follows:

> 1. Feminine quality or character; femininity. Now *rare*.
> 2. *Med.* The appearance of female secondary sexual characteristics in a male individual; feminization. Now *rare* or *disused*.
> 3. Advocacy of equality of the sexes and the establishment of the political, social, and economic rights of the female sex; the movement associated with this.

Probably, in the context of this work, the most accurate or proper meaning is the third one, as I understand feminism as the complex team of movements and ideologies whose goal is to achieve equal opportunities and rights for women in the different social, political, economic, cultural and personal areas. Allegedly founded in 1870 or earlier, the word "feminism" derives from the classical Latin *fēmina,* "woman" and *–ism*, "action; conduct of a class of persons; theory or practice", and it means "the philosophy or condition of being a woman". As for the word "feminist", it comes from classical Latin *fēmina,* "woman" and *-ist* "designating a person who practices some art or method, or who prosecutes, studies, or devotes himself to some science, art, or branch of knowledge" meaning a "woman's advocate." It first appeared as an adjective in 1872 in France.

As I explain later, feminism is a movement that approaches gender as a central category of analysis and as one of the principle constructs that marks female condition. Indeed, Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explains why it is indispensable to use the word *feminist* and no other denomination to focus on those gender issues that address women:

> Feminism is, of course, part of human rights in general—but to choose to use the vague expression *human rights* is to deny the specific and particular problem of gender. It would be a way of pretending that it was not women who have, for centuries, been excluded. It would be a way of denying that the problem of gender targets women. That the problem was not about being human, but specifically about being a female human. (41)

Taking what Ngozi says as a common trace that links the three waves of feminism, still the evolution has been diverse and the works by many different authors have transformed the movement in a way in which it has become an array of diverse matters, connotations, concerns, shades and vindications. American author and social activist bell hooks describes feminism, for instance, in a very broad sense: "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (1), problems which, according to her, both women and men should be

[19] (OED Third Edition, March 2012).

aware of in order to raise consciousness and then exercise change in a social scale. In the same line but surfacing from a totally different tradition, Mormon feminist theologian Maxine Hanks declares that feminism does not compress just *one* single movement. Hanks considers that, since the beginnings, feminism has been characterized by complexity and diversity:

> Feminism is not simply one philosophy, doctrine, or movement; there have been many feminist movements, from the ancient matriarchal culture of Neolithic peoples, to medieval feminist texts and the campaigns of Joan of Arc, to tracts of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century European and American reformists, to twentieth-century post-modernism. (xi)

Within this complexity, the word feminism has also been frequently misconceived and has had different negative connotations. Indeed, in spite of being considered one of the main important feminist authors of the 20th century, Virginia Woolf described the term in her book *Three Guineas* as a dead word, "since the only right, the right to earn a living, has been won, the word no longer has a meaning. And a word without a meaning is a dead word, a corrupt word" (302). From then on, many authors, writers or singers, as I exemplify later with the specific cases of Patti Smith or Siouxsie Sioux, have decided to reject the identification with a term that has somehow become a synonym for ". . . neurotic victims of penis envy who wanted to be men, it is said now" (Friedan 81).

However, leaving this backlash aside, feminism has enjoyed a long trip of constant advancement and flourishing. Women's right to enter the education system and to achieve a professional career together with a demand of women's rights over their own properties have accompanied other discussions on, for instance, reproductive freedom, divorce, custody rights, and the rights for disabled, lesbian or old women. To take these diverse conversations to the social arena, demanding attention and preeminence to female and feminist issues has to be recognized as one of the milestones of the women's movement, contributing, at the same time, to the personal and collective progress of different women in different parts of the world (Morgan xxix).

Feminism is an evolving process and its historical trajectory has been mapped by scholars through these three different waves (peaks of the movement) and in each one of them different demands and struggles have found space or a useful stage to voice their advocating of equal opportunities and civil rights in different political, economic and social contexts. This diversity and complexity are developed and explored in my next section. This general feminist introduction will be firmly linked to the essence of the work: this broad overview of the three different waves and the historical development of feminism will be evoked later when I face the textual analysis of the lyrics.

3.2. Early Feminism and the First Wave of Feminism

Before the coming of what today scholars label as the first wave of feminism[20] (late 19th century and the beginnings of the 20th century), women's social and economic conditions had already started to be exposed in what could be called an early feminism. This preceding action was already uncovering a ground that had been hardly explored before by women, thus opening the way for what was to come next.

In the literary realm, works by important women[21] of this early feminist time started to inquire into women's rights and reveal their non-conformism with the position that they had in society, paying special attention to education. For example, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405) by the Italian philosopher and writer Christine de Pizan is a critique of the misogynist society in which the author lived. That book and its impact became a landmark in early feminism, the author being praised as "the first Western woman to live by her pen" (Walters 19). In the 17th century, the works by the first English professional female dramatist and playwright Aphra Behn, works such as *Oroonoko* (1688) and *The Rover* (1677), paved the way for future women who wanted to earn their own bread and make a living by writing.

After the French Revolution, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789) was published, establishing individual and collective universal rights. The document did not take into consideration women's civil and political rights and, as a response to this exclusion, the French writer Olympe de Gouges wrote the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman* (1791), where she proclaimed that women are equal to men and thus deserve the same citizenship rights. This work became an influential one for future feminists.

Other women, like Mary Astell (1666-1731), rhetorician and writer, continued to give visibility to women's concerns in the next century and put the stress on the necessity for women to be properly educated, asking for access to college education, where women could develop their skills: "her great contribution to feminism was the way she urged women to take themselves seriously, to trust in their own judgment, to make their own choices in life by developing their talents and education themselves" (Walters 29). Certainly, as women were not allowed to attend college or even school, many women were self-educated, as the English writer and philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), who went further than the previous by claiming universal education. Author of *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787) – a request for girls to develop and enrich their intelligence – and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), one of the first works on feminist philosophy, Mary Wollstonecraft became a major figure in women's fights during the 18th century.

In the early and late 19th century, women's social authority was scarce: education was denied to most women, who had no rights over their own properties, could not vote or claim custody of children, divorce or sign

[20] Various expressions, with small changes in wording and punctuation, are normally used to make reference to the peaks of the feminist movement, including "first-wave", "first wave period", "the first wave" or "the first wave of feminism". In this work, I use the last two formulations to refer to each of the three different waves within the Women's Movement.

[21] It is also worth mentioning that in this first early feminism there were two men who played an important role. They both wrote two of the best arguments in favor of women's rights: William Thompson's *Appeal of one Half of the Human Race, Women, against the Pretensions of the other Half, Men, to Retain them in Political and thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery* (1825) and John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Woman* (1869).

any legal document without the husband's consent (Millet 67). As I have said, in spite of the fact that women had fought for their rights in different forms and manifestations since the beginning of times, it can be stipulated that the start of the 19th century stands as the breaking point in which women took a step forward and sought organization, stirring a real movement that proved stronger in England and France. In America, from the indigenous women of the North that "pushed for a proposal granting them an equal portion of colonial lands in Virginia as early as 1619" (Morgan xxxi) to the enslaved women that then took part in the Abolitionist movement, women organized themselves in order to demand rights that had been taken from them due to their sex.

Under the label of the first wave, scholars usually gather this group of women who started to assemble, focusing their common efforts on condemning the exclusion from political, social and economic life that women were suffering, giving special attention to the right to vote, marriage and property laws (divorce, guardianship of children and control of earnings), public emancipation and healthcare. In the United States, the Women's Movement sprang from the Anti-Slavery movement that started in 1830, where women had an important active role (Walters 46). In 1848, the Seneca Falls convention took place in New York, and women campaigned together with civil rights activists asking for a set of rights that included the right to vote for both women and African American people. With no doubt, this demonstration was a turning point for the movement. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Sojourner Truth were some of the major activists in those days and they played also an important part in the abolitionist movement. Actually, Sojourner Truth's famous speech "Ain't I a Woman?"[22] (1851), delivered at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, was key to establish race as a category that required public discussion. Yet, race, as connected to gender, would not be strongly addressed in this first wave.

On the other side of the Atlantic, demanding access to better education and the opportunity to attend university were two major concerns for women at that time. In this context, Emily Davies, Barbara Leigh Smith and a group of friends founded in 1869 a women's higher education college, Girton College. It became the first college in the United Kingdom that opened its doors to women. From the 1900s on, women began to coordinate their activism and, around 1903, in England, the Pankhurst family created the WSPU (Women's Social and Political Union), which was then followed by other groups (see figure 7). This growing body of arranged activism was categorized under the name of "the suffragettes". These female activists were led by the Pankhurst family (Dr Richard Pankhurst, Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst and their daughters Christabel and Sylvia) and they were known for their militant conviction, including strategies such as interrupting politicians at public meetings (Walters 78). Their marches, demonstrations and effective propaganda became iconic examples of important changes in feminist approaches and tactics (see figure 8). However, they also turned to occasional acts of violence. An increasing number of women were going to prison, where they would carry out hunger strikes. Eventually, divisions among these groups would increase.

[22] Full text at https://www.feminist.com/resources/artspeech/genwom/sojour.htm. Access 02/08/2021 17:25

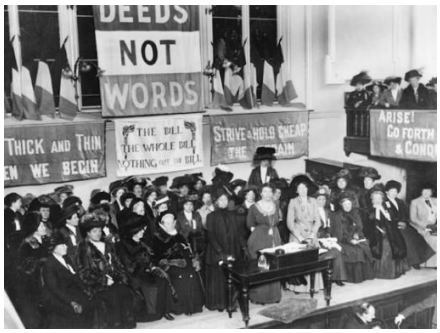

Fig. 7. A WSPU meeting, 1908 (The History Press).

Fig. 8. Emmeline Pankhurst being arrested in a protest.

The suffragists became a symbol of the fight within the feminist movement. Their, in some cases, controversial strategies and tactics were in fact efficient to establish the suffragist movement as a synonym of that first wave of feminism. Their major achievement was, of course, women's suffrage. Thanks to those women who went to the front, asked for their rights and raised awareness of women's unprivileged situation, The Representation of the People Act of 1918 granted the vote to women over the age of 30 in the United Kingdom and, a year later, the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919 opened the solicitor, juror and magistrate professions to women and amended the law that administered disqualifications on account of sex ("Sex Disqualification"). The new decade of the 1920s brought new opportunities for women in the United Kingdom and also in the United States, where the Nineteenth Amendment (1920) finally allowed women the right to vote.

In sum, the first wave was more concerned with legal issues and political equality between men and women: suffragism and stressing women's material disparity were two big concerns of this first original stage of feminism. From these demands arose the liberal and cultural feminisms, which constituted the first wave of feminism in America, between 1790 and 1920. Some middle-class American women wanted the same opportunities that their husbands had in the public sphere. Liberal feminism (1790 to the present) is scholarly employed to converge the contribution of these women who "advocated the authority of individual reason, equality of sexes, rational/legal concerns such as the right to vote, and the principles found in the National Organization for Women and the Equal Rights Amendment" (Hanks xii). At the turn of the century, feminism became a significant political force in America and another approach to feminism emerged in the 1840s. That new feminism will be labelled as cultural feminism and it "asserted a matriarchal vision and distinct or essential female values and spheres, such as the feminization of nature, global peace, clean environment, pre Christian matriarchy, feminist theology, female healing, female clergy, birth control, and the evils of patriarchy" (Hanks xiii).

In the literary realm, some of the major representative figures of this first wave addressed topics that had been rarely before narrated or exercised by women. One important work that could be included within this generation of female writing is Harriet Beecher Stowe's influential *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Stowe portrays the tough conditions of African American slaves and condemns the slave system in her country. Her book, a best-seller at the time of its publication, skyrocketed Stowe to fame, in part, thanks to Abraham Lincoln's recognition of the book's social impact. Although *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has been conventionally scrutinized

through the lenses of literary analysis in order to explore Stowe's addressing of slavery and racial issues, recent scholarship has also focused on the analysis of the cult of domesticity as it is portrayed in the novel or on the importance given to maternal power. In fact, since the 1960s, literary experts have been approaching the analysis of this novel from different angles and perspectives, concluding, for instance, that the author was influenced by the cultural feminism of her own time. Besides, even though characters such as Tom, George Harris or Mr. Legree are still central in reappraisals of this novel, more attention is paid now to the many and important female characters in the story, which did also bring forward Stowe's original treatment of the slavery issue.

Forty years later, intellectual feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman, author of the influential short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), depicts, in this story, a woman who becomes obsessed with the yellow paper on the room's wall, appealing to women's mental health, insanity and physical well-being: "'The Yellow Wallpaper enlightens the reader on women's health, motherhood, mental breakdown and its treatment, as well as feminism and gender relations in late 19th-century America" (Marland), turning this story into a landmark of cultural feminism.

Later, the "New Woman[23]" concept acquired more relevance within feminism. This concept has a strong literary dimension to it. Important authors such as Olive Schreiner, Ella D'Arcy, Edith Wharton or Kate Chopin had been influenced by the flapper culture of the 1920s and, in their novels and short stories, they would discuss the concept of the New Woman. Chopin's work, for instance, has been cherished by second and third wave feminists and novels like *The Awakening* (1899) or short stories such as "The Story of an Hour" represent that awareness of a new, conflicted and conflicting woman.

Narratives on topics such as slavery or women's mental health infused these works with an unquestionable heritage for the study of 19th century American literature. In British culture, the feminist essay published in 1929 under the title *A Room of One's Own* established Virginia Woolf as one of the main modernist authors of the 20th century. In the essay, Woolf makes an analysis of the different causes that illustrate or explain women's invisibility in British cultural, political and economic life and she suggests that material aspects (such as a room or economic independence) affected the intellectual freedom that women required to exercise their artistic ambitions: "Give her a room of her own and five hundred a year, let her speak her mind" (Woolf, *A Room* 123).

Woolf's influence was strong for many generations and it still pervades as a vivid analysis with resonance today. In fact, I resort to some of her most important remarks and ideas in my work. Particularly, when studying women's presence in music. Even though Woolf was mainly talking about the literary world, and even though literature and music can be approached as different artistic forms, some of her notions will be employed in my critical reading. The truth is that music and literature are in fact different disciplines with their own set of conventions, but still, women that wanted and want to work in any of those fields keep facing similar

[23] The Irish feminist writer Sarah Grand was the first to use this term in 1894 to refer to the free-spirited women who threatened the classical notions of womanhood (Buzwell). Then Henry James popularized the concept by depicting the heroines of his novels in this way.

limitations and, thus, many comparisons can be made between these two domains, and, in this case, connections can still be made between Woolf's original ideas and our concerns in the contemporary world.

Claiming that women should be equal citizens with men, the first wave gained legal advances for women and public emancipation. The right to vote was the most noteworthy victory of this first wave, together with some other reforms in higher education, the workplace and the healthcare system. This first wave of feminism was anticipating notions that will be still powerfully significant for future feminist generations. New forms of organization, the notion of the New Woman, and the works by female writers would influence future steps in women's fight.

3.3. The Second Wave of Feminism

From its very beginning, the 20th century witnessed an evolution of feminism that brought a broader range of perspectives to feminist studies, virtually including the birth of different schools or critical frameworks. All these different new approaches will complicate the picture and application of feminist views on both society and culture. Even though the second wave will strongly incorporate and develop these angles in the second half of the 20th century (1960s-1980s), the source and foundation for this can be previewed in previous decades of the century.

More women attended college and many replaced men at work when the Second World War broke out (Walters 86). In the aftermath and due to the recession, welfare for women came to an end and most women occupied again their prevailing role as housewives and nurturers at home. A second wave of feminism emerged in the 1960s, remarkably concerned with economic and social discrimination, birth control, abortion and reproductive rights for women, but still sharing with the first wave a concern about the politics of legal and educational rights for women. An outstanding feature of the second wave is that it challenged the traditional understanding of politics "by talking instead to other women – in the resonant belief that 'the personal is political'" (Scott 12). Before the second wave took off, everything inside the private sphere remained intimate, and all the connections and links between the personal experiences and the wider political and social structures were excluded. That changed with the new wave and the motto "personal is political" that became a major statement for the movement. Women's insights and private experiences were approached from a wider scope and by acknowledging the political repercussions.

In what follows, I explore the different approaches to feminism that could be perceived, as I have already said, *before* and *around* the so-called second wave of feminism period (1960s – late 1980s). I must say first that all of them are primarily concerned with a patriarchal society against which they vindicate the value of women's differences. New feminist theories of the decade defined patriarchy as a social construction based on practices that took for granted men's domination and women's subordination and oppression in social, economic and political terms. Feminist women belonging to the second wave will put a strong emphasis on gender difference, power distribution and its implications. As I will examine later in the analysis of the lyrics, these

concerns remained rather present in many of the songs written by Hanna, showing that patriarchal attitudes and power relations were still unresolved issues when the Riot Grrrl movement originated in the 1990s.

Even before the chronological opening of what will be known as the second wave of feminism, Hanks points towards previous decades in order to articulate the subsequent development of the feminist movement in America by paying attention to a variety of approaches that were already emerging. One of those approaches, strong and influential in the beginnings of the century, was Socialist/Marxist feminism, which, as Hanks explains, "utilized social theories pertaining to the masculine spheres (labor, wage, class) to reorder female and racial spheres, and asserted that capitalism oppressed women" (xvi). In those years, apart from social theories on patriarchy and the division of labour, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) (1923) was born to guarantee social equality regardless of sex – even though it was not approved until 1972. The works by Gerda Learner, Angela Davis and Annette Kuhn are the most relevant ones in the socialist feminism of the first half of the 20th century. Simultaneously, psychoanalytic feminism gained relevance in the second half. Addressing "Freud's theories of gender, identity, psycho-social development, and family relations" (Hanks xvii), it described how newborns grow in relation to their parents in the works by Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gilligan, Juliet Mitchell or Sherry B. Ortner. These were not the only approaches that enriched the understanding of feminist ideas and methods in the 20th century.

Emerging in 1925 and derived from the French philosophical movement, existentialist feminism "elaborates on the concepts of 'difference', 'being', and 'the other'" (Hanks xvii). It can be said that the principal goal of existentialist feminism is to enquire and benefit from the possibilities of the text and the potential discourse in order to rewrite and deconstruct the philosophical and ideological patriarchal institutions. This stress on culture and on the text is quite characteristic of the second wave, and it focuses on how the female and the feminine have been voiced and represented in culture, especially in literature. One of the best examples of this feminist approach is French writer and thinker Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), a book that relies a lot on literary analysis. It studies and examines women's subjugation through history and how the attribute of "otherness" is assigned to women by patriarchal societies. Accepted as a norm, male-sexist ideology reinforces false myths related to women who, according to de Beauvoir, are usually placed aside as the "second sex":

> Insofar as woman is considered the absolute Other, that is – whatever magic powers she has- as the inessential, it is precisely impossible to regard her as another subject. Women have thus never constituted a separate group that posited itself *for-itself* before a male group; they have never had a direct or autonomous relationship with men. (de Beauvouir 80)

Together with the concept of otherness, western feminist writers such as Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva were also groundbreaking within the (late) second wave of feminism, dealing with language and the representation of women. Cixous's essay "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1975) urges women to understand that writing is marked (by men) and that it represses women. Cixous encourages the use of a new type of writing called *Écriture*

feminine, through which women can openly express themselves, their bodies functioning as a source of power and inspiration: "She must write her self, because this is the invention of a new insurgent writing which, when the moment of her liberation has come, will allow her to carry out the indispensable ruptures and transformations in her history, first at two levels that cannot be separated" (Cixous 880). Cixous's ideas will surface my posterior analysis of women's place in music and I will then explore her theories in depth. Specifically, I discuss this issue in depth when analyzing the category in which women's music is usually placed (section 4) and that somehow resembles Cixous' classification.

On the other hand, "Women's Time", published in 1993 by Julia Kristeva addresses feminism and the question of the symbolic order. The writer mentions that sexual differences are also applied in the social contract and suggests that sex has a strong influence on how we define our social life. According to her, women have been left out of the socio-symbolic contract (Kristeva 24). Western authors Kristeva, Cixous and De Beauvoir are key figures in the French feminism of a late second wave that was already overlapping chronologically with the third wave. They exerted a big influence on the American women's liberation movement. Actually, the concept of "otherness", the marked writing and the influence of sexual difference in social life are concepts that will find a space in my critical approximation to Kathleen Hanna's lyrics, as they resonate again when exploring the topics and motifs that I want to observe in her songs. Language or a feminist linguistic approach to the text is also a constant in the FCDA and these authors are a good example of how advanced perspectives offer also new signs of progress in feminism.

Another feminist approach emerged in the 1960s. Radical feminism developed in New York and Boston and sought "women's liberation from patriarchy and women's control over their own bodies and lives" (Hanks xvi). Being a mix of races, ethnicities, classes and sexual preferences, these approaches included pink and blue collar employees, disabled or older women and household workers (Morgan xxxvi). Unquestionably, two of the most representative works of this feminist approach are Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970). Millet portrays patriarchy as a political institution that sexualizes power, leading to the oppression of women: ". . . sexual dominion obtains nevertheless as perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power. This is so because our society, like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy" (25). This controversial work is one of the most important within this wave as it dismantles some of the conventions that support sexual hierarchy. Millet requests a sexual revolution that would bring freedom to women, and that would allow them to act unobstructed by taboos or inhibitions. However, she explains that this is also related to men and their tolerated attitudes towards women. Millet claims that it is necessary to eliminate double standards and prostitution: "The goal of revolution would be a permissive single standard of sexual freedom, and one uncorrupted by the crass and exploitative economic bases of traditional sexual alliances" (Millet 62). In her book, Millet criticizes the works of canonical authors such as Henry Miller, Sigmund Freud or John Stuart Mill. Due to the exposition of this criticism and her other theoretical approximations, the book was debatable but still one of the most important contributions to understand the radical feminism of the 1970s.

Likewise, Betty Friedan's book was a controversial study that has been pinpointed as the ignition of the second wave period. In the context of my study, the book written by Friedan plays an important role and Tobi Vail (drummer in Bikini Kill) has confessed the influence that Friedan exerted in her ideological and artistic formation (Marcus 44). Friedan starts *The Feminine Mystique* by making reference to the "problem that has no name", an unnamed problem that affected most American middle-class women at the time (Friedan 439). During the 1950s and 1960s, middle-class American women used to raise large families while their husbands worked outside the home. The nuclear family was at its peak, yet, women were becoming sadder, depressed and empty (Friedan 22). Friedan criticizes the alienation and wasting of intellectual potential that most women suffered when they married and started having children, discovering that the supposedly happy-nuclear family was turning into something negative for them. Friedan goes on censuring that most magazines publishing articles for female readers were edited by males and that they mostly dealt with house chores, breastfeeding, or how to keep a husband, forgetting about other issues such as politics, the crisis or medicine, because these themes were apparently considered to be too serious and difficult for women. Indeed, according to Friedan:

> In the second half of the twentieth century in America, woman's world was confined to her own body and beauty, the charming of man, the bearing of babies, and the physical care and serving of husband, children, and home. And this was no anomaly of a single issue of a single women's magazine. (27)

Friedan considers that most American women were trying to comply with those beauty and childbearing assumptions and that this (sometimes) undesirable attempt led them to a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Friedan labelled this emotion as the "feminine mystique" to spotlight and criticize the underestimation of women's femininity:

> The feminine mystique says that the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfilment of their own femininity. It says that the great mistake of Western culture, through most of its history, has been the undervaluation of this femininity … The mistake, says the mystique, the root of women's troubles in the past is that women envied men, women tried to be like men, instead of accepting their own nature, which can find fulfilment only in sexual passivity, male domination, and nurturing maternal love. (35)

This concept of the feminine mystique that Friedan develops in her work exemplifies how there is no way-out for a woman who wants to dream of a different future since they are bounded by the only role at hand for them: motherhood, which becomes women's destiny and this leads to many identity problems for women. Besides, many women who tried to have a higher education or a job outside of the domestic sphere "had to fight the conception that they were violating the God-given nature of woman" (Friedan 89). In fact, they were labelled as "unnatural monsters" (Friedan 90) and/or "man-eaters" (Friedan 98). They were accused of having an *unwomanly behavior*. In Friedan's opinion, the problems that women had to face are rooted in Freud's theories,

but also in functionalism and education. Friedan accuses educational institutions of contributing to the reinforcement of prejudices against working women. According to Friedan, the application of Freud's theories of femininity (as the women's "penis envy") to American women had negative consequences not only for women, but also for educators who were influenced by those theories and encouraged women to play "the role of women" by discouraging them to have access to a college education. Described in the book as the worse of diseases, the feminine mystique articulates the explanation to understand how women's capacities have been kept away from achieving full development: "The problem that has no name-which is simply the fact that American women are kept from growing to their full human capacities- is taking a far greater toll on the physical and mental health of our country than any known disease" (Friedan 439).

Three years after the publication of her book, Friedan was named president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), an organization that she founded together with other twenty-seven women in 1966 and whose purpose is: "To take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, assuming all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men" (now.org).

Apart from the founding of this association, which will become fundamental in the development of feminist organizing plans, the women involved in the flourishing of this second wave did also accomplish some other victories. For instance, the Equal Pay Act of 1963 whose aim was the revocation of wage discrepancy depending on the sexes.

From the 1970s on, new forms of feminist theories emerged, being one of them lesbian feminism, that is "the daughter of two related social movements, the lesbian/gay rights and the feminist movements" (Riley 167). This movement is also characterized for approving women's body and sexuality and love between women, especially in the relationship daughter-mother (Lorber 19). The poet Adrienne Rich is one of the most influential writers in this movement and her work has exerted a strong influence on posterior feminist theories. The *New York Times* described her as "a poet of towering reputation and towering rage, whose work — distinguished by an unswerving progressive vision and a dazzling, empathic ferocity — brought the oppression of women and lesbians to the forefront" (Fox). Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (1980) addresses the idealization and imposition of heterosexuality and it relates the female versions and experiences beyond the impositions that patriarchy establishes on women. In it, the author also praises lesbian visibility within feminist scholarship, a topic that she understood to have been usually left invisible or ignored: "Feminist research and theory that contribute to lesbian invisibility or marginality are actually working against the liberation and empowerment of women as a group" (Rich, "Compulsory" 135). In that same essay, Rich also introduced the notion of the "lesbian continuum", which contemplated a complex and broad understanding of the potential associations among women. Her work is key to understand the movement from lesbian feminism to Queer theory.

Adrienne Rich, involved with her writing in the feminist movement since the 1970s, declared that some of the goals that they pursued twenty years before were still pending. In an interview that she gave in 1991, she said what follows about the situation of the feminist movement at the time that she was being questioned:

> One of the things that has been growing in the women's movement in this country – and again, in a society like this it can't, it doesn't happen easily, and it doesn't happen overnight – is the consciousness that we aren't a homogenous movement, that we are a multi-ethnic movement, that women's experiences across the board are different, even though we share common female experiences. (Gelpi 266)

For Rich, feminism is not homogeneous and, by bringing up its multi-ethnic side, she approached a concern that was to become central for the next generation of feminist women. This is, the third wave of feminism will also discuss and deal with these echoes and concerns. Intersectionality (a term that I discuss in the following pages) will have a grand impact on feminism, together with the focus on resisting the understanding of womanhood and feminity as uniform and uncomplicated, as a "unique" nature.

In summary, some of the urgent concerns that define this second wave involved economic equality, reproductive rights, the body, ageing or health-care. Political, economic and social conditions for women slightly improved and some people started to think that the end of feminist demands was near. Although American women had other issues to fight for, as Adrienne Rich had suggested, the 20th century was coming to an end and it was giving way to what was to be called as the third wave period. Influential American writer Rebecca Walker first introduced the term in an article that she angrily submitted to *Ms.* magazine, entitled "Becoming the Third Wave". From that moment on, women's struggles in the 1990s and onwards came to be classified within this label.

3.4. The Third Wave of Feminism

Until the second half of the 20th century, western feminists had fought against political and social inequalities that oppressed their sex, but they ignored "the deeply intertwined issue of race and class" (Walters 105). Certainly, the criticism coming from Black feminism and other feminists from Third World countries led to a "sense of fracture and fragmentation in the project of feminism, and a sense of political paralysis" (Moore 126). The main complaint from these new feminist sources addressed western women for not having considered other realities, for leaving out of the picture those identity aspects (e.g. class and race) which overlapped with gender and altered women's social and political conditions. For many authors usually included in the third wave, the second wave was led "by" and "for" white-middle-class women, thus universalizing and normalizing a unique woman's experience. The third wave was a response to that. Third wave feminists objected to the unique inclinations of previous feminist theories of the 1970s and 1980s (A. Stone 16) and they did widen their aims by focusing on new ideas and perspectives, such as queer theory, sexual harassment, sexual diversity, child care, stereotypes, solidarity or gender-based violence. In fact, as I will explain in-depth in my analysis of Hanna's lyrics, this last theme became of great importance for some music bands in the late 20th century, as a result of

different events that directly affected their members. Hanna will definitely pay attention to it in songs like "Liar", "Gone B4 Yr Home" or "I Wanna Know What Love Is". According to Rebeca Walker, to be a feminist is "to integrate an ideology of equality and female empowerment into the very fiber of my life. It is to search for personal clarity in the midst of systemic destruction, to join in sisterhood with women when often we are divided, to understand power structures with the intention of challenging them" (41). This personal and emotional, individual and engaged spirit that Walker expresses here illustrates, to a certain state, the nature and essence of the third wave of feminism, because, above all, the third wave leaves behind the political process of former waves of feminism and brings into focus individual identity, emphasizing the fact that women are of many colours, religions, nationalities, or classes and rejecting the presumption that there is a universal female identity for women. As I will show later in my overview of the Riot Grrrl movement, many of the bands in the movement exalted this in their lyrics or in the fanzines that they created, as "above all, the girls wanted their readers to know that each of them was unique" (Marcus 223). For third wave feminists as well as for riot grrrls, there is not a single model of woman, and the varieties of roles and models are huge, rejecting the universalization and standardization of feminism. As an example, the term "intersectionality"[24] was included as a keyword or concept within the discourse of the third wave. The term was first used in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw and it tries to explain how power systems (such as class, gender, age, sexuality or religion) converge and have an effect on (usually marginalized) people. For example, an African American woman's experience should be understood in terms of both race and gender, and not independently, since these two systems interact and combine, having a specific and powerful impact on women's social, political and cultural circumstances (Crenshaw 1244).

In that junction between race and gender, the work by African American feminist scholars such as Barbara Smith or the poet Audre Lorde can be manifestly underlined as important examples of this concern, but also the works on gender and race by Chicano authors such as Cherrie Moraga, feminist activist, poet and essayist; or the Chicana lesbian-feminist poet, theorist and activist Gloria Anzaldúa. They have exerted a great influence on Mexican-American women and Chicana feminism.

Concerning the thematic content in the works by the writers of the third wave, marginalization became a recurrent concern as they investigated racial and gender issues, barely explored before. Professor and social activist bell hooks is an important figure of the third wave too and she was certainly an influential writer for young girls like Tobi Vail and Kathleen Hanna. Her dissertation *Feminism is for Everybody. Passionate Politics* (2000) covers influential topics for the third wave, such as reproductive rights, feminist education, gender violence or the mass media. The author explains that the sexist barriers that oppress women are present in many and different aspects of our lives and that both men and women should become aware of them. She also puts the emphasis on black women rights and requires the attention of feminism towards it. She suggests that if women keep using class and race to dominate other women, then that utopian sisterhood will never be achieved (hooks 16). Apart from these concerns, bell hooks talks about women's sexual freedom, an important matter for the third wave. She explains how women's sex was taboo in the past and that enjoying their bodies always led to

[24] For more information, read Kimberlé Crenshaw's "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," published in *Stanford Law Review* in 1991.

the Madonna/whore assumption. She suggests that women can enjoy sexual intercourse as fully as their male counterparts, and that to decide on their bodies is a way to win sexual freedom: "The right of women to choose whether or not to have an abortion is only one aspect of reproductive freedom" (hooks 29). In general, the celebration of sexuality becomes a relevant point in the agenda of this wave "as a positive aspect of life, with a broader definition of what sex means and what oppression and empowerment may imply in the context of sex" (Fisher). This will also be a recurrent theme in many of the songs written by riot grrrl bands (e.g. Bikini Kill's songs "Candy" or "Sugar"). On top of that, third wave feminists wanted to change the traditional notions of sexuality and started to investigate and write on diverse matters: birth, rape, orgasms... Some writers began working on issues such as rape by men, sexual harassment at work or women's sterilization. Yet, third wave feminists disagree about the role of women in pornography and sex work, a polemic issue that divided them. Linked to this controversy, it is interesting to comment on the fact that some riot grrrls, including Hanna herself, worked as strippers at some point in their lives, as Sara Marcus discloses:

> by dancing there, they were signalling a break with a major strain of second-wave feminism. They had been in elementary school during the interfeminist sex wars of 1980s, when antiporn activists clashed fiercely with self-described pro-sex feminists on everything from whether porn ought to be illegal to whether it was acceptable for a feminist to be into sadomasochism. (301)

Other power structures that became an important field of research for those involved in the third wave of feminism were the media or the cultural portraits of women and the language used to define them. Actually, around the 1960s and framed within the second wave feminism, there had already been a significant development around the interest and attention given to how gender issues were being treated in literary representation. Back then, the focus was mainly placed on observing how women were absent or biased, silenced or represented as passive and secondary in cultural products. However, in the third wave, what we have is a step forward, and instead of criticizing or pointing at those injustices, women search for other positive and alternative uses of literature. Precisely, the linguistic concern has become one of importance.

Language is not a neutral medium. Thanks to anthropology, history, film studies, musicology, sociology and other fields of study we can observe that "meaning" is made/constructed through language. This fact entails an important drawback; throughout the years, those made/constructed meanings have perpetuated several (mis)conceptions, in particular, in what regards women. In this way, and as Adrienne Rich argues, women's anger is real, because its primary source can be traced back to language: "both the victimization and the anger experienced by women are real, and have real sources, everywhere in the environment, built into society, language, the structures of thought" (*Arts* 28). Indeed, continuing the line opened by the French feminists in the second wave, who were influenced by post-structuralist theories, the third wave of feminism advocates for the same interests and approaches, touching on post-structuralist views about the deconstruction of binary oppositions. They believe that these pairs and dichotomies are the ideological basis that perpetuates and solidifies patriarchal structures. As Chris Barker explains, deconstruction is "the dismantling of hierarchical

conceptual oppositions such as speech/writing, reality/appearance, nature/culture, reason/ madness, etc., which exclude and devalue the 'inferior' part of the binary" (18) and that same emphasis was exercised by feminists in the third wave period, who saw that this dual system was also at work in gender issues. Thus, by using deconstruction, feminists from this period were trying to "undo" the misconceived and socially accepted assumptions about their sex:

> In particular, deconstruction involves the dismantling of hierarchical conceptual oppositions such as man/woman, black/white, reality/appearance, nature/culture, reason/madness, etc. Such binaries are said to 'guarantee' truth by excluding and devaluing the 'inferior' part of the binary. Thus, speech is privileged over writing, reality over appearance, men over women. The purpose of deconstruction is not simply to reverse the order of binaries but to show that they are implicated in each other. (Barker 36)

All those binaries are preserved and replicated through language too. As I have explained, language is not neutral and sometimes it misrepresents women. In the 1980s, Susan S. Lanser's *Towards a Feminist Narratology* emerged as a significant contribution to this debate. The author shows her concern with language and she stresses that the masculine text has been the universal text and that narratology should include the gender perspective and leave a space for women's works: ". . . until women's writings, questions of gender, and feminist points of view are considered, it will be impossible even to know the deficiencies of narratology" (Lanser 343). Language and literary works were thus an important part of the research made by those engaged in the third wave of feminism, also in order to celebrate how cultural production could contribute to the achievement of equality for women.

Apart from articulating new feminist approaches to literature, the third wave embraces other art forms and cultural products, blurring the lines between high and low culture and focusing on a broader sense of what a text, as a productive terrain for criticism and revelation, could be. Music was in that team. Thus, the third wave of feminism can be stipulated as the fundamental historical and cultural context in which the Riot Grrrl movement has to be inserted so as to understand its emergence and development. In fact, this movement achieved a significant social and cultural impact that changed how America perceived female musicians. In Laura Barton's words:

> Broadly speaking Riot Grrrl was about the female voice. It was about music - being in bands, not watching them or being groupies - but it was also about finding a voice through writing, via fanzines; and it was about a political voice: anger about society's treatment of women, with domestic abuse, rape, sexuality, the need for safer streets, abortion rights and equal pay among the issues. (Barton)

The voice of women is a big concern in the agenda of the third wave period too. And it is also for the Riot Grrrl movement. Riot grrrl bands pay special attention to language. Their music was linked to their feminist activism,

in many cases. And those ideas were as important as how they were voiced and communicated. Language turns into a real matter of interest for bands like Bikini Kill. In the analysis of Hanna's lyrics, I show how her songwriting reveals her preoccupation with "marked" language and gendered diction. Her reaction against this will be artistically delivered through a conscious regeneration of the employed lexicon.

For the most part, the Riot Grrrl movement was a musical and political force that changed the way in which women took an active part in their social surroundings as political activists in the feminist movement. Moving away from the previous focus on political marches and demonstrations, girls and women turned to music as an instrument to be active and make themselves be heard. In Lucy O'Brien's words: "To them, women playing rock was a form of direct action, Riot Grrrl the agent of revolution. Much of the impetus for this revolt came from punk" (132). Women created a new stand in which they could present with force their political inclinations and personal experiences. Blending feminism and music, third wave feminists reached wider audiences and opened up different ways to tackle feminist theories. In consequence, this movement becomes a significant feminist act that contributes to the feminist development of the 1990s. As a matter of fact, some critics and scholars classify the Riot Grrrl movement as intertwined with the third wave (e.g. McDonnell and Vincentelli).

In her work, Kathleen Hanna explicitly shares many of the demands and concerns that I have pinpointed in my chronological and historical overview of the third wave of feminism. Consequently, in this context, I find a proper space to adjust my analysis and explore efficiently Kathleen Hanna's songwriting. However, I did also perceive traces of previous periods in her work. In fact, I have the impression that the mark of feminism's historical development is strongly visible in Hanna's work. That is why I understood that it was necessary to recapitulate and provide this historical overview of feminism. Hanna's music and songwriting reveal her feminist ideas, asking for women's equality and women's visibility through her artistic expression as a musician. As one of the most recognizable figures of the Riot Grrrl movement, Hanna, together with other revolutionary girls, showed that girls in the movement could challenge and change a dominated male sphere that limited women to the back rows of punk concerts.

4. A Historical Examination of Female Musicians

The next section springs from the ideas and concepts expressed in sections 2 (music) and 3 (feminism). My overarching intention with all the sections in this extensive contextualization has always been related to the observation of gender issues. For that reason, I devoted section 2 to the analysis of how music is affected by certain gendered implications; and section 3 was devised to tackle feminism and as an approximation to feminist theories. To a certain extent, the comprehensive goal was to finally reach this section in which I specifically aim at exploring the role of women in music. To do that, I cover three different aspirations: a revision of the role of female musicians throughout history; the study of the constraints that women have to face; and the outline of the transgressive character imbued in their active participation in some specific music genres**.** Consequently, I do not focus on music in general, but specifically on the role that women have played in it. In this sense, I study how the ramifications of feminism are visible in music. Thus, I make a brief revision of women's paths in music from the early ages to contemporary times and, in order to provide a solid centre to which, otherwise, is a vast span of time and activity, I concretize and exemplify my overview by proposing a more specific analysis of distinct data coming from the magazine *Rolling Stone*, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and some other secondary sources. All of it, as I say, typifies the absence of women in the western musical canon. It is also my intention to enrich this overview by exposing the main obstacles that women have to face when they pursue a career in music. It is my understanding that gender plays a significant role when women embrace the challenge to involve themselves in the production and creation of music and I explore this by examining issues related to education, economic dependence, motherhood, identity and the public dimension. This general approach to gender and popular music will be profitable later when I approach the study and analysis of Kathleen Hanna's music.

4.1. A Historical Review of Women's Role in Music

The work by female singers, songwriters and instrumentalists in western music has not been documented in the prolific and exhaustive way in which men's has been, even though women had been active in music since the early centuries:

> . . . women have been active in music history in totally unanticipated numbers. We have uncovered women's traces in a wide range of activities, including composition and performance, teaching, music publishing, founding and supporting musical institutions, establishing and participating in female musical organizations, and so forth . . . we have discovered that they have contributed to music making as both professional and amateur musicians as well as supporters and enablers of community musical life. (Bowers, *College* 85)

Even though, again, there is still academic space to include new research on many female musicians who request the attention of college research, it is also true that, in the last few decades, some of them have been observed in a properly and more exhaustively way and their legacy, in general, has been documented in several scholarly works. The list could be more extensive, but just to name a couple of the early ones, I could underline works such as *Women Making Music. The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950* (1987), written by Jane Bowers and Judith Tick, or Pilar Ramos Lopez's *Feminismo y Música. Introducción Crítica* (1993), that provide assistance in the attempt to illustrate the role played by female musicians in early ages. Pilar Ramos López, additionally, explores the power of music to create identities and she addresses some major contributions by female composers, instrumentalists or directors, always in relation to the combination of feminism and music.

If we aim at starting from the very beginning and we backtrack a solid line to the very past, we need to begin by exploring religious performance. At first, women's engagement in Christian ceremonies was not banned and they participated as singers at divine rituals. Later, as singing schools started to be established, only the priesthood and the trained male singers displayed church music and women were excluded from church services. Yet, recordings of nuns' activities as performers and songwriters can be traced back to the fourth century (Bowers and Tick 4). Convents became the main European centers for female musicians. Their musical activities were well received there and they could get the same training that other male professionals would get in other institutions (Ramos 71). Nevertheless, throughout the late Middle Ages, most women lacked authority and access to professional instruction and, in subsequent centuries, almost no woman could attain music education because of their economic dependence. In the 15th and 16th centuries, some female singers worked as troubadours, household musicians or performers in travelling companies (all of these were considered low-status employments) and only some upper-class women could enrol in music practices. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick explain that, as a result of this, "It is not surprising that we know of very few women who composed music during this period, since only those persons who had the opportunity for extensive theoretical training had much hope of mastering the complicated polyphonic style than then prevailed" (5). Class and economic prosperity turned out to be the main reasons why some women did not have the same access to the music training that men were enjoying. However, opera and its development as a growing cultural event, with social and economic impact, became a great opportunity for women, as they were allowed a professional training during the 17th and 18th centuries. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that some limitations and restrictions were still perpetuated. For instance, in the 19th century, women still could not attend composition classes in the Conservatory of Paris, which had been founded in 1795 (Ramos 54).

As a matter of fact, and as I summarize later, it has been verified that women who wanted to become artists (whether writers or musicians) depended economically on their husbands or on family support and that the public dimension that performing in public entailed supposed also a huge problem for them. Limited to their domestic world, it was not until women started to enter the labor force at the beginning of the 19th century that their participation in music changed. More educational opportunities were opened to them at that precise

moment and they also started to take up other roles such as those of composers and performers, playing the piano first and then mastering other instruments[25], such as the violin.

At the beginning of the 20th century and due to the social changes of the time, women challenge men's patriarchal systems, as I have shown in the previous exploration of the feminist movement, and this will also be the case in music. From early in the century, more women entered the roles of singer, instrumentalist, or composer, taking advantage of the fact that they were facing fewer obstacles than in previous centuries. This happened progressively and in different music genres. For instance, during the 1920s, blues, a genre that some scholars consider the base of modern popular music[26], enjoyed the presence of the American vocalist Bessie Smith, among others.

In the 1930s, swing music was partially protagonized by iconic female figures such as African American jazz singers Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald, whose examples paved the way to other female soloists and band leaders to come later – e.g. Peggy Lee. The rhythm & blues of the 1960s and 1970s broke the top of the charts with singers such as Dinah Washington, Nina Simone and Dusty Springfield. The historical role played by the Motown[27] Records company in the music business is also noteworthy, and some of its leading figures were women (The Supremes, The Velvelettes, Mary Wells or Brenda Holloway). Finally, and as I study specifically in the following section, rock and punk became catalysts for women's engagement and participation in music, following the way paved by those previous pioneers that I have succinctly covered here. Both in the rock and punk scenes, women started to occupy the stage in a more visible manner. Just to name a few, this was the case of Janis Joplin, Grace Slick (Jefferson Airplane), Stevie Nicks, Patti Smith, Suzi Quatro, Joan Jett (The Runaways), Blondie, The Pretenders, The Raincoats and The Go-Go's. Many notable women were active from the very beginning of the punk counterculture that swarmed the United States and the United Kingdom in the second half of the 20th century. Yet, groups like The Clash, Black Flag, The Sex Pistols or The Ramones occupied the most visible positions in historical recollections and they were chosen to form the canon of punk (Marcus 48). The list is longer, of course. Many other women could be included in this reminder of how they

[25] In sections 2 and 3 I discuss this issue in depth, together with gendered ramifications of music in the choice of instruments, for instance.

[26] Blues and country or western music were effectively mixed and we then got what was called rhythm and blues, "the forerunner of rock and roll" (Chase 500) and, consequently, after that, the birth of pop and rock. The influence of black music in what was to become rock and roll has been acknowledged by different scholars: "By the late 1950s, rock and roll enjoyed a prominent place in the youth culture of the United Kingdom as well as of the United States. Some British youngsters encountered African American styles through recordings by Chicago blues artists" (Crawford 414). In *An Introduction to America's Music*, Richard Crawford and Larry Hamberlin describe the birth of rock and roll in relation to that tension between the black roots and an apparent assimilation of diversity: "The general public accepted "rock and roll" as a name that was free of racial overtones and fit the style. In fact, the label has been claimed as a key to the racial crossover. The name encouraged white acceptance of the music by suppressing its black roots" (407). However, blues and the music from African American traditions is definitely there, from the very first moment, the exact day in which Alan Freed coined the term rock and roll while he was organizing rhythm & blues shows in Cleveland (Crawford 407). The origin of popular music is thus sourced from a drive for blending, the mixture of music from different traditions to get something new: "The only thing that rock'n'roll did not get from country and blues was a sense of consequences" (23), tells writer Bill Flanagan to Neil Young in 1986 according to Greil Marcus's anecdote in *The History of Rock'n'Roll in Ten Songs*.

[27] Motown was founded in 1959 by Berry Gordy and it helped to integrate African American figures in the industry. Characterized by its sound, which blends pop and soul music, it had a grand bearing on American popular music. Some other names in the movement include Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson and The Jackson 5, Teena Marie or Martha and the Vandellas.

contributed to shape modern music. Many names have been left out of this list. Some of them still remain unregistered in academia. It is not the purpose of this dissertation to give visibility to all of them, but I felt that it was necessary to at least credit and testify to the absence of a longer list of names that deserve recognition and scrutiny in academia.

Even if the influx and participation of women in music were increasing, still music genres were mainly perceived as male, which became a traditional perspective. It took a long time for women to achieve recognition in some styles and scenes. Besides, men were still in charge of the production, distribution and economic control of the music business. In fact, it was not before the late 20th century that women also started to occupy different roles in high positions in the music industry, in executive and managerial positions (fields, as I say, that had been traditionally occupied by men).

To summarize, as long as they have been able and let to participate, women have always been active in music, but their works have been silenced, cornered or darkened, until the 20th century, when economic freedom allowed them to be more active, their works becoming then more visible in the field. Women's participation in music started to be more documented from the 21st century on and that is why, currently, women working on music are still trying to create a feminine tradition that would serve as a historical background for female artists to come after them. Pioneering works and examples precede this growing interest in the visibilization of women in music in the 21st century. However, the project is still in process. And, in the agenda, there is a vivid interest in revising the musical canon, in order to reveal the many cases in which women have been restrained for issues related to their gender rather than for artistic reasons.

4.1.1. The Canonical Inclusion of Women in Rock Music. Some Statistics

To begin with, musical canons[28] usually help both consumers and companies (e.g, record labels) have a precise selection of artists belonging to a particular time, also considered as the "greatest" or the "best" in their field, their works being thus recognized as worthy, genuine or of the highest quality. In "Gender, Professionalism and the Musical Canon," Marcia J. Citron examines the main factors that collaborate in the creation of a canon (such as education, publication, access to the musical establishment or critical reception) and explains how some gender related factors have an influence on women's inclusion on it. She argues that:

[28] According to the Cambridge Dictionary, canons are "the writings or other works that are generally agreed to be good, important, and worth studying" ("Canon"). However, here I do mention other ways of listing or cataloguing in popular music. Lists of the best and charts are a common presence and a persuasive authority in the music business. Just as an example, in any historical recollection of popular music it cannot be dismissed that the Billboard charts have exerted a big influence in the development of musical periods. *Billboard* is a magazine about the music industry that "tabulates sales of recorded music in its influential weekly "charts" of hit singles and albums" (Crawford 1). From the first number one in the Hot 100, Ricky Nelson's "Poor Little Fool" to the 2012 hit "Radioactive" by Imagine Dragons, which broke all records, all through the days of the famous phenomenon of the crossover (which can be studied from an ethnic or racial perspective), the impact of Billboard in the music industry and mainstream music is indisputable.

> In the field of literature the concept of the canon functions as a basic tool in defining the scope of the discipline. Works admitted to this prestigious group command deep respect and form the literary core perpetuated in English curricula. They become source material for critical discourse and set exclusionary standards for works whose quality and thematic content do not meet certain disciplinary criteria . . . As in our correlate discipline the power wielded by the canon is enormous: its members are presumed best and thus most deserving of reiteration in performance, in scholarship, and in teaching. But even a cursory glance at these musical activities reveals that works by women are absent from the canon. (Citron 102)

In the case of musical canons, they are formed by different areas that conform the music industry, including record companies, publishing houses, radio stations, music and style magazines, and music papers (Leonard 27). As some critics explain and as can be seen in the following quotation, women's exclusion from historical records does not only pertain to western classical music, which has been founded upon an almost exclusively male, white and heterosexual canon. This is also the case in, for example, jazz. Jazz historiography has obscured the presence and relevance of certain musicians for different reasons, including their gender and/or their race:

> . . . la exclusión de la mujer no es privativa del canon germano blanco varón heterosexual de la música culta occidental. La historiografía del jazz por ejemplo, ha venido ocultando el papel de las bandas de mujeres blancas y/o negras en algunas épocas, como la del *Swing*, desvelando no solamente razones de género, sino también racistas (Ramos 68)

Much in the line of what I explored in the previous section, Laura Viñuela[29] explains that women have been active in the creation and interpretation of music, but that their work has been silenced: "También en la creación, interpretación y difusión musical han jugado las mujeres un papel activo, aunque su labor, al igual que su música, ha sido silenciada" (Viñuela 12). As a result, women do not enjoy a tradition informed by other female models and acknowledged by mainstream culture. In punk music, that has also been the trend. Female musicians, in general, do not have a historical background to identify themselves with. They cannot find a significant tradition of female singer-songwriters or female instrumentalists that have preceded them and whose example could act as a foundation for their expectations or aspirations.

Surely, until the 1990s, the "all-male canon" was never called into question, but it is from that moment on that an interest in finding female musicians who were involved in the production, creation and/or distribution of music became prominent. As Susan McClary states, "over the course of the 1990s, feminist scholars . . .

[29] I am aware of the fact that I am using very frequently and significantly this source by Laura Viñuela, which is originally in Spanish, when most of my other sources are in English, which seems more consequent with the object of my study. However, I will be citing Laura Viñuela's work multiples times in my dissertations because, due to its focus on gender, I consider that it is a thorough material, very appropriate for the exploration developed in this dissertation.

have transformed radically the goals, methods, and subject matter of the academic discipline of musicology- a field hitherto devoted to upholding the all-male canon of European art music" ("Women" 1283). The same can be said specifically for punk music, which is the object of study in this work. In general, women's absence in music history gives us clues about the place to which women have been relegated, both in music and in relation to their political and/or social visibility in society. However, there were always women creating, and there were always women in punk music: "The predominance of male musicians in the guides has suggested an absence of female rock performers and has served to re-establish rock as a male practice" (Leonard 43). There was and there is a female side to this music genre that has been traditionally portrayed as male.

Thus, one of the main objectives of feminism (and especially those feminists interested in music research) is to create a feminine tradition to help current women in their fight for the recognition of their artistic achievements: "Because traditional musicology has tended to perpetuate the study of "the great masterpieces" composed by "the great masters", it has been musicians working in nontraditional disciplines (such as American music, black composers, or women's studies) who have begun to reexamine the nature of musicology" (Jezic 6). Many started to carry out a revision and a rewriting of universal "truths," specifically those concerning their sex and their womanhood in order to bring to light the history of female artists that were put aside, oppressed or silenced for gender reasons.

In this way, we can observe how, from the beginning of the 21st century onwards, more women will occupy privileged positions on musical lists, charts and catalogues that serve as models for consumers. Yet, their number is extremely inferior to that of men. Taking the famous American magazine *Rolling Stone*[30] as one of the multiple existing examples, I will try to illustrate how the 21st century music business is still male-centered and male-ruled and how these publications privilege male singers and performers.

In 2011, *Rolling Stone* updated their "100 Greatest Artists" list. In the description of the issue, they reported that "The resulting list of 100 artists, . . . is a broad survey of rock history, spanning Sixties heroes (the Beatles) and modern insurgents (Eminem), and touching on early pioneers (Chuck Berry) and the bluesmen who made it all possible (Howlin' Wolf)" ("100 Greatest Artists"). So, taking into account that they mention "heroes" and not "heroines" and "bluesmen" and not "blueswomen," it is not unexpected that only 11 women are included in the new list. Aretha Franklin, Madonna, Janis Joplin, Patti Smith, Joni Mitchell, Tina Turner, The Shirelles, Diana Ross and the Supremes, and the bands (including women) Sly and the Family Stone and Talking Heads, are the only 11 fortunate women who carved out a niche for themselves in an almost all-male list. Four years later, in August 2015, the same publication issued the "100 Greatest Songwriters of All Time", a

[30] *Rolling Stone* is an American monthly magazine founded in 1967 by Jann Wenner. Mixing content on music, politics or entertainment, it is also famous for its film and music reviews and compilations, which are said to have shaped popular culture. As a magazine that started chronicling the rock scene and targeted young generations, it became a powerful and influential force for American journalism. It is not exempt from criticism though. For example, in direct connection to the topic at hand here, *Venus* magazine answered to the "100 greatest guitarist" list of 2003 (where the only women included were Joan Jett and Joni Mitchell) with a selection of 46 female figures to "shine light on the great female guitarists of our time" (Venus Zine Staff).

list where 16 women, including Taylor Swift, Missy Elliott, Felice Bryant, Cynthia Weil, Valerie Simpson, Björk, Lucinda Williams, Loretta Lynn, Patti Smith, Chrissie Hynde, Madonna, Stevie Nicks, Dolly Parton, Ellie Greenwich, Joni Mitchell, and Carole King, came into view. In December of the same year, the "100 Greatest Guitarists" list was also published, being this time Bonnie Raitt and Joni Mitchell the only women included in an almost entirely male catalogue of the "greatest". In spite of the fact that some may think that a different and more inclusive list might have been obtained if made by a woman, this is not always the case. As an example, in an article for the BBC[31] written by Clemency Burton-Hill in October 2014, the journalist makes a top 10 list of what she considers to be the exemplification of the best composers in the 20th century, and, in that top 10, she does not include a single woman. Indeed, in order to see a magazine, list or catalogue in which women are plentiful, one must look for special issues on women making music, as, for instance, "Women Who Rock: The 50 Greatest Albums of All Time" (Sheffield), included in a 2012 issue of the aforementioned *Rolling Stone* magazine. Certainly, one must search for separated and gender based categories if wanting to see women included in musical lists. Yet, there is no special issue for men, in a separated category. It is impossible to find a list, chart or catalogue that aims at storing historical evidence by using a title such as these: "Men Making Rock" or "The Best Current Male Singers". Males are not considered an isolated category in music, but the norm. Thus, women find themselves underrepresented in a sphere that segregates them, and instead of being considered simply as "musicians", women are placed in the "women in music" category, where attention is paid first to their gender and not to their musical proficiency. I could have chosen other ways in order to illustrate the manifest imbalance in women's access to recognition within the music industry, but, as I explained before, the cataloguing strategy is a popular and leading one in music and I thought that an overview of its use could be very illustrative to clarify my points.

In "The Manhandling of Rock 'n' Roll History", Evelyn McDonnell explains that the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame only includes 69 women (out of the 888 people that have been elected) and this averages only the 7.7 per cent of the final people inducted. In her opinion, the problem is ideological and "people and institutions have to stop defining rock and rock 'n' roll as music played by men, especially white men, with guitars. We have to change this image, this historiography, this institutionalization, this lie. In short, you do not need a cock to rock" (McDonnell, "The Manhandling"). In line with this statistic, Stacy L. Smith, Marc Choueiti and Katherine Pieper carried out a study that explores, among other things, the qualitative realities of singer, songwriters and producers (in terms of gender and race/ethnicity) on the Hot 100 year-end Billboard Charts[32] from 2012 to 2018. For the study, 1,455 artists were credited and 700 songs were taken as a sample, and the findings[33] were nothing but surprising. 21.7% of the women in the music industry are artists, 12.3% write songs and just a 2.1%

[31] The article can be accessed at http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20141015-20th-centurys-10-best-composers.
[32] The *Billboard* Charts rank the popularity and impact of songs and albums according to streams and sales. They publish weekly, year-end and decade-end charts covering pop, hip-hop, R&B, dance, country, latin, rock and k-pop music.
[33] For example, in the span of 7 years, 3,300 songwriters were credited. 87.7% were males and 12.3% were females (Smith et al, 8). Also, from the 633 songs studied, 360 did not have a woman writer, whereas only 3 lacked a male writer. In the case of producers, the rates are similar: "Across 400 songs, 871 producers, co-producers and vocal producers were credited. 97.9% of producers were male and only 2.1% were female" (Smith et al. 8). And regarding artists, on the year-end charts, 82.9% corresponds to males and a 17.1% to females (Smith et al. 11).

are producers. This shows that the role of singer or performer continues to be the most usual function for women in music, reporting apparently that the mastery of skills concerning the production of music is still in men's hands.

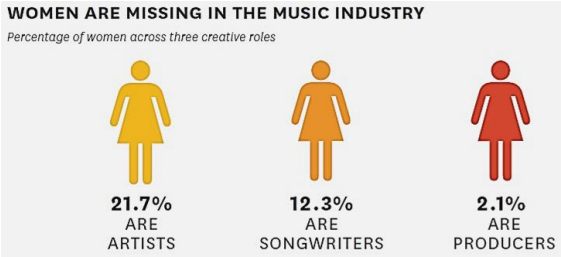

Fig. 9. Percentage of women across three creative roles (Smith et al. 3).

Additionally, the authors interviewed 75 women involved in the music industry (producers and songwriters). The interviews were useful to disclose some of the impediments that they face at work: 43% of these women revealed that their skills and abilities were usually discounted; 39% admitted being sexualized and stereotyped as women; 40% stated that they had to face general barriers when navigating in the industry; and 36% of those women answered that there were also other limitations, as a result of the industry being male-dominated (Smith et al. 6).

Another informative manifestation of these imbalances can be found in the gender gap that defines the choices made in the Grammy awards[34], that the same authors had also explored in the previous study. As the next figure shows, the female nominees from 2013 to 2019 were highly lower when compared to the men being nominated, who get hold of 89.6% of the nominations.

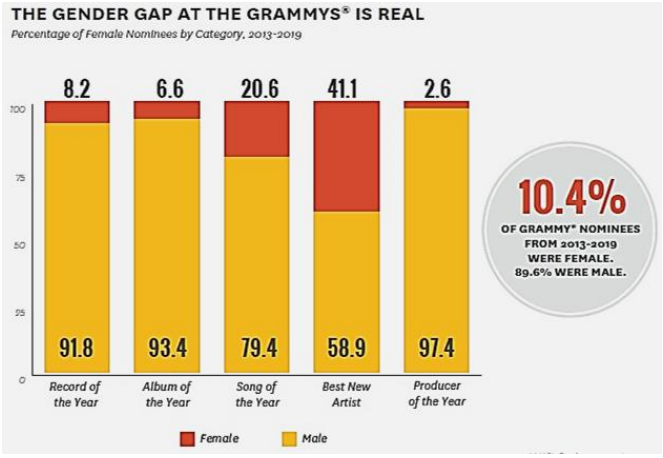

Fig. 10. Percentage of Female Nominees by Category, 2013-2019 (Smith et al. 5).

[34] The Grammy awards, given by The Recording Academy, recognize the highest achievements in the music industry. They are one of the major awards in the music industry and the Academy "represents the voices of performers, songwriters, producers, engineers, and all music professionals" (*Grammy*). Their relevance here is notorious as it also exemplifies the low numbers of females in the industry.

As I have tried to illustrate with these few but proving examples, a mere look at the magazines, compilations, charts and awards that characterize and chronicle the development of the music industry shows that women's presence in it is much lower than that enjoyed by men. Different obstacles block their presence and visibility in a field in which they still have to fight to find a proper and significant space. Discouraging as these facts may seem, present-day female musicians do not only aim at changing contemporary history by highlighting the relevance and quality of female involvement in music, they are also trying to uncover women's voices in the past to show how patriarchal canons did not take female contributions into proper consideration, minimizing the impact of female achievements in music and impeding the creation of a proper tradition. Feminist music criticism challenges the assumptions about the role played by women in music, criticizes male dominance in the field, and tries to deconstruct male-centered narratives in rock music. Mary C. Kearney observes that "Concerned [feminist researches] with how these patterns of privilege and exclusion are developed and sustained, feminist researchers have formed a unique approach to popular music studies that foregrounds gender politics" (19), and one of the principal approaches that they take is to explore women's lack of visibility in music and musicology, showing how gendered limitations have sentenced them to invisibility.

4.2. Obstacles for Women in Music

When using such a broad statement as this, that "gendered limitations have sentenced [women] to invisibility", then I find it necessary to provide a deep and detailed explanation of what those limitations are and how they work. In this section, I provide that extensive description by focusing on five different ideas that, from my point of view, delimit that general statement and supply my understanding of how women's authority has been constrained in music. I start by addressing education and economic dependence as two of the main problems that women have to face in music. Then, I explain how motherhood plays an important role in this concern, because sometimes women find it difficult to combine artistic expression with their role as mothers. After that, I explore the relevance of music as a source of identity and how the lack of female role models in music becomes a hindrance to achieve a solid identification in popular music. To finish this pursuit for depth and detail, I offer a brief exposition of the main roles that women enjoy in music (singer, performer and composer) and the way in which the public dimension that these roles entail has hampered their agency.

4.2.1. Education and Economic Dependence

Access to quality education is the way to empower women and allow them to contribute by decision making to the highest levels in society. The lack of formal and solid education confines their prospects and it finally becomes one of the main forms of discrimination. In fact, with the passing of time, patriarchies allow women the

access to all educational levels, but the quality was not the same as that provided to men (Millet 42). Women have been historically discouraged to use their critical intelligence and creativeness and, as a matter of fact, two-thirds of the 758 million adults who remain illiterate are women according to the UNESCO 2016 report on literacy ("50th Anniversary" 1). As I have briefly explained before, women lacked access to education and professional training right from early ages. Their main role as housewives and child bearers did not imply being well-educated and, even though some did want to get an education, most (with some exceptions of women belonging to the bourgeoisie or high-class) were not allowed to have it: "During most of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, women had virtually no access to the two kinds of training that constituted the principal means of acquiring a thorough music education – study at a cathedral school or apprenticeship to a master player" (Bowers and Tick 5). Women had faced those hindrances for centuries and this is understood as a consequence of a patriarchal ideology that has tried to lock them up on a domestic sphere that was denying them access to education, and obstructing the development of their artistic skills: "Even in the nineteenth century a woman was not encouraged to be an artist" (Woolf, *A Room* 71). From this situation, the notion stems that nothing could be expected from women intellectually. Even in the 21st century, on some level, it is still taken for granted that women are not (or should not be) interested in anything outside their purposeful confinement at home:

> By the time I started writing for women's magazines, in the fifties, it was simply taken for granted by editors, and accepted as an immutable fact of life by writers, that women were not interested in politics, life outside the United States, national issues, art, science, ideas, adventure, education, or even their own communities, except where they could be sold through their emotions as wives and mothers. (Friedan 44)

Yet, thanks to the development of feminist thinking, women's entrance in education became a relevant social progress in the United States. More women wanted to study and achieve intellectual independence, but their inclusion was not being facilitated, as it could have been expected. For example, in music, some critics argue that women have been excluded from education, publication, performance and even critical reception (Burns 545). This barrier, together with, for instance, economic dependence, led women to remain aside from the development of their skills and from the opportunity to take active roles in the process of artistic creation.

In *La perspectiva de Género y la Música Popular: dos nuevos retos para la musicología*, Laura Viñuela approaches gender and music within the spectrum of Anglo-Saxon musicology in order to explore and unfold women's invisibility both in the artistic and in the personal realm. Viñuela makes a comparison between classical music and literature to explain that, in literature, the written word is the canon's principal means of dissemination. Writers spread their works thanks to the written proof, which will remain fixed in the form of a paper. Closely enough, in the case of music, it is the written music (that is, the score) and the literature related to it (Viñuela 31) that takes this role as proving testimony of worthiness. Thus, should someone want to be a writer, they had to be able to publish their music, to leave written testimony. That demands economic independence, something

that women, throughout history, have been deprived of: "La publicación de una partitura o un libro implica que el autor tiene conocimientos y recursos económicos suficientes para llevar a cabo esta actividad, dos elementos a los que rara vez han tenido acceso las mujeres" (Viñuela 32). Marcia J. Citron adds that only a small percentage of women's works has appeared printed and she explains that, even though the procedures for publication seem to be based on merit, there are some social factors and practices that show that there are other requirements taken into consideration to appear in canons (Citron 106). On top of that, Citron mentions that women's access to musical establishments in order to forge contacts (with professionals, conductors, or board members, for instance) has also been affected by gender conditions (106), which, again, hinders women's progress in the field.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, women's dependence on men was the main reason why most of their potential contributions to music (or any other artistic expression) remained obscured or undone. English writer Virginia Woolf made famous the statement that women needed a space where they could develop their artistic skills, adding that many could not afford it: "In the first place, to have a room of her own, let alone a quiet room or a sound-proof room, was out of the question, unless her parents were exceptionally rich or very noble, even up to the beginning of the nineteenth century" (Woolf, *A Room* 67). These barriers were not unique or exclusively related to Virginia Woolf's artistic domain, that of literature. The same constraining circumstances were actively repeated in music, for instance:

> Before the twentieth century, if women creating music were to be recognized, they had to have been born into a musical family or grown up in the presence of royalty or in a family with court or patron affiliation: and/or they had to work in an all-female environment, such as in the religious convents or the all-female Venetian conservatories. Without these advantages or prerequisites, very few, if any, musical women could hope to become composers. (Jezic 1)

Some women were not allowed to work, and the ones who did it could not dispose of the money that they have earned. Thus, I consider that it is adequate to bring forward here some of the remarks that Virginia Woolf exposed when exploring the literary British tradition of the early 20th century. Her views and conclusions apply to what women working in music had to face then and later. For a woman like Virginia Woolf, the exercise of intellectual freedom depends basically on economic independence and, in this sense, she explains that "women have always been poor, not for two hundred years merely, but from the beginning of time . . . That is why I have laid so much stress on money and a room of one's own" (*A Room* 141). In music, something comparable happens. Many women found and still find limitations when trying to exercise their agency as artists due to their economic status. The disposable income determines the amount of money that musicians can subsequently spend on their formation and also on their instruments. In rock music, we know, electric guitars and basses, drum sets and amplifiers involve an expensive investment: ". . . playing music remained stubbornly expensive and time-consuming . . . to have a band, one needed instruments, amps, a practice space, maybe a PA. Eventually, a band would have to pay for recording time, a vehicle to tour in and gas to feed it, the twenty-minute

blank cassettes for duplicating a demo tape" (Marcus 315). Furthermore, musicians need an appropriate space to practice, Woolf's room; backline and transport are also additional costs to regard; and, above all, they will eventually aim at recording and releasing their music, which requires the production, distribution and management of a cultural product that demands a solid budget for hiring and/or renting expensive technological aid, professional supervision and other provisions. All these material constraints limited women's participation in music: "lack of money, lack of access to equipment and transport, spatial restrictions- both in terms of 'public' and 'private' space, lack of time, the 'policing' of female leisure, and regulation of female play – including restrictions imposed by parents, boyfriends, husbands, and exclusion by male musicians" (Bayton 188). In sum, being part of the music industry requires financial solvency. A financial solvency that sometimes women could and cannot afford. Thus, many women who pursued a music career found and find themselves in a frustrating situation in which the music business becomes a slippery and steep terrain for them, not for lack of skills or interest, but for being economically dependent on someone else's revenue.

4.2.2. Motherhood

Apart from education and economic dependence, women's liberty to achieve their artistic goals was restricted from other directions or by other factors as well. Free time for women was scarce because motherhood and housekeeping were overwhelming activities that extended also in their free time, and the time remaining was not devoted to play any instrument or write any literary piece: "Women never had a half an hour . . . that they can call their own – she was always interrupted" (Woolf, *A Room* 86). Virginia Woolf described the problems that a woman faced when she wanted to create a literary piece, and they can be applied in the music domain too. Certainly, writing the scores for a song or learning to play an instrument requires practice, which also means physical challenge, as in the case of the guitar or drums. Usually, that formation or training takes place in the moment of the day that one disposes of leisure or the time away from work duties. In this sense, women did not have that quality time to train and thus their expertise and command was limited, partial and bare. Even though Woolf's observations are framed in a remote time, they still seem accurate to define the problematic involvement of women in certain artistic endeavors. Motherhood (and wifehood) is still a restrictive condition for female musicians. The expectations of their gender imply that women have to be the caretakers and nurturers within the family. Parental responsibility usually devolves upon them:

> Although many of the women involved in bands as instrumentalist at this time [punk] became skilled as time went on, they'd simply not had time to plan careers as musicians, and the very ordinariness that made their activities so appealing in the first place became a burden to them as the opposing poles of business and political concerns removed them from the environments that had "grown" them. (Reddington 192)

When a woman pursues a dedicated participation in any music scene or career, it comes as a plausible quandary that she would have to find a balance between work (and the economic independence that it implies) and motherhood; in fact, some women will have to choose between one and the other: "Marriage and motherhood were considered incompatible with the image of rockin' country girl" (Whiteley 122). Helen Reddington's and Sheila Whiteley's words (and also Lucy O'Brien's, from whom I will quote later) confirm, in a way, my understanding that Woolf's observations are still accurate to describe the conflictive intersections of gender expectation and artistic demands. As an example, American musician, songwriter and artistic performer Kim Gordon (Hanna's contemporary), renowned in the 1980s for her work as bassist and singer in the New York based rock band Sonic Youth, admits in her autobiography *Girl in a Band: A Memoir* (2015) that having a baby and dealing at the same time with a music career is a hard job: "The hardest part of being a mother in a band had to do with logistics" (232). Also, she explains that mother musicians were constantly asked about that combination, what led to an identity crisis for her: "Having a baby also created a huge identity crisis inside of me. It didn't help that during press interviews, journalist always said, "What's it like to be a rock-and-roll mum?" just as over the last decades they couldn't help asking, "What's like to be a girl in a band'" (221). According to Lucy O'Brien, women are prevented from achieving high levels in their careers because, first, childcare is still considered to be a woman's task and, second, some still get a guilty feeling for leaving the kids to rehearse and perform (95). Thus, as in the case of The Velvet Underground drummer Moe Tucker, some decide to give up their music careers and devote time to their family and home: "At one point I played with a band for two weeks, but it was too much with all the kids, trying to rehearse, so I gave up" (O' Brien 95). As we can see from the evidence above, music reflects what becomes a problem and/or a limit for many women and, in the case of female musicians, many find themselves in an inner struggle to choose between being part of a band and accomplishing the typical motherhood requirements. The pressure and dilemma usually fall exclusively on women, as gender expectations of womanhood affect them in a wider and tougher sense.

Similarly, in *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan exemplifies the internal fight that women are constantly enduring in order to fulfil expectations based on their gender: "In battling for women's freedom to participate in the major work and decisions of society as the equals of men, they denied their very nature as women, which fulfills itself only through sexual passivity, acceptance of male domination, and nurturing motherhood" (Friedan 81). Also, Adrienne Rich's controversial work *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution,* published in 1976, severely criticizes motherhood as an institution. Rich perceives mothers as victims of a closed patriarchal institution in which their voices have been silenced:

> My individual, seemingly private pains as a mother, the individual, seemingly private pains of the mothers around me and before me, whatever our class or color, the regulation of women's reproductive power by men in every totalitarian system and every socialist revolution, the legal and technical control by men of contraception, fertility, abortion, obstetrics, gynaecology, and extrauterine reproductive experiments – all are essential to the patriarchal system, as is the negative or suspect status of women who are not mothers. (Rich, *Of Woman* 34)

By meeting religion, nationalism and social consciousness, a mother fulfils all the interests appointed by patriarchy. Consequently, motherhood evolves into an institution that does not really reckon or supervise women's necessities and experiences. Indeed, motherhood is still venerated as the more important (meaning also satisfying and fulfilling) condition on a woman's life, being her biological capacity for conceiving and nourishing human life her most highlighted quality. As Adrienne Rich states, a woman is predestined to be the Victorian "Angel in the House" who has to dedicate herself to the role of housewife that were conditioned for her: "— we were expected to fill both the part of the Victorian Lady of Leisure, the Angel in the House, and also of the Victorian cook, scullery maid, laundress, governess, and nurse" (Rich, *Of Woman* 27).

As a reaction to those expectations and the subsequent inner conflict, the term "voluntary motherhood" (which implies that in order to be and feel a woman, one does not have to be a mother as an imperative) was coined in the late 19th century and promoted by some radical feminists. Voluntary motherhood "was the first general name for a feminist birth control demand in the United States in the late nineteenth century. It represented an initial response of feminist to their understanding that involuntary motherhood and child-rising were important parts of woman's oppression" (L.Gordon 5). Motherhood has always been said to be one of the main – if not the main –, aims of women in life. However, some women opt for rejecting to adjust to those conventions. In music, that rejection encompasses further consequences. For female artists, the pressure to be a good wife and a good nurturer constrains their artistic agency, limiting their capacity of expression and their contributions to society. Taking a decision, thus, involves a larger conversation, one in which the complexities to be faced reach the most intimate desire, the strongest cultural construction and the most manifest social expectations of the female individual who has to take it.

4.2.3. Identity, Role Models and Girls' Exposure to Rock Music

Another major difficulty encountered by female musicians due to the gendered stereotyping of music is the lack of role models. Consequently, they find it difficult to attain a solid identification within a given specific music tradition, which, in turn, would be an accessory to the personal development of their individual identities. And I say this because music can be a key element in the social and personal construction of identity[35].

Simon Frith uses Karl Marx's words to explain that an individual can only imagine himself as an individual in relation to a material, physical and social organization: "The self is always an imagined self but can only be imagined as a particular organization of social, physical and material forces" (Frith, "Music" 109). In other words, an individual requires a community that facilitates his or her personal identification, contributing to the shaping of her or his personal identity. Similarly, Susan McClary refers to music as a vital tool that forms

[35] Identity becomes an important issue for musicology. Books such as Richard Young's *Critical Studies: Music, Popular Culture, Identities* – in which different scholars and authors talk about the operation of music as an element that participates in the construction of identity – call readers' attraction if interested in popular culture, music and cultural studies.

individual identities: “Along with another influential media such as film, music teaches us how to experience our own emotions, our own desires, and even (especially in dance) our own bodies. For better or for worse, it socializes us” (*Feminine* 53). In summary, as Frith again states: music is “a key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective” (“Music” 295). These underlying social characteristics of music are meaningful in the forge of individual identity, influencing the way in which people place themselves in society and in relation to others. In this sense, music does not reflect people, rather *creates* people: “Popular music is popular not because it reflects something or authentically articulates some sort of popular taste or experience, but because it creates our understanding of what ‘popularity’ is, because it places us in the social world in a particular way” (Frith, “Music” 121).

As Simon Frith argues, music helps to define social identities instead of reflecting them and women’s music is interesting because it *defines* what it means to be a woman rather than expressing what *it is* to be one: “‘Women’s music’, for example, is interesting not as music which somehow expresses “women”, but as music which seeks to define them, just as “black music” works to set up a very particular notion of what “blackness’ is” (Frith, “Towards” 262). In fact, many teenage girls face a great difficulty when they turn to music in order to create their identity in adolescence. Authors such as Sara Marcus have defined this difficulty as a huge limitation for girls in their teens: “The problem of female adolescence was so enormous that knowing and naming wasn’t always enough to counter it” (147). Girls may find an absence of female role models in rock music. Additionally, they may become aware of how the gender-stereotyped music to which they are exposed blocks their abilities as musicians. Actually, as I show later with the FCDA approach to the analysis of lyrics, many riot grrrl bands such as Bikini Kill recall with a critical significance their teenage days, remembering that isolation as a common feeling between many American girls of the time. Those bands embrace as well a re-appropriation of that same revisited adolescence, renovating the meaning of the word “girl” with a broader sense that provided new access to richer possibilities of significant identification for themselves and other girls.

Adolescence is a socializing period for teenagers who are forging their personal and social identities. Sharing their personal interests (among these, fashion, reading, sports or music) with other friends contributes to this identity forging, making them feel part of a community. Therefore, music is a powerful energy in order to engage people together. Within this framework, rock music, in particular, serves as a “rite-of-passage” (Pedelty and Weglarz xii) for adolescents as well as for adults, who may use it to “learn the cultural ropes of subcultures (enculturation), communicate with each other, and express themselves. Rock is the soundtrack for discovery as young people explore adult possibilities and dangers” (Pedelty and Weglarz xii). Additionally, music collaborates in an individual’s identity formation through the specific command of the lyrics. In the words of songs, the listener can find models and/or ideas that facilitate our connection with others. In some cases, those “connecting” or “shaping” elements will be eventually related to race, class or gender features:

> During adolescence, that period of fierce socialization, when popular culture seems to hold its most intensive grip, these icons can recount new stories – new paradigms- which may help to instigate

> positive identification across gender, racial, class, and even aesthetic lines, and which will, hopefully, broaden the structural and political dimensions of identity at its most formative stage. (Kelly 234)

This, as I have mentioned previously, is one of the main problems that girls face in their engagement with music. It is mandatory to consider that women who get involved in music at an early age do usually have problems finding sources of identification in some forms of popular music such as rock or punk. In fact, it can be stated that the exposure to particular types of music plays an important part in subsequent musical tastes and choices by adolescents and that this is sometimes preconceived or determined by gendered expectations or conventions. Thus, boys are usually encouraged to search for popular music forms that are more aggressive or loud and that affirm their masculine credentials, whereas girls are advised towards other genres – such as pop – which are considered to be more in line with the norms attached to their femininity. This reflects the gendered constitution of music and of specific genres like pop and rock, as I have argued before.

Lucy Green[36] carried out a qualitative study in 78 schools in England, aiming to see the teacher's perceptions on boys' and girls' musical practices. According to the survey, most of the girls in the study sang and played orchestral instruments. In contrast, no boy was in that same situation and they were more prone to play electric guitar, bass or drums. As an answer to these results, the teachers said that "girls are better at playing classical music than boys, giving the reason that girls are more persevering, hard-working and committed" (Green 103). The author suggests that the precedents that produce and reproduce gendered musical meaning were being replicated in the classroom, and thus girls and boys were also mirroring the roles attached to men and women throughout history (Green 103). That way of thinking comes from the gendered assumptions that I have explained before, a pattern in which rock is understood as "male" and pop as "feminine". As a result of boys' greater exposure to rock, "they often feel more entitled to participate in rock culture than girls do and can be suspicious when females cross this gendered musical boundary" (Kearney 114). Thus, if girls want to participate in rock music, their attitude or choice may be considered as transgressing feminine standards: "involve a socially manufactured physical, mechanical, and technical helplessness" (Bayton 194). In this manner, many girls who identify themselves in forms such as rock (or boys who aim for music genres presumably feminine) face problems because the gendered understanding of music imposes that they do the opposite and they are constantly exposed to music genres that "match" their sex/gender in contrast to what they pursue.

On top of that, pop-rock and punk bands were mainly formed by male members, headed by male leaders and followed by mainly male audiences, a situation in which boys would usually repel girls in concerts. A girl who would enjoy this kind of music and the energy that it encompasses could not attend them as there would always be a feeling of lack of safety and belonging, a certain hostility created by gender difference. Kathleen Hanna herself asked boys and men in many of her concerts to step to the back of the venue, so girls and women could feel more comfortable and less scared in the front:

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[36] See full examination in "Gender, Musical Meaning and Education." *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1994), pp. 99-105.

> Also, how fucked is that women have to watch a feminist band form the back of the room because they are too scared (or too grossed out) to be in the front? When women are moshing or it's a mixed group and everyone's having fun, that's cool, but if it's messing up a lot of people's ability to have a good time, that's when I've asked the moshers to step to the back. (Hanna, "On Not Playing" 125)

Besides, those girls attending the concerts who would not participate in the hot dancing spots because of the aggressiveness that was involved would sometimes be set aside as "coat stands", holding their boyfriends or male friends' coats while they were having fun in the mosh. Performing artist and songwriter Madigan Shive recalls a personal experience in the documentary *Don't Need You: The Herstory of Riot Grrrl;*

> There would be girls standing all around the corners holding his jackets and there would be the boys with the shirts off playing the hardcore music, and I remember being in there and not feeling particularly like I loved this music but I loved the energy and I loved what was going on, but I remember looking around and being like why are these girls standing there holding his jackets and, I remember overhearing another person there go 'these are the coat hangers. (*Don't Need You*)

As Sara Marcus explains, these behaviors in the punk scene were just reproductions and echoes of the way in which world societies were treating women (92). Women are supposed to like a particular kind of music that equals their feminine condition and rock music was outside those confinements. In view of this, girls have been encouraged from different social strata (including education) to practice music genres that are proper for ladies, so girls' exposure to rock music has been affected. Also, the adverse atmosphere created in rock and punk concerts did not help girls to create an accurate identity, as they have been put aside from a scene that they liked but due to their gender they could not own and/or enjoy. These reasons, among others, will lead Kathleen Hanna and many riot grrrls to stand up against what they considered an injustice in order to demand, through music and activism, a place for themselves.

As I already explained, in connection to the aforementioned reasons, another potential obstacle hindering women's engagement and/or contribution to rock music is the lack of connection and support with other women. Isolation and the absence of role models or mentors denote one of the biggest setbacks for girls in rock music. Many girls do not know that women before them had overcome the same adversities that they are facing at the very moment in which they challenge gendered assumptions in rock. Thus, they did not enjoy the courage and support provided by previous examples in order to feel confident to embark on those cultural projects: "Other women needed a catalyst – and seeing other women play live made performing seen easy enough to try" (Reddington 27). This lack of knowledge discourages girls to approach a genre in which they do not see manifest women's involvement. According to Karen Kelly, listeners of music remember a moment forged within a social ground and then individually recreate it:

> Audiences remember, re-create, or imagine those moments of transgression and creation through individual experiences grounded within a larger social arena. The multiple and layered conventions of the society in which music is generated and heard filter its style and promotion, often reinforcing the most common stories and representations – the rebels, the villains, the sex gods and goddesses, and the heroines and heroes. (233)

As Kelly's words suggest, music can both promote and amend stereotypes. However, the lack of support and validation derived from the invisibility that cornered potential female role models, together with the actual lack of female prominence in music, may lead girls who seek to play a part in music to reach to the conclusion that female exclusion within rock is the norm and women's presence in music is non-existent: "Without knowledge that other girls have successfully transgressed the gendered barriers of rock musicianship, aspiring female rock performers likely feel isolated and unsupported in their practices, often losing interest after only a short while" (Kearney 115). In any case, when girls watch other women on stage, "transgressing" the cultural norms that conventionally drive them away from playing instruments and screaming on stage, they get new sources of inspiration and encouragement to stay solid while striving for artistic excellence. That is why legendary musicians such as Joan Jett, Tracy Chapman, or Patti Smith, who is cited as "an influence without equivocation" for younger generations (O' Brien 99), can be acknowledged with the merit of having paved the way in music for future female musicians, becoming thus an unquestionable influence in rock music:

> . . . with an acknowledge that certain US acts (in particular, The Velvet Underground, Talking Heads, Blondie and Patti Smith) had a powerful influence in Britain, not only because their strong woman performers were role models for women who could now aspire to be player-participants in music-making, but also because they "prepared the ground" for the young male rock audiences to appreciate woman guitarists, bass-players and so on. (Reddington 6)

However, once again, the lack of strong and visible role models and fosterage to participate in music, plus the negative welcoming with which some women are received, either as audience on the dancefloor or as performers on stage, discourage many girls to enjoy or contribute to punk music. And, as a rule, women find it really difficult to win a place in a music country in which they are foreign. They are breaking the lady-like conventions of their gender and the public dimension of that transgression may have an important impact on their personal projects to become musicians.

4.2.4. The Public Dimension of Music. Singers, Instrumentalists and Composers

The last constraint that, I believe, significantly determines and restrains women's partaking in rock music is the public dimension that, as I already mentioned in the closing of my previous section, music prompts. Generally speaking, and as I anticipated in my overview of feminism, women have always been associated with traditional attributes or values such as obedience, purity and quietness. Public artistic expression was morally banned for them: "La escritura femenina ha sufrido siempre por la constricción del nexo entre castidad, silencio y obediencia: muchas tradiciones imponen un veto moral a la expresión artística pública de las mujeres" (Gnisci 456). In concordance with this, those women who decide to be musicians are viewed as if they were taking unladylike tasks. When analyzing music in the United States, Kristine H. Burns states that "observing this private/public binarism, amateur performance in the home, school, or church has been gendered female, and the wider, public aspects of music, including composing, conducting, and performing professionally, have been gendered male" (678). Thus, women used to perform in private spaces such as their homes, whereas public performances were carried out by men. As Laura Viñuela emphasizes, in the opposition public/private, women will occupy the private position and this binarism is linked to the two extreme opposite models virgin/prostitute that have being historically triggered for the discrimination between genders (32). Since antiquity, women's place in society has been always relegated to that of the home (symbolizing the madonna concept), whereas women who were in the streets looking for a job or working independently had been regarded as prostitutes[37]. That paradigm is also applicable to music. The fact that women perform in public has carried sexual connotations since the early ages. In patriarchal perception, when a woman performs a song or plays an instrument, that act is charged with negative connotations. She is subverting traditional gender roles: "Pivoted upon the binary division between whore and madonna, harlot and virgin, the woman singer re-enacts some of the fundamental patriarchal defining characteristics of femininity" (Green 100). As a result of this madonna/whore distinction (resorting to Green's personal terminology), women's public displays as singers, instrumentalists or performers are prone to be considered sexually appealing for men. Thus, instead of being seen as agents, women become sexually objectified on stage, "[a]s musicians, women have traditionally been viewed as singers, positioned in front of a band, the focus of audience attention not simply for what they sing, but for how they look" (Whiteley 52).

To explain the public dimension in depth, I use again Lucy Green's work "Gender, Musical Meaning and Education", where the author focuses on music and gender and the significant role that education plays in relation to them. Green presents gendered musical meanings and experiences and suggests that these are affected by an "inherent meaning" (99), that is, the physical materials that form the musical meaning; and a "delineated meaning" (100), which involves the listener's position in relation to the music. Green goes on arguing

[37] A theory used to reinforce patriarchy and that represents women as "either "good" (chaste and pure) Madonnas or "bad" (promiscuous and seductive) whores (Bareket et al. 519).

that there is nothing feminine (or masculine) in music but our perception and idea of femininity. This plays a role when we listen to the music and it influences our understanding of music: "Gendered musical meanings participate in the construction of our very notions of masculinity and femininity. This means, therefore, that we can use music to confirm and perpetuate our concepts of ourselves as gendered beings" (Green 103). To exemplify all this, she uses the term "display." Green illustrates the three different main positions that a woman can cover in music; singer, performer and composer (Green 100-01). It is then accurate to explore how these three roles are charged with certain overtones and implications that affect women in a specific way. In the case of the riot grrrls, they decided to take a step forward, grab the mics, play the instruments, and compose the songs. They created fresh and revolutionary materials. And, for all that, they were seen as women who were crossing boundaries into an area where "ladies" were not always accepted.

According to Lucy Green, a woman performing in public is not only, for instance, playing an instrument, but also enacting her body, what leads to the recreation of some of the characteristics attached by patriarchy to femininity: "Her femininity becomes a part of the music's delineations. This affirmation of femininity and its delineation in music is one of the reasons why throughout the history of music, women have been more abundant and successful in singing than in any other single musical role" (100). Furthermore, singers would be the closest ones to this "display" position because the voice is not considered an instrument per se. It is seen as a natural tool that emerges from the human body. Thus, it is associated with the irrational[38]. Taking into account the belief that the irrational is related to women and the rational to men, that is why the role conventionally best adapted to women is the one of singing. Also, being a vocalist does not involve playing and mastering an instrument or technological device, affirming, in this way, the traditional feminine standards assigned to women.

Kristine H. Burns explains that women find also limitations and constraints in the vocal performance, in the way in which they can use their voices. Burns explains it by using the example of the choirs, where women cannot perform low vocal ranges. This is not taken as pertinent, whereas boys are usually encouraged to "develop the full extent of their ranges (falsetto to bass), but girls' ranges are limited to the higher registers (Soprano/alto ranges as opposed to tenor/bass ranges)" (446). In any case, following Lucy O'Brien's statement that female artists have historically been directed to "the role of decorative-front women" (12), it is expectable that many women in rock will finally become vocalists.

In short, if anyone is randomly asked to mention the name of a woman in rock music, the most probable choice is that they cite the name of a woman who excelled in the role of singer. This is, definitely, as I have tried to show here, the role in music that a majority of women still occupy in popular music. Also, the one role that provides the strongest and most efficient source of visibility in the media for them. Yet, as women started forming their own bands, their presence as instrumentalists began to grow. Certainly, riot grrrl bands[39] took the

[38] Here, I understand irrational as the opposite to rational. Rational associates with the mind, logic, wisdom, intellectual capacity. These notions or attributes have been usually related to idealizations of the man, whereas the irrational refers to emotions or the heart, qualities, as I argued in the second section of this dissertation, linked to the feminine.

[39] With this, I do not mean that before Riot Grrrl there were not women playing instruments, but it is true that the movement varied women's roles in music and it contributed to modify the assignment of roles and the creation of standards. Again,

opportunity to display and master different skills, apart from vocals. Girls took up instruments and learnt the basics to beat them. In fact, it was a common practice to interchange roles. Members of the same band would change roles and sing or play one instrument or another depending on the song. Hanna, for example, played drums in "Thurston Hearts the Who" and bass in different songs (e.g. "Starfish", "Distinct Complicity", "For Only", "In Accordance to Natural Law" and "I Hate Danger"). It was the eagerness to shape the music scene and make it more inclusive that led many female musicians to develop their skills as instrumentalists.

Instrumentalists adopt a control position when playing an instrument. This means that they are mentally capable of playing music and that they have a good command of musical techniques. Therefore, from the point of view of gendered standards and role understanding, women who play instruments are exercising power, control, and, somehow, they are entering a world of authority that has been usually associated with men. Consequently, it may become a problem when they aim at fulfilling the construction of their femininity. In Lucy Green's opinion,

> the effects of this problematic relationship between femininity and instrumental performance are decipherable throughout the history of women's musical roles, which reveals the fact that unwieldiness, high volume or technological complexity tend to characterize those very instruments from which women have been most vehemently discouraged or banned. (101)

Normally, the mastering of an instrument is associated with men. Female instrumentalists trespass on a territory that has been restricted to them due to gender reasons. Moreover, the fact that instruments are also engendered, as I have explored before in this dissertation (Steblin 1995; Doubleday 2008), has a real impact on the choices made when a woman is deciding if they will play one instrument or another, of course. Consequently, it also has a strong influence and impact on people's identity formation and gender socialization. In the case of women, deciding to play the bass, the electric guitar or the drums means that those women are entering a male terrain, as those are instruments associated with the opposite sex. Therefore, gender conventions establish a paradigm in which, if a woman performs rock, she is envisioned as performing masculinity. Many of the women who play an active role in rock music – as singers, songwriters or instrumentalists – receive what apparently is positive criticism for their work. However, this usually comes with words like these: "not bad for a girl" or "you play like a man". Again, the phrasing of these ideas discloses how the gendered conditioning is still active there. In other words, when women do not accept gender expectations and they get themselves involved in a cultural paradigm that is tainted with male overtones, they may be accepted or they may excel, but they are still perceived and/or scrutinized in comparison to the male standard, as an extraordinary or exceptional version of the original or the standard. A case in point to exemplify this is

there have been women transgressing those conventions for generations before riot grrrls jumped on the stage. Sister Rosetta Tharpe (1915-1973), for instance, was an American gospel singer who is recognized as one of the best female guitarist players ever.

American singer-songwriter Susan Kay, better known as Suzi Quatro, the first female bass player to get recognition in rock music during the 1970s. Quatro herself noticed that rock was ruled by men and she tried to prove that a woman could play with the same proficiency or even better: "Fully recognizing that rock was dominated by men, she [Suzi Quatro] saw herself as 'kicking down the male door in rock proving that a female MUSICIAN . . . and this is a point I am extremely about ... could play as well if not better than the boys'" (Auslander 3).

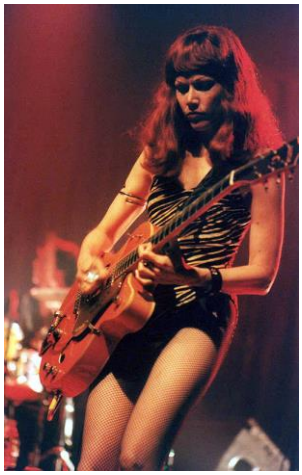

Fig. 11. Poison Ivy, 1993. Photo by Joe Hughes.

Fig. 12. Suzi Quatro, Detroit, 1974. Photo by Bob Gruen.

Likewise, guitarist and songwriter Kristy Marlana Wallace, better known as Poison Ivy, complained in *Guitar Player* magazine that she was also getting that type of criticism. Poison Ivy considers that, in general terms, women do not play better or worse than men, but they do play differently: "If I am recognized or credited, people will say I play as tough as a guy. In a way that's insulting, because for one thing, I play different. It's got nothing to do with guys" (Obrecht).

A person's mastering of an instrument should not be evaluated in relation to his or her gender. Yet women's gender affects their performance's scrutiny as people judge them primarily by regarding their gender. Consequently, it can be stated that women who master any traditionally-considered "male" instrument will eventually strike conventionally imposed gender roles in music and in society. As I tried to illustrate before, there are cultural standards and expectations that promote the idea that women cannot (or should not) get involved in some music genres. In consequence, those women have to make a double effort to prove them wrong:

> A woman in a band there's this whole idea that before you can even step on the stage you better know how to play guitar like Stevie Ray Vaughan because you are going to get so harshly criticized. The thing I realized early on is that it doesn't matter if you play like Stevie Ray. You are still going to get partially critized so you might as well just do whatever do the fuck you want. (Hanna, "Herstory repeats")

In this sense, female instrumentalists are always judged by a criterion that seems to stem from gendered standards. If they want to get recognition, they always have to demonstrate their skills in a more demanding manner, whereas men's ability is taken for granted. As Kathleen Hanna herself says in the previous quotation, some women acknowledge that, no matter what they do, they are always going to be scrutinized in a harder way, so the best piece of advice would be to ignore bad reviews and carry on playing instruments, since, sometimes, apparently, those whimsical choices reveal deep and significant hidden meanings and consequences.

Finally, it is also necessary to discuss the role of female composers. From the beginnings of the 19th century, women were considered as performers, and "as composers, they disparaged their own work and still not have been completely accepted as equals" (Anderson and Zinsser 175). Songwriting demands musical knowledge, but also an acquaintance with literary procedures. It is an activity of the mind since it presupposes technical skills. In western culture, as I have repeatedly stated and signified, the mind has been conventionally associated with manhood. Patriarchy articulates a division of attributes and capacities in which women are related to the body and men are associated with the mind and the rational, as, again, I have explored previously in an attempt to project this division in certain biased approaches to music. Consequently, women are carrying out a man's job when writing a song: "Like the display of body in performance, there is a metaphorical display of mind in composition, which becomes a part of the music's delineated meanings. When the composer is known to be a woman, the fact of her display of mind conflicts with her ideologically constructed natural submission to the body" (Green 101). In addition, traditionally – and with the exception of a few examples –, women in the 19th and 20th centuries participated in artistic processes just as muses, supporters or as mere sources of inspiration for the male artists, but on rare occasions as creators:

> Women are brought to life in the eye of the male beholders, exalted for qualities men seek out in women and berated for qualities they don't. Creativity and incisiveness are seldom amongst the qualities that attract the average songwriting male to compose lyric about a woman. (Corrigan 147)

Historically, in a general way and as I argued in previous sections in this dissertation, the only naturally accepted and assumed occupation for women was that of procreators, as women are biologically prepared to give birth and create human life. Therefore, men were the ones who performed artistic roles while women were set aside for their reproductive functions. For generations, it has been conventionally established that if women were to engage in any kind of art, that actual participation would resemble or echo their feminine condition. In music then, if they write songs, if they compose, this music is expected to be slow, delicate, related to the qualities and properties that patriarchy has considered feminine. As Susan McClary says, women's music would sound in the same way that the dominant patriarchy assumed that women were (*Feminine* 139). In short, female composers face some constraints when exercising their activity as creative agents, since their music is expected to emulate and evoke their feminine condition.

Fig. 13. Joni Mitchell in 1968. Photo by Jack Robinson.

Fig. 14. Tracy Champman. Photo by Tim Mosenfelder.

Fortunately, several examples of female musicians have shown that they are emancipated and qualified to enter training disciplines and pursue a career as composers. Susan McClary affirms that composers like Libby Larsen or Joan Tower have proved that they can compose "first-rate music, and they are fully capable of deploying the entire range of the semiotic code they have inherited-not merely the sweet and passive, but the forceful aspects as well" (*Feminine* 19). In the same manner, young female musicians in the 20th century challenged these gendered assumptions stemming from a male-dominated musical scene that sidelined girls from their own alternative artistic communities.

Despite all the resistances mentioned above, concerning education, economy, motherhood, identity and public performing, women's ongoing participation in music since the 20th century allows a more positive reading of American society and its music communities. Political, cultural and social changes are permitting a slow but solid increase in female participation in music scenes that have been opened up for female musicians. Their achievements will prove assisting for future generations that will find here the role models that previous generations of women had precisely lacked.

4.3. The Transgressive Role of Women in Rock. Women's Music and Women in Music

In previous sections, I have explained how women's professional careers are/were constrained by social and economic reasons. However, it is also necessary to explore the expectations attached to each music genre if we want to have a thorough and broad perspective on the position and condition of women within the music industry. As I have also explained and illustrated in previous sections, women have always found obstacles to be part of rock scenes and to build their identities within the culture generated around a style of music. Those who eventually participate and seek a career in rock music are labelled as "subversive", accused of carrying out roles that are not included within the standard cultural definitions of femininity. Thus, tired of a genre and gender shaping that portrays women in negative, biased ways, silencing or belittling them, some women created

a music with which they could identify, one in which their perspectives and visions would be taken into consideration. But, at the same time, critics started placing them in a "separate category" within rock music, alienating them from the general. In this section, I will further explain what I mean with this concept of new music created by women and their placement within the industry.

From the 1960s onwards, rock music (mostly in what regards the lyrics and the live performances) became more sexist and patriarchal in design and the music industry started to be more male-centered. Many female musicians took a stance against it in an attempt to operate from outside the mainstream rock music. They started to create a music that could reflect their own personal experiences. This music, defined as "Women's music" or "Women- identified music", is a term "first used in the early 1970s to denote pop and rock music created by, for, and about women" (Burns 674). In Mavis Bayton words, "'women music' was *supposed* to be more flowing, less structured, lighter, warmer, soften. Beyond this, there was little agreement. The idea of a female aesthetic (outside the culture created by men) has also been raised in other cultural forms such as for example the "*écriture feminine*" proposed by Hélène Cixous in literature (199). Renée Cox Lorraine follows a similar argument and explains that, as a result of music and writing being process-oriented, that style of feminine writing may be comparable to a possible type of women's music (10). However, these types of definitions also lead to disagreements, because of the fact that, even if women were producing this music, that does not necessarily mean that it has to be soft or sensitive. Saying so would mean falling into the same binary assumptions that supported patriarchal structures and that placed women as soft and weak in opposition to men. In general, gender is still playing a significant part in musicianship and, as a key factor, it influences the way in which society expects music to be.

As I have explained before, due to the restrictions that performances entail, and the expectations of the music genre that they practice, women who get involved in rock music do not conform to the modes associated with feminine identities and are set in the narrow category "women in music". As I have shown previously, this classification emphasizes on their gender; being a woman goes first than being a musician, eclipsing their musical work:

> The very phrase 'women in rock', which features in a great number of articles focusing on female musicians, is itself problematic. Rather than simply pointing to the activity of female musicians within a particular music genre, the phrase usually works to peculiarise the presence of women rock performers. (Leonard 32)

Men's activity and contribution to music are thus seen as standard and women's like something special and unusual that needs recognition in exceptional occasions. The label "Women in rock" may seem defiant in a way, but at the same time it "others" women, setting them aside and marginalizing them. Bayton suggests that "the status 'woman' seems to obscure that of 'musician'" (195), making women's participation in music a rarity. Marcia J. Citron complains that because women have been subjected to gender related evaluation, they are placed in "a "separate but not equal" category that has widened the gulf between themselves and the

homogeneous canon" (108). This is an issue that women have noticed and that has affected them in negative ways.

To exemplify this controversy, a song in Hanna's repertoire makes clear her rejection of that separate category: "You make me wanna crochet/Just another book about women in rock" ("Crochet", *Julie Ruin*¸1998). Similarly, Pauline Murray, lead singer of the English band Penetration, admits in John Robb's *Punk Rock. An Oral History* that people used to ask her how it felt to be a woman in a band: "'What's it like to be a woman in rock?' I never considered myself to be a woman in rock. I just thought I was part of the band. But when you look back it seems quite revolutionary, the way that the women were behaving. Females in the bands were breaking down stereotypes. Lots of these things get overlooked" (Robb 386). Similarly, singer and guitarist Carrie Brownstein from the American band Sleater-Kinney admits that, in most of the interviews that the band had, she was constantly asked about how it felt being a woman playing music: "My response to this question has just become "*This* is how it feels: you get asked that question being a woman playing music." I can't imagine any man has ever been asked how it feels to be a man playing music, and why did he choose to play music with only men" (Ryan 38). Actually, women playing punk music at that time were considered a novelty and an exception to the norm. Kathleen Hanna herself brings back a personal memory in one speech that she gave at Old Dominion University in March 2011, exemplifying how Bikini Kill was viewed as a novelty: "A lead singer for a AC/DC cover band come up to me and told me that because I was in a band with two girls we were a novelty act. Two years later his band opened for my new band and I walked up to him and said who's the novelty act now AC/DC cover band" ("Herstory repeats"). Bands formed only by women are sometimes introduced on TV shows or festivals as "all-female bands." This could also be considered sexist if we take into account that all-male bands are never presented like that: "For these musicians, gender was foregrounded in a way that musicians in all-male bands never faced. Certainly, no one ever introduced the Rolling Stones as "an all-male band" (Carson et al. 84). Moreover, as I have explained and illustrated in my overview of the *Rolling Stone*'s special issues, in order to see female musicians at the top of the lists, or to see women being considered as the "best", one must resort to a particular magazine or catalogue that records their work in a separate category. Not only so magazines categorize female musicians on a gender basis, but also research books and/or journals:

> From being under-researched, there is now a wide range of writing on the subject -so much so that in 2000, US girl band Le Tigre chanted from the stage: "Not another book about women in rock!" Yet despite fresh perspectives and new information, there is still a need to document women's musical history, because it is periodically buried. (O'Brien 10)

In the 21st century, women have asked for the same access to education and specialized training without any specific regard to their sexual condition and under the same opportunities as men, calling for respect not as female musicians but as musicians. And, in spite of all the limitations mentioned above, female musicians and composers have widened their options for recognition and many have challenged the musical canons: "A combination of circumstances – inspiration from barrier-breaking role models, the "time being right", easy

access to equipment and gigs, help from boyfriends, and a continued interest in, and support for, new bands from an eager and tolerant audience – elevated these women to an unprecedented level of self-expression in musical performance" (Reddington 46). Girls were mere passive listeners but, step by step, they colonized that male territory where the action was taking place. The best examples are the bands that emerged in the Riot Grrrl movement, which put women's vindications "to the front line" of their concerts, breaking gendered barriers and norms. The band Le Tigre commented on this to explain that "Riot Grrrl as a cultural phenomenon did, and hopefully will continue to make changes in the popular discourse surrounding "women in rock" (or whatever you wanna call it), and has created a lasting international network of feminist promoters, labels, writers, dj's, journalists, musicians, artists, and fans" ("Questions and Answers"). Female musicians want the same attention and recognition that men enjoy, a perception in which gender does not play a relevant role. Women resorted to the social power of music to protest against the cultural and social repression that they feel within gender categorization and standardization. Integrating feminist politics within the poetic lyricism of their music, feminist statements became more heard than ever with the achievements of these bands. Punk ideologies and the agenda and contents of the third wave of feminism became the basic foundation for a revision of norms, expectations and standards that I will try to visualize and explore later with the example of Kathleen Hanna's music production.

5. The Punk Subculture and the Birth of Riot Grrrl

Both punk and the Riot Grrrl movement of the 1990s are important scenarios in which to explore women's vindications in music. Punk's libertarian attitude and transgressive aesthetic opened the way for those women who have an active role in music; later, Riot Grrrl supported punk inclinations and enriched its values with a more precise feminist imprint, using third wave's politics to extend fresh messages in and within the songs.

Chronologically, it is easy to establish the birth of punk music around the 1970s. However, punk is a difficult term to define. It does not only determine the musical fashion of a given time, it also encompasses the aesthetic and cultural movement that accompanied the music production and that somehow changed the system of values that were commonly related to popular music. Trying to define the term "is rather like opening a can of worms" (Blaze 52) and, as Kevin Dunn argues, it is difficult to set the criteria that a band has to meet to be considered punk: "Where does one draw the lines? Is Green Day punk? What about Rancid or Blink-182? Get a dozen punks together in a room, ask them to define punk and you'll get eighteen different answers" (9). Therefore, and given the multiple and assorted definitions and characteristics that try to define the movement, here I have decided to focus on the presentation of its commonly accepted particularities, more so when, eventually, these were very important to understand the birth of the Riot Grrrl movement, which is the main focus of this work.

Riot Girrrl can be understood as the result of girls' nonconformities with the sexist attitudes that some punk musical aspects perpetuated, and, as so, it can be approached as a period, stage or specific experience within a more general spectrum, which would be that of punk music and culture. I believe that it is necessary to walk through these different dimensions, starting from the general to move towards the more specific, finishing with an approximation to Kathleen Hanna and her involvement in punk and Riot Grrrl. In fact, historical overviews of Riot Grrrl experience still designate Kathleen Hanna as "frontwoman and punk icon" (Berman) or "feminist punk pioneer" (Snapes), positioning her as one important figure in punk history. That is why, in the next sections, I travel from punk to Riot Grrrl in order to offer an introductory approach to both movements, providing thus a contextual foundation that will prove, that is my belief, significant for my subsequent analysis of Kathleen Hanna's work.

5.1. The Punk Scene

The term punk has been used since the late 1970s. In December of 1975, *Punk* magazine described the new music that was bringing national attention and which they were able to locate in a specific New York venue (the symbolic CBGB[40]), which seemed to concentrate the epitome of this new energetic music. They celebrated it

[40] Both as a movement and as a musical genre, defining punk has always been a complex task. Reductive definitions seek to show that punk is usually located in a specific geography. However, this is constantly a source for debate over the fact

by coining a new term, "punk," which they defined as "the same term had been used almost a decade earlier to describe '60s underground garage rock" (Raha 11). Most critics agree that there is not a precise band that can be pointed out as the original inspiration for punk as it "is neither a homogeneous 'thing' nor is it reducible to a specific time, location, sound or a select number of vinyl records and live performances" (Furness 10). According to Zack Furness, different and numerous small communities participated in its origin, and that blending of music, identities and artistic spaces led to the development of the new underground subculture[41]:

> The combinations of people, places, cultural practices, social relationships, art and ideas that co-constitute punk are rife with possibilities: creating new kinds of music or reveling in the ecstatic moments at the best shows; forging bonds of groups solidarity and personal identity; carving out non commercial spaces for free expression and the staking out of positions; and pushing people toward a participatory, 'bottom up' view of culture. (10)

The socio-political situation on both sides of the Atlantic brought antiestablishment feelings. Punk became the perfect platform to scream people's non-conformist attitudes out: "In Britain, economic recession, youth unemployment, post-Second World War debt bondage, impending Tatcherism, widespread discontent and restlessness were the breeding ground, in America, punk was fed by the post-Vietnam era, characterized by the Watergate scandal, Reaganomics and general disenchantment" (Blaze 52).

As a matter of fact, when the indie and punk subcultures detonated in the United States, the American people had seen political demonstrations in favor of enforcing legal rights for African Americans (in the context of The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and the Black Power movement that derived from it) and also witnessed their compatriots' participation in a war that they did not support in Vietnam (1955-1975). During those years, America was undergoing the worst inflation and recession since the Great Depression. Gerald Ford and then Jimmy Carter dealt with high rates of unemployment and a slow growth in the economy, what led

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of its origin, whether it began in London in 1976 or a year before in New York City. Punk was indeed intricate in its generational and geographical origin. In America, however, it is conventionally placed in New York City. The CBGB, an iconic venue that is still celebrated as the birth of punk culture in the US, is relatively pictured as the mythic place where punk was originated. Richard Hell, who was one of the protagonist of that inaugural period in the 1970s, explores that romantic view in a more penetrating way: "In retrospect, it seems like everything we did has been colored by the way the music has come to be perceived now, but that's not the way things really were – "punk" is too limited a description for what happened there from 1974 through 1977. On one hand the place was more mundane and half-assed than it's typically pictured as having been. There were plenty of ordinary derivative bands that could have been found anywhere at the time. But on the other hand we had conjured into existence, out of imagination, this reality in which we were the representatives, the sound and appearance and behavior, of the environment we'd located at CBGB. This was the essence of CBGB then and there – that we, with our rejected and extreme sets of beliefs and values and intentions, had managed to materialize an environment in which we were not outside, but at home ourselves. Where we were the positive standards of being, rather than examples of failure, depravity, criminality, and ugliness" (Hell 149-150).

[41] Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson define culture as the "level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life, and give expressive form to their social and material life-experience" (10). And, linked to this, Dick Hebdige mentions the power of style to challenge the hegemony (17). Those social values and norms help me explain a second pivotal term in my work: subculture. Hebdige says that a subculture "tends to be presented as an independent organism functioning outside the larger social, political and economic contexts" (76). In this dissertation, I use the term subculture, and also counterculture, as I consider punk as a movement that opposes the rules and values of a society, representing challenges, disruption, transgression and noise.

to a feeling of exasperation and boredom within the population. In relation with music, the MTV was born in 1981, and four years later, the PMRC (Parents Music Resource Center) was created, urging "Parental Advisory" approval for albums (rock music as an example) in order to have a control on the albums that youngsters were purchasing, to avoid violent themes, aggressive lyrics and allusions to drugs or sex. Maria Raha explains how most singer-songwriters felt repressed during the 1970s and their music rarely mentioned political issues or the dark side of mainstream American culture. According to her, the birth of punk in that period was **"**a direct reaction not only to the banal soft rock sensations but also a response to this hyped and highly commodified hard rock scene and the insipid heavy rotation of the soft rock catalog on radio" (Raha 7).

Mainly (but not exclusively) the West coast of America and Britain came to be the main and most influential spots for the punk counterculture. It is well supported that this underground movement in America originated especially in Los Angeles and New York; nevertheless, the West coast comes to be the focal point for the counterculture "…in San Francisco and Los Angeles, the DIY ethic was contagious. By 1977, West Coast bands like the Screamers, the Weirdos, the Dils, and the infamous Germs had formed, and both cities housed scenes that were much more organic, spontaneous, and youthful than New York's" (Raha 13). Indeed, New York is usually seen as a place where punk was more linked to sponsoring and art (with the local recording industries taking important names at the time like the Ramones, Bob Dylan or Patti Smith), whereas Los Angeles resembled London's spontaneous and rebellious spirit.

In fact, punk in England was more energetic, persuasive and direct than the American version of punk, reaching the mainstream discourse faster and becoming a real threat for the established and traditional British culture: "While America's turbulent Vietnam politics had given the country a political hangover (and leftist politics were deeply tied in with the reviled hippie generation), London was struggling with a widening class gap that informed both the feminist and punk movements" (Raha 65). The 1970s were depressing years in Britain and different political and economic policies led to the 1979 "Winter of Discontent[42]". In part, Margaret Thatcher's victory in the general elections of 1979 was originating from these circumstances. The subsequent decades would also be turbulent years that historically would be known as "Tatcherism[43]". The economic crises stroke the island heavily, the unemployment rates were high, and trade unions started strikes all over the country. People became discontent with an education system that they did not approve of and that would not guarantee employment for young people. Social protests were at their peak, but, at the same time, this decade brought productive years for music. In 1975, London had been turned into the epicentre of punk, and the Sex Pistols a main influence within counterculture. In Britain, people used the first wave of punk as a shelter to express their nonconformity with the political and social systems of the decade. Punk music was the perfect means to verbalize their impotence and irritation and punk's emphasis on rebellion and individualism made young people feel powerful and free: "Some way for the young people to energize themselves and voice their feelings was

[42] A strike movement that occurred in UK during 1978 and 1979. Workers stood against the Labour Government's attempt to cut their wage increases.

[43] An ideology and form of governance named after Margaret Thatcher, Conservative leader and Prime Minister of UK from 1979 to 1990.

needed, and this is where punk found its foothold" (Reddington 6). During those years, youngsters could foresee "no future"[44] and remained tied to a non-promising time of nothingness ahead, feeling isolated and outraged about the mainstream culture in which they were living. Worldwide, the new punk community allowed young people to belong, to feel part of a social group with which they could feel identified: "Punks are in a predicament: being a punk means you define yourself against society as an individual, but it also means that you define yourself as being part of a group, adhering to community standards. But the mix of authentic individuality and communal solidarity is a rough one" (Duncombe 68). This first wave was, in a way, about forging a community for support and acceptance as a basic foundation between the participants. Music was the common joint. Punk was also an opportunity to break bonds with the inherited establishment, as Marianne Joan Elliott-Said, better known as Poly Styrene, from X-Ray Spex, punk band from the first generation (1976-1979), explains:

> The great thing about punk was that everything was independent. Before that there was only big promoters, there was no room for you. Before punk there was only the bourgeois life of other musicians; it seemed like they were very grand, reminiscent of classical musicians of the aristocracy of the French revolution period. They were getting married into aristocratic families and they were buying stately homes. At the time it was a bit boring. I was more excited to see these slightly wilder shows. (Robb 280)

If the birth of punk music was geographically diverse and convoluted, but a shared central perception about the socio-political situation was noticeable, the same complexity but with solid concurrences can be found when talking about the stylistic, aesthetical or musical description of punk. Punks valued innovative expression more than instrumental or vocal proficiency. In terms of musical mastery, no limits were set for vocal, instrumental skills and style, and this is one of the things that best defines punk (as it helped create that atmosphere of approval). As Richard Hell, bassist in the proto-punk band Television and bassist and lead vocals in The Heartbrakers once said: "Half the beauty of rock and roll is that "anyone can do it" in the sense that it's not about being a virtuoso but about just being plugged in in a certain way, just having an innocent instinct and a lot of luck" (Hell 35). Or as Poly Styrene herself remembers: "I liked the idea that you could just go out and play. Basically they were not that good! But I realized it didn't have to be so polished. It could be rawer" (Robb 179). The figure below, published in the *Sideburns* zine in 1977, explains how to play the three main chords on a guitar. Symbolically, it shows the level of proficiency that was being requested to start playing in a band[45].

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[44] The Sex Pistols' song "God Save the Queen" would be turned into punk's elemental anthem. The lines "There's no future/In England's dreaming/…/no future for you/…/no future for me" from their studio album *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols* (1977) would conventionally evoke punk's rejection of norms.

[45] That simplicity and straightforwardness have been always a trademark of popular music, from country music to punk, but all the way through rock and roll. Three chords and the truth is a popularly quoted expression that was used first by country singer Harlan Howard in the 1950s to define country and western music. It talks about simplicity and authenticity in a straightforward manner. In the television series *Vinyl* (Cohen et al.), episode number eight, written by Riccardo DiLoreto and Michael Mitnick and directed by Jon S. Baird, we can see a fictional representation of that simple elaboration that can define certain popular music. Meaningfully entitled "E.A.B.", the episode shows how character Lester Grimes (Ato Essandoh) teaches three basic chords that outline popular music (from blues to rock and roll all through pop) to the boys in the band Nasty Bits. The show follows the troubled days of a record executive in the 1970s, when the city of New York is navigating through the change from classic rock & roll to punk music. The Nasty Bits are a fictional band discovered by

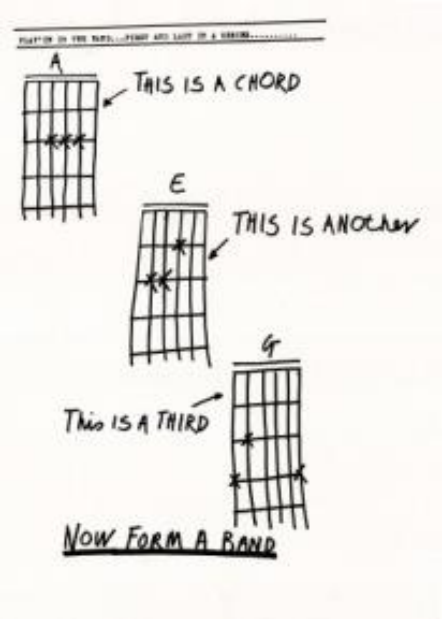

Fig. 15. *Sideburns* zine 1977.

Punk showed that it was not necessary to verify proficiency or mastery when playing an instrument or vocal training for singing to produce music and perform: "Musical competence, gender, style and content were arbitrary; the audience was expected to be open-minded" (Reddington 41). Both musicians and the audience had that in mind and the expectations were set in accordance with this philosophy: musically, punk was characterized by the use of fast and aggressive rhythms; songs were brief and they evoked immediacy and urgency, usually based on a simple combination of chords. In line with punk's music style, the language employed was genuine, expressive and subversive, an important factor that contributed to punk's success:

> the punks were not only directly *responding* to increasing joblessness, changing moral standards, the rediscovery of poverty, the Depression, etc., they were *dramatizing* what had come to be called 'Britain's decline' by constructing a language which was, in contrast to the prevailing rhetoric of the Rock Establishment, unmistakably relevant and down to earth (hence the swearing, the references to 'fat hippies', the rags, the lumpen poses). (Hebdige 87)

one of the assistants to Richie Finestra (Bobby Carnavale), the aforementioned record executive. The Nasty Bits symbolize the wavering towards a punk attitude on stage. In the first episode, Finestra has an epiphany while attending a concert by the glam rock band The New York Dolls (for many, the antecedent of the punk movement) at the Mercer Arts Center, which, by the end of the episode collapses (that happened in real life and The New York Dolls were a usual show at the Mercer, but the collapse never happened during one of their concerts). After this, Finestra is convinced that he has to change the route of his business and The Nasty Bits is his bet. For the project, he hires Lester Grimes as a producer. In episode number eight, The Nasty Bits are creatively blocked in the studio and Lester Grimes teaches them how all popular music is founded on those three chords: E, A and B. He explains that "Everything has a foundation. Shakespeare sonnet, bookcase, the Empire fucking State Building." And then, with them three chords, all in a roll, he plays "Maybellene" by Chuck Berry, "The Twist" by Chubby Checker, "Tell Me What I Say" by Ray Charles, "In the Summertime" by Mungo Jerry, "Travellin' Band" by Creedence Clearwater Revival, and a blues song which becomes key in the episode, since "Woman Like You" is an original by Lester Grimes himself. He finishes his explanation by stating: "That's a skeleton."

The punks left rhetorical terms behind and opted for a more current and tangible language which would be instrumental and more efficient for their attempt to express resentment and anger. Within all the chaos that the punk subculture entailed, punks were able to communicate disorder through lyrics, which were usually understood as a potential opportunity to target political issues and social conscience. In *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life,* Kevin Dunn mentions the plurality of political perspectives within punk and argues that this movement is special because it empowers people and it ends the alienating feeling that was common in those years: "Why does punk continue to remain so vibrant across the globe? Because, for four decades, punk has offered individuals resources for participation and access in the face of the alienating process of modern life. At its core, DIY punk provides the opportunity for disalienation and personal empowerment, and *that* is a deeply political act" (28). Many shared this idea and they used the political act that music could transfer to vindicate revision and fight against the establishment.

Carrie Brownstein, for instance, explains that music for the women involved in Sleater-Kinney became a fitting platform to address the political matters of the time: "We are a political band and a rock band and a punk band . . . Certainly now I think if you have a chance to stand on stage with a microphone, and you have a chance to reach people or talk to people, there's really no reason *not* to be political . . . To not have it at all reflect what's going on outside the doors of a venue, that's bizarre to me" (Ryan 39). This is the case of many other punk bands that used music and stages to exhibit protest and vindication. A popular and prevailing example could be that of the Sex Pistols and their lyric advocating for anarchy in the United Kingdom:

> Anarchy for the U.K. it's coming sometime and maybe
> I give a wrong time, stop a traffic line
> Your future dream is a shopping scheme
> Cos I, I wanna be anarchy!
> In the city
> ("Anarchy in the U.K.", *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols*, 1977)

Or The Slits' rejection of the feminine standards that gave definition to girls in the following manner:

> Typical girls are sensitive
> Typical girls are emotional
> Typical girls are cruel and bewitching
> But she's a femme fatale
> Typical girls stand by their man
> Typical girls are really swell
> Typical girls learn how to act shocked
> Typical girls don't rebel
> ("Typical Girls", *Cut*, 1979)

Lyrics, thus, turned into an important and aggressive demanding element in punk music, always to be understood within the extensive cultural movement that aimed at rejecting authority with a loud voice. The project of unifying anti-establishment music with dissident lyrics reached millions of different people all over the world, producing a multifaceted experience that shaped punk into a complex cultural expression that succeeded in connecting those who were under the same conditions. Some songs came close to have the impact of national anthems, shaking British and American societies. In any case, punk has to be understood as more than just the music. Its philosophy and the extensive culture that was incorporated to the movement shaped forthcoming aesthetics, music and countercultures.

For example, the DIY[46] ethic is closely linked to punk culture and it helped punks to put political ideas into practice, find alternative strategies to empower themselves, and create modes of cultural production: "Do-it-yourself (DIY) culture describes a form of cultural practice that is often pitched against more mainstream, mass-produced and commodified forms of cultural production. It often finds itself aligned with an anti-hegemonic ideology focused around aesthetic and lifestyle politics" (Bennett and Guerra 1). Punk culture meant an artistic burst that allowed passive, inactive or isolated people to start new projects in order to express their worries and discontents. It was all about originality, anti-establishment attitude and cooperation, whether in form of music or other artistic expressions, including the mere aesthetic identification, or the creation of a new way of communication: the fanzines, for instance. Steve Kent (guitarist in the British Oi! band The Business) comments: "the important message I picked up on was the DIY aspect of punk, the whole attitude which was: form your own group, make your own magazine, create your own lifestyle. You don't need the status quo to make your own way. Also to a certain extent the anti-establishment attitude" (Robb 312). The DIY ethic radically transformed the way in which people performed their involvement in punk culture, and that attitude and the expressions that resulted from this practice contemplated and mirrored that ethic. In fact, then, the DIY ethic articulated the way in which punks innovated in fashion in fresh ways that had never been seen or employed before. Many teenagers gathered in shops (as Malcom McLaren and Vivienne Westwood's famous shop "Sex" in London) were they exchange influences and created their own fashion style:

> At a time when clothes were mundane, punks were wearing layers of dayglo fabrics, jackets with slogans spray painted on the back, clothes ripped and safety-pinned back together, t-shirts with provocative images, patches with swastikas and/or the Union Jack, or any variety of styles mashed together. Hairstyles included Mohawks, shaved heads, dreadlocks, spikes, and dyed or disheveled hair. (Dunn 10)

[46] The Do-It-Yourself (usually referred to as DIY) term comprises the process of designing, creating, or modifying any item or particular object by oneself, without a professional's help.

Fig. 16. Siouxsie of Siouxsie and the Banshees wearing a swastika, 1976.
Photo by Ray Stevenson/Rex Shutterstock.

These aesthetical options were very important for the shaping of punk (as it will be later for Riot Grrrl), contributing to the self-identity building processes of those individuals engaged on the movement, at the same time that it was helping to create a collective identity. In the following quote, the reference pertains to the aforementioned London scene, but the general idea pervades in different locations and experiences: "Punk was more than music. A clutch of clothes stores and stalls were serving as key points of inspiration. The shops served as meeting places, somewhere to exchange influences, and in the case of the Sex shop threw up radical and dangerous new ideas in a series of brilliant clothes designs" (Robb 99). Punk's style is recognized for being the opposite to what the status quo of the time was determining, and, in a way, that is the key to understand punk's impact. The anti-establishment character of this subculture was matched by the new rule-breaking style that their practitioners were displaying: shaved heads, colorful hairstyles, leather jackets and pants, torn tights, piercings and badges were some of the most common distinctive aesthetical items that identified punks. This iconoclastic style was combined with the use of irreverent and controversial symbols with political connotations, such as the swastika, in an attempt to indicate a full rejection of previous generations: "The objects were there, available, but were *used* by the groups in the construction of distinctive styles . . . And this frequently involved (as we try to show in some of the selections in our 'ethnographic' section) subverting and transforming these things, from their given meaning and use, to other meanings and uses" (Hall and Jefferson 54). As I explain later, this stress on freedom of choice was valuable as a push for women's participation in punk, since the beauty conventions and the dressing codes within the movement were inexistent and everyone was free and committed to self-identity. The invocation of this insolent attitude could be directed towards the revision and modification of previous limiting roles.

The groundbreaking characteristics of punk aesthetic, together with the revolutionary imprint of the songs and the political standpoints that came with it made of punk a unique territory to amplify the voices of the unheard. Following Hebdige's words, "punk did more than upset the wardrobe. It undermined every relevant

discourse" (108). In this sense, women used the discourse that punk music and its aesthetic encompassed as a vehicle for change, an opportunity to celebrate female experience, and as the perfect time to make a strong claim towards a visible spot on stage.

5.1.1. Gender in Punk Music

The punk counterculture was a compilation of artistic expressions that supplemented the music scene, turning it into a relevant and unique blast of cultural activity. It united people from different backgrounds; divisions were not made in terms of origin, class or gender. Anyone could join in and show their piece or, at least, that is what punk's ethic proclaimed. Brian Young's words, singer and guitarist in Rudi[47], attest to this statement: "Punk brought together people from all sections of the community, all classes and creeds, and what mattered was not where you were from, or what food you kicked with (in local parlance), but what music you liked" (Robb 306). Analyzing the scene from a feminist perspective, women did form part of this community[48], and they also rejected cultural norms and traditional notions (most linked to their gender), contributing to the shaping of punk and of the alternative and underground music scene. Women in punk broke all the beauty taboos, set a template for future female musicians, and redefined what it meant to be a female artist. In general, punk for women became an opportunity to jump over the limitations and obstacles that they found when participating in other genres.

As explained before in this dissertation, punk's lack of proficiency requirements and professional command contributed to provide more opportunities for those girls that sought a chance to start a band and claim a place on stage and beyond it. Alice Bag, for instance, admits that she was not an expert when she started playing music, but that it never meant a problem as long as she was free to express herself: "I have to admit that whether playing bass or keyboards, I had very limited skills, but that was never an issue. There was no pressure to perform on a more professional level with any of these bands. I, in turn, felt liberated, free to be inventive" (Bag 347). Actually, punk was based on authenticity, experimental expressions, freedom of action and attitude. Bands like Bikini Kill would prove this right. As I explained before, the mastery of an instrument was never a requirement and some may agree with American musician and leader of The Pretenders Chrissie Hynde when she says that musicianship killed punk "because as soon as they learned how to play, they couldn't

[47] Rudi is a symbolic example of the range and complexity of punk music. Rudi was one of the punk-rock bands that stirred the music scene in Belfast in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The controversies with the political situation of Northern Ireland and the quality and energetic determination of bands such as The Outcasts or The Undertones, all in connection thanks to Terri Hooley's label Good Vibrations, is another illustrating example of how punk went beyond the symbolic CBGB's or London in the 1970s.

[48] When I refer to the concept of community in order to represent the people involved in or influenced by punk culture, I am aware of the complexities and the reductionist approach. I also acknowledge the specific characteristics, differentiations and contrasts between the different decades and diverse geographical areas, from Australia to Northern Ireland, all the way through Scandinavia, the Basque Country, the two coasts of the United States, Colombia, London and/or Manchester. Yet, I want to preserve a general approach in which I am able to visualize and represent the broader picture of punk.

play punk anymore" (Robb 149). In this sense, women (many of whom could not afford a musical education or did not have plenty of time to practice the notes) experimented a broader, more explicit freedom of action.

Besides, the unconventional and insurgent philosophy of punk let women display a more aggressive or sexual demeanour on stage. The punk aesthetic was characteristic for its revolutionary appearance and "offered women a chance to reject the 1970s pastel femininity of blue eyeshadow, flared jeans and flouncy tiered dresses that had been *de rigueur,* and consequently many entered the ranks of punk bands via a fashion route" (O'Brien 112). Thanks to the new fashion codes of punk, women challenged the traditional representations of femininity, leave behind the beauty standards that pictured them as polite and feminine on stage, and, consequently, they find a possibility to encapsulate and exhibit a more rebellious and iconoclastic bent and enactment. They did also get criticism and vehement reactions from a non-fully supportive male audience. Ari Up, singer of the English band The Slits, states that punk aesthetic was something that caused examination and judgments because of the fact that they were women:

> They never did try to harass me sexually. That guy with the knife was not harassment, it was a violent outbreak. For the boys to do punk was just about acceptable, but because we were female it was different. At the time women usually wore mini-skirts with nice tights and high heel, and it was terrible for us to wear them with Doc Martens and torn-up tights and torn-up shirts. (Robb 320)

Fig. 17. Viv Albertine, Alexandra Palace, 1980. Photo by David Corio.

Just like Ari Up, another member of the group, guitarist Viv Albertine (see figure 17) recalls how the way The Slits would dress and act on stage would upset people, especially men: "We'd be dressed half in bondage fetish gear, half in Doc Martens, hair all out there, scowling at everybody. It freaked people out, particularly middle-aged men" (O' Brien 121). By the same token, Scottish singer and activist Annie Lenox challenged the cultural

stereotyping of femininity, and, by engaging on a gender-play for her public dimension, she refined a new and fresh feminine image on stage (see figure 18).

Fig. 18. Annie Lennox, "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)" video clip, 1983.

Wearing a suit and short hair, Lennox's autonomy showed that clothing does not always correspond to a particular gender and that women can be in control of their image, which does not have to follow the established canons: "Her [Annie Lennox's] suit, her cropped hair, can thus be interpreted as a statement of business, female artistic control and disco style. As a woman conventionally defined by her body, her wearing of the male suit masked her femininity but, rather than constituting a denial of her identity, it was an assertion of autonomy" (Whiteley 125). Women like them were confrontational and subverted the traditional male sexual fantasies, using their presence and style to make political statements. This kind of gender display and, in general, women's contribution to punk upset some. In fact, despite the subversive, revolutionary and progressive features of punk culture, with its references to radical politics – famous for making people feel uncomfortable – and pliable standards, the presence of women on stage provoked the same sore reaction within punk culture:

> In general terms, the punk and indie world is littered with females who have not only withstood punk's intolerance toward women, but who have twisted societal notions of femininity in knots. Even in punk, a culture hell-bent on making people uncomfortable by its behavior and appearance, the very presence of women on stage frequently caused discomfort in the scene itself. (Raha xiv)

In her memoir *The Spitboy Rule. Tales of a Xicana in a Female Punk Band,* Michelle Cruz Gonzales, drummer in the female punk band Spitboy (California, 1990s), recalls how sexism and harassment were common in their shows (42) and that "the men in the scene somehow made it clear that we would not get the same respect that they gave each other" (23), as Spitboy was considered a challenging band and a "novelty" (23). In one interview for *The Guardian*, Viv Albertine's evocation of her personal experiences as a musician and a woman become also an illustrative example: "It was so dangerous to be a punk and female. And the way we looked and acted made it more dangerous . . . We had to be together because it was too risky not to. That took its toll. We fell apart because of the pressures we got as women, for sure" (Albertine). Her bandmate Ari Up also states how The Slits were protected by their friends while on tour: "They were really great, nothing but fun. As great as Don

was, and as punk as he was, when it came to women and managing us the chauvinism was definitely coming through" (Robb 338). These women had experienced these sexist and misogynist episodes within the punk culture, not outside of it. This is paradoxical at least when we talk about a subculture that was presumably embracing a forthcoming, unbiased and anti-normative ethic. Still, women were being negatively scrutinized not for whatever fault or lack of quality but, again, because they were under suspicion as women, because of their gender.

As Lucy O' Brien has interpreted, punk "was not an easy place to be if you were a woman" (114) and, despite the scene being more open for women, they were still perceived as objects to be seen and their capacity to enjoy an active and visible role was still questioned and censured. Being a woman in punk or forming an all-girl band was really a political statement, as gender was still a barrier for some women, affecting their possibilities and their access to visibility and recognition. Hereby, the notion that punk music is a masculinized category where gender roles come pre-packaged and always already intensely distinct can be considered up for debate.

Even though punk music has been usually distinguished by its revisionist and alternative spirit, some scholars, critics and protagonists have argued that, in fact, punk has been mostly marked and represented by a certain male configuration that has made it extremely difficult to set up a powerful role-model for those women who were committing to the scene. The number of women involved in the production, creation and diffusion of punk music, whether as singers, songwriters, instrumentalists or sound assistants is significant enough to affirm that women have played —and still play— an important role in punk music. However, if one takes a look at academic books on punk music, he or she may find large quantities of narratives that praise the Sex Pistols or the Ramones and their indisputable participation in the scenes of London and New York respectively. In other words, sometimes, the standards that have defined the chronology and history of punk music and culture are always established through the symbolic representation of all-male bands like the ones mentioned above, thus becoming authoritative representations that give meaning to the defining concepts, leaving aside (or silencing) a variety of undervalued but powerful bands that would have exhibited the rich and complex heterogeneity of punk music:

> Punk was very supportive . . . When punk died, the female energy died as well. That's why it never happens now. The Slits never get written about in general. It's the Rolling Stones who get the credit! The female chapter is missing completely from the history of rock and that's not the reality of what punk was. There was that open window for women to be themselves. (Robb 385)

Again, Ari Up, in the words quoted above, denounces the lack of what she calls "the female chapter" in the history of rock. Indeed, usually, the women that are mentioned in (academic research or) historical recollections are sometimes mentioned by comparison or parallel to male standards. For instance, Patti Smith is usually described in relation to her androgynous appearance more than because of her music, and Courtney Love and

Nancy Spungen[49] are seen as interferences in Kurt Cobain and Sid Vicious' works and lives, the ones to blame for their partners' downfall. Women's presence in the early stages of the punk movement was unquestionable, and narratives on Patti Smith's influence — defined as the "godmother of punk" (Raha 16) —, or London bands such as The Slits and Siouxsie and the Banshees are at hand but, broadly speaking and when scanning in detail the records of the period, the different scenes in which the development of punk took ground seems always to have been just boy-ruled, a fact that got reinforced in the following generations, with scenes like the hardcore's that developed in the late 1980s.

On top of that, when women's presence in punk is recorded and acknowledged, it is sometimes addressed as a separate category (as I explained before that it also happened with the labels "women in rock" or "women in music"). For many punks, a woman in punk was a 'punkette', a term used to undervalue women's merit. Zillah Ashworth, from the 1970s gothic anarcho-punk band Rubella Ballet, explains it: "They changed the word "punk rocker" to "punkette" for girls. None of us were "punkettes." They tried to devalue the whole thing by trying to split it into punk girls and punk men, whereas everybody was just in the same scene…" (Reddington 51). Hence, with the suffix –ette added to the word punk, the new noun becomes a marked word to distinguish women's acts from men's. Another example of how this designation was used can be found in Victor Bockris' words on Patti Smith: "So she was really a punk, a punkette, and it was very, very effective. The audience was completely blown away. Nobody had ever seen anything like it" (McNeil and McCain 112). Punk gets established as the norm and standard, whereas punkette evolves into a subcategory, an exceptionality, a variant. The Other.

In sum, women in the 1970s and 1980s found in punk an opportunity to participate in the music scene. However, punk, often defined as countercultural and open for everyone regardless of origin, class or gender, was also a slippery territory for women, who got more and more negative feedback from a still sexist audience and from some of the musicians involved in it as well. In *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk,* Danny Fields speaks about the double-crossing of punk. He explains that, even if this counterculture was about revolution, liberation and equality, men were enjoying gigs while women remained silent, serving and preparing dinner for them (McNeil and McCain 46). This was not always the case, as I have explained before, and many women were active participants in punk music. Still, again, when analyzing women's participation in the scene, it is more probable to find difficulties to get documentation and valid records than when the objective is a man. Also, those women who have been validated, enjoy, sometimes, that visibility by paying the toll of being marked by connection, this is, being juxtaposed to male colleagues. Challenges and difficulties for women did not stop there.

At the beginning of the 1980s, punk music developed into something more restrictive in L. A. due to the progression of hardcore, a more physical scene characterized by faster and more aggressive sounds. This "produced more gendered experiences of the punk scene" (Downes, "Riot Grrrl" 16) and, in a way, all these characteristics were just a mere reproduction of the 1980s patriarchal attitudes and tendencies, particularly noticeable in the West Coast of the United States in form of hyper-masculine bands (Dunn 40). The scene

[49] Even though Spungen was not a musician, I believe that it can be used as one more example of the reductionism that history has applied to some female figures in the music scenes.

became white-straight-male-oriented and many women who felt unsafe resorted to feminist strategies as alternative escapes. Due to the aggressiveness of the scene, some people in the audiences, mainly women, were driven away and left the concerts: "Sometimes people would try to bully their way to the front of the stage by hitting or pushing; girls were especially vulnerable, because many of us wore high heels, and a hard shove could knock a girl over" (Bag 234). Many were openly opposed to the orientation that the scene was acquiring, reclaiming equality. Based on a strong sense of community, they tried to resist that hierarchical and sexist atmosphere. In the documentary *Don't Need You: The Herstory of Riot Grrrl*, punk historian Mark Andersen evokes one example that illustrates the male dominated nature into which the punk scene had turned in the early-mid 1980s: "I can tell all short of stories about outrageous examples of the male domination of the D.C. hardcore scene. One example, literally at one D.C. hardcore show in the summer of 1992, the audience, a.k. the man in the audience began to chant a sophomoric slogan 'girls are poop'" (*Don't Need You*). Andersen talks here about Washington D.C. and Bag was talking before about L.A. The two coasts were apparently submerging in these cultural and social circumstances in the 1980s that I defined at the beginning of this paragraph. In fact, women did populate Washington D.C.'s scenes, but as a result of the hyper aggressiveness of hardcore, it became a male thing with little female input. Yet, the non-presence of women in hardcore was not because they did not want to participate in the scene, but because of the scene's hostile and belligerent atmosphere: "For the genre's aesthetics and place of origin - dissatisfied youth living in the shadow of an urban scene – it developed an acutely violent streak. And, once aggression became commonplace, the new scene didn't forest equal gender involvement" (Raha 115). Hanna herself admits that some punk environments were dominated by men mainly, and women did not feel comfortable in there:

> We would walk into environments that were very straight male dominated and flows very unwelcoming to anybody that wasn't a straight white male. We would say that we wanted to transform the space and we wanted to make this a space where women feel not only welcome but that they enjoy themselves, which was a radical concept actually in the underground punk scene in the 1990s. (Hanna, "Herstory repeats")

Women's willingness to take part in the punk movement was subsequently resolved with a negative response of alienation and rejection if you were not straight and white and a male. Consequently, women gathered and acted on it by starting a network of feminists whose activism encompassed the creation of fanzines[50] and the

[50] I have used this concept before and I think that it is important to try to define it before I go on. Stephen Duncombe expresses the difficulty on finding a definition for zines and fanzines; "*but what are they?* that's the first question I'm usually asked when I start to talk about zines" (6) to conclude that zines are "noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves" (10) and, however difficult it is, he also provides a sort of definition for fanzines: "these are no doubt the largest and oldest category of zines; one might well argue that all zines are fanzines. Simply, fanzines are publications devoted to discussing the intricacies and nuances of a cultural genre. Within fanzines there are distinct subcategories" (15). However, still, the popular use interchanges both terms.

production of music, combining artistic expressions with feminist theories. Kathleen Hanna frankly admits the following: concerning punk and sexism, "I felt totally shut out of punk rock and I feel like feminism needs to enter into that conversation, so in a way it was like two different kind of subculture groups that formed around certain ideas of identity merging together" ("Kathleen Hanna, Sara"). Therefore, many girls like her started to incorporate feminist theories to punk music, a merging that not only would challenge the scene but also shake patriarchy. As a result, the Riot Grrrl movement emerged in the 1990s: "Girls across America were beginning to question how far feminism had taken them and riot grrrl exploded from out of their frustration" (Laing). These women wanted to create a solid and effective network that could gather and connect different girls and women from different places in order to start a platform that, blending feminism and music, would be functional for their voices to be heard in matters that exceeded the music realm. Combining punk music with feminist philosophies, consequently, the Riot Grrrl phenomenon changed the way in which American society contemplated women's presence in punk music. Besides, it opened the way up for women's future participation.

5.2. The Riot Grrrl Movement

Riot Grrrl cannot be understood without being read in connection to punk music, and that is why I have started by approaching punk before getting to this point. As Cazz Blaze argues, the relationship between 1970s punk and Riot Grrrl "has incited a certain amount of semantic argument between the few writers there are on the subject" (59) and, in fact, after the punk subculture succeeded in shifting the music scene in the late 1970s, a closer examination to women's participation in punk music (and more precisely to the roots of the Riot Grrrl movement) caught also the academic interest. Just to show a bit of that interest, I could mention a few recent research works on the topic that I have been using in my work: *Cinderella's Big Score. Women of the Punk and Indie Underground* by Maria Raha and *The Lost Women of Rock Music. Female Musicians of the Punk Era* written by Helen Reddington. Both make a tribute to women who have shaped punk and the independent, alternative and/or underground scenes in the United States and Britain. Some other more specific productions (i.e. *Girls To The Front. The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution* or *Riot Grrrl. Revolution Girl Style Now!*) focus their effort on recounting the story of Riot Grrrl.

Rooted in Washington D.C.'s musical scene of the 1990s, the Riot Grrrl movement was characterized by girls' involvement in the production of music and the writing of fanzines, sharing a strong feeling of activism and a collaborative spirit. Thus, in this section, I try to show how the Riot Grrrl movement influenced American girls in the 1990s and how music became a relevant element that provided guidance to women in order to achieve a proper niche in art, culture and feminism.

To put it in context, the feminist movement was becoming more and more complicated in the 1990s. The struggles and actions that different generations of feminists had launched and developed in the first half of the 20th century, but especially in the first decades of the second half (1960s and 1970s), seemed now shadowed by the passing of time and the political circumstances of the 1990s. Since the 1970s, Adrienne Rich

had contributed to the fresh perspectives that were projecting feminism in literary and cultural analysis, declaring, at the same time, that some of the goals that feminists had pursued twenty years before were still pending. In an interview that she gave in 1991, she said what follows about the situation of the feminist movement at the time in which she was being questioned:

> One of the things that has been growing in the women's movement in this country – and again, in a society like this it can't, it doesn't happen easily, and it doesn't happen overnight – is the consciousness that we aren't a homogenous movement, that we are a multi-ethnic movement, that women's experiences across the board are different, even though we share common female experiences. (Gelpi 266)

The Riot Grrrl movement can be approached within this paradigm in which feminism has consciously diversified its interests and strategies. Within the realm of this movement, girls expressed their insecurity and framed their search for identity. To begin with, it can be said that Riot Grrrl was all about empowerment and vindication against sexism in punk and, by extension, in the dominant culture. During the 1980s, gender differences and sexism within the Washington D.C.'s punk community (mostly male in protagonism and accent) became more and more manifest and those girls who enjoyed alternative punk music and attended punk concerts were commonly pushed to the sides as coat stands, as I have explained before, or they would get insulted and rejected, asked to stay out: "In a subculture that congratulated itself for presenting an alternative, in a realm that should have been a refuge, they found more of the same crap" (Marcus 92). The mistreatment that girls had to bear in concerts resembled the way in which women had been traditionally and were still socially treated. Girls wanted to be active participants in the punk scene and, in the 1990s, some of them took action and started what will be defined by many as the definite revolution in popular music, the Riot Grrrl movement:

> Tired, also, of encountering situations where their participation was limited by male contemporaries jostling for attention and undermining female expression by casting women in the role of follower and followed, the ideal of female collaboration and a stated desire to function as a community of women united against male oppression in all areas attracted hundreds of girls on the punk scene who no longer tolerated this shortchange. (Corrigan 150)

Geographically located and rooted in 1990's Olympia[51], the movement started as a group of girls who met in the weekends to discuss about their lives, play music, organize performances, share their artistic interests and

[51] The capital of the state of Washington, Olympia, is the exact place where the Riot Grrrl movement originally started. Julia Downes states that it was from within this politicized punk community that women began to voice their contradictory experiences of feeling disenfranchised from their own alternative communities ("Riot Grrrl" 17), whereas Nadine Monem suggests that Riot Grrrl "might have officially started in Olympia, Washington during the early 1990s, but it had hundreds of beginnings in bedrooms, classrooms, bars and clubs all over North America and Europe" (7). These meetings and gatherings were mainly local but, as Monem suggests, the significance was how it grew bigger, (mainly thanks to the

ruminate possible political actions. The significant part of Riot Grrrl is that girls, who were usually targeted as consumers and not role models, became producers and agents at last: "One of the biggest shake-ups riot grrrl initiated was the influx of girls becoming cultural producers for the first time" (Chidgey 114). Their production covered a wide range of artistic domains, even though music was the most important part of it and the one that I aim at analyzing in this work:

> It was about music - being in bands, not watching them or being groupies - but it was also about finding a voice through writing, via fanzines; and it was about a political voice: anger about society's treatment of women, with domestic abuse, rape, sexuality, the need for safer streets, abortion rights and equal pay among the issues. (Barton)

As Laura Barton has stated in the text quoted above, there were other ways of channelling feminist ideas that these women in the 1990s did not hesitate to use. From handmade tapes and fanzines to pamphlets and clothing, these girls approached feminism from a more active, collective, artistic and cultural angle and they set a fresh, vivid model for future activism. In those first reunions, girls talked about what it meant to be female in a patriarchal culture and they discussed personal dreams which were really distant from the preconceptions conventionally assigned to traditional femininity, such as becoming tireless housekeepers, wives and mothers. For them, these meetings were a kind of therapy against the depressions and anxieties that they suffered during their adolescence. In many cases, and for different reasons, these girls had not been able to enjoy their childhood, so getting involved with other girls who have suffered similarly made them feel confident and, for most of them, the frightening word *girl* was turning into a word that adopted positive meanings related to concepts such as sisterhood, collaboration and support. As a matter of fact, both the third wave of feminism and Riot Grrrl made a strong emphasis on the word "girl" and reclaimed a place for those youngsters who could not find identification in previous feminist waves. In an interview for *The New York Times* (2015), Hanna recalls the vital importance of the terminological use of "grrrl", and confesses that, in a way, when she performed on stage she was trying to rescue that lost girlhood:

> I had a very dysfunctional family, and I felt very numbed-out for much of my childhood, and I felt like I missed a lot . . . I always wanted to be a girl scout, and I didn't get to be a girl scout! So I went to the thrift store, and luckily, I'm 5-foot-4, so I could still fit into a large Girl Scout outfit. And I wanted to be a cheerleader, so I got a cheerleader skirt, and I mixed it with a punk rock shirt. (Symonds)

production of music), and the repercussion reached international range and what began local ended up being almost global.

This explains why terms such as "girl[52]", "girlfriend" or "sister" are repeated throughout her work. A gesture of mutual understanding and support is drawn from this diction and without any doubt punctuates the feeling of bonding and affinity that the girls belonging to Riot Grrrl felt. Besides, the riot grrrls readopted the term and showed their disagreement about the parallels that people made of it: "BECAUSE we are angry at a society that tells us Girl = Dumb, Girl = Bad, Girl = Weak" ("Riot Grrrl Manifesto"). In sum, the meanings of girlhood were being revisited and modified so that young girls could embrace it (Marcus 118). For those girls, Riot Grrrl was essentially a girl-made-circle which helped them support one another without the need to use boy's favours. Girls were "ready to revolt over things like hallway gropes and sidewalk heckles, leering teachers, homophobic threats, rape, incest, domestic violence, sexual double standards, ubiquitous warnings against walking certain places or dressing certain ways…" (Marcus 92). Riot grrrls were not instantly famous, visible and recognized; they did not turn into icons in the blink of an eye; they were regular girls, most of them in a short range of age (between sixteen and eighteen years old), who were eager to take action and aim at launching a feminist revolution.

5.2.1. Fanzines and Performances on Stage

Riot Grrrl was highly influenced by previous subcultures and social movements, such as the mods, punks, hippies or yippies (who made use of artistic and youth-oriented strategies). Likewise, feminism and lesbian gay bisexual transgendered and queer (LGBTQ) theories, both of which had also resorted to DIY (Do It Yourself) strategies in their attempts to resist negative representations in popular culture, did also have a bearing in the development of Riot Grrrl. Broadly speaking, the women involved in this movement tried to oppose the conflicting experiences of everyday girlhood by creating a radical feminist movement of young girls (Downes, "Riot Grrrl" 14).

Certainly, when punk erupted in the late 1970s, some early fanzines like *Sniffin' Glue* perpetuated the sexism that would rule punk music by writing down things like that "punks are not girls." It is comprehensible then that many girls would try to answer to that sexism ("Riot Grrrl: The '90s Movement"). Riot Grrrl turned feminism into an entertaining alternative to the political or mainstream feminism, re-writing it by widening the limits, moving away from traditional marches and motivating girls to create art, fanzines, all-girl communities and bands. Allison Wolfe (a member of the Riot Grrrl band Bratmobile), Molly Neuman (also in Bratmobile) and Jen Smith decided to write a mini fanzine in order to have something that they could pass on in their shows. The terms "girl riot" and "angry grrrl scene" emerged as Neuman and Wolfe were trying to conceive an appealing name for the new fanzine and the result of bending both terms begot the Riot Grrrl term (Downes, "Riot Grrrl"

[52] Authors like Sheila Whiteley explain that Riot Grrrl politics tried to re-appropriate and claim this word, trying to impregnate it with a more politicized meaning in order to erase its more conservative and traditional associations of immaturity or passivity (208).

25). The *Riot Grrrl* fanzine denounced "the general lack of girl power in society as a whole, and in the punk rock underground specifically" (Marcus 82) and gave voice to the collectivity between these girls, using words like *we*s and *us*es[53]:

> That there has never been an *official* periodical for the riot grrrl network is itself significant. In accordance with the riot grrrl ethos of decentralized organisation (creating a community without leaders or media stars), the importance of the network has always been for each girl to define what riot grrrl means to her, from her own place in the world (Chidgey 132)

Anyone could be an author and co-write these fanzines and the absence of a commander within this literary network made it more special for girls, as no sense of authorship or leadership was implied and all the girls had the same status. Girls connected and supported each other and they started to put their frustrations and feelings into words, creating thus a fanzine culture that became a fundamental safe space for women to discuss and resist the cultural depreciation of women (Downes, "Riot Grrrl" 18). Security and safe spaces, for instance, were some of the recurrently targeted topics for these riot grrrl fanzines. In my analysis of Hanna's songwriting, I will show how these concerns were included in Bikini Kill and Le Tigre's lyrics as well.

Safety was a key concept for young girls and fanzines became a channel for sharing. A community of young girls could exchange their personal experiences in a safe environment, allowing them to develop friendships and connections to other girls. Their writings included a variety of topics, from body image to abortion, sexuality, self-harm or eating disorders (Chidgey 118). Leaving behind the writings of diaries and letters, fanzines would publish girls' personal dreams, essays, childhood memories, interviews, reviews, recipes, fiction, personal photographs, comics… In those writings, the authors would disclose literary influences by authors such as Kathy Acker, Dorothy Allison, Karen Finlay, Monique Wittig, Luce Irigaray, Christine Brook and Audre Lorde (Chidgey 129). Thanks to the internet, home computers and cheap photocopies, they were able to write and distribute their fanzines with little experience or skills (indeed, most fanzines were made with a handwritten style and contained errors and slang features). For the first time, those young girls were experiencing agency:

> Historically, fanzines are a male-dominated and straight (white) subculture. The 'angry grrrl' and 'homocore' zines of the late 1980s and early 1990s therefore marked a crucial turning point in fanzine history, with a rise in LGBTQ and girl authors taking their place and disrupting the usual order of things. (Chidgey 116)

[53] As an example of that, the following quotation taken from a flyer that Bikini Kill shared out at their concerts shows the prevalence of "*wes*", in an attempt to create a sisterhood between American girls: "What if we decided that we HAVE to have places where we feel safe and can talk? What if we decided that 'scenes' can no longer be ruled by issues of coolness and hierarchy and instead are here to help us feel good enough about our identities as resisters that we can openly challenge racist/sexist/classist/homophobic/speciesist/ageist standards?" (Marcus 126).

In 1993, fanzines proliferated: nearly 40,000 fanzines were being published in North America: "Grrrl zines were the coffee table reading and the fodder for dinner conversation" (Marcus 304). Fanzines like *Riot Grrrl, Jigsaw, Girl Germs, Bikini Kill* (see figure 19)*, Channel Seven, A Call to Arms,* or *Leeds and Bradford Riot Grrrl!* were crucial in the development of Riot Grrrl. Indeed, Tobi Vail's influential fanzine *Jigsaw* was in a way the kick start to Bikini Kill, being Kathleen Hanna a usual reader when she decided to meet the writer.

Fig. 19. Riot Grrrl manifesto in *Bikini Kill Zine* 2

The strong stress on aesthetics that characterized the movement was not only visible in the representative artistic experiment of the fanzine production. As I said before, Riot Grrrl marked the 1990s in ways that went beyond the musical experience. Fanzines were one example, but there was more to it. As Phillip Auslander explains, "no rock subgenre can ever be defined solely in musical terms, for each one entails an ideology that is manifest not only in music and lyrics, but also in the visual elements of performance (costume, staging, gesture etc.)" (39). The same can be said about Riot Grrrl, a movement that found in music and lyrics the most personal outlet, but which was also defined for other, however additional and/or secondary aspects, like the live performances on stage of the riot grrrl bands, which left nobody indifferent.

In an attempt to encourage other girls to explore their creativity and redefine their identities, many Riot Grrrl bands used their performances to challenge stereotypes and myths on feminine beauty. This idea was explored in *Girls To The Front. The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution:*

> The media has told you that in order to be a real woman you must be tall, thin, blonde, white, and passive. It has told you that a woman isn't whole unless she has a male protector, that women who enjoy sex are bad or sluts, that women love to scrub floors on our hands and knees. We have been brainwashed by these myths. (Marcus 152)

Feminist riot grrrls were challenging the unreachable notions for perfect femininity in American society that valued white, thin, blonde women as the standard. Moreover, girls started using their bodies as a powerful tool to fight a system that had precisely valued their bodies as passive and idealized recipients of beauty norms: "In the face of the Pop orthodoxy that a woman is there and foremost to look attractive, female artists have consistently had to negotiate their image issue" (O'Brien 168). In an attempt to rewrite the meaning of the female body, Kathleen Hanna began to draw, on visible parts of her body (arms and stomach), the words that girls in bands had to hear very often: "slut", "bitch", "sex-pot", "media whore" or "teen bullet girl" (see figure 20). Besides, she would add other words such as "choice", "girl love", or "mother for choice", challenging American society for not taking into consideration their rights and choices as women.

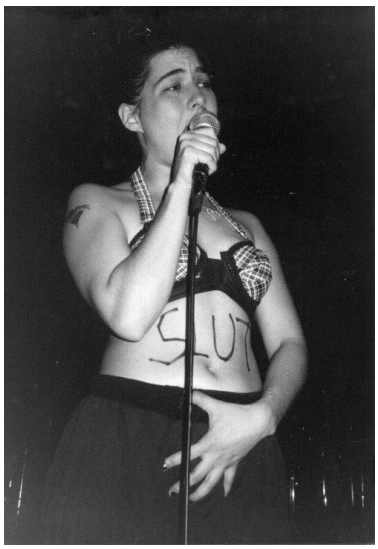

Fig. 20. Kathleen Hanna in a concert with Bikini Kill.

Hanna admitted that she meant to use "attractiveness as a tool for getting her message out" (Marcus 145). Many punk girls followed Hanna's strategy, in an attempt to modulate or redirect the insults that they were receiving on stage. This re-appropriation of harsh words was used to indict sexist language and raise awareness on how the women's body that had been used as a contested territory could be employed differently, as a means to resist and oppose the verbal and physical harassment that many girls faced during the 1990s:

> . . . various aspects of Girlie culture use the humorous re-appropriation of traditions and symbols to craft identities in the context of structural disempowerment, such as reclaiming words like girl, bitch and cunt. This playful re-appropriation of stereotypes is often interpreted as marking a lack of seriousness, but such play is a serious part of third wave feminism's critical negotiations with the culture industries. (Heywood and Drake 117)

Thus, using their bodies as a visual and artistic instrument they could make visible their disagreement regarding the role that they had played, not only in music, but also in other social spheres. Consequently, their performances would break taboos concerning femininity, as girls showed a straightforward and sometimes "aggressive" attitude that audiences were not used to contemplate. This, together with the political lyrics of the songs, made of the movement a unique phenomenon.

5.2.2. Riot Grrrl's Music

Even though Riot Grrrl had such a strong aesthetical ambit, along with the performative dimension and the literary accountability in fanzines, still, music remains the most significant and popular expertise and demonstration of Riot Grrrl culture. Riot grrrl bands had a particular sound[54] and they used music as a tool to resist the inherited social definitions. That particular focus and the subsequent ideological charge became its most recognizable signs:

> Women and girls found their own voices and power in music, art, literary and political discourses, Riot grrrls began to rewrite and figure out themselves what it means to be a girl, a feminist, an activist, a musician or an artist. It opened up the possibility to share our experiences, tell our own stories and create our own language. A riot grrrl history is an insight into a provocative moment in modern day feminism, youth resistance and popular culture. (Downes, "Riot Grrrl" 12)

Riot grrrl bands used the lyrics as a way to express themselves and share personal (and political) experiences. Some women found in these unambiguous and candid narratives a strong bond (and consequently a solid sense of community) between the singer, a visible representative of the band's discourse, and the (female) audience. In short, then, riot grrrl bands mixed feminist theory, personal narratives and punk music in order to write about women's issues from a spirited and suggestive feminist perspective:

> Though detractors claimed our music suffered, being "too political," I considered the points of contact between feminist art theory, grassroots activism, and punk rock as the *success* of our art. And we discovered that girls across the country were as hungry as we were to reimagine feminism for themselves, and to change the landscape of a masculinist punk scene that left them sitting on the sidelines. (Hanna, "Gen X" 132)

[54] Even though my analysis will be focused on a lyrical level, it must be said that the sound of Riot Grrrl remains as the most representative feature to recognize the movement. The music is raw, quick, with simple structures, pounding drums, distorted guitars, and power chords played fast. The singers' voice may vary but quite frequently we hear growls, group chanting, hostile vocals, or screamed slogans for vocals. All this played an important part as a whole, when combined with the political content in many of the songs.

Riot Grrrl was the stimulant that many girls needed to voice their stories and take some action. Bikini Kill's drummer Tobi Vail, for example, explained in a recent interview for *The Guardian* that to be in a band allowed women's voice to be heard: "There's a power in seizing history. To me, that's what being a band allows you to access. If we see historicisation as an institutional force, let's be inclusive: let women's voices in" (Ewens). That was the spirit and motivation that ignited the scene back in the days when Tobi Vail was the drummer in Bikini Kill. They were women writing to women and talking about women for the first time in punk music. Issues such as sexual harassment, artistic ambition, rape or sisterhood were targeted in their lyrics and punk became a radical feminist platform for women who wanted to take part in the underground culture. Actually, Bikini Kill exhibited that feminist edge, for instance, in the publications (lyrics sheets and fanzines) accompanying their music, texts in which they were openly feminist from the very beginning. They expressed their worries that the audience would not get the right message that they were trying to share through lyrics or in every show. Consequently, they guaranteed that the audience could understand "what the lyrics were and that they were about radical feminism" (Hanna, "Herstory repeats"). Their songs became feminist anthems (Marcus 16) and their live shows were very illustrative of this new approach to feminism, a fascinating renovation of the strategies to communicate and vindicate women's concerns. They were described as "sexist against boys" (Marcus 111) for inviting the girls to the front[55] rows of the concerts. Other negative references were "man haters" or "antifamily" (Marcus 22), probably because they used to sing about abuse and rape. Those appellations were not only dedicated to Bikini Kill, but also to other riot grrrl bands whose feminist messages were not understood by some male audiences. Their reply was full of anger and despise, surfacing verbally with those epithets that I listed before and condemning riot grrrl bands for a "militant feminist" (Marcus 53) stand that they did not support.

> It was hard being in a feminist band in the early 90's, I'm not gonna lie. People could be really mean and unforgiving towards us . . . I mean it's hard enough to be a girl in a band doing sound-checks in all-male settings, but having the "bitch" label proceed me to nearly every club got really tiring. It was draining trying to be nice all the time to prove people's preconceptions wrong. And half the time I was being called a bitch just cuz I asked the promoter for some water! It was also super schizo to play shows where guys threw stuff at us, called us cunts and yelled "take it off" during our set, and then the next night perform for throngs of amazing girls singing along to every lyric and cheering after every song. (Hanna, "My Herstory")

[55] In a recent interview, Hanna gave her present day view on the slogan "Girls to the Front" that she made famous back in the day, a sort of a trademark for Riot Grrrl: "I'm not going to ask people to come up front anymore. I'm going to ask you to willingly go to the back or just check out how much space you're taking up" (Pelly, "Kathleen Hanna"). Even though she does not consider it necessary today, the symbolism and significance of that expression is still visible. Female rock musicians still testify to that metaphor. As an example, Cecilia Boström and Frida Stahl, singer and bass player in the Swedish punk-rock band The Baboon Show have confessed that they had tattoos with this expression as a recognition to the legacy and the validity of the values promoted and strengthened in the Riot Grrrl movement.

Hanna reports how these sexist behaviours happened particularly in the underground punk scene, where she witnessed "really riots" ("Kathleen Hanna: Three"). However, in that same interview, she also confesses that things have fortunately changed and that "it's a lot better now and there's a lot more women in shows and just a lot more diversity at shows in general . . . but I'm really amazed that some people don't even know that in the 90s it was as bad as it was" ("Kathleen Hanna: Three"). The girls involved in the scene were aiming at creating an alternative system characterized by strong feminist and political undertones: "Riot grrrl was by far one of the most undeniable effective feminist movements, turning academia into an accessible down-to-earth language, making feminism a trend for the first time in history" (Ditto 8).

In fact, and as I have explained in my section on the third wave, due to the politics that the Riot Grrrl movement and the third wave of feminism share, some critics have merged the two of them, envisioning the Riot Grrrl movement as an extension of that feminist wave, or, in other cases, as an artistic manifestation of it: "one of the most visible branches of what was dubbed third wave feminism" (McDonnell and Vincentelli). Both movements stand up against abuse, violence, body image and beauty constraints, racism, or sexism. All these political issues are present in authors of the third wave and in the writing that characterized the Riot Grrrl movement. When asked about Riot Grrrl, the band Le Tigre, one of the posterior music projects in which Kathleen Hanna got involved, expressed in their blog that those meetings and the consciousness-raising groups that emerged in the 1970s were very alike and "mixed in with the practical work associated with making and distributing fanzines, promoting shows, organizing conventions, and doing activism, there was much discussion of women's experiences of sexism, sexual abuse, assault and harassment, body-image, queer identities, and how all of these things intersect with class and race ("Questions and Answers"). Besides, the two movements advocate for postmodern ideas of identity, and more personal and inclusive narratives as valid accounts of expression. Others, on the contrary, think that Riot Grrrl is an independent and autonomous movement, born concurrently with or within the third wave: "recognize riot grrrl as an autonomous entity and the third wave as a legitimate contemporary feminist movement" (Carter 7). In any case, the third wave and its demands were present in the works that came forth within Riot Grrrl, since it is manifest that both were linked by the political and social issues of the time that characterized their agendas and concerns. Le Tigre explains that, together with other activist protests, Riot Grrrl could and should be seen as a part of feminist history (within the span of time that has been regarded to frame the so-called third wave of feminism), from which it cannot be separated: "Journalistic narratives of Riot Grrrl also tended to isolate it from both a larger feminist history and from its own cultural moment in which a variety of media-savvy activist groups were changing the face of social protest (for example, ACT-UP!, Queer Nation, the Guerilla Girls, and WAC)" ("Questions and Answers"). Also, the fanzines (which, as I have tried to explain, gained a transcendence that transformed them into real feminist manifestos) were a vital form of expression of that connection between Riot Grrrl and the third wave of feminism, which certainly relates to this literary production:

> Riot grrrl has been retrospectively claimed as an important element of "third wave feminism", a new generational model of feminism emerging out of America in the 1990s. Concerned with popular culture, pleasure, multiple alliances, and postmodern identity claims, the feminist zine has been declared a "crucial third-wave feminist tool for activism and expression. (Chidgey 136)

Obviously, all these pro-women actions and campaigns called the media attention. That repercussion was so big that it shocked most riot grrrl bands. In fact, the engagement of the media in the covering of feminism in the 1990s brought confusion and misunderstanding, since this enterprise was usually addressed in misleading ways: "One of the greatest challenges for third wave feminists engaging with the media, moving into media institutions and/or producing alternate media cultures that register outside the mainstream may be to reconstruct the ways the popular consciousness of feminism is conceived and articulated" (Garrison, "Contests" 194). Something similar happened with Riot Grrrl. In the beginning, the media cover was important and functional for the riot grrrls. These new bands were reaching a wider audience across America, thanks to that covering. However, this national attention was also coming accompanied with some negative consequences: "the coverage also removed and/or ridiculed the radical and political aspects of riot grrrl, sensationalizing it as an aggressive anti-men subculture or commodifying the movement into a genre of (bad) music or (anti-)fashion style" (Downes, "Riot Grrrl" 30). The media turned the movement into an amalgam of stereotypes, and, instead of judging the Riot Grrrl movement as an important happening that had changed a part of American society in a significant way, they attempted to discredit bands' ideas and actions. Consequently, some riot grrrl bands decided to call a media blackout, something that caused fragmentation among the riot grrrls. Hanna herself admits this breach. In any case, she saw this media problem in a mixed way, as something that has also good part. For her, that the media focus was being placed on them, that attention, encouraged many girls to start a band and contribute to the movement: "While the press frenzy contributed to a lack of productive political discussion inside the Riot Grrrl, it at least replaced the media myth of a "post-feminist era" with the message that young feminist did exist – and were alive and well. As a result, RG groups began cropping up all over" (Hanna, "Gen X" 135).

In general, some people have interpreted Riot Grrrl as a feminist sub-cultural movement of young women, but others thought of it as a phase, fashion or even a man-hate movement. As it had happened before with other subcultures, "Riot grrrl experienced its own 'false feminist death syndrome' as the media declared riot grrrl a political failure, a genre of bad music and a simplistic reinvention of (male) punk" (Downes, "Riot Grrrl" 41). Apart from the media's representation of the movement, Riot Grrrl has been also criticized for its limited vision or range, as it primarily included white-middle class women and it did not focus on important concerns that overlapped with women's experiences, as in the case of race: "Third-wave attempts to fuse critical race theory, queer theory, postmodernism and antiessentialism (often through the lens of popular culture) are negotiated within the polemic and intention of riot grrrl discourse, although few hard looks at race and class politics were delivered within the movement" (Chidgey 102). It is true that Riot Grrrl lacked that intersectional vision that the third wave did in fact embrace and this criticism becomes a potential furthering reading of a

movement which would have added extra and enriching revolutionary perspectives if they had encompassed their actions and concerns within a broader approach to race.

What it is also true is that the culture of Riot Grrrl expanded very fast and music propelled its values and assumptions very far. Bands such as Bikini Kill, Bratmobile or Heavens to Betsy are good examples of how all-girl or almost all-girl punk-rock bands succeeded in challenging the male dominated punk underground of the 1990s and gained national and international visibility. Encouraging girls to form music bands and asking them to come to the front rows of punk concerts, riot grrrl bands were turning the male-dominated punk scene into a community were music was allowed to everyone, regardless of their sex. In a way, it could be said that ". . . riot grrrl reinvented punk" (Ditto 8). Thanks to riot grrrl bands, young girls who listened to punk-rock music could find encouragement and direction from openly feminist bands, finding a source for confidence and determination. In fact, I believe that this specific musical and cultural movement, in which female bands and female protagonists took the leading role, became one significant and fundamental historical step towards the consecution of a long and laborious contemporary endeavor in search of the unmasking and celebration of the role of female musicians in music history. With the Riot Grrrl movement, more and more women had the chance to gain visibility, not only on stage, but also afterwards, in the business, in publications, when the canon is arranged and history gets written down. In 2010, when Kathleen Hanna was asked whether she was hopeful about Riot Grrrl legacy or not, she argued that there are a lot of great women in bands now, adding that diverse kinds of women (and also gay, lesbian, trans activism and LGBT groups) have made a great progress since the Riot Grrrl started ("Kathleen Hanna: Three"). In fact, today, more women occupy different positions in the music industry or in other posterior music scenes, which seem to be more inclusive and diverse, verifying the legacy that Riot Grrrl has established for those who came afterwards.

In 2013, Kathleen Hanna was filmed reading the Riot Grrrl manifesto that she wrote when she was 21 and there were some moments in which "Hanna's delivery is full force, because much of what the manifesto declares still needs to be said aloud, and often" (Katherine). In a way, the feeling is that some of those concerns and demands that the movement underlined decades ago were still unresolved and pending. Six years later, in an interview for *The Guardian* (2019), Tobi Vail admits that "It's not that since the early 90s the songs have ceased to have meaning, but everything she's saying feels like it's *right now*" (Ewens). From these flashbacks, we can draw a feeling of nostalgia, but also frustration, seeing that some requests are still open to discussion and not yet settled. There is still unsettling circumstances that hinder the work by many female musicians, who have to face problems that echo those pinpointed in the 1990s. The fight is not over. However, thanks to the autonomy and self-determination of those women in the Riot Grrrl movement, the aspirations and purpose of the third wave of feminism found an efficient fresh ground that, through music, literature and other creative and artistic manifestations, contributed to the general and long standing project in favour of women's rights. In music, Riot Grrrl was not the first time that women used this artistic mode of expression to oppose the status quo, but the pioneering manner in which they blended feminism and punk music bestowed new power and effect on the movement, participating actively in the addressing and spreading, on a larger scale, of feminist messages.

Within this artistic milieu, Hanna is an instigator and her work for Bikini Kill, Julie Ruin and Le Tigre is unquestionably novel and rich in terms of feminist analysis.

6. Lyrics. An Approach to Kathleen Hanna's Work

Although the discussion concerning the qualification as literature of song lyrics comes from long ago, during the last decades, and particularly since 2016 (when the American songwriter Bob Dylan won the literature Nobel Prize[56]) a spark lighted in the academia and a new and fresh debate was opened in relation to how lyrics could be regarded as literature or at least how they could hold poetic analysis: "people have been thinking about song and lyric and poem since Plato, trying to understand what they mean, how they work; doing so is an essential process in making sense of our emotional lives" (Lindgren). Both artistic expressions are of vital significance for the cultural, social, and as I show later, political domain, but, while some critics consider song lyrics and written poetry as connected, others argue that they are two different (yet not completely independent) genres. Before studying the matter thoroughly, I would like to underline that, for me, lyrics and poems are unequal artistic productions and I do not share the idea of putting both genres on the same level. Nevertheless, I admit that, in order to conduct the FCDA of the lyrics, many strategies employed for the study of poetry turned out to be helpful and even necessary. Additionally, my work focuses exclusively on the lyrical content of songs, that is, on the words. Even though I do not pay special attention to musical aspects (such as instrumentation, acoustic, auditory or performative aspects), I solidly reckon that the power of songs relies on both its lyrical content and the music that goes with it. That is the reason why, when, in the following pages, I present the main properties of both poetry and lyrics, I find it unavoidable to refer to some musical characteristics of the songs. For that, I would use authors such as the literary scholar Adam Bradley, whose works explore this issue in-depth.

With the hope of shedding light on the issue, this section looks at that intensified academic debate on lyrics. I go deeper into the reasoning that has been exposed in favor of the need to research and study lyrics. Ultimately, I also explain why Kathleen Hanna's work for Bikini Kill, Julie Ruin and Le Tigre is relevant for Riot Grrrl and the women's movement and how her lyrical content became a cutting-edge instance of the punk scene in the 1990s.

In here, I want to focalize the more general perspectives that I have been analyzing so far (music, feminism, punk music and Riot Grrrl) so we can move from the general to the more specific aim of my dissertation, which is, the analysis of Hanna's lyrics. With this section, I aim at anticipating and presenting the analysis that comes afterwards.

[56] Bob Dylan won the Literature Nobel Prize in 2016 for "having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition" ("Bob Dylan"). The Literature Nobel prize is an annual award given by the Swedish Academy to authors whose contribution to the field of literature is notable and Dylan's nomination undoubtedly led to controversy about whether song lyrics should be considered as literature or not.

6.1. Lyrics in the Academia

In recent years, the publication of *The Poetry of Pop* (2017) and *Book of Rhymes. The Poetics of Hip Hop* (2009) undid many of the formal limitations that a researcher could find when approaching lyrics from an academic perspective. In those two books, Adam Bradley proposes a solid framework and an efficient methodology, collecting ideas from different disciplines, in order to apply a substantial-close reading (and close listening, of course) of songs, understanding them as poetic expressions. Bradley focuses on the artistic skills of popular music and rap songs by addressing sound (i.e. rhythm, rhyme or voice) and word (style, figurative language or storytelling) in diverse music genres. In his work, he also unveils a group of general characteristics that equate lyrics and poetry in terms of their form:

> When written on the page, song lyrics look a lot like poems. The lines break, as the lines in poems often do. As with poems, the syntax of song lyrics usually diverges from the patterns of casual speech; language is rendered ritual. Rhythm bends lyrics into uncommon shapes, percussive breaks that dance with the lines across the page. Figures and forms of speech and thought abound in ways they rarely do I daily conversation. Then there is rhyme, often at the end of lines, just as one might expect of poetry from an earlier time" (*The Poetry* 14)

Bradley mentions format, pattern, syntax, language, rhythm or rhyme, which both songwriters and poets adopt and adapt as fundamental elements when writing their artistic pieces. Lyrics and poetry have shared and exchanged characteristics and/or elements since medieval times. In fact, "the ancient Greeks called their lyrical poetry *ta mele*, which means "poems to be sung." . . . It has only been since the early twentieth century that music has taken a backseat to meaning in poetry" (Bradley, *Book of* xvi). And, which are those traits that illustrate their long-standing connection?

First of all, songwriters and poets employ verbal language to send a particular message that the addressees (listeners and readers) will subjectively interpret, leading to abundant and diverse readings. Then, poetry would employ musical forms such as the intonation or the rhythm in ancient performances. In those displays, travelling performers would read poems accompanying their words with rhythmical patterns or instruments: "Greek lyric poetry is said to have been sung and accompanied; indeed, even the figure of Homer singing with harp or lyre (as some conceive) may not be as distant from the blue-eyed son prophesying with his guitar as the millennia between them suggest" (Ball 171). Even though musicality plays a role, poems do not resort to repetition so often and they are "whether fixed form, blank verse, or free verse, are linear journeys, moving from idea to idea, line to line, until the end" (Pattison 126). Lyrics, on the contrary, depend on that repetition. The words of a song are usually remembered because songs include the chorus or refrain (stanzas or verses repeated throughout the song) or particular rhymes and tones that listeners may easily memorize.

Bradley explains that "words in song are never just words, of course, in large part because of the dictates of the melody and the inflection given them by the singing voice. Sound has syntax. Song lyrics are memorable because of their distance and their difference from conversation" (*The Poetry* 52). Consequently, syntax is not only applied to words and the written text (whether a lyric or a poem) but also to sound. It is that musical background that helps the audience hum a melody or even recall the lyrics of a song.

Visually, it is true that lyrics and poems seem similar on a page and that their structural arrangement is almost identical. Yet, when going into detail, even in the technical dimension, there are differences to be found. For instance, some poets use enjambed lines – lines that do not stop at the end of the sentence but continue up to the next one – to create a sense of inquietude and, in a song, this may create confusion: "In a song, the end of the lyric line usually has a sonic cue – the end of a melodic phrase. Because the song is aimed at the ear, if a lyricist tries to carry a thought into the next melodic phrase, it usually creates confusion, since there is a disconnection between the melodic roadmap and grammatical structure" (Pattison 124). As a matter of fact, lyrics rely on a melodic backup. Songs are written and produced for someone to sing them. On the other hand, even though, in the past, travelling performers sang poetical pieces to the audience, the advent of the printing press altered the way in which people approached lyric poetry, that became entirely for the eye:

> . . . the reason why lyrics aren't poetry and why no songs words, in my opinion, stand up as print texts. Good song lyrics are not good poems because they don't need to be: poems "score" the performance or reading of the verse in the words themselves, words which are chosen in part because of the way they lead us on, metrically and rhythmically, by their arrangement on the page (a poem is designed to be read, even if in an out-loud performance, and such reading directions are just as much an aspect of "free" as of formally structured verse forms). Lyrics, by contrast, are "scored" by the music itself. (Frith, *Performing* 181)

Bradley shares this notion when he argues that "poems are meant for the page, while song lyrics lose their vitality read in cold print" (*The Poetry* 17). Following that same argument of the printing text and the musical extension, Jude Rogers wonders what happens to a song lyric once it is written on a page, and she concludes that "it becomes oddly silent but also not silent. Ghosts of its usual rhythms lie at the beginnings and ends of its lines. The blank space around it seems weirdly disconcerting, like white noise. This happens, of course, because a song lyric isn't poetry" ("When song"). She also offers a similar view on how poems are bounded by a logic that is presented on paper, whereas lyrics, even though they may be presented for the eye, acquire a whole meaning when accompanied by a melody. As Rogers puts it, when in print, the whimsical but magic moment that happens when the ear, in an ordinary context, catches the enchanting pleasure of a melody, gets lost: "This serendipity disappears in print" ("When song"). This argument of musical accompaniment is noteworthy for those critics that oppose lyrics and poetry and, overall, there is a general agreement about the fact that modern poetry is an artistic form destined to be read and not heard. As Simon Frith says, poetry is defined by its page

layout and not by the performing voice (*Performing* 178). Thus, poems are usually linked to the sight, whereas lyrics are to the hearing because of their need to be complemented by music.

Similarly, Lars Eckstein, author of *Reading Song Lyrics*, argues that "while the voice in poetry is generally perceived as an *internalized* one encoded in the medium of writing, the voice of lyrics is by definition *external.* Lyrics, this is to say, cannot be conceived outside of the context of their vocal (and musical) actualization – i.e. their performance" (10). That need for vocal and musical background does not usually apply to poems and that is one of the reasons why many do not consider lyrics as poems: "Songwriters are not poets. Or songs are not poems, I should say. In fact, songs are often bad poems. Take the music away and what you're left with is often an awkward piece of creative writing full of lumpy syllables, cheesy rhymes, exhausted cliches and mixed metaphors" (Armitage). Most agree on the fact that a song needs music to become what it is. Bob Dylan himself clarified that if he can sing a piece, then he is coping with a song, whereas if singing is not possible, then he is interpreting a poem (Pence xiv). I personally agree with this notion and I believe that in order to convey their whole meaning, lyrics must be supplemented by music (whether supported by instruments or not), a particular melody, harmony or a distinct voice or sound.

Finally, it is generally argued that poets employ more complicated diction than lyricists. But, again, this is not always the case. A detailed analysis of the songs written by Leonard Cohen or Patti Smith – poets and songwriters at the same time – may disclose that their crafts equal the expectations that we have when reading a poet's work. As a matter of fact, the controversy surrounding the association between lyrics and poetry seems to be heightened with the passing of time and the access gained by the lyrics written by some important contemporary songwriters:

> There's a long history, dating back to the birth of rock and roll and reaching into the 1970s, of books about the poetry of pop lyrics, falling broadly into two categories: hagiographies of individual songwriters and polemical efforst to equate – and in these critics' minds, to elevate – pop songwriting by comparing it to the craft of the Western poetic tradition. The best example of the former approach us pretty much tevery book ever written about Bob Dylan. The best example of the latter is David R. Pichaske's *Beowulf to Beatles: Approaches to Poetry*, an anthology first published in 1972 that intersperses rock lyrics by songwriters such as Jim Morrison and Joni Mitchell with poems by canonical poets like William Blake and Robert Frost" (Bradley, *The Poetry* 21)

That attempt to boost lyricists' work within the works by those authors included in the canon of poetry leads to a multiple exchange of views. For Bradley, that parallelism comes from the critic's unwillingness or inability to create a new and separate category for lyrics, involving word and music in a different paradigm (*The Poetry* 21). He argues that "sometimes a song's poetry expresses itself best in the craft of a well-wrought lyric whose value is most apparent on the page . . . Often, though, a song's poetry is better heard than seen – or, rather, better seen and heard together" (*The Poetry* 13). In any case, printed lyrics offer the audience the opportunity to have access to the lyrical content of songs in a free and open way, allowing them to go into a close-reading

process to fully understand the meaning, sense and craft of the lyrics. In Wheeler's words, "song words began to be printed on gatefold album sleeves, allowing the audience – educated young people desperate for the music they loved to have some depth and meaning – the opportunity to pore over them as if they were great works of literature". Reading lyrics "as if they were great works of literature" (Wheeler) leads to that point in which one art (music, and more precisely lyrics) meddles with another art (literature), uncovering confronting views on whether lyrics may be considered literature or not. In this respect, a corresponding matter that arises is which lyrics are most appropriate to be studied, as only some lyrics written by some songwriters are traditionally valued or acknowledged: "Another important question to consider is why some artists are considered worthy of explication and why others are not. The work alone is not the sole issue, but race, gender, and socioeconomic associations all affect how song lyrics are evaluated- or sometimes not evaluated" (Pence xviii).

Adam Bradley himself wonders about the origin of this qualification. In other words, what provides that you are call a poet or otherwise? Bradley acknowledges the fact that poet seems to be a category that elevates the quality of the work, at least it anticipates a positive scrutiny: "people who describe these songwriters as poets (sometimes, in fact, the songwriters describe themselves as such) are using the term "poet" as an honorific" (*The Poetry* 22). In fact, the author also wonders if labelling a song as poetry is just the manifest unfamiliarity with the craft of pop songs: "the reason that some people prize certain singer-songwriters as poets often has less to do with the merits of craft than with the complacency of literary critics who are unwilling or unable to develop a new poetics to account for the double life of song lyrics as word and music." (*The Poetry* 21).

The works by Bruce Springsteen, Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell or Patti Smith, to name a few, are usually placed within the list of best composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. They are usually accepted as examples of songs that can hold literary scrutiny. American singer song-writer, poet and visual artist Patti Smith started first her artistic development as a poet[57], and at the age of 30 she released *Horses*, the debut album that led her to be one of the main representatives in the early punk scene of New York. In an interview for *The Guardian*, she admits that: "When I was young, all I wanted was to write books and be an artist. I got sidetracked, almost as a mission, to give something to the canon of rock'n'roll in the manner in which people I admired had. In other words, forming a cultural voice through rock'n'roll that incorporated sex and art and poetry and

[57] She has also written several autobiographies, such as *Just Kids* (2010) and *M Train* (2015), her last work, in which "there is no real beginning, middle or end to *M Train* though it offers the most rounded portrait you could hope for of a life lived intensely, truthfully and on a never-ending quest for artistic enrichment" (Sturges). Also, Smith wrote *Woolgathering* (1992) and *Devotion* (2017), two other important autobiographical pieces in which she blends fiction and autobiography. This is the reason why these works are usually labeled as autofiction. As a matter of fact, autobiographies and rock music is becoming a solid and growing new field of interest both in the bookshops and in the academic domain. A good example of this is the forthcoming publication of *Writing Her Stories: Women's Rock Memoirs*, edited by Cristina Garrigós (UNED University, Spain) and Marika Ahonen (University of Turku, Finland).

performance and revolution" (Hattenstone). Her work is extremely valued, both as a poet and as a songwriter, and, apart from the wide range of books that she has published (from *Seventh Heaven* in 1972 to the 2015 *M Train*), we can find the collection *Patti Smith Collected Lyrics, 1970-2015,* which includes her lyrics and an introduction written by the author herself. *The Lyrics of Leonard Cohen* or *Bob Dylan Lyrics: 1962-2001* are, for instance, some of the compilations one may find too in ordinary bookshops, local libraries or record stores nowadays. These few examples contribute to the ongoing debate around the intersection between lyrics and literature:

> Books of collected song lyrics are now big business, especially the elegantly designed, expensively produced kind . . . Pop music is a distinguished pensioner now with a solid canon: only a hoary naysayer would argue that Bob Dylan's catalogue of affecting narrative and acute social analysis lacked the cultural heft to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016. (Sappho, Pindar and co were writing short songs about emotional states millennia ago, bashing away at their lyres, and calling them lyrics. They would have released them on limited-edition marbled vinyl if they could.) (Rogers)

Making again reference to the Nobel award-winner Bob Dylan, many consider him a songwriter as well as a poet due to the content of his lyrics, which, for many critics, have the power of poetry. In the speech that Dylan gave after receiving the Nobel prize, he wonders how his songs are related to literature, a question that he himself tries to answer by setting some literary examples whose themes influenced his work (*Moby Dick, All Quiet on the Western Front* and *The Odyssey)*. Yet, in his own words, "songs are unlike literature. They're meant to be sung, not read. The words in Shakespeare's plays were meant to be acted on the stage. Just as lyrics in songs are meant to be sung, not read on a page" ("Bob Dylan"). Dylan's opinion about literature and lyrics can be approached as another opportunity to widen and complicate the traditional debate that I have tackled here.

All in all, the fact that poetry and lyrics are viewed in relation should not lead to quality issues, to the consideration of one better than the other. The general belief is that (modern) poetry is more valued than lyrics or that the works of poets is more deserving of literary appreciation than that by some songwriters. I understand that this approach is unfair for both, and prompting lower or more prominent status through this comparison does not help to reveal the literary quality of any of the two genres. To my way of thinking, lyrics and poetry share some characteristics (as the ones mentioned before), but these two genres differ to a great degree (mainly on the lyrics' need for music, but not only). Thus, I would not dare state that lyrics are poetry, though, I firmly think that they can be pondered as a genre that deserves the same attention and scrutiny that other cultural productions or literary pieces enjoy.

We can apply this approach to all songs, and analyze any music text that provokes or seeks to evoke emotion in the audience. In other words, it seems an unfair approach that, not only poets are considered different from songwriters, but that some songwriters and some songs are not enjoying attention. Punk music and works like Hanna's could be a good example of all this lack of attention. In fact, sometimes, the quality or impact of a

given song does not relate to poetic proficiency, but to the political or thematic content of the lyrics. It is not all about the poetic quality of songs, but also about the craft of the song and how it succeeds in getting that impression and effect on the audience. In this way, the utility and depth that can be found in the literary analysis of William Blake or Emily Dickinson, can also be found or exercised in the exciting and productive body of work from songwriters such as, just to mention a couple, Alanis Morissette or Bruce Springsteen, whose works can articulate a profound study and research of the political or social context that complicates their songs. Another example could be the following: "Prof Rambsy [from Southern Illinois University] finds discussing the lyrics of rapper Jay-Z a good way to engage young literature students and get them thinking about concepts like allusion and alliteration" (Wheeler). Essentially, the study of lyrics and poems may not differ that much. Robert P. McParland compares the analysis of a poem with the dissection of a frog in a laboratory, and I think that this approach can be extrapolated to a musical setting (lyrics) too:

> Yet we encounter poetry most often on a page. It is given to us in school settings and we are supposed to "analyze" it. Bring a poem into an educational setting and chances are that we will soon be dissecting it like a frog in a biology lab. We start taking it apart, looking at its constituent parts or functions, as one would look at an engine. (234)

In that sense, when we study a poem from a textual and discursive framework, we pay attention to its formal features, such as its syntax and the specific use of prosody. We can analyze who the agent of the poem is or who the poet is speaking to. And the same process can be carried out when analyzing the lyrics of a song. As I will do later with Hanna's lyrics, we can also examine the context of the song and the discourses around it, in order to see if the singer has had any particular aim when writing and performing that song. If we read lyrics with a deep awareness of their content and undertones, then we can argue that they play a noteworthy and powerful role as social constructs, influencing personal growth and social and personal identities: "The use of music, in other words, can vary as to how important it is in defining one's social identity, how significant it is in determining one's friendships, how special it is in forming one's sense of self" (Frith, *Performing* 90). In many occasions, the content of a song deals straightforwardly with social or political matters. Pedelty and Weglarz claim that "all music is political" (xi) and they add that there is now a fashion in scholarship to explore this. For instance, they talk about how some scholars are rethinking Michael Jackson's moonwalk, Britney Spears' outfits or analyzing heavy metal performances from a political perspective (xi), reinforcing the academic debate on lyrics. As I have explained in my work, lyrics "are central signifiers, one of the main ways composers and performers communicate political messages" (Pedelty and Weglarz xv). As I will clarify with the FCDA, Hanna's lyrics became an effective platform to express social, political and cultural concerns through subjects hardly explored before in music (e.g. gender, identities or women's sexuality).

These are some good reasons to study lyrics. Lyrics matter. They do have stories to tell and they reveal craftsmanship, that is, powerful and significant strategies to provoke emotional impact on the audience. They deliver a message. They move people. And, more in relation to the heart of this work, women's stories are in a

special need to be discovered and transmitted to raise awareness about the difficult path that they have gone through and also of the large number of obstacles that they have ahead because of their sex/gender.

6.2. Kathleen Hanna and Her Music Career

The women writing songs in the Riot Grrrl movement wrote from their womanly condition to other women, frankly and directly, opening new, alternative narratives in punk music. This new approach clearly opposed the traditional way in which women were depicted in (male-written) lyrics and it defined a new branch of punk music and of feminism. When asked if feminism needs punk, Alice Bag answers that it is the other way around, that "if punk is truly about challenging the status quo, then it has to be about challenging the patriarchy" (@AliceBag[58]). Music has served and still works as a vehicle for vindication and change in which lyrics play an important part. Songs work as an opportunity to display political and social concerns: "From Dylan and Donovan to DiFranco and Death By Stereo, some musicians have managed to burst out of pop's gilded cage of cool, parlaying popular music into political critique" (Pedelty and Weglarz xiii). In my study, I also seek to prove that lyrics are appropriate and useful to show the cultural range of that combination between feminism and artistic expression.

In the case of the lyrics written by Kathleen Hanna, I explore how they contain thematic and allusive references that can be analyzed from a feminist perspective. In a way, her songs can be said to be a solid and powerful instrument against patriarchal attitudes within the cultural context provided by punk radical feminist music. As I have previously argued, the cultural and musical roots of the Riot Grrrl movement can be traced back to Bratmobile's and Bikini Kill's initiators: Allison Wolfe, Molly Neuman, Kathleen Hanna and Tobi Vail. Their radical philosophy, poignantly inserted in their songs, stimulated American girls and women "to subvert the stagnant male-dominated underground by creating their own music, art, writing and scenes" (Downes, "Riot Grrrl" 23). Hanna was considered by many as the leader of the Riot Grrrl movement[59]. Despite the fact that she has usually rejected this affirmation, she became a role model for many American teenage girls. Her involvement in feminist activism propelled her into a symbolic position, as one of the most influential women of what, as I mentioned previously, was called the third wave of feminism. In order to get a clearer understanding of the relevance of her work, and her relevance in the Riot Grrrl movement, in this section, I summarize the discourse that surrounds her musical production and some personal and professional aspects that may have influenced it.

[58] This is a quotation from Alice Bag's personal Twitter account. I am aware of the fact that, in this dissertation, I usually resort to nonconventional resources. For instance, digital sources from the internet are employed quite often, always in combination with other traditional sources. Twitter accounts, Youtube channels, zines, bands' blogs, interviews or podcasts… had been natural and powerful secondary sources for this dissertation.

[59] Even though Kathleen Hanna is regarded as one of the leading icons of the Riot Grrrl movement, and even though her writing has been chosen as the material for this researching work, I have to acknowledge the fact that she is just one of the multiple possible examples of women who have paved the way in punk music to other girls. I have chosen to study Hanna's materials for her influence and transcendence in the Riot Grrrl movement, but that does not hide the fact that other women in the movement would have deserved the same attention and recognition.

The reason why I chose Kathleen Hanna as the main focus of my study on Riot Grrrl and lyrics was fundamentally based on the fact that Hanna wrote lyrics in which punk becomes an artistic expression to elaborate on political ideas (i.e. hegemony, power, or sexuality), at the same time that those lyrics were challenging traditional norms and standards and suggesting alternative notions of femininity. Consequently, my main goal in this dissertation is to study the power of music to produce and/or communicate social and political impact and transformation, especially through the content of the lyrics.

In order to deliver those general objectives, I am planning to examine the prevailing characteristics and the specific feminist themes that surface in Hanna's lyrics. Then, I present the consequences that discourses can bring on women's (especially on female artists') condition. Finally, it is my intention to provide an answer to a set of questions (included in the introduction and methodological part of my work) and, in the process, I reckon, I will be able to prove that Hanna's work is worthy of academic exploration and that the influence of her lyrics in both Riot Grrrl and the feminist movement is solid, becoming a thick foundation for both music in general and womanhood.

Thus, I study the place that Hanna's work occupies within the Riot Grrrl movement, the punk counterculture and the third wave of feminism, and how music works in this particular historical and social context. I comment on the musical language and the literary or theoretical allusions that she employs and I observe the musicological rules that she obeys (if she obeys any). Moreover, I explain whether her work has an effect in society or the targeted audiences and if her production relates to the popular culture of the time. I also analyze the purpose of the lyrics (to see if they have a moral or provide meaning, knowledge, education, or just a search of fun, for example). Finally, I number the arguments for academic interest on Hanna's work and their possible theoretical approaches to the lyrics and I show how her literary work relates to the matters of politics and gender. This is my aim in this section and it correlates with the general spirit of this work as it was presented in my introduction. Here, as I explained before, I am just trying to articulate those broader pictures that I offered before as a context to my analysis so that they equip the particular analysis of a concrete author and her work. In other words, I concretize what I explained before so that I can stipulate a proper and competent background for my posterior analysis.

However, before anything else and in order to comprehend the motivations that led Hanna to start her own band. I believe that it is necessary to start by providing a close look at her personal life, as it merges into her artistic career. Still, this will not be a conventional biographical account. It is my intention to focus on that life experience that relates to the part of her life that more straightforwardly relates to my object of study. My brief exposition of her life will always be connected to the researching interests in this work.

In the late 1980s, Hanna (see figure 21) was working as a photographer in a women's art gallery in Olympia. She was combining this job with other occupations, such as writing, working as a stripper, a crisis/domestic violence counselor at Safeplace or as a spokeswoman on sexual assaults and rape issues in high schools.

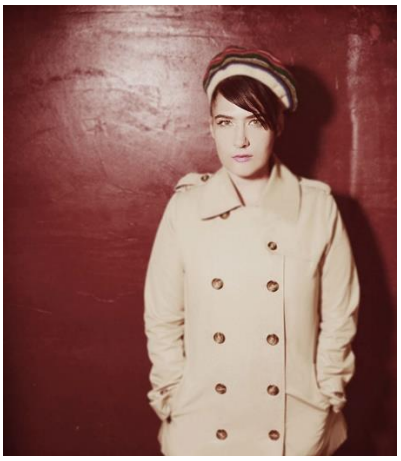

Fig. 21. Kathleen Hanna.

In different conversations, she has described a personal experience in which a roommate was assaulted at the bus stop on her way to school. In her own words, this event was kind of an "epiphany" (Hanna, "Kathleen Hanna Talks") for her:

> I was just like 'I want to end violence against women'. And it wasn't just about my experience . . . when something like that is arms-length, like everywhere around you . . . luckily there was a shelter called SafePlace, and I walked over there and that is really what changed my life and set me on a path to doing something . . . the reason I first got on stage was to advertise a teenage sexual assault group. (Hanna, "Kathleen Hanna Talks")

At that time, she started the bands Amy Carter and Viva Knievel, small projects in which she wrote songs that were mainly about sexual assaults. After the shows with these former bands, girls in the audience would meet with Hanna and tell her about their experiences with abusive fathers or violent boyfriends. Hanna then would give them orientation and counsel. In a way, she was doing the same work that she had taken as a domestic violence counselor. The fact is that she was really interested in sexually abused survivor's stories and she believed that a great amount of girls had stories to tell, stories that, she thought, needed to be told in the form of songs. This encouraged her to keep on trying harder to voice these issues: "I wanted to hear songs about what I was learning at the shelter! Songs about how to undo centuries of white-skin privilege, songs about the connections between class and gender, songs about being sexual that didn't cast me as a babe in a tight ZZTop dress" (Hanna, "Gen X" 132).

Her activism has always been linked to feminism. In different interviews, she has claimed to be a beneficiary of the second wave of feminism, thanks to her mother (also a volunteer helping domestic violence victims), who was subscribed to *Ms.* magazine and brought Hanna to a speech that Gloria Steinem gave in Washington D. C when Hanna was only nine years old (Corrigan 147). In addition, Hanna recalls that her mother was influenced by Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and that so was she. In a way, all the different feminist

inputs (and personal experiences) that she received at an early age made her turn her attention to all-girl bands who did not fear to talk about their gender. Already at college, Hanna went through one more significant experience to understand her involvement with music and feminism: she met and interviewed her idol, the American writer, performance artist and playwright Kathy Acker, whose literary works on female sexuality had been a real discovery for Hanna: "It was such a confidence builder for me. I wasn't even sure what kind of artist I was going to be, like if I was a writer or a photographer or what. But it made me feel like these other women had done this amazing shit and I could too" (Marcus 32).

In that interview that took place in a workshop in Seattle that both Acker and Hanna were attending and in which feminism, art and sex were being discussed in combination, Acker encouraged Hanna to form a girl band where she could openly express herself on those themes. On top of that, Hanna was very critical with the punk scene that was developing in the late 1980s and she was motivated to create a band that could combine punk music and feminist politics in order to oppose the male-dominated underground culture. That being so, she formed the feminist punk-rock band Bikini Kill (1990-1997). Based in Olympia, WA and Washington, DC, with the passing of time and the growth of the movement, the band would be considered a pioneering band in the Riot Grrrl movement, the origin of the ideology that has come to be called Revolution Girl Style Now![60].

Bikini Kill was Hanna's breakthrough in music. The band became famous for their performances and for the radical content of their feminist lyrics: "Our songs mixed feminist theory with the realities of our lives and were meant to inspire more girls to participate in the music scene" (*Kathleen Hanna*). They recorded and released *Revolution Girl Style Now!* (a demo album); two EPs, *Bikini Kill* and *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah* (a side of a split album with *Huggy Bear*); two LPs, *Pussy Whipped* and *Reject All American;* and two compilation albums, *The CD version of the First Two Records* and *The Singles*. Bikini Kill's impact for future all-girl bands was huge. Even today, they are still addressed as one of the most important bands of their generation due to their songs (e.g. the iconic "Rebel Girl" song), performances, but also for their politically charged lyrics and their activism and committed attitude.

Due to Hanna's revolutionary and feminist songs, her gender speeches after each concert, and the energetic performances that she delivered on stage, she was mislabeled as the "Queen Riot Grrrl" (Hanna, "Gen X" 134), a term that, as I have said before, she refused from the very beginning, because it made her feel alienated and somehow depressed. In an interview with Kelly McClure, Hanna stated: "I didn't start doing things in a way where I ever thought anyone outside myself would hear it. I never thought I'd be called a feminist icon to my fuckin' face; it's totally weird" (Hanna, "Kathleen Hanna on Becoming"). But Hanna's self-confidence and firmness on what she was doing triggered her recognition as the representative of Riot Grrrl, a feminist

[60] Riot grrrl bands had a vision for "a 'Revolution Girl Style Now!' Acting as the philosophical bedrock for the bands Bikini Kill and Bratmobile … these girls created a radical philosophy centered around encouraging girls and women across the country to subvert the stagnant male-dominated underground by creating their own music, art, writing and scenes" (Downes, "Riot Grrrl" 23).

movement that apparently was achieving more effectively and consistently those social, cultural and political objectives that other feminist movements had attempted to achieve previously but they had failed:

> Kathleen had a way of talking that made all the present obstacles seem temporary; she brought the future victory into focus. When she talked about the revolution, it wasn't just rhetoric; she meant it. She never seemed to doubt that all these young women working together had the power to end sexism, rape, harassment, and abuse. (Marcus 120)

Being an inspirational figure for many made her receive both positive and negative feedback and, at one point, she felt that everything concerning her persona was meant to be examined: "I'd been celebrated and denounced. I'd been boycotted, punched, shook, spit at, pulled offstage, and nearly arrested. I'd been called everything from a fat slut to "too radical" or "not radical enough" (Hanna, "Gen X" 135). Hanna was tired of the unchecked information and unfavorable opinion involving Riot Grrrl and, especially, the hard criticism on her. This, added to the lack of support from other feminist girls in the movement, debilitated Hanna's firmness, and she started to think that the activism that they were practicing was "fake" (Hanna, "Gen X" 136). Hanna herself has admitted that she lacked basic knowledge concerning the women's movement, a feeling that she resolved by reading a bibliography[61] that includes *The Feminist Memoir Project* (edited by Rachel Blau Duplessis and Ann Snitow, 1998)*, Daring to Be Bad* (Alice Echols*,* 1989) *Lesbian Ethics* (Sarah Hoagland, 1988) or *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (Robin Morgan, 1970), among others (Hanna, "Gen X" 136). All the inspirational works and speeches that she studied helped her have a wider view of what feminism is and means. That is probably why, more recently, she has expressed the relevance that it has to possess a referential figure; how those past references grant confidence and determination. It means that no one has to "reinvent the wheel" (Hanna, "Gen X" 131):

> Had I found my own heritage earlier, had I sought out feminist mentors (and offered myself to help with and learn from their schemes, projects, and ideas) earlier, I might not have felt so alone and freaked out . . . Their work welcomed me back to the world of language – where it's actually possible for me to express these emotions, tell this story, and write these ideas down. (Hanna, "Gen" X 136)

Due to the aforementioned breakdown, Hanna quit Bikini Kill in 1998. Soon, she started a solo project under the name of Julie Ruin*,* which was almost in its entirety recorded and produced in Hanna's apartment in Olympia, following the assumptions of the DIY philosophy that engulfed the cultural activism of those days. In the documentary film *The Punk Singer,* Hanna explains that "girls' bedrooms sometimes can be this space of real

[61] Hanna has participated in the writing of different books and comics. To mention some, she wrote a chapter titled "Gen X Survivor" for the classic anthology of feminist writings *Sisterhood is Forever*; the preface for the collection of works by female graphic artists *Scheherazade: Comics About Love, Treachery, Mothers, and Monsters* (edited by Megan Kelso in 2004) or the introduction to the book *Joan Jett* by Todd Oldham (2010).

creativity. The problem is that these bedrooms are all cut off from each other. I wanted the Julie Ruin record to sound like a girl from her bedroom made this record but then didn't just throw it away or it wasn't just in her diary but she took it out and shared it with people" (Hanna, *The Punk Singer*). This independent solo album that she wrote under the name of Julie Ruin tackles feminist issues but also a variety of other topics such as aerobics, police abuse, crocheting or friendship.

After this first solo record, Hanna moved to New York and she asked Johanna Fateman and Sadie Benning to accompany her on her performances, which led to the formation of the electro-punk band Le Tigre in the same year, thanks, in part, to the new technologies that allowed to examine the potential of combining feminism with hip hop or electro music (Downes, "Riot Grrrl" 42). The band wanted to turn feminism around by creating pop music that their community could dance along while listening to feminist mottos. Hanna was seeking to "reinforces the feminist and queer politics agenda in the art and most inspired a generation of third-wave feminists" (Corrigan 145). The band describes their birth as originated in the feminist outburst that challenged the 1990s masculinist punk, but not exactly embroiled in Riot Grrrl: "we are one art-damaged, deconstructive, performance-art, electronic pop off-shoot of the grassroots punk feminist organizing and cultural production of the nineties! . . . but the members of Le Tigre are not personally involved with Riot Grrrl now" ("Questions and Answers"). Le Tigre, which can be labelled as an electro-punk band characterized by its playful eclectic pop sounds, became a more complex project since it also included visual components and artistic performances in the shows. However, the political edge was still part of the plan, since they still were addressing political issues in the lyrics:

> The music is not separate from our political ideas and we really can't choose one or the other. We don't think that art or music can replace political activism, but we think it can be an important part of a culture of resistance so that social change feels possible. We want to make great music that radical people can recognize their values in, because that is what we ourselves crave. ("Questions and Answers")

Le Tigre's lyrics deal also with feminist and LGBT issues. In one of their songs, "TGIF", for instance, they make a sarcastic rhetorical question about their feminist foundations: "I heard you were some kind of underground/ Electro feminist performance artists. Is that right?" (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001), what confirms their commitment to the movement. "Keep on Living," in the same album, addresses the process of coming out as queer. Those two are then just a small sample of how, in Le Tigre, Hanna's artistic and personal concerns have kept a connection to her previous experience. Le Tigre released *Le Tigre* (1999), *From the Desk of Mr. Lady* (2001), *Feminist Sweepstakes* (2001), *Remix* (2001) and *This Island* (2004). It is true that, even though the musical background in Le Tigre was different from the characteristic punk sounds in Bikini Kill, the content is still relevant for this study, since, as I have stated before, the band also addresses significant topics in tune with the feminist movement.

It should be contemplated too that Bikini Kill belongs to a certain period and a certain movement – that of Riot Grrrl – in which the appetite for rebellion and protest was an important part of the spirit and agenda of

the group, as I have already shown and as I will illustrate in my analysis of the songs. Hanna explains that "in Bikini Kill I was singing to an allusive asshole male that was fucking rolled over and I was allowing other women to watch me do that, and I really wanted to start directly singing to other women" (Hanna, *The Punk Singer*). On the other hand, Le Tigre started playing in the 21st century, a time when the Riot Grrrl movement was apparently gone and Hanna has been consciously pursuing an independent musical career. There is, in fact, a change in Hanna's attitude, a visible determination and autonomy in which she seems to have been freed of the need to find a background to justify her statements. Yet, she still sends powerful messages; at this stage, with a more mature voice. This progress, sometimes manifest, other times subtle, in my opinion, has to be approached in any study that aims at exploring Hanna's songwriting. However, concerning the content of the lyrics in the aforementioned three bands, it is necessary to assert that there are still points in common. This is also a feature that needs to be considered in my analysis: Hanna's work in Bikini Kill (1990-1998), Julie Ruin (1998) and Le Tigre (1998-2006) covers almost two decades and there is an evolution in the lyrics, depending on the band and the period in which they are inserted. However, there are also common traces and a constant treatment of a set of given topics. In my opinion, that progress in the content and style of the lyrics, but also in the attitude and the overall projection of each undertaking, parallels the evolution of the feminist movement itself, which was heading towards a new phase that some will call the fourth wave of feminism (Cochrane 2013; Abrahams 2017; Love 2016).

In general, Hanna's lyrics are characterized by powerful diction and a straightforward imagery and, in them, I attest the inclusion of topics and concerns that have been usually associated with the third wave of feminism, showing that these matters were of great interest for riot grrrls and the bands that emerged within this movement and after it. As I have argued, Riot Grrrl stimulated girls to take a stand, find a proper and visible place in the dancefloor and, above all, the propositions, achievements and the legacy of this movement encourage women to be artistically creative and find, in the cultural sphere, a niche for the voicing of their preoccupations and demands. I intend to explore and show this reality through the application of an approach based on the analysis of Hanna's lyrics through the methodological framework of FCDA, as I have explained before. In my opinion, Hanna's production will reveal that lyrics are a fruitful platform to address feminism from a capable and fresh angle, while, at the same time, listening to some energetic and effective punk music.

7. A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Kathleen Hanna's Work

In the next few pages, I carry out the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Hanna's songwriting. With this specific analysis, I will show, first, that lyrics are a cultural production that contributes to the development of Gender Studies; then, I search dominant traits concerning feminism in Hanna's lyrics and explore the evolution of those topics in her music; and, finally, I will discern the place that Hanna's work occupies in the Riot Grrrl movement and in the context of the third wave.

The main goal of FCDA is "to show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which frequently taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities" (Lazar 142). In this dissertation, I take lyrics (written texts) as the object to be analyzed. The Riot Grrrl movement and the third wave of feminism are the contexts in which those texts were produced and, consequently, they are the cultural paradigm in which I insert my analysis. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of this analysis and the diverse focus that it acquires, different interpretations may be drawn from it. As Sunderland and Litosseliti argue, "it is not difficult to recognize that people will have different affective and cognitive responses to the same text" (17) and I acknowledge that mine is a subjective interpretation that might differ from its original intention. Nevertheless, I consider that an analysis focused on discourse and gender will open up the possibilities for approaching texts (whether written or spoken) in a fresh and renovated way.

As I have argued in the introductory part of the work (section 1 subsection 2), I choose a specific corpus of texts (lyrics) based on the thematic content and on their feminist themes and motifs. This specific corpus originates mainly from Kathleen Hanna's work in Bikini Kill: the self-released demo album *Revolution Girl Style Now!* (1991), their first EP *Bikini Kill* (1992); the split album with the band Huggy Bear *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah* (1993); *Pussy Whipped* (1993); the 1994 compilation album *The CD version of the First Two Records* (which was re-released in 2015 under the name *The First Two Records*, including some additional tracks); the studio album *Reject All American* (1996); a last compilation album titled *The Singles* (1998), including the following three separate singles: "New Radio", "The Anti-Pleasure Dissertation" and "I Like Fucking". Additionally, I also contemplate Kathleen Hanna's work in her solo project Julie Ruin (1998), an anticipation for her next contribution to music with the feminist electro-punk band Le Tigre. From this last project, I consider their debut studio album *Le Tigre* (1999), their EP *From the Desk of Mr. Lady* (2001), their second studio album *Feminist Sweepstakes* (2001), and the last one, *This Island* (2004). Not all the songs included in these productions are part of the final analysis. I only focus on the lyrics that have significance for my study (in relation to the feminist content of each song). Others do not specifically match the purpose of my study, yet, they may serve as alternative material for other academic studies. In fact, they testify to the diversity of musical production and the natural inspiration of Hanna's creativity, which is not only reduced to aspects or themes that would fit within a limited range of topics. Apart from the EPs, LPs, singles, demos and compilation albums that I use for my analysis, some other audiovisual material such as videos, online or magazine interviews, blog postings, documentaries, and films,

will help understand the discourse that wraps the lyrics up. The whole songs are available and can be checked in https://riotlyrics.omeka.net, the online database that I have created in order to have all the lyrics organized (chronologically and by theme). All the information related to this research has been uploaded there.

As I have also stated in the introduction, I decided to divide the examination of the lyrics in units that have been categorized for subject matter reasons (see table 2). I decided to do it like this, because, while analyzing the history of feminism, some specific themes and concepts emerged that can also be found in Hanna's lyrics, and not just within a single project but in the three bands. In this way, I made a selection of these themes and concepts, related by subject matter, in a thematic classification. I elaborated a clear division in order to clarify my exposition of the examined songs and the subsequent observation of the themes on each one of them.

As explained before, I believe that these nine different sections will help me articulate a thorough and detailed application of FCDA in the songs written by Kathleen Hanna for her different music projects. To start with, having a safe place of their own, where women could meet free from any danger and discuss personal or political matters and create artistic works led to a sense of bonding and support. This is quite representative of the third wave and Riot Grrrl too. In a way, safe spaces and a sense of sisterhood are interconnected themes, since those places helped girls meet regularly and develop a strong sense of community. That is why I have decided to place them together in a single category. Patriarchy and power come afterwards and, even though I could have put them together, I consider that these two topics are of great relevance and deserve separate sections. From these two issues, other concepts like binarism can be extrapolated. I understand binarism as a dualistic classification that tends to compare and/or counter terms). It derives from here a subsequent feeling of alienation, which affected women's condition throughout the different waves and also in Riot Grrrl (as those girls felt isolated within the punk scene). Moving away from those wide categories, I focus next on language, which acquires a special significance within my study, because I reckon it a complex case. In fact, everything in the lyrics could be estimated as pertaining to this subject matter. That is why that particular section will be longer than the rest. I think that the concept of language as a construct and the subsequent use of it makes it necessary to explain further notions that may be useful for the FCDA. Then, I approach sexuality and gender-based violence, special concerns for the third wave of feminism and that also riot grrrls approached in their performances, writings and music. Lastly, I consider politics and feminist theories. It is true that feminist activism can be included within that broader paradigm that is politics. Yet, it is noteworthy that the specific use of feminist lens is specially employed and encouraged in Hanna's career and it can be seen in all the different bands in which she participated. Politics and feminism have always been pivotal for the women's fight and, undoubtedly, for the Riot Grrrl movement too. In fact, riot grrrls started to approach it frankly and openly, offering a new approach to it through artistic expressions.

I think that this classification is accurate and pertaining when my main goal is to see the similarities between lyrical content and feminist demands, especially the ones that scholarship has related to the third wave of feminism. For each subject matter selected, I include a brief introductory part in which I explain the focal foundation and the corresponding information for a better understanding of the subsequent analytical part. Thus,

I work in depth with issues such as patriarchy, binarist thinking or sexual politics, issues that I have already examined and contextualized in the previous sections of this dissertation, but that I clarify again for the specific application in the analysis of the lyrics. After that, I discuss all the lyrics in which I found significant references to that particular topic or subject matter, paying attention both to the formal aspects in the lyrics and to the discursive content. I must say that I do not aim at making a strict analysis of the lyrics as a literary form, since my central purpose is to see lyrical content in discursive terms (for what, I insist, I adopt and apply some of the discursive information discussed in the first part of my work and the information included in the Table 1: Linguistic Analysis).

However, before I proceed to develop the content of each subject matter, I consider it appropriate and useful to offer a general overview of the most significant formal and stylistic aspects that characterized the songs written by Kathleen Hanna. For instance, the focalization offered in most of the songs is that of direct address. The singer uses a first person, *I*. Sometimes I understand that the *I* person corresponds to Hanna and I assign the analysis of the subject to herself. That *I* person is a few times understood as Hanna herself and not a fictional subject because the ideological, political, or cultural analysis derived from that assignment matches what she herself has exposed in interviews and other texts or because of the eloquence of the exposition and how she apparently establishes a nexus between her performance of the song and the topics and/or motifs communicated through the lyrics. Yet, in other songs, I explore the subjects in different ways, investigating if they are used as a broader narrative voice, encompassing the speaker and other addressees. It is sometimes obvious that Hanna is building her songs upon a fictional character, another person or just a collective subject. For these reasons, when referring to the person narrating or substantiating the subjectivity of the song, I use the following terminology: speaker, speaking voice, or voice.

The speaker directly talks to a second person *you* (unknown sometimes) or to the audience. In some cases, the songs reference to an institution or a symbolic male audience and, in certain occasions, the *you* employed (plural usually) applies to a female audience taken as a group or collective. The figurative language of the lyrics provides the audience with new insights, and combined with other strategies such as the cut-edged lines, provoke greater reactions in the audience. Hanna employs an informal, natural and straightforward diction and the use of curse words, expletives, exclamations or requests matches the feminist nature of her songwriting. Nevertheless, the singer also presents her feelings and inner thoughts maturely. Structurally, the lyrics are usually anchored on a simple and flexible arrangement and the fabrication of lines, stanzas and rhyme schemes is arbitrary, what together with the lack of strong syntactic boundaries (punctuation in the written text) and the word repetition work as a formal device. In summary, this formal perspective, here described in general and with an explanatory aim, will be also resourcefully employed in my attempt to apply an otherwise discursive analysis of Kathleen Hanna's lyrics.

7.1. Space and Sorority

As I have argued before, it is well documented that the girls involved in the Riot Grrrl movement were consciously and actively connected to each other in a supportive way that had not been reported or experienced in music before. A real feeling of sisterhood and sorority was felt within the movement and all the girls who were part of it, playing a variety of different roles – e.g., as performers, zine writers or counselors –, supported each other unconditionally, not just in spirit, but also in an organized manner. This bond and the subsequent community that stemmed from it were the results of a well-organized system of meetings in spaces where these girls, enjoying a feeling of safety and involvement that most of them found priceless and invigorating, could get together and exchange personal experiences, intimate impressions and other combative plans. As third wave feminists, riot grrrls also focused on establishing feminist spaces where women meet and share their experiences in a safe environment. For example, in the song "I Hate Danger"[62] (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998), the speaking voice refers to men putting women in a bad position, maybe as outsiders (from the music scene, public sphere, power positions etc.) and in danger too:

> Your whole thing put me in
> negative space for way too long
> the only thing I managed to say during
> that time was 'I hate danger'
> (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998)

From this, we confirm that these girls were asking for places in which they could materialize a sense of actual sisterhood, providing resources for communal and interpersonal activities, artistic creativity and determined self-expression. Indeed, these topics are voiced in several other songs by Bikini Kill and also Le Tigre. Hanna makes straightforward references, for instance, to the creation of a bigger and cohesive community of girls. She also refers to spaces like streets (both as a place that did not grant safety for women and as an expanse for

[62] As a rule, when I mention the title of the song that I am about to analyze, this will always be accompanied by the most basic information in between brackets. This is, the band, the title of the album in which that song is included and the year of release. I am aware of the fact that this is an information that I repeat later, in the citations and even in-text, but I want to put that information upfront so that the reader is able to be aware of the relevance of that information, aiding the reader so that comparisons between periods, albums and bands can be reached. I will offer those same reflections whenever I conclude one of the items of this classification, and with the inclusion of this evidence the reader can follow the path of my reasoning from the very start. Besides, as I argued in the introduction, when I analyze the lyrics of a song, I do not include the complete lyrics and I only use particular parts of it. Independent of the length of the part chosen, I will be alternating it with a close analysis within my dissertation. I decided not to include the lyrics in a separate appendix. Instead, having direct access to the portions when they are explored, I believe that I enable readers to have direct access to them from the beginning and judge my comments in a more accessible manner.

revolutionary feminist meetings) and concert rooms as territories that girls have to occupy in order to actualize their place on stage or in the frontline of the audience.

In 1993, Bikini Kill released what became its most recognized anthem on sisterhood: "Rebel Girl" (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993). As Sara Marcus suggests, it "was well on its way to becoming a movement's fight song" (110). Produced by Joan Jett and written by Hanna, the song "Rebel Girl" is considered a call to solidarity between feminists. The song portrays a girl from the neighborhood who is a potential role model for American girls. The revolutionary tone and style that Hanna uses to attract girls to her political side encourage them to follow this new "queen", whose speeches and hip movements evoke an authentic revolution. As Jenn Pelly argues, "Hanna's nonconformist dream-grrrl steamrolled over female stereotypes in rock and the world, evoking revolution with every step" ("Bikini Kill"). The use of the third person in the song opens the possibility for interpretation. It amplifies the literary implications of the unconstrained characterization, providing the opportunity to strengthen the understanding and identity of this "rebel girl" within Hanna's own cultural and social symbolic and representative command, as she became the inspiration and idol of some American adolescents, making of their isolated world a real sisterhood:

> . . .
> Rebel girl Rebel girl
> Rebel girl you are the queen of my world
> . . .
> That girl thinks she's the queen of the neighborhood
> I got news for you she is
> They say she's a dyke but I know
> She is my best friend yeah
> . . .
> Love you like a sister always
> Soul sister, Rebel girl
> Come and be my best friend
> Will you Rebel girl?
> (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993)

Probably, "Rebel Girl" is the most characteristic and popular song by Bikini Kill: a "definitive riot grrrl anthem, the ultimate snapshot of the genre's power-punk music and feminist heroism" (Mcdonnell and Vincentelli). As I explained in the first part of my dissertation, the criticism that some women were making about the lack of role models, mentors and antecedents that could help create that female community was not new. It is also true that women may find fewer role models as a result of women's historical absence from some artistic domains, as in the case of music. In this regard, "Rebel Girl" reveals itself as a call for renovation, an opportunity to transform those absences and deficiencies. The repetition of such an iconic and catchy phrase as "rebel girl" could be the

explanation for the success of the song, because it became a strong and paradigmatic self-affirmation of a whole spirit that was marking a community of girls. Besides, the use of "soul sister" in combination with it was a call for that sisterhood, networking and collaboration that define Riot Grrrl. All this, together with the use of repetition from the opening of the song is reinforced by the simple but dynamic instrumentalization in order to reinforce the message and its emotional significance.

Another clear reference to this concept of affiliation and alliance is found in Le Tigre's song "Hot Topic", where the speaking voice mentions several inspirational and powerful figures in art. As the band admits in their blog[63], it was Hanna's dream to write a song like this to celebrate the people who give the band the strength as artists and feminists that they required to pursue their goals ("Questions and Answers"). Hanna is mainly asking these women (and all the people involved in the search for equality) to continue working, we can guess, because their legacy would be uplifting for future girls:

> Stop, don't you stop
> I can't live if you stop
> ("Hot Topic", *Le Tigre,* 1999)

In 3 minutes and 44 seconds, Hanna lists famous and (some) not so popular women (and a few men), in an attempt to raise awareness of their works and, at the same time, visibilizing their accomplishments and heritage. Many of those names belong to the music world, as is the case of the Butchies, Gretchen Phillips, Japanese and New York based band Cibo Matto, Hanna's friends from Sleater-Keaney or American bluegrass singer and bassist Hazel Dickens, Nina Simone or Joan Jett. Others, on the other hand, are mainly known for their contributions in the literary realm: Mab Segrest, Dorothy Allison, Gertrude Stein or Gayatri Spivak. Italian painter Carol Rama, American auto racer Shirley Muldowney or tennis player Billie Jean King are mentioned too ("Hot Topic", *Le Tigre,* 1999). Performers, visual artists, activists… the list is long, yet, it is interesting to note the presence of three men: American novelist and civil rights activist James Baldwin; AIDS activist, photographer, painter and artist David Wojnarowicz; and American (transgender) jazz musician Billy Tipton ("Hot Topic", *Le Tigre,* 1999). It is worth mentioning that all these men are linked to causes that many feminist groups also support. It is probably on purpose that Hanna mentions them, to set examples and show that anyone regardless of their sex or cause can be influential for future generations:

> . . . Carol Rama and Eleanor Antin / Yoko Ono and Carolee Schneemann/ You're getting old, that's what they'll say, but / Don't give a damn I'm listening anyway / Stop, don't you stop / I can't live if you stop / Don't you stop /. . . / Urvashi vaid, Valie Export, Cathy Opie, James Baldwin / Diane Dimassa, Aretha Franklin, Joan Jett, Mia X, Krystal Wakem / Kara Walker, Justin Bond, Bridget Irish, Juliana

[63] I use this reference multiple times in this dissertation. It corresponds to an interview to Le Tigre named "Questions and Answers", published in a blog that can be accessed at http://www.letigreworld.com.

Lueking / Cecelia Dougherty, Ariel Schrag, The Need, Vaginal Creme Davis / Alice Gerard, Billy Tipton, Julie Doucet, Yayoi Kusama, Eileen Myles / Oh no, no, no don't stop (Le Tigre, *Le Tigre,* 1999)

Suzy Corrigan defines this song as "in many ways a blueprint of aesthetic influence on punk rock feminism" (145), and, in fact, "Hot Topic" is a clear example of how important it is to have role models to follow, especially for teenage girls, which, in connection to the topic that I am exploring in this first section, stands as an important issue, since one of the main aims of this effort to set a strong bonding system among women, which I called sorority, was to strengthen those connections in order to establish a solid conversation and, in consequence, a thick foundation for other girls who could see an opportunity for engagement in this legacy. In other words, future generations will not have to start from scratch. In the past, some young girls who wanted to participate in the punk-rock scene lacked references of successful women, as these were just exceptional. Nevertheless, as this song tries to exemplify, the list of uplifting women is extended, and it will continue to be so as long as their stories are accounted and told. Without any doubt, riot grrrls looked back to some leading roles that were inspiring, but at the same time they themselves, as explained, were setting a community of precedents for generations to come.

Once a solid community between the girls was built, they needed spaces to create art, perform, and vindicate their demands. Within the diverse allusions to outdoor spaces that we find in Hanna's lyrics, the idea of taking the "street" and the "outside" stands out as a repeated trope, representative of riot grrrls' demands for revolution. One of the first allusions to the street is represented in Bikini Kill's song "Speed Heart" (*Pussy Whipped*, 1993), where the speaker delivers a symbolic story in which she commands that an imaginary (male) audience is removed from her street. Her emphasis on the possessive pronoun "my" is very expressive and declarative. A broader reading brings forward interpretations on the necessity to claim spatial agency for women in male-dominated territories. Besides, she specifies that she does not need (a man's) company. This can be read only as a cry-out for relentless empowerment, implying that some other women have been harassed and that she needs no help to overcome this dangerous situation. However, in the light of my previous observations, she seems to reject a patriarchal and conventional standard of protection that stipulates, in a way, the weaknesses and flaws that stereotypical categorization have long established for women:

. . .
Can't you get out off my street
I don't need your company
What do you want from me?
. . .
It's so, it's so, oh
A shelter from the pain
. . .
(Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped*, 1993)

In “Strawberry Julius” (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998), another song by Bikini Kill, Hanna exhibits a similar demand and she also provides an analogous tone to a story that was previously perceived and explained in “Speed Heart” (*Pussy Whipped*, 1993); a double allusion is made to the “street” as well, and also to the “room” that girls were then starting to occupy:

> It's you
> all over my skin
> Taking invisible streets
> To the fake place
> Where we win
> Watch me now,
> From the back of the room
> . . .
> (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998)

First, with a powerful visual image, it is suggested that men are over women’s skin, and this physical image brings forward a sense of inescapability and certainty, a layer that cannot be removed and that covers the human’s body. This reference might suggest that women are not individual and free, that they are always attached, permeated, restrained by men, as close as the skin is to the bone. Like in the preceding song, streets play a fundamental role here: they are described as a territory for conflict and confrontation, in which power is exercised; in this case, from a gender perspective. The speaking voice refers in this song to the “invisible streets”. In my view, that invisibility may refer to those women that were insecure and vulnerable when walking freely through them. Hanna might be implying that the streets are not safe spaces for women. Yet, with a threatening tone, she dares men to watch her from the back, because from now on, she sings, women are going to be at the front of the room, a space occupied by men until that time. In other words, spatial gendered geography and the power structures and boundaries that perform domain over a given location are here expressed with a quality of immediacy and assertiveness that establishes new realms of potential spatiality for feminist vindications. In that sense, “the fake place” in this song can be also understood as an imaginary place in which stereotypes and expectations are reviewed and explored anew or, more exactly, as a reference to the victories achieved by the feminist movement, successes that somehow may look imaginary or incomplete because many of the relevant combats that feminism has been running for years are apparently still awaiting resolution or achievement. Whether when referring to the female body or in connection to her use of place, Hanna elaborates an emotional story of determination and agency through a solid and blunt employment of imagery.

As I have repeatedly stated, riot grrrls were launching a series of activities and plans to tackle their feminist agenda. They were pursuing with resolution a plan to settle unresolved feminist requests, among those

were the aforementioned call for sorority and change. In “False Start” (Bikini Kill, *Reject All American,* 1996), the speaker openly and sincerely asks for a wider commitment and bond between girls. The main idea is to flourish stronger and meet together in the streets, seeking to start their collective revolution.

> . . .
> Wanna go outside
> Don't you wanna go outside
> Been stuck inside your room
> so stranded-like and full of doom all year
> Time out for good behavior
> adds up to what you want it to
> . . .
> That informs a motivation
> casual or obligation-fictitious circumstance
> suspending all your future plans
> wait for you outside.
> . . .
> We're meeting at this place I wanna see you,
> see your face again
> . . .
> (Bikini Kill, *Reject All American,* 1996)

The singer expresses a desire to go “outside” with a more motivational attitude and a more challenging approach. Here the “outside” as a free space is opposed to the room, which is filled with feelings of failure. Women have been “stuck” in the interior, unable to react and act. Now, these girls are motivated. They are in the proper mood to start being what, in the song, the speaker defines both as a “casual” and “obligation” factor, probably referring to the feminist movement, which, for some, was just another continuation of the waves, whereas for others was a mandatory motion to end oppression and inequality. The speaker goes on and states that no more plans will be developed. Indeed, everything will be suspended because the only project that matters is the one in which girls are struggling for their rights.

Close to those lines and following with the sense of community and sisterhood typical of Riot Grrrl, the song “On the Verge” (Le Tigre, *This Island,* 2004) depicts a friend (perhaps a Riot Grrrl friend) depressed, lying on bed. The narrative voice is showing, with a truthful gesture, support and solidarity towards her. Hanna claims that girls are going to meet on the streets, to start an ignition and protest. They are now turning tables, and “on the verge” of changing things. The song asks girls to leave sadness or fears behind and it encourages them to grab bags filled with typewriters, mics or video cameras, to join the riot grrrls and start all together a revolution based on artistic expression:

So get your bags packed now and I'll meet you on the outside
"X"-out all self-supervision, get your keys out, now start the ignition
We're on the verge of
. . .
When you're shipwrecked on your mattress
I'll come in and show you how
To hijack the past and wind up in the right now
Grab some clothes, three chords, and a video camera
Maybe a mic, some hand-wipes, a typewriter, and a hammer
"X"-out all self-supervision, get your keys out, now start the ignition
(Le Tigre, *This Island,* 2004)

The specific features analyzed in these six songs ("Rebel Girl", "Hot Topic", "Speed Heart", "Strawberry Julius", "False Start" and "On The Verge") are related to one of the main demands in all the different waves of feminism: women's need for a solid community and a unique sisterhood with a certainty of spatial property that would reach to every dimension of their lives. As I have tried to argue before, these songs make constant references to the street as a place in which women perform agency in male-ruled territories where power structures and inequalities are still signified. Hanna claims that the symbolic outdoor space (the street) is a domain in which women should also feel free, safe and accounted. Of course, Hanna's choice of place is not whimsical. Her frequent references to the "outside" as a defining space is relevant as long as the public space is a field traditionally prohibited for women who are conventionally supposed to occupy the private sphere.

And apart from the streets, other locations, however specific, like concert venues or other more general spaces such as "rooms," were also spatial targets in these songs, voicing women's manifestation of their search for recognition and agency in punk. Venue rooms were sometimes places in which passive roles for women were performed, such as the "coat stands" trope that I have described before, when explaining the foundations of the Riot Grrrl movement. In these spaces, women also felt alienated from a scene that they wanted to enjoy. In this sense, it is significant how Hanna, in her latter project Le Tigre, explores and discusses the meaning and transcendence of the famous expression that held the spirit of the Riot Grrrl movement. The slogan "girls to the front" brings forward echoes of that spatial demand that I have argued in the previous examples. With its inception, girls cultivated a sense of space repossession and challenged (and, in a way, upset) the boys who did not easily accept their equal presence in the music scene. In the 1990s, one of the main focus of activism in the Riot Grrrl scene was the feminist attempt at spatial recovery: girls took a step forward and started to occupy the frontline in concert venues; at the same time, all-girl bands such as Bikini Kill were encouraging that attitude and disposition in their concerts. In the lyric, the same spirit and agenda is also visible.

This allusion to this Riot Grrrl's iconic slogan is appropriately illustrated in Le Tigre's "LT Tour Theme" (*Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001), for example, which clearly makes reference to those boys that occupy all the

front line of the room and then would start to mosh, discouraging girls to participate. Fortunately, all that changed, as explained before, when bands emerging in the context of the Riot Grrrl movement started to ask girls to take the frontline of concerts, so that they could enjoy the performances in an equal way to men. In this song, the speaking voice states that the presence of those girls moving forward to that significant and politically-charged defining space and reaching close to the stage was in fact an opportunity that ignited recognition and celebration for the bands up in the stage. That was what they were trying to endorse, that the situation of women within the spatial order of a concert was reverted:

> Yeah, it's weird when the club is really crowded
> And there's no way that we can do every song that's shouted
> But we'll still try to push you towards abandon
> Yeah, every night is something we can't plan on
> . . .
> Yeah you know the guys with the digi cameras
> Push to the front and then they just stand there?
> But then we see the girls walking towards the dance floor
> And we remember why we go on tour
> . . .
> (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001)

Included in the same LP, the song "FYR" (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001) establishes a significant contrast and a peculiar reading of the undertones that brought forward that demand. With the passing of time, other meanings are evoked in her music and Kathleen Hanna exhibits a complexity that enriches her reading of time and signification. The song makes a similar reference to the same Riot Grrrl's slogan but, at the same time, it also criticizes that, after all the fight in which women were involved in this musical fulfilment of certain ideals and motifs encompassed in the third wave of feminism, some things remain unchanged. The title "FYR" (Fifty Years of Ridicule) hints that, after all the activism and struggling, some women consider that the outcomes amount to a ridiculous defeat. In the lyric, the speaker voices a pending questioning on the achievements and success in the consecution of the goals that this slogan was encompassing. Women, in other words, still wonder if one day they will feel free, happy and safe:

> . . .
> Feminists we're calling you
> Please report to the front desk
> Let's name this phenomenon
> It's too dumb to bring us down

. . .
I wonder whether we could be happy in a place like that
. . .
I had a friend who did that
She used to ride the subway in New York City
From the beginning of the line at New Lots Avenue
All the way up to 241st Street in the Bronx
And nobody would bother her
(Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001)

Also, the topics of safety and freedom are very well illustrated in this same song. Taking as a backbone the specific story of a woman who travels alone in New York's subway without anyone bothering or harassing her, the persona articulates a musical discourse in which it is possible to compare this unusual event with a normal situation in which women are harassed and deprived of their freedom. This, as I have mentioned before, becomes one of the key elements in the feminist ideology that these women were trying to elaborate through music.

In the song "After Dark" (Le Tigre, *This Island,* 2004), the speaker provides the audience with examples of patriarchal expectations. The song uses symbols such as a "brush" to structure a dialogue on patriarchal assumptions. A brush can be read as an element associated with beauty standards that reinforce gender stereotypes for women and men. The speaking voice addresses women, calls their attention and compels them to relinquish the brush (and thus reject standards of beauty) for the microphone. However, apart from this obvious reference, what Hanna evokes again in this song is the significance of spatial location, which is used, in the song, as the language that describes how that performance of freedom will take place. The front row of a concert becomes again a territorial metaphor of dispute and autonomy:

. . .
I will be in the front row later when your brush becomes a mic
Maybe we could change this game forever
. . .
(Le Tigre, *This Island,* 2004)

The song evokes sorority between girls as well. Hanna seems to talk from experience, with a certain tone and attitude, being harsh and sincere in the lyric, blending message and emotion and addressing a girl, maybe new in the music industry, as a powerful image to deliver her own signification. In the following verses, the speaking voice explains that, in case someone wants to put an end to a girl's dreaming about her artistic qualities, she can contact her, no matter the time of the day. The anaphora that she significantly employs suggests that some may argue that it is not the right time for women to be active participants, that doubts will always be cast on

them. She resolutely states that together they are going to cross the line that interferes with the success that they deserve:

> . . .
> They might say we're both crazy
> I'm just glad I found you, baby
> I don't want someone telling me no-oh-oh "you're out of time"
> I don't mind being debated as long as you're with me tonight
> I'm not gonna give up easy, we were made to cross the line
> (Le Tigre, *This Island,* 2004)

The sense of protection is present in this song. It emulates the unconditional support that the girls belonging to Riot Grrrl shared in the aforementioned communities. All the girls bore the same famous mantra in mind: "girls to the front," which, as referred before, became a symbolic expression that riot grrrls would shout in concerts.

That confinement to patriarchal standards that I explained in the introductory part is also made apparent in the song "TKO" (Le Tigre, *This Island*, 2004). On the one hand, the lyric starts by metaphorically expressing the idea that men get attention at women's expense; men are represented as an overprotective or repressive figure that is always on women's back, looking after them, as guards who do not let them act independently. Hanna openly expresses that, while men speak liberally, women "eat the glass" ("TKO", Le Tigre, *This Island*, 2004). This metaphor – probably hinting the glass ceiling metaphor that is used to represent an invisible barrier that prevents women from reaching the highest power-positions in hierarchical structures – is still a present obstacle that many women have to confront:

> Want more real attention
> At my expense guess you forgot to mention
> You talk good, I'll eat glass
> I heard you read my mind behind my back
> Outside, I'm waiting
> By the car when you're hesitating
> Take a good look
> Take a photo
> Write about it in your tiny notebook
> Don't you know? You're out cold
> Don't you know? It's our dance-floor!
> . . .
> Wanna be in
> Everyday it just gets closer to you

I'll say my piece
And when it's over, you'll be on your knees
. . .
(Le Tigre, *This Island*, 2004)

However, on the other hand, the song conjures, again, the allusion to girls' location in concerts, which was somehow limited to the back side of the room. The physical hostility that the late punk and hardcore scene entailed was part of the reason behind a situation that had cornered women in certain terrains, domains in which agency and muscle were verbalized and performed. In this song, the repossession of both the "outside" and the "dance-floor" triggers a natural vindication of that new feminist geography of revival and authority.

To sum up, team spirit, respect and help were the grounds of a movement that came up from bedrooms, classrooms and bars all over North America and Europe (Monem 7). That feeling of bonding needed a space in which girls would freely and safely express their feminine condition. In the lyrics of Bikini Kill and Le Tigre, we come across many examples in which Hanna openly asks for feminist spaces within the underground.

This topic is, in fact, perpetuated and repeated in two different projects that belong to different periods, a recurrence that I consider very significant. Thus, Hanna discloses an authentic concern about sisterhood; a strong awareness of the importance that it had to find safe spaces for women. And she does it at different stages in her career. Songs like "FYR" explore and contemplate the topic that I have been exploring here and how the passing of time seems to bring forward the opportunity for re-interpretation.

With the analytical application of FCDA we observe how the key and recurrent references to streets and concert venues are sometimes employed just as a mere functional description of a specific context. At the same time, these spatial and territorial examinations are significant because they reflect the demands and struggles of the women engaged in the feminist movement. The conquering of these spaces carries with it an even more important achievement: it is a step towards equality in music. In a sense, the metaphor that this territorial overcoming implies echoes other discourses that feminists have confronted and reassessed. Conversation on the repossession of space and the female bonding were topics that were popular in the third wave and Hanna contributes to it by specifying it to a very concrete group of girls and mixing it with punk ethics.

7. 2. Patriarchy

Gender equality involves the attainment of equal rights and opportunities for everybody independently of their sex/gender; also, access to full participation, empowerment, visibility and, of course, the recognition of social responsibility in both private and public life. It is "not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world" ("Goal 5"). Different pitfalls prevent women from achieving gender equality worldwide, being patriarchy the one from which other inequalities emerge, becoming one of the main subjects of discussion in the so-called second wave and also afterwards.

Broadly speaking, patriarchy chronicles the manner in which gender roles have tended to place men in dominant positions, subordinating women to them. According to Mary Holmes, patriarchy has its origins in gender differences between men and women, where the first dominates the last: "gender differences are to be understood as a central feature of patriarchy, a social system in which men have come to be dominant in relation to women" (2). As explained in the historical review of feminism, this is a widespread concept that can be appreciated in political and academic areas that had been examined and prospected by the second and third waves of feminism. The different approaches exercised by feminist movements have modified the understanding and range of a concept that has significantly evolved into a complex variety. Consequently, the term patriarchy, in a broad sense, designates all types of male domination. It is different from "male chauvinism" in that it implies a whole community and not only the specificity of an individual:

> Whereas "male chauvinism" and "sexism" imply that the problem of women's inequality has to do with individual men, and that the path to change lies in reform, education, and incremental steps, the theory of patriarchy implies that the problem is society itself and calls for revolution of, or escape from, the patriarchal status quo. (Wilson 1496)

Patriarchy then refers to a whole society that overlooks women's inequality and takes for granted men's domination and women's subordination. Patriarchy takes place across almost every sphere of life and stands out this male dominance and female subordination as systematic. Feminist theory usually describes patriarchy as a social construction based on practices in which men dominate and oppress women in political, economic and social terms. For example, and as Simone de Beauvoir explains, "economically, men and women almost form two castes; all things being equal, the former have better jobs, higher wages, and greater chances to succeed than their new female competitors; they occupy many more places in industry, in politics, and so forth, and they hold the most important positions" (9). As a matter of fact, it is well acknowledged that both the under-representation and the over-representation of women and men in different jobs and social, cultural and political positions (horizontal and vertical segregation[64]), contributes to gender inequality. This, together with gender bias[65] and other phenomena[66] have a direct and detrimental effect on women's professional (as well as personal) growth.

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[64] Horizontal segregation is the concentration of women and men in different jobs and sectors. Vertical segregation refers to the concentration of women and men in different positions, levels of responsibility or power and denotes "the situation whereby opportunities for career progression for a particular gender within a company or sector are limited" ("Segregation"). As a result of these inequalities, some others arise. For example, the gender pay gap or the glass ceiling that prevents women from getting a top position at work.

[65] Gender bias is the prejudiced thoughts and actions based on the gender-based understanding that women and men are different in rights and distinction ("Gender Bias").

[66] To cite some instances, in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) the "leaky pipeline" metaphor refers to continuous disappearance or removal of women as they move forward in their careers and stop carrying out research, and the so-called Matilda effect is a concept that explains how sometimes certain achievements by female scientists are attributed to their male colleagues.

As a social system or institution which is fully controlled by males' authority, women's representation in most domains tends to be almost nonexistent. In Simone de Beauvoir's opinion, all the important historical events recount men's legends and victories. In consequence, girls listen to those stories and resolve that men rule the world. In other words, girls do not see themselves reflected in any of those stories, because no woman is represented as the leader or the main actor of those historical facts: "The heads of state, generals, explorers, musicians, and painters she admires are men; it is men who make her heart beat with enthusiasm" (Beauvoir 303). Even though de Beauvoir's text was written a long time before Riot Grrrl came to light, I still consider it pertinent to use it, as these notions have not completely changed and can still be perceived in music today. In general, gender inequality does not escape any domain or society, and it is developed, repeated and sustained by society itself.

Radical feminist theories on patriarchy often analyze the way in which men's dominance is perpetuated thanks to religion, science or culture with the hope of finding alternatives to patriarchal beliefs and practices (Wilson 1495). In fact, most of the patriarchal prospects for women are socially accepted and perpetuated by social forces once and again. It is the society that conveys, between many other things, that women are expected to have good manners, be polite and formal, follow beauty standards, please their husbands, be good housewives and mothers and occupy the private space. These patriarchal foundations are based on many different ideologies and practices that have taken place throughout history. In particular, I would like to highlight the reference to social and cultural manners and the beauty standard and expectations that have stereotyped women historically. Confronting that precise discourse becomes a significant content in the analysis of the lyrics that I have selected for my study.

In order to extend the background that clarifies that specific lyrical analysis that I will be facing later, it is important to pinpoint that, during the 1960s, many educated American women could not exercise their talents or skills, or fortify their knowledge and seek for education and cultural fulfillment, because they have absorbed the aforementioned cultural and political assumptions, and, consequently, they felt that they had to stick to the standards that society had placed for them: "In the second half of the twentieth century in America, woman's world was confined to her own body and beauty, the charming of man, the bearing of babies, and the physical care and serving of husband, children, and home. And this was no anomaly of a single issue of a single women's magazine" (Friedan 27). Magazines and articles (mainly written by men) addressed women and described how a good wife should act, including tips for women in order to, for instance, efficiently please their husbands. All these magazines were about house chores, breastfeeding, or how to keep a husband. Housework was seen as a medium of expression and femininity. Also, the industry saw a perfect target on housewives and used advertisements to appeal to women and perpetuate what Betty Friedan describes as the "feminine mystique", which implies "a choice between "being a woman" or risking the pains of human growth" (382). In connection to these historical assumptions that seem to evoke previous generations, more recent statements like the following by Chimamanda Ngozi show that it can be applied to contemporary interpretations as well, or, at least, it can be signified in order to describe the context in which Hanna was writing her lyrics. Ngozi says that girls are "invested" in being liked by boys whereas society does not teach boys to worry about what the girls think of

them (23). Women have been raised and taught to believe that they have to please men and still today the beauty standards and the customary body care are two of the *sin qua non* prospects that society asks women to accomplish according to their sex.

Due to the thorough compliance of patriarchal theories, many women could not develop their skills as artists. Yet, by the end of the 20th century, women's reactions and struggles against male's dominion over the artistic canons began to be more visible. From that moment on, in disciplines like painting, dancing, writing, or music, women have tried to leave behind a tradition that erected a patriarchal structure in which it was very difficult to become artists. In the context of that reacting spirit, those women started to experience different facets of their female identity. Diverse feminist generations have dealt with this breakup, but feminists of the first and second waves of feminism confronted this struggle in a subtler way. It was throughout the third wave that women's attitudes became more prominent and visible, even revolutionary, as it was the case of the specific cultural movement that I target in this study. Riot Grrrl bands like Bikini Kill exemplify that reactionary and pro-active response to gendered standards and patriarchal assumptions. Consequently, the examination of the use and representation of patriarchy (and the multiple reactions against it) in the lyrics selected from Kathleen Hanna's production was a mandatory task. Patriarchy, patriarchal traditions and/or patriarchal attitudes have been long addressed in lyrics, as well as different, more specific topics that we can link or relate to the general conceptualization of gender inequalities that can be encompassed in the vast canvass that entails the concept of patriarchy (such as wage inequality or social expectations for women). Of course, this is the case in both Bikini Kill's and Le Tigre's discography.

Included in Bikini Kill's first album *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, "Feels Blind" (1991) is an intricate song, full of visual images and metaphorical language. With a sad and angry tone, it alludes to the feeling of ignorance and alienation, that, in my reading, I believe makes reference to women's position as passive agents in American culture:

> All the doves that fly past my eyes
> Have a stickiness to their wings
> In the doorway of your demise I stand
> Encased in the whisper you taught me
> how does it feel?
> it feels blind
> how does it feel?
> well, it feels blind.
> what have you taught me? nothing.
> . . .
> As a woman I was taught to be hungry
> Women are well aquainted with thirst.
> . . .

(Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991)

The lyric starts with a metaphor in which doves, which have something stuck to their wings, articulate a powerful image of limiting and imprisoning agency upon potential liberty. This can be read as the representation of the confined environment in which women are inserted and which hinders the development of both their identities and their artistic careers. In a similar metaphorical language, Hanna addresses a second person (probably a male audience) and describes how the narrative voice is locked in a "whisper" ("Feels Blind", Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991) which stands for passivity, silence and manners, everything that patriarchy has established as a valid cultural and social standard for women, a patriarchal premise under which women have lived for ages. The "demise" ("Feels Blind", Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991) may stand for a transfer of power from men, who are finally going to let the narrative voice be an active agent, or, I assume, it might refer to their death or end in artistic terms, what undoubtedly will let women engage in any kind of creation.

All this makes Hanna feel blind in front of a world of opportunities and from here a sense of alienation emerges. Indeed, she describes how the narrative voice is in a sidelined position in which men have taught nothing (positive at least) to women, leading them to be hungry and thirsty for knowledge. This powerful use of imagery contributes to a deft representation of how teenage girls like Hanna and her Bikini Kill mates wanted to change the music scene, which is envisioned as boy-ruled, unreachable to girls.

In a recent interview, Hanna has explained that "Feels Blind" expressly refers to mainstream American culture. When asked if she still feels related to that idea, she answers the following:

> Yes. People have taught me a lot, but I'm talking about mainstream culture and the fact that we live in the United States where the majority of people didn't vote for Trump, but Trump was able to be elected . . . So, yeah, that makes me feel incredibly alienated to the point where all of our songs make sense to me. "Feels Blind" always made sense to me on a really visceral musical level more than on a lyrical level. The way the drums come in, the way it starts with just that bassline. There's something sad about it, but also hopeful and angry. That combination of emotions can be applied to so many different situations, and definitely right now with where we're at as a country. (Pelly, "Kathleen Hanna")

From this explanation, it can be derived that, even though more than twenty years have passed between the writing of the song and Hanna's more recent opinion on it, the lyric is still pertaining and applicable today. It is still useful, in the opinion of the author, to describe a reality that is still affecting American society, which, in fact, the band describes as blind in front of so many policies that are relapsing into past and unequal states.

The album *Julie Ruin* (1998), which opens Kathleen Hanna's solo career under the pseudonym Julien Ruin, includes the song "Stay Monkey", which focuses on knowledge and its contrast with the state of ignorance in which some women are still stuck. In a way, it resembles "Feels Blind", the previously analyzed song by Bikini Kill. This acquires a significant meaning as it shows that Hanna repeats some topics in different projects:

. . .
Not knowing makes me happy
I just wanna wait and see
Every day is inhibition
The television's calling your name
. . .
It's the movie that never gets filmed
It's the story that we won't tell
. . .
Stay monkey with me
Afraid is
Much better
Than a fake
Forever
. . .
(Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998)

The title of the song may allude with irony to women's social state, metaphorically complaining about their lack of access to knowledge – and thus, to power. Hanna sarcastically expresses that not using the mind, which is culturally associated with men, makes her happy. She thus uses irony in order to artistically offer a sharp complaint of the naive disposition that relegates women to a secondary, passive position in society. According to her, she just waits (for her turn) and watches (men's acts). This image exposes a revelation in which women are inhibited and their abilities, blocked. Then, she makes a reference to TV as a hindrance, due to the fact that it has become a public platform that only voices men's primacy and achievements (what is not surprising since men are societal active agents). Indeed, there is a mood of nostalgia that is articulated in the song to explain that women's stories will not be recorded and, consequently, it will remain cornered and invisible. There is a candid variation towards the end of the song, when Hanna speaks for herself and probably for the rest of her audience, in an attempt to provoke a positive reaction on them. As the riot grrrl bands proved during the 1990s, being afraid was not a possibility. To be oneself and articulate a particular identity, achieving agency and writing one's story was the only option, instead of the probably expected prerogative to remain silent and concede to patriarchy.

Making a completely different reference to patriarchy (and somehow sexuality), the song "Suck My Left One" (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991) can be described as a song about resistance that deals with authoritative figures in the house and roles in the family. Using colloquial and straightforward language (as observable in the title), Hanna sings about the rejection of those social standards and commands, with personal images or autobiographical elements to be found. She channels the focalization through an omniscient third-person voice, that, in fact, will probably mask Hanna herself and the story with an "abusive father" that her

personal biography discovers (Tang). Hanna has claimed that being abused had an impact on her and pushed her to speak out about it in her songs:

> I'm not superwoman or anything; but I'm also not a piece of crap who deserves to be constantly abused and annoyed … Part of the reason I came to do this in the first place is because of personal experience. It's not like I'm a feminist because I had an abusive history — I'm a feminist because I believe in the equality of everyone — but this happens to be a part of my history, like so many other women (Levine).

The song starts with the speaker wondering and finally asking her sister about what women have done to find themselves where they are (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991). This can also be read as a reference to the sorority and bonding being forged by riot grrrls that I have explored in the previous section. Then the song focuses on the paternal figure, and the fictional "dad" becomes a central character in the story. Hanna powerfully describes how he enters into the girl's room with abusive intentions. The girl answers back enraged, with a livid attitude: "suck my left one" (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991), which Hanna utters twice, reinforcing it with the repetition of a symbolic and powerful meaning that can be profited from that iteration. The stress on certain phrases like the one that opens the song, the beat of the drums, the bass line and the different voices that Hanna employs accompany the powerful explanation in words:

> Suck my left one
> Sister Sister, where did we go wrong?
> . . .
> Daddy comes into her room at night
> He's got more than talking on his mind
> My sister pulls the covers down
> She reaches over, flicks on the light
> She says to him: suck my left one (x2)
> Mama says:
> You have got to be polite girl
> You have got to be polite girl
> Show a little respect for you Father
> Wait until your Father gets home
> Fine fine fine fine fine fine fine fine
> (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991)

The mother figure also acquires relevance in the story when she aligns herself with the father and reminds the daughter that a girl must obey certain rules: be polite (that is repeated twice, what provides the utterance with a potent emphasis), be respectful, and wait for her father (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991). These

are the expectations that all girls had to fulfill in society and within the nuclear family, where limits and rules were also well-established. The fictional girl in the song answers back. She repeats, in an ironic and uncomplaining tone, "fine" ("Suck My Left One", Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991), which reveals her demurral of the abuse. As I show later[67] in the section dealing with the subject matter of gender-based violence, abuse and assaults were issues repeatedly addressed in Hanna's work, what discloses her concern and uneasiness on a matter that had become a popular worry in the American society of the time.

Also in thematic connection to patriarchy, in the split album released by Bikini Kill with Huggy Bear, the song "Don't Need You" (*Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah*, 1993) can be analyzed in this regard, being some of its lines a clear statement of Bikini Kill's stern position against patriarchal projections:

> Don't need you to say we're cute
> Don't need you to say we're alright
> Don't need your protection
> Don't need no kiss goodnight
> Don't need you don't need you
> us girls don't need you
> . . .
> Does it scare you that we don't need you?
> Does it scare you boy that we don't need you?
> We don't need you don't need you
> Us punk rock whores don't need you
> (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah*, 1993)

The straightforward reflection of the title is repeated nineteen times in the song, what, apart from reinforcing the rhetorical employment of the repeated expression, do also contribute significantly to the rhythm of the song. The "you" referred in this song is again understood as the fictional representation of a male audience. This time, the speaking voice uses the first person plural, both in the subject position ("we") and as direct object ("us") to focalize the story, involving in this encompassing point of view all the girls and women that could be affiliated to her cause. From the very opening of the song, the anaphora is repeated and it articulates a meaningful list of things that girls and women do not need from men: flattering comments, insults, protection, approval or a kiss at night. This last image is something that parents usually do to small kids and when done to women it may suggest that they are being infantilized. Towards the end of the song, the speaker directly addresses the

[67] The division in subject matter and the subsequent classification by topics can not hide the fact that those same themes and motifs can be found in more than one song or that one song can be inferring different topics or preoccupations. This is, thematic content is not always mathematically or objectively established. Songs are usually written with passion and emotion and they also reveal complex structures and paths of inspiration. In a single song, different themes and motifs can be found, and I could have chosen the same song to represent or vehicle different topics.

audience to question if it can be possible that men are now feeling frightened since women (more specifically "punk rock whores," an insult that many riot grrrl bands received on stage) do not need them anymore. In consequence, the speaker expresses the idea that the time setting that she presents in the song is witness to a significant change that testifies to the independence and self-reliance achieved by women, who do not need to be pleased by anyone, who do not seek attention, who do no longer observe the expectations that have been placed on them. It is this song, probably, one of the songs in Hanna's career with a stronger and more powerful reference to patriarchy. The song "Don't Need You" is a clear proclamation of punk girls who want to fight and overturn patriarchy. When Hanna remembers this song, written twenty-six years ago, she gets a sad feeling. Hanna seems to perceive it as showing that unfortunately many things have not changed:

> I started having situations where I would receive emails from men who were angry at me for things that happened 25 years ago, which weren't even real, and I was thinking in my head, [*singing Bikini Kill's "Don't Need You"*] *Don't need you to tell me I'm good*. I was like, "This is really sad. I'm quoting my own lyrics to myself in my own life to get me through. (Pelly, "Kathleen Hanna")

In the same year that this last song was published, the album *Pussy Whipped* was released. In this album, a song includes some interesting references to patriarchy and its traditional affection. It also refers to those women who are trying to review and indict the assumptions generated by patriarchy. "Magnet" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993) opens up with a simile that unites the narrative voice to a simple and ordinary object. In this symbolic marriage, the speaker (likely a woman) finds an opportunity to reveal her insurgent attitude towards those ideologies and norms that set women in negative places and that make them be oppressed:

> . . .
> you don't own me, Fuck!
> You hold me down
> You hold me down like a magnet
> And this is not all that I am
> No this is not my name
> I've got the love that's strong and not weak
> . . .
> (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993)

First of all, a magnet is an object that sticks to something else and this infers the place women have occupied, always stuck to men as adjacent objects. The speaker suggests that she is not nobody's property, proclaiming that she has a name. She is somehow evoking and cleansing all those times in which she got insulted on stage or the occasions in which people referred to her as something that she did not relate to her identity. "Magnet"

attacks those who, following patriarchal theories, hold down women as if they were an object, forgetting their personal and unique identities, with individual names and strong personalities.

In the same album, the song "Lil Red" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped*, 1993) uses the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood[68]" to speak to women who can be characterized as real victims in a commanding way. In an interview, Hanna claimed that it is still relevant to make clear who the real victims are, as victimization has become a public strategy with spurious purposes. Also, to exemplify this, she refers to the president of the United States at the time of the conversation (Donald Trump): "When we have a president who's likening himself to an African-American being lynched ... it's only a matter of moments before he's going to say that he's being raped by the Democrats—that whole "I'm the real victim" thing we've been seeing so much with the right wing. When I sing those lines, it feels very pertinent" (Pelly, "Kathleen Hanna"). In the song, the use of diction related to the body prevails ("tits", "ass", "legs", "lips", "nails") contributes to the physical embodiment of the concepts and feelings elucidated in the lyric. Also, there is a real emphasis on dichotomies in order to deconstruct and review men's particular vision of life and things. The "you" that is applied in this song may stand for someone specifically (like a paternal figure, politicians, a boyfriend…), but it can be also a broad direct object to make the connation in the song more expansive:

These are me tits, yeah
And this is my ass
And these are my legs
Watch them walk away
These are long nails to scratch out your eyes
You are not the victim
Tho' you'd like to make it that way
Pretty girls all gather round
To hear your side of things
Yeah, your side of things
Your sh-sh-sh-sh-shining path
These are my ruby red lips
the better to suck you dry
These are my long red nails
the better to scratch out your eyes…
. . .

[68] Red Little Riding Hood is a classic children story of European origin. Dated even before the 17th century, this folk tale tells the story of a young girl wearing a red hood who comes across a wolf on her way to her grandmother's home. There are many adaptations and versions, but, probably, the most famous ones are those written by Charles Perrault and the Grimm brothers.

I am sorry we are so good to you

. . .

all you do is destroy

all you do is fuck up

all you ever do is take take

. . .

(Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped*, 1993)

Hanna and her bandmates in Bikini Kill are somehow mocking the audience by expressing regret for being good (something that women have always been supposed to be), while criticizing that men appropriate power in detrimental ways for women. Irony here is another literary element. The speaker resorts to it as a device to reinforce her statements and observations. By being her own protector, Hanna is re-writing the classic tale. This time, the imagery in the song explores a new model of womanhood. Women are portrayed as determined to save themselves from any danger, or, for instance, from a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Following with the revision of patriarchy and the subsequent anti-patriarchal agenda that I have observed in the previous songs, "Distinct Complicity" (Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*, 1996) denounces the delimitation that many girls like Hanna had to face when determined to involve themselves in a music band. However, in a broader sense, this lyric contains a more expansive allusion that refers to women's limitations in life:

. . .

determined by many separations,

so controlling and understated,

determined today by those of us

who refuse to conquer hesitation

. . .

determined by many situations,

seemingly random considerations

determined tonight by those of

you who decide to do more than

just sit on the floor

. . .

(Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*, 1996)

As I explained before, many young American girls in the 1990s felt isolated and constrained by a patriarchal society that neglected their access to artistic opportunities, more so in the specific realm of music. As I tried to illustrate in the second section of my work, hardcore and punk-rock were inferred as male-oriented genres or

territories in which the defining characteristics of the genre (hard melodies, electric instrumentation or anti-establishment lyrics) did not match the standards and assumptions corresponding to a lady's conduct or attitude. Girls who empathize with punk ethics and aesthetics felt conditioned and misunderstood. When they got the opportunity to report their disillusionment by writing lyrics, they did not hesitate to address their male counterparts in order to express their conviction that they were also part of a musical community. With agency and resourcefulness, they rejected the many times and circumstances in which they had been segregated or belittled.

In my explanatory introduction to patriarchy, I already stated that beauty stereotypes have always been an important disadvantage for women. In a song that Bikini Kill selected for the album *The Singles*, "Demirep" (1998), the speaking voice employs again irony as a literary feature to apologize for failing on accomplishing those beauty expectations that were established for women. As Michelle S. Bae-Dimitriadis explains, "girls' empowerment through external beauty has played havoc with the conventional power hierarchy between male and female, in whose long tradition girls have been taught the importance of external appearance in the pursuit of beauty as the essence of femininity" (69) and a direct criticism to that pressure can be found in Bikini Kill's lyrics, more specifically in this song:

> I'm sorry that I'm getting chubby
> And I cannot always be happy for you
> And I am not some lame sorority queen
> Taking you home to meet my Daddy
> You collect your trustfund baby
> And I'll be a whore
> And we'll pretend we're just the same but
> I know I KNOW I know I know that
> I, I am hiding
> . . .
> (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998)

Again, the speaker approaches the topic from an ironic perspective that consolidates her vision and sharpens the effect of her elocution. The narrative voice apologizes for gaining weight and getting "chubby" ("Demirep", Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998), for not being happy all the time or having a good face. It is evident though that she is not really exercising a truthful attempt at repentance. In fact, it is interesting to explore the meaningful repetition of the conjunction "and" in order to add more things to the recording of requirements that she is not meeting, substantiating the use of irony in a recurrent recapitulation of items. Once again, the speaker ironically claims her arrangement or categorizing as a "whore", ("Demirep", Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998) but she deeply knows that this is a fake construction in which she is just hiding her real self, which does not match the patriarchal standards and attitudes that she perceives as apparently mandatory in society.

Hanna's more recent work for her band Le Tigre can also be discussed in connection to the topics related to the beauty stereotypes that I am exploring here. For example, in "Hot Topic" (*Le Tigre,* 1999), the band makes reference to figures who are praised by their work and, in Hanna's voice, they complain about the fact that some people are referring to these powerful female artists (e.g. Yoko Ono or Carolee Schneemann) by focusing on their age. That they are "getting old" seems the main concern, deprecating the intensity and validity of their contributions:

. . .
Carol Rama and Eleanor Antin
Yoko Ono and Carolee Schneemann
You're getting old, that's what they'll say, but
Don't give a damn I'm listening anyway
. . .
So many rules and so much opinion
So much shit to give in, give in to
So many rules and so much opinion
So much bullshit but we won't give in
Stop, we won't stop
. . .
(Le Tigre, *Le Tigre,* 1999)

Ageism directly affects women as women are forced to meet gender based conventions on appearance and sex appeal. In fact, ageism for women as a new form of sexism is a recurrent topic of discussion in the most recent feminism. In Barbara Macdonald's words, youth is glorified as a false power (158) and "ageism has its roots on the patriarchal family" (156), which she defines as the place in which all the hierarchical roles are adopted and learned (156). According to the narrative voice, all these rules and opinions are unacceptable. The speaker encourages these women to keep on creating, eluding this criticism. Thanks to the diction employed in the song, with expressions and words like "don't give a damn" or "bullshit", the tone acquires a vindictive perspective and the song becomes an anthem of solidarity for those women who are seeking involvement in art.

Another aspect that comes always incorporated to any deep inspection of patriarchy is that which refers to the wage inequality between men and women. This topic, of course, is also found in Kathleen Hanna's lyrical production. For example, in the song "Gone b4 Your Home" (Le Tigre, *From the desk of Mr. Lady,* 2001). In this song, the lyric complains that women have scarce options to be active, as the only tasks socially matching their assigned social role are those that involve a traditional and narrow vision of their participation in society: going shopping (running errands or buying clothes and beauty products); being passive agents. In the song, the

speaker opposes this particular configuration. She does not want to remain still, listening to male advices or warnings. Instead, she prefers to participate and work, even though they may get a negative feedback:

No shopping
No choice
I can't stay here
And listen to your voice
I'll be gone b4 yr home
. . .
Can read it in my note
It says: I went to be alone
Yeah, babe, I know I make about
Twice the money you make
And, of course
I'm never called a stupid whore
Or a fake
. . .
(Le Tigre, *From the desk of Mr. Lady,* 2001)

There is a gentle shift in the narrative. Hanna and her bandmates in Le Tigre directly address the topic of wage inequality. As I have identified before, wage inequality is a social concern that can be intrinsically related to the definition of patriarchy. It has been a constant in the feminist fight that women have denunciated the gender-based inequalities between men's wage and theirs, to which I referred before in this dissertation as the pay gap. Thus, sex/gender becomes a relevant factor for wage inequality in the work place. Yet, in the song "Gone B4 Yr Home", the speaking voice in the song is the one who gets a higher salary and, for that reason, she is put into question while she ironically denies being called a whore and a fake. Traditionally, men have taken the breadwinner role in a domestic sphere where hierarchical roles are cautiously assigned and followed. The fact that a woman works outside the house, as is the case in this song, and more so when she is making more money than the patriarchal figure, is taken as a direct attack on that hierarchy. This song was released in 2001, therefore it does not remain attached to the historical circumstances of the 1990s; it becomes an indication of 21st century women who are still facing wage inequality in the workplace.

To conclude, patriarchy is a social construction deeply rooted in most societies. It is thanks to this established discourse that one sex benefits from oppressing the other. Feminist movements have been trying to denounce the ramifications of this discursive practice, fighting against it in order to achieve economic, political, social and cultural equality between the sexes. As a socially constructed system where women are subordinated and alienated, the patriarchal tradition is one of the main targets of the feminist movement and it is also a recurrent topic in Hanna's songs for Bikini Kill, Julie Ruin and Le Tigre.

The lyrics analyzed in this section display an explicit *I* with Hanna speaking to the audience from a direct-address focalization. There are also instances in which she changes to the plural form *we* (in songs like "Hot Topic" or "Don't Need You") to include all women and fashion a sense of community. In turn, she also uses *you* in the indirect object position to address a male audience that she implicitly constructs as a whole, yet, approaching it in a perceptible and notorious way. It should be highlighted the metaphorical language employed in songs like "Feels Blind" or the ironic and sarcastic tone in songs like "Demirep". The diction, as in most of her songs, is informal; a clear example of this can be found in "Suck My Left One", a song in which the title already discloses the dissident mood impregnating the discourse of the song. This specific diction arranges a closeness to the audience that articulates a more efficient and contemporary communication of the potential readings that can be made of the meanings in Hanna's lyrics. The combination of an innovative metaphorical language, a fresh use of irony and the unceremonious choice of diction contributes to a straightforward conversation that seeks a compelling interaction with the audience.

Even though patriarchy is not addressed directly as a concept, the artist refers to it through descriptions of subtopics and features that can be reached back to the very origin and foundation of patriarchal politics and practices. In this way, we find references to wage inequality between men and women, women's situation of alienation and ignorance, the beauty expectations for women, the resistances that many girls had to break to perform in a music band, the authoritative figures and power disclosure within the domestic sphere, or the dynamic and disapproving attitudes that are usually employed by women to stand against patriarchy. All these matters and strategies directly germinate from and against patriarchy. However indirectly, Hanna addresses patriarchy in her work for Bikini Kill, a band active during almost a decade, from 1991 to 1998, but also in her solo album under the name of Julie Ruin and in her more recent work for Le Tigre's, lyrics that she wrote when we were already in the new millennium. This suggests that patriarchy is still a concern for Hanna and that patriarchy is still a real problem for women in the 21st century, as we can see from the fact that the approach is perpetuated in time.

7.3. Power

Patriarchy's main basis is the social relationships of power between men and women and this structural and widespread force is implemented in order to favour western-white men and oppress women (Wilson 1494). In the book *Sexual Politics*, American feminist writer Kate Millet concludes that the essence of politics is power. She explains that politics are based on the power-structured relationships where one group is controlled by another (Millet 23). It is true that some groups stand opposed because of their access to power and that the ones occupying privileged positions have the opportunity to "make the rules, to organize meaning, while others are less favorably placed, have less power to produce and impose their definitions of the world on the world" (Hebdige 14). One group dominates another and it is women who are generally marginal citizens (Millet 55) as a result of the patriarchal ideologies that are deeply established in all political, social or economic forms (Millet

25). Just as a basic illustration, I could use the classic reference to the early 19th century, when most women did not have rights over their properties (Walters 42) and the prevalence of traditional and patriarchal attitudes led them to suffer an unavoidable lack of opportunities in public spheres. In Virginia Woolf's words, "a woman was not encouraged to be an artist" (*A Room* 71). Something similar happened, in connection with the educational system, in patriarchal western societies where that institution "permitted minimal literacy to women while higher education was closed to them" (Millet 42). Albeit, some middle-class women or those belonging to the aristocracy could have access to some type of education[69], but, in general, women's access to it was denied on account of their sex. Following the next few centuries, women's access to power was apparently closer, even though inequality (in terms of how power is exercised) was still a relevant issue for the second and third waves of feminism, which, in general, approached this topic from different perspectives (patriarchy, or women's survival in an unequal society). In Simone de Beauvoir words:

> History has shown that men have always held all the concrete powers; from patriarchy's earliest times they have deemed it useful to keep woman in a state of dependence; their codes were set up against her; she was thus concretely established as the Other. This condition served males' economic interests; but it also suited their ontological and moral ambitions. (159)

The access to power has been limited for women, and this situation, as de Beauvoir argues, has placed them in a condition of dependency. These notions by de Beauvoir or Millet are still pertaining and necessary in the historical context in which the lyrics selected for this work were written. Power issues and power relations are still visible in any feminist analysis. Hanna's lyrics are a testimony of this continuity.

Power (and power relations) is a recurrent motif in many of Hanna's songs, which refer to power as a social construct that oppresses women and segregates them from their artistic ambitions. However, she also approaches it to proclaim that girls are starting a revolution to demand power, proclaim themselves as active agents and use that agency in artistic ways that will not be overlooked or silenced anymore.

A first allusion to power is found in the 1991 song "This Is Not a Test", where the speaker portrays the flaws of society and screams that "You don't make all the rules, yeah" (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*), addressing on a one-to-one basis a male audience that is responsible for stipulating laws and rules; in other words, exercising power for regulation and administration. In general, a woman's position in society has been assigned to her by men (de Beauvouir 86) and it is men who write the rules and the laws to guarantee their domination over women (Mackinnon 447). As a consequence, women have been set aside in the private sphere, being, consequently, condemned to invisibility, incapacitated to exert their individual powers. But, in this song, Hanna advocates for perseverance and determination, summoning girls to alter the arrangement of normative definition:

[69] I reckon that education and the access of women to education can be perceived as independent of the general approach to power that I have been introducing so far. However, I believe that both are related since I understand that the systems of education are affected by the power relationships that define the inner hierarchies of any given society.

I know what I'm gonna fucking do
Me and my girlfriends gonna push on through
Riot Grrrl is gonna stomp on you, yeah
(Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*)

This determination and rebel attitude is a distinguishable attribute in Hanna's work for Bikini Kill, which, as I have said before, matches the essence of the Riot Grrrl movement. In this song, I perceive that same assertiveness, but in relation to the articulation of power. Hanna's use of the voice and the instrumental arrangement contributes to the energetic and confident tone that the song expresses.

Five years later, in 1996, the lyric for "Statement of Vindication" (Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*, 1996) appealed to those same "rules" that were hinted in the previous song. This song is quite genuine as it starts with the popular question that Snow White asks to the mystical mirror in the famous fairy tale:

Mirror mirror on the wall who's the fairest of them all?
. . .
I don't I don't really care
Like it's not important at all
(Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*, 1996)

We can take this as an ironic attack on that traditional folklore. Literature has contributed to the education on conventional gendered formation for kids, teaching girls, in this case, to accept and seek beauty and aesthetic stereotypes as social norms. Even though the sex/gender of the addressee still comes unspecified and thus interpretations remain open, the speaker starts many of the verses of the song by directly addressing a "you" that apparently refers to the institutions which are essentially led and administered by men and which have been for centuries the repositories of power, thus the ones responsible for establishing those rules that the rest of the society (mainly subordinate groups like women) must obey:

. . .
You made the rules
You wrote the script out
Don't blame me when you fuckin' lose
Don't put the blame on me
. . .
You are your own worst enemy
(Bikini Kill, *Reject All American,* 1996)

According to the speaker's words in the song, men are represented as their own opponents and women are saved from responsibility in any difficulty that may arise from this conflict. The speaking voice notifies women's innocence and lack of liability. She describes how the social situation establishes that they are far from being allowed to participate in the writing of norms or regulation. Even though women are gaining access to power, this is still distributed in unequal ways, affecting the way in which social, political and economic policies are balanced and registered. Power distribution, as explained before, has been a constant matter of concern for the feminist movement. Here, I show an example of how riot grrrl bands were aware of these imbalances, addressing an aspect that directly reflects the subordination that shapes the social definition of certain groups.

Also in Hanna's writing for her electronic-rock band Le Tigre, power remains a regular issue. In the song "On Guard" (*Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001), the narrative focuses on two powerful figures: a king and a judge. The first verse of the song addresses, again, a "you" that uncovers a male audience, making allusion to the remarks, insults or gazes that women have to tolerate and deal with. However, the singer argues that no negative input will make her give up or feel bad:

> . . .
> You can comment all day 'til dark
> You can call me any name you want
> You can look me up and down
> I won't stop, no, I won't fall apart
> . . .
> (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001)

In the second verse, the singer accuses a "thief" ("On Guard", Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001) of taking somebody's way. In this sense, I perceive that she is referring to men governing or evaluating women's emotions. Later, she mentions a king, a solid symbol of power, and a judge, also a subject with huge responsibility and power. In my view, the speaker is implying that men are always assessing women's appearance. To reassert this notion, the narrative voice also mentions a "beauty pageant" ("On Guard", Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001) in order to insinuate that women are constantly being tested and examined by men; that they are being "rated" in a scale:

> . . .
> Stop! Thief! You can't steal the way
> I fucking felt when I got up today
> Well, I guess you're the judge
> I guess you're the king
> Of the forever beauty pageant I'm always in
> My heart beats blue, beats red, beats mad

Is this the only power that you really wanna have?

Yeah, count from one to nine, how high do I rate?

. . .

(Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001)

As I have claimed throughout my work and, more specifically, in the section regarding patriarchy, beauty stereotypes have always had a strong influence on women, who have been under a lot of pressure to follow patriarchal standards that worship beauty and the female body. This issue is strictly linked to power, as women's bodies have long been considered an object for the pleasure of a symbolic male gaze, what disempowers women and consequently empowers men (Bae-Dimitriadis 70).

In the analysis that I have been developing in relation to power, the songs "This Is Not a Test" (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*), "Statement of Vindication" (Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*) and "On Guard" (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*) refer to authority figures (the "king", the "judge" and those who write the "rules" and "scripts") as the controllers and commanders of power. In these three songs, we find a first person who speaks in favour of women (artists), pointing at a male community to express dissatisfaction about women's condition in society (for example, their lack of access to the writing of rules or how they are always evaluated on the basis of their physical appearance). Thus, Hanna portrays a social and cultural situation in which power has been stolen from women because of their feminine condition. At the same time, with a resolute and forthright disposition, she makes clear that girls are going to reverse their underprivileged position in music (and society).

However, there are other songs in her lyrical production in which Hanna explores power issues in relation with women's decision-making. In these songs, the singer seeks to demonstrate how, in women's hands, power will be employed to contribute to their autonomy, becoming active agents in the exploration of artistic fields. As I will show now, Hanna makes direct references to women's artistic ambitions and dreams, topics that can be fully understood in combination with the other songs related to power in this work.

Lucy O' Brien declares in *She Bop: The Definitive History of Women in Popular Music* (2012) that, throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, most women were confined in the domestic sphere, restricted to the occupation of their assigned duties: giving birth to children, raising them, cooking and ironing for their husbands. However, some of them took advantage of private moments to write songs or observations in diaries or letters, most of which have not survived (O'Brien 146). In reality, it is well-documented that women have been bounded within the private sphere for long, aside from any public dimension; and, consequently, their artistic ambitions as writers, singer-songwriters or musicians have been also affected. When analyzing music in the United States, Kristine H. Burns states that: "Observing this private/public binarism, amateur performance in the home, school, or church has been gendered female, and the wider, public aspects of music, including composing, conducting, and performing professionally, have been gendered male" (678). Mavis Bayton also agrees on the fact that spatial restrictions exerted a negative influence in women and she states that other material constraints (e.g. lack of money and access to music equipment) and restrictions in terms of time and support (both support coming from their own families or other male musicians) limited women's participation in music (188). It was in

the 20th century that many of the women who were excluded from the musical and literary traditions began a revolution of sorts and started making public statements about their conscious awareness of their invisibility as artists: "The diffusion of feminist ideologies and rise of feminist scholarship during the late twentieth century has transformed both musicology and popular music studies. Beginning in the 1980s, feminist scholars called attention to the dearth of women-centered research in these two fields" (Kearney 20). Being pioneers or following the tracks of those first ones who began that line of denouncement, women in the musical scene have empowered and changed the constructed misconceptions of the female gender in the artistic world. One good example of this is to be found through the analysis of the works by Kathleen Hanna, as I have been doing so far.

In the 1993 track "Jigsaw Youth" (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah*), apart from discussing opposites (on which I will also focus later), Hanna refers to the body as a source of power for women. As Margaret Walters explains: "one of the most urgent concerns of second-wave feminism has been a woman's right over her own body" (110) and it remained an important concept for third wave feminists and riot girrrls like Hanna herself, who did also comment on this topic in her lyrics and cultural expressions. It can be assumed that this song is a personal insight, as Hanna openly declares her personal experience working as a stripper. The revolutionary attitude that can be perceived in the lyric is metaphorically represented as a fire that burns inside of her and that cannot be stopped by anyone. In fact, she suggests that now she is in control of her own body and this is also a theme connected to power, the general spectrum of this section:

> I can sell my body if I wanna
> God knows you already sold your mind
> I may sell my body 4 $$$ sometimes
> But U can't stop the fire
> that burns inside of me
> U think I don't know
> I'm here to tell you I do
> (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993)

I read this lyric as a declaration of awareness. Even though the speaker is not expected to be rational or probably shrewd, she is aware of the sexism around her and she is ready to scream that awareness off to a potential audience. Hanna admits that she got the same sexist feedback when working as a stripper and when performing as a singer on stage: "Part of the idea of that was, what's the difference between when I'm on stage taking my clothes off and when I'm onstage singing in Bikini Kill? . . . I'm still operating in a sexist society whether I'm in a strip bar or I'm in a punk club" ("Kathleen Hanna Revisits"). When Hanna speaks (in such a straightforward way) about women's decisions on their bodies, she is exemplifying that music (in this case lyrics) may serve as a stand in which women can discuss issues that, for a long time, have been taboo.

In the seventh track in *Le Tigre,* Le Tigre's 1999 album, the song entitled "Let's Run" offers a new approach with "we" as the subject of her narrative, suggesting that women have the power and can "rock", "bomb" and "try" ("Let's Run", Le Tigre, *Le Tigre*, 1999), even though the speaker also recognizes the chances to fail. Apparently, the speaker is advocating women's agency. She is asking them to carry out any ambition, regardless of the many hindrances that have been limiting their capacities for years:

Oh we could rock
Or we could bomb
Or we could try
Like super hard
Or we could come
Or we could lose
. . .
I wanna knock it off the line
Give me attention
Every day and every night
We could suck
"They might improve"
We get out grades from
Professor You
Or we could fly
Demystified
Or we could please you
All night
(Le Tigre, *Le Tigre*, 1999)

As a punk singer and a woman, Hanna compromises an open obligation to seek attention, criticizing imposition through the image of an educational figure that teaches women and grades their improvements. It is that constant urge for advancement that usually limits women's professional growth, as, due to their female condition, they are subjected to continuous scrutiny and a never-ending requirement to prove that their work is worthy, whereas men's aptitudes are taken for granted. Hanna tries to "demystify" ("Let's Run", Le Tigre, *Le Tigre*, 1999) that misconception that contemplates women as incapable of doing the same tasks that men do. At the same time, in the song, the speaker is also suggesting that women have two choices: either they keep on satisfying men or they rebel instead.

Some years later, in the song "Fake French" (Le Tigre, *Feminists Sweepstakes,* 2001), by making use of an anaphora and the cataloguing technique, the speaking voice lists the things that she owns and that are part of a new plan among those girls who are planning to fulfil a transformation:

I've got - the new sincerity
I've got - a secret vocabulary
I've got - MIDI in, out, thru
I've got - dialectical specstimme
I've got - herm choreography
I've got - a conceptual stunt double
I've got - a deviant scene, I mean
I've got - multiple alliances
I've got to move
. . .
I've got - The Gift of Fear
I've got - The Courage to Heal
I've got - site specificity
I've got - plan "B" ability
. . .
I've got - extensive bibliographies
I've got - flow disruption
I've got - widlife metaphors
I've got - post-binary gender chores
. . .
(Le Tigre, *Feminists Sweepstakes,* 2001)

In this lyric, the speaker envisions new strategies for girls to act and take action, whether or not they fear the possible consequences of their rebellion. When she refers to a "deviant scene", she is apparently recalling the Riot Grrrl movement and the different scenes that developed from it, evoking how it did not follow the norms and the standards that had been assigned to women. Also, "flow disruption" ("Fake French", Le Tigre, *Feminists Sweepstakes,* 2001) relates to the fact that women's presence on stage meant a disturbance for the dominant male-focused scene, interfering and breaking with the ideological expectations derived from it. Indeed, alluding to the "post-binary gender chores" ("Fake French", Le Tigre, *Feminists Sweepstakes,* 2001), the speaker is explicitly stating that women are getting out of the traditional roles assigned to them, which had been acting as a force of confinement, keeping them back in the private sphere, where their only role was that which conformed to the standards and expectations describing the role of housewife/mother. Now, these girls, the speaking voice evokes, have multiple strategies to use against inequality. There is nothing that can stop them. The revolution is here. That is the strong message that seems to be conveyed through the lyric of this song and Hanna's determined elocution, which follows a mid-tempo but steady funky rhythm with effective vocal playing, contributes to this reading.

As exemplified with “Jigsaw Youth”, “Let’s Run” and “Fake French”, women’s agency came to be an important matter of discussion to reverse women’s position in society. Women’s ambition as artists has strained an unquestionable push to exert their agency. I acknowledge that, in this section related to power, I have been exploring issues related to it from a varied perspective. In the same line, I find it necessary and pertaining here to tackle also the references that we can find in Hanna’s songs about one topic that I perceived as related to power issues as well. I am talking about women’s artistic ambitions. In these following pages, I focus on direct references to womanhood and artistic aspiration. In fact, this aspect could have been applied or developed in other sections, opening broader perspectives in the general subject matters that I chose, and it could have been developed as a specific and independent feature or theme. However, I see that it better illustrates an aspect or dimension of how power is exercised, and that is why I have opted to develop it within the realm of this section.

In “Bloody Ice Cream”, a song released in the album *Reject All American* (1996), Bikini Kill relies on the life story of Sylvia Plath to evoke a certain perspective on women’s involvement in art. Plath, born on October 27, 1932, became one of the most admired poets and novelists of the 20th century. Her works have attracted the attention of a large number of readers. However, Plath was sick for the most part of her adult life, affected by a strong depression. She finally took her life in 1963, when she was only 30 years old, placing her head in the oven with the gas on. Hanna uses Plath’s figure to address a problem that was common within female artists: suicide.

> The Sylvia Plath story is told to girls who write
> They want us to think that to be a girl poet means you have to die.
> Who is it that told me all girls who write must suicide?
> I've another good one for you, we are turning cursive letters into knives.
> (Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*¸1996)

Plath, as it also happened with other women in literature (Charlotte Perkins-Gilman or Virginia Woolf, for instance), committed suicide. For many, her story can be understood as a dramatically symbolic example of the pressing challenge that accompanies a woman’s decision to become a writer. Sometimes, when this interpretation is offered, the intention is usually to discourage women to develop their artistic skills. The speaker in this song, in turn, revisits Plath’s story to establish new readings, conceiving that women’s involvement in art does not come always associated with that implied sacrifice. As the speaker argues, women “are turning cursive letters into knives” (“Bloody Ice Cream”, Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*¸1996) to break up with a society that rejected their role as writers. Indeed, Hanna (and other female artists who embrace this same message) are putting forward an artistic striving towards a transforming attitude that seeks affirmation for women’s involvement in art and also visibility for those who already pursue that path. In these specific lines, Bikini Kill is trying to bury the false belief that pronounces a woman’s condemnation if she decides to become an artist.

In her solo project Julie Ruin, thematic and stylistic similarities establish a solid connection among her musical production. Hanna uses an analogous diction and focus to address women’s empowerment and

courage to write and resist. The song “I Wanna Know What Love Is” (Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin*, 1998) stands out for its closeness to the same topics and motifs that I perceived in the previously analyzed song. Yet, her use of lo-fi electronic music here, relying on melody, a strongly marked rhythm and the use of samplers, is combined with a stronger emphasis and a fiercer tone. Hanna exhibits her strength and refusal of a pre-established predestination that ascertains her future as related to wifehood, motherhood, or a role as a nurturing and accessory helper:

> . . .
> So I'll stay awake almost every night
> A pen in my hand and in the other a knife
> Cuz I'd rather be scared and fight back
> Than be some dick's maid, babe or wife
> (Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin*, 1998)

Women’s disavowal of traditional roles turned more notorious in the late 1990s and Hanna’s standpoint on the matter is also clear: she rejects to adjust her determination to the norms; instead, she is going to retaliate and enhance her artistic competencies.

Included in the album *Feminist Sweepstakes,* the song "My Art" (2001) deals with the same motifs that I explore in “Bloody Ice Cream”. This song shows the bands’ concern with those female artists who committed suicide, again. The speaking voice deliberately scrutinizes their art as better than men’s, identifying male artists as “post-modern parasites” (“My Art”, Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001) and, with a challenging tone, she warns them to stop driving female art into suicide. Once again, as a response, she voices a revolutionary operation in the artistic world led by women, insinuating that women like her are going to claim visibility and authority in an artistic community which, for centuries, has banned their accomplishments. The lack of punctuation (which is how I see her personal use of syntactic boundaries as reflected on the written text), the use of repetition (“art”) and the diction selected, with words such as “fucker” and “parasite” (“My Art”, Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001) energizing the message, function as a formal device that elaborates the thematic content with an apparent simplicity that, in fact, consolidates a solid formal pattern:

> . . .
> Cause my art is better than your art
> And you will be better off when I'm gone
> . . .
> And if you ever wanna try
> your hand at forcing my suicide,
> Come on fucker reach out for the sun!
> . . .

You're a post-modern parasite.
And if you ever wanna try your hand at forcing my suicide
Just know I've only begun
…
(Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001)

In this song, the speaker is implying that female artists have just started an insurrection that will not be temporary or weak. In connection to this lyric, in the song "Slideshow at Free University" (Le Tigre, *Le Tigre*, 1999), Hanna argues that women are seeking to reflect, in their works, their own personal view and understanding of art, which comes defined as more than an expression to be observed, something that requires critical thinking and must be valued. Indeed, she defines women's artistic expression as something that cannot be overlooked, that calls for involvement:

. . .
The artist was attempting to make art more than something to just look at
They wanted it something to be involved in, something too big to ignore
It is our function as artists to make the spectator to see the world our way, not his way
(Le Tigre, *Le Tigre*, 1999)

Hanna uncovers here her personal understanding of women's artistic duty. She explains how a woman needs to stand as an observer, a reader and/or listener in order to see the world from a different perspective, avoiding men's way of seeing it. History has been told from men's side and she encourages a fresh approach in which women will propose a renovated perspective and interpretation of the world around.

To close this analytical section in relation to women's agency, I consider it appropriate to mention a specific extract of the song "Tres Bien", included in *Le Tigre*'s album *Feminist Sweepstakes* (2001). The song could be described as a feminist anthem from the late 1990s, at the same time that it can also be perceived in a broader sense as an anti-establishment song. The speaker criticizes the scholars who attack female artists and defends an artistic community in which women could be valued, could attain visibility, and would request attention and consideration:

. . .
Because we need to live in the place where we are truly alive,
Present, safe, and accounted for.
Because we refuse to allow our writing, songs, art, activism
And political histories to be suppressed or stolen.
Because we refuse to be embarrassed about the mistakes
And faults and choose to move forward

With a political agenda bent on freedom of all.

I get it I get it I get it

. . .

(Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001)

In an expansive and encompassing approach, the speaker argues that women's involvement in different artistic fields has been belittled and removed from historical revision. Then, she points towards the present time and the future as a new paradigm in which a renovated spirit will be employed by women to reject that conventional invisibility that female artists have suffered. Women will move forward and remain determined to vindicate their active participation in search for equality.

In general, the lyrics studied in this section discover Hanna's discontent with an unequal society in which men are empowered and women cornered to invisibility, especially in the artistic domain. On the one hand, the lyrics are remarkably assertive due to the employment of straightforward language and persuasive and aggressive expressions that seek both to arrange the quotidian and to provoke an impact, what makes Hanna's discourse informal and natural in outlook, but intense and sharp in range. By approaching the lyrics through a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, we find some content elements that can be considered feminist, for example, the use of a particular topic like power and some other references to power-related matters like women's artistic ambition. On the other hand, Hanna uses some elements to spread her feminist message, articulating her lyrics as an authentically upfront method to approach girls who are feeling alienated or powerless and offering them an artistic source of confidence and determination. It must be mentioned that all these songs are apparently sharing a resembling voice, in other words, the same spokesperson, one who speaks in favor of women (artists) with an engaged stress and a vibrant diction. The addressee in five of the songs analyzed in this section ("This Is Not a Test", "Statement of Vindication", "Jigsaw Youth", "On Guard" and "My Art") is a "you" that symbolizes the male community, but Hanna also directs her words to girls in order to create a sense of solidarity and to build a community. Thus, in "Let's Run", "Bloody Ice Cream", "Slideshow at Free University" and "Tres Bien" the artist employs the personal pronoun "we", the direct object "us" and the possessive adjective "our" in a way that seeks to include and represent girls that are understood as equal and alike to that being embodied by the speaker or narrative voice. That sense of common space and sorority was very characteristic of the Riot Grrrl movement, as I have explained before.

Within the bounds of that unifying spirit, these lyrics do also show how Hanna celebrates female creativity and artistic capacity. Her attempt and call for that communal project that contributes to women's access to authority and the female exercising of power is epitomized in her demanding and pushy lyrical content. Besides, her own personal agency and representative accomplishments stand out as an exemplary legacy that contributes to her artistic ambition to addressing girls that can find in her songs and performances a proof of how there is room for them in the public domain, one in which, moreover, as Hanna herself does, their feminist demands can be voiced and articulated.

7.4. Alienation and Binarism

In the patriarchal tradition, power configuration is sometimes articulated through the adoption of binary oppositions. In Mary Holmes's words, binary oppositions "are central to how we make sense of the world. So the two terms in these sets of oppositions are not equal. It is not a case of A being understood in relation to B, but of A as opposed to not A. In other words, meaning is established in terms of what is valued in society, as opposed to what is not valued, and this can be used to explain gender inequalities" (68). That is, gender bias, inequalities and women's position in society, comes from their specification as opponents to the norm. In other words, what is usually valued and accounted for as a standard or point of departure is men's central locality. Women's condition and their place in society, from different perspectives and in connection to varied aspects in life, has been described as "alienated". Women have been relegated to the symbolic position of the "Other", in contrast to the other extreme in this arrangement, in which men seem to be configured as the primordial. For Simone de Beauvoir:

> They [men] alienated part of their existence in Nature and in Woman; but they won it back afterward; condemned to play the role of the Other, woman was thus condemned to possess no more than precarious power; slave or idol, she was never the one who chose her lot… the place of woman in society is always the one they assign her; at no time has she imposed her own law (86).

De Beauvoir describes a woman's fate as sentenced, being her role passive and the power assigned to her scarce. As the result of women's lack of access to power, but also due to patriarchy's intrusion on women's capacity to define themselves, the prospects that women enjoy for self-definition seem to come from male design and in accordance to male interests (Millet 46). What is more, Millet argues that "the image of women as we know it is an image created by men and fashioned to suit their needs. These needs spring from a fear of the "otherness" of woman… the male has already set himself as the human norm, the subject and referent to which the female is "other" or alien"" (Millet 46). Millet, as I also did before, delivers her perspective through the use of adjectives like "Other" or "alien" that are used traditionally to report and trace women's path in history.

In other words, conventionally, women have been defined in relation to man: in the Christian tradition, the Bible states that first God created Man, and then Eve was created from Adam's rib as his partner. From there on, women have been historically described in reference or association to their counterparts, being both sexes considered opposites. In this opposition, women are usually the repository of negative connotations, biased representations and narrow definitions, which are sourced from the system of meaning that patriarchal dichotomies yield. This binarism has helped to perpetuate patriarchal power. However, different lines and critical approaches, emerging in the second half of the 20th century, have unveiled and criticized this pattern, being one of them the "deconstructionist" method that embodies post-structuralist thinking, as envisioned and suggested by Jacques Derrida. Derrida's theoretical innovations had a significant impact on the work by third wave

feminists who embraced his approach in search of a practice to "deconstruct" misconceptions regarding the nature of women and, consequently, showing their disagreement with those traditional dichotomies that led them to a desperate feeling of alienation.

Alienation can be defined as the psychological isolation of an individual from a community. Its prevalence in modern society has been an issue that was developed as soon as in the beginnings of the 19th century (Marx's theory of alienation[70]). In female studies, isolation is a factor that applies to the sociological consequences of economic and political circumstances. Women have been economically, politically and socially alienated from American society. In the context of the United States, it was not until 1848 (when the Married Women's Property Act was signed), that unmarried women could own and control their properties; and it was not before 1920 (when the Nineteenth Amendment was passed) that women could vote or stand for electoral office. Thus, women have felt segregated from their own societies. This feeling of isolation (and loneliness to some extent) has to do with western binarist preconceptions that are entrenched in American society, but also in many different cultures. With regard to music, women have also felt alienated, mainly because of the limitations that the gendered music sphere entailed, but also because, if the genre or music style that they liked was not in accordance to their femininity (as I explained that it normally happened in the case of punk-rock music), social and cultural expectations would censure their choice and disapprove their involvement. This issue is a recurrent thematic inspiration in Bikini Kill (and also in Hanna's project Julie Ruin). Many songs refer to how there are broader possibilities and more than just two ways of doing things. According to Hanna, "in the writing process, I always felt like: 'I'm not trying to tell you how to think. I'm trying to raise questions and say things I'm going through'" (Pelly, "Kathleen Hanna"). Opening up space for new and outside-the-norm choices was something that riot grrrl bands shared with the feminist politics of the 1990s.

In Bikini Kill's song "White Boy" (*Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993), they directly address the patriarchal culture that is responsible for women's alienation. It specifically blames, as can be seen from the clear distinction made in the title, on a western male figure (designed as dominant and prevalent by patriarchy) the inception of this alienation:

. . .
It's hard to talk with your dick in my mouth
I will try to scream in pain a little nicer next time
. . .
I'm so sorry if I'm alienating some of you
Your whole fucking culture alienates me
I cannot scream in pain from down here on my knees

[70] Karl Marx's theory of alienation describes the isolation that people suffer as a consequence of living in a world divided by social classes. According to this theory, a person loses his capacity of self-control due to his new acquired mechanistic condition. Marx described several types of work alienation, and, even though the alienation that women suffered is not similar to those types, it is related to it in that women's alienation is also affecting their condition as human beings.

I'm so sorry that I think!

. . .

(Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993)

Jenn Pelly describes this song as "pure opposition art, with Hanna appropriating a Rollins-like stalwart stance for *her* war" ("Bikini Kill"), and in a sense, the song, with a particular erotic tone in the opening lines and the use of sarcasm in the rest of the lyrics, represents the rejection of that unique reality that segregates and corners radical and diverse alternatives. The subject matter hidden in the discourse becomes apparent when the word "alienate" is repeated twice within the same verse, showing an unequivocal preoccupation and cultural judgement on women's rank and the limitations that they find on their way towards creative fulfilment, blocking their (artistic) growth.

In the same album, "Jigsaw Youth" can be defined as a typically constructed punk song, succinct, built up through layers of fast rhythms, using distortion and simple chords, a foundation upon which Hanna elaborates on the meaning by playing with her voice. This song can be read together with "White Boy" as a continuation in terms of content. It deals with non-prescribed paths and it seeks to offer new possibilities. This time, the persona rejects contraries and stands up for an "in-between" situation in which the formal strategy is delivered through a question-asking paradigm:

. . .

We know there's not one way

one light, one stupid truth

Don't fit your definitions

won't meet your demands

not into win/lose reality

won't fit in with your plan

(Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993)

The first-person plural "we" echoes the unity between girls, that potential feeling of sisterhood that involves all the people that like Hanna do not esteem a unique accepted approach, worldview or truth (described in the song as "stupid") that is established upon patriarchal ideologies. It is also interesting to note, first, the positive reassurance provided by the employment of the expression "we know", inferring that women are reacting; then, it is also worth mentioning how the speaker elaborates on the feeling of change with the use of negative remarks such "don't", "won't", "not" ("Jigsaw Youth", Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993) which, we can guess, Hanna uses in order to list all the things that they do not approve of or will not cover anymore. In truth, these women that Hanna potentially empowers and represents in her songs are questioning, in her lyrics, those patriarchal concepts that are accepted and perpetuated (even within language, as we can see with the reference to men's designed definitions that distort women's reality). These concepts that are revised or attacked in these

songs cast out minor communities that do not fit within those same terms, whether in relation to sexuality, class, race or religion.

The same album also includes another song that deals with the theme of alienation and the use of the binary opposition that, as I mentioned before, can be signaled as the ideological foundation for western civilization, especially, in what regards the feminist topics that I have been addressing in my analysis. "Resist Psychic Death" (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993) is again a punk song in formal design with a characteristic dissident tone:

> Your world not mine
> Your world not ours
> . . .
> I will resist with every inch and every breath
> I will resist this psychic death
> . . .
> There's more than two ways of thinking
> there's more than one way of knowing
> there's more than two ways of being
> there's more than one way of going somewhere
> silence inside of me silence inside
> . . .
> (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993)

The song starts by attesting to a description of the world as a male territory where the narrative voice itself and that women's community that Hanna always inferred or elicits in the songs do not feel as active participants. The speaker projects a polyvalent understanding of a varied set of ways that can rearrange modes of thinking, being and knowing, criticizing, thus, the binarism that impregnates western society, which makes it almost impossible to accept any other possibilities apart from the standard categorizations delineated by those binary pairs.

It comes as no coincidence that these three songs ("White Boy", "Jigsaw Youth" and "Resist Psychic Death") are included in the same album, one which encompasses and embodies the tone and essence that have been conventionally and distinctively assigned to punk music[71]. These lyrics denote a feeling of sorrow and dissatisfaction that Hanna shares with other girls that she addresses and involves in her songs, girls that she portrays as determined to take decisions such as starting bands and getting involved in artistic projects. She focuses on the fact that these girls did not enjoy positive feedback and support, instead they got an avid criticism that was focused on those things that girls cannot do because it is not the "right" thing for their

[71] As I explained in the section related to punk music, these songs are excellent examples of the music Riot Grrrl encouraged: innovative and fresh expressions, playful voices, simple chords and fast or aggressive rhythms.

sex/gender. However, there is also a sense of defiance and rebellion, which incontestably distinguishes Bikini Kill's work.

However, this edge does not stop with this album. With a distinctive playful and provocative voice, in the song "Alien She" (in the album *Pussy Whipped*) Hanna explores sisterhood and, again, how girls are subjected to feelings of alienation. In a speech at Old Dominion University, Hanna explained that this song "was about me before I was a feminist, singing to me after I was a feminist and kind of getting an argument and try to figure out how can those two kind of personalities, the one that wants to go to the mall with this other person" ("Herstory repeats"). In the first lines, Hanna describes a sense of sorority and community between all her girlfriends: "She is me, I am her" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped ,*1993). She compares it to being "Siamese twins connected at the cunt" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped ,*1993). Then, the mood expressed in the song changes and Hanna complains about a friend who only wants to go shopping and buy makeup, but then she admits having a scary feeling, as if by declining her friends' invitation, she is also renouncing to the conventional standards that society established for women, what makes her feel as an outsider, evoking those feelings of alienation that come from that rejection:

. . .
She wants me to go to the mall
She wants me
To put the pretty, pretty lipstick on
She wants me to be like her
She wants me to be like her
I want to kill her
But I'm afraid it might kill me
"feminist"
"dyke" "whore"
Pretty, pretty
Alien
. . .
(Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped ,*1993)

A parallel reading of this lyric may imply that, if a girl was to participate in the 1990s punk scene, they would immediately be labelled within the previously mentioned attributes, because that scene was mainly formed by a male audience that did not approve of girls' involvement and potential as musicians, what led to the fact that most girls would feel alienated in a music scene that they supported, but where they do not seem to belong.

Another controversial song in Bikini Kill's repertoire, concerning the topic of alienation and binaries that I am aiming at analyzing here, can be found in *The Singles* (1998). "I Like Fucking" denounces a circumscribe reality characterized by male design:

Hey! Do you believe there's anything
beyond troll-guy reality? I do. I do. I do.
. . .
Just 'cause I named it right here sweet chickadee
don't mean for a minute you should think
I'm the opposite of anything
but if you wanna know for sure, I'll tell you
. . .
(Bikini Kill, *The Singles*, 1998)

With an exclamatory tone, the speaking voice catches the audience's attention and queries if an experience different from men's ("troll reality") is possible. As an individual, the speaker does believe in it and reaffirms it, repeating this idea three times. Then she goes on saying that, in spite of the fact that women like her are called "sweet chickadee" (which is an affectionate name for women or children), they are not the opposite of men, and she proceeds with a resistant pitch and attitude to insinuate that, in case of doubt, she is determined to make of this a clear statement.

"Radical or Pro-parental" follows the same nature of the previous lyric that depicted a binary division. With no music accompanying in the background, Hanna starts the song by asking a question: "Is the lady of the house at home?" (Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998). Exhibiting a sweeping disposition, she wants to change the normative status quo and bring down the foundations of the hierarchy that pushes women towards pre-established expectations and roles as both wives and nurturers:

. . .
Who is real and who is false now
Pick the scabs to see whose boss now
And when they kill each other off now
We'll find a cure for their first cough now
Radical or pro-parental?
. . .
(Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998)

In her song, Hanna acknowledges the labor and struggle of many women that have been breaking up with a heritage that pigeonholed them, and whose conventions did not value their wills. It will not be the only example in which Hanna touches on this topic again. In her solo album, the song "Breakout a Town" (Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998) echoes these previous ideas by commenting on those simplistic arrangements founded on blacks and whites that cast out women. Hanna's subsequent reaction to it is to present an inspiring alternative:

. . .
You're so tired and I'm so lovely
You're so great and I'm so bored
. . .
Single handed manner you got the best of me
Every word you say, I sit on the edge of my seat
You're so smart and I'm so dumb dumb
You're so great and I'm so bored
. . .
I'm so big and you're so pretty
I'm so great and you're so bored
I'm so great and you're too shitty
. . .
(Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998)

In this song, as Hanna has done before, she employs a persuasive oratory in which the focalization tries to encompass a sense of dialogue, an exchange that can be perceived in the way in which she directly addresses a second-person singular "you" that is described as the opposite to the speaker, in this case, articulated through the use of a first-person, "I". This addressee is described as "tired", "great" and "smart", while Hanna portrays herself as "lovely", "bored" and "dumb" ("Breakout a Town", Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998). In my potential interpretation of these words, Hanna verbalizes this portrait of that imaginary person as tired, because he has been actively commanding a positive criticism from his actions. On the other hand, Hanna, as representative of a differing situation, is rendered like I mentioned before because it illustrates the usual passive role, observant of the one enjoying a real agency, that has been traditionally established when defining gender roles.

The rest of the song shows a modulation of Hanna's perspective. She proclaims a change in perception and attitude that reveals a new approach to the use of the first-person as actively and determinedly opposing the second-person resistance. She is now the recipient of adjectives such as "big" and "great" ("Breakout a Town", Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998) and she goes back to her persistent reference to a community that will have command of their experiences and take control of the space. This is an invocation of the reading that I did on the place that girls occupied in punk-rock or hardcore concerts, where, as I explained, they were always in secondary positions. This was one of the main reasons why riot grrrl bands started to ask girls to "go to the front" lines of the venues. That stress and determination permeates Hanna's lyrical production.

Focusing specifically on the application of the FCDA, the seven songs analyzed offer a specific exploration of the subject matter of binarism and the feeling of alienation derived from it that I proposed as a source of analysis in this section. The lyric exhibits contraries as a contrastive way of paralleling different worldviews. Adjectives and pronouns (i.e. yours/ours) are set as divergent on purpose, in order to make a

greater sense of antagonism within women's and men's perception of reality. The second person "you" embraces a male audience in all songs; and the first-person plural "we" stands up for a community of girls. The words "alienate" and "alien" are repeated in two songs ("Alien She" and "White Boy") with the evident purpose of unfolding women's feelings of isolation and exclusion. Some insults or curse words like "dyke", "whore", "dumb" or "shitty" are used to make the lyric more decisive. Exclamations are also employed to represent Hanna's annoyance and despair. This topic seems to be of great relevance in Hanna's work. Her discourse sets a stand from which she vindicates a conviction that she shares and seems to grant to other girls and artists. Even though there is a sense of restlessness and sorrow in some of the songs, as if women were struggling once and again with the same issues in a loop in which no final victory can be perused, the lyric's content does not give the sensation of defeat. Instead, her attitude and her persistent message is one that could be link to that of a determined warrior that encourages female artists and young girls not to surrender and fight to get their side of things heard and accounted for.

7.5. Language

Previously in this work, I stated that language as a feminist concern emerged especially in the so-called third wave and that it was also a hot topic of great relevance for riot grrrls. In what follows, I focus specifically on how Hanna addresses directly language as a vehicle, the mediation or the channel for her attempt in communication. In essence, language is what Hanna uses to mould her thinking and share it with other girls and women. Music is her expertise. I find in her words, in the text of her songs (and how these were performed and verbalized), the source for understanding her feminist conversation. Hanna faces writing and creation in all of her songs, whatever the topic addressed. In the songs that I explore in this section, however, she addresses language straightforwardly. I found specific examples in her songwriting when she addresses the linguistic topic upfront, and that is why I decided to dedicate a section to reflect on the theories, ideas, concepts and strategies that can be associated to this perspective.

Feminists understood that language was a topic that they needed to tackle. They envisaged it as a system in which gender perspectives could be noted and explored. They concentrated their efforts on studying the way in which women had been (un)represented or shaped by what they understood as a damaging use of language. Language is not impartial. As a result, patriarchal systems, even when working in a variety of scales, have carved gender inequalities in language: "If representation is a normative function of language, patriarchal language systems can never adequately represent women as the structures are themselves misogynistic" (Whiteley 119). According to Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva, language plays a significant role for women's progress. As I explained before in my overview of feminism, in her work "Women's Time", Kristeva explains how she considers that sexual differences come represented in a symbolic contract, which reproduces difference in the subsequent relationships of power, language and meaning (21). For her, a possible attempt at subverting that contract is to "break the code, to shatter language, to find a specific discourse closer to the body and

emotions, to the unnameable repressed by the social contract" (24). Kristeva suggests that women have been left out of that contract and from the fabrication of language, which she describes as the "fundamental social bond" (24). In a similar manner, in "The Laugh of the Medusa", Cixous suggests that language hides an unbeatable opponent, because, she argues, this language is made by men and by their grammar (887), and women's words are not heard by those who only speak in the masculine (880). To defeat these resistances and conquer the impossible, women must write and invent "the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reserve-discourse" (Cixous 886). It is true that the grammar and syntax that order the different languages vary, and, to a greater or lesser degree, some languages may be considered more inclusive than others. Some scholars are thoroughly aware of this and Gloria Anzaldúa, for example, refers to the impartiality of language as one of the important factors that shape cultures: "The first time I heard two women, a Puerto Rican and a Cuban, say the word "*nosotras,"* I was shocked. I had not known the word existed. Chicanas use *nosotros* whether we're male or female. We are robbed of our female being by the masculine plural. Language is a male discourse" (76). All these illustrative reflections by feminist critics indicate how language has been a big concern for feminism.

In the intersection of language and feminism, two aspects excel as the most significant fulfillments of patriarchy's manipulation of the linguistic: apart from the fact that language, overall, is considered a male construct, it is also a fact that women are represented (or better said, misrepresented or not represented at all) by languages in connection to the exercising of those inequalities that patriarchy had established and perpetuated for women in all aspects of life. As an example, if we take English and the definitions that the Oxford English Dictionary (Third Edition, September 2000) provides for the words "woman" and "man", we perceive that the representation of both sexes in linguistic definition discloses an obvious different approach to the masculine and the feminine. According to the OED, "man" comes firstly defined as a human being. It is after reading another fifteen different definitions that its antagonism with the opposite sex is revealed. Furthermore, an annotation[72] is used to explain the former use of "man" in reference to both male and female and its current avoidance:

> man, n. (and int.)[73]
>
> I. A human being (irrespective of sex or age).
>
> II. 4. a. Contrasted with a woman.

[72] "*Man* was considered until the 20th cent. to include women by implication, though referring primarily to males. It is now freq. understood to exclude women, and is therefore avoided by many people" ("Man" *Oxford English Dictionary*).
[73] It can be accessed at https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/113198 (Last access 17/11/21).

On the contrary, the first definition for "woman" already explains that it is a particular human being and the equivalent of "man". Thus, we can see how we use words by understanding how they relate to others[74]. In this sense, the existence of women arises thanks to its counterpart, the man, who is, in turn, defined as an independent "human being" per se:

> woman, n.[75]
> I. Senses referring to an adult female human being.
> 1. a. An adult female human being. The counterpart of *man*

On top of that, the OED goes on giving other definitions for "woman" that are also significant to understand the impartiality of language. For instance, that "woman" comes mainly defined in relation to their sex or their feminine qualities:

> 3. a. In *pl.* Women considered collectively in respect of their sexuality, esp. as a means of sexual gratification
> b. Chiefly *derogatory*. A woman considered with reference to qualities traditionally attributed to the female sex, as weakness, fickleness, vanity, etc. Also with reference to positive qualities, such as capacity to love, sensitivity, etc.

In view of the definitions above, it can be concluded that masculine is universal ("a human being"), whereas the feminine is particular, as in within that "human being" category ("an adult female human being"). Besides, from the beginning, "woman" is linked to their sex and their female qualities, as representative and characteristic attributes of their nature. In consequence, it is unavoidable for women to notice how sexism is conveyed in language, a human-made construct that reflects the sex-based discrepancy on which the rest of the social constructs are also based.

Similarly, feminism perceived a biased ideology on the way in which patriarchal discourse has endorsed certain specific feminine representations that had shaped women through language. Simone de Beauvoir, for instance, suggests that patriarchy was established when history was written. She explains that patriarchy's greatest victory was not achieved as a result of a meaningful struggle between men and women. Instead, de Beauvoir considers that in order to properly describe the relationship between men and women it is necessary to resort to terms such as drama, threat and danger: "This is why religions and their codes treat woman with such hostility. By the time humankind reaches the stage of writing its mythology and laws, patriarchy is definitely established: it is males who write codes" (88). When something gets written, recorded, it acquires

[74] As Mary Holmes claimed, "linguistic structuralism has also played a part in explaining gender divisions by establishing the importance of language in creating our world" (66). The figure of the linguistic Ferdinand de Saussure emerges as one of the most representatives of the 20th century on the matter.
[75] It can be accessed at https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/229884 (Last access 17/11/21).

a higher value. Meaning is allotted and it can be passed on to subsequent generations. As an example, the representation of women in religious texts is very illustrative. Margaret Walters has explored those texts only to conclude that certain biblical characters, female characters, of course, had to pay a price for conflicting with the standard gender representation: Delilah was considered treacherous; Jezebel was portrayed as violent; and Eve led humans to the Fall (Walters 9). Probably the most influential and popular book in history, the Bible, unveils one of the most familiar and substantial examples. Eve, who tempted Adam to eat from the forbidden tree (the tree of knowledge of good and evil) condemned thus humans. Eve personifies evilness, weakness and blame. Accordingly, Christian cultures have found here a foundation for the modern myths that have associated womanhood with immorality. These beliefs or significations are then circulated by institutions and social organizations and they are finally taken for granted. The process is resolved then by concluding that the assumption is settled: women's attachment to the underlying meaning that stems from what is related to the wicked and the dangerous comes naturally and as a given. In other words, we internalize certain ideologies and concepts, which have been perpetuated and reproduced by complex processes of naturalization:

> Ideologies become dominant when a large number of people consent to them. With mass acceptance over a long period of time, ideologies become understood as "natural," "true," or "common sense," and individuals ascribing to them do not question their validity – a process called **naturalization.** Thus, while ideologies may seem true, in actuality they have been socially constructed, produced collectively by human beings and circulated by social institutions, such as the media, government, religious organizations, and the educational system. Naturalization was once achieved through the circulation of religious texts, such as the Bible. (Kearney 10) [bold in the original]

These processes perpetuate inequalities. The strategy can be devised in different fields, cultures and generations. Kathleen Hanna herself received negative input at punk shows, what reinforced the idea that stereotyping was also affecting a music realm that she aspired to make hers. In an interview with Eugenia Williamson, Hanna has vividly recalled a precise moment that she experienced while being on the stage with both Bikini Kill and Le Tigre:

> Sexism and racism and homophobia and classism are so naturalized. All these stereotypes make people think it's just normal that straight white men are getting all the breaks. When someone stands up at your show and says take it off, it's like, "thank you for letting everybody know that sexism is alive and well in this room and in punk rock and even though we're supposed to be living this alternative lifestyle that what I'm still doing is very important because, look, this guy exists, and there's a lot of guys in this room who are thinking the exact same thing". ("Interview Kathleen Hanna")

Therefore, stereotypes and language have always been linked. The two of them stand as important concerns for third wave feminists, who have strongly focused on the linguistic resource. Feminism has explored the

linguistic description and representation of women, asking, in turn, that a non-sexist use of language is used, especially, in the media.

The same impulse and stress can be found in riot grrrl bands and, therefore, in Kathleen Hanna's artistic interests. When talking about how this movement exerted a big influence in linguistic terms, Sara Marcus says that "The women's movement didn't have a language for reaching young women. The language and ideas of Riot Grrrl have permeated the culture and made this more participatory, messy, vernacular feminism available to everybody" (Barton). Hanna herself has attested to this anxiety with language in different interviews. Of course, and that is my main interest, the presence and impact of this topic in her songwriting is profound, and I will show that in my analysis. In order to illustrate the concern with the power of language, Sam del Rowe quoted Hanna's words, finding on how female artists are obligated to discover the constraints of language and create new ways of expressing her voices the best illustration for the aforementioned concern: "I felt the language we had made to empower ourselves, for lack of a better phrase or word, was just stolen and cheapened and didn't mean anything" Hanna said. —I felt like I had kind of lost language" (Del Rowe). As explained above, this is also reflected in Hanna's lyrical production, complicating and enriching the far reaching artistic opportunities that songwriting offers. Hanna's linguistic and rhetoric expressions matched the unambiguous and insurgent nature of punk music. Her lyrics show how women were rejecting language as a male construct that had weaponized them at the same time that they were searching for a new language that would not serve the interests and aspirations of patriarchal discourse.

Preceded by a sturdy drum pattern and an intense electric guitar arrangement, Hanna screams in "Blood One" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993) that words are made by and for the same group, that of men. The song opens with the use of the vowel sequence A-E-I, a direct reference to the thematic relevance that language will have in the song. A plan that is confirmed in successive parts of the lyric with the choices in diction: "words", "language", "terms", and "alphabet" ("Blood One", "Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993) are all terms that reveal the topical content of the song. The speaking voice claims that she does not owe anything to men and that she does not fit into a constructed lexicon that has been written with men's lineage and ignores women. By using this startling metaphor, the speaker expresses objection to the fact that only men are valid and considered in order to inspire linguistic meaning. Then, she goes on making a parallelism between language and memory, suggesting that to hear and use that male-marked lexicon constantly reminds her of her position as an outsider:

A-E-I don't owe you nothing
. . .
I don't fit into your dumb words
Language is memory pushing thru my skin
Bloody memory that filters everything
. . .
Your terms
I don't fit into those words

Your alphabet is spelled with your blood
Your alphabet is spelled with our blood
Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah
I don't understand
I don't understand
(Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993)

The speaker states that she does not comprehend that language, suggesting that it does not represent her or women, in general. It is not only discourse and institutions that remind women of their alienated position, it is also language itself, which like a latent reminder consolidates this foundation.

In a very similar way, five years later, Bikini Kill releases "Demirep" (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998), a song that, as I explained in a previous section, deals with the patriarchal tradition, but it also covers the extensive topic of language**.** This song can be analyzed together with the previously mentioned "Blood One". Both make reference to similar themes and the diction employed is also analogous. The narrative voice, once again, attempts to speak with authority and integrity and it suggests that men's words (which are compared to a razor and a baseball bat) sculpt their initials in women's skin. Women are thus always aware of men's power over them:

. . .
I could scream my truth, if I wanted
Right thru your lies
But your baseball bat words razormouth
Carves your initials bloody in my thigh
(Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998)

The reference to the baseball bat implies that men's words are strong as the strength that is used with a bat. And that is how women are hit. Besides, as razors do, words do also cut. Again, blood plays a relevant role in the context of marked language. It hints that speech is a matter that deeply affects women. This imagery is concrete, carnal and primary. Bikini Kill relies on a muscular and frank metaphorical language that specifies and engenders their energetic criticism and dissection.

As I have already explained in a previous section, Le Tigre's song "Fake French" (*Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001) catalogues a long list of things that women have to resist and combat. It is accurate to focus the attention on her use of expressions such as "secret vocabulary", "dialectical specstimme", "extensive bibliographies" and "wildlife metaphors" ("Fake French", Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001), all of them evocative concepts that, in their relation to language, render the conflictive definitions of gender that Hanna has constantly explored in her songs:

I've got - a secret vocabulary
I've got - MIDI in, out, thru
I've got - dialectical specstimme
I've got - herm choreography
I've got - a conceptual stunt double
I've got - a deviant scene, I mean
. . .
I've got - extensive bibliographies
I've got - flow disruption
I've got - wildlife metaphors
. . .
(Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001)

The speaker's evocative use of "extensive bibliographies" ("Fake French", Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001), which I interpret as a reference to the silenced contribution of women to the music scene or to the arts in general, voices Hanna's poetic struggle for equality and visibility, implemented here through a varied use of imagery and what herself calls "wildlife metaphors" ("Fake French", Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001). It is true that riot grrrls and bands coming afterwards, such as Le Tigre, cared for a language that represented women in an equal and fair manner. They wanted to use music "as a tool for enacting feminist mythology or helping to create a language" (Ewens), as claimed by Bikini Kill's drummer Tobi Vail. Female musicians were trying to re-appropriate language and their implementation of that plan was visible in the lyric performance that energize their songs. For instance, they would make use of expressions (like swear words) that had been not expected from women traditionally, less from female singers; or they would also employ a simpler range of vocabulary that would make it easier and more efficient to find a connection with other girls. In other words, they somehow left behind the complex and academic concepts used by previous waves of feminism in order to target a broader audience and reach to more girls in a straightforward and easy way, still without losing the strength and depth required for a proper transfer of feminist ideas and values. This transfer would rely on a strong awareness of language, both as focus and as channel.

The focalization in the three songs that I have mentioned above is the same: a first person *I* that talks directly to the audience or addresses a second person *you* that represents a male audience or model or a given institution. As mentioned before, Hanna employs words ("words", "alphabet" or "language") that reveal the conscious exploration of discourse and language that I perceive in Hanna's lyrics. Yet, the word "blood" is also significantly employed and it plays a symbolic part when repeated several times in different songs. With the use of that word, Hanna seems to signify its association with the topic at hand here. She also discloses how this is a transcendental, essential, profound linguistic foundation that suggests the close relationship between discourse, institutions, ideologies (everything that we see as constructed) and our inner selves, the more

intimate parts that form our identities. Again, this association suggests that inequalities and injustices are deeply originated and rooted, not only in communities and societies, but also within people. Language plays a key role to shape attitudes in different cultures. One way of being inclusive and eliminate gender bias and stereotypes (from a gender perspective that approaches language as a social construct) is to use a gender-neutral language that does not discriminate in terms of sex or gender. The focus on language became important, especially for the third wave of feminism. There was a particular emphasis on a language made by women and taking into consideration women and addressing women, but also a universal language free of sexist definitions, allusions or metaphorical implications.

The written word is the territory of time and memory. What remains alive and persists through time is usually mediated through language. It, for instance, recounts and articulates history. Accordingly, it is necessary to be aware of the use that we make of the language, avowing for a non-sexist habit. Speakers have to review, rethink and deconstruct the meanings that are not based on a real equality. This regeneration of the lexicon and the grammar can be observed in the lyrics written by Hanna, as I have tried to illustrate above.

7.6. Sexuality

Sexuality has to do with our sexual and gender identities, and also with how we experience attraction and desirability. Sexual orientation is our physical, romantic or emotional appeal to others. There are many ways in which an individual may experience it. For example, by identifying as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, aromantic, fluid, pansexual or questioning any of them. LGBT is the acronym that tries to encompass this varied understanding, standing for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. A fifth letter is usually added to this acronym, the Q, which stands for queer and it represents those who identify themselves as outsiders to the normative sex/gender system, neither heterosexual nor cisgender[76].

Véronique Mottier defines sexuality as the manner in which people experience their bodies and desires. She suggests that it is a construct shaped by political and social forces, connected also to power relations around class, race and gender (Mottier 2). In a similar way, Kate Millet defines sex as a category with political implications where intimacy is extrapolated to a more social and wider context: "…Sexual dominion obtains nevertheless as perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power. This is so because our society, like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy" (25). In that sense, sexuality can also be understood as an ideology in which power inequities are embedded. In fact, sexuality has been organized upon men's idea of pleasure. In ancient times, the phallus was the symbol of power and it was present everywhere:

[76] The sexual identity –the sex assigned at birth— corresponds to the gender identity.

> The ancients adopted a phallocentric notion of sex, defined exclusively as penetration… Sex was thus not construed in relational terms, as a shared experience reflecting emotional intimacy, but as something – penetration- done to someone else…Men were encouraged to use penetrative sex for domination and control of the submissive partner. Sex reflected social and political relations of power, since men performed their social status as citizens in the arenas of war, politics, and sex. (Mottier 5)

Thus, the male is *on* the female. The male deposits while the woman receives. The sperm is seen as the active part and the ovum as the passive. Women's sexuality has always been restrained by men's. As Véronique Mottier explains, female sexuality has been conceived mainly as an answer to male's desire; female sexuality has been circumscribed to reproductive instincts (34). Before the third wave, sexuality was appreciated as a private affair, a kind of taboo, but from the 1980s onwards, women started to question it, plus also other related notions, such as pleasure and pro-choice politics (the right to have an abortion).

Historically, women's sexual practices have not been contemplated a topic for public discussion or as a valid source for artistic inspiration. Female sexuality has not been seen outside the territory in which it is associated to the innuendos derived from concepts such as reproduction and monogamy. As I explained in the first part of my work, women who exerted a certain determination to enjoy the sexual pleasures of their bodies would certainly be categorized within a consciously negative type, usually as "whores" (depraved and sexually active). The assumptions raised by this negative type are also structured in a binary system. It is traditionally opposed to the concept of the "Madonna" which symbolically enacts the virtues that are ideally attached to female sexuality: chastity and lack of sexual desire or promiscuity. Still today, this binarism reigns, in subtle and no so subtle ways, in many societies: women are "whores[77]" when promiscuity is rated for just more than one relationship, while boys can accumulate affairs and culturally this will be accepted or approved without reservation, and sometimes even praised. Extramarital relationships form also an illustrative case: depending on the gender, the judgment will be different. When people discuss virginity, as Chimamanda Ngozi explains, girls' virtue is praised, whereas boys' is not (32). Most societies teach girls that they cannot be as sexually active as boys, and that the main purpose of women's sexuality is to procreate, ignoring their sexuality and pleasure concerns. This is still a prevailing situation in our contemporary society. However, it is also important to discern how there has been a progressive movement against these views. As Whiteley explains, women have wanted to defy stereotyped ideas about females' sexuality and femininity, asking to be commanders of their own sexuality:

> the independence of sexuality, frequency of lovers and, more importantly, dominance in heterosexual relations leading to freedom of choice, was an important part of the challenge to romanticized

[77] The definitions for "whore" are manifold and it gets even more complicated to identify it due to economic, political, social and cultural undertones. I am aware of these connotations. However, since my interest is not to develop a thorough analysis of this complex issue in the 20th century politics, I use "whore" as an expressive cultural and linguistic convention that is usually employed to derogatorily describe those women that do not prescribe their attitudes and behaviors to the assumptions and expectations marked by patriarchy.

> constructs of femininity. However, while chastity and purity were largely interpreted as outmoded patriarchal concepts, feminists stressed the importance of being in control of one's sexuality, if being a thinking woman. (48)

In a similar way, Cixous claimed that "almost everything is yet to be written by women about femininity: about their sexuality, that is, its infinite and mobile complexity" (885). Third wave feminists tried to change those assumptions about female sexuality in order to challenge its mystification, with the aim of turning it into a political matter that required the engagement of society and the political body.

As explained before, the feminist movement in the second half of the 20th century put also in the center of its concerns the issue of unwanted pregnancies. In fact, today, women, in many different countries, are still hampered by reproductive policies (meaning the lack of regulation to allow the use of the contraceptive pill or the right to legal abortion). Therefore, the necessity to instigate discussions over the political control of the female body. The increasing use of the pill has to be seen as an important step forward towards the requested freedom on issues related to sexuality that women have been demanding, as I have previously shown, for decades now. Yet, at first, many women rejected the use of pills and opted for abortions instead, because they felt ashamed, they felt that it was like publicly displaying information on their sexual life: "And they did frequently use abortion as a means of birth control. Using the pill meant a woman was directly confronting her choice to be sexually active. (…) Yet women were willing to take risks to have sexual freedom - to have the right to choose" (hooks 27). Third wave feminist asked for control over their own bodies and sexual activity. However, many working class women and/or poor women could not afford having an abortion and they would have one in clandestine clinics, risking their lives. That is why, nowadays, feminism still asks for inexpensive or free abortion as an essential right for women's reproductive freedom. Also, current feminists stress solidarity between women, seeking to find an opportunity to get together those women that support pro-life programs and those who are in favor of ending their pregnancies and have a full control of their bodies[78].

As the examples above show, in the 1990s, sexual politics became a central concern for the third wave of feminism. In the Riot Grrrl movement, it also became one of the main matters that feminists discussed on fanzines, songs and/or other writings. In general, sexuality is a recurrent theme in Hanna's lyrics, addressed with straightforwardness and candidness, what feeds the topic, when issued in these songs, with a declaring and expressive tone or style. In her lyrics, Hanna talks openly about issues that, some years before she was born, had been taboo for most American women. Hanna makes an honest use of women's sexuality, using explicit descriptions and, as I said, a straightforward approach to the topic.

That is the case of the lyric in "Candy" (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!,* 1991). This song deals with gendered iconography that seeks to elucidate the meaning of sex, focusing on women's passive role during

[78] Abortion, the pill or pro-life campaigns are complex issues that necessitate a more expansive investigation. I should have commented many different economic, political and cultural undertones. I am aware of the problems of generalizing. However, my intention is just to offer a solid but brief foundation so that then I focus my analysis on how these issues are represented and discussed in Hanna's songwriting.

sexual relationships. The speaker makes a clear description of an intimate episode in which she portrays herself as leaving her pride aside while having sex in order to satisfy the man's passions:

> I swallowed my pride
> I chewed on your sores
> I ate out my heart
> I swallowed your cum
> It's just my part in it
> [Pre-Chorus]
> Just the way it is
> . . .
> (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!,* 1991)

I interpret the expression "just the way it is" ("Candy", Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!,* 1991) as a criticism of normal and conventional ways of oral sex in an unmediated way that resembles or evokes the explicitness of traditional sex where roles are established. However, at the same time, the speaker is also being ironic, provocative and distorted with the connotations of the last verses of the song, where she sings that "You really like it baby / I want to be your candy" ("Candy", Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!,* 1991) in a sensual, yet, aggressive manner, accompanied by distorted guitars and a slow drum pattern. In sum, Bikini Kill complains about this submissive role and opens up a debate about broader sexual options for women. Music, in this song, is harsh, painful and rogue, as it is in "Daddy's Lil Girl" (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991). This song is also about roles, about the inner struggle against them. However, at the same time, she is talking about intimacy in an ambiguous, even ironic manner. It is not a coincidence that this song is included in the same album in which "Candy" can be found. Here, Hanna uses self-images of her problematic childhood to portray a formative stage on her upbringing, one in which dad provides and she remains silent and obedient:

> I have no desire
> I can't feel a thing
> I just want to make him happy
> Daddy's little girl
> Daddy's little girl
> Daddy's girl don't wanna be
> His whore no more
> Food
> Shelter
> Love
> I need to hold my tongue

I need to hold my tongue
Didn't know I'd have to lose so much
For Daddy's love
Didn't know I'd have to lose myself
For Daddy's touch
. . .
(Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991)

Hanna's song evokes a durable connection between the lyric's content and her own biography, making use of a strong association and referential use of herself as a "little girl" ("Daddy's Lil Girl", Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991), a denomination usually used to make women feel smaller or defenceless. In the development of the story, Hanna claims that she is more than a sexualized body. It can be assumed that this personal disclosure has its origins in autobiographical elements, as previously stated. Hanna has admitted having a traumatic upbringing in which she had to take care of her body and in which her dad played a pivotal influence: ". . . part of that is looking back at bad messages my dad gave me as a child and talking back to them, saying, "No, I'm not a piece of shit. I'm not a six-year-old trying to take advantage of a 30-year-old man. I'm not some sexualized body here for your pleasure" ("Kathleen Hanna is Shedding"). In the song, there is also a sense of revelation or reaction, which seems quite latent, as if Hanna had made a promise that is still pending: "Didn't know I'd have to lose so much" ("Daddy's Lil Girl", Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991). That awareness is ongoing and seems to be painful, reinforced by the tone of the whole song.

After that, there is a change in tone. Hanna shouts and that yelling is asking to pay attention to her father's words:

. . .
Listen!
Dad has something to say
He has something for you to do
And he wants it done right now
And he wants you to do it his way
(Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991)

This is also a direct allusion to the active part that the male plays in the domestic sphere. He is the one who speaks and commands. He wants her to do something in a particular time and according to his manners, also specific and unique. These demands and power display can be understood, first, as male's authority in the nuclear family. Women (in this case, Hanna as a daughter) have to listen and obey. Second, the aforementioned demands and the display of power can also refer to the rules that girls had to follow in the music scene, where their agency is blocked and their initiative is disregarded.

Even more explicit is Hanna's focus on sex in "Sugar" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993). Ironically (yet gravely) the speaker offers a list of complaints in relation to the attributes consigned to women due to their fictional roles in pornography:

> Oh baby! You're sooo good
> You're so fucking big & hard
> You're such a big man
> You've got such a huge cock!
> Push it in harder!
> Oh deeper, harder
> I'm almost cumming!
> . . .
> I'm a self-fulfilling porno queen yeah
> I mimic out your every fucking fantasy yeah yeah
> And now, and now,
> Here is my head I'm on my knees
> Oh baby" Why can't I ever get my Sugar?
> . . .
> I won't play girl to your boy no more, sugar
> . . .
> (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993)

The performance starts with an exclamatory voice, ironically praising the qualities of the boy with whom she is having sex. The speaker describes him with (presumably) positive adjectives when talking about sexual relationships. Then, she focuses on the confidence and awareness that women acquire when analyzing sexuality and pornography. Hanna commands the I person or speaker in the song to associate the voice in the song with herself and her resolute performance, moving forward in order to describe herself as a "porno queen" who imitates porno videos. Next image shows her on her knees asking for sugar. A sweet treat is usually given to good children, so, again, Hanna plays with those connotations, alluding to the infantilism that is constantly employed to represent women's active participation in different social circumstances, even when as intimate and personal as sexual intercourse, as it is the case in this song. It is also interesting to analyze the connotations in the expression "be on the knees" ("Sugar", Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993), since it suggests and consolidates the idea that women have a passive role in sex. Then, Hanna focuses her speech on the boy and firmly states that she is not going to fulfill his desires by playing that particular role anymore, showing, again, one more change of tone and perspective in the song, which is something habitual in Hanna's writing.

Another important topic in relation to her portrayal of sexuality in this song is Hanna's linguistic deliverance and perspective on the theme. Her employment of words and expressions such as "fucking", "cock",

"cum" and "porno queen" ("Sugar", Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993), among others, shows her straightforward and daredevil approximation to the theme. Besides, this impulsive and assertive use of diction discloses also her concern about language. In a way, Hanna is showing how the use and meaning of certain words can be changed when they are employed with agency and determination.

In a different way, "New Radio" (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998), a song produced by Joan Jett, describes a woman whose agency is not questioned:

> . . .
> I'm the little girl at the picnic
> Who won't stop pulling her dress up
> It doesn't matter who's in control now
> . . .
> Come here baby, let me kiss you like a boy does
> Wooh Wooh Wooh Wooh Wooh Wooh
> Let's wipe our cum on my parents bed
> (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998)

First, the speaker describes this girl as a "little" ("New Radio", Bikini Kill, *The* Singles, 1998) girl who pulls her clothing up, because she deliberately wants to, what may imply, again, a sort of infantilism that is associated to women. That image brings forward a woman that has agency and power now. Besides, a simile is used to describe her way of kissing "like a boy", what places her again as playing the active and empowered part. Power during sexual practices, active roles, and pleasure were important vindications for feminism. In the Riot Grrrl movement, many bands did not hesitate to make explicit references in their songs.

In the song "I Like Fucking" (*The Singles,* 1998), Bikini Kill turn their attention to another important dimension of this general topic that I am exploring here. In this case, Hanna makes a direct reference to the female body. This, as I explained before, is a constant topic in feminist literature and thinking. Hanna enriches this perspective by also bringing forward the topic of pleasure in connection to the female body:

> . . .
> Just 'cause my world sweet sister
> Is so fucking goddamn full of rape
> Does that mean my body must always be a source of pain?
> No. No. No.
> . . .
> I believe in the radical possibilities of pleasure babe
> I do. I do. I do.
> (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998)

Taken conventionally as a means of procreation and of gratification for men, before the end of the 20th century, the female body had not been considered beyond its reproductive limits. The female body as a source for women's pleasure was a banned or neglected idea. In other words, women were and still are dispossessed of control over their bodies. Adrienne Rich herself theorized about this in *Of Woman Born*: "The female body has been both territory and machine, virgin wilderness to be exploited and assembly-line turning out life. We need to imagine a world in which every woman is the presiding genius of her own body" (285). According to her words, a woman's body is a territory upon which others have decided, and this needs to change. 21st century girls do believe in different possibilities of joy. A significant effort in today's feminist movement is directed towards the condemnation of women's painful experiences with sexual assaults and abuses.

Le Tigre's song "Keep on Living" (*Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001) deals with those different possibilities. More precisely, it echoes those stories that tell the experience of coming out of the closet as queer and also as a sexual abuse survivor. This song acquired a significant and special place in Le Tigre's discography. The band wrote a blog post about it to explain its content and relevance. In that sense, they confess the strong connections between the story in the lyric and Hanna's personal life. To a certain extent, that connection unveils the strong associations between the speaking voice in the song and Hanna's biography, which offers an explanatory context to understand the depth and significance of the content of this song. Hanna had started writing her feelings about her own experience with sexual abuse when her bandmate JD ended up expressing how he felt when as a kid he realized that he was out of the heteronormative view. According to Hanna, "when we compare these two forms of 'coming out' in the song (and try to address the high incidence of suicide and depression among those who deal with these issues) we are in no way trying to say they are exactly the same thing. Not even" ("Keep on Livin"). The band's purpose with this positively aspiring and inspiring yet tough song was to show that silence and concealment was not an option; that, after all, and with time, happiness and joy will fill one's life when truth is acknowledged and determination is articulated:

> You hide inside, so not okay (keep on, keep on livin')
> What if you remember more today? (keep on, keep on livin')
> The phone rings but there's too much to say keep on, keep on livin')
> You tell them to go when you wish they would stay (keep on, keep on livin')
> . . .
> Disporportionate reactions just won't fade (keep on, keep on livin')
> Every dude you see puts you in a rage (keep on, keep on livin')
> Or stupid shit just makes you cry (keep on, keep on livin')
> Your friends are worried you won't tell them why (keep on, keep on livin')
> . . .
> You don't need to scratch inside no just please
> Hold onto your pride and

So don't let them bring you down and
Don't let them fuck you around cuz
Those are your arms that is your heart and
No no they can't tear you apart
They can't take it away now
This is your time this is your life and
. . .
(Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001)

In general, the song deals with all the different forms of coming out. It does not stop in a celebratory description, it also addresses the social stigma or the potential feelings of shame and guilt that can be derived from that experience. According to JD, it is normal to feel confusion and fear once a person comes out ("Keep on Livin"). Regarding sexual abuse, the song addresses one of the main problems that American society is facing today, with a conscious awareness of the fact that remaining silent to it can be one of the major problems to achieve a solution. Hanna explains the following:

> When sexual abuse first came to the fore front of North American popular culture (as a result of survivors working tirelessly for a really long time) there was a lot of information that suggested a big part of our problem is/was SILENCE. Of course since most sexual abuse is often unnamed and most perpetrators are never prosecuted or even confronted, this makes a lot of sense and has, in turn, resulted in a lot of emphasis being placed on women and girls being able to "tell our own stories". ("Keep on Livin")

In order to break that culture of silence that Hanna denounces in the quotation, this song works as a call for all those survivors of sexual assaults or the queer people that have not spoken out their true identity yet. The song attempts to support them and encourage them to confront and overcome shame, unease and the social criticism that may develop from it. It does so with lyrics that rooted their symbolic transcendence in the personal foundation and candidness of those who share their personal experiences. The lyric is reinforced by a music and a rhythm that is catchy and the repetition of the lines "keep on livin'" (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001) with a tone typical of demonstrations contributes to the tone of the words within.

Sexual politics (and the fight to achieve sexual freedom for women) is a topic that Hanna addresses with a blatant assertiveness and vivid diction. It is true that the theme is more common in the discography for Bikini Kill, whereas in Le Tigre the band focuses more on the radical possibilities of sexuality and on sending a message of support to those facing difficult times when discovering their own identities. However, a line that unifies the use of this topic in Hanna's songwriting career is visible. Hanna's diction in most of the songs, as I said, is spontaneous and it addresses sexuality in an open way, without filters or mediation, rejecting inhibition or any kind of measuring. This helps to see the topic as something natural and accessible that has to be freed

from any taboo-like connotation. Words such as “cum” or “cock” articulate a direct and candid exploration of the topic, urging to revise the intimate realities of American girls, and the gender iconography and representation of women in pornography. The feminist fight today is still focused on women’s sexuality, trying to challenge the notion that a woman’s goodness is determined by her sexual practice; looking to place female’s sexuality on equal terms to men’s (hooks 79). In the 1970s, Kate Millet already suggested the need to start a sexual revolution that would put an end to the madonna/whore complex and the negative suppositions of any sexual practice:

> A sexual revolution would require, perhaps first of all, an end of traditional sexual inhibitions and taboos, particularly those that most threaten patriarchal monogamous marriage: homosexuality, “illegitimacy,” adolescent, pre- and extra-marital sexuality. The negative aura with which sexual activity has generally been surrounded would necessarily be eliminated, together with the double standard and prostitution. The goal of revolution would be a permissive single standard of sexual freedom, and one uncorrupted by the crass and exploitative economic bases of traditional sexual alliances. (62)

Years later, it is my belief that third wave feminist activism contributed significantly to these goals: women’s sexuality started to be addressed and observed differently thanks to the work by these feminists, when women’s pleasure was put at the core of the movement’s concerns. Thus, what had been a taboo started to be argued as a matter that needed revision and discussion. As I have tried to illustrate, this concern is expressed in Hanna’s lyrics with a regeneration of vocabulary and point of view that Hanna uses to address a topic that had been silenced and skipped for a very long time. Explicitly trying to disclose an elocution that shows no trace of hesitation, Hanna describes a reality that affects her condition as a woman and projects her reading of the theme to a broader perspective in which she invites girls to feel a connection or observe an opportunity for recognition in her bold exhibition of intimacy.

7.7. Gender-Based Violence

In the previous section, I have already talked about sexual assault and abuse. Now, the next topic can be related to those previous explorations. Nevertheless, I thought that it needed an independent and specific analysis, because of the way in which the varied approximations to violence and gender are addressed in Hanna’s songs and how important this is for the third wave of feminism.

Gender-based violence is a violation of human rights and an obstacle to gender equality. Lately, “gender-based violence”, “violence against women” and “gender-based violence against women” are terms that are often used interchangeably, being the last one included in the Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention. It is used to describe the “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately” (Council of Europe). In this dissertation, I use gender-based violence, because the term puts

the emphasis on the structural nature of violence against women[79]. Gender-based violence is an issue of power relations. One part reassures their privileged position by dominating the subordinated group. It also contributes to the development of a heteronormative society in which men command and implement power. It is acknowledged, as I will expose briefly later, that women are the main subjects of violence, which may take many forms: physical, sexual, verbal, psychological, or socio-economic, and this violence may be perpetrated by any person. Even though gender-based violence has always existed, it was in the last decades of the 20th century that this violence was specifically reported and publicly condemned. To illustrate it, these are some of the most recent facts and data published by different organizations in relation to gender violence and human trafficking, both concepts affecting mainly girls and women:

As stated in the data shown by the UN, nearly one in three women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner. Every day, 137 women are killed by a member of their family, (adult) women make almost the 49% of the global trafficking victims, and, at least 200 million women and girls between 15 and 49 years old have experienced female genital mutilation in the 31 countries where the practice is still exercised (**"**Facts and Figures").

In America, different types of violence (gender violence, groping, sexual assault, rape) developed into an important social problem in the late 20th century. After the publication of the "Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women" by the United Nations in 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) federal law in 1994, in order to provide almost 2 billion dollars to investigate and sue violent crimes against women: "VAWA included provisions on rape and battering that focused on prevention, funding for victim services and evidentiary matters. It included the first federal criminal law against battering and a requirement that every state afford full faith and credit to orders of protection issued anywhere in the United States" ("History of Violence"). According to the 2009 report of the Bureau of Justice Statistics on Female Victims of Violence, from 1993 to 2008, the rate of intimate partner victimizations for females aged 12 or older was 4.3 per 1,000 females, while the equivalent rate for this violence against males was 0.8 victimizations per 1,000 (Catalano et al. 1). Also, females killed by an intimate partner in 2007 were 70%, a number that has hardly changed since 1993 (Catalano et al. 3). Concerning rape or sexual assaults against females, one in five (20%) was committed by an intimate partner (Catalano et al. 5) and four out of five (80%) of the rapes against them were committed by males (Catalano et al. 5).

[79] Nevertheless, I would like to mention that also LGTB+ people suffer from violence due to their non-normative sexual orientation or gender identity, which transcends the male/female binarism.

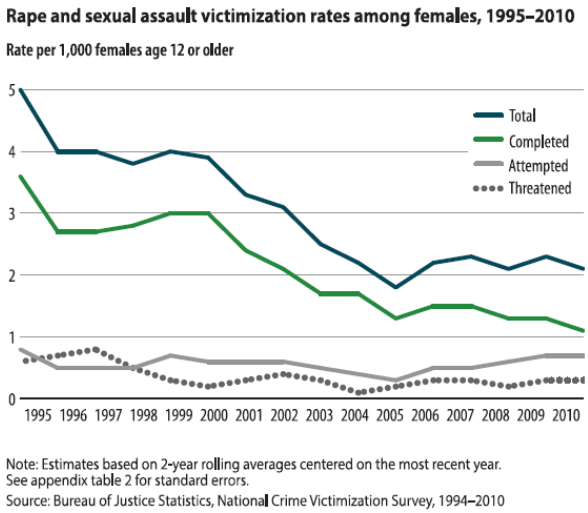

Fig. 22. Rates of rape and sexual assault victimization among females between 1995 and 2010. (Planty et. Al 1).

In 2010, the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey made public that 1 in 6 women in the United States has experienced stalking at some point in her lifetime, situations in which those women felt that she or someone close to her would be harmed or killed as a result (Black et al. 29). All this data shows that, in spite of laws and regulations, gender-based violence is still present in the lives of many women. As a result, it comes with no surprise that violence against women became an unavoidable concern for the third wave of feminism. Consequently, it was also one of its main targets to combat. The Riot Grrrl movement echoed this scourge. In fact, this matter plays a very important role in the ideological and critical depth of both Bikini Kill and Le Tigre's repertoire. Being conscious of all kinds of women's experiences and in connection to that conscious agenda that sought to finish the culture of silence, Hanna addresses male and female communities to condemn and denounce sexual assaults and any other type of attacks on women.

In fact, in 1993, Bikini Kill was playing at a show for an abortion rights benefit concert (Rock for Choice) and Hanna decided to wear a very special short-sleeved t-shirt with a legend proclaiming "KILL ME". Hanna's intention was to raise questions about gender-based violence. In a recent interview, she has explained that "The idea is: What constitutes asking for it? . . . If you wear a dress that says 'kill me' on it, does that mean you're asking for it?" (Stoeffel). This example reveals how Hanna clearly opposes the mistaken reasoning which suggests that women are also partially guilty of violent situations for those accessory or contextual excuses that have perpetuated a cultural interest to relativize the subject matter that I explore next.

One example to illustrate how Hanna addresses this issue in her songwriting is visible in the lyric of the song "Liar" (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991). The song is purposefully offered as a manifestation that condemns social oppression and abuse. It tells Betty's story, a girl who has to deal with sexual assault and whose mother is also beaten, victim of gender-based violence. The lyric clearly rebukes and expresses disapproval. This is directed towards the attacker's inviolability and his escape from punishment:

Betty's got the back of her dress all ripped out
Mama's got her face muffled twist and shout
. . .
You profit from the rape
Lie baby
Eat meat, hate blacks, beat your fuckin wife
It's all the same thing
Deny, you live your life up in denial
Stand my whole life on trial baby,
You, you always deny that
You profit from the lie
You prophet from the lie yeah
. . .
(Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991)

The song starts by describing Betty's dress being torn and her mother's face being hit, while she screams in a softened cry. We do not know about the assailant's identity, but because of the song's context we can guess that the speaker is implying a male subject (a member of the family maybe) who will take profit from his rape and from the lies that he invents later on. The song may also represent a scream against the legal system and the dictum that fails to protect and endorse the real victims. It is also very powerful how the speaker plays in the refrain with the words "profit" and "prophet" ("Liar", Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991), chanting the structure of the chorus as if it was a solid wall of prosodic bricks that she is trying to break with her condemnation of the aforementioned unfairness.

In the context of gender-based violence, the album *Pussy Whipped*, released some years after the example that I have just analyzed, includes the song "Starfish" (1993), in which the band explores the consequences and the outcomes surrounding an abuse. This is a really short song (about one minute) in a slow tempo. Hanna's vocal performance comes in a deeper tone, maybe to match the toughness of the lyric's content, which is really direct and potent:

They want to buy the look of my abuse
They want to use my blood to color their perfume
Get out of me
I know
Go go go
Just like a starfish
My legs will soon grow back

I'll just be ten times stronger
Each time that you attack me
(Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993)

In a first reading, the lyric is a manifest criticism of those capitalist institutions that take profit from certain news. The first lines explain how, after the girl protagonizing the surface story is abused, there is some undetermined people who want to buy her "look" ("Starfish", Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993), suggesting that some might use her image and the news of the rape to broadcast it on the media and get a profit from it, taking advantage of her own "blood" ("Starfish", Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993) and suffering. Again, the body plays a role in here, as a site of political conflict for women and a testimony of the pain that they have to suffer. The narrative voice repeatedly asks the attacker to "get out" ("Starfish", Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993), symbolically referring to her body. Focusing on the metonymic description of the protagonist's legs, the song illustrates the emotional pain with a physical representation. To strengthen the emotional construction of the scene, the speaker relies on the use of a simile that links the body of the girl to that of a starfish (who usually, when at risk, sacrifice one or more of their multiple limbs to escape and then they regenerate those limbs again). Her legs will grow again, even stronger and ready for future attacks, what might suggest that assaults on women will ,unfortunately, repeat in time and that they are getting ready to fight back. In one minute, a lot of significant content is conveyed and condensed in intense and powerful lines which rely on fresh and vivid images.

In this same line, the eight track of the same album, "Star Bellied Boy", addresses power relationships in the context of a sexual interaction between a man and a woman. However, to anticipate the lyric's content, it is appropriate to comment on the fact that this song still has an impact on Hanna at present. She admits that every time that she sings this lyric, she remembers an assault that she suffered and from which she has not totally recovered yet:

> I was assaulted by a male feminist when I was in Bikini Kill, the day before we moved to D.C., in 1991. It was literally three hours after I finished [the zine] *Bikini Kill 2,* which was called *Girl Power*. I'm still processing that violence. I still feel that in my bones every time I sing "Star Bellied Boy." I kept that to myself at the time because I was leaving on tour and I didn't want to get pulled off my path. I was the loud, angry feminist, and I was really confused about what that meant. (Pelly, "Kathleen Hanna")

The lyric in "Star Bellied Boy" depicts a girl (we can assume that is Hanna herself from the content and the biography) who is tricked by a boy (a direct reference to the male feminist mentioned in the quotation) who first presents himself as a supporter of the feminist cause and a real "best friend" ("Star Bellied Boy", Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993). However, this male character turns out to have a sexist and selfish attitude. The speaker, in a sarcastic manner, replies that he is just like the rest. This conversational structure, which requires a tricky balance of rhythm and execution in the immediate and condensed structure of a song, is a recurrent strategy that the singer uses a lot and it contributes to her colloquial and urgent style:

He said he wanted to
Just touch you
. . .
Star bellied boy
Different from the rest
You're so different from the rest
You're no different from the rest
You're no fucking different from the rest
(wanted us to believe wanted us to believe we are free)
And then he said "why won't you fuck me"
And then he said "do me do me do me"
And then he said "I'll be your best friend"
And then I said...
"Why do I cry every time that I cum?"
I can't I can't I can't I can't cum
. . .
(Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993)

In the song, Hanna articulates her complaint upon the extended image of those fake feminists who approach the movement to take some profit, even an immoral and criminal profit, like the one described in the lyric. The man in the song is portrayed as impersonating a positive model, seeking to gain women's confidence by using an assertive and positive attitude that is finally unveiled as exactly the opposite. The autobiographical elements in the lyric reinforce the emotional impact of the song and deepen the consequences that can be taken from a song that relies again in an explicit language, direct questions and a tragic repetition, all in order to articulate a confession that achieves an exemplary tone.

In the song "Strawberry Julius" (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998), there is also another strong and straightforward statement concerning gender-based violence. The speaker starts the song by alluding to a "you" that, rather than opening the possibilities for interpretation, essentially describes a bullyboy, stalker or assaulter. The speaker then addresses him directly to make plain her (or any other victim's) feelings when they have been attacked, harassed, assaulted or raped. The speaker expressively asks not to be touched again, adding that this person is occupying the "invisible streets" (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998), maybe those in which women demonstrated and fought for their rights in the feminist movement and which gave them a false victory, an adjective that possibly evidences the feeling, that I already perceived in my previous analysis of Hanna's songs, that feminism is still striving for certain rights that women started to pursue generations ago:

It's you.

all over my skin
Taking invisible streets
To the fake place
Where we win
. . .
Just don't touch me with
your bare hands
Whatever you do
. . .
(Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998)

Towards the middle part of the song, the speaker wonders about what women have done to receive a beating, frowning upon the myths that attempt to justify attacks towards women under pretexts related to the criminal's social background, addictions or false testimonies that place women as provokers of the subsequent violence. This climactic moment is accompanied by an instrumentation (pounding drums and a potent bass and guitar line) that evokes the feelings of irritation and rage:

. . .
Burn with the truth
Ask you what the fuck
What the fuck, what the fuck
What the fuck did they do to you?
(Who needs a beat when the beat just goes)
. . .
I gotta tell you something.
Your palm
The back of my neck.
It means more than any porn
I wanna forget.
(Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998)

With a change in tone and with a more defiant articulation, the speaker has her say and uses it to portray a situation where the assaulter's open wide hand is holding her neck and, as she did in the song "Sugar" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993), the band again abruptly refers to porn as a negative influence in how sexuality is sometimes mentally and visually projected. This is, in porn, men are normally portrayed as active and in control, whereas women are depicted as passive and powerless. In real life, the consumption and acceptance of this visual imagery may lead to situations in which men would repeat or copy these representations, and the intensity

or significance of the gesture would be, in fact, hiding a different, more dangerous or violent meaning. In the song, the speaker says “it means more than any porn” (Bikini Kill, *The Singles,* 1998), which can be interpreted as a re-reading of how that cue or motion displays an aggression that surpasses the connotations or overtones that it could have expressed in a porn movie. This perspective is in line with other instances in which sexuality was addressed in Bikini Kill’s songs. It undoubtedly uncovers girls’ unease and rejection of those pornographic depictions.

The song “APT 5”, included in the solo album *Julie Ruin* (1998), also makes reference to those false reasons that I have mentioned before. Hanna’s annoyance is expressed by her complaining about an attacker that justifies an aggression against a woman. Hanna expresses a profound reflection in which she looks beyond the first spontaneous reaction by exploring the deeper implications. Hanna voices the pain and damage that comes afterwards, evoking feelings of destruction and loss of confidence:

> You can tell yourself you're the one who tried
> You can tell your friends how many times I made you cry
> . . .
> But if you're gonna talk about how I deserved what you did
> You can look now cause I'm gone
> . . .
> Things you've said are taking their fucking toll
> Eroded my confidence and almost took my soul
> . . .
> Why I deserve what I get
> You'll have to watch me as I go
> …
> (Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998)

Julie Ruin (1998) also includes the song “I Wanna Know What Love Is”, in which the first lines are accompanied by a marked drum beat that strengthenes the deliverance of Hanna’s explicit question: "Do you remember when we were young and impressionable and taught to believe everything the Great White father told us?” (Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998). This question evokes the cultural gendered formation by which women are dutifully instructed by male figures and a limiting binarism, as I have tried to explore before.

The lyric continues by making a strong criticism of the violence that women suffer due, in part, to the lack of legal protection. She describes women of all ages being scared (of being attacked or killed) while, in an eloquent and expansive projection, nobody seems to care about it:

> . . .

How many girls stay awake all night
Too scared to sleep and too scared to fight back
. . .
Another woman killed and hardly a pout about it
Green River Killer my fucking ass
The cops have gotta be deaf, dumb and spastic
To not catch the killer of a hundred women
I guess it'd be different if they thought we were human
. . .
What the fuck if we all got guns
To off the fucking pigs and all the other motherfuckers
Raping the children they paint like dolls
Jon Benet didn't scream cuz she never fucking was
. . .
The killers and the cops give us special advice
Like cross your legs and act fucking nice
While they kill us off old and fucking young
. . .
They'll keep you scared so you have to have a boyfriend
And take your kids away if you're a la la lesbian
Arrest you for whoring then rape you in the car
It's time we point the fingers at who the real criminals are
. . .
(Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998)

Probably, Hanna is ironic when she says that people (men) would care if women were considered "human." Hanna alludes to JonBenét Ramsey, an American child beauty queen that was killed when she was 6 years old, and whose corpse was finally found in the family basement. According to her, law does not protect children or women at all. In the song, Hanna seems to suggest that the police are as guilty as killers or perpetrators. She criticizes how the problem is reduced to a mere invitation to women to remain more careful and cross the legs not to be raped. Nowadays, this is still an advice that a lot of authoritative figures, and people in general, give to women, who are taught how to resist (and cross the legs) and fight back, whereas men are not educated on not to attack and rape women. Women are, many times, blamed because of the aggression, in a painfully turned situation that seems to inspire Hanna in order to argue (once again, but in a different song) that it is time for women to make it clear who the victims are and who the criminals are. This song is a clear anti-authority diatribe in which Hanna addresses the police forces directly, while placing them at the same level than assaulters and killers. During the 1990s, many women felt unprotected in a society that never questioned the

words of the attacker; a society in which women were left defenceless. As Hanna does in here, many other riot grrrl bands censured women's vulnerability, appealing to the judicial system as a partner in crime to voice that lack of support, protection and recognition.

Years later, Hanna continued covering the theme of gender-based violence in her lyrics, this time when she was already composing for a new project, Le Tigre. The following three lines, taken from a song titled "Gone B4 Yr Home" (Le Tigre, *From the desk of Mr. Lady,* 2001), depict how the speaker of the song is trying not to structure her life around the fear of being raped or murdered. As I said in the introductory part to this topic, statistics and data show that sexual assaults had become so recurrent in American society that women live in a constant fear or suspicion of being attacked, even within the limits of their homes:

> . . .
> And I don't structure my life
> Around fear of murder, dismemberment, or rape
> But I hardly see how that has to do with our relationship
> . . .
> (Le Tigre, *From the desk of Mr. Lady,* 2001)

In this song, the narrative voice conjures a situation which can be related to this grievous social reality. In fact, "about 3 in 4 victims of sexual violence knew the offender" (Planty et. al 4). As a consequence, and as the speaker expresses in this song, a climate of alarm spreads among American women whose lives were organized around a constant state of alarm, in combination with a feeling of sadness, mourning and fear.

Some years later, Hanna and her former band Bikini Kill re-released a side B for the split album that they shared with Huggy Bear, including new songs, like "Girl Soldier". As Jenn Pelly states, this song is "a chilling military march regarding the U.S. government's ceaseless war on women" ("Bikini Kill"). The band opened a gig in 1992, outside the capitol, with this song, in a conscious choice that voiced their opposition to the Supreme Court's sway to the right and republican side (Pelly, "Bikini Kill"):

> Guess you didn't notice
> While we were crying
> Guess you didn't care
> Women are dying
> . . .
> I am talking to your dead fucking eyes
> You spread
> My legs
> Apart
> . . .

It's happening
Now
This town
On three
Tonight
Today
Always
Girl
Soldiers
. . .
After all, only women were dying
After all...
(Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 2004)

Similar to what I have explored in "I Wanna Know What Love Is" (*Julie Ruin*, 1998), this song declares that despite the data and the news disclosing that girls and women are still dying victims of gender-based violence, people's "dead fucking eyes" (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah*, 2004) keep on overlooking the situation, because, all things considered, it is not men who are dying. That constant and widespread defenselessness led girls to the circumstances in which they have to become soldiers in a sex-based battle in which, without real legal backup, they need to take agency and act as their sole saviors. The acute lack of complex syntax and the resolute use of sharp syncopated and incisive line-cutting contribute to the dynamic and bold tone of this lyric.

Out of the eight songs analyzed in this section, three mention "rape;" three use verbs or expressions related to violence, such as "kill", "murder" and "die;" and another two bring attention to the act of touching. We also find terms such as "beat", "abuse" and "attack", all related to the different kinds of violence that women may face. From the diction selected in these songs, it may be argued that lyrics make a transparent and unambiguous report about women's situation. In her different bands, Hanna makes an engaged and straightforward use of the first person *I,* but she also mixes it with the plural form *we* to include women that, like her, may have experienced and faced abuse. It is thus conceivable that, as Hanna sings, fear is present on a daily basis in girls' lives. According to her condition as a survivor, Hanna explains the following, concerning the process of overcoming (or living) an abuse:

> I am constantly freaked out that I can be doing totally great one minute and start feeling totally devasted the next. I just wanna pull out my hair and scream" I thought I already fucking dealt with this shit!!!!" The thing is dealing with rape and sexual abuse is an ongoing process that sadly is never complete (unless you are magic and can turn back the hands of time!!!!) BUT it does get better. It really does. ("Keep On Livin")

In that same interview, Hanna requests the community's cooperation in order to put an end to violence and abuse: "It is not trivial or individualist to end the war against all women by starting with ourselves. We need joy and we need to be strong enough so we can change the fucked up path our "leaders" are currently driving us down" ("Keep On Livin"). In a similar way, bell hooks believes that we have to end all types of violence, and we all (men and women) have to be included on that process: "We must see both men and women in this society groups who support the use of violence if we are to eliminate it" (hooks 63). We all have to take part in the process, again, in order to end with the most spread and devastating scourge of the 21st century. High percentages of (mainly) women are dying every day in different countries, making it clear that policies and laws should be reinforced to avoid this situation and protect women. In fact, everybody, whether man or woman, is entitled to protection and safety. Besides, those who witness any kind of abuse should not be afraid to intercede or collaborate against it. Political action and stricter measures should be taken, but we also have to raise awareness and ask for people's involvement to end any type of gender-based violence. For that, feminist politics are essential and Hanna's lyrics do contribute to voice these issues in a cultural context, substantiating how popular culture can be an efficient instrument to participate in social reform and advancement. In fact, that political engagement, this time related to a very specific issue, will be addressed more exhaustively in my next section.

7.8. Politics

The 1990s in the United States was a time for economic prosperity, supported by the expansion of the economy and a drop of unemployment rates. The World Wide Web was developed and the digital age arrived. Le Tigre's song "Get Off the Internet" (*From The Desk Of Mr. Lady*, 2000) is a criticism of that, frowning upon the increase in the use of these new methods of global communication; a call for collective political implication:

> It feels so 80's
> Or early 90's
> To be political
> . . .
> Destroy the right wing
> Get off the internet
> I'll meet you in the street
> . . .
> This is repetitive
> But nothing has changed
> (Le Tigre, *From The Desk Of Mr. Lady*, 2000)

Still, in these apparently positive times, American society still had a few social issues that they had to face. There were still many reasons to feel anger and despair, fresh opportunities to rebel. All this would be addressed in punk lyrics, in songs that would echo the political situation and the specific cultural reactions to it.

In the early 1990s, the American president George W. Bush and the Soviet Union Head of State Mikhail Gorbachev signed a treaty to ditch the production of chemical weapons and, on January 1991, President Bush addressed the nation to inform about the USA's involvement in the Gulf War against Iraq. War, guns and international politics will also have a protagonism in many of Hanna's songs. More specifically, when referring to those political decisions that affected women. In that regard, it can be said that the years under the presidency of George W. Bush, from 1989 to 1993, are characterized by a return to family values, which also involved a setback for reproductive rights[80]:

> The threat to reproductive rights again became palpable in 1989, with Missouri's anti-abortion laws pending before the Supreme Court, and the Bush administration siding with abortion foes, explicitly urging reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. NOW's April 1989 March for Women's Lives drew crowds that had not been seen in Washington since the Vietnam protests of 1969 and 1971. ("History of Marches")

Also, in 1991, Anita Hill became known across the country after accusing Clarence Thomas, a U.S. Supreme Court nominee and her supervisor at the United States Department of Education and the Equal Employments Opportunity Commission, of sexual harassment. Her testimony made the term "sexual harassment" visible and it gained popularity within the more radical feminist movements, also raising awareness about misbehaviours in the workplace. In April of the following year, more than 750,000 women attended the March for Women's Lives, protesting against the *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* case (1992). This was a Supreme Court case regarding abortion that can be seen as a turning point in American society. It changed the standards established in *Roe v. Wade*[81] and demanded from women that they had to observe certain requirements, such as, for example, notifying their husbands about their will to have an abortion or, in the case of being a woman under 18, getting their parents' consent.

With Bill Clinton as President (1993-2001), the Federal Assault Weapons Ban (1994) was signed, prohibiting the use of semi-automatic assault weapons for ten years. This opened a debate on the possession and control of weapons by civilians (which involved a wider broadcasting and a major interest in American society, after the impact provoked by the successive massive shootings that were taking place across America). As I will explain later, this topic is also addressed in Hanna's lyrics, particularly, from 1996 on. Socially, Monica Lewinsky's scandal (from which president Bill Clinton was later acquitted), together with football star O.J.

[80] With George W. Bush as President of the United States, reproductive rights would be on the spot once again. As a result, in 2001, NOW (National Organization for Women) organized a "Zap Action for Women's Lives, which brought 30,000 marchers to the Capitol for a rally and march to draw attention to Bush's threat to women's reproductive rights and to focus public attention on the danger of Bush stacking the federal courts" ("History of Marches").

[81] *Roe v. Wade* (1973) turned into a landmark for feminism. In the aftermath of this case, abortion was decriminalized, guaranteeing and protecting a pregnant woman's choice. Women could have an abortion without the government's restriction on her decision.

Simpson's crime (accused of murdering his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman) shocked the American audience of that decade. The last years of the 20th century were also a milestone for different militarisms and activisms. From civil rights campaigns for African American people to lesbian, gay or bisexual demonstrations, diverse groups proliferated in demand of justice and equality.

Many of these affairs[82] are targeted in Hanna's lyrics, especially (but not exclusively) in Le Tigre. The band accuses (and castigates) public and authoritative American figures like the New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani:

> . . .
> Oh fuck Giuliani!
> He's such a fucking jerk
> Shut down all the stripbars
> Workfare does not work
> ("My My Metrocard", Le Tigre, *Le Tigre*, 1999)

Another example found in Bikini Kill's discography addresses American president George W. Bush:

> George Bush ain't no hero
> George Bush is a pig
> ("George Bush Is a Pig", Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 2004)

The fact that some topics are repeated in both bands shows that Hanna's writing and cultural interests are intact. The lyrics analyzed in the next pages cover politicized music and biting lyrics, and the content turns into an exclusive platform that centres attention on personal as well as political discourses affecting American society of the late 1990s and the early new millennium.

For example, Bikini Kill's penultimate album, *Reject All American* (1996), forthrightly reveals the anti-patriotism nature of the work. Included in it, we find the song "Tony Randall", which made use of some really elusive and playful lyric in which the American nation is compared to a robot in order to articulate a thorough attempt to criticize American culture and society, more specifically in connection to the development of that new digital era that I mentioned before:

> Robotic Nation
> False history spit out

[82] In relation with the topics of violence in American society or gun laws in the United States, police and police practices are also a hot topic in America and one very recurrent theme in Hanna. I have already tackled this issue in Hanna's songwriting and I will do it again in this section, since it is visible in the songs selected for this section and I understand that it is strongly associated with the other political controversies around the theme of violence in American society.

another picture of a
girl with a gun
to bore me
Cartoon girl
Hallmark Card
I see a punk club
He sees a strip bar
Somethings can't
be photographed
(Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*, 1996)

The speaker argues that the self-image that America portrays is completely false. The probably televised image of a girl with a gun unchains Hanna's disaffection and bore with how America is being mediated by the media and the subsequent cultural representation. As a matter of fact, the speaking voice protests that there are certain truths that "can't be photographed" (Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*, 1996), revealing thus the unspoken complexity that remains undisclosed and that somehow testifies to the fabrication of a reality that is being communicated through powerful strategies that cannot pervert our own perspective and access to truth. To a certain extent, the band is vindicating the preponderance of autonomy and scrutiny: "I see a punk club/He sees a strip bar" (Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*, 1996).

It is not by accident that, in the same album, the song "Reject All American" portrays a society strictly arranged by rules, organized like a military unit, where people are programmed, again, like robots. The speaker protests about this nation that always follows the same scheme; a nation in which everything is accepted and not even questioned:

Regimented
designated
mass acceptance
over rated
lip synch
apology
lip synch
salutations
lip synch
teen anthem
lip synch
obligation
If you work hard

You'll succeed
A starring role
on nothing incorporated
Reject all American
. . .
(Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*, 1996)

The speaking voice refers to the people evoked in the song as if they were a "mass," thus, implying that no-one questions and they all follow established laws and directions, as a flock of sheep does. The speaker puts a real emphasis on that by making allusion to the lip synchronization (Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*, 1996) that, in its constant repetition, uncovers how people mimic standardized positions and attitudes without questioning or considering broader and different possibilities or realities. According to the speaker's ironic words, America is the land of false hopes and the image that America sells to the rest of the world is based on artificial values and false promises that the band seeks to disclaim. In this fictional world in which an automated and programmed spirit is symbolically elicited, there would also be room for power injustices, quite probably. In these songs, I perceive a powerful invocation of the practical marriage between music and politics through a specific rejection of mass-marketed products and the media's mediation of those same cultural products. In other albums by Kathleen Hanna, I also identify that preoccupation and concern about political matters.

In different songs from the album *Julien Ruin* (1998), politics will also be visible, and with the same varied thematic concerns. In a complaining tone, for instance, "A Place Called I Won't Be There" stands out as a song that reprimands the police's unethical or dubious procedures to protect women:

Fake feminist police force
Is really bumming me out
Pray, witness, contradiction
Kill what you can't live without
You use your cop-like tactics
Say it is for our own good
You want to plant your feet where
Only others have really stood
. . .
It's a place called I won't be there
(Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin*, 1998)

Hanna casts blame upon authorities, who according to her are also responsible for killing women and appropriating spaces. With an outspoken attitude, Hanna criticizes police strategies and she stands firm against

what she considers that is an unfair matter. Connected to this song, in “I Wanna Know What Love Is”, Hanna argues that the police are still a big part of the problem in America as they fail protecting the real victims:

> . . .
> The cops have gotta be deaf, dumb and spastic
> To not catch the killer of a hundred women
> I guess it'd be different if they thought we were human
> . . .
> What the fuck if we all got guns
> To off the fucking pigs and all the other motherfuckers
> . . .
> Come on now the police aren't gonna save you
> They're part of the problem that society gave you
> Locking up black men for whistling in the wind
> You see a mirage when you call the cop your friend
> . . .
> (Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998)

Criticizing the police was a constant in punk music. Similarly to what she did in the previous song, Hanna says here that the police “gotta be deaf, dumb, and spastic” (“I Wanna Know What Love Is”, Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998), which is a harsh way of expressing disaffection with the way in which police has involved itself, as an institution, with the problematic of gender (and otherwise) violence. The speaker suggests, in a strong and controversial turn, that a solution could be to get guns for people’s own self-protection, since police do not accomplish that task (“I Wanna Know What Love Is”, Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998). As a matter of fact, Hanna uses this lack of protection to call people’s attention and she expresses that they cannot call the police “your friend” (“I Wanna Know What Love Is”, Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998) because, as she observes, they are being unfair and doing a bad job and sending black people to prison with no reason.

Similarly, but making a more explicit criticism, the song "Bang! Bang!" (Le Tigre, *From The Desk Of Mr. Lady*, 2000) protests against shootings based on racial prejudices. This song is long and complex. The title already clarifies the content of the lyric: a shooting. That is fully developed. The lyric makes direct allusions to the stories of particular people murdered by the police. In fact, the song resembles the breaking news on TV, with two different people reading some of the lines of the song in a journalistic-style. The absence of instrumental backing provides a stronger tone to the song:

> [In New York, the shooting of another unarmed black man
> Raises further questions about NYPD tactics
> On Thursday, an undercover police officer shot and killed Patrick Dorismond] [in newsreader voice]

Murder is murder
Why are they confused?
Another man dead
I read it in the news
Who gave them the fucking right
To run around like they own the night?
. . .
Wrong fucking time
Wrong fucking place
There is no fucking way
This is not about race
Who's gonna call 9-1-1
When they can't tell a wallet
From a motherfucking gun?
. . .
Bang bang daddy I want you dead
Bring me Giuliani's head
. . .
[Since the shootings, police have changed their account of what happened that night
The shooting has angered many community members, especially after four NYPD officers were acquitted last month
In the shooting of unarmed African immigrant Amadou Diallo] [in newsreader voice]
. . .
(Le Tigre, *From The Desk Of Mr. Lady*, 2000)

Indeed, the sound of the gun is reproduced throughout a song that starts by making reference to New York City and the killing of another black man in the hands of police officers. Le Tigre first recalls Patrick Dorismond, who was killed in the 16th of March 2000 by undercover officers of the city. In the lyric, the band makes official their condemnation of this shooting by putting again the criticism on the police. The narrative voice protests that the key to understand this misconduct is not the usual bent towards a focus on the victim's being in the wrong place or time and she blames the police for not differentiating a wallet from a gun (Le Tigre, *From The Desk Of Mr. Lady*, 2000). From a literary perspective, it is interesting to see how the speaker discloses a focal point on the closest perspective, developing a realistic approach, with recurrent allusions that associate her creativity with the urgency of the breaking news[83]. In fact, the connection with actuality and real facts is also exercised on this

[83] According to *The New York Times*, "The shooting was the third in 13 months in which plainclothes officers shot and killed an unarmed man. It came just as tensions that rose with the acquittal of four officers in the shooting of Amadou Diallo and another fatal shooting by the police a week later had begun to ebb" (Rashbaum).

lyric when another shooting episode is illustrated and used as part of the song's development. This time is the case of Amadou Diallo, who was killed on the 4th of February 1999, an event for which the four police officers were acquitted. For all that, in the lyric, the speaking voice asks for New York's Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to be inculpated. In fact, in an abrasive and undeviating manner, the expression used to voice this request is "Bring me Giuliani's head" (Le Tigre, *From The Desk Of Mr. Lady*, 2000), making him responsible for the police tactics applied against immigrants. The song ends with a counting from one to forty-one (the gunshots that killed Diallo), what, together with the story developed in the song, makes of the lyrical content a really touching and impressive narrative in which Hanna uses the speaking voice in a certain, determined and striking manner, following direct attack to institutions exhibiting control and command, or even addressing personal names of real characters.

The topic of the police is a recurrent one (and a controversial one) in punk music. Here, the writing of blatant lyric, including direct citing of facts and protagonists reinforces the notions of accusation. Consequently, a reference to those additional elements comes together with the analysis of the music and the elocution of the performance. In this lyric, police's tactics based on racial prejudices are approached with clarity and straightforwardness. There are direct insinuations and accusations about the methods and strategies run by the police, with factual references to details that belong to real cases. The actuality of these cases is still high in contemporary American society. As an example, on July 2014, Eric Garner (a 43 years old African American) was choked by a New York police officer when he was being arrested for selling illegal cigarettes in the street. The officer was then exculpated[84]. The same year, in August, Michael Brown, an 18-year-old and unarmed boy, was killed in Ferguson, Missouri, and the police officer who killed him was not charged. Brown was also African American[85]. All these happenings led to assumptions about racial prejudices within the American criminal justice system and American society in general, where racism was still a matter pending resolution[86]. In Julie Ruin and Le Tigre, some songs echo and show a coarse disagreement with certain policies that, in fact, a huge part of the American society were visibly censuring[87]. Julie Ruin's songs are set in the 1990s and Le Tigre's in the early

[84] To see the key facts about the case, see https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/2019/08/20/eric-garner-timeline-chokehold-death-daniel-pantaleo-fired/2059708001/.

[85] To read about it, see https://edition.cnn.com/2020/07/30/us/ferguson-missouri-michael-brown-darren-wilson-no-charges/index.html.

[86] In fact, in 2020 we witnessed how George Floyd was killed by a policeman in Minnesota and huge mobilizations took the streets all over the world, leading the "Black Lives Matter" movement (founded in 2013) to gain supporters in an attempt to raise awareness of the racism present in American society and in American institutions today and to bring justice to African American people. For more information on this issue and the network, visit https://blacklivesmatter.com/.

[87] The issue of police violence, whether in the late 2010s or today, is a constant thematic content in many songs by different bands, whether it comes from a hip-hop artist, a pop group or southern rock bands. Precisely, the example of the Georgia band Drive-by Truckers is one that can be very illustrative here. In their most recent albums, *American Band* (2016), *The Unraveling* (2020), and *The New OK* (2020), the band released politically charged songs that raised a relatively huge controversy. Before, the band had been known (and praised) for their irony and humor when dealing with what came to be known as "the duality of the southern thing" and they enjoyed a solid and faithful audience and fan base. With the publication of these consecutive albums, some of those fans started rejecting this change of perspective in lyric's content. This is because the band was addressing, in these new songs, topics such as gun violence and police brutality in the United States, with specific references to the Umpqua shootings or the aforementioned George Floyd case. In more than one interview, Patterson Hood and Mike Cooley, authors of the songs, despised the controversy and the rejection by part of their fan base and they embraced the movement Black Live Matters, while addressing their preoccupation with the issue of race-based violence in the United States.

21st century. There is a manifest continuation then and the most recent cases testify to the actuality of the themes addressed in Hanna's songs, which, as I have just said, in a way, provide a line of continuity in thematic interests, observable in her songwriting.

A year later, in the song "FYR" (*Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001), Le Tigre criticizes specific American social and health policies. Probably, this song makes a direct reference to those years in which Clinton's democratic policies brought a feeling of positive changes for American society. Yet, the song criticizes some important points concerning equality and the National Health System:

> Ten short years of progressive change
> Fifty fucking years of calling us names
> Can we trade Title IX for an end to hate crime?
> RU-486 if we suck your fucking dick?
> One step forward, five steps back
> One cool record in the year of rock-rap
> Yeah we've got all the power getting stabbed in the shower
> And we've got equal rights (on ladies' night)
> . . .
> Mrs. Doubtfire on Mother's Day
> On-the-job stalker for equal pay
> Toss us a few new AIDS drugs as national healthcare bites the dust
> While you were on vacation black people didn't get reparations
> You know these days no one's exploited
> Sorry dude can't hear you with my head in the toilet
> . . .
> You've really come a long way, baby
> It's you, not the world, that's totally crazy
> Cause we really rocked the fucking vote with election fraud in poor zip codes
> Celebrate gay marriage in Vermont by enforcing those old sodomy laws
> . . .
> (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes*, 2001)

As an example, the speaker mentions Title IX, a federal civil rights law that was signed to end discrimination in terms of sex in educational institutions (it was part of the Education Amendments of 1972), suggesting the necessity to establish a better law that would finish with hate crimes (with a reference to those hate crimes directly suffered by minority groups). Regarding health policies, the medication RU-486 (which is used to have an abortion and that became available for women in the United States during the 2000s) is symbolically pointing towards the fact that some women are being raped and will then have to take the pill to abort. The lyric makes

also an open critique of the factual situation in the national healthcare system by employing direct references to, for instance, new drugs for AIDS, which are given to people as a way to keep them away from complaining and to make them forget about other social problems. In sum, this song mentions different and complex political and social issues that affect different groups of people in America, but especially minorities and women. With a strong political edge, the lyrical content in "FYR" shows implication and depth, since the detailed reference and the profound approach enriches the essential cry for protest that can be perceived in how Hanna performs her musical approach and the depiction of how subsequent movements and social struggle have unfortunately failed to close this social, political and cultural problematic. In fact, in songs written for Le Tigre, Hanna will voice public criticism about the small and slow steps and the big and quick step backs that had come from these repeating cases and which hinder the achievement of equality and justice.

The song "New Kicks", included in Le Tigre's album *This Island* (2004), can be read as an ode to diversity. By using a point of view that relies in the first-person of the plural ("we"), the band encourages commitment and engagement in political activism against war, for instance. By using specific and varied references to actual cases (including references to the political situation in places as diverse as Spain, Amsterdam or California), they seem to embrace an encompassing association with their own nation, which they identify as democratic and consequently they require that it exhibits a certain level of commitment and engagement:

> We are gathered here, we come from so many different places
> From different identities, different cultures
> Different backgrounds different religions
> And yet we can gather, under the guides of peace...now...
> Peace now!
> "We say no to war!"
> Peace up, war down!
> . . .
> This is what democracy looks like!
> This is what democracy sounds like!
> . . .
> And as Eleanor Roosevelt said...
> "It isn't enough to talk about peace, one must believe in it. It isn't enough to believe in it, one must work at it"
> And we here today are working at it!
> "Peace is possible, and even necessary. So drop the sword, pick up the hammer and the saw. And let's build a better world!"
> No blood for oil!

We will not be violent!

. . .

"We will not go to war, for a selected president, who wasn't even elected!"

. . .

We need healthcare!

We need education!

We need freedom in this nation!

. . .

(Le Tigre, *This Island*, 2004)

The focus is placed on democratic values, stating that this activism will be non-violent, and that their aim is to notify their opposition to a war, specifically certifying this political position, that they do not apparently perceive in their main leader and representative of American democracy (the President of the United States, who is alluded in the lyric). In the song, there is a direct request that no more blood should be spilled in exchange for oil. The song also applies an efficient practice of literary strategies, such as allusion, mentioning historical figures such as Eleanor Roosevelt, whose words quoted in the song match the tone of the lyric, reinforcing and consolidating the petition for peace, in the first place, but also for awareness, commitment and engagement, activism, in one word.

The band does not stop here. It continues to address recurrent political issues in other songs. Political issues such as the healthcare system, education, and/or freedom (of expression). It is interesting to remark that sense of duty and obligation that is perceived in a song when the writing develops an encompassing approach that does not reject responsibility. In fact, the same album mentioned previously contains the song “Punker Plus” (*This Island*, 2004), which follows a similar pattern to the other songs analyzed in this section, at least in terms of content. The lyric again requests universal healthcare in one of the lines and, as in the previous song (“New Kicks”), the speaking voice complains about politicians only taking care of the oil’s profit, in a sharp reference to capitalism and contemporary economy that was used before and here as well it aims at condensing the complexity of the song’s protesting content. However, in this case, the reference comes accompanied by a plainspoken derogatory adjectivization:

. . .

Hey, we want a universal healthcare deal

And we want Kissinger on trial for real

We got a right wing king making third world war

Assholes, oil-guys!

(Le Tigre, *This Island*, 2004)

As it happened before with other references to historical figures and real people, in this song there are also direct allusions; in this case, to Henry Kissinger, for instance. Kissinger is an American politician who played a significant role in American foreign policies during Richard Nixon's and Gerald Ford's administrations, and who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973, even though the Swedish Academy took it away later, due to some controversies arisen after the criticism exerted from different political activisms, which considered that Kissinger was, in fact, a war criminal[88]. In the lyric, that symbolic and powerful voice, shaped by the use of the first-person of the plural, asks for justice and she uses Kissinger's trial to contextualize the message. These allusions clearly express the bond between creativity and political consciousness, at the same time that they articulate the band's rejection of right-wing politics, both from a domestic and an international perspective.

In 2016, years after the band was at the top of its career, and with Hanna already enrolled in a new project, Le Tigre enjoyed the opportunity to put out a song "I'm With Her" that was intended as a pro-Hillary Clinton contribution. Released in 2016 as a special single, it was foraging for support to Hillary Clinton's running for presidency:

> She's already done the math
> And she's ready with a plan
> And she's always got to work
> Twice as hard as every man
> Bye bye, bye bye, bye bye, bye bye, bye bye
> Trump has got to go!
> . . .
> I want a problem solver, a true rock climber
> Pantsuit-wearing her-storical first-timer
> I want a listener, a negotiator
> A legal scholar, supreme court nominator
> . . .
> Trump thinks Putin is a "very strong leader"
> Just like him, a fascist bottom feeder
> Building a wall is his greatest vision
> Bigotry colors his every decision
> . . .
> I'm with her (Abortion is healthcare, it's a human right)
> To the top (Policy homework 'til the morning light)

[88] In an article for *The Guardian*, Kissinger was said to have been "recognised for his efforts in negotiating a ceasefire in the Vietnam war. While negotiating that ceasefire, Kissinger was secretly carpet-bombing Cambodia. The worst of his bombing started in February 1973, a month after Washington, Hanoi and Saigon signed the Paris Peace accords" (Mahdawi).

She's with us (NRA stands for murder and hate)
We won't stop (Gun laws now! We can't wait!)
. . .
I don't want a sexist, it's 2016!
. . .
(Le Tigre, 2016)

The lyric directly suggests that women are always requested to prove their capacities and skills, while men's capacity to carry out the same job is taken for granted. In fact, this is an issue that had been discussed in other songs by the band like "Let's Run" (Le Tigre, *Le Tigre*, 1999) and, to be thorough, this is still a current matter that affects many women worldwide. Le Tigre, in the song, does not reject commitment: they sketch a series of attributes for Hillary Clinton that go around her capacity to solve problems, whereas Trump is called a "fascist" and "sexist" ("I'm With Her", Le Tigre, 2016), a figure that the band declines as President of their country. They also describe Hillary Clinton's role as a rock climber, what suggest that the paths taken by women are not always easy and pitfalls may be found on the way to success. The song does not only rely on an upfront account of Hillary Clinton, as contrasted to her rival in that political campaign. The song keeps on delivering its transparent and steadfast tone, characterized by sharp sentences, colloquial diction, and persuasive expression, by touching in other actual topics that could be associated with the two politicians addressed in the song: reproductive rights, guns, or Trump's promise to build up a wall that would separate USA from Mexico. The song declines those divisions and setbacks (with specific attention to policies that address women's issues) that Trump was anticipating in his campaign. With this song, Le Tigre shows a clear endorsement of the first democrat female candidate ever to run for the presidency of the United States of America. In my opinion, this specific articulation of a precise support to a person echoes, in fact, other less specific approximations to gender issues that they had incorporated into their songs before. However, the clear acknowledgement of names and real circumstances unveils that Hanna, as a songwriter, has never hesitated to express her political ideas and social concerns.

In general, all the lyrics analyzed in this section reveal a sharp criticism of America, a country that is portrayed as overrated and feeding a counterfeit image of itself in order to hide that there are many political and social issues that require urgent amendment. On the one hand, the lyrics criticize right-wing politics. As Gerfried Ambrosch argues, "Punk is not a political movement, nor has it produced a coherent ideology. It is safe to say, however, that the punk milieu is mostly 'on the left,' meaning that most punks hold 'progressive' – culturally liberal, socially egalitarian – views" (55) and this is clearly seen in all the bands in which Hanna has taken part. As a matter of fact, this is a national matter that has become a thematic concern that has acquired a big relevance in Hanna's lyrics, especially in the end of the millennium. That is why more references to it can be found in Julie Ruin and Le Tigre. On the other hand, Hanna urges to demonstrate pacifically against the war and to request a universal healthcare system and a workfare that really works for unemployed people. Also,

she directly challenges police forces and their tactics[89]. Some of the songs analyzed in this section focused on images and representations of African Americans being victims of (police) violence, what apparently aims at mirroring the racial prejudices which are still present in the American society. Besides, this selection of lyrics has censured American dependency on oil and the specific economic measures and policies taken in order to get it. Finally, these songs have also denounced the abuse in the use of the internet and the automation and robotization of American citizens through the misapplication of new technologies.

Punk philosophy and its dissident character are represented in these lyrics. The diction employed in the lyrics, the tone of the performance, the simple but vigorous instrumentation, the sharp architecture of the songs, everything contributes to a songwriting that seeks direct discourse in the treatment of issues that affect women and other groups, with a strong focus on the African American community. With a clear rejection of certain regulations and practices in American society, Hanna expresses her opinion in a piercing way, not avoiding controversial issues and impregnating her songs with an assertiveness and frankness that matches the up-front linguistic and fierce musical performance. It is true that, so far, in all the songs analyzed, Hanna has used lyrics to exhibit her political position in different issues, but in a more oblique, indirect, subtle, evocative way, like when patriarchy was explored and dissected with criticism but through the use of allusions, imagery, metaphors, fictional examples, conversations, visual depictions and emotional invocations. Here, instead, Hanna tackles politics with a plain and honest design, showing that she embraces the political edge in music, or, to be more precise, the explicit political processing in punk music. Hanna seems to accept that music is an artistic and creative platform that contributes to the construction of a discourse. In a general view, her whole writing career can be seen as a contribution to her envisioning of a fresh society that favours equality and the end of prejudices and injustice.

Feminism has been a big part in all the previous sections from a specific to a more concise point of view. The next thematic section is still related to Hanna's political confession when writing songs, but it will be devoted to explore the specific cases in which she addresses feminism. My intention this time is to explore in-depth one specific aspect that I consider very important when trying to cover the general significance of her songwriting.

[89] This recurrent topic in Hanna's songwriting has been divided into two different sections, since it had been related for its associations with other issues explored in this analysis. In a way, this topic has been defined and consequently classified due to the overtones that had related it to (1) power and (2) violence.

7.9. Feminism as a Revolution

I acknowledge that I have been approaching feminism and feminist politics in all the subsections in this section 7. However, in the following, I approach feminism as a separated and specific element or feature that in Hanna's songs can be observed in isolation. Whether as a movement, a worldview or a way of thinking, feminism is acknowledged in Hanna's songwriting as a source for different inspirations and motivations, as an invitation to take action, a stimulation to start and ignite change, or a way of creating new ideas. All these potential interpretations are tackled here straightforwardly.

Bell hooks defines feminism as a "movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (1). That is why one of the main goals of feminism is to try to explain what feminism is and how sexism works and how it is maintained, so people can understand it and contribute to challenge it. It is true that, nowadays, more and more people have basic notions about gender equality, but others, still wrongly, think that feminism is not needed, because we already live in an equal society. Also, some are in favor of a movement that asks for "equality" between the sexes, but they suggest that instead of using the word "feminism" (which according to them privileges women over men), the struggle should be named "equality" or "justice":

> Some people ask: "Why the word *feminist*? Why not just say you are a believer in human rights, or something like that?" Because that would be dishonest. Feminism is, of course, part of human rights in general—but to choose to use the vague expression *human rights* is to deny the specific and particular problem of gender. It would be a way of pretending that it was not women who have, for centuries, been excluded. It would be a way of denying that the problem of gender targets women. That the problem was not about being human, but specifically about being a female human. (Ngozi 41)

Thus, the word feminism emphasizes gender oppression. Using another word would mean to hide that gender problem. The diverse inequalities that emerge and directly affect women are based on their female condition that positions them as the opposite of men, which is the norm and the standard. Woman, the Other, faces difficulties in every aspect of her life and to omit her condition as the source of the problem would be totally unacceptable and inaccurate.

In that context, as I have been explaining throughout my work, lyrics can be approached as a convenient platform in which female artists can express their view on political and social issues. Afterwards, the academia can apply their scientific scrutiny to observe the processing and execution in culture of certain discourses and ideologies. In her songwriting, Hanna unifies feminism and punk music, exemplifying that punk music needs feminism and that punk becomes the perfect stand to voice the movement. In fact, the band Le Tigre defines itself as a feminist band: "Obviously we can't represent all feminists or come up with a definition that can be universally applied, but yes, of course we proudly identify as feminists. It's also safe to say that the

kind of feminism we are most interested in is the kind that not only challenges misogyny but also stands against racism, homophobia, class-ism, imperialism etc ..." ("Questions and Answers").

In the previous sections, I have developed specific elements or features that could be catalogued or pinpointed as part of feminist thinking. The main idea was to observe how they have been addressed and projected in Kathleen Hanna's literary production, in the belief that they played a central role in order to understand Hanna's creativity and songwriting. Now, for closure, I consider that these individual analyses will be consolidated by paying attention to the instances in which feminism is addressed directly. This is, the lyrics selected for this section would make clear Hanna's embracing of the feminist movement as an important ingredient in her writing, both for the ideological and the aesthetic dimension of her songs. Additionally, these songs illustrate Hanna's rejection of sexist or chauvinist attitudes and her solid veto to the unequal treatment of women.

"In Accordance to Natural Law" gets Bikini Kill's signature for its content and its sound. Hanna's vocals are an outburst of rage, anger and violence when she sings the sharp lines in this song. The song is also characteristic for its shortness (28 seconds). Its content, an opinionated text, is delivered through colloquial, straightforward, pure and natural verbal exposition, starting in this graphic way:

> "All men are evil
> except my boyfriend"
> said the sound of the spectacle
> I read it in a fanzine
> it wasn't even in a
> big dumb glossy magazine
> (Bikini Kill, *The Singles*, 1998)

These first lines may perfectly be understood as a reference to the "not all men" campaign that has been happening today in certain circles; a tendency that tries to refute some general statements regarding men's actions and behaviors by way of appealing to the wrong use of collective or expansive observations. Written in the late 1990s, the song can be read as an artistic strategy to comment on teenage feminism and popular culture. For instance, it claims that fanzines are the real sources of knowledge for girls, as opposed to the beauty magazines which, as I have argued in this dissertation, lowered girls' self-esteem. In the following lines, the song waves towards a sense of exaggeration that can lead us through a close reading of every element in the song, understanding it as an overt self-criticism; doubts and fears appear in regard to feminist thinking. This self-criticism, this censorious view on feminism, was also present in other songs. I observe it when analyzing this next song. It traces a feminism that is related to an apparent state of constant crisis:

> . . .
> everything we ever said

. . .
everything might have done
well, none of that means shit anymore
we contradicted ourselves
I guess we're all hypocrites
(Bikini Kill, *The Singles*, 1998)

This is not the only judgmental view on the feminist movement, its progress and its achievements. In the text of the song "They Want Us To Make A Symphony Out Of The Sound Of Women Swallowing Their Own Tongues" (Le Tigre, *From The Desk of Mr. Lady*, 2000), the speaker focuses on the wide-ranging choices within feminism, wondering if it would be the case that feminism will always be accompanied by objections to move forward:

. . .
What is it that they're, that younger women are pushing up against?
They would seem to have a list of options to choose on, uh, choose from
A set of ways to construct their own identity that takes in everything.
It's just a vast smorgasbord.
The options are not as narrow as they might have been thirty years ago.
So, where does the problem lie now?
. . .
(Le Tigre, *From The Desk of Mr. Lady*, 2000)

This lyric may support the intersectional approach that the Riot Grrrl movement lacked and that caused criticism within this community of girls in the first half of the 1990s. We have to bear in mind that, in the past, the possibilities of accepting untraditional identities were fewer comparing to the multiple options that were available at the time in which this song was written, what makes the feminism that Hanna supported much more inclusive and broader than it used to be. As I explained in my overview of the different stages in the development of feminism, the women's movement has been persistent and resilient. Women's demands have changed at the same pace that some central concerns of feminist thinking were accomplished. However, a certain feeling of exhaustion and debilitation was shared between many feminists in the late Riot Grrrl movement, but the work being pursued by the cultural engagement that informed the formation of these bands always encourage girls to join the movement. In the next few songs that I have selected, this will be visible.

The feminist nature of Le Tigre's album *Feminist Sweepstakes* (2001) is evident from its own title. This work includes three songs that are openly linked to feminism. Those songs directly ask the audience to consider their involvement and active participation. For example, the song "Much Finer" discusses the personal dimension behind the collective agenda. It shows an ironic speaking voice that declines to attend a party

because she reckons her commitment to the movement, warning others so that those feminists who identify themselves as authentic activists but then they hardly take any real action are unmasked:

> . . .
> Hey look I'm really sorry
> I couldn't make it to your party
> I know it looks like I'm gonna cry
> Got a to-do list behind my eyes so
> Go tell your friends I'm still a feminist
> But I won't be coming to your benefit
> I give up
> (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001)

By asking for further and genuine support within the feminist community, the band displays their political commitment and dedication to a cause that has changed the route of history (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001). In fact, the pre-chorus of the song "FYR**"** starts with Hanna calling the rest of feminists (women or men) to move forward and reach the frontlines of the feminist movement:

> Feminists we're calling you
> Please report to the front desk
> Let's name this phenomenon
> It's too dumb to bring us down
> (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001)

As it can be noticed, the word "feminists" is not taken as something to feel ashamed about. Instead, it is used as an empowering term applied to women's political and social view towards equality. The song pictures a social situation in which women will not be behind anymore. It is high time for feminists to raise their voice in the front rows; a space that they have already conquered. This short of visual determination that imbues all the scenes that Hanna develops in her representation of the feminist movement (from a specific point of view) is a recurrent strategy that I have explored repeatedly in my analysis of her songs, whether it was in connection to specific concepts or when approaching feminism in general, as in this song. In the song, the speaker urges the audience to consider the naming of what she first calls a "phenomenon" ("FYR", Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001), probably visually referring to a crowd of girls taking part on a demonstration. Instead, the speaker proposes to call it a huge movement that has come to be so important that cannot be stopped anymore. Hanna is voicing through the speaker in the song an urgent call for support, an appeal for bigger crowds. Actually, in the song "Dyke March 2001" (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001), a person is depicted attending a protest in which a wider branch of gender identities, sexual orientations and non-normative options are welcome. The visual

imagery helps to build a sense of togetherness. Hanna declares a sisterhood that withstands and defies bias and prejudice:

> I like going to the dyke march because I like to be surrounded with women
> Marching naked ladies
> We recruit, We recruit. . . .
> There's no-one telling us where to stand or where to be
> . . .
> We're just this huge strong mass of feminist fury
> Resist, Resist. Feminist fury. Feminist fury
> Proud to be a dyke, proud to be a dyke
> . . .
> (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001)

Probably, the “dyke” allusion refers to those who do not follow the heteronormative standards; those who are in same-sex/gender relationships. The speaker acknowledges her satisfaction. She is in a safe space where she feels comfortable. As the speaker in the previous song did as well, she again asks for more active participation, in an attempt to enlist more people in the feminist movement, which is, as it is epitomized in these songs, already growing bigger and mightier. Many of Hanna’s songs have a nonconformist appeal, and with a subversive, insurgent, disobedient style and tone, she urges people to support women’s cause. These songs, with specific strategies and distinct perspectives, are good examples of this.

Changes come from real revolutions and the third wave and the Riot Grrrl movement were pioneers in reshaping and restyling traditional marches. Hanna’s work in music is defined by its rebel spirit and the lyrics that she wrote reproduce that same spirit. Included in the album *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, songs like "This Is Not a Test" and “Double Dare Ya” become authentic anthems that were seeking to prod a real punk uprising. “This Is Not a Test” certifies the band’s intention to build a big community of girls that would contribute to turn patriarchy upside down:

> . . .
> I know what I'm gonna fuckin do
> Me and my girlfriends gonna push on thru
> We are gonna stomp on you!
> (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!,* 1991)

“Double Dare Ya” is, according to Lindsay Zoladz, “one of their definitive songs: an explosive collision between didacticism and dynamism, a Bill of Rights you can mosh to” and “the bulwark for the battle to come” (McDonnell

and Vincentelli). The message is transparent and plain. Girls are turning tables and bands like Bikini Kill are ready to offer new insights:

> We're Bikini Kill and we want revolution
> Girl-style now!!!
> Hey girlfriend
> I got a proposition goes something like this:
> Dare you to do what you want
> Dare you to be who you will
> Dare you to cry, cry outloud
> (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!,* 1991)

The same message is broadcasted in "The Punk Singer", a song released in Hanna's solo album (*Julie Ruin*, 1998). The song adjusts to that recurrent mood that Bikini Kill mastered:

> . . .
> I want a revolution
> You wanna make your mark
> But it's not guilt I want or punishment I see
> . . .
> Maybe tonight
> We could bring the fuck into the fight
> Maybe tonight
> I can see that I don't wanna die
> Maybe when I turn myself away
> Every little thing you said I wanna throw it
> All into the bay
> (Julie Ruin, 1998)

That resilient attitude was common in many riot grrrl bands and it survived in Hanna's next project, Le Tigre. In fact, that allusion to fighting is, again, used in "Friendship Station" (*Le Tigre*, 1999), a song about bonding, friendship and radical change:

> . . .
> Everyone around me wants to start another fight
> I'm gonna let it be alright
> (I wanna be there!) (I wanna take you there!)

(Le Tigre, *Le Tigre*, 1999)

Also in "TGIF" (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001), it can be perceived these positive and energetic connotations**.** In the inclusive pronoun "we", the speaker tries to embrace girls like her. She explains that women will occupy the stages while others will see and support them from the pit, forging a community that, despite conflicts, will persist:

We will survive as thieve
We will survive as freaks
Turn around, turn around turn around
And take a look at the crowd...
I think it looks all right
We got friends in sight
Yeah tomorrow we fight
(Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001)

The majority of the lyrics analyzed in this section present, once more, a stylistic enactment that relies on a persuasive insistence on direct address. Hanna holds the first person by employing the singular pronoun *I* but, in this selection, it is also exceptional that Hanna relies more often in the rendition of a collective speaking voice, using the pronoun *we*. Her intention is, as I have argued several times throughout my dissertation, to invite girls to partake in the cause and to incorporate them to the community in order to achieve and fulfil one of the distinctive traits and objectives that characterized the Riot Grrrl movement. Besides, by enlisting words like "fight", "resist" or "revolution", and also by suggesting the insurgent and non-standard possibilities concerning identities, these lyrics serve as a solid and authentic background and foundation for the feminist movement, a genuine way to back it up. A revolutionary style is clearly found in most of Hanna's lyrics, both in terms of tone, use of diction, thematic selection and performance. However, as I clarified in the opening of this section, there are songs in which she delivers an immediate and plainspoken feminist speech, rebel and radical in spirit, that complements and echoes the attitude and ethic that she so vividly condensed in her song "Rebel Girl," which became Bikini Kill's most popular and well-known song.

In conclusion, the FCDA makes evident the need to approach the discourse surrounding lyrics from a feminist (and intersectional) perspective, as Alice Bag argued when she said that punk needed feminism (@AliceBag), or when Hanna claimed that feminism needed to enter punk's conversation ("Kathleen Hanna, Sara"). That is what I aimed at doing with the analysis of the selected songs. To launch an efficient summary of the most relevant aspects that I have covered in this analysis, it is necessary to start by saying that, throughout her career, Hanna has integrated a varied register of different voices. Her vocal delivery has been always versatile. Sometimes, she uses a sweet voice and, in other cases, she makes use of an angry, frantic and raw style of singing:

> Kathleen Hanna, the trailblazing singer, said that in Bikini Kill she embodied 1,000 voices, and you can hear this on any of these songs. She pivots between radically contorted stylings—from a childish sing-song playground rhyme to a savage, lion's roar—in order to show how things like masculinity and femininity were performed constructs, how those qualities are inside of us all. (Pelly, "Bikini Kill")

The strength of the lyrics lies in the use of this characteristic voice, but also in the diction, usually direct, natural, with a punk essence captured and epitomized in the discursive elaboration. Hanna employs a characteristic use of the vernacular or colloquial speech; slang words, direct allusions, the addressing of varied topics, both personal or political, with a straightforward pitch, and/or the recurrent use of irony and sarcasm. It all helped to define her personal songwriting.

The songs are dominated by the use of figurative language. Firstly, she introduces some powerful and fresh visual images in songs like "Feels Blind" (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991), "Speed Heart" (*Pussy Whipped*, 1993), or "Resist Psychic Death" (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993), and she uses similes in the songs "Rebel Girl" (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993), "Magnet" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993), "Alien She" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped ,*1993), or "I'm With Her" (Le Tigre, 2016). In some cases, the use of these resources was combined with references that provided political undertones to the songs. For instance, Donald Trump in "I'm with Her", as we saw, is compared to a "fascist bottom feeder" ("I'm With Her", Le Tigre, 2016). Some other resources were also employed in the songs. Hyperboles are not missing in Hanna's work, but their use is rare. Just in "Dyke March 2001" (Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001) she refers to the feminist movement as a "huge strong mass of feminist fury" ("Dyke March 2001", Le Tigre, *Feminist Sweepstakes,* 2001). Metaphors also have a central place in Hanna's use of figurative language. In her songs, we can find interesting examples in "Jigsaw Youth" (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah,* 1993) to express the power that she has within and that is compared to a fire in "Blood One" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993), where she refers to language as a memory that filters everything inside women. Also metonymy is used in tracks like "Candy" (Bikini Kill, *Revolution Girl Style Now!*, 1991) to express Hanna's need to hold her tongue. However, it can be said that the use of anaphoras excels throughout Hanna's work. Just to mention a few, in the songs "Don't Need You" (Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah*, 1993), "Stay Monkey" (Julie Ruin, *Julie Ruin,* 1998) and "TKO" (Le Tigre, *This Island*, 2004), we can hear Hanna making use of this rhetoric figure.

Another significant element to be tackled in any technical analysis of her songwriting is Hanna's construction of the subject or narrative voice. The lyrics present an unmediated point of view, with Hanna usually singing and assimilating the use of the first person as a focalization. However, she is more flexible than what could have been expected. Sometimes she delivers a strong association with that narrative voice, whereas some other times the speaker typifies a more general, encompassing fictional articulation of subjectivity, one in which potential interpretations open the way towards connection and representativeness. Hanna also employs other persons in both the subject and the direct and indirect object positions. She also uses the *we* in a collective and inclusive slant from time to time, while the addressee *you* is normally addressed in order to stand for the

repository of her message, more often a male audience, male-based institutions, or the community of girls when the message or meaning implied is different. The sex/gender of the "you" in her songs is never specified but she tends to address the audience on a "one-to-one" basis. In short, she makes a functional use of pronouns, but, in some cases, her dynamic combination offers the opportunity to examine the efficient articulation of her thematic interests.

The structure and formal design of her songs follows a use of free verse, with no regular metric pattern and varied rhyming schemes where, when put in paper, lines or verses seem to be casually cut. As Adam Bradley explains, "The surfaces of songs take shifting shapes" (*The Poetry* 38). The basic structure or layout of a song would be that which follows the classic AABA, being A the verse and B the chorus. Of course, with a constant recourse to small deviations or modifications that enrich the basic structure, for instance, with the repetition of verses and choruses or the inclusion of other additional elements such as an intro and the outro, plus the more habitual employment of the bridge. In the case of these songs, the structure or layout is usually simple and undeviating, following the pattern ABAB or AABA with some modifications. In Hanna's songwriting, I envision the conventional use of the pattern verse (A/AA) + chorus (B) with slight changes and the use of the bridge (C) as an alternative for the final part of the song. For example, in the popular song "Rebel Girl" (Bikini Kill), the conventional structure is strongly followed with slight modifications based upon the use of iteration. In this case, the structure used for that song would be ABABABCA. The structure of Hanna's songs (as it is usually the rule in popular music and in punk-rock) determines the use of a chorus, which is used repeatedly, gaining a great relevance in the songs due to that recurrence but also because it is usually the recipient of strong political content. Expectedly, there is also a certain level of variety that is routed through the use of intros and outros (as it is the case of the songs "Tres Bien" and "On Guard" by Le Tigre). The addition of these structural elements provides a meaningful supplement to the songs, enriching, emphasizing or consolidating the song's content and tone. In general, there is a conventional use of structure but with a varied operation of the elements. In a general overview of her discography, I can conclude that Hanna's bands do follow a somewhat arbitrary structure that, in a way, represents punk's essentially rebellious and iconoclastic spirit.

There is a recurrent use of sources and intertextual references, as in "Bloody Ice Cream" to portray Sylvia Plath's fate, or in "Bang! Bang!" (Le Tigre, *From The Desk Of Mr. Lady*, 2000) to remember Patrick Dorismond and Amadou Diallo's murders under racial prejudice. Henry Kissinger or Eleanor Roosvelt are also names that appear in Hanna's songwriting. There is an allusion to the New York band Sonic Youth in the song "Thurston Hearts the Who" (Bikini Kill, *Bikini Kill*, 1992) and other cultural references to people like George W. Bush ("George Bush is a Pig", Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah*, 1993), David Lynch ("Fuck Twin Peaks" Bikini Kill, *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah*, 1993), Tony Randall or Molly Ringwald ("Tony Randall", Bikini Kill, *Reject All American*, 1996). In a way, this intertextuality reveals a closeness to the reality of the times and a concern with Hanna's present-time and the politics of those days. As I explained before, Hanna's lyrics become a grand example of politicized music. Sometimes, those specific references strengthen that political fingerprint. Some other times, the focus is on the feminist traits that are found as a representative occurrence of the political edge in songwriting.

Eloquence and persuasion are also literary resources that can be found in these songs. In her use of persuasive writing, rhetoric is to be perceived in a conscious use of language, more often addressing the ethos than the pathos. This is, the focus is put on the distinguished attitude and performance of the speaker or narrative voice (ethos) rather than on the emotional response of the audience (pathos). In fact, some times, her persuasive writing relies on the rational argumentation (the logos), using facts, references, or the same intertextual allusions that I mentioned before, to strengthen her views.

From both the ideological standpoint and the musical, there is a clear and explicit evolution in Hanna's work. The music in Bikini Kill and Julie Ruin is minimalistic, with few chords and a fast and loud pace, quite characteristic of Hanna's first songs. In Le Tigre, the musical characteristics associate the music with the style of electro-punk, a genre that includes more instrumentation and the use of more complex progressions. That is, from a very general perspective, the music can be appreciated as affected by an evolution or a process of change. In what relates to the textual content, the lyrics for Bikini Kill (1990-1998), for instance, are much more unsophisticated, the insurgent and non-conformist insolence reigns within the content in all the songs. Again, the diction is harsh; Hanna's voice matches this natural assertiveness; the sound of the musical instruments do it too. In Le Tigre (1998-2004 and present), there is a development in the textual content as well as in Hanna's attitude and approach to politicized music. Hanna's maturity as a composer was to be ascertained in how she addresses recurrent issues in a more elaborated and progressive fashion. As a matter of fact, in Le Tigre's songs, lyrics are much more coherently developed, direct allusions are more often used, franker vindications are articulated, and the lyrics do rely on explanatory stories that are usually employed to tackle political concerns. Still, the same dissident and insubordinate attitude is patent and some themes are also repeated, what offers some sort of thematic continuity.

The revolutionary atmosphere in the lyrics is dominant and strong. Yet, some songs present a Hanna who seems to be annoyed and tired, as if a feeling of sadness accompanies the refractory messages of the lyrics. In fact, nostalgia also has a space in some of the songs. Nevertheless, most songs have a rebellious and feminist shade and they show and portray Hanna's active position as an empowered woman. Feminist politics is the subject of her narrative. Lyrics, consequently, are a potential literary paradigm that reflects social, cultural and feminist themes. Actually, the resolute quality of the lyrics, and their socially conscious nature offer a window into feminism. The politics of the songs lie in the context and discourse around the lyrics, which are more than words. They have a message. They can actually become anthems of opposition as well as solidarity and support. Because of this, they are really inspirational, uplifting, and thought-provoking, what makes of Hanna a trailblazer within Riot Grrrl.

We can also find autobiographical elements or conscious self-representation in the lyrics, for instance, in the song "Star Bellied Boy" (Bikini Kill, *Pussy Whipped,* 1993), where Hanna recalls an assault from which she has not totally recovered. The lyrics, in fact, are apparently exercised as a stream of consciousness of Hanna's thinking, one in which tension is implicit and a variety of subject matters or themes are addressed and resembled. This associates with feminist inquiries and concerns, especially the ones that more clearly pertain to the third wave. In consequence, as I have tried to show in my analysis, Hanna's lyrics offer political insights

into topics such as patriarchy, power, sexuality or gender-based violence that are the foundation of Hanna's discourse, paralleling the same interests that can be found in the Riot Grrrl movement and in feminism. Specifically, Hanna reports the ideological but also spatial imbalance in society. She sings that certain spaces have to be recuperated by (and for) women and that this female (re)occupation is a right that they have to exercise. Even though patriarchy is not named directly, the artist refers to it through thorough descriptions of concerns that are rooted in patriarchal practices (i.e.; wage inequality between men and women, or the beauty stereotypes). There are also references to power or power-related issues, such as women's artistic ambitions and agency. Hanna also supports broader possibilities of knowing, thinking and being, and she reports women's feeling of alienation within binarist thinking. Besides, and from this thematic perspective, language also plays an important part in Hanna's work. Throughout a regeneration of diction and a fresh approach to the American lexicon, she complains about language being a social construct that limits women and does not represent them. As I said, sexuality and gender-based violence gain great relevance in her work too. They are two of the main topics that Hanna's work shares with the third wave of feminism. She is determined to present diverse sexual choices that may stand outside the heteronormative scheme. Her work tries to consolidate the right of women to enjoy their sexuality without the need to fulfil the standardized cultural prospects that preserve a role model for women as mothers and wives. The songs that deal with gender-based violence had become anthems against the biggest fight that feminism is still facing: violence, abuse, harassment and assaults due to one's sex/gender. Some of the songs contain tough stories in which the protagonist's perceptions are well depicted and enacted. In other songs, the content is overtly political. Whether in Bikini Kill, Julie Ruin or Le Tigre, Hanna openly states her political positioning against injustices. She directly points at those who are in charge and criticizes the regulations and/or political decisions that may interfere with left-wing activism.

In sum, her lyrics are frank, feminist and they urge for a revolution that, in her songs, Hanna is basing on artistic expressions as well as on an active participation in the movement. This has been visible in the classification of the sections (See Table 1) and it has been articulated through a variety of songs with which I have tried to encompass a thorough and significant analysis of Hanna's songwriting.

I believe that the linguistic and the thematic approaches that I included here can be richly accompanied and completed by taking also advantage of the FCDA examination of Hanna's lyrics. This triple exploration contributes significantly to my main objective: analyzing the emotional, political and/or cultural foundation of Hanna's lyrics. This examination shows the potent links between music and literature. As I showed in the different sections, this analysis acquires an interdisciplinary tone, including theoretical background of diverse fields like Cultural Studies or Gender Studies. With it, I focused on lyrics as literary paradigms, worth of scholar examination. I tried to look for dominant characteristics involving feminism and lyrics, which then I signified, explored and placed in connection with other elements and perspectives that were also significant and functional in an exhaustive analysis of songwriting. Additionally, I expand this varied analytical approximation by considering time and the processes that discover an evolution in Hanna's career. This has helped me to situate her work in the slippery territory of history, revealing the old and solid roots of her music and incorporating her

work in the broader historical landscape in which we locate the developments of both feminism and the Riot Grrrl movement.

8. Conclusion: Women Rocking the Scene

In recent years, music has been asserted, both in academia and in different cultural scenarios, as an instrumental and profitable way for personal and communal articulation, and for interaction between different communities and generations. In addition, recent scholarship has regarded how music can also be used as a facilitating tool for activism, political commitment and social involvement. For instance, Pedelty and Weglarz claim that "here have always been strains of politically charged rock, music that challenges powerful institutions and social mores" (xiii). As a matter of fact, in this dissertation, I have approached punk-rock music from an academic and feminist perspective, enabling the possibility of perceiving how women have been determined by their being located in a very definite social position and how this happens due to the specific consequences that surfaced when they try to get involved in the music business. This, as I have tried to show, has occurred all throughout history. However, women have also succeeded in subverting those traditional conventions and roles.

By paying special attention to women's participation and contribution to music, we can see how, despite being active agents in the production and distribution of music, usually, their works have been silenced or cornered, in a segregation based on gender conventions. These conventions that I explain in section 2 are social constructs that have a strong authority (both affecting collectives and individuals, especially individual women and women as a collective) and are solidly rooted in different societies and varied fields, including among them music, which was my object of study here. Again, this connection between music and the social, political and cultural domains has gained notice and a growing academic interest in the contemporary study of music, and, consequently, it has become an area of research that has successfully applied gender related issues to the examination of different cultural products or representations.

In that sense, music arises not only as a tool that reflects unequal distributions of power in the aforementioned domains but also as an instrument that operates in the role of method or approach to review and challenge women's invisibility in culture. Here, music studies and feminist critical theory come together in a suggestive combination of methodological approaches that displays how it is possible to examine the social and cultural conditions that contribute to the exclusion of women, at the same time that I emphasize their actual involvement in art and I put into focus their works, which can be efficiently and effectively scrutinized. As Susan McClary argues,

> feminist criticism has opened the field to the study of genders, sexualities, bodies, emotions, and subjectivities as articulated in a vast range of musics - popular and classical, Western and non-Western, ancient and contemporary; it has, in other words, brought musicology into the conversations that have dominated the humanities in the past twenty years ("Women and Music" 1285)

In fact, I would add, there is an increasing number of works that deal with female musicians. And one of my aims in this dissertation has been to contribute to that growing research. I did it by studying the social and

political power of music, how it contributes to transform or convey political messages. In other words, I aimed at showing that lyrics are a cultural and artistic production that will effectively and significantly supply the expansion of Gender Studies. Another more specific goal, of course, has been to search dominant feminist traits in the lyrics written by the American singer and songwriter Kathleen Hanna (one of the icons of the hereafter examined Riot Grrrl movement) for the music projects that she headed: Bikini Kill, Julie Ruin and Le Tigre. In that exploration, I examine whether there has been progress or evolution of those feminist topics in her career. Finally, I have also pursued the completion of this study in order to discern the place that Hanna's work occupies in the Riot Grrrl legacy, in the punk scene, and in the context of the so-called third wave of feminism.

Always in connection to these multi-layered goals, I targeted and developed a central hypothesis that works as a backbone in my study. I believe that lyrics contribute to the enduring examination that feminist criticism has been stretching for generations in an attempt to ascertain and attest female experience and, to certify that, I was certain that it would be very useful and functional to carry out a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) of a particular set of lyrics in order to observe how gender relations of power are produced, maintained and contested in Hanna's work. For that, I approach the contributions to the field by authors such as Norman Fairclough, John Langshaw Austin, Teun A. van Dijk, Michelle M. Lazar and Pedro Santander. The aforementioned FCDA "aims to advance a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse in sustaining (hierarchically) gendered social arrangements" (Lazar 141) and by searching for pieces of evidence that contribute to a feminist discourse my intention was to prove that there are ways to re-appropriate discourse and transform its ideological traits so that they work in the struggle for equality. I consider that the applicability of FCDA to the multidimensional character of my study leads to nontraditional perspectives that encompass new directions, opening up the possibility that music becomes an instrumental contribution for/in Gender Studies (and beyond).

In order to contextualize my central analysis, I explored first how both music and musical instruments have been traditionally gendered. I examined the expectations based on the categories sex and gender (and their influence on women's lack of access to the historical tradition in music genres like punk). Sex places individuals within the binary category man-woman, assigned at birth and based on the biological and anatomic traits that differentiate us (genitalia, chromosome and hormones). Gender, on the contrary, is a socio-cultural construct acquired and internalized by all members of society that intersects with other categories such as class, race or religion. Through the process of socialization, gender is learned and internalized by being grounded on the binary division male/female and man/woman and the subsequent notions that derive from it regarding masculinity and femininity. Gender norms and expectations of behavior also differ across cultures, but, generally speaking, when individuals do not fit or match those norms, they may face social stigma, discrimination or exclusion.

Among the conventions that have shaped the understanding of femininity or womanhood, we find traditional assumptions such as the fact that women are demanded to occupy the private sphere, follow beauty conventions, and accomplish properly their assigned role as wife and mother. Considered or defined as passive

agents, dependent, weak and irrational, a strong emphasis has been made on their bodies. Men, on the contrary, have been traditionally characterized as economically autonomous and productive, and they have been defined as active and rational; thus, they occupy the public sphere. This stereotyped gendered configuration is perpetuated from childhood to adulthood and it affects every aspect of life, including music, which emerges as a gendered artistic expression that reproduces those social and culturally enacted convictions.

According to Lucy Green, music "delineates gender in a variety of ways, according to the gender of the performer and/or the composer, in combination with the music's style, its historical context, and the subject-position of the listener" (102) and it has been documented how this stereotyping of music and musical instruments goes back to ancient times. Musical instruments and music genres have been labelled as feminine or masculine as a result of a given set of socially constructed traits that reproduce and perpetuate gender bias. For example, rock is normally described as rebellious, subversive and characterized by political content, which is the reason why it is normally attached to the masculine. Pop, on the contrary, is normally considered an alternative and somehow trivial form of entertaining, analogous of the feminine. Despite being true that there are technical differences between these two genres, the categorization and separation of pop and rock music are also derived from those traditional assessments based on the sex/gender distinction, which contribute to the genderization of music.

Regarding musical instruments and how they can be read as gendered stereotypes, authors such as Veronica Doubleday explain that "an instrument's look or sound may come to embody gendered meaning. Instruments may be imaged or named as male or female entities, as paired entities combining male-female characteristics, or as gendered members of a family" (29). In this sense, the gendering of instruments may come from many levels. To approach the gendered nature of music in order to understand its origin and implications is essential in any academic study that pursues an observation of the role played by women in artistic and music creation. And, for that goal, I believe, it is critical to use a feminist angle.

Feminism, as I have tried to show in this dissertation, is a complex team of movements and ideologies whose goal is to achieve equal opportunities and rights for women in different social, political, economic, cultural and personal areas. Feminism has enjoyed a long trip of constant advancement and has left a historical track that scholars have classified in three different waves. The early feminism or first wave (1830-1920) involved small groups of women and was more notorious in France, the United Kingdom and certain places in the United States, such as the city of New York. This first peak of the movement was concerned with legal issues and equality between men and women: the right to vote and other reforms in higher education, the workplace and the healthcare system were some of the most remarkable vindications of this wave. In other words, this first wave of feminism had its interest drawn towards suffragism and stressing women's material disparity. In literature, some of the major representative figures of this first wave addressed topics that had been almost never before narrated or exercised by women. The "New Woman" became a relevant concept in feminism and important authors such as Olive Schreiner, Ella D'Arcy, Edith Wharton or Kate Chopin elaborated on it in their

writings. Nonetheless, it was the 1929 feminist essay *A Room of One's Own* that established Virginia Woolf as one of the main modernist authors of the 20th century.

In the 1960s, a second wave of feminism emerged; this time, it was concerned with economic and social discrimination, birth control, abortion and reproductive rights for women; besides other social issues, such as gender difference and power distribution. Still, these feminists shared with those in the first wave a concern about the politics of legal and educational equal rights for women. Two important features of this movement have to be underlined. First, that it challenged the traditional understanding of politics by addressing that "the personal is political." Also, that it led to the emergence of new feminisms: the liberal and the radical.

French writer and thinker Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) broke the ground by examining women's subjugation through history and the attribute of "otherness" assigned to them. The work by de Beauvoir reached the consideration of a masterpiece for authors coming afterwards. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970), and other feminist works such as Hélène Cixous' *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975) were also innovative within the (late) second wave, dealing with stereotypes, oppression, politics, language and the representation of women.

Towards the end of the 20th century, the movement was growing bigger, stronger and more influential worldwide. Also, whereas the first and the second waves reported injustices and pointed at the oppressors, the third wave acquired a more introspective nature and asked western women to include other identity aspects like race or class within the conditions that affect womanhood. Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the term "intersectionality" as a key concept within this wave. Focusing on new ideas such as queer theory, sexual harassment, sexual diversity, child care, stereotypes, or gender-based violence, this wave brings into focus individual identity.

Chicano feminist poet Cherrie Moraga and Chicana lesbian-feminist poet and scholar Gloria Anzaldúa contributed with their works on gender and race, which had a great influence on Mexican-American women. Professor and social activist bell hooks was another important figure of this third wave. Her work *Feminism is for Everybody* set an illustrative example of the development of feminist politics and thinking. Also, the celebration of sexuality was a relevant point in the agenda of this wave, as well as the media or cultural portraits of women. Within this context, the Riot Grrrl movement paid specific attention to these matters, changing the way in which women actively participated in the feminist movement. Additionally, the movement did also contribute to the alteration of the patterns of involvement for women in music genres such as punk.

It must be said, though, that women have always been active in music, but their work has not been documented in the thorough and exact way in which men's contribution has been scrutinized and catalogued. Because of this, they cannot find a relevant tradition of female singer-songwriters or instrumentalists that preceded them. A reason for this deficiency is that the canon (mainly formed by white and heterosexual men) is grounded on an unequal system that tends to support and highlight men's work, while exercising a silent approach to women's participation. This canon was never called into question until the 1990s, when the feminist criticism of popular music developed an interest and preoccupation for the revelation and affirmation of female musicians and their contribution to the production and distribution of music. This new feminist criticism began

to challenge the long-standing assumptions on the role played by women in music, deconstructing those male-centered narratives in music.

There are different reasons and factors that have constrained women's authority in music. One is education and economic dependence, as they both empower women and allow them to contribute to music by decision making and active agency. A second constraint is motherhood, which is still venerated as the more important (meaning also satisfying and fulfilling) condition in a woman's life. This is still a constraint for female musicians who have to find a balance between work and motherhood; others have to choose between one and the other. Thirdly, music works in the construction of identity and it influences the manner in which people place themselves within a society or a social group and how they connect and interact with others. Adolescence is a key stage when teens are exposed to cultural inputs. In the case of music, girls find more problems to identify themselves with some forms of music such as rock or punk as they lack role models or mentors that precede them in those genres. Boys are usually encouraged to enquire and experience more aggressive or loud practices of music (what would reaffirm their masculine condition), whereas girls' exposure to pop, for example, is higher because it is considered to be more congruent with their femininity.

In this dissertation, I claim that one of the constraints that influences more strongly women's agency as artists is the public dimension that the work entails. As I argued when discussing patriarchal attitudes and its consequences, "patriarchy has developed a whole series of 'feminine' characteristics (sweetness, modesty, subservience, humility, etc.)" (Moi 123), and these affect women in many different ways. In general, women have been associated with the values listed above and those who decided to be musicians (and particularly punk-rockers) were breaking and subverting those traditional roles assigned for them. To explain the different effects that this may have on women, I use Lucy Green's work. She employs the term "display" (100) to give evidence of the three different positions that a woman can take in music (singer, performer and composer) and the ramifications that it may have for women. All the three different positions involve commands and skills historically linked to men (for example, the mastery of an instrument or the ability to compose a musical piece or song).

Taking into consideration these limitations, those women who dare seek a career in rock music are commonly labeled as "subversive" while they are accused of carrying out roles that are not encompassing the conventional cultural definitions of femininity and womanhood. Music criticism and journalism consign them in a "separate category" within rock music, alienating them from the general, a category that for authors such as Maria Raha "shouldn't even exist anymore" (xii). The unnecessary need to add the word "female" or "woman" to the music category, whether punk or classical music, reinforces the idea that men are the natural choice and the norm in the field, whereas women's participation is taken as an exception, as something extraordinary or uncommon. Men's activity and contribution to music are thus seen as standard and women's as the rare opportunity that needs a paternalistic recognition in exceptional occasions. The label "women in rock" may seem resistant in a way, but concurrently it marginalizes women, who become the "other".

Despite the fact that they were being contemplated as insurgent and rebellious icons, women played a crucial part in genres like punk, which together with Riot Grrrl were essential for female allegations in music.

To start with, punks valued originality and non-mainstream expression more than anything else. Sonically and in terms of style, punk-rock music allowed the freedom to innovate and express oneself. As I have also tried to display in this dissertation, fast and aggressive rhythms were characteristic of the genre. The length of the songs was typically short, what, I believe, was drawing a direct allusion to the urgency that typified the genre, which was effectively condensed with the "no future" motto that epitomized the iconoclastic nature of the movement. The music also evoked this immediacy and insurrection: the chords were based on simple combinations, accompanied by subversive and dissenting language. However, and this is an idea that has permeated my work, punk does not only determine the musical fashion that can be chronologically set around the 1970s, it also includes the DIY aesthetic that distinguished a whole cultural undertaking which was accompanying the music scene.

Punk's transgressive attitude, its lack of professional authority and its unconventional philosophy provided more opportunities for women. It let them display a more aggressive or sexual behavior on stage. Women did form part of this community, and they also rejected cultural norms and traditional notions (mostly those linked to their gender). In general, we can say that punk became an opportunity for women to jump over some narratives that they have found as a hindrance when trying to get involved and participate in other music styles or scenes. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that punk music has been typified for its alternative and inclusive spirit, women still found other difficulties and challenges on their way to partake of the punk movement.

On the one hand, some scholars, critics and even some of the actual protagonists have affirmed that punk music and its different scenes were mostly represented by male figures, leaving aside or silencing a solid variety that could have spoken in favor of a more complex and assorted experience. Thus, it is usually Sex Pistols, Ramones, The Clash or Dead Kennedys that are compiled and accounted as representatives of this movement, but in fewer occasions bands such as Los Crudos, Spitboy or Babes in Toyland, with women or members of ethnic minorities in their line-ups, have been acknowledged for their contribution and participation in the development of punk music.

On the other hand, at the beginning of the 1980s, hardcore was gaining ground in L.A. Punk turned into a more physical music (characterized by faster and more aggressive sounds). The scene was mainly white-straight-male-oriented and many women felt unsafe or excluded. However, women opposed the orientation that the scene was taking. As a result, many of those women started a network of feminist activism that mixed artistic expressions and feminist theories: this, as I have explored in the corresponding section, can be signaled as the foundation of Riot Grrrl.

The 1990s Riot Grrrl was an underground movement shaped by feminist politics that redefined the punk scene and encouraged girls to engage in the cultural production of art (mainly music, fanzines and performances). Julia Downes defines it as a "set of experiments set into play in response to the limits of masculinist paradigms in the written word (language), visual arts (male gaze) and punk music scenes (paces of male belonging), that simultaneously sought to transform culture and critique harmful binary logics that limited the lives of girls and young women" ("We are" 99), and, within this broad framework, the participants in the movement broke the gender stereotyping that had configured punk culture, breaking with the exclusive

narratives that had shaped it. Riot grrrl bands resorted to lyrics as an efficient way to express themselves and share personal (and political) experiences. Many bands subverted traditional notions of femininity or womanhood and articulated new and revolutionary narratives. Their lyrics became a conversational arena that the bands employed in order to address potential audiences. The connection between those bands and the audience was a strong and solid, as both sides were determined to contribute to a firm and powerful reawakening of feminism: "don't assume a passive response" (Bennick iix). Riot Grrrl can be thus portrayed as a radical musical movement that sought the audience's involvement and stimulated women's active participation in feminist politics. Yet, for many, Riot Grrrl lacked an intersectional approach. Besides, it has been harshly criticized for not including the social realities of those women who did not fit within the cultural spectrum of middle-class white women, the original setup of the movement. As I have tried to disclose in my analysis of the movement, Riot Grrrl is increasingly being examined from a theoretical perspective today, but there is still a requirement for practical approaches, since, even if the movement seems to be remote in the past, it is still considered as an active force today, progressing into a fresh and more inclusive phase. Many musicians and other artists and cultural activists have confessed that the legacy of bands like Bikini Kill and others, in both what refers to their lyrics and to their performances, remains genuine and stable. In short, the Riot Grrrl movement has exerted a big influence on successive generations.

After this recapitulation of the contextual part, I move forward and focus on the main purpose of my work, the analysis of the lyrical content. I start by a comprehensive approach in which I tackle recent debates over the literary eligibility of songs. This has been an ongoing debate for decades now, but it developed into a central issue in cultural conversation when Bob Dylan became the recipient of a Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016. Since then, discussions on how lyrics could or should be scrutinized and appreciated as literature grew in academia. While some experts contemplate song lyrics and written poetry as connected, others argue that they are two different genres. The works by authors such as Adam Bradley, Gerfried Ambrosch, Lars Eckstein or Charlotte Pence shine a light on the matter and some of their conclusions are relevant for my study.

In this opening part, I examine how lyrics and poetry have shared and exchanged formal characteristics since medieval times. Poetry employed musical forms such as intonation or rhythm when performing in travelling shows, in which they would read poems accompanied by instruments and rhythmical patterns. Then, the printing press transformed lyric poetry in an art that became fully for the eye and, nowadays, songwriters and poets are equally perceived as artists that send a particular message through language that the audience then interprets. Even though musicality still plays an obvious and important role, poems do not rely on repetition as heavily as lyrics do. Also, as Bradley argues, lyrics alone do not matter, because they have an essential dependence upon how they use the singer's voice and other elements such as rhythm, melody, harmony, or the specific use of instrumentation, which determines (and specifies) the experience of listening to the song (*The Poetry* 3). This argument of how musical accompaniment affects and defines the impact and quality of a given song is key to understand the position of those critics and experts that oppose lyrics and poetry. In general, there is a common agreement that modern poetry is an artistic form destined to be read and not particularly heard, whereas lyrics need these supplementary dimensions and contexts.

In my opinion, these two forms of cultural production are different yet not antipodal. Lyrics can be explored by a scrutiny that is sustained on the same standards that we may apply to the analysis of modern poetry. That is, we analyze the linguistic substance of a poem (e.g. its uncommon syntax or use of figurative language), and the same approach can be applied to lyrics; this is, a similar analysis can be carried out in order to examine the discursive elements in a song.

As I show with my application of the FCDA on the selected songs, lyrics are an effective platform to address social, political and cultural matters. These lyrics do contain stories. They are crafted instruments that have been designed to provoke an emotional impact on the audience, deliver a message and move people. In the case of these specific lyrics that epitomize the Riot Grrrl movement, songs by bands such as Bikini Kill opposed the resilient prevalence of the patriarchal ideology that had also shaped popular music. The women in the movement started to represent themselves in those songs as active agents, powerful figures, politically and socially involved rebels against the patriarchal system.

The lyrics that Hanna has written for these three bands (Bikini Kill, Julie Ruin and Le Tigre) have points in common: feminist demands and oppositional and/or supportive messages, mainly. However, I also find a noted evolution in the attitude and tone, what concurs with the progress of feminism itself. Yet, one thing is clear: Hanna's writing has remained strong and consistent all through those years.

As I said before, Hanna's work covers almost two decades and twelve albums, and I have explored here a big portion of that time. Because of the broad music career and the significant amount of available material, the first step in my research was to create a particular corpus of texts that compiled a relevant and representative sample of Hanna's songwriting, in this case, containing feminist themes. Thus, I proceeded to group together her musical output, including material from all her different projects and periods. All the songs were included in the corpus, but, as a consequence of this first filtering process, not all of them were finally analyzed, since I only examined those lyrics that had a relevant thematic significance for my study, which, as explained before, required that the songs contained feminist themes or references.

My second methodological step was to arrange a convenient classification in subject matter units. I understood that this organization would unify my approach and the resulting analysis of the selected songs, always in search of the occurrence of feminist ingredients in the content of the lyrics. Space and sorority (and/or sisterhood) were chosen for their relevance as a topic in feminist studies and especially for riot grrrls, as the women involved in this specific movement made a solid claim for safe places in which they could meet and create artistically. Patriarchy and power, and specifically the alienation derived from the unequal distribution of power, are interrelated matters that affected women's condition throughout the different waves. Regarding language, sexuality and gender-based violence, these units were added due to the fact that they were also distinct concerns for the third wave of feminism and for those women who participated in the Riot Grrrl movement, who did also start to focus on them as influential and restrictive instruments. Lastly, I want to underline that politics and feminist theories have always played a role in women's social and cultural fights and Riot Grrrl started to approach these concerns frankly and openly, offering new insights and strategies, using music as an original approach, and addressing the many extents and peculiarities of female identity and

struggle. The formulation of a solid and functional classification was key in order to advance to the next step in my research, which was a close-reading of the lyrics. I completed its linguistic analysis by paying attention to some points like focalization, diction or structure (see Table 1: Linguistic Analysis).

My analysis of the lyrics, from a technical or literary perspective, has discovered a set of linguistic and literary characteristics that, in a way, provide a mutual and synergic singularity to Hanna's songwriting. For instance, the focalization offered in most of the songs is that of what I called direct address, which means that the singer uses a first person *I*, seemingly striving for a straightforward and inspiring connection with the audience. Sometimes I understand that the *I* person corresponds to Hanna herself. Therefore, I assign the analysis of the subject to herself, avoiding the association of the speaking voice with a fictional subject and/or character. I do this because the cultural analysis derived from that assignment matches what she herself has exposed in interviews and other texts; or because her performance and articulation reinforces the link between the singer and the speaker in the lyrics. Nevertheless, in different songs, there are also instances in which I explore the subjects in assorted ways. In my examination, I sometimes read those subjects as manufacturing a narrative voice or speaker that addresses a fictional character or a collective subject. Most songs address a second person (singular or plural) that, in some cases, makes reference to an institution or a symbolic male audience. However, some other lyrics speak to a *you* (plural, usually) that implicitly and quite manifestly indicates or applies to a female audience conceived as a collective. Hanna uses this pronoun to create a sense of community among women, urging them to take action and to show support.

Likewise, the figurative language in these lyrics is specifically used to provide the audience with new insights. These literary resources transcend the linguistic interpretation when they are specifically harnessed, in combination with other strategies, to provoke a greater impression in the audience. The diction that Hanna employs is quite natural, straightforward, informal, and insurgent. In sum, it fits the expectations associated with punk. The use of curse words, expletives, exclamations, requests or indictments harmonize with the feminist essence of her combative songs, making those lyrics obtain an emphatic and subversive kick. However, Hanna does not only write insurrectionary and committed lyrics, she also uses her songwriting to expose her feelings, growth, inner thoughts and self-criticism in a frank and mature way. As a matter of fact, some autobiographical elements are appreciated all over Hanna's work, and she explicitly leaves proof of her activist position as an agent of change. Regarding the structure of the lyrics, her songs are usually anchored on a simple and flexible arrangement, offering coherence and signification to the offhand development of the discourse. The fabrication of lines, stanzas and rhyme schemes is arbitrary; the playful syntax and the implementation of word repetition work as a feasible and productive formal device. Indeed, the arrangement of words and the grammatical structure of the lyrics matches punk's aesthetics as the author does not follow any particular rule or scheme and, even though prosody does not seem to be a strategy consciously employed in the writing of the lyrics, the music and the words mold and match punk's principles sonically as well as discursively.

From both an ideological and a musical standpoint, there is a clear evolution in Hanna's work when encompassing her songwriting for the three bands in which she has played. The musical background in Bikini Kill and Julie Ruin is minimalistic and fast; the lyrics are crude and characterized by an authentic insurgent

attitude. The diction is harsh too and the way in which Hanna plays with her voice harmonizes with the revolutionary nature of the first phase of her career. In contrast, her music in Le Tigre could be described as electro-punk, departing a bit from the style and fashion of her previous projects, even though some traces and hints of this progression had been already anticipated in Julie Ruin, with a more experimental and lo-fi perception. There is also a development in the lyrics' content. Hanna's attitude and approach to politicized music is also partially modified in this late work. It seems as if the performer is consciously addressing those matters that she has, in some cases, also addressed previously, in a more elaborated way. This is also visible from a technical perspective, since the lyrics for Le Tigre are syntactically, grammatically and thematically more developed and complex. They envelop a thorough story with a broader complexity. Direct allusions and diegetic layers are used to tackle particular concerns. Nevertheless, there is still a strong denouncing attitude present in these lyrics.

In general, the tone of the lyrics is dominant and robust, yet nostalgia also has a space in some of the songs, showing a Hanna annoyed or tired of a fight that never ends. The lyrics are spirited as a powerful stream of consciousness through which Hanna verbalizes her personal vision on themes and subject matters that concurred with those that identify feminist thinking and interests, particularly those associated with the third wave. To begin with, Hanna informs on the ideological and spatial imbalances and she demands women's access to safe spaces (especially in music venues) in which they can enjoy and express themselves artistically. Secondly, she does not name or refer in a direct way to patriarchy, yet, she makes allusions to it through descriptions of concerns that are rooted in patriarchal practices, for example, the wage gap between men and women, or the beauty stereotypes that oppress women. Linked to patriarchal practices, in the lyrics we also find references to the unequal distribution of power and some other power-related issues like women's artistic ambition and agency. Here, Hanna straightforwardly recounts how women's contribution to art and music has been concealed and their agency as artists obstructed by different obstacles (mostly linked to their gender). Besides, in general, Hanna expresses her support to the broader possibilities of knowing, thinking and being at hand; and she reports women's feelings of alienation and "otherness" within western binarist thinking.

There are other pertinent concerns in Hanna's work that feminism also approaches. Throughout a regeneration of diction and lexicon, the singer-songwriter complains about the social constructedness of language. Hanna argues that language does not efficiently represent women or include them satisfactorily. In what regards sexuality, in her songs, Hanna presents diverse sexual choices that may stand outside the heteronormative theory and she advocates the right of women to enjoy their sexuality in an active way. This theme acquires a bigger prominence in her work for Le Tigre, where Hanna articulates the band's position on the matter in a determined way. Likewise, gender-based violence (abuse, harassment and assaults due to one's sex/gender) is firmly condemned in her lyrics, with a tone that is truly heartbreaking and unambiguous. Finally, politics and feminism are two topics of grand significance in Hanna's songs and, consequently, it is also an important feature in this analysis. As a matter of fact, these subject matters are found all throughout Hanna's music career. In her work for her first band Bikini Kill as well as in her solo project Julie Ruin or in her most recent project, Le Tigre, Hanna is consistent and persistent in her singing and writing against injustices (social,

racial or gender related) with a resolute demeanor that she does not hesitate to name. She directly points towards the people and the policies that she acknowledges as responsible for those injustices and inequalities. As a solution, in her songs, she suggests that feminism is a unique and certain answer. In her work, Hanna (re)presents a feminist ignition founded on a politicized notion of music. Her lyrics incorporate an open call for revolution and an invitation to get involved in artistic and/or activist undertakings.

My multifold classification on nine thematic items or, as I called it before, subject matter units, is elastic and it cannot be exclusively compartmentalized. With this, I mean that the correlation is manifest and those themes are developed fluidly in different songs, sometimes in combination, intermingled, associating, contrasting and complicating a vision that rejects simplicity and shallowness. That is why some of the songs that I have analyzed are, in fact, included in more than one category. The interconnection between the aforementioned topics is evident, from my point of view, and this is manifested in any social, political or cultural domain in which they would be exerted, addressed or deployed. Music is not an exception. From my research, I conclude that music is plunged in social life, whether it is in relation to its strong and conventional association with entertainment and culture or by its strong bond with subcultures and movements, sometimes, by being exploited as an expression of protest. In this last approximation, I perceive the natural foundation for my analysis of these lyrics, as I study Hanna's songs for Bikini Kill, Julie Ruin and Le Tigre as potential feminist discourses. From the conclusions that I had taken after my operation of a FCDA examination on the selected songs (and also from the contextual background in which those lyrics were written), I can firmly state that Hanna's work occupies an influential place within the Riot Grrrl movement and beyond, as the legacy of her music career and songwriting can be extended to the broader scope of punk, both as a music style and as a cultural and social movement; and, extensively, to the development of the third wave of feminism as well. Her contribution as a singer and performer in her bands, always with a certain feminist agenda, is a potent example of how music may serve political purposes. By being truthful to herself, she speaks with both a steady personal voice and a sound political accent about feminist issues that she strategically places in the center of the cultural focus, or, paraphrasing a popular motto during the Riot Grrrl movement, she is able to take those issues "to the front". Her work for these bands has become a symbolic representation of women's capacity, agency and power to occupy places and (public) positions in which, before, female presence had been limited (or even denied) in a discriminatory tactic grounded on sex/gender differentiation. Consequently, her songwriting strongly relates to the key matters and concerns that have defined the politics of gender, showing that lyrics may serve as a profitable stand from which to make political vindications.

Hanna's impact on subsequent generations of female artists is indisputable. Her work sets a much-needed precedent for many young girls that, like her, were lacking a role model that could assist them in their pursue of cultural and artistic accomplishment. Female artists find in those who achieved excellence and culmination before them a determination and confidence that they require in order to achieve recognition and validation, more so in a music style, punk, in which gender bias has also been experienced. Implanting this role on music facilitates that it attains an effective cultural proximity and persuasion. Thus, music would reach girls worldwide becoming a platform to bring closer popular culture to everyone.

Lyrics provide feminist awareness. They also share stories of perseverance, resistance, resilience and hope. Moreover, many contain moral lessons as they pursuit a particular closure and aim. In this specific case, this closure or aim is mainly an attempt to vindicate and consolidate women's struggle in challenging inequalities by advocating support and solidarity among girls from different social and cultural origins. All the reasons above reinforce my thesis that lyrics should be considered of chief academic interest in cultural and social examination. Hanna's work is one good example. Her songwriting stands scrutiny as a case in point of literary communication, but it is also interesting to examine her songs by connecting them with the particular historical and social context and the specific discourse that have molded that writing. Through an interdisciplinary approach to this songwriting career that encompasses the aforementioned connotations and complexities, and by developing a specific FCDA analysis, I have aimed at contributing to the growth and spreading of both Gender and Cultural Studies. In fact, I find it necessary to affirm again that gender and feminist research have progressively accomplished a more varied and intricate perception of the areas of enquiry in order to carry out a more significant revision of womanhood and gender politics. Music and musicology are examples of this advancement. The increase in both quantity and quality in what regards the recent research that explores women's role in music has become fundamental to raise awareness of the gender issues that had also affected those women that tried to get involved in music and pursue a music career. At the same time, and analysis that combines gender and music, with specific examples of music production by female artists that reveal the complexities and depth of this combination, can be as efficient and functional for the enhancement of academic studies on music, as it can richly contribute to the upgrading of Gender Studies.

Indeed, future investigations may focus on other aspects of the Riot Grrrl movement; or other researchers may want to study other songwriters, expanding academic interest to other literary backgrounds, theoretical frameworks or methodological approaches. For example, Riot Grrrl has been criticized for not including a more intersectional perspective, and concerns such as race or class surely affected the agency of many girls when the movement was getting off the ground. A possible future research on Riot Grrrl as a cultural movement may take notice of how those power systems converge and had an effect on girls. Moreover, as I said, those taking part in Riot Grrrl were encouraged to create artistic productions like fanzines and, even though there is some research that has already been done on the topic, the origin and motivation, the influences and impact of fanzines on different generations require an extensive analysis. Fanzines still offer a vast and appealing field of research for future investigators. Likewise, in this study I focus on Olympia, the place in which the Riot Grrrl movement originally emerged, but, as I have explained before, the influence of this movement reached overseas and it would be also very interesting to examine other major scenes that emerged in Europe and how the legacy has been absorbed by contemporary bands, for instance. Russian feminist formation Pussy Riot (formed in 2011) have admitted Bikini Kill's influence (Chernov) and Spanish group Las Odio also stated that their main goal was to start a riot grrrl band after seeing figures like Hanna or Tobi Vail (Garrigós). The Linda Lindas (a multiracial band formed in 2018) went recently viral on Twitter thanks to their riot grrrl song "Racist Sexist Boy." They have also played covers from Bikini Kill's songs (Spanos) and they even have a chance to open one recent show by Bikini Kill.

As for Hanna's lyrics, even if my work tried to be comprehensive and detailed, I confess that there are still other angles and approaches that can be applied to her songwriting. Her work includes some themes that I have decided to leave out in this study as they did not meet the required criteria for my feminist inspection. However, I was not blind nor deaf to the importance of other themes and motifs in her lyrics. Love, friendship, memories, personal development or the music business have been other recurrent and important topics in her songs, that I sacrifice to keep a solid balance, but that could draw the attention of other researchers in the future. Finally, and from a broader, more generic perspective, I find it necessary to say that the political edge that I have examined and esteemed in this analysis is not exclusive of punk music. I acknowledge the political, cultural and social impact of music songwriting in other genres. In fact, I consider that all music is political and thus any music genre may serve as a creative and effective platform to revise and discuss social, cultural, and/or political matters.

In conclusion, women have always been active participants in the creation, production and consumption of art. However, due to the gendered stereotyping of culture, and specifically of music, most remained cornered or yet disregarded. Women were tacitly conceived as passive agents and secondary partakers: muses but not creators. Female musicians were thus disallowed of any access to power and credit. Oppressed by the systems and institutions that formulated and promoted the same gender stereotypes that had affected women in other spheres and fields, female musicians did also face extraordinary difficulties to find their place in music. Of course, from a historical or historiographical perspective, the dominant narrative has also perpetuated a gender bias that limited, alienated, and erased women's contributions in music. Yet, many persisted, many faced old and new challenges, many broke ground for change, many were able to set a solid example that would facilitate a fresh start for future generations to come after them. Many riot grrrls among those persistent women dared to rethink and re-appropriate those narratives and discourses that are rooted in old patriarchal theories. Creating and approaching music from different perspectives and including new paradigms, this dissertation has displayed how there were and there are female musicians who created new models of understanding music from a different perspective, rendering how a generation of women firmly stood against injustices, oppression and bias in order to consolidate new opportunities for those female artists who were seeking a career in music and art. Hanna's songwriting has been, as I have tried to show in this dissertation, a complex but productive example to illustrate this broader perspective on the intersection between womanhood and music.

More needs to be done though. Women still need to be heard; their works require further scrutiny and revision; their contributions to different areas and fields of interest still claim attention and documentation that has been long neglected. Music is no exception. However, when implemented, research on music discovers a long and affluent tradition of female musicians, instrumentalists, songwriters, producers that bring forward new angles of analysis. Punk women, riot grrrls, "subversive" and innovative performers have emerged in this dissertation. Through music, they have questioned authority; they have broken taboos; they have resisted discrimination and/or opposed injustices. This is a positive and uplifting transformation that needs to be told.

Also, in academia. Hand them a mic, let women take the floor: they will surely rock and their “statements of vindications” will be heard.

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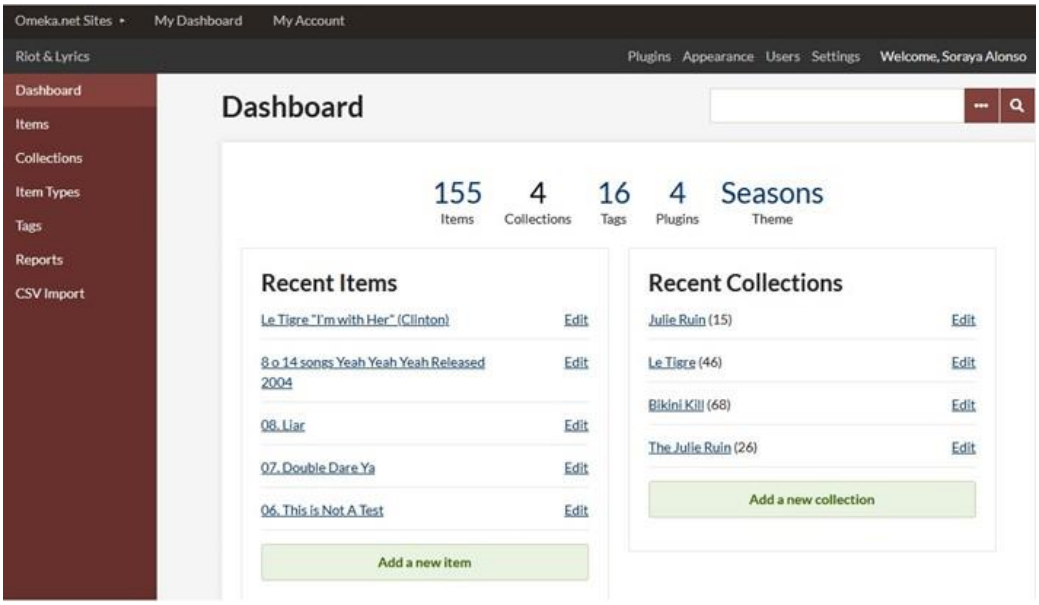
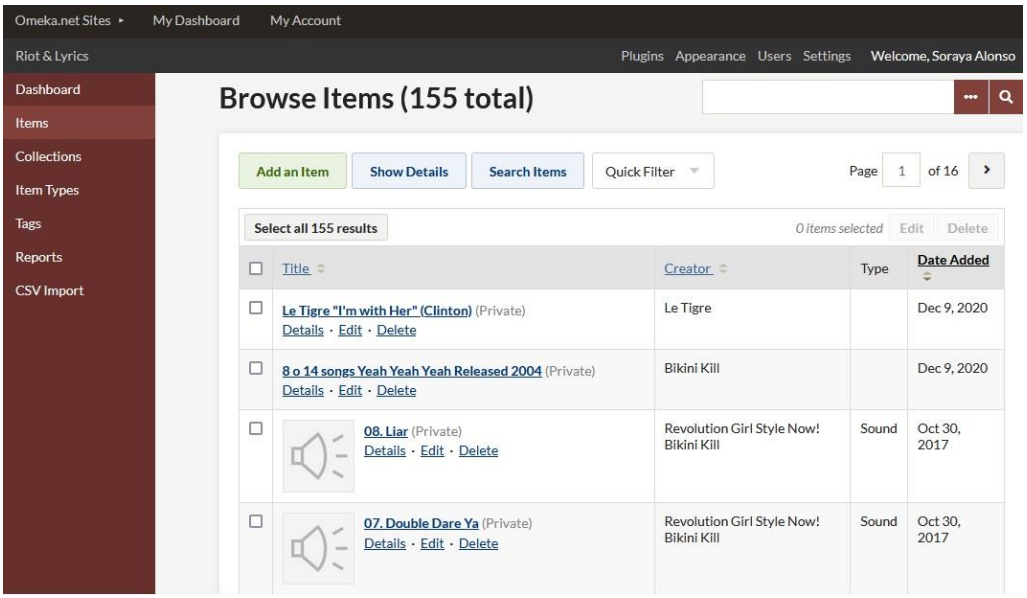
Appendix

In this appendix, I include extra information on my methodology. Both the specific practical process and the final outcome that I got from the application of this method of archiving and storage will be visible in this appendix. Omeka is a free, open-source content management system for online digital collections. It was first released in 2008 by the Roy Ronsenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. The use of this web application are varied and it has been studied as a valuable resource in the field of digital humanities. It could be generally described as a platform to share and handle digital items and collections. I opted for this digital platform because it offered me an accessible and easy-to-use dashboard and the flexibility of its components was key to adjust the platform's themes and plugins to my specific use of it as repository.



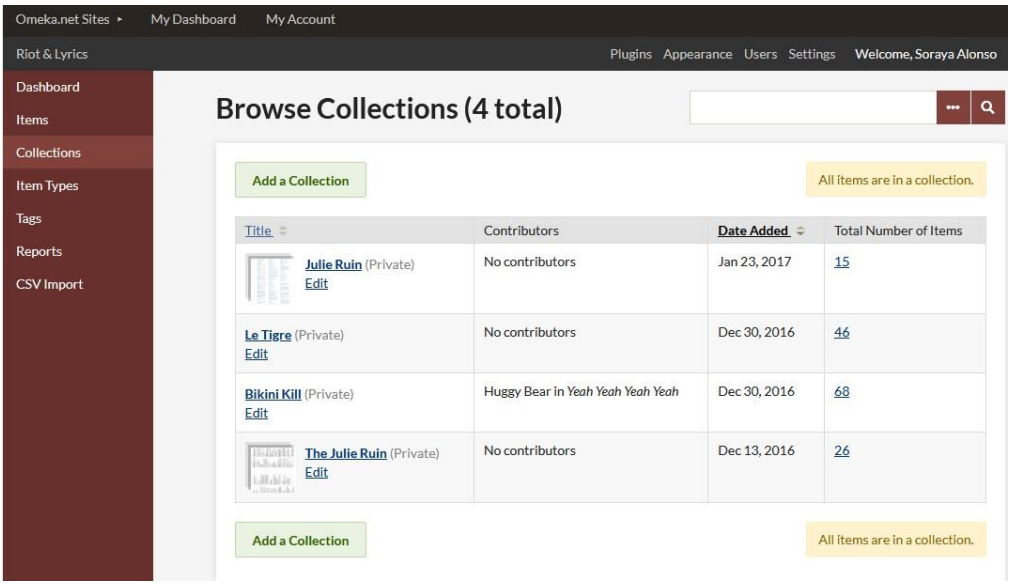
Appendix A. Omeka Dashboard.

In the snapshot, we see the Omeka's main dashboard. On the right column, we get instant access to the main services and we can navigate through the platform, visiting or checking individual items, full collections. We can also do a search by a given, particular tag that we choose. I compiled here a total number of 155 songs, all of them belonging to Kathleen Hanna's extensive discography. I did, in fact, include songs from the 3 bands that I wanted to explore (Bikini Kill, Julie Ruin, Le Tigre) and I also incorporated the songs belonging to her more recent project, The Julie Ruin, that I have not examined in my final work. In the following snapshot, you can see the total number of items included in my collection.



Appendix B. Items included.

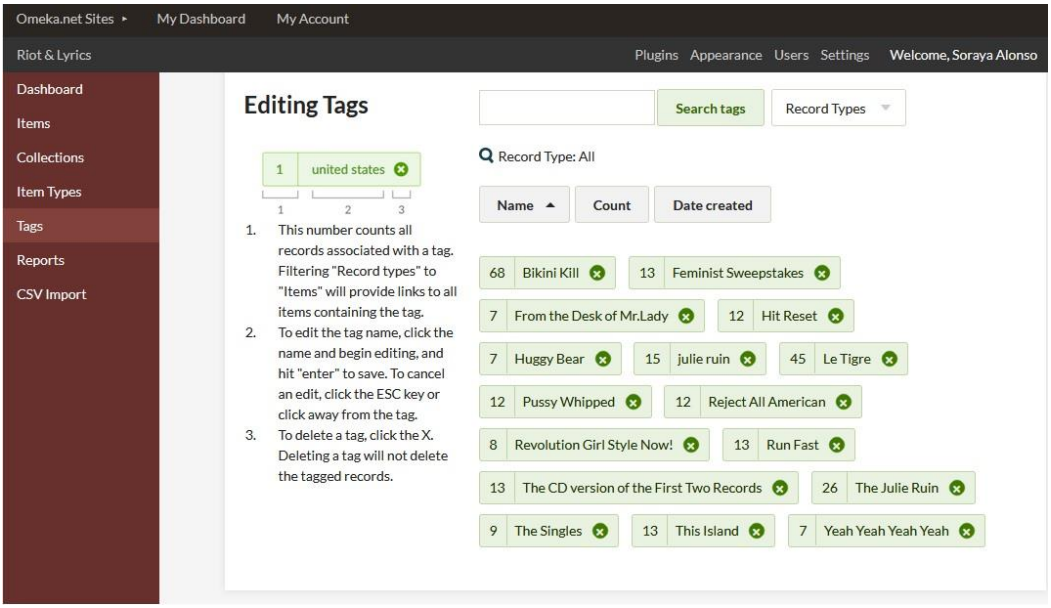
All these items can be browsed. The total number of items add up to a collection of 16 pages. The user has the possibility to click on “quick filter” in order to search and check a particular song or collection.



Appendix C. Collections.

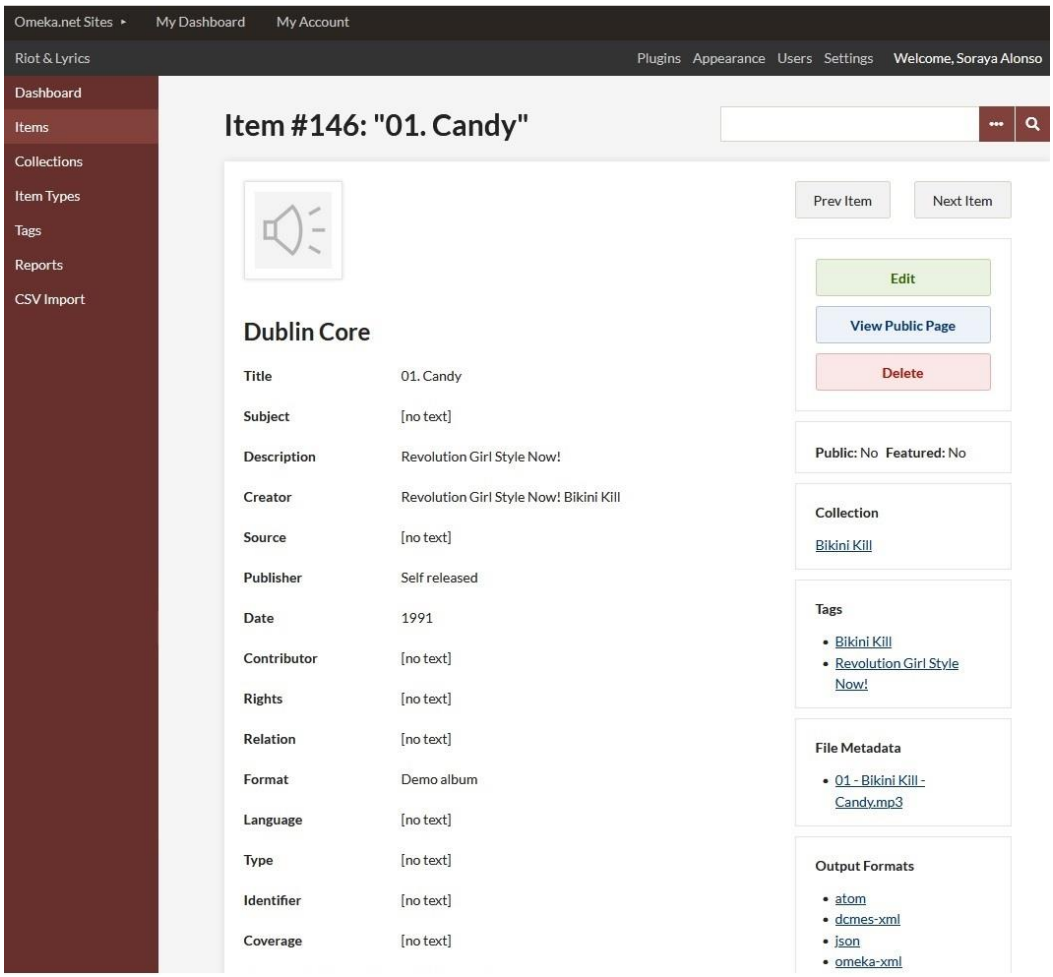
If the user clicks on the plugin “collections”, he or she will find that my database is composed by four different collections. The classification corresponds to the different bands in Kathleen Hanna’s career. There is a collection for Bikini Kill, including 68 different items; a second collection for Julie Ruin, which comprises 15 items; Le Tigre has its own collection, with 46 items; and, finally, as I said, I also included the songs in The Julie

Ruin, a total number of 26 items. Omeka is a flexible platform in this respect; the user can add as many collections as needed.



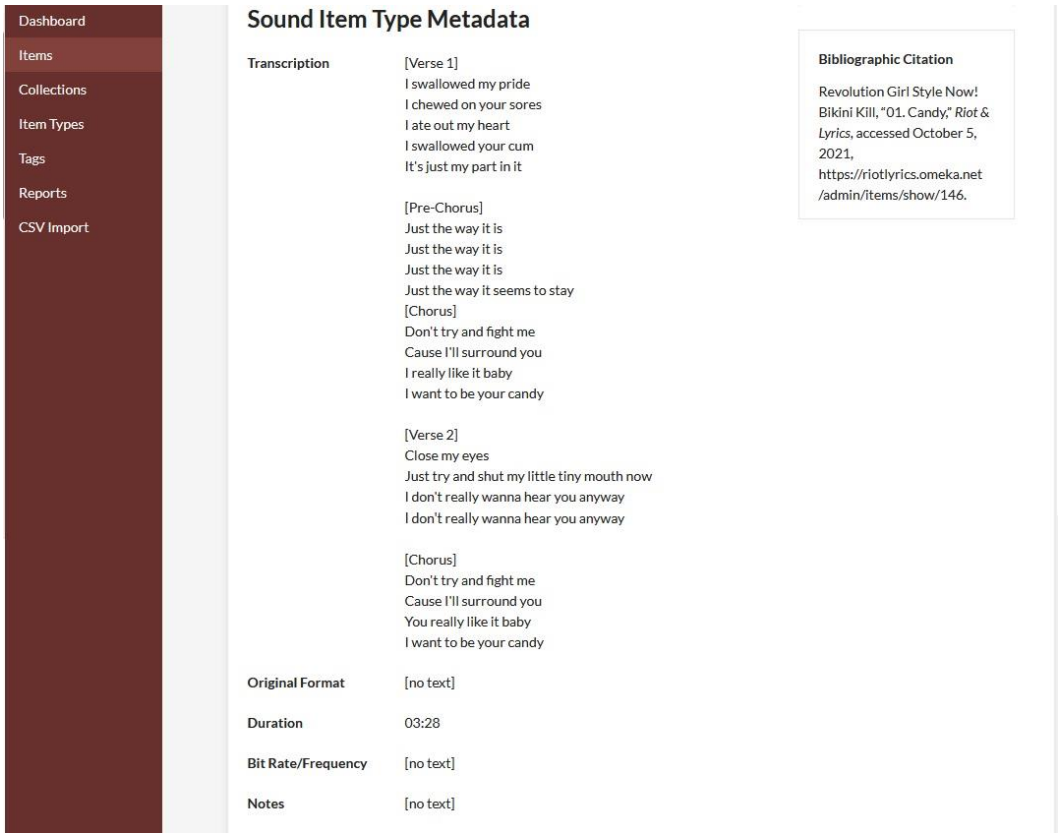
Appendix D. List of tags.

In this snapshot, we catch a glimpse of a very useful implement that the user can find incorporated in Omeka's interface: the "tags". The user can add a countless number of tags for each specific item. These tags can be edited at different stages and it helps to associate records and articulate different searches. Again, these tags can be very useful in order to carry out an efficient search for specific items. As can be seen in the example, multiple tags can be added to a single item.



Appendix E. An example of the information available for a song.

For each item, the user will be provided with a set of entries that can be incorporated to the descriptive storage of the items in his or her collection. Those are informative entries that help manage the added information: Title, description, creator, publisher, date, format. In my case, before I transferred that information to each one of the items, I had to do a work of research and compilation. Then, I consigned that information in each one of the items, completing the data for every song in my extensive collection. If the user clicks on the audio symbol, he or she can listen to the song. On the right, we can see the collection to which it belongs and the edited tags. Also, with the “edit” and “delete” options, the user can easily update the information or delete the whole item.



Appendix F. The transcription of the lyrics and the duration of the song.

The storage unit for each one of the songs, apart from the aforementioned information, does also include the lyric of the specific song, also including some other extra information, like the duration of the song. The use of this digital platform facilitated my recurrent access to the songs and the lyrics when I had to check information or update my analysis. Additionally, with the correct use of the tags, I started organizing the thematic or chronological disposition of the albums and the songs. In any case, this process was not intended as a final goal in itself. Previous research was done before the tool was employed and, of course, it was necessary to analyze the information that I stored here in depth and with accuracy in order to fully developed my textual analysis of the songs. However, the procedure became instrumental from a methodological point of view. It helped me articulate my analysis and provided a flexible and fluid way to manage the textual evidence and to observe the development of Kathleen Hanna's music production.