

Female rock stars and addiction in autobiographies

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ABSTRACT

AIM – This article analyses addiction and rehabilitation as described in the autobiographies, memoirs and diaries of famous female rock artists. The article shows how female artists portray rock culture, addiction and causes to addiction. **MATERIAL** – The data includes 16 autobiographical books published between 1982 and 2010. These books were published first in English. Female rock artists are marked as the first authors, and all of the books use first-person narration. **METHOD** – The analysis relies on thematic qualitative analysis and narratology. Data were encoded for addiction, object of addiction, rehabilitation and type of recovery from addiction. Gender was analysed as a separate category. In addition, narrative strategies used in the books were analysed. **RESULTS** - Addictions and rehabilitation are prevalent themes in autobiographical rock books written by female authors. Many authors write about their personal experiences of addiction and rehabilitation. Those authors who do not portray their personal problems with alcohol or drugs write about staying sober as a way of coping in the male-dominated rock world. **CONCLUSIONS** – Rock 'n' roll mythology is changing. Rock artists no longer celebrate their excesses, but rather write about their negative experiences with alcohol and drugs. Rock narratives by female stars portray social and gendered settings which lead to addiction.

KEY WORDS – Gender, addiction, drugs, alcoholism, popular culture.

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Introduction

Male musicians and artists have traditionally been notorious for their excessive and eccentric lifestyles, which have led to fatal accidents and tragedies. Some of the most (in)famous alcohol and drug-related deaths have involved male rock musicians, such as Brian Jones (1969), Jimi Hendrix (1971), Jim Morrison (1971), Elvis Presley (1977), Keith Moon (1978) and John Bonham (1980). The history of rock music also has

many famous female addicts, including Janis Joplin, Marianne Faithfull and Nico from The Velvet Underground. Within the past decade, such female stars as Britney Spears, Lindsey Lohan and Paris Hilton have been in the tabloids because of their problems with alcohol and drugs (Goode, 2010; Hellman & Rantala, 2012; Podnieks, 2009). The deaths of soul/R&B singer and songwriter Amy Winehouse (2011) and

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pop diva Whitney Houston (2012) have raised further debates on drug and alcohol abuse among female stars.

This article analyses addiction and rehabilitation as described in the autobiographies, memoirs and diaries of internationally recognized female rock artists. Rock autobiographies have become increasingly popular in the past two decades (Oksanen, 2012a; Oksanen, 2012b; Swiss, 2005), but women's rock autobiographies have received little scholarly attention. Previous studies on female rock musicians have tended to concentrate on their position in the male-dominated rock business (Auslander, 2004; Clawson, 1999; Frith & McRobbie, 1990; Gaar, 2002; Gottlieb & Wald, 1994; McLeod, 2002; Rhodes, 2005; Strong, 2011; Walt, 1998; Whiteley, 1997). Also, there are relatively few systematic studies on rock music and addiction (or drug and alcohol abuse) (Markert, 2001; Oksanen, 2011; T. Sanders, M. Sanders & White, 2006; Shapiro, 2003). The study of cultural products such as rock music, rock books and rock lyrics nevertheless has considerable social relevance because of the popularity of these very products.

In alcohol and drugs research, some studies have explored the role of addicted female celebrities in the media (Atkinson, Elliot, Bellis & Sumnall, 2011; Hellman & Rantala, 2012; Shaw, Whitehead & Giles, 2010). More research has been done on the gendered media images of the use of alcohol and drugs (Bernhardsson & Bogren, 2012; Bogren, 2011a; Bogren, 2011b; Huggins, 2006; Huggins 2010; Lyons, Dalton & Hoy, 2006; Törrönen, 2011; Törrönen & Juslin, 2011). Sociological studies have also addressed the importance of gender roles in drinking and drug use (Bogren,

2008; Demant & Törrönen, 2011; Holmila & Raitasalo, 2005; Hunt, Moloney & Evans, 2010; Järvinen, 2001; Room, 1996; Törrönen & Maunu, 2007), and epidemiological research literature on the physiological differences between men and women is expanding (Brady, Back & Greenfield, 2009).

This paper aims to enhance our understanding of addictions represented in the autobiographical books of female rock stars. It is important to study cultural images of addiction if we want to understand why people engage in self-harm. This article uses both thematic qualitative analysis and narratology in exploring how the books by female artists portray rock culture, addiction and causes related to the getting addicted. I also emphasise how a resolution is sought to the conflict caused by addiction.

Addiction, gender and rock

Twenty-first century popular culture is awash with images of addiction and rehabilitation. Addiction has become a culturally recurrent concept whose meaning has expanded from substance dependence to a variety of compulsive behaviours, such as workaholism, compulsive shopping and sex addiction (Furedi, 2004). Addictions, and recovery from addiction in particular, are discussed in popular memoirs and television talk shows such as *Oprah*, where people confess their innermost secrets such as the trauma of sexual abuse and addiction (Gilmore, 2010). During the past decades, various famous female actors, models, musicians and political figures have publicly disclosed their efforts of combating addictions (White & Kilbourne, 2006).

Despite the current discussion about the drug-related deaths of Amy Winehouse

and Whitney Houston, little new has emerged in the image of the addicted female artist. Jazz artists in particular were well known for their drug problems even before rock music was born. Jazz had its downcast and addicted female front figures, such as Billie Holiday, the star of the 1940s jazz (Jackson, 2005; Shapiro, 2003). Holiday was also among the first musicians to write about her own addictions: her *Lady Sings the Blues* (1956) portrays her descent into heroin addiction, alcoholism and various legal problems, and then her attempt to “fight the dope” (Holiday & Dufty, 1956/2006, p. 220). Holiday died only three years later in 1959 at the age of 44. Her book was made into a Hollywood film in 1972.

Rock stars carried on the tragic legacy of jazz artists. By the early 1970s rock music had lost some of its greatest talents, including Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison. Another casualty was the singer and songwriter Janis Joplin, who died in 1970 of a heroin overdose at the age of 27. Joplin and her colleague Grace Slick from Jefferson Airplane represented a new generation of independent female artists in the male-dominated rock business. At the time, in the United States where gender roles were in flux (Rhodes, 2005), Joplin not only broke many of the traditional roles assigned to gender, but she also gained extensive first-hand experience of being a female star in the all-male rock world. She suffered from loneliness and ambivalence caused by the divide between her on-stage and off-stage personas. These problems enforced her descent into alcoholism and drug abuse (Jackson, 2005).

Rock business has traditionally been the homosocial playground of male musi-

cians, managers, producers and journalists. Homosociality is understood here as non-sexual preference for the company of the same sex (Lipman-Blumen, 1976, p. 16). Female creative roles have been traditionally mediated through a masculine view of female ability (Frith & McRobbie, 1990, p. 373). Forms of male bonding have varied from an exclusion of women to blatant sexism and misogyny (Rhodes, 2005). Rock music has been canonized as masculine music while pop music is usually considered feminine (Mayhew, 1999). Women are often missing from the histories of rock, even though they have earned their place in the rock world. A striking example is that *The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time* by the *Rolling Stone* music journal (2005) includes only six albums by female artists in the top 100, the first of them being *Blue* (1971) by Joni Mitchell at number 30 (*Rolling Stone*, 2005).

But female artists have been more than just passive victims of male hegemony. Women have been involved in the rock scene not only as artists and producers, but also as journalists since the 1960s. Feminist scholars have emphasized that even groupies should not be considered mere passive objects of male exploitation (Rhodes, 2005). In fact, the world of groupies was made into a book already in 1969 in *Groupie* by Jenny Fabian and Johnny Byrne, who portray 19-year-old Katie telling her story of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. She is not a mere helpless victim and object of male desire, but rather a subject of her own desires – at least to some extent. Similarly *I'm with the Band: Confessions of a Groupie* by Pamela Des Barres (1987/2005) depicts a female groupie expressing the sexual freedoms enabled by

the rock culture. These books are important chapters in the autobiographical writing on rock culture. A much darker vision of the world of rock has been painted by the girlfriends and wives of rock musicians (Curtis, 1995; Forsberg Weiland & Warren, 2009; Kennealy, 1992).

Male rock stars have traditionally celebrated both sexuality and transgression through an excessive use of drugs. This – a rather easy route for men – has been much more problematic for women, who had to transgress cultural and social norms especially in the 1960s and 1970s (Rhodes, 2005). Some of them, such as Suzi Quatro, broke the limits of the traditional feminine position (Auslander, 2004) and others adopted male behaviour patterns at times, such as excessive drug use. Physiologically, women are more vulnerable to alcohol and drugs than men (Brady, Back, & Greenfield, 2009), and female musicians have therefore had to face much sooner the consequences of excessive alcohol and drugs use for their bodies than their male colleagues and partners. Some, like Janis Joplin, became trapped in the male world. They did not find alternative ways of coping in the rock business. Joplin's overdose death exemplifies how destructive the role of being "one of the boys" may turn (Gaar, 2002, p. 97).

In this article, the definition of addiction follows Jim Orford's (2001) concept of *excessive appetites*, which underlines the problematic nature of addiction. Addictions are not only bad habits; they have serious consequences to the subjects. It should be stressed that consumption of alcohol or even the strongest drugs does not make use excessive as such. Orford's concept gives an explicit guideline for

analysis, which is important if we want to study addictions and not simply the use of alcohol and drugs. The theory also takes into account the role of culture, and addictions or excessive appetites also involve a question of normality. If we say that an appetite is excessive, we must ask: "exceeds whose definition of normal or moderate?" (Orford 2001, p. 260). It is therefore vital to understand that cultural beliefs, norms and values can alter perceptions of what is considered an addiction (Elster, 1999).

According to Orford (2001), excessive appetite entails an over-attachment to a substance, object or activity. Excessive appetites are habit-forming activities that are rewarding for the subject. They become costly for the subject and may cause financial loss, disruption in close relationships and problems with the law. Also, excessive appetites involve psychological and social conflicts resulting from the deleterious effects or costs, which serves to distinguish between troublesome appetites and relatively normal appetites. Conflicts include non-objective thinking and problems with self-control and with social relationships. Conflicts may cause feelings of remorse, guilt and shame. They may lead to keeping the behaviour secret and may be manifest in the use of various justifications of the appetite to oneself and others. Eventually there may be pressure to find some kind of resolution to the problems caused by the excessive use or behaviour.

Although gender is only briefly mentioned in Orford's (2001) theory, he does emphasise the social norms related to the conflicts caused by attachment to excess use or behaviour. Social norms are often gendered: they have a different meaning for men and women. Some authors state

that addict women become more stigmatized than men (White & Kilbourne, 2006). My analysis of the data will tackle the gender issue and show that addiction is not a gender-neutral concept. It has different social and psychological consequences for men and women. My particular aim is to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How many of the autobiographical books by female rock artists discuss addiction and rehabilitation?
- 2) How are addictions and rehabilitation portrayed?
- 3) What is the role of gender in the narratives?

Data and methods

The data consists of 16 autobiographical books by female rock artists. These books are part of a larger data set of autobiographical rock books (autobiographies, memoirs and diaries) by internationally recognized artists (see Oksanen, 2013). The data were collected between 2007 and 2011 by going through library and bookstore databases online. In total, 96 books were identified during the data collection period. The members of the most important rock groups in history were searched separately. The selected books were published before 2011. While many of the books are written together with a second writer or an editor, rock artists are marked as first authors, and all of the books use first-person narration. Only books published originally in English were included. Hence, some books by well-known international artists were not included in the data, such as *That's Why the Lady is a Punk* by Nina Hagen (published in German) (Hagen & Feige, 2002).

Most of the books are by British or American artists who have had a major impact on rock music worldwide and who made their commercial breakthrough in different decades. Of all the books, only 16 were by female rock stars. These 16 books are by 14 different female rock artists (in total 4,542 pages, published between 1982 and 2010). Marianne Faithfull and Cherie Currie (from *The Runaways*) have both written two autobiographies. The books include icons such as Grace Slick, Suzi Quatro, Patti Smith, Debbie Harry, Tina Turner and Marianne Faithfull (see table 1). The musical styles of these artists vary from early rock and roll (Ronnie Spector, Tina Turner) to 1960s hippie era rock music (Slick) and to 1970s punk and post punk (Patti Smith, Debbie Harry, Cherie Currie) and later developments, including alternative/industrial metal (Sean Yseult from *White Zombie*). All of the artists nevertheless represent rock music in its different variations and developments.

The earliest of the books in this study was written by Debbie Harry (from *Blondie*). Her *Making Tracks* was published in 1982. Two other titles were dated to the 1980s. Three books were from the 1990s, five from the 2000s, and five books were published in 2010 (see table 2). Autobiographical rock books have been published in increasing numbers during the last years and they have become an important part of music business and marketing (Oksanen, 2013). The current autobiographical boom also shows that rock music has been around for quite some time. Musicians have aged and have wanted to write about their experiences in the music business. The female writers were on average 50 years old when their books were published.

Table 1: Selected autobiographical books by female rock artists, 1982–2010

| Artist | Book |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Pat Benatar | Benatar, P., & Bale Cox, P. (2010). <i>Between a heart and a rock place: A memoir</i> . New York: HarperCollins. |
| Belinda Carlisle (The Go-Go's) | Carlisle, B. (2010). <i>Lips unsealed: A memoir</i> . New York: Crown Publishers. |
| Marshall Chapman | Chapman, M. (2003). <i>Goodbye, little rock and roller</i> . New York: St. Martin's Press. |
| Cherie Currie (The Runaways) | Currie, C., & Schusterman N. (1989). <i>Neon angel: The Cherie Currie story</i> . Los Angeles: Price Stern Sloan. Currie, C., & O'Neill, T. (2010). <i>Neon angel: A memoir of a Runaway</i> . New York: HarperCollins. |
| Melissa Etheridge | Etheridge, M., & Morton, L. (2001). <i>The truth is... my life in love and music</i> . New York: Villard Books. |
| Marianne Faithfull | Faithfull, M., & Dalton, D. (1994/2000). <i>Faithfull: Autobiography</i> . New York: Cooper Square Press. Faithfull, M., & Dalton, D. (2007). <i>Memories, dreams and reflections</i> . London: Forth Estate. |
| Debbie Harry (Blondie) | Harry, D., Stein, C., & Bockris, V. (1982). <i>Making tracks: The rise of Blondie</i> . New York: Dell Publishing. |
| Courtney Love (Hole) | Love, C. (2006). <i>Dirty blond: The diaries of Courtney Love</i> . New York: Faber and Faber. |
| Suzi Quatro | Quatro, S. (2007). <i>Unzipped</i> . London: Hodder. |
| Grace Slick (Jefferson Airplane) | Slick, G., & Cagan, A. (1998). <i>Somebody to love? A rock-and-roll memoir</i> . New York: Warner Books. |
| Patti Smith | Smith, P. (2010). <i>Just Kids</i> . London: Bloomsbury. |
| Ronnie Spector (The Ronettes) | Spector, R., & Waldron, V. (1990). <i>Be my baby: How I survived mascara, miniskirts, and madness, or my life as a fabulous Ronette</i> . New York: Harmony Books. |
| Tina Turner | Turner, T., & Loder, K. (1987). <i>I, Tina</i> . New York: Penguin Books. |
| Sean Yseult (White Zombie) | Yseult, S. (2010). <i>I'm in the band: Backstage notes from the chick in White Zombie</i> . New York: Soft Skull Press. |

Table 2: Overview of the data

| Decade | Number of books | Pages | Mean age of authors |
|--------|-----------------|-------|---------------------|
| 1980s | 3 | 624 | 45 |
| 1990s | 3 | 1131 | 51 |
| 2000s | 5 | 1483 | 51 |
| 2010 | 5 | 1304 | 54 |
| Total | 16 | 4542 | 51 |

My aim here is to study these books as texts. The starting point for the analysis is to show how these books represent and construct reality. I approach the books through textual analysis, leaving out of the analysis extratextual explanations. Autobiographies have specific stylistic con-

ventions and rules of genre, and, as such, they have become an integral part of the Western mode of self-production (Bruner & Weisser, 1991; Gilmore, 2001). Autobiographic books purport to be factual, but they are always potentially fictive (Brown, 1999, pp. 49–50). They do not refer to “life

as lived”, but rather “a life is created or constructed by the act of autobiography” (Bruner, 1993, p. 38). Hence, the key point is not whether autobiographies are fact or fiction, but it is rather the representational level of discourses, myths and narratives that is important.

Thematic analysis is a systematic method of categorising and analysing qualitative data (Boyatzis, 1998). I first coded the data into simple thematic categories. The selected thematic categories were partly theory-driven and partly grounded on the previous qualitative analysis of the autobiographical rock books (Oksanen, 2012a). This descriptive analysis of the text aims to show 1) how prevalent the themes of addiction and rehabilitation are in the books; 2) what kind of substances or forms of behaviour are described as excessive and 3) what the methods are of recovering from the addictions. The coding, too, follows the concept of *excessive appetite* by Jim Orford (2001), which is used as a synonym for addiction in this study. The following coding strategy was used:

- 1) *Addiction* (yes/no): Whether the books described excessive appetites in any form.
- 2) *Personal addiction* (yes/no): Whether the authors described their own use as excessive.
- 3) *Rehabilitation* (yes/no): Whether some kind of alcohol/drug/addiction treatment or mutual aid group meetings, such as AA, were mentioned.
- 4) *Personal rehabilitation* (yes/no): Whether the authors had participated in treatment or mutual aid group meetings.
- 5) *Coping*: A) *Self-recovery* refers to those who claim to have recovered from the

addiction on their own, even if they may have received some kind of treatment at some point of their lives; B) *rehab* includes those who claim to have recovered via treatment or mutual aid group meetings; C) *continued excess* includes those who continue in their excesses.

- 6) *Object of addiction* refers to the substances or modes of behaviour that the books portray as excessive. The following groups were categorized (yes/no): A) *alcohol*, B) *opiates*, C) *cocaine*, D) *tranquillizers* (a miscellaneous category of barbiturates, benzodiazepines, analgesics and sedative-hypnotic drugs either prescribed by a doctor or purchased on the illegal markets), E) *amphetamines*, F) *behaviour* (such as sex, eating disorders), G) *cannabis*, H) *tobacco* and I) *LSD*.

In addition to a thematic analysis based on the thematic categories, my analysis relies on narrative theory and methodology (for example, Gubrium & Holstein, 2009; Riessman, 2008). Narratological methods have been previously used in the study of addict narratives (Hänninen & Koski-Jännes, 1999; Järvinen, 2004; Oksanen, 2012a), demonstrating how addictions and recovery from addictions are narrated. The analysis uses thematic categories as a starting point and aims to show 1) how female rock artists portray addictions; 2) how they portray the process of getting addicted, if they have personal problems of their own and 3) how they have coped with these problems. Gender issues are underlined in the analysis, which seeks to understand the position of female artists in the male-dominated rock culture.

Portrayals of addiction and rehabilitation

These autobiographies, memoirs and diaries, 16 books by 14 women, portray the rock scene and culture through different generations of rock from the 1960s (Slick and Turner, for example) to the 1970s (Smith, Harry, Currie among them) and the 1980s (for example, Love and Yseult). Not surprisingly, rock books portray excesses of rock culture. Belinda Carlisle (from *The Go-Go's*) writes about her experiences in the rock business: "Drugs and booze were plentiful, easily accessible, and considered part of the job. It was a very indulgent and dangerous way to live." (Carlisle, 2010, p. 93) Similarly, American singer-songwriter Marshall Chapman notes how drugs were an integral part of the whole lifestyle that almost destroyed her: "Mix true love with youth, ambition, the drugs, and the times and you just might get some great rock 'n' roll. It's a miracle that we didn't kill ourselves." (Chapman, 2003, p. 87)

In addition to the use of alcohol and various drugs, female rock autobiographies portray problematic, excessive and out-of-control behaviour and substance use. Only two books do not include addictions, and one of these, too, by Debbie Harry, considers drugs potentially problematic. She writes about quitting the drugs before engaging in problems: "I was using drugs in my life, but I didn't want them to become my life. A lot of people don't make this distinction and the drugs do become their life. I got smart and stopped." (Harry, Stein & Bockris, 1982, p. 11). The other book which does not include the addiction theme is Sean Yseult's autobiography. Other artists explicitly discuss both their personal addictions and addictions of

family members, friends and colleagues in the music business.

Table 3 shows what kinds of addiction the books portray. The most common addiction is alcoholism, but opiate and cocaine addiction follow close behind. Some books talk about problems caused by excessive use of tranquillizers and amphetamines. Tobacco and behavioural addictions, such as eating disorders, are also mentioned. Cherie Currie describes ignoring her own drug and eating problems and her father's alcoholism: "No, of course I'm not anorexic, and of course Dad's not dying, and of course everything is wonderful and perfect in the whole world and there is nothing to worry about." (Currie & Schusterman, 1989, p. 137). Marianne Faithfull writes both about anorexia and impulsive out-of-control behaviours: "I'd do coke, write songs and when I couldn't think of anything else to do I'd go in the bathroom and pick my face. I did a lot of shopping." (Faithfull & Dalton, 1994/2000, p. 260).

Nine books (by seven authors) describe severe personal problems with drugs, alcohol or excessive behaviour. These artists (shown in the table 3) are Cherie Currie, Ronnie Spector, Marianne Faithfull, Grace Slick, Marshall Chapman, Courtney Love and Belinda Carlisle, who all discuss visiting alcohol/drug/addiction treatment or mutual aid group meetings, such as the AA. The artists often give a whole list of different types of treatment that they have had, as Marshall Chapman in the following: "During that time I went to AA, NA, ACOA, CODA, SLAA ... you name it. If it ended with a capital A, I was there." (Chapman, 2003, p. 207). Courtney Love's (2006) diary includes photographs and diary notes from the rehab. All of the other

Table 3: Addiction, rehabilitation and coping in autobiographical rock books by female artists

| Book (publishing date) | Addictions portrayed | Personal addiction | Rehabilitation portrayed | Personal rehabilitation | Coping |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Debbie Harry (1982) | Drug use is portrayed as potentially problematic, but addictions are not specified. | No | No | No | No personal addictions |
| Tina Turner (1987) | Cocaine | No | No | No | No personal addictions |
| Cherie Currie (1989) | Alcohol, cocaine, amphetamines, tranquillizers, behavioural addictions | Yes | Yes | Yes | Via rehabilitation |
| Ronnie Spector (1990) | Alcohol, opiates | Yes | Yes | Yes | Self-recovery |
| Marianne Faithfull (1994) | Alcohol, opiates, cocaine, tranquillizers, behavioural addictions | Yes | Yes | Yes | Via rehabilitation |
| Grace Slick (1998) | Alcohol, opiates and drugs in general | Yes | Yes | Yes | Via rehabilitation |
| Melissa Etheridge (2001) | "Addiction problems" mentioned | No | No | No | No addictions |
| Marshall Chapman (2003) | Alcohol, amphetamines | Yes | Yes | Yes | Via rehabilitation |
| Courtney Love (2006) | Not specified | Yes | Yes | Yes | Via rehabilitation |
| Marianne Faithfull (2007) | Alcohol, opiates, tranquillizers | Yes | Yes | Yes | Via rehabilitation |
| Suzi Quatro (2007) | Alcohol, cocaine, cannabis | No | Yes | No | No personal addictions |
| Pat Benatar (2010) | Alcohol and drugs in general | No | No | No | No personal addictions |
| Belinda Carlisle (2010) | Alcohol, opiates, cocaine, tobacco, behavioural addictions | Yes | Yes | Yes | Via rehabilitation |
| Cherie Currie (2010) | Alcohol, cocaine, amphetamines, tranquillizers, behavioural addictions | Yes | Yes | Yes | Via rehabilitation |
| Patti Smith (2010) | Opiates, amphetamines | No | No | No | No personal addictions |
| Sean Yseult (2010) | None | No | No | No | No personal addictions |

addict artists make at least short remarks about their time in treatment or mutual aid groups. The most commonly listed treat-

ments are AA and 12-step programmes.

Seven books – those by Debbie Harry, Tina Turner, Melissa Etheridge, Suzi Qua-

tro, Pat Benatar, Patti Smith and Sean Yseult – do not portray the addiction of a first-person narrator. Although most of them mention some addictions, the references to alcohol and drugs are usually shorter and more general. Some, including Melissa Etheridge, talk generally about “addiction problems” (Etheridge & Morton, 2001, p. 155), while others make references to the music scene. For example, Patti Smith portrays the Chelsea Hotel and the Factory scene of New York with addicted personalities:

It was as darkly glamorous as one could wish for. But running through the primary artery, the thing that ultimately accelerated their world and took them down, was speed. Amphetamine magnified their paranoia, robbed some of their innate powers, drained their confidence, and ravaged their beauty (Smith, 2010, p. 117).

The main theme of these books is, however, not addiction, but rather the life in the rock music scene.

Gendered rock culture as the root of problems

Gender is an important theme in the autobiographies of women rock stars. The books underline the difficulties women have had to face in rock culture both as artists, girlfriends and wives in a male-dominated rock world. The stories involve exploitative managers (Currie) and violent husbands (Spector, Turner), unsuccessful relationships to male superstars (Faithfull), or simply fragile male egos (as in the case of Quatro and Yseult). Gender roles may have been changing rapidly during

the 1960s and the 1970s, but rock culture still remained dominated by men (Rhodes, 2005). Pat Benatar summarizes the early 1980s situation:

If a guy said “fuck you” to someone it was rock and roll; for a woman to do it was disrespectful. This was rock and roll’s dirty little secret: it was 1980, the women’s movement had been around for almost twenty years, and yet overt sexism and misogyny were alive and well. (Benatar & Bale Cox, 2010, p. 94)

Benatar’s comment shows the tight division of gender roles within rock culture. The books depict how the rock world saw male musicians as subjects and women rather as (sexual) objects. Not surprisingly, Benatar’s autobiography puts emphasis on her becoming an independent artist: “I wanted to make music, but I wanted to do it on my terms. I wasn’t in this to fit some male fantasy of what I was supposed to be.” (Benatar & Bale Cox, 2010, p. 71). Females have had to deal with dualistic gender roles, appearing as either “good” or “bad” girls. There were no intermediary positions available as for men (Gaar, 2002, p. 97). The rigidity of gender norms is an evident context of alcohol and drug problems in the books.

Marianne Faithfull’s account of the famous Rolling Stones Redlands drug bust of 1967 is revealing. Faithfull was then Mick Jagger’s girlfriend, and her public image suffered the most from the scandal and accusations: “I was the lowest of the low because I was in a room full of men, naked under a fur rug. The slut. Miss X.” (Faithfull & Dalton, 1994/2000, p. 103) Yet, she was not even able to defend her-

self in court. The police made her an example of a young woman seduced by a rock band: “I was slandered as the wanton woman in the fur rug, while Mick was the noble rock star on trial.” (Faithfull & Dalton, 2007, p. 24) The Redlands bust and the public humiliation marked the beginning of Faithfull’s problems with drugs: “I was anorexic, I was doing drugs. The energy that you need to oppose an assault like this is phenomenal.” (Faithfull & Dalton, 1994/2000, p. 118)

Some of the most iconic women in rock, like Marianne Faithfull, became severely addicted. Faithfull is also an example of a stigmatized woman. Female musicians were often labelled as deviant – even before they started using drugs (Shapiro, 2003, p. 98). It is perhaps because of this that female rock artists find it necessary to explain their relation to alcohol and drugs, even though these substances had not caused any personal issues. Seven books in the data do not include any personal problems with alcohol or drugs (see table 3), but some of these artists write that they avoided excessive use of alcohol and drugs. They may have tried and used drugs, but they stopped or moderated their use early on, as Debbie Harry and Suzi Quatro. In fact, these women write about staying sober as a way of coping in the male-dominated rock world. The books portray how women could not afford ruining their careers with reckless behaviour like men who got support from the other men in the business.

Tina Turner discusses avoiding drugs because she wanted to maintain self-control: “I guess some people in my position might have turned to drugs, or drinking, but I never did.” (Turner & Loder, 1987,

p. 115) She does talk about how her violent husband Ike Turner got addicted to cocaine: “Cocaine made him ... well he was always violent, but cocaine made him worse.” (Turner & Loder, p. 142). Turner’s way of surviving was to stay sober and finally seek to free herself from her moody and destructive husband. Similarly, Suzi Quatro’s book is full of addicted men with fragile egos. Quatro wanted to beat the male musicians in their own game. She was the first successful female rock star to play bass, she was the bandleader, and her music was hard (Auslander, 2004). Her act was powerful, even masculine, yet she did not engage in the excesses of alcohol and drugs. Being a woman out of control would have had serious consequences. A woman who rocked as hard as Quatro had to stay in control: “I’m no angel, and I tried other drugs like every teenager of the time did – but I don’t like the feeling of being out of control.” (Quatro, 2007, p. 40).

Addiction and the struggle to regain agency

Addiction appears as a long process in the books by the artists who have had personal problems with alcohol and drugs. Addiction is also the main theme of most of these autobiographical works. As narratives, they resemble AA narratives of a descent to a rock bottom crisis point. Release comes when the protagonists claw their way back from addiction (see Hänninen & Koski-Jännes, 1999; Keane, 2001). Autobiographical rock books start with portrayals of childhood and youth followed by the career breakthrough. Problems usually start after success and fame. Eventually, however, the stories end in recovery and survival (Oksanen, 2012a). The act of

telling such an autobiographical narrative involves the narrative construction of past events in an acceptable relation to the present (Järvinen, 2004).

Marianne Faithfull outlines her gradual descent into addiction after pressure caused by the Redlands drug bust: “A curse is a very real thing. Like the Lady of Shalott I got into a boat, painted my name on it and drifted downstream.” (Faithfull & Dalton, 1994/2000, p. 119) Faithfull had glamorized junkies and drug use when she was young: “Ever since I’d read *Naked Lunch*, I’d wanted to be a street addict.” (Faithfull & Dalton, p. 200) The writer of the song *Sister Morphine* (1969) did in the end become a street junky. Faithfull casts the music business in a bleak light. Unlike her heroin addict male friends, such as Keith Richards from The Rolling Stones, she was not saved by fame, fortune or record companies. The story has been different for addict female artists. In the throes of addiction problems, they have felt let down by the music industry. One of these early dropouts was Cherie Currie who draws the downward spiral of a teeny rock star in her 1989 book *Neon Angel*:

My name is Cherie Currie. I’m seventeen years old. I left a superstar rock group called “The Runaways” because things just weren’t working out. (...) I put things into my body to change my moods, ‘ludes and Tuinals – downers when I need to feel mellow. I forge my father’s checks when I need cocaine. I can do whatever I want, and drugs is what I want to do. There are hundreds of drugs that I can do, and I’m going to try them all. (Currie & Schusterman, 1989, p. 108)

Some female artists portray how husbands and boyfriends ruined their careers. Faithfull’s original career did not make much headway when she became Mick Jagger’s girlfriend. Similarly, Ronnie Spector had brief spell with success with The Ronettes in 1963, but after she married the producer Phil Spector her career was basically over. The same man who had raised her to fame now almost destroyed her, his jealousy extending to the point that Ronnie could not leave her home. She started using alcohol to combat depression, loneliness and boredom. Eventually, her problems got worse: “Going into rehab became my habit, something to break the boredom, like cigarettes. When things got bad at home, I’d get raging drunk, pass out, and then spend ten days in rehab.” (Spector & Waldron, 1990, p. 193)

After a description of early life and success in the music business, addiction becomes a narrative turning point in the books. It is usually marked by portrayals of dramatic events. Cherie Currie explains her early efforts to control her drug use after a severe car crash:

The accident (...) made me re-evaluate where my life was heading. I decided that I would take this opportunity to sober up. I wasn’t planning on quitting booze and drugs for good, but I figured that it was at least time to slow down. (Currie & O’Neill, 2010, p. 246).

Initial attempts to cope with addictions are usually doomed to fail in these books, and getting into treatment or mutual aid therapy signifies the start of a long struggle. The pattern is familiar from AA narratives, which also underline the trans-

formative change in the self-image (see Järvinen, 2004; Koski-Jännes, 2002, Oksanen, 2012a). Belinda Carlisle, for example, writes about her new sober identity:

Gradually, I became a different woman inside and out. The obsessive, unhealthy, drug-addicted, alcoholic liar and cheat faded into the background, and a kinder, more open and loving, more honest and healthy woman stepped into view. I worked my steps. (Carlisle, 2010, p. 239)

Marianne Faithfull discusses her self-change in similar terms: “From the program I learned that although you have to help yourself, if you help *only* yourself it’s useless.” (Faithfull & Dalton, 1994/2000, p. 268). Her narrative emphasises personal growth (see also Oksanen, 2012a), and she particularly debunks the romantic image of artist, which she views as infantile and narcissistic. Yet, it is these dark and doomed artists, she claims, that young rock bands glamorize. Faithfull notes her changed point of view: “I haven’t been passionately self-destructive for about twenty years now. What drives this self-intoxicating behaviour is the adolescent quest to defy conventional morality, to leap over all the petty, mundane things in life into an ecstasy of excess.” (Faithfull & Dalton, 2007, p. 269). She also notes that the new sober Marianne Faithfull did not always please men:

They liked me better on heroin. I was much more subdued and manageable. It’s very common with rock stars. They surround themselves with beautiful and often brilliant women whom

they also find extremely threatening. One way out is for women to get into drugs. That makes them compliant and easier to be with. (Faithfull & Dalton, 1994/2000, p. 278)

Almost all of the female rock artists who write about their personal addiction have recovered with the help of treatment or mutual aid groups (see table 3). The analysis conducted with the whole data shows that men more often write about self-recovery and continued excess than do women (Oksanen, 2013). None of the books by women portray continued excess, but rather underline coping through rehabilitation. While they do stress self-change, they also recognize the help given by others. Ronnie Spector was the only woman to end her book with self-recovery. She had, however, been in rehab countless times during her life. In her narrative, she insisted that, in the end, she had to start helping herself – without being constantly helped by others. Her story like many others is about the narrator gaining her integrity and agency after the difficult years.

Discussion and conclusions

This article has analysed addiction and rehabilitation as described in the autobiographies, memoirs and diaries of internationally recognised female rock artists. What I have sought to analyse is 1) how many of these books discuss addiction and rehabilitation; 2) how addictions and rehabilitation are portrayed; and 3) what role gender plays in the narratives. The data consisted of 16 books by 14 female artists, with addictions and rehabilitation as prevalent themes.

As has been noted in previous research,

addiction has become a culturally discussed concept (Furedi, 2004; Hellman, 2010). Female rock artists write in detail about addictions (or excessive appetites; Orford, 2001). The context of these stories is the alcohol- and drug-oriented rock culture. The books not only portray the use of alcohol and drugs, but also the problems and negative consequences of the use. Of the 16 books, 14 portray addiction to alcohol, opiates, cocaine and other drugs. Some books portray different forms of behaviour (such as eating, shopping) as being addictive. Tobacco is also considered addictive. Alcoholism is the books' most commonly depicted addiction.

Nine books portray the personal addiction of the first-person narrator, and all of the autobiographical works also describe participation in treatment or mutual aid groups. Not surprisingly, narratives by these women are survival stories in the male-dominated world of rock music. These books exemplify the difficulties women have had to face in the music business (see also Gaar, 2002; Rhodes, 2005). Some famous artists write about a deliberate choice to control or abstain from the use of alcohol and especially drugs. Such control became a career solution for them. It also shows that rock careers are not always marked with excesses.

All of these women's books which discuss addictions in detail imply that addiction is a gendered process. Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs has different implications for men and women (Bogren, 2008; Holmila & Raitasalo, 2005). Addiction has more severe consequences to the professional career of the women. In these books, female rock stars are not saved and helped by the music business,

managers and other people involved. This is in sharp contrast to the famous male addicts and reflects the gender binary in the rock culture. An addict male rock star may have maintained their credibility and authenticity, but addict female stars have been seen as lost cases, almost beyond help. This cultural image of an addict female artist has a well-established history from Billie Holiday to Amy Winehouse.

Autobiographical rock books are above all constructions, relying on the stylistic conventions of the autobiographical genre (Bruner, 1993). These books are told from the perspective of an artist who has recovered and survived. Addiction is a narrative turning point; many of the books underline both the process of getting addicted and the process of recovery. These narratives are based on coping with addictions via rehabilitation. All but one book by the female artists saw rehabilitation as a method of coping. Some of these stories resemble AA narratives, and the recovery has been a major motivation for writing their story. Recovering alcoholics in AA recount their stories to abstain from their previous alcoholic lives (Warhol, 2002, p. 108). Converting to a new identity is often part of such stories (Järvinen, 2004), and self-change also plays a huge role in the addict narratives by women.

The detailed qualitative analysis outlined in this article was limited to books by famous and internationally recognised female rock stars. Soul, R&B, country, disco, pop and hip-hop artists were not included. This is justified by the fact that rock music more than any other popular music genre has been associated with the excessive use of alcohol and drugs. However, it is still important to note that some

of the women in R&B and soul, such as Aretha Franklin, have had considerable influence on rock music. Future studies could therefore focus on the autobiographies by female artists in other genres.

This study does not answer questions about the reception of autobiographies. We do not know who reads these books and how the readers interpret them. Generally, we can assume that the readers come from different age groups, since the autobiographies represent artists from different generations. These books are popular and have been translated into many languages. Additional studies could thus be conducted on the reception of these books. We would need more information about the readership of these books and about their relevance on attitudes towards alcohol and drugs. These books could also impact on public health attitudes since rock stars are followed closely in the media.

Autobiographical rock books have become increasingly popular. They also

demonstrate the changing rhetoric and attitudes inside the rock business. The ethos of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll has evaporated (Oksanen, 2012a). This article shows that female artists strongly oppose the male myth of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll in the first place. These female artists have told their stories in their own voice, expressing the difficulties they or their colleagues, friends and relatives have experienced with alcohol and drugs. Their books do not glamorize the use of alcohol and drugs, but rather situate the use of alcohol and drugs in the cultural context. They also show that gender is an important factor in the process of addiction.

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