

# The creation of heavy metal and its effect on society

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“ Heavy Metal music's influence on society is really profound. Most people don't realize this, but Heavy Metal has spawned an entire subculture, with millions worldwide who can call themselves Heavy Metal fans. It is more than just aggressive music; it is an obsession and a way of life for a staggering amount of people” (Dunn 2008). Anthropologist, Sam Dunn documented how Heavy Metal has changed lives and societies across the globe. Heavy Metal music is a way of art, and how humans show what they see in society and translate it through a very artistic and creative way, which is the music itself”(Dunn 2008). “ Human nature would argue for this scenario. Humans are influenced by conditions in their environment and react, whether physically, emotionally, or in this case, creatively” says sociologist of DePaul University (Deena Weinstein). This does not rule out the fact that artistic output created by humans can go back and in turn be an influence on society.

By looking at some examples both historic and current, you can observe this process and how it has affected our world. (Weinstein 2005) Metal Music affects the world and Teen society in many diverse ways, whether it be by fashion, politics, religion, lyrical aspirations, and simply bringing people together. John Lennon was one of those people to bring peace by music, he went on a hunger strike for a week to promote peace all around the world with music, and he was not just recognized for doing this but many other inspirational acts with music.

Through music, artists, bands and so on, speak of things going on in the society around you. Origin of Heavy Metal In the gritty streets of

Birmingham, UK 1970, where Black Sabbath, took music to a more darker  
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and sinister place, there was a man named Tony Iommi, who together with the well known Ozzy Osbourne, formed a band and started the era of Heavy Metal. The first album they produced was self titled – Black Sabbath.

Research shows that the Tri-Tone (Blue scale) is the devil's note, which was used in the also self titled track “ Black Sabbath”, claimed by Cannibal Corpse guitarist Alex Webster in “ Metal, A Headbangers Journey (2008) “ This note, in the Middle Ages, was forbidden because of its thought up relationship with the devil, towns folk believed that this “ Tri-Tone” summoned the devil, thus explaining why it was forbidden”(Ezrin 2008). In the middle Ages, sorcerers used this Tri-Tone to summon the beast and cause havoc amongst the villagers who were ignorant and scared of heavy sounds.

As Black Sabbath's music spread through out the U. K, people from all over the world started to react to this new heavier style of music and became influenced, such as Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Rainbow, and many more bands all over the world became interested and incorporated Heavy Metal to their personas and musical ways. Anthropologist Sam Dunn: Metal, A Headbangers Journey (2008) and also past Heavy Metal band member says that “ There's an on going battle in heavy metal to be more heavier and evil than the band that came before you, this has kept me into metal all these years”

Competition plays a great part in Heavy Metal, which is also a great factor that spread Heavy Metal world wide and turned it into many now known Heavy Metal sub genres per say. As Heavy Metal started to grow in the 70's,

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band after band tried to sound heavier than the last band which is how these “ sub genres” of metal, like I stated earlier, came to be. The teens in that era, noticed this, “ competition” and many teens started and incorporated, Heavy Metal to their own bands and were so influenced by this music, that it made teens in this society more hardworking and also up for a challenge.

### Musical Roots

The classical roots of heavy metal were fairly obvious (Ezrin 2008), most of the really good practitioners were fans of dark powerful music, and for example Beethoven was one of them. Beethoven had created great classical music that incorporated heavy bass music and powerful orchestral sound waves, which are great assets to Heavy Metal that traced Classical music to Heavy Metal roots. Heavy Metal has another musical ancestor which is The Blues. (Morton, Blythe, from Lamb of God 2001), stated that the guitar is an African instrument, and the Guitar was used in slave music, and influenced the Blues and Heavy Metal now in today’s music.

In the movie: Metal, A Headbangers Journey, The director and producer/ anthropologist Sam Dunn, interviews many Heavy Metal Pioneers such as Toni Iommi, Ozzy Osborne, Ronnie James Dio, Rob Zombie, and they all claim to say that The Blues and Jazz classical type music were influential in their music. Environment and the Effect Towards Teen Society “ It comes down to growing up in a rundown place, full of poverty, hopelessness, scumbags and assholes, that make your life hell and get you bottled up inside, then that’s when the music comes in and sets you free. ” states (Taylor, of Slipknot 2005).

Music takes a maximum effect in everyone's lives, Heavy Metal for many, claims that this musical genre sets them free and sets them in a straight forward positive mind set due to the message that some Heavy Metal artists send. James "Munky" Shaffer bassist for the band "Korn" says in an interview, that as a teenager, the environment he grew up in was based on drug abuse, violence, problems at home and death. "I found salvation through Heavy Metal, it influenced me to stay positive, grab an instrument and just jam out and let all the negativity out and let the positive and creative stuff flow in you know?"

Ha-ha, look at me now, I am in my mid 20's and part of a great well known band selling out everywhere and loving it, all thanks to Metal!

"(Shaffer 2008). Rob Zombie, (White Zombie, Movie Director), - Revolver magazine, June 2009 said that "Metal is a life style, it's your life style, people listen to what they listen too but in the end, what you listen too defines who you are." Heavy Metal is like mine and any other metal heads own world. The music tells you to stick to your guns and stay strong and positive, (Dickinson 2008).

Bruce Dickinson of Iron Maiden was one of the worlds most influential Heavy Metal band of the late 70's- 80's that helped pioneer this musical genre. Heavy Metal Archive (2001-20011) stated that "It gives them an alternate universe, it gives them a life of imagination through which they can view music and be influenced by many things the world and their society has to offer them." Metal does impact children nowadays in this young society, and

makes them aware of what's going on in the world such as, wars, politics, corruption and genocide and inequality.

The Message through Different Methods & Styles Politically Impacting the Media/Society Dee Snider of the Heavy Metal band Twisted Sister- was attacked by many parental groups and the (P. M. R. C) also known as the Parents Music Resource Center (1984) about censorship in Heavy Metal bands (Music in general). Sam Dunn, stated in his Documentary; Metal: A Headbangers Journey, that in 1984, Heavy Metal met its first organized attack and many bands were put in " The Filthy Fifteen".

Twisted Sister were not the only band censored and put on " The Filthy Fifteen" but Many Heavy Metal bands such as W. A. S. P, Judas Preist, Motley Crue, Def Leppard, AC/DC, Venom, and Heavy Metal Pioneers Black Sabbath were amongst those " Filthy Fifteen" These bands were put in " The Filthy Fifteen" by the " Parents Music Resource Center (1984)" because their music was deemed offensive and violent. The P. M. R. C rated songs according to the following: 1. X= Profane or sexually explicit, 2. O= Occult, 3. D/A= Drugs or Alcohol, 4. V= Violence and 5. Sac= Sacrilegious. Although the lyrics in Twisted Sister's song " Were Not Gonna Take It" talked about standing up for your rights and never giving up, the video was censored as violent which led them into " The Filthy Fifteen" by the P. M. R. C. It must have been upsetting to the band members that their music is being prohibited to teens that in society look for help and sanctuary in music.

Music that is inspirational should not be banned to teens because it can affect their social mental lives. Due to the fact that the P. M. R. C censored

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Twisted Sister's enthusiastic, stand up for your self, keep going on music, children were unable to buy their music and listen to what they wanted to hear. Music is a way of life, as I always say and everyone needs it in their daily personal lives to get by, whether they are down, lonely, happy, and or just out of mind and ready to loose it. You can not help to imagine how many youths rebelled against parents because of this cause and made them unable to listen to music that appealed their ears, and helped them get by in life's daily struggles and challenges.

Religion and Satanism Many Metal artists used religious symbolism in their music. For example when up and rising band Venom (1983) came out on stage with satanic pentagrams, gory live performances, and brutal satanic lyrics, many people were scared. In that era, Satanism was well known but only in secluded parts of Norway. As venom and many other bands such as Slayer(1983-present) went on stage and vulgarly scared the non-metal community, people and many other religious groups as well, started to ban there shows, and music all over the world.

The media started to engage in a non stop attack of releasing ideas that these bands were satanic, insane, and inappropriate content for teens, and that they should be socially declined to the public. (Dunn2008) This however did not stop the bands from releasing their music, being less graphic, and selling out shows. Nor did it stop teens from tuning in to their music and impacting their religious views and life's. Slayer, created masterpiece after masterpiece of brutal Satanic, Anti-Christian, war related, lyrics and album covers that there were literally protests at their shows by religious groups

because teens were so excited and appealed at this new style of musical art, and parents thought their children were being manipulated and brainwashed to do bad and in the end hurt and destroy their life's and their social backgrounds. They also manifested an idea that Slayer (1983) were Satanists, when in fact they were just trying to shock the audience and gain more fans. Having the mindset of Slayer being Satanists, they also thought up the idea that Metal Music was the doing of the devil. And that those teens were heading towards a path of destruction and anti-religious acts in their society, like burning churches down.

Slayer, to defend themselves stated, " We consider what we do art, and art can be a reflection of society, and we are simply just picking up the dark reflections, and manifesting them to the world" (Araya2008) Norwegian Black Metal bands certainly do live up to Satanism, (Dunn2008). Norway is an isolated country in northern Europe in which 87% of Norway's population belongs to The Lutheran State Church, and yet strangely their most cultural export is Satanic Black Metal (Rasmussen 2008).

Because many Satanists in Norway have a grudge against the Christian religion, due to conflicts and clashes between Vikings thousands of years ago (Rasmussen2008), there was a series of arsons. A man by the name of Varg Vekernes, and along side of him to help was a man named Jorn Tunsberg, set out a quite discrete plan to burn down some of the oldest churches in Oslo, Norway. They were convicted of arson on multiple counts and both were sentenced to prison.



Because of these satanic acts in Norway due to Black Metal and what it symbolized for these men, people of all over the world started to react in an eruptive way towards the Metal community. The parents now have reason to believe that children's musical interests could indeed affect the society in which their kids lived in and cause harmful behavior for generations to come. Death and Violence Death has played a major role in Metal Music. Since Metal Music spawned from dark imagery and horrific violence and brutal lyrics, a sub genre emerged known as Death Metal.

Death Metal was built up on Thrash Metal and Black Metal, which consisted of machine gun guitars and fast passed drumming, with guttural vocals, also with a little twist of bloody gore and violence, Death Metal was created. Cannibal Corpse, along with Death, were the first bands among many Death Metal bands to use gory imagery. Cannibal Corpse was known for producing horrific album art. Cannibal corpse(1985) 3 first albums are banned in Germany, New Zealand, and Korea due to very gory and graphic album art also horrific lyrics related to murder. (Slagel2008).

Rose Dyson(2008) states that there is evidence to state that the average person these days sees more violence through popularculturethat would occur in real life, and this also has been marketed in many essences, particularly in teenage society and disrupts the teenage mind into murder, suicide, corruption and drug abuse as a conflict resolution. Manny bands have been set for trial over the past 20 years, such as Judas Preist, Slayer, Slipknot, Cannibal Corpse and Marilyn Manson, due to suicides and murders

all because Metal Music has been stereotyped as devil music and everything else you have read thus far in this research paper.

A main reason, as to why Metal Music and these bands have been blamed as the cause to many teen deaths, is because of their lyrics. Most Metal bands have an image they portray whether it is evil, Blasphemy related, or just simply vulgar. It is crazy to argue that there is a relationship between the imagery in Metal and some teen suicides and acts of violence.

(Klosterman2008). The most powerful predictor of whether someone will commit suicide is the feeling of helplessness (Kahn2008).

No one listens to Heavy Metal in order to feel helpless, they listen to Heavy Metal in order to feel empowered and connected with other people, and that may be empowered through a song that's about suicide that makes you realize your not alone. And your not helpless and other people are going through the same thing; you don't need to kill yourself! Human society should realize this because blaming such horrific incidents other people cause to themselves should not be blamed on people who are merely making art in their own personal ways, such as these bands.

As the media and such sources uproar and release these serious issues about teen suicide and their causes, all over the world, parents should focus on Teen Society and how teens learning and hearing these issues of teen suicide may affect them personally. Teen youth does get affected by seeing this media provided information because it somewhat brainwashes them into thinking that music of such sorts leads them into suicide and disruptive

mayhem. When they grow older they judge other teenagers amongst their societies and start labeling them.