Chapter 2 The Galaxy is gay

Angela Wilson's chapter about lesbian punk rock subculture seems to be a response to McRobbie's assertion that feminism is no longer an issue at the forefront of today's female youth, claiming that feminism itself is dying. In this chapter, Wilson argues that this music genre provides a new direction for feminist theory due to these band's performances and lyrics, which question gender and sexuality. In this chapter, Wilson asserts that lesbian punk rock combines second and third wave feminism but also includes "innovative ideas of queer politics" which results in a new form of activism that is generally ignored by mainstream media outlets. By questioning gender and sexuality, these band try to create a theory of feminism that includes queer politics and makes identity/community the focus. This chapter is effective in tracing the history of lesbian punk rock subculture by explaining that this movement started within the punk rock subculture in the late 1980s and early 1990s by bands such as Sister George and Tribe 8 and were produced on independent, queer-positive labels Mr. Lady and Chainsaw Records. Dykecore and riotgrrl developed alongside one another, and many individuals identified with both subcultures- each trying to make the punk subculture more inclusive. This new genre is thus a subculture of a subculture. Both Dykecore and riotgrrl disrupted the traditionally gendered stereotypes of rock music, but only dykecore called on the lesbian feminist folk music of the 1970s and their politically charged lyrics calling for a redefinition of the social structure.

Perhaps the most contentious discussion in the essay surrounds the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. The festival was established in 1976 by a radical feminist group and it allowed women to come together and discuss the politics of being female. However, a major controversy erupted after a change in the admission policy listed "womyn-born women only" in 1991. The festival's policy, which is trans-exclusionary, has created a divide within the dykecore movement. Dykecore bands make questioning gender and sexuality their mission, so the festival's strict view surrounding sex and gender goes against what they are trying to accomplish.

Despite the divide that has been created by the festival, Wilson makes it a point to emphasize that this genre has also allowed for the formation of community for young women. The author also makes it a point to argue that despite what some would call a dying community, the dykecore movement is still active today. The women that are a part of this subcultural community use zines, web pages, and other types of media to tell their stories and, in doing so, have created a new type of feminism and activism. Wilson states that the record label, Mr. Lady, which promoted lesbian-feminist thought, provided a "valuable network of resources for teens." Additionally, it has been noted that dykecore has the most visible and supportive fanbase of any all girl punk rock band.

Wilson makes it a point to separate dykecore from queercore (homocore), because dykecore is the only group of the three that is fundamentally feminist. Additionally, there is the distinction between "girl power" and "feminism." It is easier to get support behind the term "girl power" because it is simplified and less stigmatized; it is commodifiable. Feminism, on the other hand, is more complicated and comes with many more social/political implications. Another distinction is made between feminism and equality. It seems as though many feminist agendas are classist/racist and fight only for the equality of some; they appear to be quite selfish in motivation.

This article relates to visibility and community. It was shown in the essay, through the example of riotgrrl, that some visibility is better than no visibility. The issue seemed to be that riotgrrl's queer/homosexual elements were disregarded by media coverage, even though it remained in the dykecore movement. Riotgrrl became more commodifiable as it had a more mainstream message than dykecore. The idea of community is shown throughout the essay as dykecore brings together groups of lesbian identified individuals while posing questions to their fanbase - getting them involved and creating a larger community.

The paradox this essay brings into focus is how dykecore and riotgrrl are trying to make punk more accessible and inclusive in contrast to the idea that punk needs to be more inclusive for these audiences only. Dykecore is synonymous with homocore or femcore so most of the examples this essay mentions are trying to open the punk market to lesbians, not gays or transsexuals or queers as a whole. This is interesting because it shows that even within minorities there can be a self imposed hierarchy. It also brings into focus ideas of community in that it relates to identity and how these communities become visible. Under the umbrella community of queer, sub communities, like subcultures, exist and these communities are based on internal and external identities. Each sub-community fights for visibility independently as well as a whole. This essay highlights an example of one sub-community fighting for its own visibility while excluding parts of the queer community as a whole.