

Informal interview with subcultural outsider who has had some experience with it - 24/02/05

Basics

Age: 16

Sex: Female

Do you regularly buy OR read a music magazine (yes / no): Yes, NME

Questions

1. *Do you remember kids who were into heavy metal at your high school / college, how did you feel about them, i.e. outsiders, rebels etc?*

I think the kids who are into heavy metal at my school have a subculture much the same as the “normal” or “popular” kids. They are just as well respected in their own group as anyone else. I don’t particularly feel that they are any more outsiders than the kids who like Indie, punk, rock and rolls, emo and so on. Pop music is still the overruling style of music, that is preferred by the “popular” kids, and it is them who retain the power, anyone outside that is an outsider, but heavy metal is no more an outsider than any other style of music outside pop.

2. *Do you feel, looking at the heavy metal subculture from an outsider perspective, that it is rebellious / deviant?*

I think that stereotypically the heavy metal subculture does have a reputation for being rebellious. Personified by the characters of “the Criminal” in “the breakfast club”, it seems to be taken that heavy metal is the genre of music preferred by those more rebellious of people. Personally, I think a lot of subcultures have a reputation for rebellion. Punk in particular I would say would seem more rebellious than heavy metal; heavy metal just fuels images of anger and aggression, rather than rebellion. Only the pop culture has a clean reputation.

3. *Have you been to a heavy metal concert before, if so can you briefly recount the experience, what did you think of the behaviour of the crowd etc...*

I have been to a Heavy Metal concert before, with a local Durham band, The Heresy headlining. I found the crowd and the attitude to be a breath of fresh air from the usual crowd I would be in contact with at the indie gigs, the ones leaning against the bar in their drainpipes and winkle pickers, sipping expensive Japanese bottled lager and

swaying pretentiously, whilst trying to to muss up their perfect “bed hair”. In comparison, the metal crowd was like a massive anger orgy. The aggressive tone of the music meant that the crowd could really release their emotion without having to know perfect dance steps. It was a real free-for-all, an exhilarating experience.

4. *Do you believe that substance abuse, such as alcohol and soft drugs, are rife within the heavy metal / alternative music subculture?*

Yes. Although there are alcohol and soft drugs in every subculture, heavy metal so less to conceal the fact that this occurs, perhaps why they are better known for it. I would say that the heavy metal subculture is more known for harder substances and more alcohol abuse than say, the ska subculture, where they are known to be frequent drug users, but of softer drugs, mainly cannabis.

5. *Do you think Heavy Metal as a subculture and subcultures associated with it, such as punk rock, are more rebellious than other music orientated subcultures? For instance, dance music.*

Yes, I do think they are more rebellious. But I think this is only skin deep, as I have said, I think the heavy metal and the aforementioned punk rock subcultures do less to try and mask over this rebellion, and any that does occur is used to create the image that the subcultures have. Dance music does not have the image of being particularly rebellious, but when the figures of people using ecstasy in clubs and those drinking Alcopops come through, they are most likely just as rebellious as punk rock or heavy metal.