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**“Girls like metal, too!”: Female  
reader’s engagement with the  
masculinist culture of the tabloid  
metal magazine**

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# Approach

- textual and discursive representation of
- female musicians and women non-musicians,
- how they are *included* and *excluded* within the magazine.
- ways in which female magazine readers and female metal musicians
- attempt to *negotiate* these modes of inclusion and exclusion,
- how such acts of discursive negotiation
- construct female metal identities that are
- compatible with, contradict or contest
- the masculinist ethos of metal magazine culture.

# Theoretical context

- Weinstein: HM 'highly esteems masculinity'
- Blue-collar, by fact or sentimental attachment
- Defiance against authority/control over the male body
- Femininity as other/PC makeover of rebel masculinity/aggression
- Walser: misogyny, exscription, androgyny, etc
- Power/control/anxiety: identity work
- Masculinity project open to contestation/change?
- Essentialist attributes can be articulated to female performers and female fans?

# Method

- Tuchman's: 'symbolic annihilation'
- Condemnation, trivialization, absence
- Potter & Wetherell: discursive repertoires
- Lad's mag research: irony & cynicism
- Celebratory of WC culture, male camaraderie
- Sexism, exclusive male-friendships and homophobia, drinking, partying, addressing women as sexual objects, no reference to fatherhood, ethnically white
- Evades sexism via satire on New Man as PC
- Excessive irony, used to entertain but encourage complicit cynicism of male reader
- Context of industry-wide tabloidisation: metal tabloid
- Not a Lad's or lifestyle mag but similarities

**Fig. 1**

**Frequency of magazine covers featuring female musicians,  
Jan 2007 – Dec 2008**

<b>Magazine</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
<b><u>Kerrang!</u></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6<sup>0</sup>%</b>
<b>Metal Hammer</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15<sup>0</sup>%</b>
<b><u>Terrorizer</u></b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11.5<sup>0</sup>%</b>
<b>Revolver</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8<sup>0</sup>%</b>
<b>Decibel</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4<sup>0</sup>%</b>
<b>Metal Maniacs</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10<sup>0</sup>%</b>

## Examples:

- KERRANG – *Within Temptation*, Issue No. 1149, March 10 2007
- KERRANG – *Paramore*, Issue No. 1161, June 2 2007
- KERRANG – *Arch Enemy*, Issue No. 1178, September 29 2007
- KERRANG – *Nightwish*, Issue No. 1202, March 22 2008
- KERRANG – *Paramore*, Issue No. 1209, May 10 2008
- KERRANG – *Mindless Self Indulgence*, Issue No. 1216, June 20 2008
- 
- TERRORIZER – *Arch Enemy*, Issue 163, November 2007
- TERRORIZER - *Diamanda Galás*, Issue 168, March 2008
- 
- DECIBEL – *Lacuna Coil*, No. 19, May 2006
- 
- METAL MANIACS – *Electric Wizard*, Nov/Dec 2007
- 
- METAL HAMMER – *Nightwish*, March 2008

# Tuchman applied:

- Symbolic annihilation:
- Female metal musicians generally absent
- Personality 'front' women: often without band
- Do band pics make a difference?
- Trivialization: mundane sexy pics non-musicians
- Condemnation: controversy around well-known female metal musicians, Tarja Turunen, Angela Gossow...diva-bitch-goddess.....



# Modes of inclusion

- Female participation in metal magazine culture:
- As letter writers
- As fans
- As members of concert crowds (pics)
- Readership data
- Areas of reader contestation/conflict
- The Hottest Chick in Metal feature
- The All-female glamour calendar

		<u>Kerrang!</u>		<u>Metal Hammer</u>	<u>Terrorizer</u>
<i>Launched</i>		<b>1981</b>		<b>1986</b>	<b>1993</b>
<i>Circulation</i>		<b>43,253</b>		<b>46,004</b>	<b>15,000</b>
<i>Readership</i>		<b>417,000</b>		<b>101,361</b>	<b>45,000</b>
<i>Frequency:</i>		<u>weekly</u>		<b>13 issues</b>	<b>13 issues</b>
<i>Cover</i>		<b>£2.20</b>		<b>£3.99</b>	<b>£3.80</b>
<u>Readership Profile</u>					
<i>AB Profile</i>		<b>24%</b>		<b>No data</b>	<b>No data</b>
<i>ABC1</i>		<b>59%</b>		<b>No data</b>	<b>No data</b>
<i>Male</i>		<b>60%</b>		<b>64%</b>	<b>85%</b>
<i>Female</i>		<b>40%</b>		<b>36%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<i>Age</i>		<b>15-24</b>		<b>22 years</b>	<b>No data</b>
<i>Household income</i>		<b>19,000</b>		<b>27,778 pa</b>	<b>No data</b>
<i>Ownership</i>		<b>Bauer</b>		<b>Future Pub.</b>	<b>Dark Arts</b>

**Fig. 3**

**Proportion of female letter writers to Kerrang! magazine,  
May-July, 2007 and May-July, 2008**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b><u>Unc.*</u></b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>15%</b>

# Editorial Framing

The first time I met Christina Scabbia was at a cover shoot for the August 2004 Ozzfest issue of Revolver. It was an incredibly harrowing day that involved extracting a dozen artists from a Sharon-and-Ozzy hosted press conference in order to do the photo, and I was in what could charitably be described as a “manic” state. So crazed was I, in fact, that it seemed perfectly reasonable to ask Scabbia, to whom I had been introduced only moments before: “Would it be cool for us to do a shot where Zakk Wylde is holding you in his arms in a kind of a *Beauty and the Beast* thing?” “Why would you want to do that?” she asked, arching an eyebrow. “Because I think that our readers who are in prison would get a kick out of it,” I replied. Let’s just say that that did not go over well, and I did what any man who has just really pissed off a lady does: I ran away (Revolver, July 2007: 018).

# Editorial Framing

- Is it flattering, annoying or demeaning to be in an issue about the hottest babes in metal?
- How do you deal with a lunkhead yelling “Show us your tits”?
- What metal songs put you in the mood?
- Isn't it unfair that your bandmates can just roll out of bed and get on stage looking like crap and you can't?
- Who's the hottest dude in metal?
- Is there something you hear all the time that makes you want to put a screwdriver in your ear?

# Female Reader Repertoires

- a. 'All the chicks you mentioned rock fuckin' harder than any of those shitty emo-wannabes!!! It's awesome to see us women progressing and kicking more ass than half the guys out there. I'm all for more chicks in metal' – *Rosalie Black, via email, (Hellbent for Letters, Revolver, September 2007: 22).*
- b. 'I would definitely buy Revolver more if it featured more bands like these' (*Marie Caldera via e-mail, op cit p. 022).*
- c. But come on, now, there has to be another woman in metal besides Christina Scabbia. Yes, I agree, she IS pretty, but I'm a little tired of seeing her face on every other page. And what's up with you guys putting Amy Lee in with the women of *metal*. Does anyone truly and honestly consider that what she does is metal?! Also, this is the second issue on women in metal , and again Otep wasn't included. Otep can out growl Amy any day - not to mention probably eat her for breakfast! (*Brandie Langie, the hottest black chick in metal, via e-mail*)

## Female Reader Repertoires

- d. 'I hope Marta doesn't complain about not getting respect from the metal community. Posing the way she did on the cover – that's a big no-no' (*Erika Asmar, Long Island City, New York, p. 023*).
- d. 'your list of Hottest Chicks left out quite a few, such as Otep, My Ruin and Kittie. Did you ask them but they said no because the article seemed to be less about musical talent and more about the women's appearance' ( - *Patricia Burton, via email op cit, p. 023*).
- e. Since you guys had a "Hottest Chicks in Metal" issue (July), why not have a "Hottest Dudes in Metal" issue? Yeah, *Revolver* is a guy magazine. But girls like it, too! Here are some recommendations to get you started: Synyster Gates, Zacky Vengeance and M. Shadows of Avenged Sevenfold; Alex Varkatzas of Atreyu; and Jacoby Shaddix of Papa Roach. Think about it! – *India Hodges, via email (Hellbent for Letters, Revolver January 2008: 023)*.