

Abstract

Using a method of reflexive ethnography, this thesis deals with a question of masculinity performance in the Czech extreme metal milieu (to be specific I am concerned with the brutal death metal and related sub-genres). Participants of the brutal death metal subculture either in the position of performers or audience are with a very few exceptions men. Brutality, harshness, extremeness and other values are the main aesthetic criteria, which – as we can observe while doing the research – the participants connect with a coherent collection of ideas about a certain ideal of dominant manhood. To achieve these values to the greatest extent possible the musicians use particular musical features and topics of the compositions; and so does both the musicians and the audience via their visual image, with using specific kind of behaviour and having fixed movements and dancing during the music production.

On the basis of an analysis of these values and means of their manifestation I am concerned with the question of what specific characteristics the masculine identity, which is performed in the given subculture, has. My research data show that these are: 1) mutual affinity with the other participants, 2) power as an ability of an aggressive attack as well as one's own endurance, and 3) coarseness, lack of refinement, and thus „authenticity“.

It is also apparent that this subculture features an essentialistic gender discourse where the characteristics mentioned above are still understood as „masculine“ in the first place. Therefore, I believe this fact encourages and explains the absence of women. Performing these values in such a milieu where essentialistic gender discourse prevails, women are taking the risk of losing their position of being perceived as enough „feminine“.

As a material for the analysis I used my notes from a participant observation in a concert- and festival-events environment, interviews with chosen participants and a certain musical, text-based and visual material. The theoretical basis for my thinking was laid mainly by Judith Butler's theory of the gender performativity and by other texts which further develop this concept.