

Riot grrl college essay



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Riot Grrrl- A Concrete Manifestation of the Third Wave of Feminism Riot Grrrl is an underground feminist punk movement that started in the early 1990's and is often associated with third wave feminism. They address issues such as rape, sexuality and female empowerment. " You profit from the rape lie baby Eat meat Hate Blacks Beat your wife It's all the same thing Deny, you live your life in denial" Lyrics by Bikini Kill To give a complete description of Riot Grrrl is impossible. There's some debate over the status: Some claim it was mostly about punk music whilst others say it's a sub cultural youth movement.

I believe it is probably both of these. I want to discuss Riot Grrrl as a concrete manifestation of the third wave of feminism. I'm not declaring that Riot Grrrl thoroughly represents the 3rd wave, but would argue that it was one of the many expressions of 3rd wave feministic ideals and issues. Riot Grrrl made a difference at an individual level rather than a political improvement.

It didn't meet the needs of many women because it was mostly a white middle-class youth oriented movement. As I browsed over forums and blogs I understood that many girls and young women talk about how Riot Grrrl helped them to speak up and overcome, and above all it welcomes a sense of community with young girls who feel alienated from mainstream culture. The movement consisted of a network of young women- early teens to 20's- wanting to start a girl riot against a society they felt offered no validation of women's experiences. They did this both within the underground punk scene and society in general. It's characterised by certain punk philosophies,

mainly DIY, in that girls engaged in cultural production, creating their own music. This reflects aspects of 3rd wave feminism.

Body image concerns and the redefinition of the word 'feminist' along with 'girl'. Third wavers reclaimed the word 'feminist' and weaken the stereotype of the unattractive man-hating feminist. "The whole point is that we were able to re-write feminism for the 21st century. For teenagers there wasn't any kind of real access to feminism.

"Corin Tucker of 'Sleater Kinney' The third wave goal was to do this and help young women understand that feminism is not about hating men or abandoning females practices. An Analysis of band interviews and zine content shows Riot Grrrl also embraced a contradictory feminism. It overturned negative stereotypes associated with feminists and helped create a new girl culture. One zine I found, 'Ode on a Feminist', discusses how women must not be limited by rules regarding who qualifies as a feminist. Contradiction enters into the picture when I am told by my feminist sisters that my choices must be constrained, that I must change to alter to someone else's design, in order for me to be 'free'" Avia Midows Kathleen Hanna from Bikini Kill shows that Riot Grrrl adopted the 3rd waves enthusiasm for girl culture: "I get a great deal of pleasure out of dressing myself, I'm not giving that up.

If I want to wear make up like a mask one day, I'll do it" However the movement took the acceptance of feminist a step further, transforming the word 'girl' itself to signify a more aggressive and powerful force. They turned the traists associated with G. I. R. L.

, girl, upside down through song lyrics and performances. Riot Grrrl overturned the conventional meanings associated with 'girl' through the expression of anger in music and zines. The fierceness of their lyrics demonstrate that they're not weak but opinionated and outspoken. 'Words and Guitar' a title of a Sleater Kinney song- a band whose roots are firmly planted in Riot Grrrl. It summarizes the spirit of Riot Grrrl perfectly- words communicated through music.

Music is one of the most influential and powerful means of communication, combined with the DIY philosophy of punk, it helped express the ideas of Riot Grrrl's brand of feminism. It has a huge impact especially to young people who are trying to find their identity. Although they deny credit for the movement, one band in particular is linked to its formation. The rise of Riot Grrrl music begun when feminist activist Kathleen Hanna read a feminist fanzine called jigsaw written by Toby Vail, then drummer for a band 'Go Team'.

They collaborated and named their newly formed band 'Bikini Kill'. Hanna, co-founder of Riot Grrrl press, has become one of the primary sources of Riot Grrrl. She emphasizes feminism in her writing and her music: "Don't need you to say we're cute Don't need your protection Does it scare you boy that we don't need you? Us girls, we don't need you." Bikini Kill 'Don't need you' Lyrics By the late 1990's Riot Grrrl had diminished, the message had diluted.

Riot Grrrl was hijacked by businesses that disregarding the politics and turned the movement into a fashion fad. Musicians formally associated with Riot Grrrl responded to this and paved the way for all female-bands. Hanna

formed a new band- Le Tigre- their goal: “[To make] great music that radical people can recognize their values in” Le Tigre I think, although their style is different to the raw punk of Riot Grrrl, they succeed in expressing profound feminist ideals. Sleater Kinney transformed into an indie favorite while still delivering their strong feminist message.

Now we have a new contribution of the movement, Ladyfests. Weekend long-festivals held in cities across the US and UK, exclusively for women performers and artists. I myself am in an all girl band, and we’ve played lady fests. Ladyfest attests to the lasting influence of Riot Grrrl. The spirit of Riot Grrrl is very much alive today and to sum up, it cannot be said that Riot Grrrl had a large impact of 3rd wave but was important for two reasons- The study of Riot Grrrl practices and ideas helps people to understand the complex nature of 3rd wave. Secondly, despite lack of interest, many 3rd wavers adopt strategies and embody the same principles and Riot Grrrl in writings.

Therefore the movement indirectly impacted the 3rd waves mode of thinking. This is the legacy of Riot Grrrl.