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AUTHENTICITY AND COMMUNITY IN THE POSTMODERN SPECTACLE
LOLLAPALOOZA AS ALTERNATIVE REPRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper broadly examines notions of authenticity and community as they intersect in the music industry, particularly through the concept of the music festival. In seeking to understand these concepts' relation to society, the paper briefly overviews some of the tenets of the theory of postmodernism that underlie notions of authenticity and community. These ideas often come in conflict with the dominant, spectacular representations in society. Next, in trying to apply these concepts as represented in the idea of the music festival, it maps the early framework of the original Lollapalooza festivals as notable breaks in the spectacle, defining authenticity and community in an era otherwise indifferent to those concepts. With its antecedent clearly mapped, the paper then examines the role of the reincarnated Lollapalooza festivals and its possibilities to expand on the original's framework. Arguing that the new Lollapalooza reveals the ways in which the alternative can be collapsed into the larger spectacle, the paper finally examines the corporate censorship of 2007 headliner Pearl Jam, and how this act stands as antithetical to the original festivals' intentions.

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Introduction

Questions of authenticity surround the popular music world. In addressing concerns related to authentic expression, I'll first highlight some broader posits of the postmodern theory as it relates to authenticity in popular music. While postmodern theorists have often speculated that societal detachment from the images they encounter in the everyday has led to subsequent detachment from the concepts of authenticity and community, there also exist substantial breaking points from the more detached, mediated forms that dominate consumption patterns, what Guy Debord terms the society of the spectacle. In searching for authenticity, it becomes most notable as a rupture in the spectacular society, as represented here through the framework of the Lollapalooza music festival.

By reestablishing the preeminence of authenticity and community in the image-driven spectacle otherwise found in reality, Lollapalooza was presenting a unique source for investment. The early festivals remain indelibly linked to the music of the Pacific Northwest, Seattle's grunge, which, again, came to represent authenticity in the increasingly spectacular media of its day. Herein, I'll present the case for Lollapalooza as an authentic representation of community in a similar pattern as the festival aesthetic of the 1960s through which we've come to understand Woodstock, which has become definitional when discussing countercultural community and authenticity.

Next, I'll examine the changes that subsequently took place since the rise of grunge in the early 1990s; a co-optation of the image of grunge and a further slide into the spectacular. Lollapalooza reemerged within this framework, itself a uniquely different product, one that undercut the concepts of authenticity and community inherent in the first festivals. Lollapalooza's own slide into the realm of the spectacular is exemplified by the introduction of

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corporate interests in the festival, and the censorship of Pearl Jam's political speech by one of those corporations, AT&T, at the 2007 festival.

All of this raises questions as too true representations of the authentic in society, and how the imagined realities of our lives can come to be understood in the context of the images we consume. While we can certainly recognize breaks in the spectacle, it becomes difficult to sustain efforts at authentic representation, and even more difficult for the larger public to understand what these breaks mean.

Chapter I

        We currently live in a society that embraces commodity over substance. Perhaps

nowhere is this more evident than in our music industry, where artistic integrity and consumer

culture live in very close quarters. What's more, the inherent tensions that should play

themselves out when cultural artifacts are made into a commodified form often don't, as public

perceptions are increasingly shaped by mediated realities supporting the commodity form.

Unfortunately, this means that industry practices often win the day, and, often, only those artists

who embrace an image-driven mode of reality are given the opportunity to reach a wider

audience. In contrast, notions of authenticity are often rife within alternative music scenes,

wherein the artists use their talent and given platform to undermine status quo thinking by

presenting something outside of typical entertainment spectacles. And while these artists are

routinely forced to play only to those niche audiences privy to their work, they sometimes meet

with great mainstream success, and are given a unique opportunity to interject alternative views

into spectacular visions of society. With this in mind, it serves us well to address questions

related to the notions of authenticity and community as they intersect music and the music

festival, and how these are related to articulations of political possibilities.

        To further explore these questions, it is a relevant step to consider our meaning-making

system, which points toward the theory of postmodernism. With regards to the particular focus

of this study, I will look to address three main posits of the postmodern theory: polysemy of

meaning, the waning of affect, and the ascendance of image and the society of the spectacle.

These three interrelated concepts go a long way to better understanding the postmodern

condition, "a world in which all traditional categories are being blurred and all institutions

questioned..." (Johansson, 1992, p. 10). Because relevant meanings themselves are in constant

flux, traditional notions of culture and commodity are easily blended without questioning the underlying issues that have conventionally led to their separation.

The polysemic nature of meaning refers to the "slipperiness" of concepts. That is, even those objects and concepts that seem to have the most agreed upon definitions are themselves subject to debate. Dick Hebdige's seminal work *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* is extremely influential in understanding polysemy. Hebdige put a particular focus on the punk music subculture of late 1970s England (see Chapter II). One of the most important arguments put forth in his book deals with the particular way the punk subculture was able to take objects without a dominant societal value and give them meaning simply by the way the objects were used as pieces of fashion. For instance, safety pins, a staple of punk fashion, have little intrinsic value save their functionality as safety pins. But when worn on or through the body as a fashion statement in the punk subculture, these innocuous objects take on an entirely new oppositional meaning against high class notions of beauty. This illuminates the way that even common meanings can be conditionalities. When objects that in themselves lack a dominant meaning can take on an oppositional tone, whole systems of meaning-making are called into question, especially in relation to how we make sense of our everyday realities.

In the postmodern condition, then, questions of what is real in society become harder and harder to answer. This points to the waning of affect. Essentially, with entire systems of meaning falling into question, our abilities to invest in our own realities come into question as well. Without an ability to firmly plant our ideological centers, we are left without an ability to create emotional responses. As Grossberg (1992) explains, "Postmodernity, then, points to a crisis in our ability to locate any meaning as a possible and appropriate source for an empassioned commitment." (p. 222). Further,

The postmodern condition manifests the increasingly distant and precarious

relations between affect on the one hand and ideology and desire on the other. It

reflects the historical appearance of an expanding series of ruptures or gaps

between these planes, between the available meanings, values and objects of

desire which socially organize our existence and identity, and the possibilities for

affectively investing in them. This goes beyond the increasing difficulty, and

even the impossibility at certain moments, of making sense of our affective

relations or of putting any faith in our ideological constructions. (ibid., p. 221)

Creating affective emotional responses becomes an increasingly difficult task. This idea

undermines notions of authenticity and community that are essential to oppositional forms of

expression. Without an ability to make deeper investments beyond the images projected to us,

we are increasingly less likely to search out the real, or authentic, beyond the image or to join in

communal relations that allow for deeper meaning-making. While Grossberg seems to be

positing a rather pessimistic view regarding the existence of true sources of authenticity, he is

not, though, completely disregarding the possibility of that source's existence. He merely seems

to be making suggestions based on the mediated image culture, which is, by and large, removed

from notions of authenticity, stressing the escapism and consumerism that are presupposed in

postmodern readings our culture.

Further, when we lack the ability to affectively invest in our lived realities, the

possibilities for our mediated realities to come to represent our real lives become all the more

heightened. That is, mediated images can come to be understood as reality. Because the image

requires no investment, it can substitute for realities that do require such investment. This points

to the concept of hyperreality as theorized by Jean Baudrillard. "Baudrillard claims that we have

reached a stage in social and economic development in which 'it is no longer possible to separate the economic or productive realm from the realms of ideology or culture, since cultural artefacts, images, representations, even feelings and psychic structures have become part of the world of the economic'" (Storey, 2009, p. 186). Under a Baudrillardian reading, the lines between fiction and reality become blurred and less important. And it is through mediated representations that individuals come to understand their own lives. "The answer may have something to do with the way in which, as noted by John Fiske (1994), the 'postmodern media' no longer provide 'secondary representations of reality; they affect and produce the reality that they mediate'" (ibid., p. 189).

A particularly poignant example of this is highlighted by John Storey (2009). "Think of the way in which *Apocalypse Now* has become the mark against which to judge the realism of representations of America's war in Vietnam. Asking if it has the 'look' of *Apocalypse Now* is virtually the same as asking if it is realistic" (p. 187). The fact that affective responses to notions of war can't be made allows society to invest itself in the image of a war movie as an understanding of the horrors of war. Again, because the image itself requires no real investment, the image can be made a quick substitute so that the mediated perception is that we are investing ourselves and making better understandings of issues like war.

The ascension of image seen above points toward Guy Debord's theorization in *The Society of the Spectacle*. Debord theorizes that mediated forms essentially shape the dominant narratives of our lives. His work emphasizes the role of the image in constructing our lived everyday realities. We, as individuals living in the spectacular society, seek to define our own lives through the images presented to us from the mass media. As Debord (1967/2002) theorized, "[e]verything that was directly lived has receded into a representation" (p. 1). In this

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society, the representation of the thing is more omnipresent, and more important, than the thing itself. In the words of Debord himself, "When the real world is transformed into mere images, mere images become real beings—dynamic figments that provide the direct motivations for a hypnotic behavior" (ibid. p. 4).

Perhaps the most striking hypothesis presented by Debord, and the one that perhaps most clearly states the nature of the spectacular society states,

> The fetishism of the commodity—the domination of society by 'intangible as well as tangible things'—attains its ultimate fulfillment in the spectacle, where the real world is replaced by a selection of images which are projected above it, yet which at the same time succeed in making themselves regarded as the epitome of reality.
>
> (ibid. p. 9)

This describes Debord's sense of the image as reality. The image of the real becomes more important, is projected above, reality, attaining a status as a new form of reality.

Much of Debord's work in *The Society of the Spectacle* takes this assumption on the basis of a Marxist critique of the highly commodified culture that was being mediated through the emergent television and film media at the time he was writing. The fetishization of commodities and images continues to the present day. Debord's Marxist economics may be a driving force behind his hypotheses, but these can equally well be expanded to cover the whole of our culture industries. *The Society of the Spectacle* can refer to questions of authenticity in popular culture. Whereas much of the culture industry follows a rather formulaic image consumption model, authenticity seems to reside in the edges, in the breaks, of the spectacle.

When all of our media consumption falls into spectacular notions, the spectacle itself is reinforced and perpetuated, to the point where war can be understood through cinematic

adaptations, for instance. When we come across an art form, though, that transcends its role as spectacle, and fosters broader affective engagement, we often point to notions of authenticity. In popular music, in particular, this term is highly contestable, and the notion is often tied to the visceral reaction of the listener. As noted, meaning itself is polysemic, and notions of authenticity can shift over time. Within the rock canon especially, the ascension of popular art form as authentic expression has found strong footing, though the exact point where authenticity breaks from mere entertainment spectacle is rife with debate. Many theorists have attempted to address this question, and foster a deeper sense of what it means to be authentic.

Authenticity in popular music points to areas outside of mere consumptive patterns where the musical form represents a more natural, personal structure. Grossberg (1992) highlights this, stating, "…the line 'properly' distributes musical practices and alliances: on the one side, entertainment; on the other, something more—an excess by virtue of which rock can become a significant and powerful investment" (p. 206). Authenticity, then, works at levels above simple entertainment spectacles, searching to elicit some broader investment beyond the music.

As such, authentic artists, those who seek to maintain artistic integrity, are set against those who have "sold out." Quoting Barker and Taylor (2007), "[e]specially in the music aimed at white teenage males, authenticity is seen as the sine qua non of artistic success. It is rare to come across a songwriter, rock singer, or rapper these days who does not aim to 'keep it real' for his audience, or who doesn't talk about the difference between making it and selling out" (p. xi).

Grossberg highlights well, too, how the notion of authenticity is linked to the notion of community constructed around popular musical forms.

"Inauthentic rock" is "establishment culture," rock that is dominated by economic interest, rock that has lost its political edge, bubblegum music, etc. "Authentic

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rock" depends on its ability to articulate private but common desires, feelings and

experiences into a shared public language. It demands that the performer have a

real relation to his or her audience—based on their common experiences defined

in terms of youth and a postmodern sensibility rather than class, race, etc.—and to

their music—which must somehow "express" and transcend that experience. It

constructs or expresses a "community" predicated on images of urban mobility,

delinquency and bohemian life. (pp. 206-207)

This quote works equally well on a few fronts. First, it shows the clear separation between

commercial (inauthentic), which is mere entertainment, and more authentic (political[1], private

but shared desires, etc.) musical offerings. Second, it highlights the community concept that

underscores much of musical history.

Mattern (1998) provides a great view into how music can be a communal force. He

states,

As different people identify with a particular kind of music, they internalize some

of its meaning, and it becomes part of their identity. By expressing common

experiences, music helps create and solidify a fund of shared memories and a

sense of "who we are."…The process is reflexive: the music expresses common

experiences and, by playing and listening to it, people reexperience its sentiments

and forms, which reflects back on the identity of the participants. This, in turn,

may contribute to the development of community as individuals acquire and

maintain an awareness of common experiences, memories, beliefs, and

commitments. (p. 19)

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[1] While pure political expression is highly related to the notion of authenticity, it would be imprudent to suggest that
this is the only expression of authenticity. Authentic expressions are those which foster deeper affective investments
in our lived realities, and the expression of political ideology through art is but one way to establish authenticity.

Music clearly has an ability to bring people together. Moreover, important to discussions of alternative music, individuals establish scenes through shared musical and life experiences in certain parts of the world.

The idea of community in music is also highly indicative of the music's ability to meet political ends. As Mattern (1998) points out, "…the political work of a piece of music also occurs in the multiple ways that people use it and in the ways that it circulates in a context. The wider context of reception and use defines a communicative arena in which meanings are created, shared, negotiated, and changed and in which various individuals and groups appropriate music for different ends" (p. 16). Moreover, "The *deliberative* form of acting in concert occurs when members of a community use musical practices to debate their identity and commitments or when members of different communities negotiate mutual relations" (ibid., p. 28).

Before moving on, it is important to note the tensions that underlie the blurring of capital and culture, which can have both positive and negative consequences related to music and community. Positively, without an explicit power base due to the dissolution of meaning, art and music can be subjective terms. Again using the punk subculture studied by Hebdige as an example, what most would view as noisemaking was considered music amongst punks. By deconstructing what music is "supposed" to be, the punk movement was undermining the ability of others in society to define what was or was not music, as well as empowering themselves to make those classifications within their own community.

With these positive effects, though, come a myriad of negative consequences. Especially within the spectacle, the commodity form supersedes the art form. Capital is the ultimate end and the mass media, through a constant barrage, work reasonably well to homogenize the consumer public. This, again, has consequences for understandings of authentic music-making

within the spectacle. In an era where the art form is often subordinate to the commodity form, authentic representations occur where the art form is projected above the commercial potentialities of itself.

As noted throughout, the conceptualization of authenticity is particularly important in the postmodern condition. Authentic expressions allow for deeper meaning-making through more robust affective investment in new ideas. In this regard, the concept of community has major implications, particularly when applying notions of authenticity to popular music forms. Alternative musical communities seem to inherently defy spectacular visions of society, and therefore embrace notions of authenticity, by their very existence as alternatives, i.e. non-mainstream. It would be problematic, however, to take this as a blanket statement. In the postmodern condition, even what is authentic in one instance can be collapsed into the spectacle in another time, as meaning shifts around the concepts of authenticity and oppositional music making. Of particular importance, though, are the ways in which collective understandings can grant legitimacy to claims of authenticity. That is, through established scenes and within the framework of the music festival, notions of authenticity can be more firmly grounded.

The music festival, then, is particularly archetypal of the intersection of notions of authenticity and community. Moreover, the evolution of this concept, from Woodstock in the 1960s through Lollapalooza in the 1990s and into the present day, highlights well the ever-changing conceptualizations around these ideas, as well as our own abilities to make deeper investments in the music festival aesthetic as meanings shift over time. Lollapalooza, in itself, further highlights this evolution, as what was once a preeminent representative alternative music festival, embodying a rupture in the spectacle, has itself collapsed into the spectacle as notions of authenticity have shifted.

Chapter II

        The concepts of authenticity and community established in Chapter I find an intersection

when placed in the frame of the music festival. Given this, the original Woodstock festival of

1969 is perhaps the most well known, agreed upon archetype of the music festival as a means for

both the authentic and the creation of community. While some of this archetypal nature may

derive from nostalgic views of the festival since 1969, it still serves well to highlight an

embodiment of the two aforementioned notions.

Woodstock

        The Woodstock Music and Arts Fair was the culmination, in many ways, of the entire 60s

counterculture. Set up by four partners, John Roberts, Joel Rosenman, Artie Kornfeld, and

Michael Lang, the festival became a reality on Max Yasgur's 600-acre farm in Bethel, New

York. While Woodstock will always be remembered for its music, it is important to consider the

way that the notion of community so profoundly influenced the festival. For instance, the Hog

Farm commune, which was largely in charge of maintaining order at the festival, established

what they called the "Please Force." The idea was for the festival goers to help police

themselves, placing ultimate control for the wellbeing of the group in the hands of the whole

group. The group would have to act as a collective, as a community, for the festival to function

as they all hoped it would.

        Moreover, it is important to consider that Woodstock, though not originally intended to

be, was a free festival. As Frisch (1993) notes, "…the promoters confronted the fact that they

could never clear the bowl to collect tickets, that in fact they never would get the turnstiles or

fences in place. They decided that one of the first announcements from the stage would have to

be to declare Woodstock a free festival" (p. 223). Now anyone who chose to join the Woodstock

community had the chance. The sense of community at Woodstock, then, was being fostered before a single note had been played.

As noted, though, Woodstock is remembered for what it delivered musically, which only served to enhance the community aesthetic. This was one of the first music festivals of its kind to spring forth from the musical underground as it did, bringing together seemingly disparate artists and genres. Frisch (1993) highlights the musical community,

> …For the first time it seemed as if all of rock's various streams were coming together, fusing diverse groups of fans into a single, public generational audience. The performers included the hard driving Creedance Clearwater Revival; the queen of acid rock blues, Janis Joplin; the experimental, theatrical British group The Who; the then virtually unknown Santana, anticipating the infusion of Latin rhythms into rock; and the quintessential San Francisco groups—the classic folk-rock-blues band the Grateful Dead and…the Jefferson Airplane, wellspring of a harder acid rock sound. But for most people, the peak came somewhere in the middle of the long night, with the black group Sly and the Family Stone, psychedelic rock grafted onto R&B (rhythm and blues) and gospel…it seemed that rock music had finally become a kind of communal binding force. (p. 229)

This idea, that music could be a "communal binding force," highlights well the notions of community that were the underpinnings of much of the counterculture movement. And in a very real way, the sense of authentic community that was the dream of the counterculture finally came to fruition on a small patch of farmland in rural New York. This is the lasting impression of Woodstock, both to those who witnessed and experienced it and to the generations since. While the truth of the matter may not be so clear cut, the fact that such an expression of youth rebellion

and civility could occur simultaneous has certainly left an indelible mark on the way we are all forced to reflect on that festival's accomplishments. And while Woodstock was not the catalyst for widespread societal change built around music, it did provide an image, an archetype, of how a concert festival could do more than just provide a spectacle, Woodstock was able to provide deeper investment in notions of a more authentic community (see Frisch, 1993).

Commodification of Culture

The revolutionary ideas presented by the Woodstock generation were set in direct opposition to the spectacle of the time. Unfortunately, even these notions of revolution and community were recouperated and co-opted, to be sold as commodities rather than invested in as deeper ideas. It is interesting to consider how the counterculture, which had established itself as a community outside of mainstream, status quo ideology, was so easily brought into the mainstream, tempering the revolutionary fervor of the ideas, and undercutting their potential. As Walley (1998) points out,

> By 1968 rock and revolution had become inextricably linked in the public mind,
>
> or at least with the record-buying public mind, as a youth fashion statement,
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> which came to be typified by a Columbia Records ad campaign designed by Jim
>
> Fouratt. A former actor and social activist in San Francisco's Haight Ashbury in
>
> the midsixties as well as an associate of Dr. Timothy Leary, Fouratt conceived of
>
> a print ad campaign that prominently featured a picture of a group of hippies in a
>
> jail holding pen under the tag line, "The Man Can't Bust Our Music." Cool, huh?
>
> (p. 82)

Moreover, "Warner released a compilation LP called *The People's Album* that was largely a repository for their singer/songwriters and soft rock acts. The album cover art, however, had

lettering intended to look like Chinese characters and depicted heroic, banner-waving protesters in Mao jackets, thus suggesting an association with the cultural revolution that was occurring halfway around the world" (Garofalo, 2005, p. 203). This example in particular seems to be the most intriguing. A wholeheartedly capitalist organization selling product through the reproduction of imagery associated with the spread of Communism in the middle of the Cold War. What's more, the fact that the record-buying public doesn't seem to question this link further evidences the spectacular nature of the blending of culture and capital.

Important to discussions of Woodstock, too, is the way that nostalgia has fueled further understanding of the festival and the 60s counterculture. "Both musical form (style) and substance (messages, content) are saturated with meanings derived from past experiences" (Mattern, 1998, p. 18). This has both positive and negative consequences. Positively speaking, the fact that individuals invest so heavily in the ideas of Woodstock and the 60s seems to point to a break with the spectacle, where affective responses are being made. However, this is tempered by the fact that what is being invested in is usually some mediated image of the festival. That is, we've come to understand Woodstock not necessarily based on the revolutionary ideas of its forebears, but through subsequent experiences with the festival through movies and television and memorabilia. Woodstock, then, has become a frame around discourses concerning authenticity.

70s Backlash

Various socioeconomic realities, including increased frustration with the war in Vietnam and the OPEC embargo, among other events, triggered a radical shift away from the countercultural ideals of the 1960s, giving way to the "Me Generation" of the 1970s. This new generation also represented a shift away from the authenticity found in the counterculture's

music, exemplified by disco in the late 1970s. As Andrew Kopkind, quoted in Garofalo (2005), explained, "Disco in the '70s is in revolt against rock in the '60s. Disco is 'unreal,' artificial, and exaggerated. It affirms the fantasies, gossip, frivolity, and fun of an evasive era" (p. 252). Kopkind is pointing to clear distinctions in the authenticity of the music of the 1960s as compared to inauthentic elements in the 1970s. Moreover, his assertion of the evasiveness of the era highlights the spectacular nature of the society of the day. In fact, Barker and Taylor (2007) highlight the escapism, and thus the inauthenticity, of disco music, stating, "…disco simply wasn't about everyday real life. If anything, it was about escape from everyday life…" (p. 237). Society was searching for a break from the hard, pressing issues surrounding the nation, and they found it in disco. Disco requires less affective investment than other musical forms, and as a result, gives very little back aside from the chance to escape reality.

The punk movement that sprang up in the late 1970s, though, showed that oppositional voices within the spectacle still existed, and proved to be a more authentic response to the escapism inherent in disco. Punk was a uniquely working-class movement in England in the late 1970s staunchly opposed to notions of high art. Punk's most significant weapon in its battles against conventions was what Hebdige (1979) described as "semiotic guerrilla warfare" (p. 105). In other words, the punks were using stylistic elements to represent their sense of community, misappropriating common household items to apply new meanings which grounded their working class notions of beauty. "Punk claimed to speak for the neglected constituency of white lumpen youth…-'rendering' working classness metaphorically in chains and hollow cheeks, 'dirty' clothing (stained jackets, tarty see-through blouses) and rough and ready diction" (ibid., p. 63). Safety pins, clothes pins, and razor blades, all items without intrinsic meaning outside of their common uses were given new meaning when worn on the clothes or on and through the

body and face of a punk. All was designed to shock the conscious of the bourgeoisie, as class consciousness so defined punk. From fetish and bondage items taken straight from porno theatres, expressing deviance in not so subtle terms, to the use of Nazi imagery, particularly the swastika, an image linked almost inexorably to fascism and, in England especially, the enemy. While much can be made of this particular image choice, the punk appropriation of the swastika was not to represent the purely political, extreme right-wing implication that the image defined, it was used for its shocking connotations; "the swastika was worn because it was guaranteed to shock" (ibid., p. 116). All of this speaks to the polysemy of meaning mentioned earlier. By detaching objects such as safety pins, razor blades, and swastikas from their original meanings, punks were calling into question an entire system of definitions, outlandishly questioning what it was to be working class in British society.

Perhaps the punk movement's most significant contribution to the alternative music that would follow it was the introduction of the do-it-yourself ethos popularized in the movement. The artists in punk music, for instance, weren't so much musicians as noisemakers. "Typically, a barrage of guitars with the volume and treble turned to maximum accompanied by the occasional saxophone would pursue relentless (un)melodic lines against a turbulent background of cacophonous drumming and screamed vocals" (ibid., p. 109). This amateurism came to define what was meant by do-it-yourself. Again, the punks were attacking high class notions of art, shunning the musical acumen that comes with years of training for the inclusiveness of an open musical community.

This DIY ethos was also exemplified through the punk fanzines. As with much of the punk DIY, fanzines were an attempt to reclaim notions of musical production from the industry; they represented the print version of the musical and stylistic do-it-yourself ethos, "produced on

a small scale as cheaply as possible, stapled together and distributed through a small number of sympathetic retail outlets" (ibid., p. 111). It was all hastily and crudely made, a recurring notion in the punk community. *Sniffin Glue*, a prominent punk fanzine, defined do-it-yourself thusly: "a diagram showing three finger positions on the neck of a guitar over the caption: 'Here's one chord, here's two more, now form your own band'" (ibid., p. 112). Punk was an extremely self-contained movement. It was working class in its origins, and extremely crude in its outcomes. But the punk movement also defined an authentic reality maneuvering its way around the spectacle.

Spectacular Representations in the 1980s

While not completely abandoning the notions of authenticity that gave punk its oppositional voice, the shift from the traditional punk aesthetic to new wave in the 1980s generated a much more commercially successful movement than punk had ever been. Certainly the lack of larger commercial success of punk and its major artists is due in large part to their own maneuverings against the commercial potentialities of music, and the success of new wave once again shows that oppositional forms, like the counterculture of the 1960s, can find larger commercial success. So although new wave artists, such as Elvis Costello and the Police, still greatly interwove cultural politics into their musical form, the larger commercial success of the music in relation to its punk antecedent made for some very interesting contradictions. New wave seemed to be seizing on the untapped commercial potential of punk, which on the one hand opened new doors for the celebration of the cultural politics of the form, but which also had the negative consequence of finding itself as a commodified art form, again, akin to the countercultural ideas inherent in the 1960s. So in a very real way, new wave became the spectacular, marketable form of punk music.

This shift is actually anecdotal of an even greater societal shift away from notions of authenticity as we moved into the 1980s. Tantamount to the spectacular visions projected on society as the 70s turned into the 80s was the mass proliferation of the music video form through the advent of MTV in 1981. Music videos themselves are rife with the sort of commercial impulses on which the spectacle thrives. "In music videos it is not just the music that is offered for sale, but also the visual images of the artist, i.e. a whole lifestyle" (Johansson, 1992, p. 15). This typifies the spectacular representations inherent in a postmodern society.

> Cultural historian and theorist Fredric Jameson (1984) saw music videos as "meta entertainments" that embody the postmodern condition. It is certainly clear that [music videos] do indeed merge commercial and artistic image production and abolish traditional boundaries between an image and its real life referent. In this respect, their most obvious characteristic is their similarity to advertisements, making them a part of a blatantly consumerist culture. (Shuker, 2008, p. 108)

This blending of the commercial and artistic potentials of music video may best be exemplified by Madonna, who is herself a bastion for postmodern expression. Her videos, while almost crassly calling into question sexual roles, are overtly driven by image, not music, which seems sign and symptom of her career. As Grossberg (1992) highlights,

> …Madonna…invest[s] [herself] in the image, but the image itself is unimportant. What is important is the fact of the investment itself with no claim beyond that…while Madonna's music is the sign of her investment and the vehicle of her success, it is neither the sign nor the vehicle of her popularity. While a number of critics have recently argued against readings which focus on her image rather than her music, it is worth pointing out that the music is entirely taken for granted, its

production erased, in Madonna's documentary of her tour *Truth or Dare*. Neither

the band nor the engineers are ever introduced or even visible…The film—

Madonna's "postmodern" denial of the difference between public image and

private self—is about fashion and movement, costumes and dance. It doesn't

matter what image one takes; take any image and live it for as long as you want.

It is the construction of any identity as absolutely real and totally ironic. One can

deconstruct gender at the moment of celebrating it (and celebrate it precisely

because one can deconstruct it). One can take on an identity predicated on the

deconstruction of identity itself (cyborgs such as Max Headroom). (p. 227)

Madonna seems to typify postmodern expression. It is investment in her mediated image, and no

investment beyond that, that becomes part and parcel of the successful career she has maintained.

This appears in contrast to notions of authenticity. As Gardner (2005) notes of authenticity,

"Authentic music is thus often viewed as transgressive and political compared to inauthentic

'pop,' which is viewed as 'co-opted and superficial'" (p. 136). Madonna seems representative of

the superficial quality of more inauthentic musical offerings. Taking account of Grossberg's

quote, what is required of the consumer is merely consumption, especially of the image. When

nothing is required past the point of image consumption, no deeper affect necessary, this seems

indicative of an inauthentic, spectacular representation.

The projection of the image through mass channels such as MTV was the catalyst for

Madonna's success, but MTV played a key role, also, in the manipulation of difference that

allows for easier links between cultural producer and cultural consumer. MTV reinforced genre

distinctions that created niche musical markets, playing up difference in the name of market

cohesiveness. This is not to say that there are not obviously stylistic and elemental differences

between certain musical forms, but it is problematic to suggest that these differences should segment the youth culture into discernible marketing categories.

This point is highlighted further when one looks at the festival scene of the 1980s. Two particularly poignant examples come to the fore, the Monsters of Rock and US Festival, which both significantly undercut the notion of community that was expressed at Woodstock. Monsters of Rock was an annual festival held in England begun in 1980 and running through 1996, with an attempted revival in 2006. The festival itself was designed to showcase the largely successful heavy metal and hard rock of the era. So while the festivals were celebrating community to an extent, it was a much more homogenized group than that seen at Woodstock. The task of these shows, then, was not the inclusiveness found at Woodstock, a collection of somewhat disparate acts coming together to create a mass countercultural community. These shows were centered around one audience, the goal ultimately being to raise awareness of the performers involved, ostensibly to sell more merchandise. Clearly the festival aesthetic established at Woodstock was being collapsed into the spectacle.

Perhaps more representative of the commodity form that the festival took in the 1980s is the 1983 US Festival. The US Festival was the creation of Apple Computer's Steve Wozniak, and occurred in both 1982 and 1983. The 1983 festival, though, is more illuminating to this point. Again, the promoters were selling the notion of community, but in a homogenized, packaged way. For instance, that year the performances were split into four days, consisting of, among others, a New Wave Day and a Heavy Metal Day. The importance of this is that while the concept of community was not lost on the promoters and audiences at the festival, they were clearly in line with the manufactured organizational tropes of the music industry. For example, metal artists were playing only to fans of metal music, and new wave artists were only playing to

new wave fans. What was truly being celebrated was not so much the communities themselves, or even the concept of community in general, but the genre distinctions that defined the way music is bought and sold. This is not to say that the Monsters of Rock and US Festivals were not representative of community forms in themselves, for instance, each of the US Festival's four days represented a class of music more or less associated with one or another subculture, but their use of the imagined boundary distinctions created from within the music industry established not a communal form, but a homogenized product.

Although the present age presents itself as a series of frequently recurring festivities, it is an age that knows nothing of real festivals. The moments within cyclical time when members of a community joined together in a luxurious expenditure of life are impossible for a society that lacks both community and luxury. *Its vulgarized pseudofestivals are parodies of real dialogue and gift-giving; they may incite waves of excessive economic spending, but they lead to nothing but disillusionments, which can be compensated only by the promise of some new disillusion to come.* (Debord, 1967/2002, p. 50) [emphasis added]

Again, while the festivals highlighted celebrate community to a degree, they are still placed within a framework that is wholly not their own. They don't work within any realistic contemplation of difference, but only within the genre categories as defined by the music industry, whose main goal is not community, but profitability. It would be hard to argue against Debord's proposed spectacular society when set against this backdrop.

Moreover, it is important to consider the long-run effects of these festivals. In keeping with the spectacular nature of the festivals themselves, we see no affective investment in these festivals beyond the mere act of having attended. That is, unlike Woodstock, which is fondly

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remembered in large part due to the high degree of emotional investment made in the concept, audiences at the 1983 US Festival, for example, were not investing themselves in any ideas beyond the show itself. This points to the commodity fetish role of the spectacle as proposed by Debord. The festivals themselves were simply escapes, providing nothing really beyond the spectacle of the festival. And so while Woodstock is celebrated to do this day, and given a nostalgic bent that enhances its historical significance, few will give the same level of credence to either the Monsters of Rock or US Festival experiences.

As the decades shifted from late 1980s into the 1990s, Milli Vanilli infamously cemented themselves as representative of the inauthenticity of spectacle. Milli Vanilli themselves were, more or less, a construct of the music industry. The duo, made up of Germans Robert (Rob) Pilatus and Fabrice (Fab) Morvan, became hugely successful in at the close of the 1980s, even winning the Grammy for Best New Artists in 1990. However, Milli Vanilli sparked a firestorm of controversy during a nationally televised performance when it was revealed that the duo was not singing to its live audience, but only lip-syncing over pre-recorded tracks. What's more, as the controversy intensified, it was revealed that even the pre-recorded tracks were themselves not the doing of the duo, Rob and Fab had contributed nothing but their own images to the success of Milli Vanilli (see Hughes, 1992). The fraud of Milli Vanilli is illuminating to the concept of the spectacle, and a particular break with the authenticity sought by other artists and performers. And while perhaps Milli Vanilli were never the poster children for authenticity, they were awarded a Grammy, so clearly the industry was unconcerned with this point at the outset.

This is particularly interesting considering Milli Vanilli's subsequently being stripped of their Grammy. What was important in the aftermath of their incident was that the industry was able to reassert that authenticity still mattered and that the public could accept that fact, even

though other musical offerings of the day, including Madonna, proved that Milli Vanilli was simply one standout example in an industry with a plethora of inauthentic representations. This underscores Baudrillard's hyperreality, when he proposed a similar response to the Watergate scandal. Quoting from Storey (2009), "[Watergate] had to be reported as a scandal in order to conceal the fact that it was a commonplace of American political life" (p. 190). Likewise, this suggests that the industry was similarly able to scapegoat Milli Vanilli, and the viewing public was able to accept that the industry still valued authenticity, without questioning the wider implications of the image-driven, market-oriented consumerism of which they were investing.

This commodification and niche-marketing worked in contrast to a thriving alternative music scene, really a collection of many different scenes, that was on the cusp of breaking out in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The many scenes that were integral to the 1980s indie underground proliferated through the same DIY ethic that was key to the punk aesthetic. There were the independent record labels that became repositories for the artists, local radio and fanzines, as well as the relentless touring that maintained these scenes. Notable artists such as Black Flag, the Minutemen, Dinosaur Jr., and Sonic Youth, among others, cultivated substantial cult followings, and became the forefathers of much of the alternative music that would follow (see Azerrad, 2001). While these artists remained relative unknowns outside of indie circles, they paved the way for the massive mainstream success of alternative music in the 1990s.

Chapter III

        The indie music which was bubbling beneath the surface in the late 1980s reached a boiling point in the 1990s, when the musical underground took on a new life, as it transcended its status on the outskirts of societal consciousness and was blessed, and cursed, by mainstream success. One of the first groups to have to grapple with the new tensions that came with the fame of breaking out was R.E.M. Coming out of the musical community built in Athens, Georgia, the group came to be representative of a successful crossover from independent to mainstream. As Anderson (2007) notes, "R.E.M. was the first great American postpunk success story. Through word-of-mouth reviews, nonstop touring, and critical acclaim, R.E.M. went from being a college-town bar band to being a national sensation…" (pp. 20-21).

        With this new success, though, came new tensions as well. When alternative music navigates its way into the mainstream, its artists often struggle to maintain authenticity by staying true to their roots and still be successful within the industry. For what it's worth, R.E.M. was able to subvert these tensions better than most other artists who come from the musical underground, sticking close to their indie roots despite being one of the most commercially successful and well-known (and well-respected) bands of all time. As Garofalo (2005) notes,

        For a group with the longevity and achievement of R.E.M., their career has been

        remarkably trouble free. Of course, there have been a few bumps on the road to

        success. While members proclaimed early on that they would never play arenas

        or lip sync, to the dismay of some diehard fans, they broke both vows with the

        Green tour and the video for "Losing My Religion." Still, on the cooptation

        scale, these were fairly minor infractions. Overall, it was a testament to the

        strength of the group's fan loyalty and artistic staying power that, some fifteen

years later, R.E.M. was still being reviewed as a model of musical integrity. (p. 373)

R.E.M. highlights well the inherent tensions of success among independent or alternative musics. Whereas these sounds bubble under the surface of mainstream music for years, often within cohesive musical communities such as, in R.E.M.'s case, Athens, Georgia, there is often a tension that arises when these same alternatives become the mainstream. And in the early 1990s, there was nothing more mainstream than the alternative sounds of the musical community of the Pacific Northwest, Seattle's grunge.

The Seattle Rupture

Seattle was largely a musical afterthought prior to grunge, with few major label acts coming from the city. This musical and geographical isolation was key to the creation of the subculture that sprouted up in the city. Much of the subcultural underpinnings of grunge borrowed from the do-it-yourself ethic developed under the punk subculture. For example, Bruce Pavitt and Jon Poneman founded the Sub Pop record label, which would be the catalyst for the mainstream success of many of the artists that would come to form the "Seattle sound." Moreover, the Seattle area created a highly cohesive musical community, wherein the bands were often formed as remnants of other bands and the artists were playing to audiences consisting of other artists. Of the Seattle community, Garofalo (2005) states,

> …Seattle had a thriving, if isolated, alternative scene for years. At its center was Sub Pop records, which was founded by Bruce Pavitt, a former deejay and local promoter, and Jon Poneman, who published a fanzine called *Sub Pop* in the early 1980s…[Seattle's various] groups were supported by Seattle's radio stations KCMU and KJET early on and by a developed alternative press that included the

now-defunct *Backlash* and the *Seattle Rocket*. Prior to the 1990s, all the groups

lived in and around Seattle and played to local audiences. (p. 368)

This is consistent with Shuker's (2008) description of the function of punk scenes, which were

"identified with 'the active creation of infrastructure to support punk bands and other forms of

creative activity'" (p. 201). Seattle was representative of the concept of community, and the

notions of authenticity that often come with it, as it intersects alternative musical expression.

Owing perhaps to the punk attitude, the artists most affected by the explosion of grunge

were able to maintain notions of authenticity due in large part to their overtly antithetical

attitudes toward their commercialization.

Seattle's "alternative rock" bands…are an anomaly in rock music. They eschew

most of the trappings and perks of stardom, including the stratospheric sums of

money that rock stars command. The alternative rock scene in which they

perfected their acts was a movement that rose up in response to the bloat, abuse,

and corruption that so characterizes the world of mainstream rock'n'roll.

Alternative bands around the country, signing with local managers, performing in

local clubs, and recording with a local record label (in Seattle's case, Sub Pop),

sought to bypass the corporate rock world, in which musicians are forced into

unpalatable aesthetic compromises for the sake of gaining access to a mass market

and generating massive sums of money—most of which goes into the pockets of

"the men in suits," as rock's businesspeople are called. (Moody, 1994)

This highlights the sense of authenticity that alternative scenes like that of Seattle hope to

maintain even as they become themselves part of the mainstream, but it somewhat ignores the

tensions that exist in this situation. For example, Nirvana's Kurt Cobain famously posed for his

band's *Rolling Stone* magazine cover wearing a T-shirt reading "Corporate Magazines Still Suck" (Garofalo, 2005, p. 369). This not so subtle jab at the industry artifice says a lot about the power of artists to create ruptures in the spectacle, but it also displays the inherent tensions of mainstream success coupled with a desire to remain true to one's roots and maintain a sense of authenticity. Moreover, the larger success of grunge in general has frequently been credited to the breakout success of Nirvana's 1991 album, *Nevermind*, which itself was assisted by the widespread MTV airplay of the song "Smells Like Teen Spirit." So despite some of the successes that Seattle bands had begun to see even dating back to the late 1980s, it was through established industry structures that these bands met their widest audience. Unfortunately, Kurt Cobain's 1994 suicide would ultimately derail Nirvana, shining an even bigger spotlight on the grunge band who undoubtedly met with the widest success, Pearl Jam.

Pearl Jam was formed from the remnants of Seattle band that many locals believed was destined for success even before the breakout of grunge, Mother Love Bone. Tragedy struck, though, as that band's success was cut short by the untimely death of lead singer Andy Wood of a heroin overdose. Two of the surviving members of Mother Love Bone, Stone Gossard and Jeff Ament, soon decided that they would form a new band, and recruited Mike McCready to join them as a lead guitarist. They recorded a few demo tracks which eventually found their way into the hands of Eddie Vedder, who quickly wrote lyrics and overdubbed vocals onto the tracks. Upon hearing the vocals, Gossard and Ament recruited Vedder to sing lead for their new band, which would become Pearl Jam. In 1991, Pearl Jam released its first album, *Ten*, and, riding the wave set in motion by Nirvana, were thrust into the musical foreground, ultimately becoming one of the most successful acts in rock history.

Pearl Jam has made a strong effort throughout its career of trying to maintain a sense of

authenticity, a sense of the real in an increasingly unreal spectacle. They've sustained this earnest effort in a number of ways, from the most basic aspects of their music, their lyrics, to their fight to seize control from concert industry giant Ticketmaster. Moreover, they've taken direct action against the music industry artifice, at first undermining the postmodern aspects of the music video form before shunning it all together, and also notably questioning the role of the industry in determining what good music is. Also important to the story of Pearl Jam is their role in fostering a larger community built around music. Their own success is indicative of this point, as they have been a band that has maintained a tremendous career through a substantial fan club base. All the while they've sought to create authentic ruptures in the spectacle, using their platform as a means to undermine spectacular representations.

For example, lead singer Eddie Vedder explained why his lyrics dealt with more serious subject matter, such as suicide, gun violence, and homelessness, than the music that marked rock radio airplay in the 1980s, largely driven by the consumptive rock of hair bands, "Music for most people, you know, is some kind of release to talk about real life and escape through that way. That way you've escaped through dealing with something, rather than just escaping *by escaping*, by talking about something that's totally not real, like dressing up in leathers, and riding motorcycles, and getting girls…I'd rather talk about real life in songs" (The Story of Pearl Jam Part 1, 2008).

That Pearl Jam, like other grunge acts, was challenging the industry status quo by its mere lyrical content is far from its only ties to notions of authenticity. In keeping with the concepts of community and authenticity, Pearl Jam actively sought to fight back against established industry practices with regards to their role in the concert industry. Whereas most multi-platinum selling rock bands would be selling out arenas at massively inflated ticket prices,

Pearl Jam, even as grunge exploded onto the musical landscape, sought to keep their ticket prices as low as possible. As Moody (1994) states, "In many respects, alternative rock was an attempt by artists to regain control both over their music and over the business of delivering it to an audience…Alternative rock sought to deliver directly to audiences music undiluted by corporate greed and marketing, and to eliminate the excessive profiteering by large companies off of the life's work of musicians." In this respect, Pearl Jam actively took on Ticketmaster for what it viewed as unfair practices in the pricing of concert tickets.

> Pearl Jam's peculiar ethic first brought it at odds with Ticketmaster, which controls at least 90 percent of the American ticket market, during the 1992 Labor Day weekend, when the band staged two free concerts for Seattle fans. Ticketmaster wanted to assess a $1 service charge for each free ticket it issued. The band balked, and eventually distributed the tickets itself. On its subsequent 1993 40-city tour, Pearl Jam lowered its ticket prices to $18—over the objections of concert promoters who urged the band to charge up to three times that amount—and negotiated lower commissions from T-shirt and souvenir vendors. The result, in the case of T-shirts, was a price lowered from $23 to $18. Promoters estimate the total loss to the band in ticket and merchandise revenues for the '93 tour alone at around $2 million. (Moody, 1994)

The idea of one of the biggest rock acts of its day deliberately losing $2 million to take back control of its own ability to connect with its fans in its own way is a wholly unique occurrence in the spectacle. In the same industry where a pop duo was ostensibly manufactured to further corporate agendas, it is hard to fathom an actor in that industry trying in such a way to seize power back from "the men in suits."

In an era dominated by the music video form, where artists were experimenting with new storytelling enhancements to their videos, often losing the meaning of the song in the visual images presented, Pearl Jam chose to make videos consisting simply of the band performing. Eddie Vedder explains the motivations behind this move: "When music videos first kinda came out, there was this interesting thing. If you go before that, you'd listen to songs with headphones on sitting in a beanbag chair with your eyes closed, and you'd come up with your own visions. You'd see these things for the song that came from the band...It robbed you, again, of any form of self expression. And so it seemed like doing things live, it was just kind of a better way to keep that stuff sacred" (VH1 Pearl Jam Ten Revisited Parte 2/5, 2009). And so what you have in Pearl Jam's first few videos is simply the band playing. This reestablishes the intimate role of live performance with the audience, removing all of the glamorousness and gaudiness of other videos, and replacing it with a stripped down live performance.

Further to this point, Pearl Jam stopped making videos following their video for "Jeremy," one of their first that was not simply a live performance, largely stemming from a disputed edit, which ultimately left the band feeling their artistic integrity had been compromised. In fact, "When 'Jeremy' won Video of the Year, Vedder felt the prize should have been called 'Best Commercial of Your CD'" (Hiatt, 2006). Pearl Jam was shunning the established industry artifice. Whereas other artists of the era, particularly Madonna, were seizing the image machine, making their videos and promotions more important than their music, Pearl Jam was purposefully putting their music at the forefront of their success, a novel idea in the spectacle.

In 1996, too, when Pearl Jam was accepting their Grammy for "Spin the Black Circle," Vedder was rather unappreciative, again calling into question the authenticity of the industry

itself, "I don't know what this means, I don't think it means anything" (Pearl Jam 1996 Grammy's Speech). Following the Milli Vanilli scandal only years earlier, Vedder was probably right to question the overall meaning of the prize that he and his bandmates had just received. And while industry apologists may question the antipathy of the band to the award, this was really a profound statement about the role the music industry has to be play in telling the buying public what is or is not good music. It is a particularly poignant point coming from a Seattle band, or any other underground turned mainstream band that may be in a similar position. After years of anonymity, a grunge artist was being rewarded for their efforts, but great music had existed in Seattle long before this Grammy award, and it presumably would have existed in the absence of the Grammy.

Pearl Jam's continued success in the wake of its rejection of fame is indicative of the larger concept of community highlighted previously. This is a band that reached tremendous levels of success very early on, with their first album, *Ten*, selling, to date, over 12 million units, only to see its commercial successes fall as they stopped making videos and made more experimental music later in their career. What has sustained their success, though, is the strong fan club base that has remained loyal to the group since the beginning. Through fan club releases and newsletters, a musical community has been established around the band, sometimes referred to as The Jamily (Kelly, 2009). Highlighting the band's ability to navigate the tensions when commercial interests and authentic realities intersect, The Who's Pete Townshend, quoted from Korat (2005), had this to say about their authenticity and their role in fostering a deeper community, "What comes across is that Pearl Jam are real and right sized. They have somehow managed to maintain a connection with their audience" (p. 20).

Lollapalooza in the 1990s

The alternative movements and aesthetics described above were the direct antecedents of

the Lollapalooza festival. The discussion of grunge music highlighted above is particularly

poignant, given that the explosion of grunge is highly representative of the larger mainstream

success of alternative music in general in the 1990s, with Lollapalooza as a further manifestation

of that success. Lollapalooza during this time was presenting a very unique offering set against

the backdrop of homogeneity established in the 1980s festival scene. With its eclectic brand of

political, social, cultural, and, above all, musical elements, the festival was clearly breaking the

organizational tropes of the industry. Highlighting again the dominant nostalgic understandings

of the Woodstock festival that preceded it, Lollapalooza was labeled a "travelling Woodstock,"

due to its esoteric nature, and the fact that it expanded the idea of the festival into new grounds

by making the festival into a tour; you didn't have to go to Woodstock, it would come to you.

The festival itself was the pet project of Jane's Addiction frontman Perry Farrell.

Garofalo (2005) notes of the festival's formation, "The idea of Lollapalooza came to Farrell and

booking agent Marc Geiger in 1990 while they were in Europe marveling at the routine success

of annual multiact summer music festivals like the Reading Festival in England. While these

types of festivals had never caught on in the United States in any big way, Farrell and Geiger felt

certain they could pull one off and joined forces with Ted Gardner and Don Mullen to do so,

picking the worst concert season in recent memory to launch the tour" (pp. 373-374). The first

tour took place in 1991, with Farrell's Jane's Addiction serving as the headliner, a sort of swan

song for the band, though they have subsequently reunited on a few occasions. Moreover, the

tour, like Woodstock before it, was presenting a whole host of voices representing the alternative

musical forms of the day. And unlike the 80s festivals scene, which worked within the

boundaries of music industry genre definitions, these acts were given equal footing playing to the

same audience.

> Alternative thus took its place, along with rap and metal, as one of the
>
> predominant voices of youth culture. From a certain point of view, rap, metal,
>
> and alternative had developed separately at least in part because the industry that
>
> produced them, like society at large, was divided along lines of race and culture.
>
> It could easily be argued that the fans that listened to rap, metal, and alternative
>
> had a fair amount in common, including, certainly, their age and alienation from
>
> the establishment. These styles were themselves united in their commitment to
>
> transgression—transgression of musical conventions, transgression of societal
>
> values, transgression of behavioral norms. If rap, metal, and alternative were
>
> already individually threatening and controversial, what could be more upsetting
>
> than putting them all together? No doubt these thoughts crossed the mind of
>
> Perry Farrell…when he organized the first Lollapalooza festival in 1991.
>
> (Garofalo, 2005, p. 373)

So along with Jane's Addiction the 1991 mix also included "rapper Ice-T, who debuted his

thrash combo Body Count on the tour; industrial noisemakers Nine Inch Nails; the guttural rants

of the Henry Rollins Band, plus the smart metal of Living Colour and veteran post-punks

Siouxsie & the Banshees. It struck a chord with the youth of America that had been fed up with

the usual superstar arena-rock attractions" (Rosen, 1992). The eclectic mix that Lollapalooza

was fostering was taking the community-building potentialities of music to expanding heights,

bringing together these seemingly disparate voices. And that's where Lollapalooza makes its

best claims to the authentic. As noted by Garofalo (2005), these musical happenings certainly

did have divisions, such as those of "race and culture," but these differences, when used by the industry to sell records, only serve to further divide the youth culture, ignoring the inherent similarities between both the music and the audiences of these alternative genres.

What's more, despite starting the festival during "the worst concert season in recent memory," Lollapalooza was hugely successful. "While a package featuring dinosaur rockers Alice Cooper and Judas Priest fell flat on its face, and other multi-genre packages such as a Gathering of the Tribes II failed to fly, Lollapalooza stood tall, packed houses and made people take notice" (Rosen, 1992). The incredible success of Lollapalooza seems itself to be a manifestation of the wider success of alternative music in general in the early 1990s, remembering that 1991 is the same year that grunge broke out to astounding levels. And with the incredible success of the first tour, it was almost inevitable that a second tour would follow. By the time Lollapalooza 1992 came around, Seattle was firmly on the musical map, and Pearl Jam was becoming a household name. Against this backdrop, it may be hard to argue that Lollapalooza was truly a celebration of the alternative when the alternative itself was now mainstream.

Despite these concerns, Lollapalooza continued to expand on its conceptualization of community, incorporating a diverse musical lineup, and treating festival attendees to a host of alternative voices.

In terms of musical range, Lollapalooza '92 was similar to its predecessor. Although there were differences between them, Pearl Jam and Soundgarden carried the banner of Seattle grunge. Pearl Jam was a safer, more straightforward blend of heavy metal and psychedelic rock. The group's lead singer, Eddie Vedder, was dark and brooding as he agonized over questions of sanity and

personal existence. Soundgarden was more dissonant with irregular tempos and

time signatures. Lead singer Chris Cornell segued from angry growls to high

piercing tones. Concerned about Ice-T's removal of "Cop Killer" from *Body

Count*, Soundgarden performed the song. Ice Cube, the reigning king of gangsta

rap, supported the sentiment with a new rap line, "Rappers don't kill people.

Cops do." Ministry dispensed industrial rock with as many as four guitars

pounding frenzied riffs. The Jesus and Mary Chain played nihilistic Ramones-

derived punk. Lush supplied the only female voices of the day, offering ethereal

introspective punkish folk rock. (Garofalo, 2005, p. 376)

Similar to the ideologies of Woodstock and Lollapalooza 1991, the second tour was continuing

to promote the inclusivity of a community built around alternative music. This 2nd tour expanded

on this concept further, introducing a side stage promoting lesser known acts, some of whom

would go on to reach wider audiences and meet with tremendous mainstream success, including

Cypress Hill, Stone Temple Pilots, and Rage Against the Machine.

Lollapalooza, though, was about much more than just the music. "Perhaps more than its

music, what made Lollapalooza alternative was the continual projection of political messages

concerning everything from censorship to the Gulf War and the presence of many left-leaning

activist organizations" (Garofalo, 2005, p. 374). But Lollapalooza wasn't just about the left wing

politics of most of its audience and performers, and Farrell lamented the lack of politically right

organizations at the festival. "'Most of the right wing don't want to come to the Lollapalooza,'

Farrell says. 'I've tried to get the military involved. I've tried to get the National Rifle

Association to come down and say their piece, and they don't want to. I think it is important to

have both sides, otherwise you are preaching to an already converted crowd'" (Rosen, 1992).

Lollapalooza was taking the community concept of Woodstock to a new level, trying to expand

the idea of inclusivity to its optimum. And like Woodstock, the promoters of the festival seemed

aware of their lofty goals. According to Ian Astbury, quoted in Mullen (2005), "We didn't do it

for the money, we did it for the community" (p. 222).

Lollapalooza was celebrating the concepts of community and authenticity in ways that

severely undercut what had been occurring at the time. Whereas other festivals at the time were

promoting themselves on the backs of homogeneous groupings of artists, Lollapalooza was truly

celebrating the alternative in music and society, complementing the bands with a plethora of

activities and events furthering emphasizing the community. As noted, perhaps Lollapalooza's

first signature accomplishment was its ability to break the organizational tropes of the music

industry. By choosing artists and genres that were not in the typical radio playlist or record

company roster, Lollapalooza was, by its mere choice of bands, presenting itself as an alternative

to business as usual in the music industry. For instance, the examples of Cypress Hill, Stone

Temple Pilots, and Rage Against the Machine highlight Lollapalooza's ability to uplift unknown

artists by giving them equal footing as the more established artists on the tour.

Like Woodstock, Lollapalooza was providing a whole host of voices from across the

musical spectrum. The sense of community fostered at Lollapalooza, though, seemed predicated

on providing an even more expansive community. It would seem counterintuitive, for instance,

for Woodstock's promoters to have reached out to the military or other right wing organizations,

but the mere fact that Perry Farrell reached out to these groups shows the new level of the

inclusivity that Lollapalooza was trying to foster. It was celebrating the alternative, and

attempting to foster a new sense of community in an otherwise homogenized industry. Noting

all that has been described above, Lollapalooza, like Woodstock, seems indicative of the

authenticity and community inherent in the folk festival aesthetic, as described by Frith (1996),

> The folk festival describes a time (usually a weekend) and a space (usually
>
> outdoors) within which folk values—the integration of art and life—can be lived
>
> (and this is a form which is therefore used—for folk ends—by other musical
>
> genres, by rock, soul, and rave). Hence the strict festival conventions: the famous
>
> performer must come and have a drink with the audience in the tent after the
>
> show, and, often enough, take part in workshops; anyone in the audience must be
>
> able to stand up somewhere on the site—in a "club room"—and perform herself,
>
> informally; there is a constant attempt to deny the actual (commercial) separation
>
> of folk stars and folk fans. Folk festivals are more likely to be organized around a
>
> large number of small stages than one big spectacle; there is, as MacKinnon puts
>
> it, no " back room" for folk performers, no place to prepare themselves…In short,
>
> the folk festival seeks to solve the problem of musical "authenticity"; it offers the
>
> experience of the folk ideal, the experience of collective, participatory music
>
> making, the chance to judge music by its direct contribution to sociability. (p. 41)

Commodification of Grunge

As the 90s drew to a close, the alternative scene faced increasing corporatization and

cooptation. Grunge, again, is indicative of this point. As noted, grunge was, in many ways, the

catalyst for the wider proliferation of alternative musics throughout the 1990s. While the

underpinnings of grunge had been bubbling beneath the surface prior to its growth, it was the

grunge scene that finally put alternative music on the map. Moreover, the incredible mainstream

success that the new grunge superstars were met with was greeted with indifference at best, and

outright antipathy at worst. It was during this time that Lollapalooza folded, after the 1997 tour.

And even in its closing years there were calls that the festival was becoming too mainstream, inviting commercialism and consumerism, and straying too far from its subcultural roots. According to Ted Gardner, one of the festival's co-founders, "[i]t was killed because it had become too fat, the industry changed and we hadn't kept up" (Cohen and Grossweiner, 2003). Perhaps this informs the way the spectacle was to reestablish itself in the year's following the festival's seeming demise. While it would be foolish to believe that the spectacular was not celebrated in society as a whole during the early years of Lollapalooza, as earlier examples have proven, what happened during that time should not go unappreciated. The early 90s grunge and alternative music represented an opposition, as shown, to the homogenization and impurity of the music industry. In fact, Shuker (2008) notes that "Critics emphasized the purity and authenticity of the Seattle scene as a point of origin…" (p. 201). What had really just been bubbling beneath the surface of mainstream music was brought into the foreground. Unfortunately, as the industry tends to do, even this seemingly impenetrable wall of authenticity was brought down.

Like the 60s counterculture, the grunge acts that broke out in the early 1990s faced the forces of staggering hypercommodification, of both their music and themselves. The corporate interests involved in the process, in an attempt to overcome the intransigence of grunge's biggest stars who were, on the whole, not too keen on being big stars, found ways to monetize as much as possible from the subculture. This, again, highlights the tensions of mainstream success when thrust upon an alternative subculture. One act, for example, was the marketing of grunge fashion. As noted, the original English punk movement was largely based off a look, as defined by the punks themselves. The fashion that became associated with grunge, however, was largely not the doing of the members of the subculture themselves. Certainly, they were wearing the clothes that became the "look" of grunge, but unlike the punk subculture which actively sought a

form of "semiotic guerrilla warfare," as noted, the members of the grunge subculture wore their fashion more out of necessity than any semiotic attack on the status quo. What was startling, especially to those within the movement, was the idea that what they were wearing would be featured in prominent fashion magazines, selling for hundreds or even thousands of dollars (see The Story of Pearl Jam Part 2, 2008; *Hype!*, 1996; Shuker, 2008). As Eddie Vedder explains of this corporate cooptation, "It's not like who can wear the most expensive clothes or who has the new style. It's more like, 'I got this for 35 cents.' You know, it's this whole new thing that anyone could participate in. It was a very good thing. You know, now they turn around, they sell the 35 cent shirt for $35, you know, now you can't find them because now they're trendy" (The Story of Pearl Jam Part 2, 2008). While this quote is seemingly rather innocuous, it is just a shirt after all, what was really going on was the selling of authenticity. In a postmodern sense, the image that these artists represented to people was one of the real, the authentic, so what better way to sell this idea than to give consumers an opportunity to look just like their heroes. So whereas the grunge artists and the subculture as a whole were seeking to remain true to their alternative roots and foster a community built around music, something "that anyone could participate in," the commercial interests that involved themselves in the subculture were trying to boil that authenticity down into a commodity form. And in the spectacle, this really isn't something that people tend to roundly question. Indeed, "[a]rtistic integrity and authenticity become irrelevant when consumers no longer perceive contradictions in a Victoria's Secrets ad featuring Bob Dylan or a mobile ring tone (*Crazy Frog*) topping the UK music charts" (Elavsky, 2008, pp. 16-17). And in the early 90s, it was grunge that was forced into that commodity role.

> I was a little freaked out about being, like, "the guy on the side of the bus." All of
>
> a sudden, they had billboards with Chicago radio or something, and your face on

it—*giant*. This happened fairly quickly. It's like, "Do they need our permission

for that?" And then they say, "Well…*no*." And then you think, "Well that's

strange—I thought people needed permission for stuff like that if they're going to

use your image to sell something." And they're doing "All Pearl Jam" or "All

grunge" issues of a magazine. "Do they need our permission for that?" "No, they

don't." And you're thinking, "We *should* have some control over that stuff—I

don't think that's a high quality product right there. Who are these people? And

they're associated with porn magazines?" I felt like getting spun around in a

washing machine.—Eddie Vedder (Prato, 2009, p. 318)

This begs the question as to what is the breaking point of community and authenticity.

That is, how big can the community be before it begins to lose notions of authenticity? In the

aftermath of the grunge explosion, record companies were quick to realize the potential of the

sound that was emanating from Seattle, again capitalizing on the subculture, and addressing this

very question. The "new" music that became popularized as a result of this action was labeled

post-grunge, but was really just a derivative of its direct musical predecessor. Again, the music

that was coming from this era seemed to be grabbing onto the grunge image, trying to perhaps

mask its own inauthenticity in the guise of more authentically created grunge music. Whereas

grunge truly was the music of a unique subcultural movement (promotion through Sub Pop and

local radio and fanzines, the relationship between Seattle's artists and audiences, etc.), post-

grunge was stealing the attitude and angst of this subculture, capitalizing on public perceptions

of the grunge sound to maximize the new artists' fame. Of the banality of the sounds of post-

grunge, Eddie Vedder said,

That first record, it's really "throaty" [laughs]. It didn't mean to be, but it became

a vocal style that became co-opted by certain bands that I feel made *really* shitty

music. And they weren't making those records until we were on, like, our third

record—or even fourth. And what's funny—the bridge would sound like Layne,

the verse would sound like me, and the chorus would sound like Kurt. Or they'd

look like me and sound like Kurt, or look like Kurt and sound like me [laughs].

All this weird amalgamation stuff. (Prato, 2009, p. 470)

The music of post-grunge was wonderfully illustrative of the ways in which the spectacle can

come to define itself even in the presence of authentic expression. The sound and subculture of

grunge was boiled down into an easily commodified, co-opted consumer product. At the

forefront of this shift was the rock band Creed, who is remarkable mostly for deriving their

sound directly from Pearl Jam. Scott Stapp, Creed's lead singer, sung in a similar deep-voiced

tone as Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder, as noted in his quote above, and Creed was cast as the

predominant post-grunge band. In fact, Vedder's vocal style seemed to be a recipe for success

for many of the bands that would meet success with similarly deep-voiced singers. As Anderson

(2007) points out, "Meanwhile, every other band that put an album out between 1992 and 1997

sounded *exactly* like Pearl Jam…In Pearl Jam's case, the 'regular guys' stance made them pretty

universal—if you had a couple of arena-size riffs, a ballad about abuse, and a brooding baritone

for a front man, you had yourself a platinum rock band" (p. 77). The fact is, when music is not

taken into a new direction, it can lose its ties to notions of authenticity, particularly when the

ultimate goal is to become a platinum rock band. Moreover, when a musical form developed

over time in a subcultural context is co-opted and made into a derivative commodity, it severely

undermines the community potentialities of the musical form. This is particularly egregious in

the spectacle, where an uncaring public continues to buy products similar to, say, grunge music

without investing in the ideas that made grunge a success in the first place.

The popularity of post-grunge, then, points to the ways in which the culture industry is able to seduce the larger society away from making deeper affective investments. In fact, given that grunge was presenting such an alternative view, it could be argued that society, through a further enhancement of the image culture through the culture industry, was easily led to not invest in the new ideas that were being presented. It was much more convenient to consume the derivative form. It was the sound that was upsetting, it was the ideas that surrounded it, so post-grunge was a way to buy and sell the sound and feel of grunge without having to make the larger connections to all that was entailed by the authentic community of grunge.

Legacy

While it is certainly important to note the rupture in the spectacle represented by Lollapalooza, questions still remain as to what it means today. The tours were certainly groundbreaking, incorporating many theretofore unknowns who would eventually have their own significant successes, but aside from this, how much can we take from these early festivals? We can look back with fondness, perhaps, at the way the festival was calling into question all of the spectacular media that was happening around it, but, again, we're forced to ponder how much of this is sustainable. For instance, while Lollapalooza, and the early 90s alternative turned mainstream music that was part and parcel of the festival's success, existed in direct contrast to the spectacle of other music happening at the time, the Madonna's and Milli Vanilli's of the world, this did not prevent the spectacle from reestablishing dominance just a few years later, with the introduction of new stars whose music was subordinate to their image. And given the lofty political and social goals of the festival, it is hard to truly estimate whether or not there was an effective or affective change in the political attitudes of concertgoers. Like Elavsky's (2008)

Live 8 example, it is hard to imagine that the audiences at the early Lollapalooza festivals were willing to engage in the ideas presented more so than just trying to enjoy their day of performances. As he states, "Lacking the means to immediately connect their participation with a broader political praxis, viewers had little impulse to reflect on Live 8's larger goal nor their identity and role as political agents in it" (p. 14).

This is not to paint a negative picture of what was happening at Lollapalooza. Quite the opposite, the mere presentation of these alternative images and ideas is itself revolutionary in a spectacular society inundated with consumer logics in that it ruptures the established image culture. But it is notable to point out that this opposition may not particularly serve the goals laid out at the outset of the festival. Like the punk movement before them, those involved with the festival were applying semiotics to articulations of the notions of community and authenticity. And while people may have come across revolutionary ideas in contact with some of the activist organizations present, this does not mean that they walked away from the festival engaged in the new ideas; it was easy to leave their newfound political engagement at the festival when they left. Garofalo (2005) perhaps best sums up the legacy left by Lollapalooza in its earliest incarnations:

> However, the fact is that all the Lollapalooza tours crossed lines of class, race, and gender in ways that most tours would have avoided like the plague…While it lasted, however, Lollapalooza presented a reasonably representative cross section of what was going on musically in youth culture, and each did so with far more heart and spontaneity than the festival held on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Woodstock. Because Woodstock '94 performances were broadcast only on pay-per-view, MTV was temporarily reduced to the rock equivalent f the Home

Shopping Network with its incessant merchandising schemes to make up for the

lack of performances. It was so not alternative. (p. 377)

Lollapalooza was clearly an attempt to foster further investment in alternative expressions, and

create a rupture in the spectacle with potentially lasting implications. However, Lollapalooza

2007 would bring this further into question.

Chapter IV

        In the period following the end of the original Lollapalooza festivals, the alternative

voices that had been so crucial to the music industry of the early 1990s gave way to an

intensified spectacle aesthetic. The new stars of the late 90s were just that, stars. They served

little purpose beyond their role as stars in a star-driven media spectacle. Perhaps no one is more

indicative of this trend than Britney Spears.

        Like Madonna before her, Britney Spears is representative of an almost entirely

inauthentic reality. Key to understanding this is the knowledge that Britney herself was largely a

creation of the Disney hit factory. Coming from Mickey Mouse Club fame, she has spent her

entire career within the spectacle. The tabloidization of her life is particularly illuminating of her

spectacular representation of fame. Even in the early days of Britney's career, questions

surrounding the teen idol's virginity were themselves simply distractions. For example, the

widespread investment in these questions are out of sync with the actual contributions Britney

made to the world of pop music. The only importance of these questions, really, were as

marketing ploys. It was her ability to play the dual roles of vixen and child that was tantamount

to her early successes. The importance of this, of course, is that it is a presentation of a

completely inauthentic reality, not because they may have been lying about her purity, which

may be indicated through the bizarre behavior that would come in the years to follow, but

because these images should have no bearing on her success as a musician. In fact, the bizarre

behavior that did follow Britney's early career is further indicative of the ways that society

reinvested in the spectacle following the explosion of alternative music when one considers how

much the consumer public invested, literally and figuratively, into the story of Britney Spears.

Her apparent function has always been as a gross archetype of consumerism; an image, not a

person or art form, being mass-marketed and sold as a distraction and escape from the banality of the everyday.

Britney Spears is amongst a host of pop stars which further undercut the concept of authenticity. As noted previously, Milli Vanilli sparked a rather infamous controversy when it was revealed that they had been lip-synching, and in fact not even singing on their own records. Reading this in the context of the spectacle, of course, Rob and Fab were simply the rather innocuous frames for which these records would be marketed. They were brought in for the purposes only of providing an image, no matter how inauthentic. And while the music industry must have at least feigned interest in authenticity in 1990, to the degree, at least, that those in the industry were willing to take away their top prize when the rupture in the spectacle was officially revealed, in the years following Milli Vanilli's cementing their infamy, even this wholly inauthentic act is now widely accepted in society.

In fact, Britney Spears' own non-controversy in Australia seems to highlight the role of the spectacle in society, as well as the seeming indifference, especially among American audiences, to notions of authenticity. During Spears' *Circus* tour, she was panned by critics in Australia upset by her lip-synching in concert. What's interesting about this case is that while the Australian critics seemed to be at least implying that notions of authenticity mattered even in pop music, American media were shocked, not by the fact that Britney would lip-sync in concert, but by the fact that the Australia media saw this as a problem. In fact, *Rolling Stone* had this to say in an article about the Australian controversy, "*Rolling Stone* noted Spears' lip-synched performance when the tour kicked off back in March, but that only minimally detracted from the live spectacle of the *Circus* show" (Kreps, 2009). Whereas Milli Vanilli caused a shock when their lip-sync controversy broke, fans are now actually willing to accept and even defend these

actions. In asking how she possibly pull of an entire dance routine and maintain perfect pitch, the spectacle is perpetuated. Her ability to perform is subordinate to the performance itself. This incident is completely detached from notions of authenticity. Moreover, when a pop star is able to simply act out her songs, without having to actually sing a note to a live crowd of nearly 20,000 paying customers, and the public is willing to accept that the performance is more important than the actual music, we're clearly living in a spectacular era.

This is true, too, of the logics of production of the popular television show *American Idol*. As Barker and Taylor (2007) have pointed out,

> When watching a show such as *American Idol* (or, in the UK, *Pop Idol*), we can feel as though authenticity doesn't matter any more. Reality television and pop music have melded together in a seamless blend of light entertainment. Like VH-1's *Behind the Music*, the show reveals and glorifies the manufacturing of music. The pop music business has momentarily succeeded in turning its darker arts into a central achievement to be celebrated as the creation of successful pop acts and records is seen as an end in itself. Celebrity is the ideal, and the struggle to attain success is treated as more important that the actual music. (p. 323)

Again, the celebration is of celebrity, commodity, and performance, not of the musical form or its underlying abilities to foster more significant investment, pointing to the societal institutionalization of the spectacle. The commodity form is clearly, here, superseding notions of authenticity and community, which themselves fail because they require a further investment beyond commodity.

Lollapalooza in the Present Day

It was against this backdrop of an increasingly celebrity-obsessed spectacle society that Lollapalooza was resurrected in the mid-2000s. Given, though, the recouperation of the alternative musical forms at the heart of the original festivals, as well as the further expansion of the commodity spectacle, Lollapalooza was resurrected as a changed festival.

Lollapalooza was resurrected in 2003, trying to revive its original nomadic ways. Unfortunately, this idea sputtered, with weak ticket sales derailing another 2004 travelling show. In 2005, however, the festival was revived in its current form, as a three-day, one-city festival in Chicago, Illinois. This new festival was remarkably different from its original, including corporate sponsorships and a noticeably consumerist edge. On the resurrection of Lollapalooza, Ted Gardner, one of the co-founders of the early festivals, said, "I have no feelings, it is all about making money" (Cohen and Grossweiner, 2003); contrasting sharply with the quote of Ian Astbury in Chapter III which highlighted Lollapalooza's community potentialities over its commercial viability. And given that the early festivals were relatively successful in fostering a larger community concept, this corporatization raises larger issues when an alternative rock festival includes the adidas Stage, the Bud Light Stage, and the AT&T Stage. While it would be foolish to ignore that these corporate interests are no doubt the reason why the festival was able to make its revival, this still largely implies issues related to the power relations of corporations in contrast to alternative forms of musical expression.

The corporatization of the festival, then, informs how we can interpret another rupture in the spectacle. In 2007, Pearl Jam headlined the festival, appearing for the first time since their time on the 1992 tour. This again raises questions of authenticity as it relates to nostalgia. The choice of Pearl Jam as headliner was certainly made with full regard to their previous spot as

Lollapalooza headliner in a time when the festival was defined by its alternative status. What's more, that Pearl Jam represented an authentic artist allowed Lollapalooza to cling to notions of authenticity even as the commercialization surrounding the festival collapsed it further into the spectacle, evidenced further by the censorship of Pearl Jam during their 2007 performance.

At the 2007 festival, Pearl Jam, now well known for their political activism, infused their performance with political musings about then President George W. Bush. During their set, they began to play Pink Floyd's "Another Brick in the Wall, Pt. 2" as a tag on their song "Daughter," not really an uncommon thing for the band to do. On this night, however, Vedder altered the lyrics, singing "George Bush: Leave this world alone, George Bush: Find yourself another home." Unfortunately, these lines, and only these lines, were censored from AT&T's live Lollapalooza webcast. Though AT&T denied claims of censorship, the band and its fans were understandably upset about the incident, which certainly calls into question Lollapalooza's continued role as a forum for alternative expression. In a statement released by the band, they stated,

> AT&T's actions strike at the heart of the public's concerns over the power that
> corporations have when it comes to determining what the public sees and hears
> through communications media. If a company that is controlling a webcast is
> cutting out bits of our performance—not based on laws, but on their own
> preferences and interpretations—fans have little choice but to watch the censored
> version. What happened to us this weekend was a wake-up call, and it's about
> something much bigger than the censorship of a rock band. (Kaufman, 2007)

Certainly, as much as it is disconcerting that this type of censorship could happen at all, it is all the more alarming given that it happened at Lollapalooza, a festival that was started to celebrate

the alternative, whether in music or ideology. This was a very interesting juxtaposition of Lollapalooza against itself, especially given that Pearl Jam was involved. The experience of the early Lollapalooza festivals, a notable rupture with the spectacle, incorporating true attempts at community building, contrasts sharply with the image of the resurrected Lollapalooza. In fact, it seems as if, like grunge's fashion and sound before it, the resurrection of Lollapalooza was an attempt in many ways to co-opt the concept. Lollapalooza represented the authentic, and the Lollapalooza name seems to now be used in its representation of authenticity, not as a reintroduction of authenticity in the spectacle.

From Pearl Jam's perspective, the fact that they were able to elicit a response from AT&T in the wake of the controversy seems to support their own ability to speak back to power. And while ultimately there seems to be little that has come from this controversy, Pearl Jam was raising an issue that was probably largely out of public perception of the event. In our increasingly consumerist culture, there seems to be an acceptance of spectacular visions of reality, which ultimately causes us to lose sight of the overriding issue of corporate logics working hand-in-hand with a representative alternative festival. This largely informs the way the spectacle is able to operate. It is not to suggest that society is filled with dupes, but the commercial logics of the spectacle have been so forthrightly reinforced throughout our shared histories that issues surrounding the corporatization of even sacred cows such as an alternative music festival, like Lollapalooza or Woodstock, or countercultural music scenes, like the 60s counterculture or grunge, go largely unnoticed and unreported.

Conclusion

The story of Lollapalooza works well in the framework we've established given the postmodern precepts explained in Chapter I. First of all, the festival clearly shows the evolving nature of meaning, as it challenged traditional notions of the festival, as well as grappling with issues of authenticity and community, and what it meant to be alternative. Moreover, the festival's later incarnations prove the slipperiness of these concepts, as the authenticity and community inherent in the early festivals seem only a selling point in the later incarnations, undermining the authenticity of the early festivals.

Moreover, the rise and fall of the alternative musics of the 1990s seem indicative of the waning of affect. While these sounds represented something new early on, the public on the whole seemed to quickly tire of the constant barrage of representations of real life, raising serious questions about the affective power of music. This music was not escapist, and while it sold well, it seemed to ask too much of an audience used to simply buying records, not learning from them or thinking more deeply about them. Again, this raises questions related to music's ability to influence and shape our critical consciousness.

This, too, points out the ways in which the image culture and the society of the spectacle have informed the rise and fall of the alternative music scenes of the early 1990s. As noted in Chapter III, even grunge was boiled down to its most easily commodifiable fashion points and sold. What's more, the music and style that would follow was highly derivative of grunge, essentially co-opting the image without its inherent investments. The same seems to be true of the revived Lollapalooza. Whereas the early Lollapalooza festivals seem to stand for an authentic reality represented by alternative music, the new Lollapalooza seems to be undercutting that aesthetic, especially with its use of corporate sponsorships. And the lack of

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investment in making the connections between an alternative festival set against commercialization and censorship vs. a manifestation of that same festival that invites commercial interests and their censorship is indicative of the larger societal complacency within the spectacle.

Our musical history has been shaped by the authentic representations of many musical communities, ranging from London to Athens, Georgia, to Seattle. These communities have done well to navigate the shifting notions of authenticity that have been indicated through their various rises and falls. As Elvis Costello explains,

Rock 'n' roll has always thrived on people not necessarily willfully throwing

things into the mix, but sort of stumbling on things, crossing over, short circuits

and missed connections. The people who have the tight spandex pants on, and

their hair just so, and the guitar at the right angle aren't it at all…It's a facsimile,

it's something that was previously rock 'n' roll, that doesn't make it rock 'n' roll

forever.

So the larger goal must be to find new ways to break the spectacle. When punk hairdos and outlandish clothing become part of the spectacle society, new ruptures have to be found that move our collective musical histories beyond the commodified ruptures toward a new authentic expression. The shifting, contested notions of authenticity and community are more fully understood within ruptures in the spectacle, whereby deeper meaning-making and affective investment are fostered over simple consumption patterns.

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	Telecommunications Student Marshal
	National Honors Society
Activities:	Citizen's Fire Company #10 of Newport
	Relay for Life