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'If I had more time it could be better, but the new wave's about spontaneity, right?': finding meaning in Britain's early punk fanzines (1976–77)

Article

Accepted Version

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(2020) 'If I had more time it could be better, but the new wave's about spontaneity, right?': finding meaning in Britain's early punk fanzines (1976–77). Punk and Post-Punk, 9 (2). pp. 223-245. ISSN 2044-1983 doi: 10.1386/punk_00028_1
Available at https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/87866/

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To link to this article DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/punk_00028_1

Publisher: Intellect

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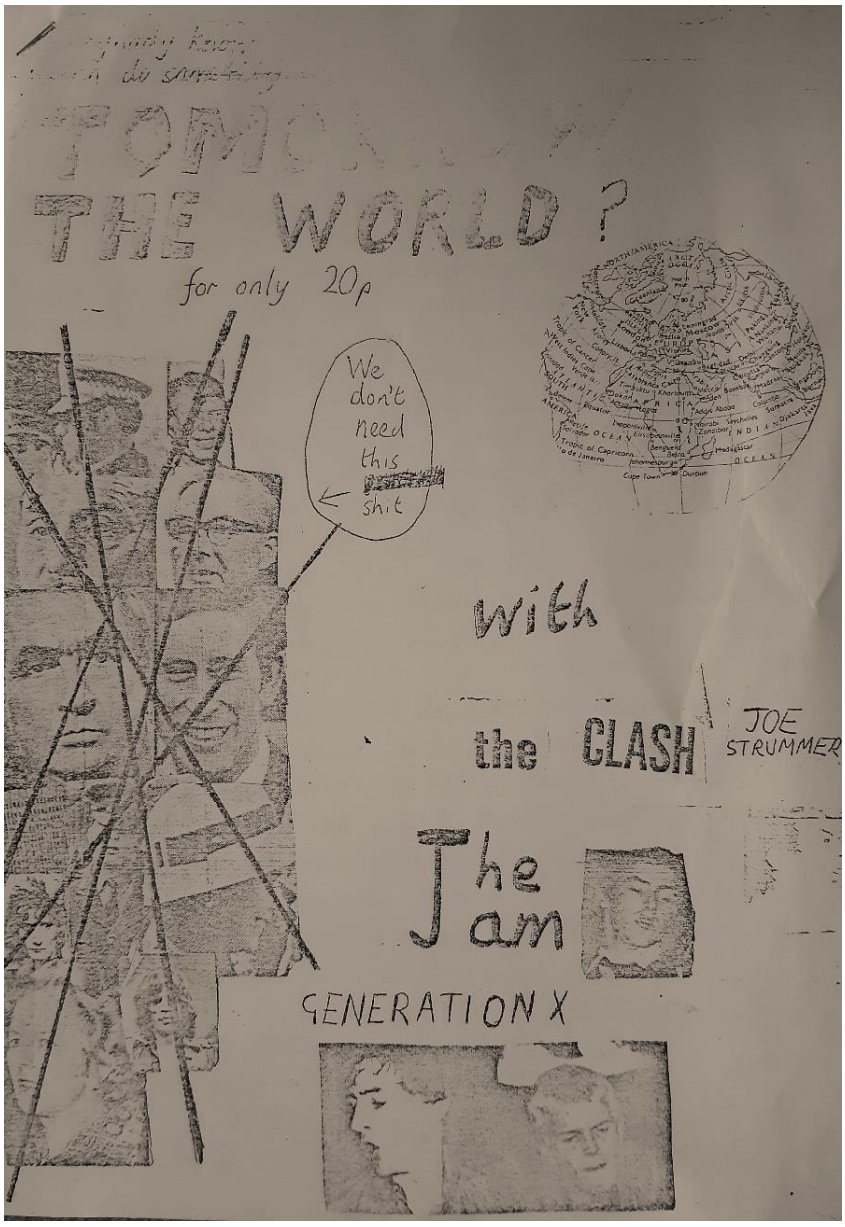
‘If I had more time it could be better, but the new wave’s about spontaneity, right?’: Finding meaning in Britain’s early punk fanzines (1976–77)

Abstract

This article uses fanzines produced from the UK in 1976–77 to explore how punk’s politics, production and cultural impact were understood by those first enticed by ‘the new wave’. It is divided into three principal sections, the first offering some context: a rough survey of who made fanzines and how. The second will explore definitions of punk’s new wave, looking at how emergent cultures were understood and the rationale applied to any point or purpose. Third, the inherent tensions of punk’s cultural formation will be teased from fanzine editorials and articles seeking to maintain the momentum of 1976–77 and protect against perceived infiltration or dilution. In each case, choice examples are given and the article is not meant to suggest any definitive reading. Rather, the objective is to test, challenge and confirm recurring punk myths and give voice to those who ‘were there’ without enabling any conceited subjectivity to transform into universalism.

Let’s pick one (almost) at random: *Tomorrow the World?*, a fanzine produced from the milieu attending London’s Roxy club in early 1977. The cover is a mess of crudely cut ‘n’ stuck pictures surrounded by hand-written scrawl and rudimentary collage. The title is in capitals top left, with ‘for only 20p’ in lower-case below. A cropped globe has been added, presumably to reflect the ‘world’ of the title. Small portraits of Paul Weller, Tony James, Billy Idol and Joe Strummer have been applied next to band names to alert potential readers to the fanzine’s contents. A set of cribbed newspaper photographs then run down the left-hand side of the cover: Jimmy Carter, Jim Callaghan, Denis Healey, Prince Charles, Rod Stewart, Margaret

Thatcher. Rulered lines have been struck across their faces, with a small text-bubble placed alongside: ‘We don’t need this shit’. Quite evidently, another word had once been inserted between ‘this’ and ‘shit’ before being scribbled out. Whatever it was is hard to tell, but the mistake did not warrant re-doing the cover. ‘If I had more time it could be better, but the new wave’s about spontaneity, right?’ (*Tomorrow the World?* 1977: 1). You just had to *do something*.



Tomorrow the World?, 1 (1977), provided by Jonathan Brooker and printed with permission of Max Gray

The creation of Max Gray, *Tomorrow the World?* was but one of a slew of British punk fanzines to emerge as 1976 turned to 1977. Mark Perry's *Sniffin' Glue* was the first to self-define as such, proclaiming itself 'for punks!' in July 1976 (*Sniffin' Glue* 1976a). By the end of the year, moreover, titles such as *Ripped & Torn*, *48 Thrills*, *Bondage*, *London's Outage* and *London's Burning* had begun to circulate, often in very small print runs or Xeroxed facsimile. The new year saw the trickle turn to flood: *Kid's Stuff*, *More On*, *JOLT*, *Flicks*, *The New Wave Magazine*, *Cells*, *Sideburns*, *Live Wire* and on and on and on. Beyond London and its immediate surround, almost every town, city and suburb spewed forth hastily cut 'n' pasted snapshots of punk in the process of formation. Be it *Shy Talk* from Manchester or *Bored Stiff* from Newcastle, *Loaded* from Bristol or *Rotten to the Core* from Nottingham, *Gun Rubber* from Sheffield or *Hanging Around* from Edinburgh, punk's impetus to *do it* produced an alternative media no less integral to the emergent culture than the records, style, aesthetic, attitude and independent labels (Worley 2015). They were often short-lived. Their content could vary from the inane to the artistic and astute. But punk's fanzines were part of a cultural upheaval contested from the outset (Worley 2017). Inside their stapled pages, amidst often functional record reviews and clumsy interviews, were ruminations on punk's meaning and personal reflections on formative experiences. As was their intent, fanzines captured punk's impact at the grassroots and from within. Historically, their ephemeral existence has now become eternally precious. On fading pages and via erratic text, they offer glimpse of lives lived in a moment, outside – but often in dialogue with – the media spectacle.

This article uses fanzines to explore how punk was understood by (some of) those who embraced the culture in the seminal period of 1976–77. It picks up on tensions; but also the process of engaging with the new wave. It challenges some of punk's 'myths'; but also affirms assertions now at risk of cliché. In so doing, the article duly recognises Teal Triggs' pioneering

work on fanzine design and Russ Bestley's research into punk graphics more generally (Triggs 2010, 2006 & 1995; Bestley forthcoming & 2018; Bestley and Burgess 2018; Bestley and Ogg, 2012). It takes inspiration from Stephen Duncombe (Duncombe 2008) and especially those whose study of riot grrrl has demonstrated why [fan]zines matter (e.g. Buchanan 2018; Chidgey 2013; Cofield and Robinson, 2016; Piepmeier 2009; Sinor 2003). Most notably, it seeks to uphold Lucy Robinson's vital insight that fanzines work both as and for history; they capture and construct the present as well as the past (Robinson 2018: 39–54). And if you don't like the article then you know what to do: write one yourself.

'I'm not quite 17 yet so I thought I was the youngest fanzine editor …'

All the headings for this article are taken from *Tomorrow the World?* As the one above suggests, Max – the 'editor' – opened his first venture into print in reflective mode. His youthful aspiration had been undermined slightly by early punk 'face' and future Pogues singer Shane MacGowan informing him that the producers of *More On* (Sarah Hall and Rebecca Hale) were both 15. Nevertheless, and despite really wanting to be in a band, he was keen to do more than just pose at the Roxy. A temporary job had given Max access to a duplicator, so brief interviews with the Jam, Generation X and the Clash were loosely transcribed from memory and decorated with photos taken by a friend (Wally Davidson). Due to turn 17 in the spring of 1977, Max was not sure if he would do a second issue. But in the meantime he felt inspired enough to share his love of the Jam and advised future fanzine writers to 'try to be sober when you do interviews' in order to remember what was said. Or,

alternately, get a cassette recorder. 'Hope you like it', he wrote at the bottom of the last page. 'If you don't – fuck off' (*Tomorrow the World?* 1977: passim).[1]

Trying to ascertain an accurate prosopography of punk's early fanzine makers is nigh-on impossible. Tracking down the ages and backgrounds of more well-known creators (Perry, MacGowan, Jon Savage, Lucy Whitman, Mick Mercer *et al*) may be easy enough. Look closely and future photographers, journalists, musicians, costume designers, writers, illustrators, politicos, band/label managers, academics and authors appear in earlier guises contributing to youthful labours of love, be it Kevin Cummins, Jane Suck, Mike Scott, Rebecca Hale, Paul Morley, Steve McGarry, John McTernan, Richard Boon, Shirley O'Loughlin or Philp Hoare. But many fanzines were fleeting moments of creativity produced under pseudonyms and then lost to posterity (until people like me come and dig them up). From clues and calculated assumption, we may deduce that most of the 1976–77 fanzines were made in teenage bedrooms, though slightly older producers were not uncommon. A good few displayed art school or college credentials; but many more did not. There is nothing to suggest an overtly middle class or student bias to punk's early fanzine production. Backgrounds were mixed; some – including the pioneers of *Sniffin' Glue* – were resolutely working class. It is also fair to conclude that the majority of those holding the glue and scissors were male. Nevertheless, women featured prominently among those forging an underground punk press, be it as 'editors' or contributors or photographers (Blase 2018: 72–88). As well as *More On*, we know that Great Yarmouth's *Mutant Flyer* and Stone's *Punkture* were driven by teams of female editors, while early London fanzines included Cariola Chaos' *Fishnet Tights* and Lucy Toothpaste's *JOLT*. Several fanzines were produced by collectives, amongst which were

[1] Gray would later go on to be in the Tickets, who appear on the *Farewell to the Roxy* (1978) album. He never did do a second issue of *Tomorrow the World?*

countless female contributors. As should be well-known, Erica Echenberg, Jill Furmanovsky and Sheila Rock provided many of the photographs for *Sniffin' Glue*.

Still, punk's early fanzines do offer insight as to the processes by which they were produced. We get a glimpse into young lives and the efforts undertaken to contribute to punk's dissemination. Stories of surreptitious photocopying proliferate, adding credence to notions of a Xerox culture/revolution. Both Mark Perry and Tony Drayton made their first copies of *Sniffin' Glue* and *Ripped & Torn* via a workplace copier, while Savage ran-off both *London's Outrage* and MacGowan's *Bondage* from the solicitor's office where he worked at the time. Leeds' *New Pose* and Manchester's *Shy Talk* both boasted similarly clandestine 'births', be it via lunchtime Xeroxing or late-night printshop incursions.

That said, not everyone had easy access to a Xerox machine. According to Jon Savage, only two public colour photocopiers existed in London in 1976, making cheaper and more accessible black-and-white copy almost *de rigour* (Taylor 2010: 61). Adrian and Sharon Fox produced their respective fanzines from Ilford, where they cost 5p a page to photocopy at the local library (*Apathy in Ilford* 1977: 2). Adrian Thrills, meanwhile, printed the first issue of his *48 Thrills* fanzine for 15p a copy (2½p a sheet). Gestetner printers were sometimes accessed or cheaply bought, offering a purple or green hue to the page. Others sought out printshops and offset-litho reproduction, especially once thoughts turned to generating more issues to meet (real or imagined) demand. This could be a revelation. 'I thought we'd become fiendishly impressive', *Panache*'s Mick Mercer recalled, 'when our typed columns of print were taken to a printshop and reduced in size on a photocopier, and those reduced columns were then put down on the master page' (Mercer 2019: correspondence). But it could be costly and not always constructive. For the 'poverty-stricken schoolkids' from Hayes in Middlesex who created *Sunday Mirra*, three different printers had to be sourced across their first five issues,

be it for financial reasons or antipathy to all things 'punk' (*Sunday Mirra* 1978: 2). More constructively, Hebburn's *Deviation Street* was printed by the Tyneside Free Press, which helped Kevin Anderson hone his craft over three issues. 'I'm just learning what can be done at the printers', Anderson admitted in number two, 'so I'm trying different things to see what looks best' (*Deviation Street* 1977: 2).

Praxis was, in part, the point. The 'look' of Britain's punk fanzines varied in the early period. Many copied the original *Sniffin' Glue* template of scrawled text and type across circa 8-to-10 pages stapled top left corner. Images were typically culled from the music press; friends were recruited to take photos. Others eschewed glue and scissors in favour of hand-drawn covers and text typed formally in columns, with only the implied haste of their presentation hinting at punk content. This was sometimes inventive, as with Tony Moon's now classic 'Here's a chord …' diagram for *Sideburns* (p. 2). Cartoons of various hue peppered many a fanzine, including strips by Edwin Pouncey (aka Savage Pencil), Mark Schlossberg (*Skum*) and sketches by future Zodiac Mindwarp Mark Manning (*New Pose*). Alternately, too straight an approach could lead to fanzines appearing more like a poor imitation of the existing music press than a counterbalance. *In the City*, for example, bemoaned the amateurish nature of most fanzines and boasted a colour cover (*In the City* 1977: 2). It aspired to standards of writing and production beyond its purchase, even as it offered insightful interviews with bands not favoured by the mainstream papers (Ultravox, Adam and the Ants and, later, Crass). *Shews*, too, looked akin to an independent magazine with its neat layout, page headers and sharply reproduced photos.

Collage became as a staple feature of punk's fanzine pages over the course of 1977, following on from the example of the Sex Pistols' emergent aesthetic and the dada-informed approach of Savage's *London's Outrage* and Jonh Ingham's Clash-focused *London's Burning*.

Certainly, after 'flicking thru what fanzines have sprung up since *Sniffin Glue*', Tony Drayton resolved to attempt a 'fairly typical' collage in order to fill an empty space in the third *Ripped & Torn* (*Ripped & Torn* 1977a: 11). Or, perhaps, collages took shape haphazardly as a result of the very practice of aligning found images with self-penned text in suitably irreverent fashion. Whatever, punk collage – and photomontage – typically comprised juxtaposed or overlaid media-images: shock-horror headlines and bland adverts; key words (999, hate, control, war) and snippets of bleak tabloid tales; band names and, occasionally, salacious imagery. The effect was to locate punk in the here and now, pertaining to a relevance and a place within the scrambled newscasts and media lexicon of 1977.

Initially, at least, A4 was the usual paper size, though Foolscap, A5, A4 folded into booklets and even odd measurements of 18cm by 21.5cm added to the mix. Coloured paper was common, while some fanzines included single-sided and double-sided pages in the same issue. The quality of paper and production was dependent on where and how many were printed. In some early fanzines, the copy was such that photos proved all but impossible to discern. In others, the image degradation worked well to signify a disintegration both reflective of punk's dystopian vision and appropriate to a DIY practice foraged from culture's debris. Indeed, picture-based fanzines – such as the second *London's Outrage* or *Andy Palmer's Observer* – were amongst the most effective at capturing punk's tenor and temper, reproducing the bleak landscapes that served as a backdrop to songs of anarchy, riots, boredom, hate and war. More generally, in those fanzines that lasted beyond just a couple of issues, layouts and reproduction improved or diversified as techniques sharpened with experience. As this suggests, producing a fanzine was not always 'easy' and rarely 'cheap' once the paste-up needed reproducing, even as young punks evidently resolved to 'do it'. Nor was equipment necessarily to hand. If MacGowan made a virtue out of writing (so not typing)

his text for *Bondage*, then Charlie Chainsaw apologised in advance for having no camera or tape recorder and so no photos or interviews (*Chainsaw* 1977: 2). In *Chainsaw*'s case, a fanzine that continued into the 1980s, reproduction took place at a local printshop in Croydon for the collaged cover and via a second-hand Gestetner printer bought for £10 from *Exchange & Mart* for the text (Chainsaw 2018: correspondence).

Andy Palmer's Observer, 1 (1977), Courtesy of England's Dreaming: The Jon Savage Archive at Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives, and with permission of Andy Palmer.

Andy Palmer's Observer, 1 (1977), Courtesy of England's Dreaming: The Jon Savage Archive at Liverpool John Moores University Special Collections & Archives, and with permission of Andy Palmer.

Early punk fanzines were often written in breathless prose, all but doubling as personal journals recording nights out and signalling a cultural kudos: *I was there*. From inside the Roxy, *Tomorrow's the World?*, *Fishnet Tights*, *Live Wire, These Things* and early copies of *Kid's Stuff* presented in such a way, recording faces and conversations, evoking the excitement of punk's becoming in sometimes clumsy and sometimes evocative turns of phrase: 'fight my way thru large pieces of rock stars and splash out on a can of coke' (*Kid's Stuff* 1977: 3). Record and gig

reviews could be similarly immediate, at their best capturing the thrill of the moment in short sharp busts of recall. Thus, from a *These Things* review of Generation X:

> I just couldnt/wouldnt stop pogoing, X saw to that/X wanted that/X fuckin GOT that!!! […] thats what we were there for, dummyism in audiences is DEAD! […] cries for "LISTEN" spun from the floor as the band came back, then in rettaliation, pleas for "READY STEADY GO", one bloke yelled both, they gave it, we got it! Bashed me in the head, that gig. Reality got me via the cold air outside [sic]
>
> (*These Things*, 1977: 9)

As we shall see, not all settled for simple reportage. As obsession transformed into action, so deeper reflections came into view.

Distribution could be difficult. Relatively few shops stocked fanzines in 1977. Many early issues were thus hawked at gigs or exchanged, while Rough Trade's importance became hard to overestimate, first for stocking fanzines but also for providing a contact address and dispensing via mail order. The shop's Cambridge connection – Edwin the printer – was a revelation to Mark Perry and others, allowing for multiple reproductions to be made in the dead of night and with better quality. Rough Trade became a meeting point; a nexus for fanzine writers. In addition, Compendium Books in Camden stocked punk's early fanzines next to its range of radical and political texts, as did a handful of other retailers willing to take on sale or return (*Ripped & Torn* 1977a: 2).[2] Be it through small runs of tens, or hundreds, or – in very few cases – thousands, punk's fanzines permeated the culture. In the fifth issue of *Sniffin'*

[2] The list of retailers selling *Ripped & Torn* in March 1977 comprised Rough Trade, Compendium, Flyover Records, Beggar's Banquet, Town Records, Harlequin, Rock On, Remember Those Oldies (Cambridge), Hot Licks (Edinburg), Graffiti and Bloggs (both Glasgow).

Glue, Perry called on readers to 'flood the market with punk writing!' (*Sniffin' Glue* 1976e: 2). This they did; young guttersnipes creating spliced missives from the underground.

'"See No Evil" and "Marquee Moon" sound alright. But when I heard the whole album at home it just bored me – I think its more hippy than punk' [sic]

Quite what constituted 'punk' was contested from the outset. Early fanzines abound with assertions and personal proclivities, their instinctive reactions to the bands, records and gigs of 1976–77 revealing how punk's new wave was received beyond the more meditative analysis of the mainstream music press (*Melody Maker*, *NME*, *Record Mirror*, *Sounds*). To be sure, enthusiasm over-rode critical reasoning. Fanzine reviews were typically descriptive and rarely willing to stray much further than a judgement of 'great' or 'I don't like this'. Then again, intuitive responses also threw up interesting anomalies and reminders as to the early disputations of punk's cultural impact. Just as *Sniffin' Glue* was quick to cast doubt on the punk credentials of the Vibrators ('old rockers … out of place'), the Jam ('sixties revival') and the Stranglers ('progressive rock will always be around'), so other fanzine writers wrestled with what fitted to their own understanding of what punk was (*Sniffin' Glue* 1976c & d; 1977a: 3, 7 & 12). Claims for The Vibrators, Jam and Stranglers being a part of punk may just as easily be found; Ultravox caused all sorts of problems! In effect, however, the boundaries of punk and the new wave remained amorphous and open to subjective understanding.

For Max, in *Tomorrow the World?*, punk's designation was defined as much by what it wasn't as what it was. So, for example, he was disappointed by Television's acclaimed (at the time and since) *Marquee Moon* album because Tom Verlaine's lyrics 'don't say anything and they're like fucking Bob Dylan […] I like simple words that say a lot (like 'White Riot')'. Equally, the music was 'boring' and the songs 'too long'; too much guitar reminded him of how 'people

who like Led Zeppelin always tell me their guitars are great'. It was 'more hippy than punk'. As well as being about 'spontaneity', therefore, and simple lyrics that 'say a lot', Max's punk was meant to make you 'get up and dance'; that is, to be urgent, active and exciting rather than slow, passive or soothing (p. 3).

As this suggests, various interpretations of punk began to ferment across the range of early fanzine titles. Mark Perry's definition – in the first issue of *Sniffin' Glue* – bore the stamp of Lenny Kaye's sleevenotes for Elektra's 1972 *Nuggets* compilation of 1960s' US garage bands. 'It's all about rock in its lowest form', Perry insisted, 'on the level of the streets. Kids jamming together in the dad's garage, poor equipment, tight clothes, empty heads (nothing to do now you've left school) and model shops' (*Sniffin' Glue* 1976a: 8). Paul Morley, in his one-off 1976 fanzine *Out There*, defined punk as 'murmuring vibrations' from the 'grassroots', a jittery and 'neatly contemptuous' riposte to rock's 'prattle elite' (*Out There* 1976: 32). *The New Wave Magazine*, born out of Barnet in early 1977, plumped for 'energy and spontaneity, and sometimes originality' (*The New Wave Magazine* 1977: 2).

True to punk mythology, the new wave was set in contrast to rock's then-dominant currents; that is, to 'virtuosos' such as 'Yes, Mike Oldfield etc.' or 'boring cunts (like the whole of Led Zeppelin, The Who, Paul McCartney, Stevie Wonder etc) lazing away in some hot tropical paradise' (*Sniffin' Glue* 1976a: 2; *Ripped & Torn* 1976: 5). Indeed, what has now become the standard rationale for punk being a 'back to basics' approach to offset rock's transformation into a bloated and distant cultural form was often and keenly stated. If pop and rock had become boring, 'completely irrelevant to today's plastic, ready-wrapped, ready-cooked society', then punk was the response (*Flicks* 1977a: 8). From here, moreover, stemmed the impression of punk as 'year zero', with the old discarded in favour of the young and the new.

In truth, punk's early fanzines remained fascinated by pop's past. Sandy Robertson's *White Stuff* recognised that 'the old farts weren't always boring' as it sought to tie punk to a cultural continuum stretching back through the counterculture to the Beats, surrealism and dada (*White Stuff* 1977: 4). Fanzines such as Alan Butcher's *Live Wire* and, from Scotland, Lindsay Hutton's *The Next Big Thing* regularly paid homage to pre-punk rock, with articles on everyone from Slade and the Who to Kiss and Blue Öyster Cult. More typically, punk's early fanzines featured regular retrospectives on the likes of Lou Reed, Nico, the Stooges and New York Dolls, establishing an alternative rock 'n' roll linage to contest that which found a route through the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's* and on to the progressive rock of the mid-1970s. As this suggests, punk's new wave was less a wholesale rejection of rock's past than a reconfiguration of it. Or, to quote the first issue of *Flicks*, punk 'look[ed] back into the past with the aim of stepping forward into the future' (*Flicks* 1977a: 2).

In terms of impetus, boredom was another now-clichéd punk trope that repeated *ad infinitum*, be it in relation to boring music, boring jobs, boring television or boring life in general. So, for two model examples, *Roadrunner* and *Sideburns*:

> A 'mag' borne of boredom, frustration and a desire for self-expression. If you don't like it, too bad – it's free anyway. If it keeps you from watching television for a while, it's done something worthwhile [sic].
>
> (*Roadrunner* 1977: 2)

> Your reading this for various reasons: - 1. BOREDOM with all of the pathetic wankers and posers who seem to be the stock hero's in the music world and seemingly everywhere. 2. MARK P and 'SNIFFIN GLUE' …… One year ago there was F.A. today

> there is something […] kids of fifteen-sixteen forming bands and asking people to get off their arses for once […] The whole movement is about change […] I can't type, but I'm having a go so why don't you. Forget the established papers, next month they will be latching onto yet another fad [sic] …
>
> (*Sideburns* 1977: 3)

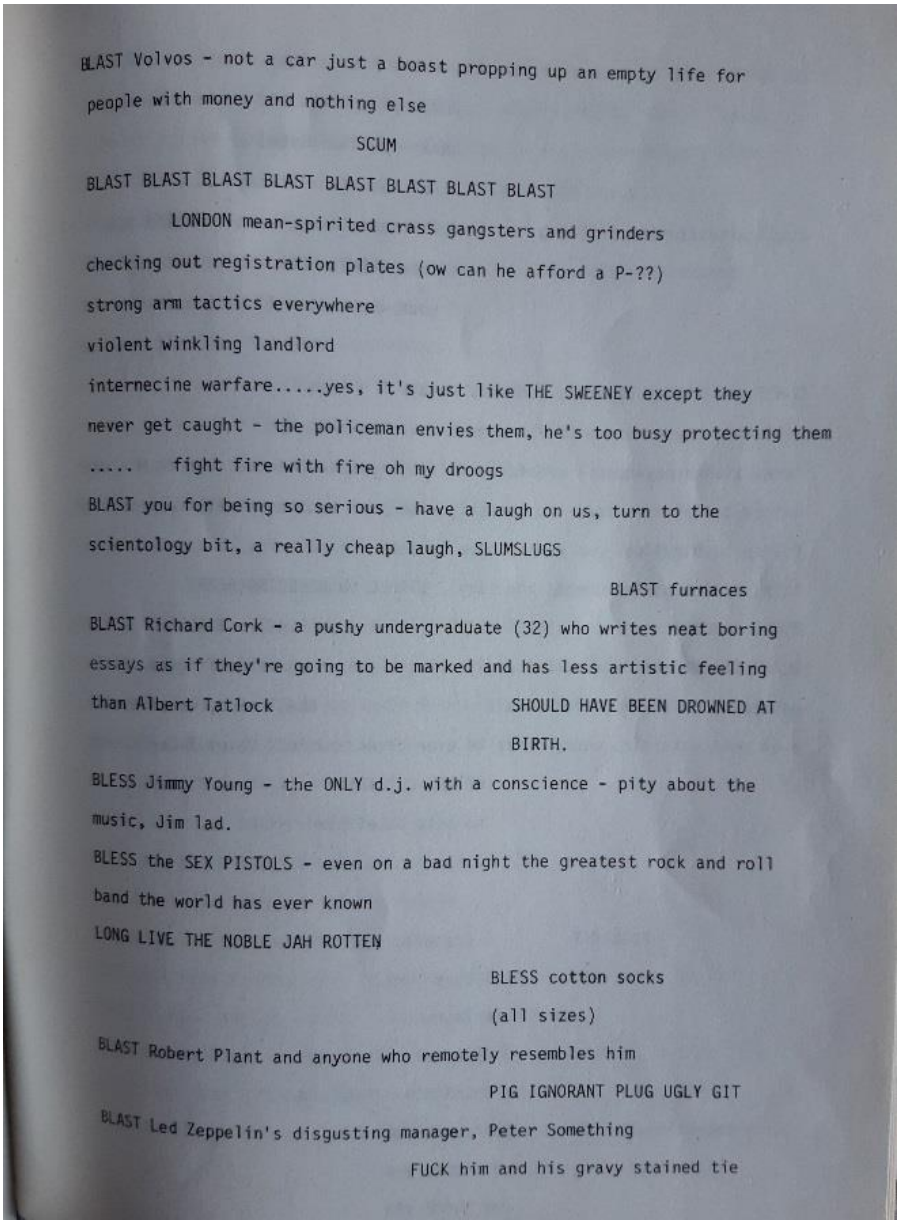
Quite whether these were just Pavlovian responses to early interviews with the Sex Pistols or a sign of punk's resonance may be open to debate. That fanzines – like the number of bands forming by 1977 – proved testament to punk's stimulus is less contentious. 'Apathy' became a buzzword, evoking both cultural malaise and the antithesis of punk's call to action. In time, moreover, such reasoning began to extend to the source of such youthful restlessness, especially once the Sex Pistols' infamous appearance on Thames Television's *Today* programme (1 December 1976) had stoked a 'moral panic' that affirmed punk's sense of deviant difference. Even before then, music journalists such as Caroline Coon and Jonh Ingham had framed punk in terms that defined the music, style and attitude as a response to prevailing musical and socio-economic trends. Early on, Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood talked of capturing a mood; of provocation and threatening the status quo (May 1976: 60–4; Richmond 1976: 20–5; *Anarchy in the UK* 1976: 8). Johnny Rotten's search for relevance and his antipathy to all things hippy combined with the injection of 'anarchy' into pop's discourse and Jamie Reid's overtly political artwork to ensure punk's anti-social gestures signalled a seditious intent: 'don't accept the old order, get rid of it' (LWT 1976). Critique was inherent to British punk, be it towards the state of 1970s (popular) culture or the state of the nation. Meaning was soon sought beyond just teenage kicks.

Accordingly, then, fanzines were quick to develop the idea of the media as a source of ennui and distortion. Shane MacGowan's *Bondage* railed against double-standards: 'There isn't any public decency – people only know what's decent by being told by ITV and the rest of the media' (*Bondage* 1976: 2). Alistair Collins, in *Kid's Stuff*, similarly recognised punk as 'something better than watching the fucking box' (*Kid's Stuff* 1977a: 3). The *NME*, *Sounds et al* were cursed for their faddism, remoteness and penchant for purple prose, while *Sniffin' Glue*'s early music focus quickly transformed into something more as Perry began to envision punk as a kind of cultural revolution. In the first issue, a disconnect between the music press and what was happening on the ground served as the fanzine's stimulus. A little later, Perry asserted that: 'It's not just the press, it's also the music companies. I don't want the Pistols, the Clash etc. turned into more AC/DCs and Doctors of Madness. This "new wave" has to take in everything, including posters, record-covers, stage presentation, the lot!' (*Sniffin' Glue* 1976c: 4). By its penultimate issue, *Sniffin' Glue* was canvassing those inside the scene as to whether punk was 'just shouting for the sake of it?' The replies varied. Sandy Robertson, following the line pushed through his *White Stuff* fanzine, argued for New York artistry over Clash-style social realism, searching for transgression amidst Patti Smith's 'sea of possibilities'. Chelsea's Gene October offered a paean to 'the right of the individual to choose for [themselves] what [they] want to do, and to help others achieve the same'. Rough Trade's Steve Montgomery evoked Mao Tse Tung to imagine a youth-driven revolt against the commercial and political structures that closeted individuality and determined existence (*Sniffin' Glue* 1977c). Come the summer of 1977 and the empty heads in the garage seemed a long way away.

This, certainly, was the case in some of the more inventive fanzines of 1976–77. Jon Savage's *London's Outrage*, produced in late 1976, centred on a long essay locating punk as a

cultural response to a repressed British psyche under attack, assailed both by the challenge of socio-economic crisis and a pop culture opening doors to youth, sex, emotion and perception. Punk, Savage concluded, was the 'final vomit of a rotted society' (*London's Outrage* 1976: 5–11). *Dat Sun*, by Denis Browne, evoked the iconoclasm of Wyndham Lewis to capture punk's call to arms, blasting and blessing across an array of barricades. *JOLT* viewed punk through a feminist lens, while *Flicks* saw the new wave evolving out of a 'growing feeling of boredom, frustration and aggression towards not only the state of rock music in 1976/77, but towards life, such as it is …' (*Flicks* 1977a: 7–8).

Dat Sun, 1 (1978), copy of the author



BLAST Volvos - not a car just a boast propping up an empty life for people with money and nothing else

SCUM

BLAST BLAST BLAST BLAST BLAST BLAST BLAST BLAST

LONDON mean-spirited crass gangsters and grinders checking out registration plates (ow can he afford a P-??) strong arm tactics everywhere violent winkling landlord internecine warfare.....yes, it's just like THE SWEENEY except they never get caught - the policeman envies them, he's too busy protecting them ..... fight fire with fire oh my droogs

BLAST you for being so serious - have a laugh on us, turn to the scientology bit, a really cheap laugh, SLUMSLUGS

BLAST furnaces

BLAST Richard Cork - a pushy undergraduate (32) who writes neat boring essays as if they're going to be marked and has less artistic feeling than Albert Tatlock SHOULD HAVE BEEN DROWNED AT BIRTH.

BLESS Jimmy Young - the ONLY d.j. with a conscience - pity about the music, Jim lad.

BLESS the SEX PISTOLS - even on a bad night the greatest rock and roll band the world has ever known

LONG LIVE THE NOBLE JAH ROTTEN

BLESS cotton socks (all sizes)

BLAST Robert Plant and anyone who remotely resembles him

PIG IGNORANT PLUG UGLY GIT

BLAST Led Zeppelin's disgusting manager, Peter Something

FUCK him and his gravy stained tie

Dat Sun, 1 (1978), copy of the author.

Out in the sticks (as it were), deeper analyses also began to develop. *Blades 'n' Shades* from Birmingham, insisted that:

> I believe the aims of new wave music were, and still are, to bring together radical youths and to be a communication medium between them. Towards this end, rock music has been simplified and taken back to its roots and is now being played with

> more energy than before. The simplification has meant that it is easier for people to relate to the songs and the bands. You can enjoy it […] without hero-worshipping the people who play it. If you've got anything to say you can now get up on stage and say it without the need for great musical prowess […] New wave is more than just music however. It is finally an attempt to make a better world to live in, something that only a united youth can hope to achieve. Politicians can argue with each other […] but only by changing the attitudes of the people can anything constructive be done […]
>
> (*Blades 'n' Shades* 1977: n.p.)

From Exeter, David Hine's *Spit in the Sky* featured a bleak short story of social alienation and an editorial outlining how punk reflected a 'changing disposition amongst young people'. Where hippies had envisioned an alternative society, punk existed in the 'NOW' and sought to make 'the best of what we have: cities, technology, plastic living'. Beyond music, Hine continued, punk had developed its own style, graphics and journalism; it had shattered illusions and broken down hierarchies by questioning accepted standards and roles. A youth movement being rebellious was the 'only way a fucked-up society can change and progress' (*Spit in the Sky* 1977: 2).

The endgame of punk's rebellious intent was harder to fathom; the oft-mooted 'change' and 'revolution' was indeterminate. True, fanzines such *Situation 3* followed Savage in locating punk as indicative of a more general socio-political breakdown, warning against flirtations with fascism and impending authoritarianism (*Situation 3* 1977a). Like a few others, it reflected on punk's reference to anarchism, while titles such as *JOLT*, *Street Talk* and Edinburgh's *2nd Hand Nuclear Devices* sought to connect punk to wider campaigns such as

Rock Against Racism (RAR).[3] But high politics were rarely engaged with beyond curt dismissals or oblique allusions to 'the establishment' – usually meaning local councils and the media – acting as a block on punk's freedom of expression. Punk, on occasion, was even seen to offer a substitute for politics, either as a space for excitement beyond the ideological fray or, as *Cells* put it, an 'alternative to acceptance of the rules of the people at Westminster in whatever party they are' (*Cells* 1977: 9). If punk was political, *City Chains* suggested, then it signalled someone protesting 'against almost everything that's drummed into him/her all their lives' (*City Chains* 1977: 11).

Such a fumbling for meaning ensured punk brokered tensions that simmered as punk-related sub-scenes formed and evolved over time. Pete Shelley may have been clear that the 'NEW WAVE […] is a challenge to consider everything you do, think and feel […] the way you react to the people around you. The ways that you love them, fuck them, hate them, slate them' (*Plaything* 1977/8: 1). But others held different priorities or interpretation. Perhaps, as the future New Labour strategist John McTernan mused in *Hanging Around*, punk's paradox lay in its representing a 'creative backlash against the stagnant boring rock scene' that nevertheless fermented a politics tending towards the 'anarchistic destructive' (*Hanging Around* 1977: 2). That punk engendered agency was all but accepted; communicating and doing it yourself were fanzine mainstays. To what end, however, remained an open question …

[3] *Street Talk* was another product of Sharon 'Spike' Fox. She would also write for RAR's *Temporary Hoarding*.

'Posing at the Roxy …'

Punk's various antipathies were often performed, a snotty recalcitrance as essential to the early 'punk' demeanour as affected boredom. This played out in fanzines. Their language, following Mark Perry's lead, tapped into claims of street-level sensibility and implied a suitably 'punk' attitude: 'fuck', 'ain't', 'gonna', 'yeah'. *Tomorrow the World?* was again a case in point as Max extolled how the Jam were 'fucking brilliant' and signed off in irreverent fashion (*Tomorrow the World?* 1977: passim). This, read now and across numerous fanzines, can grate, but it was – of course – intended initially to assert punk credentials and break through the staid language of most mainstream media (and most pre-punk fanzines). It also reinforced punk notions of accessibility; anyone could do it, irrespective of spelling, grammar and education.

That said, punk's antipathies led to internal antagonisms. Combined with the fledgling media critique outlined above, they fed a perennial attentiveness to punk's own status and development. While those drawn to punk revelled in a perceived cultural importance (or notoriety), so concern as to commercial and/or political co-option became endemic. In fanzines, we find a wariness and a weariness of journalists and politicos distorting subjective *truths* as they peer from 'outside' to tarnish what was once unsullied; or high street designers copying and sanitising punk's style and design; or bandwagon jumpers filling cash-tills for merciless record companies to exploit the gullible part-timer. As a result, complaints of 'posers', 'knobheads' or 'plastics' infiltrating – and thereby ruining, diluting and derailing – punk recurred. If 'the establishment' was set against punk, then dangers also lurked within.

Certainly, by the summer of 1977, a number of fanzines began to fret as to punk's degeneration. Two concerns predominated. First, that punk had been co-opted by the music industry; that it was being codified and commercialised. 'I thought we were kicking out the

old system, bringing in a new one', Peterborough's *Look at the Time* complained as it considered the major label signings and TV appearances of punk's first wave. 'But […] the new was simply the old in another disguise' (*Look at the Time* 1977: 2). *Ripped & Torn*, by as early as April 1977, was challenging the Damned to justify the cost of their label's marketing campaign (*Ripped & Torn* 1977b: 8). Reviewers vexed as to diminishing returns: '[is] it just me', *Rotten to the Core* [as *Rotting to the Corpse*) asked towards the end of 1977, 'or are all these records worse than the [group's] first ones?' (*Rotten to the Core* 1977b: 7). Even the Sex Pistols were coming under suspicion for not playing enough or being absorbed into the industry's clutches (e.g. *Censored* 1977: 9–11; *Look at the Time* 1977: 2; *The Mutant Flyer* 1977: p. 7; *Situation 3* 1977b: 8; *Sunday Mirra* 1977: 13–16). 'Punk Rock?', Stephen Singleton asked himself in August 1977, 'I think it's getting a bit crap […] the whole scene is getting contrived' (*Steve's Paper* 1977: 2).

Early punk fanzines had captured the interactions between bands and audience that reinforced notions of a grassroots movement. Fledgling bands proved eager to talk to fledgling fanzines. Buzzcocks, in particular, showed willing to enable interviews and provide connections, helping Martin Ryan get his *Ghast Up* started and encouraging Steve Burke to create *Shy Talk*. The band's manager, Richard Boon, was instrumental to co-producing *Girl Trouble* with Paul Morley and helped print copies of Bangor's *Alternative Ulster* for Gavin Martin. Generation X and the Jam were also regular and ready interviewees, with the latter's Paul Weller even contributing a list of his top ten favourite records to *Live Wire* (*Live Wire* 1977a: 6). Soon, however, as bands developed and contracts were signed, so connections stretched. Would the Clash cease to be a 'public band' once they played the Rainbow Theatre in May 1977? (*Skum* 1977: 13–14). Had the Sex Pistols begun to compromise? (*Sunday Mirra* 1978: 13–15). Would new bands (and fanzines) come through to replace the Pistols and

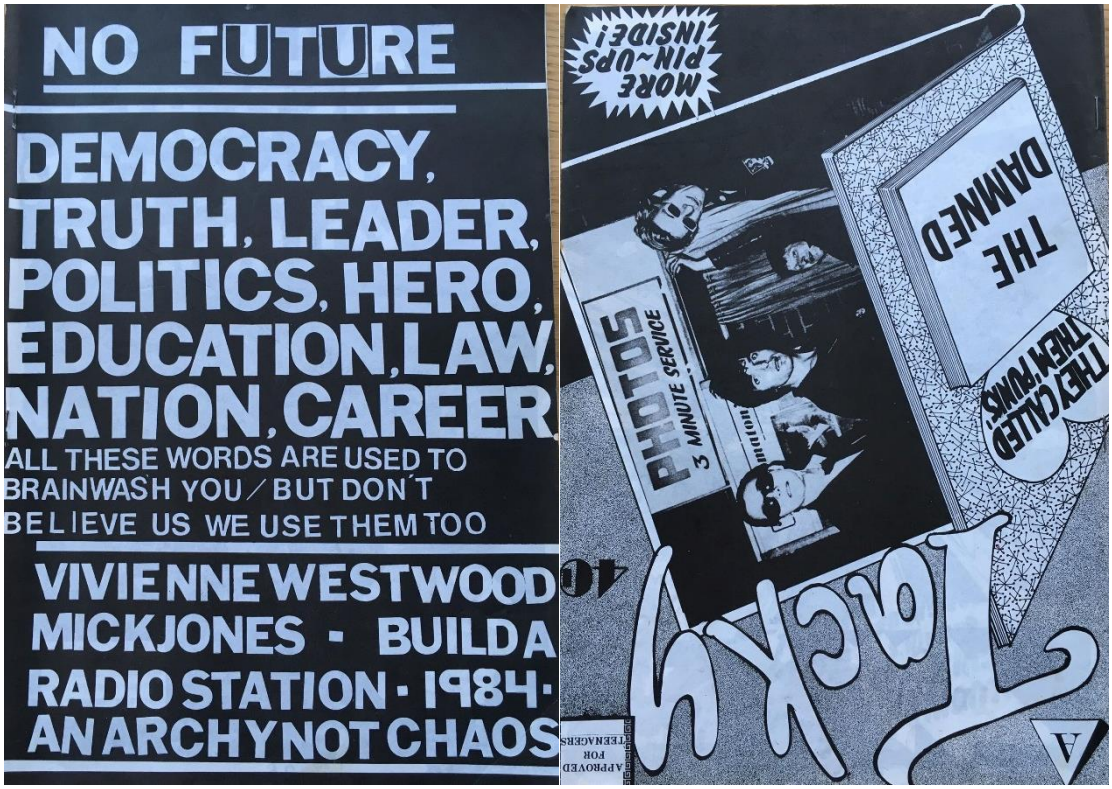
Sniffin' Glue once they had been co-opted? (*JOLT* 1977a: 5) Equally, then, fanzines revealed a tension between bands seeking to create, aspire, develop and an audience wishing to hold fast to imagined relationships born of small gigs and common heritage.

Punk style provided a further battleground. Early on, the wearing of swastikas had brokered fanzine debate as to punk flirtations with Nazi chic (e.g. *Flicks* 1977b & 1977c: 12–13 & 1–2; *Hanging Around* 1977: 2; *JOLT* 1997b: 7; *Ripped & Torn* 1977c: 7). Know your history, *Situation 3* insisted as it warned of the failing Labour government opening a space for fascist reaction and warned young punks not to be blinded by Nazi-shock symbols: 'it's fucking ignorance that really pisses me off' (*Situation 3*, 1977a: 3). Most other fanzines concurred, including *JOLT*, *Flicks* and *Ripped & Torn*, though Scotland's *Chicken Shit* rubbed against the grain, employing swastikas on its cover and arguing for punk writing 'straight from the gutter' by the 'most miserable, dirty cunts' (*Chicken Shit* 1978: 6).

In time, however, as punk began to inform high-street fashion and provide centre-spreads in teen mags, the relationship between punk style and commodification came into sharp relief. From *Sniffin' Glue*, Mark Perry urged punks to 'chuck away the fucking stupid safety pins, [and] think about people's ideas instead of their clothes' (*Sniffin' Glue* 1977b: 10). Not dissimilarly, *Punkture*'s 'Pretty Nastie' admitted to her being obsessed with punk's commercialisation: 'it makes me SICK' (*Punkture* 1977: 3). Cut-out punk dolls with identikit fashion accessories and Airfix assembly instructions featured in at least a couple of 1977 fanzines (*Situation 3* 1977a: 8; *Gun Rubber* 1977c: 1).

Two other fanzines engaged head on with punk's process of commodification. Steven Lavers' *No Future*/*Tacky*, produced out of flat in Covent Garden, was presented as two fanzines in one. *Tacky* was a parody of a teen-magazine featuring a high-street fashion page along with pin-ups and a banal set of Q&As with the Damned. By contrast, *No Future* was

overtly political and began with a long essay on anarchism that quoted Leo Tolstoy and ventured through dissections of terrorism, the state and political power. 'Free co-operation between individuals' was extolled alongside 'direct action' against new wave bands that became alienated from their audience: 'don't buy their records – smash them. Disrupt their gigs. Slash the tyres on the limousines you've payed for. Spread propaganda against them' [sic]. In the middle, conjoining the two contrasting fanzines, an interview with Vivienne Westwood made the case for punk as a conduit for youthful rebellion; a means to disrupt, confront and break free of all social restraints (*No Future*/*Tacky* 1977: passim).



No Future/Tacky (1977), produced by Steven Lavers and provided by Jonathan Brooker

As pointed, if a little less sophisticated, was *Speak Out!*, a collaborative effort put together in late 1977. The fanzine was wholly dedicated to exposing punk's degeneration,

comprising mainly handwritten diatribes against poseurs 'in £18 trousers', star worship and industry co-option (*Speak Out!* 1977: 2).

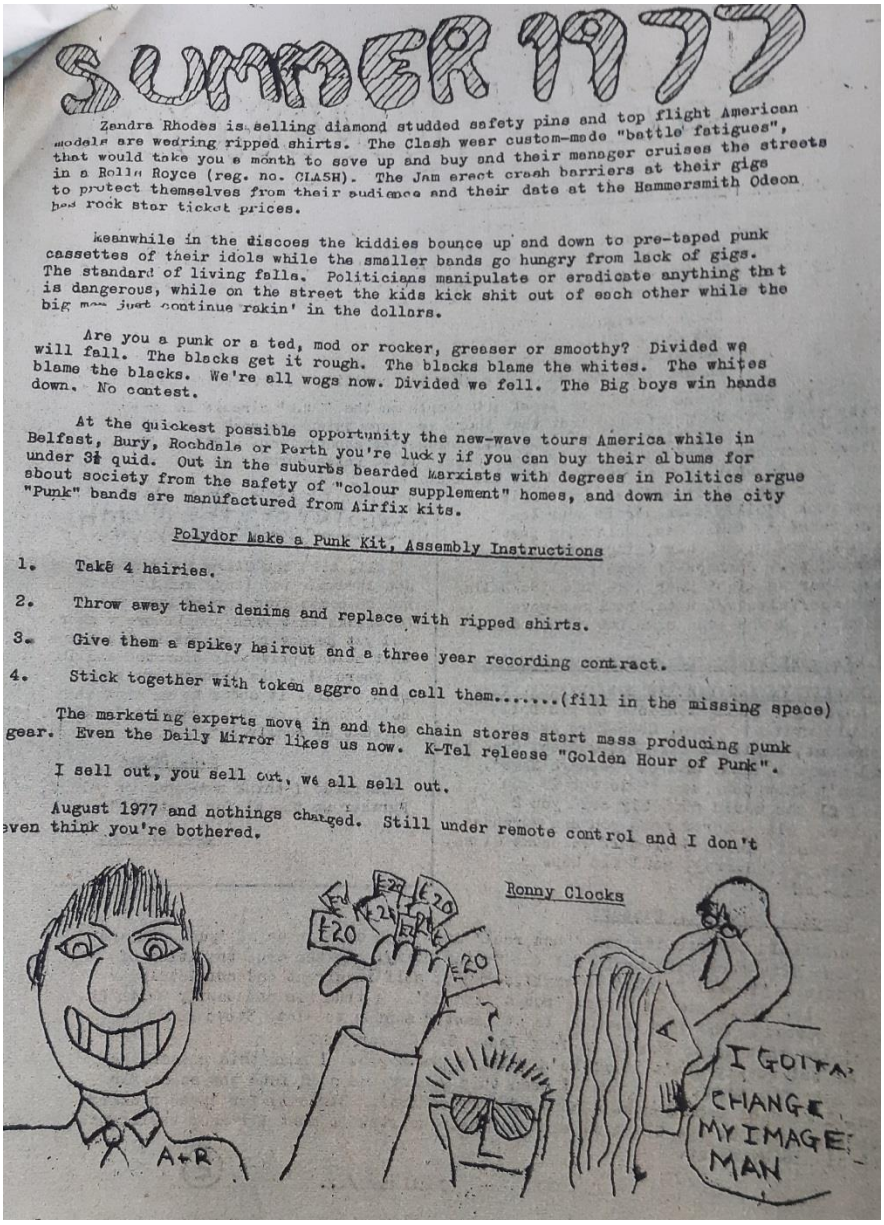
> Lets face it, punk just ain't what it used to be – why? OK. In the beginning we had an elite few, media hysteria, small gigs, no big record companies – or T-shirts or Zandra Rhodes or gold plated razors or safety pin pendants etc etc etc. Punk has now been accepted by Fleet Street and every record company which is anything. Venues are no longer cramped side-street affairs and every bloody company is ripping it off for all it can get. Unless people realise it punk will go like everything else – nothing's new. Let's see big companies using smaller labels – Chiswick, Step Forward, Raw, Illegal etc. Let's see smaller bands avoiding what the others haven't been able to. Lets see the poseurs get pissed off and bored and go home. Lets see punk belonging to the punks.
>
> (*Speak Out!* 1977: 11)

In response, anarchy was evoked as a creative impulse; 'ordered self-rule' to 'break barriers'. The Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta was even quoted amidst warnings of an encroaching police state and earnest calls to stop the 'revolution slipping away' (*Speak Out!* 1977).

Second, fanzines railed against those claiming to be punk but somehow not understanding its significance. There are countless examples, but a handful should suffice. So: Sharon Fox's *Apathy in Ilford* ventured into Ilford's Lacy Lady disco, where kids dressed in punk gear danced to soul and appeared oblivious to what Fox insisted was punk's wider subversion. 'This lot don't want change', she complained, 'they don't want to get up the old farts noses by forming Bands, writing their own Fanzines […] think for themselves' (*Apathy in Ilford* 1977: 7–8). Elsewhere, posers and the uncommitted were dispatched in fits of teenage

pique bristling with subcultural ownership. In Nottingham's *Rotten to the Core*, one contributor insisted that he was 'not trying to make "punk" an exclusive club', but the culture's 'dilution' – recognised as 'cunts' in 'brand new parallels, striped ties and Vibrators badges' posing at the weekends – was 'killing it OFF' (*Rotten to the Core* 1977a: 4). *New Pose* set its sights on 'knobheads' who took punk aggression as an excuse to cause trouble; Tim Williams' *Loaded*, from Bristol, bemoaned ex-hippies and students who embraced the new wave but never travelled to gigs outside the city. He also took aim at those 'ACTING PUNK' for ruining what had been 'the lifestyle of a minority, built around that monthly trip to London, the Kings Road in the afternoon and the Roxy in the evening' (*Loaded* 1977: 4).

Most amusing, or arch, was Sheffield's *Gun Rubber*. In issue three, Paul Bower – writing as Ronny Clocks – offered an outside view of London punk. On visiting the Roxy, he reported that the 'music is moving but the kids are still. Looking bored. Blasé. I felt very alien. There was no way I'd come here to look cool. I'd come here to pogo […] I recognised a couple of girls from Sex Pistols publicity photos. They looked real good. But I'd always thought that punk was anti-cool'. After hearing two 'ageing punks' talk about buying clothes on the Kings Road, Bower's 'stomach heaved' (*Gun Rubber* 1977b: 4).



SUMMER 1977

Zandra Rhodes is selling diamond studded safety pins and top flight American models are wearing ripped shirts. The Clash wear custom-made "battle fatigues", that would take you a month to save up and buy and their manager cruises the streets in a Rolls Royce (reg. no. CLASH). The Jam erect crash barriers at their gigs to protect themselves from their audience and their date at the Hammersmith Odeon has rock star ticket prices.

Meanwhile in the discoes the kiddies bounce up and down to pre-taped punk cassettes of their idols while the smaller bands go hungry from lack of gigs. The standard of living falls. Politicians manipulate or eradicate anything that is dangerous, while on the street the kids kick shit out of each other while the big men just continue rakin' in the dollars.

Are you a punk or a ted, mod or rocker, greaser or smoothy? Divided we will fall. The blacks get it rough. The blacks blame the whites. The whites blame the blacks. We're all wogs now. Divided we fell. The Big boys win hands down. No contest.

At the quickest possible opportunity the new-wave tours America while in Belfast, Bury, Rochdale or Perth you're lucky if you can buy their albums for under 3½ quid. Out in the suburbs bearded Marxists with degrees in Politics argue about society from the safety of "colour supplement" homes, and down in the city "Punk" bands are manufactured from Airfix kits.

Polydor Make a Punk Kit, Assembly Instructions

1. Take 4 hairies.
2. Throw away their denims and replace with ripped shirts.
3. Give them a spikey haircut and a three year recording contract.
4. Stick together with token aggro and call them.....(fill in the missing space)

The marketing experts move in and the chain stores start mass producing punk gear. Even the Daily Mirror likes us now. K-Tel release "Golden Hour of Punk".

I sell out, you sell out, we all sell out.

August 1977 and nothings changed. Still under remote control and I don't even think you're bothered.

Ronny Clocks

Gun Rubber, 6 (1977), provided by Jonathan Brooker and printed with permission of Paul Bower

Various other sources of tensions emerged. Punk's relationship to previous youth cultures were occasionally dissected, with potted histories of mods or skinheads and reflections on Teddy Boy antipathies (e.g. *Fair Dukes* 1977: 9–11; *Gun Rubber* 1977a: 11–12; *Live Wire* 1977b: passim). Lines, too, were being drawn between punk as a sound or a process; between punk as a continuum of rock 'n' roll or a break; between punk as an attitude or an impulse; between punk as politics or just a bit of raucous fun. For Tony Drayton in *Ripped &*

Torn, it was important to distinguish the 'CREATIVE side of punk' from the 'shitty' (*Ripped & Torn* 1977d: 5), pointing the way towards the contested vistas of post-punk and the sub-scenes that helped define the early 1980s (anarcho, Oi! etc). In 1977, punk's fanzines captured the beginning of such disputation, revealing both insights and insecurities as the vivacity of cultural engagement gave way to bleating hubris: I'm more punk than you.

'Hope you like it. If you don't – fuck off'

Punk's early fanzines help trace the emergence of a culture that defined popular music into at least the 1980s and constructed a style and aesthetic that retains still today. Honed into a narrative by the music press at the time and ossified across various media thereafter, punk's history can be re-interrogated through a fanzine's lens. Some 'myths' hold true; others dissolve. Clearly, however, punk's meaning and remit was contested from the outset, even by protagonists close to its core. The third issue of *Sniffin' Glue*, produced for September 1976, included an interview with the Damned during which the band discussed the term:

> Rat [Scabies] – What's a punk?
>
> SG – It's a ruffian, isn't it?
>
> David [Vanian] – The actual definition means worthless.
>
> Brian [James] – No one playing in a band's worthless! […] If someone says you're a punk, it don't mean they think you're stupid …
>
> Rat – It's just a slag down, I can see how the tag came about but I don't see how it applys to me.
>
> David – Or anyone else in this group!
>
> SG – How would you describe your music? […]

Rat – It's not rock 'n' roll but it's like …

David – It's music for NOW!

Brian – Power music …

Rat – Get up of yer arse music [sic]

(*Sniffin' Glue* 1976b: 3–6)

In the following issue, the Clash took up the question. 'Rock 'n' roll's about rebellion', Mick Jones insisted. 'I had this out with [Brian] James of the Damned and we we're screamin' at each other for about 3 hour 'cause he stands for enjoying himself and I stand for change and creativity' [sic] (*Sniffin' Glue* 1976d: 3–6).

Similar debate would rumble on (and on), informing punk's dissemination. To be sure, there was recognition in each-and-every fanzine that punk signalled a new wave of young bands playing music that rubbed against the grain of most rock and pop in the mid-1970s. Now-familiar references abound in punk's fledgling press: ageing rock stars; inaccessible virtuosos; boredom; an out-of-touch media; something better change. If not quite instigating a 'year zero', then punk was recognised to signal a rejuvenation and redirection of pop music, fracturing rock 'n' roll history and opening portals to cultural stimuli lost in the afterglow of the 'swinging sixties' (and then only partially revealed by the likes of David Bowie). Such influences were recovered and traced in more cerebral fanzines such as *White Stuff* and *Flicks*, picking through the rubble of the twentieth century. Others resolved simply to embrace and seek out *the new.*

Politics did feature. Nods to the state of the nation and the pernicious rise of the National Front are clear to see, suggesting punk resonated in ways more than just musical energy. Or it did so for many. To quote *Cells*:

> Punk rock like all music is not just a representation of reality but is a product of that generation, and so reflects the times and the state of society, people live their fantasies, punk is the fantasy of this generation. In the past days of unlimited affluence a kid at school work or in front of the television had the hope of better times ahead, a better job and a big car etc. This optimism is still shown in the majority of pop music and in hope for a better world that the hippy generation had. Punk is different because society today is so depressed today, punk is pessimistic […] punk is an image of an empty future, of 1984. This depression is a product of the dead end society which we are living in, of the economic depression, irrelevant and boring education, no job or a boring job, rising prices, boring TV, bland radio and a general disillusion with politics.
>
> (*Cells* 1977: 8–9)

Punk *felt* relevant, aestheticizing the 'declinism' that shaped the politics of the 1970s and adopting the crisis-speak that infused the surrounding mediascape (Beckett 2009; Garnett 2007; Moran 2010; Tomlinson 2009). The style, sound and rhetoric touched a nerve, with the moral panic enveloping the Sex Pistols doing much to fix the gaze and set the brain beyond the realm of pop music towards critical reflections and a real sense of difference. In punk's fanzines, this all played out in titles that asserted, shocked and confronted; in a commitment to being active not passive; in a desire to initiate and create rather than simply consume cultural product; in (often vague) allusions to change and revolution; in sometimes astute surveys of punk's cultural precedents and political resonance.

There may, too, be subtler points to make. Early on, 'punk' and 'new wave' were used interchangeably; the latter took time to develop the sanitised interpretation it holds today:

that is, punk's poppier – more saleable – cousin, adopted as a marketing term to cash in on punk's harsher intervention. This, more than anything, was due to the diverse influences conflating to enable punk's genesis, coalescing in the UK most startlingly around the Sex Pistols before once more disengaging into various sub-genres and scenes. Simultaneously, fanzines reveal how quickly an initial flush of enthusiasm could rescind, both in London and elsewhere. By so doing, punk's innate dissatisfaction set in train a search for innovation and originality that helped foster the post-punk transformations of the later 1970s and early 1980s. Finally, punk's critical disposition was never sharper than when directed inwards. Fanzines articulated this often petty – but occasionally incisive – impulse, succumbing at times to snide elitism but also channelling the critiques used to frame the Sex Pistols by McLaren, Westwood and Reid. Be it reification or recuperation, commodification or co-option, radical ideas were absorbed and reformulated to determine punk's (and many a fanzine's) rationale, commitment and purpose.

For Max, aged 16, punk's thrill was palpable. In *Tomorrow the World?* he reflected on the energy of the Jam playing live three nights running. He recalled chatting about revolution and impending fascist governments with Joe Strummer at the Marquee whilst watching Generation X. He asked Billy Idol and Tony James about politics and if their band made money. He was in the middle of *something*, getting the track listing for the forthcoming Jam album from the band and reviewing the first Clash LP from the shop floor of Rough Trade. In the process, he helped capture punk's becoming and the sense of both urgency and agency it imparted (*Tomorrow the World?* 1977: passim).

Max's contemporaries did similar. In fanzines obscure and relatively well-known, we find a grassroots record of the Roxy but also the origins of Leeds' influential F Club and less renowned spaces opening to give room to fledgling punk and post-punk cultures (e.g, Clouds

in Edinburgh, Katie's in Nottingham, the Lord Louis in Southampton etc.). The early histories of soon-to-be-recognised bands are documented first hand; long-lost pioneers – e.g. Brighton's Punktuation (average age 14) – are preserved; local scenes are ready to be excavated. More generally, socio-cultural tensions are revealed alongside youthful reflections, anxieties and aspirations that are, in turn, related to punk forms and practice. Subcultural solutions, to evoke the language of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), are proffered (Clarke *et al* 1976: 47–8).

And there's more. Punk's fanzines curated alternative cultural histories. Bands, artists and writers were recalled and recovered to make sense of punk's import: Valerie Solanas and Harry Crosby; Third World War and Wilhelm Reich; Nico and Lou Reed. In a pre-internet world, fanzines helped source the esoteric and provided material for the inquisitive. Connections were made and theories were tested, as with Pat Moore's 'dadaism + pop art + punk' for his *Breakdown* fanzine (*Breakdown* 1977: 7).[4] Pop's canon was challenged and reconfigured; the twentieth century was reimagined; new identities were created: Lucy Whitman became Lucy Toothpaste; Jon Sage became Jon Savage; Adrian Fox became Randy Bollocker (!!). By so doing, fanzine writers/makers took ownership of the cultures they helped forge and sustained, challenging the bands and protecting against media distortion. Punk's early fanzines constructed meanings and contested them. To paraphrase, Lucy Robinson, they were as essential to punk's repurposing and rearming of pop's history as the bands they coveted, covered and critiqued (Robinson 2018: 50). 'It ain't no fun being a New Wave sheep', Bert Vinyl wrote in *Gun Rubber*. 'Get out and do something!' (*Gun Rubber* 1977c: 27).

[4] Pat Moore is now better-known as the writer Philip Hoare.

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Suggested Citation

Worley, M. (XXXX), '"If I had more time it could be better, but the new wave's about spontaneity, right?": Finding meaning in Britain's early punk fanzines (1976–77)', *Punk & Post-Punk*, pp. XXXX, doi: XXXXXX

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