

“666 XXX”: Sexploitation in Czech and Slovak Black Metal and Porno-Gore Grind

Povzetek

»666 XXX«: Seksploatacija v češkem in slovaškem *black metalu* in žanru *porno-gore grind*

Avtorja v prispevku obravnavata pojav erotike in pornografije v dveh skrajnih podžanrih metal glasbe, *black metala* in žanra *porno-gore grind*, pri čemer je njuno izhodišče teza, da ta žanra zaznamujeta izkoriščanje in seksizem, prevladuje pa heteroseksualna moškost. Teoretsko se članek opira na študije pornografije, ki ta pojav razumejo kot pomemben družbeni dejavnik, ključna pa je umestitev problematike v okvir subkulturnih študij, še zlasti punka in metala. Glavni vir študije so spletne publikacije: v primeru *black metala* njihov vizualno gradivo, v primeru žanra *porno-gore grind* pa poleg vizualnega gradiva tudi drugi multimedijski elementi.

Ključne besede: metal, pornografija, *porno-gore grind*, *black metal*, seksizem

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Abstract

The article analyses the presence of erotica and pornography within two genres of extreme metal music: black metal (BM) and porno-gore grind (PGG). By contextualizing it through a prism of exploitation and sexism, the authors discuss the heterosexual male domination of these genres. The authors employ a porn studies approach, dealing with pornography as an important social phenomenon. Subcultural studies, particularly when it comes to punk and metal, also provide a theoretical background to the article. The main source of the presented research are webzines: in the case of BM, their visual components, and in the case of PGG, visual and other multimedia elements.

Keywords: metal, pornography, porno-gore grind, black metal, sexism

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On the CD cover of the album *Ten, který se vyhýbá světlu* [*The One Who Avoids the Light*] issued in 1997 by a Czech black metal act entitled *Unclean*, a spectator can observe a motif that could be considered quite a typical one for the occult and Satanist strands of this extreme metal genre. A man-figure with horns and wings that could represent Lucifer is bending down towards a naked woman in a pose that could remind one of sexual intercourse. This reminiscent image might be reinforced by the fact that “the fallen and the most beautiful amongst angels” holds one of woman’s breasts. Moreover, an angle of one of her legs could also suggest that the meeting of the two is all but innocent. The woman has her eyes closed and it is hard to determine whether she is sleeping or just passively accepting what is happening to her. Thus the depicted scene could suggest either ritual abuse or the mythological figure of Incubus. The theme of sexual intercourse hidden behind mystical references, in any case, occurs in many examples of black metal production.

In other extreme metal genres, such as the porno-gore grind scene that has gathered together around the “annual sanctuary” of grind-core, metal and hard-core genres, the festival Extreme Obscene, references to sex may take the form of pornography and the public display of genitals. A powerful example may be presented in the CD cover for *Pussy(De)Luxe* by the Czech porno-gore (grind) band *Spasm*, displaying a woman in leather and chain necklaces in a seductive pose typical for pornography. Despite the fact that this picture has a direct masculine/phallic message, we can also read it as a joke about the live band performance assuring us even more. At the same time, however, porno-gore (grind) scene suffers from male domination, sexism and objectification. Ambiguity between sexism and the disintegration of heterosexual male domination in a tiny branch of extreme metal connoisseurs can also function as a looking-glass into mainstream music and society as well as into different ways erotica and pornography can be treated, consumed and explained.

“Hey, who watches porn? ... And who jacks off?”³

In this study, we focus on themes and levels of sexploitation in extreme metal. The term “sexploitation” is reserved for movies that use erotica and sex for commercial purposes (Sconce, 2007). Here, we have decided to extend its use to the visual, textual and performative production of two extreme metal sub-styles. We have chosen two different, and in certain ways complementary, cases of black metal (BM) and porno-gore grind (PGG). Even if in the Czech and Slovak cases both are parts of larger global scenes, we limit ourselves to the context of the period

³ Quote taken from Storm, 2016.



Spasm, *Pussy(De)Luxe*, 2015, CD cover

of “long post-socialism”, starting with the emergence of extreme metal in Czechoslovakia coinciding with perestroika in the second half of the 1980s, and lasting until recently. Our research methodology is qualitative, focusing on those visual and narrative patterns that echo erotica and pornography.

One part of the research material was accessed with the help of the emerging Czech and Slovak Archive of Subcultures, others by way the local file-sharing

platform Uloz.to as well as Google Images, YouTube, Facebook, Bandcamp and its Czech and Slovak equivalent, Bandzone. An important empirical tool was the website *Encyclopaedia Metallum: The Metal Archives*. Several mentions of local BM were retraced thanks to the archiving of 1990s fanzines on the website entitled *Send Back My Stamps*. In the case of BM, we’ve used six archived interviews with members of different Czech and Slovak BM scenes (the interviews were conducted by various authors): two of the interviewees were members of the first generation of Czech BM bands, originating in the late 1980s; two are from the second generation, active since the mid-1990s, one based in Czech Republic and one in Slovakia; and two are from the youngest generation of Czech BM fans and musicians, active since the mid-2010s. In the case of PGG, the research is based on the subcultural media, especially webzines (local as well as international), and six oral history semi-structured interviews, also conducted by various authors, with hardcore-punk zinesters interlinked with Czech and Slovak Archive of Subcultures in the period 2016–2018. Our research can also be described as partly ethnological, echoing the methodology of participant observation. Namely, in the case of PGG, one of the authors is an insider and a participant on the scene: he performs live, and has organized a festival; moreover, he is also engaged in the punk environment and the power-electronics scene, where pornography is there a common phenomenon as well. In the case of BM, both authors are consumers of recorded and live (performed) music. As for erotica and pornography as such ... well, we’ve heard about that from our friends.

Several works related to the discipline of porn studies were consulted in order to interpret the gathered material. Above all, the introduction to *Porn Studies* written by Linda Williams (2004) is of crucial relevance. Not only does she understand pornography as an integral part of popular culture, but mainly, and more importantly for the research of PGG, she outlines the issue of displaying nudity in the public space. For her, that which is regarded as “on-scene” is admissible, while that which is “off-scene” (cut out from the rest) or “obscene” is not. But the definition of what is on- and what off-scene is negotiable, as with any other popular-culture product; the notion of obscenity was even included in the name of the main Czech PGG festival, Extreme Obscene. Besides *Porn Studies*, Robert Jensen’s *Getting Off* (2007) helped us sharpen our hypothesis as well as include an important portion of auto-reflexivity to the topic. The historical work, edited by Lynn Hunt, *The Invention of Pornography, 1500–1800* (1993) enabled us to see contemporary pornography in a broader historical picture of political critique delimited between the two poles: struggle for freedom of speech, on one side, and sexual pleasure that may include misogyny and objectification, on the other. Finally, Anna-Elena Pääkkölä (2013) reminds us in her thesis that sexual pleasure based on violence and domination is also linked to S/M (queer) erotica; moreover, the effect of sexual pleasure with emphasis on Sadean philosophy can be viewed as the political critique of the clerical discourse as well as that of the Enlightenment.

Metal studies, a sub-discipline of popular music studies, is especially connected to Keith Kahn-Harris. According to him, the quest to decode the meanings in extreme metal (death metal, black metal and grind-core) production can be difficult since the scenes are often “reflexively anti-reflexive” — they are oriented towards rejection of “politics” and reflexive change (Kahn-Harris, 2003b: 91–92). Even in the often discussed case of ideologically driven BM, according to Kahn-Harris, the music itself is much more important than any political intent (Kahn-Harris, 2006: 6). Despite the conclusions of the research of Natalie Purcell (2003: 200–201), where she points out that most death metal musicians share the idea of liberal non-nationalism (this is even more visible within grind-core scene), no particular ethics, as opposed to the hardcore punk scene, for example, is clearly stated. Notwithstanding the above, we consider cases of sexism in BM and PGG as striking, and claims of “reflexive anti-reflexivity” as endeavours to avoid responsibility. Avoiding responsibility seems even more striking when we hear extreme metal connoisseurs stating that they are only “interested in the music”, while CD booklets depict rape scenes. Gender topics in subcultures have been raised especially by Angela McRobbie (1991), and later by Dunja Brill (2007). Even though subcultures are often regarded as environments that allow for undermining the patriarchal structures of the family and society, the position of women within music scenes is for the most part secondary; often women are present solely as partners of active males or as sexual symbols used for attracting male-rebels. In punk, active women participation is predominantly limited to the posts of vocalist or a bass-

-guitar player (Římanová, 2015: 30–32). Whereas the prism of vocalist as a sexual symbol seems to be present, the position of a bass guitar player reflects a deep lack of empowerment. The guitarist, the main creator of the band and usually also the songwriter, is in most cases male. Even though oftentimes extreme bands of the power-violence genre (PW, extremely fast punk/grind-core) with strong anti-chauvinist attitude have female vocalists, the key positions—in the case of PW, the guitarist and drummer—are mostly occupied by a man. Pauwke Berkers and Julian Schaap (2018) describe the position of woman musicians in cases of extreme metal as searching for equality through mimicking men, for example, the extremity of their “brutal” vocals.

Sexism in sub-genres of extreme metal were studied by Michelle Philippov (2006) and Rosemary Overell (2011), who similarly to us, worked with the above-mentioned ambiguities of the meanings related to sexuality in death metal and grind-core, respectively. Extreme metal pushes the already masculine heavy metal into an even more pronounced exaggeration that can turn into misogyny and sexism. The basic elements of extreme metal, for example, the rhythmic speed and technical virtuosity, and more especially the vocal part that is intended to be so brutal that only a few women would be able to sing it (Mishrell, 2012: 23), is regarded by most metalheads to be the main distinction against mainstream—the same mainstream that is regarded by most feminist authors as the backbone of sexism in culture (Hall, 2017: 1–2; Zeisler, 2016).

Following the indications of Lynn Hunt and Anna-Elena Pääkkölä, should we understand erotica and pornography in BM and PGG as potential gender and queer empowerment or rather, following the subcultural emic narratives, as brutality and bestiality? Should we follow Robert Jensen’s thesis on pornography as reinforcing the male dominance and getting more and more specialized while getting more and more hardcore? Can we also observe similar overspecialization in the musical genres of extreme metal, where the new sub-styles of already hyper-specialized sub-styles do not cease to emerge?

“Better some tits than no tits but this was an end to itself”⁴

A debate around nudity and erotica on stage during a BM concert was opened in mid-June 2017. A band that could be considered a true legend of the first wave of Czech BM, *Master’s Hammer*, presented, during their show in Prague, a choreography of two young naked women, one of whom at first wore a mask of Baphomet but later posed without it, wherein they supposedly kissed

⁴ Quote taken from H., 2017.

each other and used a fan to provide fresh air to the already silver-haired male musicians. According to the singer and lead guitarist of the group, František Štorm, the two women were dedicated groupies (Shock, 2018). In webzines, their presence on stage was, however, perceived in a much less enthusiastic and rather discomfited way. The critique focused mainly on the autotelism of such a stage performance and the randomness of their choreography (H., 2016), but also the general awkwardness of such scenes (Johan, 2017).

BM is one of the extreme metal genres merging some elements of punk ethics, and glam rock and the hard-rock aesthetic, with influences of horror movies and comic strip culture. In the academic press, it has been convincingly argued that during the more than three decades of its existence, the genre has changed its position from the initial provocation based on occult references through sectarian violence until its appropriation by the life-style-driven culture of young urban professionals. Most of the scholarly attention has focused uniquely on the often overexposed second wave of BM (Introvigne, 2017; Moynihan and Söderlind, 2003; Olson, 2008; Reyes, 2013). Here, we try to operationalize sexploitation in BM as whole. It goes without saying that given our focus, our examples come particularly from the first and second waves of BM, as the third wave is more conscious and attentive regarding such topics.

Women in eroticized positions were a part of BM aesthetics from its beginnings in the early 1980s. Sexploitation, even if limited to particular visuals of several BM acts using it either for ideological reasons or for its shock value, could also be understood as part of Satanist imaginary. Images of desecration or the ritual killing of women, presumably virgins, could therefore be considered as an important part of BM. The aesthetic of the black mass as used in BM owes much to 1960s and 1970s horror movies as well as to earlier literature. We could search particular sources in the decadent novel *Down There (Là-Bas)*, 1891, published in Czech in 1919 and republished in 1997) written by Joris-Karl Huysmans, who linked Satanism with suppressed sexual pleasures on a scale between erotic blasphemy and paedophilia murders. In addition, films such as *Black Sunday* (1960), *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), *A Bay of Blood* (1971) and *The Omen* (1976) have all contributed to the image of Satanism as an utterly eroticized and blood-seeking antithesis of Christianity. In Czechoslovakia, the BM band Törr was probably the first one that, since 1990, started using erotica in their visual materials, without, however, openly embracing Satanism.

Visuals of naked female bodies can also result from desires of a predominantly masculine scene (Kahn-Harris, 2003a; Walser, 2004). Images of naked female bodies, cut from erotic journals, were, similarly to Törr visuals, present on every possible free spot of the Slovak fanzine *Mortal*, in the undated issue no. 7. In most cases, in contrast with cases of eroticization by mainstream sexism, nudity and sex in BM visuals were presented in the form of blasphemy. Not all BM bands and fanzines used sexual visuals so explicitly. The undated 3rd issue of

the Slovak fanzine *Mortianna* used similar graphic motifs, with fantasy painting of an erotically attractive but still modestly dressed witch, whereas on its back page it presented a drawing of a pretty female face with flock of bats flying from the direction of moon. But one of the most known of iconic blasphemous black metal sexual pictures was displayed on the cover of the EP *Fuck me Jesus*, issued in 1991 by the Swedish band Marduk. There is a nun depicted masturbating with crucifix. This motif has often been reprinted and exploited in even more explicit scenes, such as in a cartoon published in the Slovak fanzine *Mortal* in 1999, where we could see a nun having sex with the crucified Christ. This could be interpreted in line with the emic narrative of Satanism as a liberation of sexuality bringing empowerment based on pleasure, instead of religious abstinence, but it still opens the question: could this be translated into an increase of respect for feminine sexuality and as such provide a source for development of other emancipation activities within the scene? If not, it can still be seen as just male-designed blasphemy.

The fetishization of sex and violence was in some BM visuals, in particular in the second generation of BM, instrumentalized through images of staged murder scenes and/or sexual violence. Nevertheless, we didn't find such motifs in the Czech or Slovak contexts. Following the visual documentation of the main second-generation BM annual event in the Czech Republic, the Eternal Hate Fest festival in Southwest Bohemia, with an important number of visitors coming from across the close borders of Germany and Austria but from other countries as well, two



Unclean, *Ten, který se vyhýbá světlu* ("The one who avoids the light"), 1997, CD Cover

observations relevant to the topic of this study may be stressed. Firstly, the macho body postures present in the other genres of extreme metal (Kahn-Harris, 2003a) can also be detected in Eternal Hate Fest stage performances, and in the audience as well. Secondly, among the audience, there was a considerable number of female fans that could be described as "BM-chic", merging sexy elements of goth and emo with the overall BM imaginary.

The second point, however, appears to be rather an exception in a micro-scene that seems to be communicating misanthropy and seclusion from the worldly pleasures at every possible occasion. In an interview with the *Hassgesang* zine editor about women and gender roles, the guitarist Set from the Czech band Sekhmet states:

I am not a tyrannizer but some women need a good punch. The truth is I don't care much about it, but what I do hate are whores and feminists. Those blind cows should look around themselves. They might find out that, in this world, they can do whatever they like, like everybody else. Another fact is that since ancient times, women have taken care of "households", kept the fireplace and cooked what the men brought them from hunting trips. It is a beautiful thing to form family, and I hope I will manage to bring another white warrior into this world. (Hassgesang, 2004)

Even if many statements of national-socialist black metal (NSBM) protagonists, such as the one just quoted, are linked much more to a White Power imagery that can correlate much more to racial exclusivism than to the anti-humanism and misanthropy typical for other BM strands, the overall sexist tone is not an exception. However, even in this extreme case, Sekhmet—also linked with Eternal Hate Fest—kept friendly and personal contacts with the BM band Kraake, both bands echoing the second generation of mainly Nordic BM (Lucas et al., 2011).

Until recently, Kraake had a female singer performing under the stage name "Valfarin" as a front(wo)man and even an originator of the band's name (Obscuro, 2017). If we follow the visual documentation of her stage performance stored in Kraake's Bandzone profile, we can see almost no allusion to her femininity. As a singer of Kraake, Valfarin acted like any other second-generation, Nordic-inspired BM singer. Such stage figures can be described as androgynous rather than as masculine or feminine. Probably the only allusion to Valfarin's femininity can be found in an interview in which she acclaims inspiration from the unearthly sounds during the exorcism of Anneliese Michel (Echoes, 2014). Deep fascination by evil in the second generation of BM that results in some cases with the open embracing of National Socialism thus contrasts with the occult BM, in which the images of female breasts could represent the offering to Satan or—and probably more importantly—simply result from the sexism of one part of the scene.

“Everybody knows that gore-grind lyrics aren’t meant to be taken seriously...”⁵

In his critical book on pornography, Robert Jensen states the substantial role of male teens. Older porn consumers are usually regarded as “jerk-offs”. To watch porn while masturbating does not equal being real men, at least not the masculine alpha male, i.e., the ideal that all men should follow (Jensen, 2007: 41, 167). The discourse of a teen musician of a rock or metal band, who mostly attracts the school girls, can be regarded similarly. Musicologists Julian Schaap and Pauwke Berkers add that many bands start their careers in school and the local environment, where social bonds with the people of same sex play a crucial role (Schaap and Pauwke, 2004: 104). Keeping this in mind, we can carefully ask the question as to whether the motto “Hey, who watches porn? And who jacks off?” (Storm, 2016) that is put forth by the singer of the PGG band Spasm at the beginning of performances, is—if not ridiculous—surely lampooning the element of male-rock-masculinity as well.

Grind-core as a genre stems from the metal and punk legacy. In general, most grind-core bands share the punk ethics of “do it yourself” and the anti-chauvinistic hardcore punk morale. Death/grind or brutal death bands can, however, be closer to the “reflexively anti-reflexive” extreme metal. Both these approaches represent the base for PGG. Following the roots of extreme metal even deeper, a rock ‘n’ roll legacy comes to light. To many metal as well as punk fans, this is personified by Motörhead’s reviving of the prism of the rock ‘n’ roll rebel attacking the “bourgeois” morale at the turn of 1970s and 1980s. Rock ‘n’ roll went hand in hand with the sexual revolution that led to gender empowerment as well as to the increase of mainstream sexism in culture. The legacy of rock ‘n’ roll could also be detected in the sub-genre of technical death metal focusing on musical skill and sophisticated compositions close to classical music. Certain musical skills, especially those based on the ability of playing fast, are important for PW as well. Both technical death metal and PW can be seen as an opposite to PGG. Namely, contrary to the above-mentioned technical skill, PGG musically is based on a very simple style of usually a groovy metalized polka dance rhythm that is “brutalized” by blast-beats and the vocals of bubbling, grunting or (pig)squealing that represent the main characteristic of the sub-genre. Often, the bands have no lyrics at all, and if so, they’ll sometimes lampoon some pop song (or a pornographic sample), usually the song titles are meaning enough for a particular track and the rest is grunting or squealing. This approach is, in general, usually called “gore-grind”; PGG is thus in this context not only musical, but a particularly semantic sub-genre. Some gore-grind bands stem from classical death metal and grind-core “brutality”, where

⁵ From an interview with Haemorrhage (Löfquist, 2008).

the topics of cannibalism, zombies, gore-splatter and brutal violence usually based on B-horror and exploitation movies are especially articulated. This approach, older than PGG, is represented by bands like Impetigo, ROT, Regurgitate, Dead Infection or Haemorrhage. The most known PGG bands are Cock and Ball Torture, Blood Duster, Regurgitate, Rompeprop, Torsofuck, Haemorrhage, within which we can see Czech ones such as Carnal Diafragma, Gotalax, Spasm and Aggressive Tyrants. PGG can definitely be recognized by the titles of its tracks, such as "Where Girls Learn to Piss On Command", "Vaginal Luftwaffe", "Raped by Elephant", "Mouth Full of Hairs", and "Licking the Brown Line of Fat Old Granny Bitch".

Whereas in the case of PGG the humorous nature is particularly emphasized and widely articulated by fans, brutal death metal articulates brutal violence as a fantasy, or simply as an inevitable part of the brutality in music (Overell, 2011: 202–205; Mikkelsen, 2016). The overall PGG prism of gore/slasher, violence, rape, exploitation, sexual perversion, pathological issues, or even fluids (defecation, vomiting ...) is exposted solely as a joke, hyperbole or parody. Moreover, the musical primitiveness is regarded not only as an asset, but even as a mission, as Maty, the singer of Gotalax (the name references a Czech brand of laxativum) underlines: "... we play just the same, it is how it is, stupid polka ... we were always jackassry, but people like it ... you just jump to the stage in the costume, so you are the idiot, so the people have fun ..." (SB Corporation, 2016). The interview with Spasm, moreover, is headlined: "Gore-grind, for many musicians, is the last option they would like to play" (see Kezir, 2016). The costumes of the porn bands often present a parody of the typical male rock musician dress code. Moreover, the act of taking off a t-shirt and showing male muscles is ridiculed by fat men going naked and showing their fat stomachs. Some bands wear S&M masks or medical cloaks. But if we take the above-mentioned masculine domination in death metal with all the discourse of brutality, music skill, stage behaviour and dress code, then the PGG self-presentation can be read as the downgrading element.

In the case of the above-mentioned ethics, the bulk of the Czech PGG scene is into the grind-core approach. The bands, for example, play at the events of the Good Night White Pride anti-neo-Nazi campaign. The gore and porn topics, on the other hand, are only seldom presented in a political way. The PGG support of sexploitation has been stressed as a reason such bands are sometimes cast away by very political hardcore/grind bands (Deathfist in 2014, Malström in 2013), and should not belong to hardcore-punk scene (Samuel, 2015). The PGG scene is (aside from the "attack-on-censorship" extreme metal discourse of the past) often represented by gore/rape sexploitation, one of the most extreme cases being Cannibal Corpse, banned in the most explicit way in Germany (DawnoftheShred, 2007). Moreover, PGG bands, in contrast to many death metal or even hardcore bands, usually do not come to festivals like Masters of Rock. Thence, the messages of PGG can hardly reach the overall rock audience.

Probably the most known festival of grind-core and extreme metal music, Obscene Extreme, established in 1998/99, takes place in the Czech Republic. Its peculiarity is that the organizer (known as Čurby) invites both political and brutal/gore bands (but not BM bands, only blackened grind, crust or punk), which is very rare in the extreme metal club scenes. The premise is that these genres should be, despite their issues, still united and understood as one scene. The most valued element of the festival is probably the possibility for fans to dance on the stage for a while and then stage dive. This is the moment for exposing freaky, pervert, and funny costumes; nudity is also acceptable to a certain extent, i.e., as long as it stays in the limits of a shared notion of a “sense of humour”. One can hardly be surprised that this masquerade takes place especially during the PGG shows. One of the fans, Storm, reports on the Spasm show for the *Marast Music* webzine:

As their show starts, you can hardly see the band. There is a parade of masks, naked boys and beach equipment on the stage, and I know I’m amongst my fellows when Radim, the vocalist, asks the fans whether they watch porn and if they jack off. (Obscene Extreme, 2016)

Moreover, the festival also hosts special artistic freak or S&M shows and performances with a potential of queer/S&M empowerment. The most shocking persona in this regard was probably a performer called Selfie the Clown (in 2016, and again in 2017), who was damaging his body with drills, stabbing nails into his penis and knocking them into his testicles as well. The DIY journalist Grinch explains the logic of the festival:

I suppose there is no need to mention that racist or sexist thoughts have no space there, and all the bands and the fans agree with that (well, maybe, there is only some gore-grind hyperbole, but any person with a brain would understand that). (Grinch, 2017)

Since the explanation of all ambiguities within the scene seems meaningless can hardly reach a wider audience, we are back to “reflexive anti-reflexivity”.

Reflecting on the PGG overarching humorous prism, we find hardly any examples of sexual jokes that would objectify a male. For example, when you Google “porn-gore grind bands”, most of the hits will display male domination based on objectifying women, differentiating itself from “sexist” mainstream only by its brutality and disgusting content. Even in more ambivalent cases, for example, the band Cock and Ball Torture that, despite its name, semantically does not support male domination—on the contrary, it downgrades and ridicules it—the particularly perverse content goes clearly hand in hand with the male-centred discourse.

Let's look at an example. The members of a Czech PGG band, Gotalax, are asked by an interviewer: "Have you ever, as the whole band, fucked one girl?" The first member indicates he is married, the second one blurts just "no", and the singer responds in a seemingly planned discourse of gore sexual abnormality: "I have never fucked a girl, but we have been talking about this and it can be fine." (SB Corporation, 2016) Another example is the already mentioned band Spasm. The motto of its singer ("Hey, who watches porn? And who jacks off?") indicates the everyday-ness of male masturbation, characteristic for the masculine discourse.

Moreover, when asked about the competition for the cover girl for their album *Pussy(De)Luxe*, members of the band—three old men—explain that the girl who won was happy with the collaboration: "She simply needed to have a photo with the group of such handsome men. This is an offer she couldn't have found anywhere else." This clear objectification is accompanied by the statement that "the humour and hyperbole belongs to this genre. Our intention is not to offend anyone, but when it happens, it is in our specific sense of humour." (Kezir, 2016)

Skulda, one of the best known Czech grind-core zinesters, reminds us that the singer of Spasm has also been known for much more radical statements such as "Girls, are you swallowing?" (Almer, 2017) Skulda regards this particular statement as an extraordinarily stupid sexist behaviour, but also states:

[...] If they were really fucking on stage, ugly fat man with ugly fat woman, or even shitting on each other, that would be super [...] Nowadays the scene of hardcore sometimes keeps some kind of strange and sick Victorian morale, when every sexual content is *a priori* regarded as sexist. (Almer, 2017)

This narrative can be read as an attempt to find the ideal way of articulating porn and erotica within extreme music, where—maybe paradoxically—censorship tendencies can be tracked, though the question of almost non-existent empowerment persists. As an insider female critic of PGG, Jill Mikkelson, clearly and aptly argues: "Where are all the turbo-feminist gore-grind bands if metal is about challenging the boundaries of acceptability?" (Mikkelson, 2016) This statement also finds support in Anna-Elena Pääkköläs' argument that she makes in the context of queer empowerment. Pääkkölä points out that even the Mikhail Bakhtin-type of the carnival, which would fit with the Obscene Extreme festival quite well, "still imposes limitation upon the subordinate groups of the society" (Pääkkölä, 2013: 27).

Evil versus weird? Stereotypes reinvigorated

Both BM and PGG, are predominantly white male heterosexual scenes. In the case of BM, patriarchal values linked to the rather traditional readings of mascu-

linity can be analysed both in the occult BM as well as in NSBM, where the topics linked to Nordic mythology sometimes tend to highly valorise even bands from “North Bohemia”. Yet observation of the Eternal Hate Fest shows a much more complex picture: besides BM metalheads, with its style of motorcycle gangs, one can also observe feminine “BM chic” fans. Standing next to them are also androgynous figures that could problematize such traditional readings of gender roles and exploit their (a)sexuality in a much more provocative and challenging way. In the case of PGG musicians, we can trace similar weirdo, sexually deprived, androgynous aberrance of masculinity. The ridiculed and degraded masculinity of “jerks-off” is thus also the favourite auto-stereotyping in the PGG scene, allegedly misunderstood by neighbouring subcultures and almost absolutely ignored by mainstream music. Quite on the contrary, in both scenes, the motifs of self-purifying can be tracked, as the debate about the Master’s Hammer concert and in Skulda’s allegations of a “sick Victorian morale” suggest. Yet pointing out that even fat and ridiculed men can be eroticized “rock stars” does not make sexism less visible. Moreover, the purifying persons are for the most part heterosexual men.

As proposed above, the roots of empowerment can grow from loosened sexual pleasure. Yet, as we have seen, for women, pleasure is sometimes not allowed, not even on a semantic level; when it is, they have to follow men’s “sense of humor”—act merely as a passive object (as in the case of ritual abuse depicted in many occult BM visuals), perform blasphemy suited particularly for the “masculine eye” (such as masturbation with crucifix), or suppress their femininity. Some empowerment can be traced at the Obscene Extreme festival, but there, PGG bands simply coexist alongside and do not participate in queer-based performances. We believe that it is not an exaggeration to say that extreme metal itself finds its “extremism” in heterosexual (white) male definitions, alongside which the mainstream erotica and pornography is organized. As such, sex also sells in extreme metal, even if this role of sexual symbols might not be crucial, neither is it always clearly recognized. Therefore, the sexploitation in extreme metal can only be seen as different from that in mainstream from the point of view of the topics at its focus, but not in its overall form.

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