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Shorter Final Paper

Are Kids Allowed to Be Radical? An Analysis of Riot Grrrl, DIY
Publishing, and Resisting The Concept of Profit

In a time of youth censorship, restriction, and shame, Riot Grrrl Press provided an avenue for teenage girls to speak on issues that impacted their own lives and the lives of those around them. Through independent zine production, these youth took it upon themselves to condemn the systemic oppressions they were experiencing and quickly realized that if they wanted the world to change, it was time for a girl-led riot. In this essay, I will investigate how the use of independent publishing endorsed teenage girls to become active political players and architects of cultural production.

In order to understand the impact that Riot Grrrl zines had on the North American construction of childhood, it is important to address the socio-cultural climate that allowed the Riot Grrrl movement to thrive. Riot Grrrl was inspired by a race riot that broke out in Washington D.C in 1991, where members of the Black and Latino community were injured, killed, and imprisoned (Shrodes 1). In addition, the music scene of the 1990s in Washington D.C was heavily saturated with a genre called pop-punk, an alternative music category and associated culture that was influenced by working-class struggles in Britain. Despite the rejection of

normative behaviours and beliefs, the pop-punk scene was not the alternative utopia that it presented itself to be. In actuality, these counterculture spaces were unsafe for women and girls, putting them at risk of being assaulted, verbally abused, or attacked. When the female-led punk-rock band, Bikini Kill, saw this gap within the punk community and witnessed the D.C uprising while on tour, they decided that it was time for a girl-led revolution and worked alongside students attending the University of Maryland to create the beginning of Riot Grrrls, dedicating themselves to creating their own spaces where girls are celebrated for being girls (Shrodes 3).