‘WE CAN'T HELP IT IF WE'RE FROM FLORIDA’:

A DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE 1980S GAINESVILLE PUNK SUBCULTURE

Christos Tzoustas

Student No: 5950559

Master of Arts ‘Cultural History of Modern Europe’

Utrecht University

Supervisor: dr. Rachel Gillett

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ABSTRACT

This thesis undertakes a discursive analysis of the 1980s Gainesville punk subculture. As such, it performs a semiotic analysis and close reading to both the textual and visual discursive production of the scene, in the form of flyers, fanzines and liner notes, in order to, on the one hand, examine the ways in which such production was made to signify disorder, and, on the second hand, to illuminate the identity representations that ultimately constructed the Gainesville punk identity. For this reason, it employs the concept of intersectionality in an effort to consider identity representations of gender, race and class as interconnected and overlapping rather than isolated. Finally, it investigates the links between Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection and Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque, on the one hand, and the bodily performativity and corporeal manifestations of the Gainesville punk identity, on the other. Can the punk identity, within its capacity to disturb order, rid the 'subject' of its discursive constraints?

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To those that never belonged, but want to.

INTRODUCTION

> That elsewhere that I imagine beyond the present, or that I hallucinate so that I might, in a present time, speak to you, conceive of you—it is now here, jetted, abjected, into 'my' world.
>
> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of horror* [1]

It was December 1st, 1976 when the Sex Pistols were featured as last-minute replacements for labelmates Queen on Thames Television's, Today show, a regional news magazine programme. The members of the band used profane language on the very short, two-minute interview with host Bill Grundy but because of the live nature of the programme, the broadcast was not cut-off by the production team who feared trouble with the studio. As a result, Thames' telephone lines were jammed by complaining viewers, disgusted by the language uttered by the group and entering their homes through their televisions. The following day an article covering the incident ran in the tabloid paper Daily Mirror. Its title read: 'The Filth and The Fury! Uproar as viewers jam phones'. [2] The newspaper even managed to track down an outraged Essex lorry driver by the name of James Holmes who kicked in his television in order to prevent the obscenities from reaching his young son's ears. 'I can swear as well as anyone', he admitted, 'but I don't want this sort of muck coming into my house at teatime', he went on to say. From that moment on, the Sex Pistols would constantly be under media scrutiny establishing at the same time punk rock as a major, highly controversial cultural phenomenon in the United Kingdom and the United

[1] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of horror: an essay on abjection* (New York, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1982), 4.
[2] Stuart Grieg, Michael McCarthy, and John Peacock, 'The Filth and the Fury! ,' *The Daily Mirror*, December 2, 1976.

States, one that continues to be relevant today and one that has produced a plethora of subgenres within the punk genre and a multiplicity of punk 'scenes' across the world.

One of these 'scenes' is the topic of this study. The scene in question is set in the small city of Gainesville, Florida. The time frame is that of the 1980s. In respect to this specific locale and time, this thesis will attempt to analyze the process of the construction and maintenance of the Gainesville punk rock subculture. To achieve this, it will look closely into the main historical participants of this process. On the one hand, it will examine the bands themselves and mainly their products (songs, lyrics, videos) as creators and carriers of the content of the subculture. At the same time, it will aim its attention towards the record labels, festivals, popular magazines, and fanzines of the area viewed as the 'gatekeepers' of this content, who control its dissemination and simultaneously create new forms of it. On the other hand, it will focus on the subjects produced in this space, on the individuals that perform the punk identity through their bodies. The punk identity, here, will not be treated as a homogeneous category but rather as an intersection of different experiences linked to distinct identity categories, namely class, race and gender. The punk identity will, thus, not be viewed as having concrete, stable characteristics but examined as a fluid and malleable concept that is constituted through the interaction of different forms of identity, punk simultaneously being one of them and the one that can act as a common denominator between them through its basic characteristic, its lack of fit. While class and race will be considered in this examination, the emphasis will be placed predominantly in the intersection between gender and punk.

In order then to examine these parameters of the content production of the Gainesville punk rock scene, this thesis will employ the theoretical framework of the discourse as this concept was formulated and used by Michel Foucault. [3]As such, it will

[3] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: an introduction*. volume 1 (*London: Allen Lane*, 1976)

look into the wider context of the apparatuses and technologies of institutions such as record labels, magazines, fanzines and festivals examined as power structures through which the forms of what Foucault termed as discursive knowledge are disseminated. At the same time, it will look more closely into specific visual images and verbal texts (songs, lyrics, videos, flyers) produced in the discourse, viewed themselves simultaneously as carriers of this knowledge and creators of new forms of it and consequently, as producers themselves of power relations and guarantors of its continued existence. While this thesis will focus on the production of subjects who embody the punk identity as a result of these discursive procedures, it will also simultaneously attempt to provide agency to the 'subject' as the producer of its own intentions through the use of the psychoanalytic concept of abjection as this was termed by Julia Kristeva. [4]

Nonetheless, a better way to understand the potential aims and possible absences of this thesis, is to first compile a historiographic review of the historiography related to the topic of punk subcultures. A good starting point in this case is Dick Hebdidge's *Subculture : the Meaning of Style* which is to be considered as a seminal work in the field, as it produced a model and various theoretical frameworks with which to analyze youth subcultures in general and the punk subculture in particular. [5] In using concepts mainly deriving from Stuart Hall's cultural theory, combined with the use of semiotics as theorized by the French structuralist Roland Barthes, Hebdige analyzes the emergence and dissemination of a number of Britain's post-war youth subcultures including the mods, skinheads, the glam rock movement and the punk subculture.

While taking into account the historical, class and race contexts influencing the British society at the time of the distinct subcultures' formation, Hebdige simultaneously

[4] Kristeva, *Powers of horror.*
[5] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 1979).

constructs broader theoretical concepts that explicate the cultural mechanisms at work during the construction, dissemination and eventual return of any given subculture within the mainstream culture, allowing, thus, for implementation of such concepts in different case studies than his own. For Hebdige, all subcultures possess a common subversive thread manifested in the attempts of its members to undermine the cultural conventions of the dominant culture against which they ostensibly define themselves. As far as the punk subculture is concerned, Hebdige locates the origins of the subculture firmly within white, working-class British youth and simulatenously provides a historical grounding of the subculture within reggae and Rastafarian traditions. While he does not examine the textual and visual discursive production of the subculture (lyrics, videos, flyers, fanzines etc.) as a way to showcase the implementation of his concepts, he utilizes the performative element to be found in punk style as a means through which to illustrate the subversive capacity of the subculture.

Building on Hebdige's concept of the importance of historical, class and race contexts in the construction of subcultures and his transgressive interpretation of punk, but moving away from a Marxist interpretation of culture where style interpreted as a collage of commodities acts as the main signifying practice of the subculture, more recent academic work on the topic of punk employs a discourse analysis approach to its study. Konstantin Butz's *Grinding California: Culture and Corporeality in American Skate Punk* and David A. Ensminger's *Visual Vitriol: The Street Art and Subcultures of the Punk and Hardcore Generation* move in that direction. [6] As products of discourse analysis, both of the works naturally focus on the institutions and the verbal, visual products of the discourse that create and disseminate the knowledge/power on which it is built on. As such

[6] Konstantin Butz, *Grinding California: Culture and Corporeality in American Skate Punk*, (Transcript-Verlag, 2014); David A. Ensminger, *Visual Vitriol: The Street Art and Subcultures of the Punk and Hardcore Generation*, (University Press of Mississippi, 2011)

their primary sources consist of song lyrics, flyers, magazines, videos, interviews and street art.

However, and while still remaining in the theoretical framework of the discourse, both of these works add a new dimension to the study of punk by employing the concept of 'intersectionality'. Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced intersectionality in 1989 within the context of feminist theory. [7] The concept alludes to the examination of systems of power and discipline within a discourse, such as race, gender and class as interweaving, rather than stand-alone, experiences which, in turn, affect marginalized groups within culture. A large part of the above studies, then, focuses on the close examination of space, gender, race and class as 'axis[sic] of differentiation' to be found in the historical context in which the discourse of the punk subculture was formulated. [8] However, these axis of differentiation, in turn viewed as 'affective elements' of the lived body, especially in Butz's study, rather than existing separately, overlap with one another to essentially produce the punk identity. [9] The punk identity, then, becomes a performative act through which the body embraces a symbolic value that signifies its rebellion against normativity. Nevertheless, such an identity is in no way fixed and stable, as the intersecting axis of gender, race and class, and underlying historical context, produce a vast array of 'distinct' punk identities, drawn together by their opposition to the mainstream. A similar approach, focusing on the performative aspect of punk identity, is also used by recent journal articles such as 'Negotiating the Punk in Steampunk: Subculture, Fashion & Performative Identity' and " 'I Can't Seem To Stay A Fixed Ideal': Self-design and self-harm in subcultures".[10]

[7] Kimberle Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Policies', *University of Chicago Legal Forum 1989*, no. 1 (1989): 139-167.
[8] Avtar Brah, and Ann Phoenix, 'Ain't I A Woman? Revisiting Intersectionality', *Journal of International Women's Studies*, no. 5 (May 2004): 76.
[9] Butz, *Grinding California*, 29.
[10] Brigid Cherry, and Maria Mellins, 'Negotiating the Punk in Steampunk: Subculture, Fashion & Performative Identity,' *Punk & Post Punk*, no.1 (September 2011): 5-25; Guy Mankowski, ' "I Can't Seem

They both investigate the personal and social impact of the punk subculture and by utilizing concepts such as Greenblatt's 'self-fashioning',[11] they attempt to demonstrate how the punk identity affects personal presentation and, through its performative character, is ultimately inscribed on the body.

Finally, linked to the performative element inherent in the punk identity, contemporary academic writings on punk have sought to incorporate post-feminist and queer studies theory into the study of the punk subculture. A key role in this attempt is played by the Riot girrrl movement which originated in the early 1990s in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. A women's band movement, Riot girrrl is associated with third-wave feminism and is to be viewed as an endeavor to re-evaluate female performativity and stereotypical, commodified notions of girlhood. Journal articles such as 'Beth Ditto and the Post-Feminist Masquerade; or How "Post" can Post-Punk Be?' and '"I could scream my truth right through your lies if I wanted": Bikini Kill's sound-collage and the subversive rhetoric of grrrlhood' use Riot girrrl bands as case studies in order to illustrate, using post-feminist theory, how the transgressive character of punk music and style is intersected with feminist awareness and a rhetoric designed to achieve the movement's aims.[12] Furthermore, books such as Lauraine Leblanc's *Pretty in Punk: Girl's Gender Resistance in a Boy's Subculture* examine the manner in which notions associated with dominant cultures' gender representations are renegotiated by the female participants of punk subcultures to create new hybrid forms of femininity.[13]

To Stay A Fixed Ideal": Self-design and self-harm in subcultures', *Punk & Post Punk* 2, no. 3 (February 2014): 305-316.

[11] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[12] Serena Guarracino, 'Beth Ditto and the Post-Feminist Masquerade; or How "Post" can Post-Punk Be?', *Punk & Post Punk*, no.1 (September 2011): 111-122; Megan Sormus, ' "I could scream my truth right through your lies if I wanted": Bikini Kill's sound-collage and the subversive rhetoric of grrrlhood', *Punk & Post Punk*, no. 4, (September 2015): 159-174.

[13] Lauraine Leblanc, *Pretty in punk: Girls' Gender Resistance in a Boys' Subculture*, (Rutgers University Press, 1999).

It is fitting then, after this sort historiographical review, to reevaluate the aims and claims of this study. In order to produce a discourse analysis of the Gainesville punk subculture of the 1980s, this thesis will look to adopt methodological and theoretical notions linked to discourse analysis, as these were described in this short review, and apply them to the locality of the Gainesville punk rock scene. Inevitably, the concept of intersectionality will occur throughout this study in an attempt to highlight possible convergences and divergences between the punk scene and other marginalized groups, such as racial minorities and women. Similarly, the notion of the bodily performativity of the punk identity will act as a staple of the expression of the punk identity and a means through which to juxtapose punk identity to the carnivalesque as theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin. This thesis will, then, examine instances of live shows characteristic of the Gainesville 1980s scene, in order to trace its commonalities with the medieval carnival as a form of cultural resistance to a hierarchical view of the world.

However, and while this study will use the aforementioned, already integrated in similar studies on punk subcultures, theoretical and methodological frameworks to examine the Gainesville discourse, it will also aim to introduce a new dimension to the academic discussion about its topic. As such, it will attempt to provide agency to the discursively produced 'subject' as simultaneously being the producer of its own intentions through the use of Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic concept of 'abjection'. 'Abjection' as explored by Julia Kristeva represents the feeling that is generated when one is confronted with a disruption in the distinction between what is perceived as the 'Self' and the 'Other'. As such, human bodily secretions and fluids, such as feces, act as telling representation of the abject. They belong neither inside the Self or entirely on the 'outside' of the Other. They constitute an 'in-between' state that acts as a reminder of the 'body's permeability'

and its 'corporeal limits' that must be, in turn, cast off in order for the Self to live.[14] Ultimately, the abject threatens one's sense of life as it disrupts the process through which one separates one's Self from the Other, an Other which is a reminder of the body's corporeal limits tied to death. As such, the punk identity will be considered as an expression of the abject, as that which stands outside the symbolic order and, thus, is not culturally and discursively produced. In turn, this thesis will seek to link punk as an expression of the abject with other forms of identity that could be argued express the abject, such as the feminine identity. This kind of connections and analyses will be based on the close reading of the primary sources chosen by this project.

The music, lyrics, videos, interviews and autobiographical texts of the most prominent punk rock Gainesville bands of the era, on the one hand, and relevant flyers, newspaper articles, and fanzines, on the other, will act as the raw material on which this thesis will built its conclusions. The Gainesville punk discourse will be regarded as having been constructed by groups of certain visual and textual statements that create and reproduce a particular knowledge about the subculture, which, in turn, shapes how the subculture itself is understood by its members. As such, the examination of these sources will search out these moments of meaning creation by focusing closely on the 'texts' they produce, be that lyrics, images, film or music. In order, for example, to look at images (flyers, fanzines) as visual texts containing discursive meaning, this paper will selectively employ the methodological framework of Barthes' semiotic analysis to locate the underlying cultural conventions and codes that are to be found beneath the denotational level of such sources.[15] While each of these categories, be they verbal or visual texts, will receive special attention, none of them will be explored in isolation. Rather, they will be

[14] Karina Eileraas, 'Witches, Bitches & Fluids: Girl Bands Performing Ugliness as Resistance', *TDR 41*, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 132, 137.
[15] Roland Barthes, *Image - Music - Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

viewed as always being in close relation to each other, as texts whose meaning depends as much on the meanings of other discursive texts as on their own.

However, the aim of this paper is to simultaneously keep this discursive analysis 'grounded' in historical time by analyzing the social context in which such content was produced. As such, a brief sociocultural analysis of the broader Florida region will be attempted in order to highlight the convergences between the wider historical context of the era and the identity categories of punk, in general and class, gender and race, in particular. Intersectionality, then, as described earlier, will not only highlight the interactions within a scheme of gender-class-race-punk identity but also facilitate the analysis of the Gainesville discourse within the historical contours of the era.

As far as the provenance of the primary sources necessary for such an undertaking is concerned, due to the almost non-existent nature of institutional archival documentation of such sources, this paper will mostly depend on the personal archival collections of ex-members of Gainesville punk rock bands and music enthusiasts for the uncovering of relevant information such as flyers, articles and fanzines. Simultaneously, interviews with both members of active and non-active bands and autobiographical works of participants in the construction of the scene such as Matt Walker's *Gainesville Punk* will provide a major alternative source for the completion of the analysis. [16] Such sources, however, need to be approached with a certain caution. While, on the one hand, they produce a historical representation that is based on first-hand experience, on the other hand, there is always room for potential biases in the reconstruction of the past due to the selective and malleable nature of personal memory. This thesis, then, will attempt to cross-reference such sources with other, distinct testimonial narratives and information deriving from secondary sources in order to prevent such biases from occurring.

[16] Matt Walker, *Gainesville Punk* (Arcadia Publishing, 2016).

Nevertheless, the same exact lack of archival sources that perplexes the realization of this project, is what adds value to it at the same time. Due to the poor state of the archival records when it comes to primary sources concerning the Gainesville subculture, the Gainesville discourse has been omitted in the academic production interested in punk subcultures. The fact that the Gainesville scene is considered to be the Southeastern epicenter of punk in the United States renders this omission even more evident. As such, this study hopes to fill that void.

At the same time, as a study that hopefully contributes to the larger body of academic production revolving around punk subcultures, this thesis aspires to aid us better comprehend our post-modern situation. Post-modernism and the punk subcultures share a number of common characteristics, most importantly that they are both informed by a mutual crisis of meaning which was until recently used to make sense of the world around us. [17] They are both immersed in self-reflexivity as they reject dominant systems of representation that appear as natural (e.g. the nation-state) and attempt to reconstruct a worldview that rejects ideology and the teleological trajectory of humanity towards social progress. The study of the punk subculture, then, as the epitome of 'semantic disorder' provides us with the chance to further 'expose the arbitrary nature of codes' that shape our post-modern world and our understanding of it. [18]

Last but not least, the topic of the punk subculture and the Gainesville scene, specifically, lies within the interests of the author and provides further incentive for the analysis of the Florida discourse. In the spirit of self-reflexivity, then, this personal involvement demands additional caution on the part of the author in order to reconstruct

[17] Ryan Moore, 'Postmodernism and Punk Subculture: Cultures of Authenticity and Deconstruction', *The Communication Review 7*, no. 3 (2004): 305-327
[18] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style,* 91.

an, as much as possible, ‘objective’ representation of the Gainesville discourse and to not simply apply his own presupposition to the findings of the research.

After establishing the goals, methods and theory informing this study, let us then turn to a brief preview of its structure and content. Chapter 1 will be devoted to the examination of the much-required context through which the discursive analysis of the primary sources will obtain its historical ‘grounding’. A two-part chapter, subchapter 1.1 will delve into the sociocultural past and present of the Florida region. The findings will, then, inform the remainder of this study and simultaneously accommodate ties between the social reality of Florida and the representations of the identity categories of punk, gender, class and race as these will be manifested in the analysis of the primary sources.

In similar manner, subchapter 1.2 will offer a brief historical analysis of the construction of the Gainesville punk subculture, setting, thus, as its time frame the decade of the 1980s. A factual retrospection on the most important components and actors of the scene (bands, prominent members, record labels etc.) will introduce the reader to the Gainesville discourse and familiarize him or her with the particularities of the subculture which will repeatedly exhibit themselves through the examination of the primary sources.

In turn, chapter 2 will exclusively concentrate on the discursive analysis of the Gainesville subculture, focusing thus on its content as this was produced by the Gainesville locale. Consequently, the focus will lie with a close reading-visual semiotic analysis in Barthesian terms of flyer art, lyric sheets and fanzine articles, pictures and artwork. It is here, that this study will attempt to highlight the intersections that occur between the identity categories of gender, race and class and the punk identity as these reveal themselves through the close inspection of the discursive products of the scene.

In an attempt to point out these intersections more convincingly and to, furthermore, underline the interplay between their manifestations and the subculture’s

semiotic signification techniques, it is regarded as more fitting to the goals of this study to not create separate subchapters for the gender, class and race identity categories. Rather the examination of their representations as these are deduced through the close reading of the visual and textual discursive products of the scene will hopefully produce an analysis that interweaves these different axes of identity as they inscribe themselves on the signifiers of punk identity. As such, chapter 2 will be divided into three subsections. Subchapter 2.1 will engage with flyer art, while subchapter 2.2 will look into the products of Gainesville's fanzine culture. Finally, subchapter 2.3 will focus on liner notes as discursive products.

At the same time, while focusing on the discursive products of the subculture, chapter 2 will also incorporate extracts and quotes from an interview conducted by the author with Debra Fetzer, an original member of the seminal band of the 1980s Gainesville scene, Mutley Chix. The purpose of this addition is to further illuminate the conclusions drawn from the discursive analysis of content and, in some cases, to even induce interpretations that supplement the original findings. Simultaneously, the inclusion of elements drawn from the premises of the discipline of oral history, will render the analysis of the Gainesville discourse less 'impersonal', by introducing to the reader the thought process of the people behind the production of the discursive content of the subculture. Finally, it is important that, throughout the chapter, representations of gender, race and class, exhibited through the different forms of subcultural content, will be continuously linked and informed by the contextual analysis conducted in chapter 1.

Lastly, chapter 3 will explore the bodily performances of the punk identity. Subchapter 3.1 will, initially, attempt to uncover instances where Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection is expressed through the music of Gainesville punk bands, the bodily performances to be found in punk concerts and the stylistic choices of Gainesville punks.

In this attempt to provide agency to the discursively produced subject, this study will also utilize Ronald Barthes' essay on the 'Grain of the voice' as his theory approximates Kristeva's abjection in many instances. Subsequently, subchapter 3.2 will investigate the correlation between the practices and bodily performances of the carnival, as theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin, and the corresponding experiences generated in the concerts of the Gainesville punk scene. Here, both photographs from these events and testimonies produced by interviews with members of the subculture will act as supporting evidence.

Let us then begin.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT

1.1.THE FLORIDA DREAM

> The persons most drawn to the sun culture are the pleasure seekers, the bored, the ambitious, the space-age technicians and the retired — a super slice of the rootless, socially mobile group known as the American middle class.
>
> Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* [19]

The term 'Big Bang' has been utilized by historians to describe the vast social and cultural change that has redefined the state of Florida in the time span starting from 1950 until the early 2000s. Prior to the 1950s the state was largely economically dependent on agricultural production but since then it has transformed into a tourist and retirement empire. It is, thus, characterized by an immense population shift which is, simultaneously, complemented by extensive social and cultural change. The 'Florida Dream' is both the reason behind and the result of massive economic, demographic and cultural growth. '[G]rowth became theme, mantra and creed' for Florida.[20]

The extent to which Florida has been transformed in half a century is most clearly reflected by the shift in the state's demographics. In 1950 the total number of its inhabitants was a mere 2.7 million, while in 2000 that number had risen to an impressive

[19] Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New York: Arlington Place, 1969), 437.
[20] Gary R. Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 4, Kindle Edition.

15.9 million, ranking Florida as the fourth most populated state in the United States. The rate of population growth has simultaneously been steady, with an average increase of 3 million inhabitants per decade. However, while the impressive rise in population propelled the Florida Dream, it also resulted in an abrupt rise of the median age of the state's population. A number that stood at 28.8 in 1950, constituting Florida's inhabitants as younger than the US average, had risen to 39.3 in 2000, making the median Floridian four year older than the average American.[21]

This demographic change can be attributed to two major developments of the second half of the 20th century. The first is the postwar affluence and social security that Americans experienced post World War II and the second, the fact that Florida developers decided to market the Dream almost exclusively to 'veterans, retirees and middling folk'[22]. Florida was inextricably linked to youthful exuberance while the sun was essentially turned into a commodity available for purchase. In a shifting culture where the consumption of products came to be associated with personal identification traits, the act of leisure was ultimately commodified. The total package was sold to the elderly and the postwar prosperity allowed mainly middle-class, white retirees to buy into it.

A plethora of private-owned theme parks and retirement communities were built to entertain and house the elderly newcomers and 'natural' beaches were reworked into man-made, picture-perfect white-sand beaches for the retirees to enjoy. As a result, Florida never became a true home for its elderly inhabitants but 'merely their penultimate resting place, a warm way station in which to relax and play golf, the blessed limbo between Cleveland and the pearly gates'. [23]A statement that is also reflected by the fact that in the 1980s about half a million Americans were affluent enough to spend more than a few

[21] Ibid., 2-4.
[22] Ibid., 3.
[23] John Rothchild, 'The Distinguished States of Florida,' Forum 17, no.2, (Fall/Winter 1993), 8.

months in vacation destinations, many of them choosing Florida, while simultaneously maintaining their primary homes. At the same time, following 1950, federal revenues were also 'injected' into the state, largely a result of the Cold War and the Great society project, culminating in the construction of military installations, veterans' hospitals, public housing, senior citizen communities and interstate highways. [24]

The construction of the Federal Interstate Highway System in the second half of the 20th century along with air conditioning, the dissemination of television and shopping centers act as a testament to the dependence of Floridians upon modern technology. By the 1980s automobiles had surpassed the number of Florida inhabitants and life without the highway was by then unimaginable. In 1950 most Americans lived and worked in cities, but due to the new advancements in automobile technology and the highway system, by 1980 most downtowns had become obsolete. The efficiency and speed of the automobile and the new highway system allowed Americans, and Floridians in that case, to live a long distance away from their workplaces. New suburban areas and private communities in Florida were constructed in the blink of an eye, without any correlation to the urban center, thus breaking down, what was until then, urban life. However, the new Interstate System not only promoted speed but also homogeneity.[25] The new endless highways, the disintegration of urban life, the new suburban areas, together with modern Floridian urban architecture that has been criticized for its 'blandness and conformity' led to what could be argued is a lack of an urban identity tied to specific locales.[26] As urban critic James Kunstler writes about the Florida roadside, 'there is little sense of having arrived anywhere, because everyplace looks like no place in particular'.[27] Florida can, thus, be

[24] Mormino, *Land of Sunshine,* 151.
[25] Ibid., 241-252.
[26] Ibid., 8.
[27] James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-made Landscape, (*New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 131.

characterized as a 'transient state', a state defined by mobility and rootlessness, especially since the mobile home, which is common in the state, can act as a home in itself.[28]

The lack of a distinct urban identity and homogeneity caused by the highway system, is exacerbated by the development of the shopping center and shopping mall. The shopping center and mall is associated with a consumer-oriented society and is a sign of a commodification of life. The automobile and the interstate highways allowed for easy access to the centers and malls, and by the late 1970s, around 20.000 such centers were erected in the United States. In the early 1970s, Florida had the fourth largest number of such centers in the United States. Similarly, in the four decades following 1960, 1.500 shopping malls were constructed in the United States, hundreds of them being in Florida. The link to a dynamic and lively urban life was, thus, further severed as Floridians were entertained and fulfilled all their shopping needs in shopping centers and malls. [29]But for the indoors malls to be become a reality, there was a prerequisite, and that was the dissemination of air conditioning.

Air conditioning, while widely available as a technology since the 1950s, did not become commonplace in Florida until the 1970s. According to historian Marsha E. Ackerman, 'air conditioning had much less to do with hot weather than it did with prosperity, efficiency and status' and, thus, the affluence and the disposable income of the middle-classes of the 1970s was a precondition for the dissemination of the technology in Florida. [30] As such, in 1970, more than 2 in 3 white households had air condition units installed. At the same time, the tourist season which in 1950 lasted around seven to eight months, in the 1970s was transformed into a year-round enterprise. But more importantly, the air condition transformed the lifestyles of Floridians. By permitting them to spend

[28] Mormino, *Land of Sunshine,* 14.
[29] Ibid., 256-263.
[30] Marsha E. Akerman, *Cool Comfort: America's Romance with Air Conditioning, (*Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Press, 2002), 3.

increasingly longer periods of time indoors, it disconnected Floridians from nature and from neighborly communication. [31]The front porch was replaced by the TV room and visits to nearby shopping malls, disintegrating, thus, the sense of community. When taken into account together with the mass amounts of newcomers into the state, tourists and retirees, the crumbling of urban life and the mobility facilitated by the interstate highways, air conditioning contributed towards a 'weak civic bond' between Florida residents.[32] In similar manner, the popularization of television in Florida in the 1960s, mainly due to lower selling prices, and the establishment of new local broadcast stations, led Floridians towards further isolations, promoting a culture of individualization devoid of community bonds.[33]

However, such a culture of individualization was not contained only within the contours of mainstream Floridian culture. At this point, then, before turning to the final section of the sociocultural analysis of Florida, it is important to shift our scope momentarily in order to begin to establish connections and transfers of cultural values between the wider Floridian historical context and the specific locale of the Gainesville punk subculture. As such, this study will employ the theoretical framework constructed by Dick Hebdige in order to examine the interconnection that exists between the binary pair of dominant culture-subculture and allows for transfer of meaning in a reciprocal manner. As Hebdige theorizes, subcultures are a response to mainstream cultures 'against which they are ostensibly defined'.[34] Furthermore, using Stuart Hall's definition of culture, and subculture then, as '. . . that level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life and give expressive form to their social and material . . .experience', Hebdige postulates, drawing from Marx, that such an experience is always influenced by the historical context

[31] Mormino, *Land of Sunshine,* 234-241.
[32] Ibid., 356.
[33] Ibid., 272-278.
[34] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style,* 73.

in which it is encountered.[35] What is important for Hebdige, and for this study, however, is to account for 'historical specificity' in a manner as in which to not simply posit subculture as a mere reactionary response to an oppressive dominant culture but rather as a way through which to seek an 'explanation of why these particular forms should occur at this particular time [and particular place]'. [36]

In turn and in our case, then, the historical context that defines the mainstream Floridian culture finds expression in the Gainesville subculture, but in this instance as a marker against which the subcultural identity is constructed. As such, the emergence within the Florida region of a culture of individualization and extreme commodification of life, coupled with a lack of a local urban identity and the dramatic altering of Florida's population make-up, reverberated within the Gainesville punk subculture but as the enactor for the construction of an identity defined against such cultural expressions. The Gainesville punks, thus, sought to create an 'authentic' local identity, original and 'unmediated' or, at least, deconstruct the ideological grounds on which identities tied to the mainstream culture of commodification and individualization were based on. Chapter 2, in examining the discursive production of the scene, will attempt to showcase such subcultural identity representations and consequent semiotic challenges to the dominant culture.

Let us then refocus our lens once more and return to the wider context of Florida to grapple with the topic of immigration, as this brief sociocultural analysis of the state would not be complete without its mention, so central for Florida's history. Due to its geographic proximity to the Caribbean and the fact that the state remained under Spanish rule for almost three centuries (1539-1821), Florida maintained strong cultural ties to the island

[35] Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, *Resistance through rituals: youth subcultures in post-war Britain*, (London: Hutchinson, 1976).
[36] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 73.

complex, in general, and Cuba more specifically. This link, in turn, was renewed in recent years through the immigration flow of Hispanic populations into the state. Starting with the 1970s, Hispanics began to heavily immigrate to the state, extensively altering the state's population make up. As early as 1970, the Hispanic population represented a 4.4 of the total, seven million Florida population, amounting to 299,217 individuals. Interestingly, only the Cuban-born population numbered 206,347 in a total of 540,280 foreign-born immigrants. Nevertheless, the 1980s provided the big push for Florida's immigration. Partially linked to Fidel Castro's 1980s shift in his foreign-policy approach that granted *gusanos* (Castro's critics) the right to freely migrate from Cuba, Florida's Hispanic population spiraled upwards, increasing by 83 percent during the decade. By 1990 Florida's total Hispanic population numbered 949,700 peoples, representing a substantial 12.2 of the total population. The same trend held true for the 1990s, as the Hispanic population steadily rose to reach nearly 1.3 million, a 16.8 percentage of the entire population. Ultimately, however, and despite the vast numbers of Hispanics relocating to the state, Florida's fastest-growing, foreign-born group since the 1970s was not Hispanic but rather Asian. In 1970, just over 15,000 Asians resided in Florida, with that number being tripled during the 1970s and doubled, subsequently, during the 1980s. Asian immigrants, most commonly, chose to relocate to the state's suburban areas in search of the economic opportunities provided by Florida's growing urban economy. Finally, it is worth noting that the median Floridian family income in 1990 fluctuated considerably per ethnicity, as it provides evidence for a direct correlation between race and class, two of the identity categories that play a central role in this study. While the median family income in 1990 was $32,212, white families had median family incomes of $34,928, Blacks earned $20,334 and Hispanics $26,907. Such statistics, then, allude to a

direct link between race identity, level of affluence and corresponding class. [37] But how does this demographic information relate to Gainesville's specific locale?

By closely examining the 2010 U.S. Census results, one arrives at the conclusion that the same tendencies concerning migration flows and population growth which were examined earlier and were apparent in the wider Florida area, also hold true for Gainesville's demographics. A city of 29,701 inhabitants in 1960, Gainesville experienced immense growth in the 1960s and 1970s, registering a 117.2 and 26.1 percent increase in its population numbers respectively. At the same time, the examination of the minority percentages that comprise the city's population make-up, confirm the tendencies in migration flows exhibited in the state. Hispanics make up ten percent of the total population, while Asians represent a respectable 6.9 percent. Finally, it is worth noting that Black or African-American populations constitute a large 23 percent of the city's population. [38]

After this short sociocultural analysis of Florida, which produced the wider historical context in which the Gainesville punk rock scene was constructed and prospered, it is now time to further 'focus' our historical scope and move to a brief historical overview of the subculture itself. By mainly focusing on a factual retrospection on the events, individuals and institutions that shaped the subculture, the next subchapter will attempt to provide more time and locale specific context with which to analyze and tie the discursive analysis of the subculture's content to be carried out in chapter two.

[37] Mormino, *Land of Sunshine*, 282-300; John L. Martin, Leon F. Bouvier and William Leonard, 'Shaping Florida: The Effects of Immigration, 1970-2020', *Center for Immigration Studies*, December 1, 1995, https://cis.org/Report/Shaping-Florida-Effects-Immigration-19702020.
[38] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twenty-third Census of the United States, 2010: Population*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010.

1.2. GAINESVILLE, A SOUTHEAST PUNK-ROCK MECCA

In the spring of 1981, college students of the University of Florida roaming the campus and halls of the university were caught by surprise by a flyer covered in cut-out images of aborted fetuses, advertising some sort of rock show at the Friday Nite Live. The headlining band's name was eye-catching by itself. Roach Motel, written in ransom-note style, reminiscent of the font used by the Sex Pistols to print their name, was sure to turn some heads, especially when compared to the rather mild selection of college-rock cover bands that dominated the bulletin boards. However, it was the drawings of aborted fetuses, one penetrated by a coat hanger through its head and another one immersed in a bowl of cereal that produced a backlash in the otherwise liberal community of Gainesville. In the following days, protestors led by the Moral Majority, a national right-wing religious organization, began gathering across the street from the Friday Nite Live in an attempt to subvert the realization of the show. As is the case with most subcultural-related manifestations, the protests quickly caught the attention of the media. The *Gainesville Sun* was the first to get a hold of the event and surely, soon after, local television shows began showing up outside the Friday Nite to capture footage of the protesters.[39] Dick Hebdige's assertion about the role of media in the initial stages of the construction of punk subcultures was, here, confirmed. According to him, 'deviant behavior… can provide the catalyst for a moral panic' which is then transformed by media into a specifically categorized 'punk deviance', utilized from that point on to inscribe with meaning all other possible displays of punk, style, for example. [40] Similarly, then, to how the Daily Mirror

[39] Walker, *Gainesville Punk*, 17.
[40] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 93.

aided in the elucidation and popularization of the term punk in Great Britain, the local Gainesville media pointed the spotlights towards Roach Motel, the band inseparably linked with the genesis of the Gainesville scene.

Under pressure from the Moral Majority and facing threats of eviction from the landlord, the owner of the Friday Nite Live decided to cancel what would have been Roach Motel's first show. The mishap instead of discouraging the band, however, rather motivated it, leading to a short-lived but illustrious career and Roach Motel's eventual acknowledgement as one of the most influential hardcore bands of the early 1980s Gainesville scene. Other important milestones of the band's career included securing the support act role in a Black Flag concert, when California hardcore pioneers embarked on a short Florida tour in 1982, and an opening act slot in a Dead Kennedys show in Tampa. The live performances of the band have been described as chaotic affairs, combining the aggressiveness and fast pace of hardcore music and live performances with the nihilist attitude of first-wave punk bands, such as the Sex Pistols.[41] It was one of those dynamic performances that would inspire the conception of the Mutley Chix, an all-girl band that was to replace Roach Motel in the forefront of the Gainesville subculture.

Mutley Chix guitarist Debra Fetzer recalls watching Roach Motel for the very first time and alludes to the immense impact the band had on her subsequent musical endeavors. 'It just totally changed my life' she admits, to further add 'like I can do that', referring to the simplicity and straightforward character of the music that left her with the impression that anybody could play in a punk band. [42] Ever since their first show in August 1984 at one of Gainesville notorious house parties, the band led a productive career, especially in their first few years. In line with the DIY mentality of the 1980s

[41] Walker, *Gainesville Punk*, 25.
[42] Ibid., 30.

hardcore and punk rock era, the band started its own fanzine, 'No Worries' and would also lead the way in booking punk shows in Gainesville, using the opportunity to play shows with national hardcore and punk acts such as Agnostic Front and Sonic Youth. However, securing a club for the realization of these concerts was not an easy task.

Besides Friday Nite Live which acted as the sole venue for hosting punk and hardcore shows in the early 1980s, no other local clubs were willing to accommodate the Gainesville punks. As such, public recreational spaces and cultural centers around the city such as the American Legion Hall were rented by show organizers to host concerts. Debra Fetzer confirms such a practice in negotiating the Mutley Chix' ties with the DIY mentality pervading 1980s American punk subcultures: 'I guess it came from the times because it was just a way of making it happen since we lived in Florida and you didn't have clubs and stuff, as a way of "hey, you could put on a show", "hey, we'll rent this hall out and get our friends who have a PA, and something from here and just do it"'. [43] Nevertheless, the primary location, where most of the punk shows of the 1980s took place, was the so-called 'student ghetto', which mostly consisted of student-owned houses located just outside the University of Florida campus. A practice that was rooted in the 1980s Gainesville subculture, as evidenced by the photographic archives of the scene depicting punk house parties in their majority, continued well into the 1990s with some of the most influential bands of the time using similar houses as their 'bases of operations' and a space where to regularly host shows. [44] However, what is more important in this case, is the relation between the Gainesville subculture and the University of Florida institution.

[43] Debra Fetzer (Mutley Chix member) in discussion with the author, April 18, 2018, Skype interview, Utrecht, Netherlands.
[44] Walker, *Gainesville Punk*, 21, 79.

Apart from the apparent tolerance towards the house shows hosted near its campus, the University of Florida was a 'surprisingly strong supporter of left-of-center bands in the late 1970s and early 1980s'.[45] Bands such as The Ramones, The Cramps and The Police, all played University of Florida hosted shows during those years. At the same time, the 1981 annual University of Florida sponsored Halloween Ball featured the renowned shock punks, The Plasmatics and the provocative performance artist Wendy O. Williams. Fetzer remembers attending the show and watching in person Williams chainsaw a guitar in half and blast a car on stage with the use of explosives: 'Yeah, I saw that Plasmatics show and they blew up a Cadillac on stage, it was killer. It was crazy, massive amounts of people out on a field and then they had this band shell like a stage, and it was crazy because it was Halloween and everyone was high and dressed up of course. But the band was great and she had the chainsaw and also blew up the Cadillac, it was a white Cadillac and she blew it up'. [46] However, the university's main contribution towards the scene was not its stance towards the subculture, but rather the fact that it supplied 'personnel' both for the creation of new punk bands and the 'staffing' of the Gainesville punk shows.

The majority of the bands that influenced the Gainesville subculture were created when their members first arrived in Gainesville to attend the University of Florida, and were similarly dismantled when their members graduated. Again, the Mutley Chix' guitarist, in justifying the constant switching between instruments that occurred within the band, confirms the contention as she attributes the practice of switching to 'a revolving cast of characters in the band', in turn, tied to the fact that 'we live in a college town': 'People would be here for college and then leave but there would always be the core of us that would keep doing it, so we'd get a new person in. Now if that person couldn't do a

[45] Ibid., 21.
[46] Debra Fetzer (Mutley Chix member) in discussion with the author.

certain instrument, then we would switch'. Simultaneously, she then goes on to further stress the importance of the university as an 'incubator' for the Gainesville subculture, as she estimates that 'the 80% of the bands, let's say, are here to go to school and then they go form bands'. [47]

One such case was Peter Brightman, the singer of the Doldrums, another of the most influential bands of the 1980s Gainesville scene. Brightman moved to Gainesville in 1984 to attend college and after experimenting with a couple of different line-ups he formed the Doldrums, part of which were also two local Gainesville residents. Doldrums were characterized by their aggression and speed when it came to lyrics and music, and were also renowned for their energetic and dynamic shows. [48] Brightman's anger and disgust towards American culture found an outlet through his on-stage persona, leading to some memorable performances. His loathing towards American culture and the extreme commodification of life, evidenced in the examination of Florida's cultural contours in the previous subculture, is best exemplified in his following statement:

> The whole Reagan era…I felt like there was a lot of ignorance, just the American culture to me was just sort of reduced down to this really driven-by-greed and superficial kind of shit and a lot of stupidity and this sort of frat boy and the president was like this revered guy and he was just a piece of shit.[49]

Another band that flourished at around the same time as the Doldrums were the Psychic Violents. Led by Charles Pinion who was characterized by his fully immersive performances during which he would take the stage in zombie make-up, fitting into the living-dead theme that dominated California hardcore in the 1980s, the Psychic Violents employed an innovative approach to punk and hardcore. The band used hardcore as their

[47] Ibid.
[48] Walker, *Gainesville Punk*, 45.
[49] Ibid., 44.

basis, but did not limit themselves to it, adding new elements to the small Gainesville scene, such as guitar work which was layered above the rhythm section and the theatricality of Pinion's performances. The Psychic Violents played their second show in 1985 in a venue named The Vatican. What is worth noting in this case is the fact that The Vatican was the first ever venue that could be considered as 'a home for punk rock in Gainesville'. At the same time, the club was owned and operated by insiders and members of the subculture. Interestingly, four of the six owners of the venue were also students at the University of Florida. [50] Here, we become witnesses, then, of the fulfillment of another of Hebdige's observations about the punk subculture which concerns the engagement of subcultural members in projects which involve the prospect of eventual economic profits and lead to its commodification. [51]

Another instance of insiders of the scene becoming involved in projects that aided in the dissemination of the scene, was the creation of the *No Idea* fanzine, a venture that would forever change the Gainesville scene. Var Thelin and Ken Coffelt, both attending high-school at the time, conceptualized the *No Idea* fanzine in an attempt to channel their fascination with punk music and the Gainesville scene in particular, and mimic the fanzine trend of the 1980s. The first issue of *No Idea*, featuring on its cover an oversized bust of Ronald Reagan, was released in December 1985, using Gainesville high school's printing press. The issue contained live and album reviews, an editorial and a comics section. Following the same formula, by 1988 and issue No. 5, *No Idea* would have sufficiently grown, being nationally distributed in alternative record stores and reaching a two thousand yearly distribution count. It was time for Thelin to take the next step. Utilizing his connections in the DIY networks of the national punk community, he took advice from

[50] Ibid., 38-39.
[51] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 95.

the founder of Washington D.C.'s Discord Records, Ian McKaye, and the first release of No Idea Records was realized, as a Doldrums 7-inch record accompanied *No Idea* Issue No. 6. Between Mutley Chix, The Psychic Violents, Doldrums and the newly founded No Idea Records and fanzine, the Gainesville scene was flourishing in the second half of the 1980s. [52] However, there was still a lot to come.

By the end of the 1980s, the bands that created and propelled the small scene during the decade had inevitably reached the end of their careers. Their dissolution, however, brought in a new surge of bands and concert-goers that would held the scene reach new heights during the 1990s. An enthusiastic group of punks was moving in Gainesville to attend college and bands such as Spoke and Radon helped channel their teenage angst, adding a more melodic element to their music that simultaneously aided in its popularization. The shows in the 'student ghetto' were as lively as ever and at the same time, Gainesville punk found its new home in The Hardback, the notorious downtown café where every Gainesville band of the 1990s played in. This new-found popularity of the scene, showcased by Gainesville bands such as Hot Water Music and Less Than Jake successfully joining the national stage, as evidenced by the former's non-stop touring across the country and the latter's record deal with the major record label Capital Records, also propelled No Idea to new heights. In 1994, Thelin turned No Idea into a full-time record company and by the late 1990s No Idea Records had become a staple in the national underground punk scene. [53] The dynamism of the scene in the 1990s carried well into the new millennium, with bands such as Against Me!, Hot Water Music and Less Than Jake providing worldwide recognition to the Gainesville subculture, and allowing for new projects to prosper. One of these new endeavors, would be the now world-renowned

[52] Walker, *Gainesville Punk*, 35-36, 50.
[53] Ibid., 56-120.

Gainesville punk rock festival The Fest. Established in 2002, The Fest quickly became associated with No Idea Records, helping usher in a new international crowd to the Gainesville scene. Not a typical festival, since the shows do not take place in a big outdoor field but rather in the same venues that host Gainesville concerts all-year round, The Fest is still thriving involving more than 400 bands and 9 venues in 2016. [54]

After establishing the wider cultural context of the Florida region and the more time and locale specific historical context of the Gainesville punk rock scene itself, let us now turn to the main section of this study. Chapter 2 will attempt to provide a discursive analysis of the content as this was produced by the Gainesville subculture in an effort to reveal the representations of and intersections between the identities of gender, race and class associated with the Gainesville punk identity. Simultaneously, the Floridian cultural context will continuously inform the different types of identity manifestations and supply links between them and the historical contours in which they were constructed.

[54] Ibid., 120-145.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENT

2.1. FLYER ART

> However, when the bricoleur re-locates the significant object in a different position within that discourse, using the same overall repertoire of signs, or when that object is placed within a different total ensemble, a new discourse is constituted, a different message conveyed.
>
> John Clarke, *Resistance Through Rituals* [55]

The popularization of Xerox machines in the second half of the 20th century provided the members of the punk subculture with a significant opportunity. Flyer art production could be used as a way to subvert and resist the mainstream culture of commodification, characteristic of 1980s United States and Florida, although this was not always realized at the time. The flyer was more than a mere advertising technique for live shows. It enabled the members of the Gainesville scene to be active participants in the cultural processes of meaning-making of the era. Rather than being passive consumers of cultural conventions constructed inside Floridian malls and shopping centers and disseminated through the 'explosion' of the popularity of television during the decade, the Gainesville punks found themselves in a position that allowed them to challenge said cultural codes of the

[55] Hall and Jefferson, *Resistance through rituals*, 177.

mainstream culture. Simultaneously, flyer production gave them the opportunity to redefine the meaning produced by mainstream cultural manifestations.[56]

One way to achieve such goals was through the technique of the bricolage. As Hebdige continuously stresses in *The meaning of style* '[b]y repositioning and recontextualizing commodities, by subverting their conventional uses and inventing new ones, the subcultural stylist gives the lie to what Althusser has called the "false obviousness of everyday practice"'. [57] To put it more simply, punk style and consequently punk flyers, tied together in 'homology', alluding to a fit between different forms of manifestations within subcultures that will be grappled with more extensively below, essentially block the mechanisms through which mainstream cultures invest commodities, specifically, and everyday life practices, more generally, with meaning. To better understand such a blockage, this study will employ Barthes' conception of the sign, composed by a 'signifier' and a 'signified'. [58] Within the system of a sign, and on a first level, the signifier is always associated with an image or a sound and, depending on its context, can take different forms. As such, the signifier can be a drawing within the context of a painting, an image within the context of a photograph, a word within a text or even an 'actual' object or live being we are looking at. However, the signifier by itself cannot construct meaning, it is empty of meaning. For the sign to be complete and allow its viewer/ listener to interpret it, the function of the signified, on a second level, is required. The signified, then, is tied to a concept that allows us to make sense of the signifier. That concept can be both perceptual and culturally constructed. For example, a picture or a drawing of a rose, on a first level, evokes a mental image of an 'actual' rose in the perception of the viewers, but on a second level, it also 'forces' them to associate it

[56] Butz, *Grinding California*, 146.
[57] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 102.
[58] Barthes, *Image - Music – Text.*

with culturally constructed conventions tied to depictions of the rose within the time-and-place specific historical context the viewers find themselves in. For example, the rose can stand in for beauty and romanticism if encountered within a modern Western historical context.

As such, and to get back to its subversive capacity, the punk subculture, by bringing together signifiers that in the mainstream cultural 'code book' are linked to conspicuously mutually-repelling signifieds, manages to expose the constructed nature of ideology, the process through which the cultural conventions of distinct historical eras are invested with a veil of 'naturalness', 'as if composed according to the evident laws of natural order'. [59] In turn, identities that are constructed on the basis of the acquisition of commodities tied to such cultural conventions and the adoption of equivalent everyday life practices, be they class, race or gender, are challenged and exposed as arbitrary modes of representation within a discourse. The punk subculture, thus, and its media including flyer art, compose 'noise', as they intervene in the mainstream cultures' production process of meaning 'which leads from real events and phenomena to their representation in the media'. [60] Here, the similarities between the bricolage technique, Dadaism's collages and, consequently, Surrealist papier collés (most notably by Pablo Picasso) are apparent. [61] Both Dadaist collages and Surrealist papier collés utilized a cut-and-paste technique, most commonly applied to paper, in an attempt to escape the constraints of reality and convention. As such, by bringing together paper clippings associated with seemingly disparate attributions of meaning, both art movements approximate the punk subculture's potential for exposing the arbitrary nature of the relationship between signifier and signified.

[59] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paladin, 1972), 139.
[60] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 90.
[61] Butz, *Grinding California*, 142.

Let us then turn to the examination of one of the flyers produced by the Gainesville discourse in order to better understand how Hebdige's concepts are implemented in it. The Roach Motel flyer that led to the Moral Majority's protests and the consequent cancellation of the first show of the seminal band illustrates my point. Before even turning to the actual visual analysis of the flyer itself, another one of Hebdige's arguments about punk subcultures is verified. He argues that '[t]he emergence of a spectacular subculture is invariably accompanied by a wave of hysteria in the press' and his thinking is confirmed both by the inauguration of the British punk subculture following the eventful Sex Pistols' TV appearance, as described in the introduction of this study, and the fascination exhibited by the Gainesville local newspapers and TV stations with the right-wing protests related to Roach Motel's first show. [62] But why would the cut-out images of fetuses cause such a negative reaction (see figure 1)?

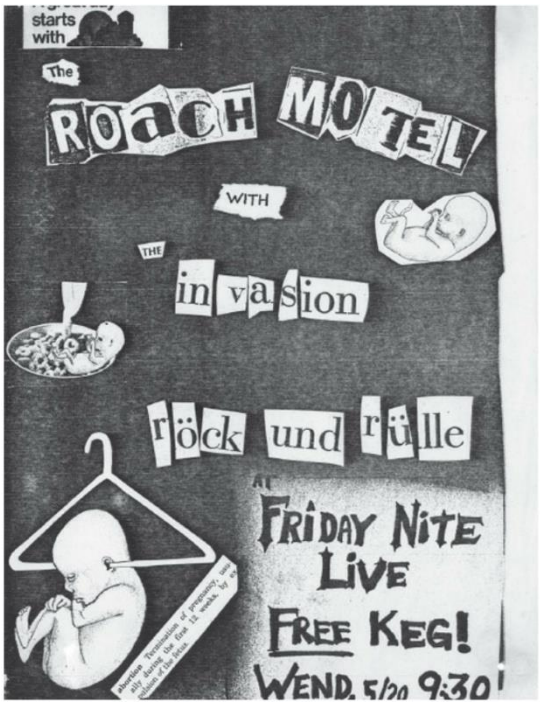


Figure 1: Roach Motel flyer, 1981 (In Gainesville Punk. By Matt Walker. Arcadia Publishing, 2016, 17.)

[62] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 92.

Here, Hebdige's reasoning is once again confirmed. 'For punk to be dismissed as chaos, it had first to "make sense" as noise.' [63]In simpler terms, in order for punk to convey disorder, it had first to select language drawn from a subject matter, preferably controversial, that is relevant to the cultural context of the era and locale. Roach Motel's choice of depicting aborted fetuses, together with the preoccupation of the 'culture wars' of the 1980s with the topics of gay rights, abortion, the backlash against women, immigration and ethnic minorities amongst others, thus, fit perfectly into the picture painted by Hebdige. [64] Furthermore, the correlation between the cultural contours and the thematology chosen by punk flyer art, solidify the subcultural medium as an insightful source into the cultural and political context that pertains to a specific subcultural discourse, as Konstantin Bultz also argues.

Moving on to the visual analysis of the flyer itself, what immediately becomes evident on first glance is Roach Motel's clear use of the technique of bricolage. On a first level, Roach Motel utilize bricolage to portray the band's name to the viewer as a collage of letters. Individual letters selected from disparate sources, each possibly associated with different groupings of meaning production, are appropriated by Roach Motel and, in turn, re-ascribed meaning in order to act as the signifiers for the band's name. As such, the linguistic order of the mainstream culture is momentarily blocked as the meaning tied to particles of language, the letters themselves, is subverted and replaced. The depiction of Roach Motel's name alludes to the potential of punk for participating in 'semiotic guerilla

[63] Ibid., 88.
[64] Butz, *Grinding California*, 143.

warfare', in the subversion of the original meaning produced by an arbitrary link between signifier and signified, in this case, within the language system. [65]

Continuing in the same vein, the iconic message of the flyer utilizes bricolage to subvert the semiotic order of mainstream culture tied to the Gainesville locale. Barthes uses the term 'iconic message' to refer to both the perceptual, non-coded message of an image (in our case a young human, if we use the fetus cut-out image for example) and a cultural, coded and symbolic one of the same image (in our case the fetus signifying abortion). The coded iconic message of the fetus could have very well been different (new born life, for example), but Roach Motel employ the assistance of the technique of what Barthes terms as 'anchorage' to stabilize the meaning of the fetus image. Part of the linguistic message of an image, anchorage works as way of limiting the potential meanings of an image, of fixing its cultural messages. [66] In this case, Roach Motel use the definition of the word 'abortion' to 'anchor' the potential signifieds of the image of the fetus, tying it thus exclusively to the idea of abortion. By choosing to provide the viewer with the anchorage of the abortion definition, the band have succeeded in showcasing the arbitrary nature of cultural codes. What could have very easily alluded to the wonder of birth and life, now stands in for death and decay.

But the semiotic warfare of Roach Motel does not stop there. If we turn our attention to the combination of the images of the bowl of cereal and the aborted fetus, we become witnesses to another such instance. By using Judith Williamson's concept of referent systems, the subversion of meaning becomes more apparent. A referent system according to Williamson is 'the external "reality" referred to by the collection of signs in an advertisement [which] is itself a mythological system, another set of signs'. She adds,

[65] Umberto Eco, 'Towards a Semiotic Enquiry into the Television Message', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, no. 3(1972): 103-21.
[66] Barthes, *Image - Music – Text*, 36-41.

'[t]he referent is external to the sign, whereas the signified is part of the sign'. [67] In our case, the signifier of the bowl of cereal is linked, on a first examination, to the signified of well-balanced healthy breakfast and diet. However, when examined more thoroughly, the bowl of cereal can be tied to a referent system inextricably connected to the cultural context of the 1980s United States. That system refers to a 'world' where cereal is a part of the quintessential American, usually suburban, happy family life and, consequently, of the American dream. Such 'mythological' systems, as there is nothing natural about them, are progressively constructed by advertisements and media representations. But how do Roach Motel subvert such a system? By adding the 'anchored' signified of death, provided by the sign of the fetus, the referent system of happy American life automatically crumbles and the viewer is left disgusted as an image, until recently associated with life and health, is abruptly disrupted by notions of abjection. Thus, by employing shock tactics and questioning the semiotic system of mainstream culture, Roach Motel succeed in giving 'the lie to what Althusser has called the "false obviousness of everyday practice"' or in other words ideology.

The referent system of white, middle class, American life is again evoked, and subsequently subverted, by another flyer produced by the 1980s Gainesville subculture. The flyer advertises a show performed by Doldrums with Naked Raygun, who were very influential in the second half of the 1980's (see figure 2). Just as Roach Motel subverted the referent system alluding to American, suburban family life, the Doldrums flyer attempts a semiotic 'attack' on the white, middle-class American conventional culture. On a first level, the sign of the boy scouts signifies youth, camaraderie and ingenuity but on a second level, its 'external reality', the mythological system further removed from the immediacy of the signified links boy scouting to cultural conventions associated with

[67] Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements*, (London: Marion Boyars, 1978), 31.

white, middle-class America, including reverence towards God, the country, the traditional family structure and morality of the Reaganite family of the 1980s. As such, by introducing the signifier of the hangman's noose signifying suicide and death, the flyer immediately destabilizes through its iconic message the process of meaning construction performed by the referent system. It suggests that the American middle-class dream, represented in this case by the head scout passing on his knowledge to the boy scouts, rather than the happy and fulfilling life it promises, leads to anxiety, pain and eventually death.

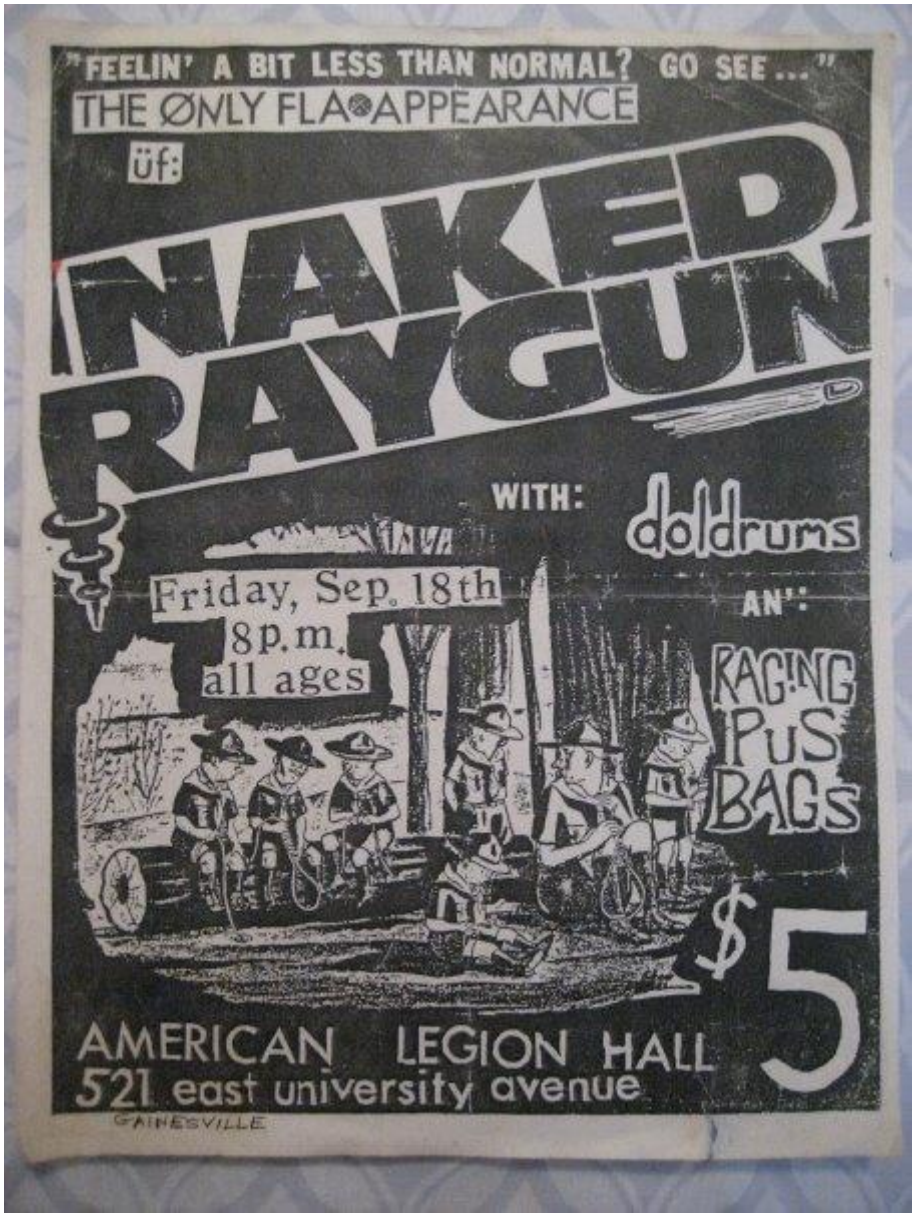


Figure 2: : Doldrums flyer, n.d. (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt. Flickr accessed June 28, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/8126422698/in/album-72157631861089144/.)

Nevertheless, what is advocated by the iconic message of the flyer, is equally supported by its linguistic message. 'FEELIN'A BIT LESS THAN NORMAL? GO SEE…' acts as 'relay' in this case rather than anchorage, as it complements the iconic message more than it limits its possible interpretations. As Barthes argues about the function of the relay, 'Here text (most often a snatch of dialogue) and image stand in a complementary relationship; the words, in the same way as the images, are fragments of a more general syntagm and the unity of the message is realized at a higher level, that of the

story'.[68] The subversion of the referent system of middle-class, white family life, in this instance, is coupled with the questioning of the normalcy of the viewer as they converge on a higher level, to create the story of a white minority opposed to the very cultural conventions in which its members where brought up in. By implying via the linguistic message, that the normal for them is the white, middle-class representations enacted by the images of the boy scouts, the creators of the flyer reveal the class and gender identities related to their upbringing. Here, then, we become witnesses of an 'othering' process through which the members of the Gainesville punk culture posit the very codes of their own, white middle-class upbringing as that against which they create their own minoritized subcultural identities.

Following Butz's implementation of Sally Robinson's theory in his study of the Californian skate punk subculture, her conception of white males as 'bearers of normative invisibility' fits very well in this instance as well. [69] In her study Robinson theorizes on how the intersectional privilege of white males deriving from skin color, gender and subsequent middle-class association sets white males as the norm against which all other identities are based against, hiding them behind 'a mask of universality'. [70] She further adds that 'invisibility… can also be felt as a burden in a culture that appears to organize itself around the visibility of differences and the symbolic currency of identity politics'. [71] The ability of other, marginalized social and gender groups to create clear-cut identities on the basis of difference is not an option for the white, middle-class male, leading Robinson to the identification of an identity crisis amongst white males in post-sixties United States. As such, she continues, they fail to participate in multiculturalism, their only chance being

[68] Barthes, *Image - Music – Text*, 41.
[69] Butz, *Grinding California*, 41; Sally Robinson, *Marked men: white masculinity in crisis*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
[70] Robinson, *Marked men*, 194.
[71] Ibid., 3.

stylizing and recognizing themselves as victims of their own identity group. Thus, the establishment of the subcultural identity exhibited in the Doldrums flyer, could be argued is an instance of such self-victimization.

Finally, this subchapter would not be complete without the examination of one of the flyers produced by the Psychic Violents and their front-man Charles Pinion, a former high-school art teacher. Because of his art background, Pinion employed a zealous approach to creating Psychic Violents artwork and also performing on stage, occasionally recreating zombie themes with his make-up and dress. The following flyer, advertising a Psychic Violents show at The Bar with the band The Segmas accordingly features an alien-esque, zombie-like one-eyed creature (see figure 3). Similarly to the two previous flyers, the iconic message of the image alludes to the referent system of white, middle-class, suburban life. This time the sign that links us to this 'external reality' is the white-collar shirt worn by the monster-like creature of the flyer. The Psychic Violents introduce the sign of the one-eyed creature to subvert the mythological system of mainstream culture, in similar manner to Roach Motel's and Doldums' flyers. The monster signifies an underlying anxiety and misery that informs modern life and acts as 'a microscope and a mirror, both a way to reveal pain and suffering and a medium to examine, explore, and enlarge it'. [72]

[72] Ensminger, *Visual Vitriol*, 133.

Figure 3: Psychic Violents flyer, n.d. (In Gainesville Punk. By Matt Walker. Arcadia Publishing, 2016, 39.)

In punk flyer art of the era in general, and the Violents flyer specifically, the normative world is 'invaded' by such ugly and monstrous bodies which cannot be disciplined and as such 'challenge the righteous inhabitants' by revealing the misery, pain and disorder that 'hovers at the edges or borders of our existence'. [73] As David Ensminger further argues about punk imagery in *Visual Vitriol,* 'images of death are embedded to speak against the grain of shopping-mall aesthetics, of the so-called objectivity of newspaper-speak, of the commercial veneer of the hyperkinetic modern world'. [74]As such, his argument provides, at the same time, a link to the historical context of 1980s Florida characterized by the popularization of TV, the erection of countless shopping malls, the construction of the Federal Interstate Highway System and the influx of out-of-state retirees and tourists.

[73] Ibid., 129; Elisabeth A. Grosz, 'Language and the Limits of the Body: Kristeva and Abjection.', in *Future Fall: excursions into post-modernity.,* (Sydney: Power Institute of Fine Arts, University of Sydney and Future Fall, 1986), 108.
[74] Ensminger, *Visual Vitriol,* 128.

Simultaneously, the fact that Ensminger, in examining mainly flyers deriving from the 1980s Californian hardcore and punk scene, refers to identical tropes of zombie and undead themes suggests that the DIY networks that punks established to create links between the different scenes of the United States contributed towards a transfer of ideas and influences and an 'external' homology, if one was to use Hebdige's concept of the internal homology of subcultures in a slightly different manner. Nevertheless, Hebdige's standard definition of homology as a concept that describes the fact that 'the internal structure of any particular subculture is characterized by an extreme orderliness [where] each part is organically related to other parts' is also confirmed in the Gainesville scene. [75] Not only did the zombie themes exhibited in the Psychic Violents flyer find their way in the performances of the band in the form of heavy zombie inspired make-up worn by Pinion, but they also showcase apparent semiotic similarities with the previously examined flyers in their effort to subvert the mythological system of white, middle-class, Floridian suburban life.

Continuing in the same vein and confirming yet another of Hebdige's arguments, the appropriation of formal characteristics such as the zombie theme by the Gainesville scene reveals a correlation between the subculture and specific mass media of the era exhibiting similar themes such as popular comic books of the 1980s, e.g. *Tales From The Crypt* and *MAD magazine*, science fiction novels, cartoon shows and science fiction films of the era, e.g. *Dawn of The Dead* (1978) and *Return of The Living Dead* (1985). Hebdige, utilizing Stuart Hall's thesis which states that '[i]t is primarily through the press, television, film, etc. that experience is organized, interpreted and made to cohere in contradiction as it were', postulates that '[s]ubcultures are, at least in part, representations of these representations'. While the link between the forms of expression used in the

[75] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 113.

Gainesville subculture and popular media of the era is apparent in the case of the Psychic Violents flyer, it remains to be seen whether there is the possibility for other, content-related transfers tied to identity construction to take place and, subsequently, for the subculture to 'articulate, to a greater or lesser extent, some of the preferred meanings and interpretations, those favored by and transmitted through the authorized channels of mass communication'. [76]

Finally, while this subchapter has mostly concentrated on a semiotic, visual analysis of Gainesville flyer art, the significance of the medium of the flyer itself has been left largely unexamined. Ensminger argues that 'punk flyers can act like a newspaper by another means— aggressive one-sheets', as 'instant, short-lived, photocopied art forms'. [77] Punk flyer art provided the members of the subculture with the opportunity to aggressively market their projects, disseminate information concerning concerts in a quick and low-cost manner and, more importantly, to 'mark' territory. Punk subcultures utilized flyer art as a way to challenge the everyday life routines of urban areas associated with mainstream culture, to 're-signify' space itself. Similarly to how the content of the Gainesville flyers introduced signifiers that subverted referent systems tied to middle-class life and revealed the arbitrary nature of their codes, the material form of the flyer itself could have been interpreted by non-members of the subculture as an anomaly in the 'conformist grid of cities', as a signifier that challenged a living version of the middle-class referent system. [78] The medium itself became the message, reminding city inhabitants of the potentiality for disorder. To return to The Psychic Violents, and Pinion's aggressive approach to artwork, Gainesville inhabitants would have surely been familiarized with such as a feeling, as 'Charles had flooded the town with this sort of obtuse eyeball artwork that just was on

[76]Ibid., 85-86.
[77] Ensminger, *Visual Vitriol*, 10, 133.
[78] Ibid., 12.

every phone pole everywhere'. [79] It is no surprise, then, that most urban communities regarded flyer art as a form of graffiti and, consequently, as vandalism.

After the study of the Gainesville subculture's flyer art, let us now turn to another discursive product of the scene closely tied to the former, the fanzine. In similar fashion to flyer art, the fanzine is part of what could be described as the punk subculture's 'culture of authenticity'. A notion that is most commonly associated with the 1980s hardcore and straight-edge United States scenes, can very well be used to describe Gainesville's production of fanzines. In the postmodern cultural context of Florida dominated by a hyperkinetic culture of consumption where Floridian teenagers would have been 'unable to participate in the spectacles of mass media as anything but spectator[s]', as passive consumers of meaning, incapable of constructing a distinct identity based on local culture, the discursive product of the fanzine provided the opportunity to members of the Gainesville subculture to actively construct meaning and 'cement' their identity traits in contrast to mainstream culture. By using the discursive 'methods and apparatuses of commercial media', appropriated for use in mediums such as the fanzine, Gainesville punks were able to construct and maintain an underground scene that felt their own, connected through interpersonal networks with other parts of the country. [80]

2.2. FANZINES

> Doing it themselves, they made the ephemeral world of consumption into a grounds for durable identities and participatory community.
>
> Ryan Moore, *Postmodernism and Punk Subculture* [81]

[79] Walker, *Gainesville Punk,* 41.
[80] Moore, 'Postmodernism and Punk Subculture: Cultures of Authenticity and Deconstruction', 321.
[81] Ibid.

In 1930s United States, fans of science fiction, usually organized in clubs, began the production of a new form of self-published periodicals, in an attempt to share stories and critical commentary and to simultaneously establish networks of communication between them. The new medium was described as a 'fanzine' by the science fiction scenesters, a term that would later become inseparably linked with punk subcultures. Gainesville was one of them. Stephen Duncombe traces the existence of similar forms of periodicals back to the 18th century American Revolution political pamphlets. Because of their low production cost and low selling price as few-page, unbound booklets, these publications constituted an early version of underground media.[82] Following its introduction in the 1930s, the fanzine would receive its defining form in the mid-1970s when, along with the popularization of photocopying machines, the newly founded British punk scene would appropriate it as a medium of expression in an effort to circumvent mainstream media. The fanzine supposedly avoided the passivity in 'consumption' of mainstream media. The fanzine would rapidly be employed by the growing United States hardcore and punk scenes of the 1980s.They used fanzines in an attempt to actively construct meaning, subvert the cultural codes of mainstream culture and create do-it-yourself networks of communication between disparate local scenes across the nation. The most common form of the fanzine would include live and album reviews, interviews with bands, editorials and articles about current political issues and controversies concerning the respective scenes. Fanzines were invariably composed and published by small teams of two to three scene enthusiasts, further distancing the medium from the professional connotations of

[82] Steven Ducombe, *Notes from Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture,* (Portland: Microcosm Publishing, 2008)

mainstream media. This also held true for the *No Idea* fanzine, the publication which together with the subsequently established No Idea Records, would aid in the popularization and expansion of the Gainesville scene.

In December 1985, Var Thelin and good friend Ken Coffelt, still in Gainesville high school at the time, composed, edited and released the first ever issue of the *No Idea* zine. Ken Coffelt was, also, at the time, the creator of his own comic book, *Atomic Comix* and as a result a lot of his sketches would find their way into the *No Idea* pages, further confirming the thematic correlation between popular comic books of the era and the Gainesville subculture as this was examined in the previous subsection. The teenagers employed the help of one of their high school teachers and Gainesville high school's printing press to release the issue featuring on its cover an oversized bust of the then-reigning president Ronald Reagan (see figure 4). [83]

[83] Walker, *Gainesville Punk,* 35-37.

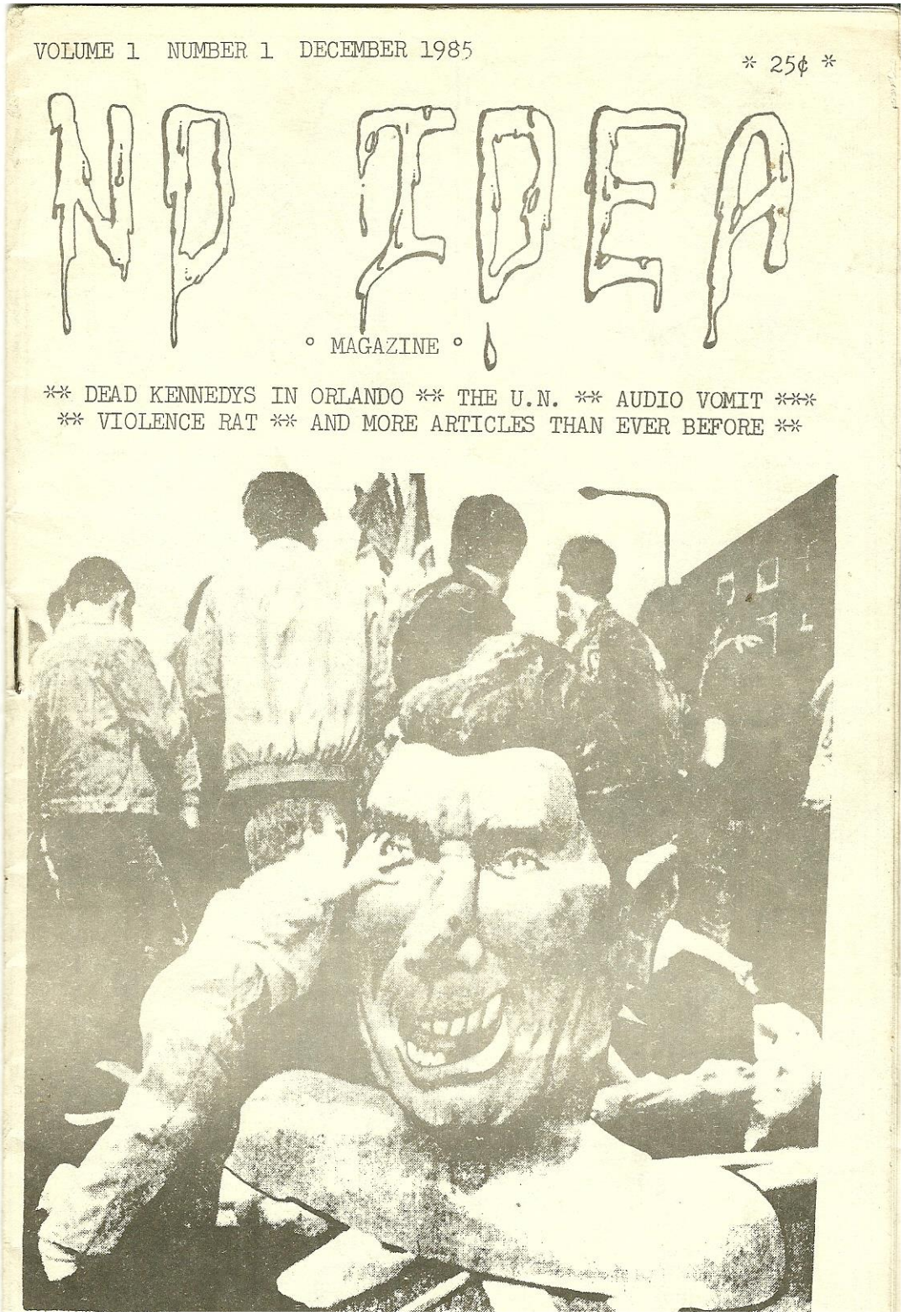


Figure 4: No Idea fanzine no.1 cover, 1985 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt. Flickr accessed June 28, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/8126422698/in/album-72157631861089144.)

In similar terms with the semiotic visual analysis conducted on the Gainesville flyers, on a first glance, the signifier of the 'decapitated' Reagan head signifies dislike and despite towards the former president, but only when viewed in the context of what appears to be some sort of protest. If we appropriate Monaco's film theory on the syntagmatic relationship of signs and apply it on this image, in order to understand how the Gainesville subculture produced discursive content that signified resistance to mainstream culture, then the signs surrounding the Reagan bust actually become the ones that provide meaning for the viewer. Monaco uses the example of a film shot of a rose to theorize on this relationship, as he argues that 'when the significance of the rose depends not on the shot compared with other potential shots, but rather on the shot compared with actual shots that precede or follow it, then we can speak of its syntagmatic connotation'. [84] Similarly, when the bust of Reagan is viewed on its own, it does not produce a clear-cut meaning for us but rather generates confusion. However, when viewed in comparison to the signs that surround it, the images of youthful protestors, then it comes to signify a certain distaste towards his personality exemplified by the protesting youngsters. At the same time, the 'No Idea' title on top of the cover page functions in an identical way. Designed as to simulate the dripping of blood off the font, exemplifying again the connection between the monster theme popular in comics of the era and punk subcultural representations, the *No Idea* title, also acts as one of the contextual signs that administer the Reagan sign its syntagmatic connotation of distaste towards his personality. The title furthers 'anchors' the potential meanings of the Reagan decapitated bust, as it prompts the viewer to decode it in a subcultural context, already associated with reactionary ideology.

[84] James Monaco, *How to read a film: movies, media and multimedia : language, history, theory*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), 163.

Finally, and on a second level of reading of the cover, when the Reagan bust is tied to its referent system which is, in turn, associated with the conservative Reaganite family, Reaganomics promoting 'an individualistic ethic of upward mobility', the commodification of life and consumerism, the viewers' distaste is transferred from Reagan's personality to the white, middle-class way of life that the Gainesville subculture identified itself against. [85] If we return to Sally Robinson's self-victimization of white masculinity concept, then Reagan acts as the ideal 'Other' against which the Gainesville subculture defined itself as a 'minority'. Steven Blush argues in *American Hardcore* that Reagan 'was the galvanizing force of Hardcore – an enemy of the arts, minorities, women, gays, liberals, the homeless, the working man, the inner city, et cetera' as '[a]ll "outsiders" could agree they hated him'. [86] As such, the expression of despite towards his icon by the *No Idea* cover and, subsequently, the Gainesville scene, would have immediately provided the fanzine and the subculture with an 'outsider', minoritized status. Ultimately, then, on a final stage of meaning transfer, the whole array of connotations of disgust for Reagan and, more importantly, the white, middle-class ideology he represented, 'imprint' themselves onto the *No Idea* title sign. A sign, that before the release of the first issue of the zine, would have been devoid of any connotations, is now promptly associated with its own referent system, a world of subcultural defiance where its members perceive themselves as being part of a community of minoritized subjects.

In a subsequent interview, Debra Fetzer described a similar othering process. When asked about the prevalent political mentality within the Gainesville locale, her response exemplifies a minoritized position. On a first level, she denies the question's insinuation that Gainesville might have been dominated by a conservative mentality in the 1980s by

[85] George Lipsitz, 'Listening to Learn and Learning to Listen: Popular Culture, Cultural Theory, and American Studies' in *Locating American studies: the evolution of a discipline*, ed. Lucy Maddox (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 324-325.
[86] Steven Blush, *American Hardcore*, (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2001), 20.

responding: 'No I think Gainesville is a liberal town. Was it more conservative in the 80's? Yeah.' She, then, goes on to say: 'And it's North-Central Florida so it isn't more conservative than South-Florida which is kind of a redneck area. So, everything around us is very conservative but because it's a college town that's where the liberalism is. But yeah, you're fighting against what's all around it, for sure.' As such, on a second level, Fetzer's response, while it links back to the seminal role of the University of Florida for the construction of the scene due to its liberal character, it also constitutes the city of Gainesville itself as a 'minority' within the wider political and cultural context of Florida. Fetzer's words illustrate Robinson's concept, especially when viewed along with another of her responses. When questioned about the prevailing political mentality within the University of Florida, this time, Fetzer responds: 'I think they were pretty conservative, you know, yuppies. Given that it is still liberal because it's a college…But it was more conservative, I think, which was part of rebelling against it, you know. Doing punk music back then you were saying fuck them'. [87] What becomes immediately apparent is that, while Fetzer identifies herself and the Gainesville scene against a general conservative mentality, her response exhibits the tendency, discussed above, to position the subcultural members as minoritized subjects. Gainesville as a minority against the wider conservative Floridian context, in her first answer, is substituted by the Gainesville punk scene against the conservative University of Florida context, in the second.

Fetzer's interview confirmed the "self-othering" position of the fanzine's creators with regard to mainstream culture. This process is also evident in a close reading of the *No Idea* fanzine. Turning to the first page of the issue which approximates the contents page of a magazine, what first makes an impression on the viewer is the sketch depicting a one-eyed skating humanoid (see figure 5). Examined together with the dictionary definition of

[87] Debra Fetzer (Mutley Chix member) in discussion with the author.

the verb ‘thrash’ which is placed next to it, the drawing supports Hebdige’s argument on the homology existent within subcultural discourses. On a first level, the one-eyed monster ties into the previously examined one-eyed monster drawings that dominated The Psychic Violents flyers, creating a link between these two, distinct discursive subcultural media. On a second level, however, the skating monster along with the dictionary definition construct a homological relation between the format of zines and the punk subculture it represents, on the one hand, and the activity of skateboarding, on the other. In this case, the definition of ‘thrashing’ acts as relay-text and together with the sketch of the skating humanoid work towards the association of *No Idea* with the notion of skateboarding as that was defined and popularized through the now-iconic skateboard magazine, *Thrasher*, first published in 1981 in California. While the story told by the sketch and definition provide us with another link between the Gainesville scene and the 1980s California hardcore scene, it also exemplifies how skateboard is appropriated by the punk subculture and is ‘made to reflect, express and resonate… aspects of group life’. [88]

[88] Hall and Jefferson, *Resistance through rituals*, 56.

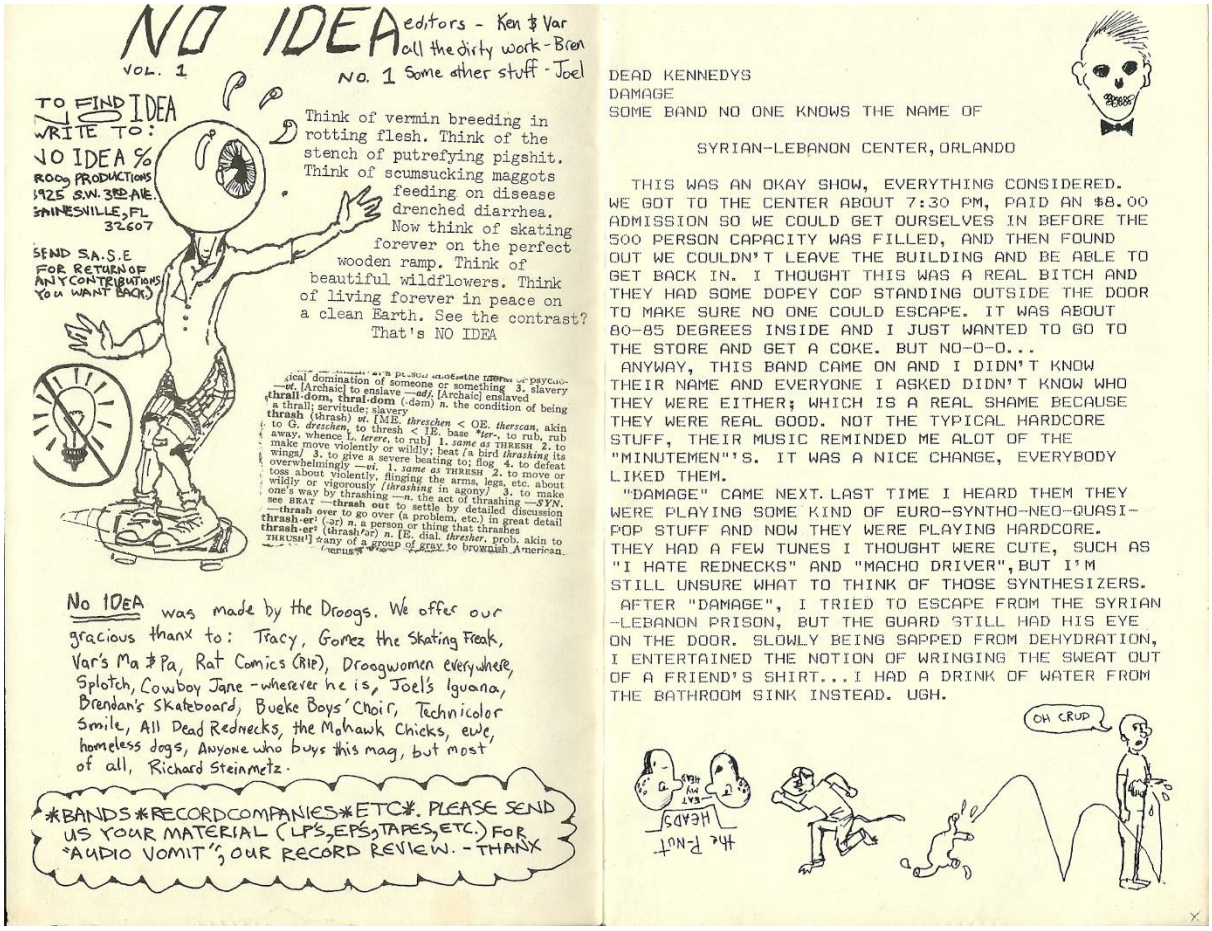


Figure 5: No Idea fanzine no.1 p.2-3, 1985. (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt. Flickr accessed on June 28, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/4639059925/in/album-72157624135051308/.)

The punk subculture's culture of deconstruction, meaning the subversion of mainstream cultural codes, and culture of authenticity, alluding to the DIY attitudes embraced by its members, both find their expression in skateboarding culture. On the first level of deconstruction, the activity of skateboarding presents the skater with the opportunity to disconnect 'space from its previous codes, boundaries and worth'. [89] Similarly to the concept of bricolage utilized in the punk subculture, skateboarding acts as way in which to challenge the cultural codes of urban space. The lack of rules, the speed and the notion of intrusiveness associated with skateboarding, coupled with the simple fact that anybody can, in theory, skateboard anywhere, pose a semiotic challenge to the rigidly

[89] Ensminger, *Visual Vitriol*, 111.

constructed codes of the urban landscape by either obstructing the undisturbed use of urban infrastructure (roads, pavements etc.) or 'desecrating' the worth and value of specific urban terrains. The pool tied to notions of suburban life, downtown banks linked to consumerism, municipal buildings associated with authority, all are redefined by the bodies of skateboarders as they re-inscribe such spaces into the discourse of skateboarding and, as such, distort their 'original connotations'. [90]

However, while subverting spatial cultural codes, skateboarding, on a second level, simultaneously becomes the means with which to actively construct meaning. Identically to the punk subculture's culture of authenticity concept, skateboarding culture enables its members to escape the role of the passive consumer of culture by embracing a DIY ethic. Similarly to the chord chart presented in the British fanzine *Sniffing Glue* and accompanied by the phrase 'Here's one chord, here's two more, now form your own band', skateboarding culture seems to imply that anyone can skate, just about anywhere, just as easily as they can start a band.[91] Amateurism becomes a staple of both subcultures and a guarantee that their scenes will not be 'corrupted' by the cultural codes and rules dictated by mainstream cultures. Finally, if one takes into account the potential for authentic DIY cultural production in the form of skate videos, provided by the popularization of handheld camcorders in the 1990s, then the homological relationship between the punk subculture and skateboarding becomes even more apparent. [92]

Such a relationship is furthermore exemplified by the existence of a skateboarding advertisement in the first issue of *No Idea* (see figure 6). In this instance, however, the affiliation rather illuminates the commodification process through which subcultural representations can find their way into the discourse of mainstream culture. In order to

[90] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 105.
[91] Cited in Ibid., 112.
[92] Butz, *Grinding California*, 186-187.

restore the order of the cultural codes that are questioned by punk subcultures and deal with the semiotic challenge posed by them, institutions of mainstream discourses such as the media, the police, or the judiciary attempt to situate subcultural representations within 'the dominant framework of meanings'. [93] This recuperation process meant to incorporate the subculture 'as a diverting spectacle within the dominant mythology', as Other, or 'folk devil', takes two distinct forms, the commodity and the ideological form. [94]

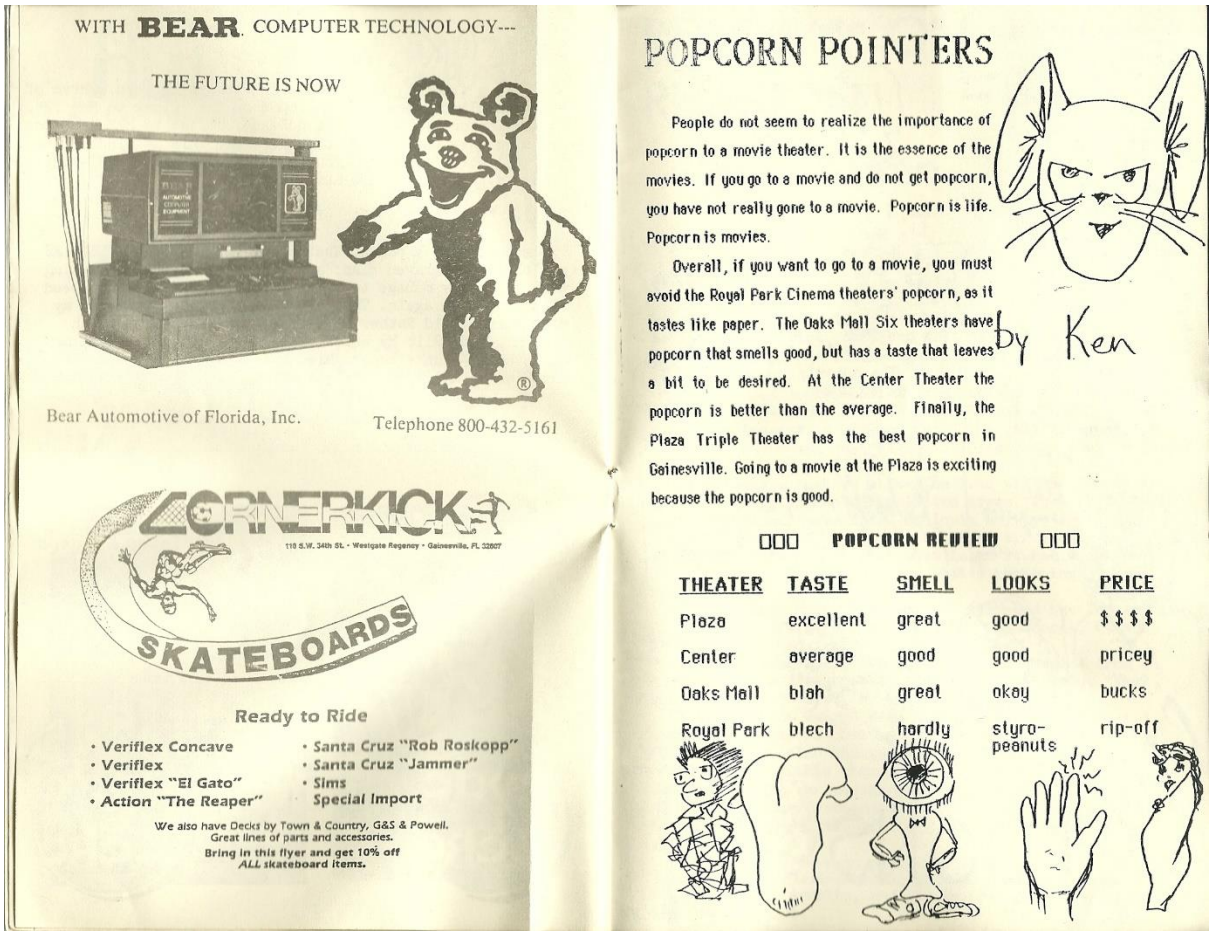


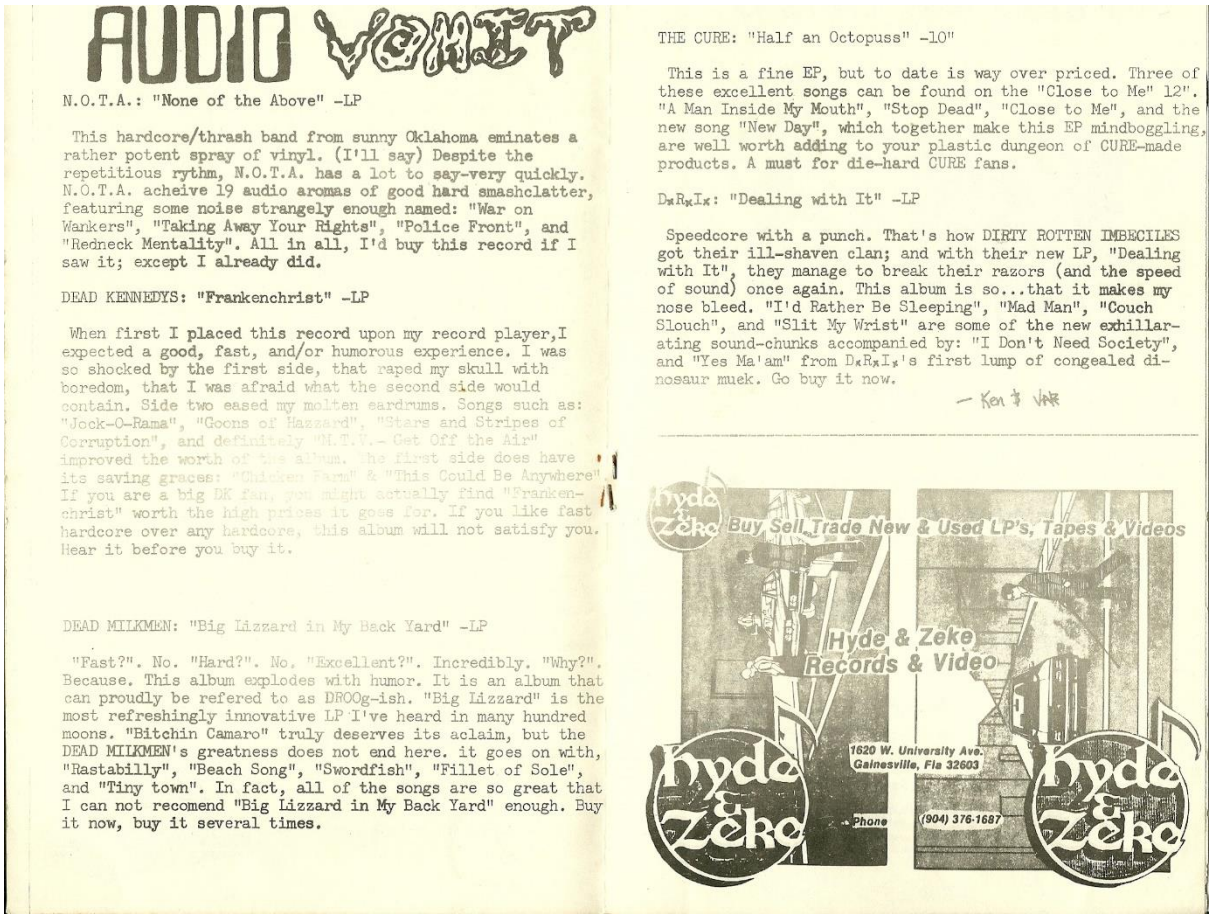
Figure 6: No Idea fanzine no.1 p.10-11, 1985 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt, Flickr accessed on June 28,2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/4639060779/in/album-72157624135051308/.)

[93] Stuart Hall, 'Culture, the Media and the "Ideological Effect"', in *Mass Communication and Society*, ed. J. Curran et al. (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), 315–348.
[94] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 94.

As Hebdige argues, in the first case, mainstream discourse indicates an attempt to convert subcultural signs into mass-produced objects. Subcultural dress, music and objects tied to the subculture such as the skateboard become targets of commodification by mainstream media. Print productions, and activities that initially confused the meaning-production process by employing the bricolage technique to subvert mainstream cultural codes, now find themselves with a firmly fixed meaning deriving from a dominant discursive framework. Skateboarding, in our instance, and consequently the connoted punk ethos, become a commodity that signifies a deviant 'other', an 'other', however, that acquires its meaning from a stable 'reservoir' of meanings tied to the dominant discourse. What might be described as an early form of artisan capitalism, as subcultural members create a new micro-economy based on DIY ethos, nonetheless transforms a subcultural sign into a commodity. [95] Commodities 'freeze' meaning as they must make sense to a buying public, even if that public is, in an initial stage, members of the subculture, and as such, subcultural expressions 'become codified … at once public property and profitable merchandise'. [96] Thus, becoming codified renders their initial ability to issue symbolic challenges to the mainstream culture useless, as the subcultural product acquires a fixed-meaning in order to be communicated to a buying demographic. Similarly to how the skateboarding ad fixes the meaning of skating within 'the dominant mythology', the advertisement for Hyde and Zeke's record store (see figure 7), the central hub for hardcore and punk music in 1980s Gainesville, commodifies punk music, leading subsequently to the inevitable and irreversible codifying of its meaning within culture. Finally, identically to the commodity form of incorporation, the ideological form refers to a certain '"labelling' and re-definition of deviant behaviour by dominant groups'. Here, 'deviant

[95] Hall and Jefferson, *Resistance through rituals*, 187.
[96] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 96.

behaviour' or the 'Other' that initially resists interpretation using mainstream cultural codes, is returned 'to the place where common sense would have [it] fit'. [97] As Barthes argues, 'Otherness is reduced to sameness' and, as such, by utilizing already familiar cultural codes to categorize their identity manifestations, the members of the punk subculture automatically become out-of-work degenerates, or troubled family members. [98]



AUDIO VOMIT

N.O.T.A.: "None of the Above" -LP

This hardcore/thrash band from sunny Oklahoma eminates a rather potent spray of vinyl. (I'll say) Despite the repetitious rythm, N.O.T.A. has a lot to say-very quickly. N.O.T.A. acheive 19 audio aromas of good hard smashclatter, featuring some noise strangely enough named: "War on Wankers", "Taking Away Your Rights", "Police Front", and "Redneck Mentality". All in all, I'd buy this record if I saw it; except I already did.

DEAD KENNEDYS: "Frankenchrist" -LP

When first I placed this record upon my record player,I expected a good, fast, and/or humorous experience. I was so shocked by the first side, that raped my skull with boredom, that I was afraid what the second side would contain. Side two eased my molten eardrums. Songs such as: "Jock-O-Rama", "Goons of Hazzard", "Stars and Stripes of Corruption", and definitely "M.T.V.- Get Off the Air" improved the worth of this album. The first side does have its saving graces: "Chicken Farm" & "This Could Be Anywhere" If you are a big DK fan, you might actually find "Franken-christ" worth the high prices it goes for. If you like fast hardcore over any hardcore, this album will not satisfy you. Hear it before you buy it.

DEAD MILKMEN: "Big Lizzard in My Back Yard" -LP

"Fast?". No. "Hard?". No. "Excellent?". Incredibly. "Why?". Because. This album explodes with humor. It is an album that can proudly be refered to as DROOg-ish. "Big Lizzard" is the most refreshingly innovative LP I've heard in many hundred moons. "Bitchin Camaro" truly deserves its aclaim, but the DEAD MILKMEN's greatness does not end here. it goes on with, "Rastabilly", "Beach Song", "Swordfish", "Fillet of Sole", and "Tiny town". In fact, all of the songs are so great that I can not recomend "Big Lizzard in My Back Yard" enough. Buy it now, buy it several times.

THE CURE: "Half an Octopuss" -lO"

This is a fine EP, but to date is way over priced. Three of these excellent songs can be found on the "Close to Me" 12". "A Man Inside My Mouth", "Stop Dead", "Close to Me", and the new song "New Day", which together make this EP mindboggling, are well worth adding to your plastic dungeon of CURE-made products. A must for die-hard CURE fans.

DxRxIx: "Dealing with It" -LP

Speedcore with a punch. That's how DIRTY ROTTEN IMBECILES got their ill-shaven clan; and with their new LP, "Dealing with It", they manage to break their razors (and the speed of sound) once again. This album is so...that it makes my nose bleed. "I'd Rather Be Sleeping", "Mad Man", "Couch Slouch", and "Slit My Wrist" are some of the new exhillar-ating sound-chunks accompanied by: "I Don't Need Society", and "Yes Ma'am" from DxRxIx's first lump of congealed di-nosaur muek. Go buy it now.

— Ken & Vale

Figure 7: No Idea fanzine no.1 p. 8-9, 1985 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt, Flickr accessed on June 28, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/4639060545/in/album-72157624135051308/.)

Continuing with the close reading of the first issue of the *No Idea* zine, let us now move on to the examination of the short articles found in the publication. The first piece titled "Reagan on religion" (see figure 8) provides us with a fictional narrative in which the

[97] Ibid., 94.
[98] Barthes, *Mythologies*, 152.

former United States president is portrayed as a devoted Shiite Muslim looking to 'establish Islam as the national religion of America'. The narrative and content of the article evidently contrast Reagan's image as a devoted Protestant Christian and the notion of the conservative Reaganite family which his rhetoric promoted. As such, the article taps into the theme of humour and satire evident in every manifestation of the punk subculture. However, it is not the content that is of major importance, in this case, but rather the form of the article itself.

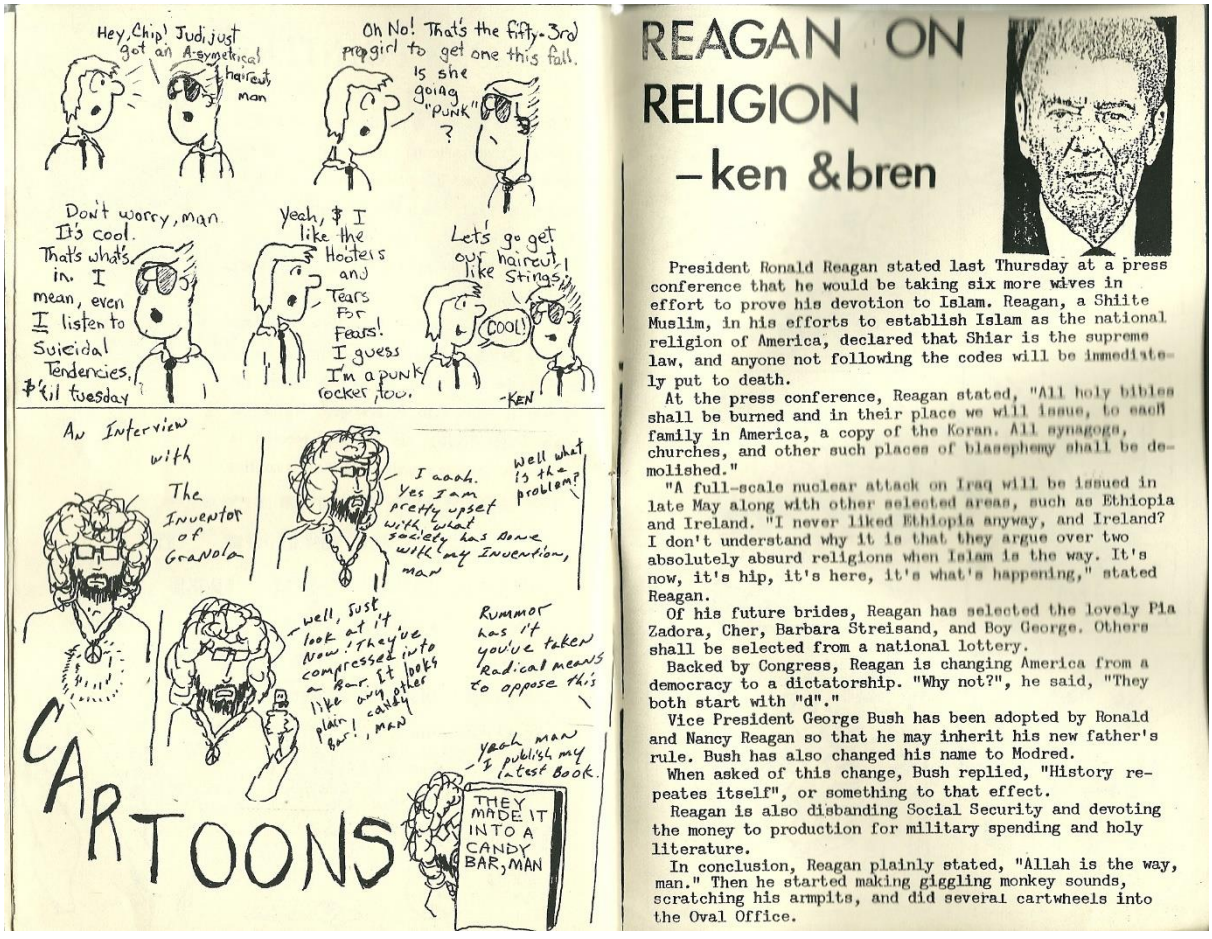
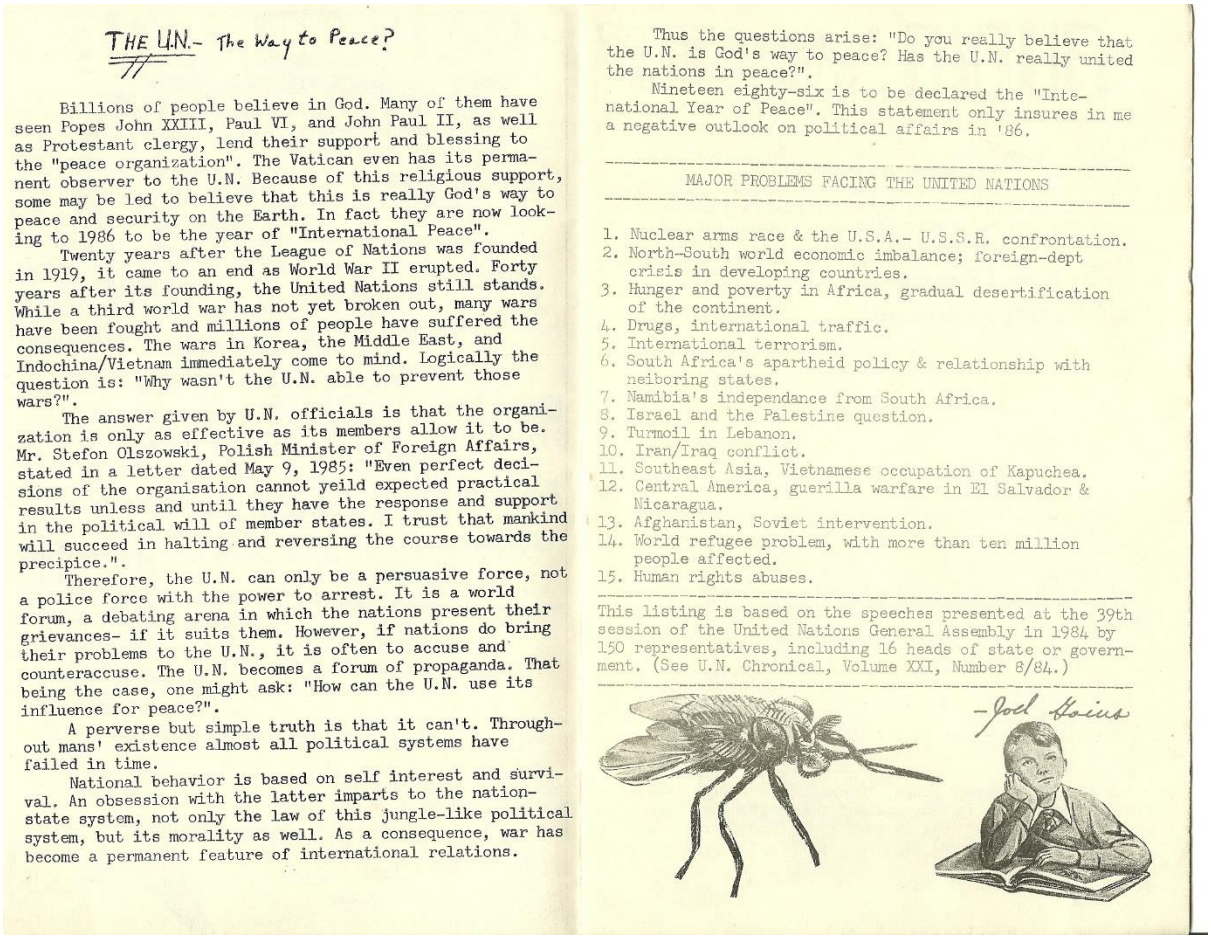


Figure 8: No Idea fanzine no.1 p.12-13, 1985 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt, Flickr accessed on June 28, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/4639060991/in/album-72157624135051308/.)

What immediately becomes apparent is the correct use of the English language coupled with excellent punctuation. The style is compelling, and the writer was clearly articulate and well-educated, judging by the use of paragraphs, grammar and transition

words. The publication of one well-written article in the *No Idea* zine does not by itself reveal the education level of its publishers. However, when viewed in association with the article concerning the ineffectuality of the United Nations organization featured in issue no.1(see figure 9) which showcases a correct use of academic reference techniques, and various articles accommodated in subsequent issues, the pieces reveal a basic or higher level of education. The level of writing displayed by all the authors leads to the conclusion that the majority of them must have been pursuing tertiary level education, or at least completed secondary education. Especially when examined in comparison to the fanzine language to be found in respective British fanzines of the era or the 1970s, such as *Trees and Flowers: Punk Rok Zine,* then the contrast between the use of language within the subcultures becomes even more obvious.[99] The British fanzines, tied to an almost exclusively working-class authorship and readership, displayed a very poor use of language, full of grammatical errors and typos. While this phenomenon was indicative of the working-class descent of the publishers, it also acted as a violation of sacred character of language. As Hebdige argues, by violating language as 'the authorized codes through which the social world is organized and experienced', the British subculture fulfilled the primary goal of its transgressive 'manifesto'. [100] Thus, when viewed in contrast to its British parallel, the *No Idea* zine reveals an authorship and readership that showcases high education levels and, subsequently, further evidence for the affiliation between the Floridian middle-class and the Gainesville scene.

[99] Trees and Flowers: Punk Rok Zine, 1982, International Institute of Social History, IISG ZDK 42110, Amsterdam.
[100] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 91.



THE U.N.- The Way to Peace?

Billions of people believe in God. Many of them have seen Popes John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II, as well as Protestant clergy, lend their support and blessing to the "peace organization". The Vatican even has its permanent observer to the U.N. Because of this religious support, some may be led to believe that this is really God's way to peace and security on the Earth. In fact they are now looking to 1986 to be the year of "International Peace".

Twenty years after the League of Nations was founded in 1919, it came to an end as World War II erupted. Forty years after its founding, the United Nations still stands. While a third world war has not yet broken out, many wars have been fought and millions of people have suffered the consequences. The wars in Korea, the Middle East, and Indochina/Vietnam immediately come to mind. Logically the question is: "Why wasn't the U.N. able to prevent those wars?".

The answer given by U.N. officials is that the organization is only as effective as its members allow it to be. Mr. Stefon Olszowski, Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated in a letter dated May 9, 1985: "Even perfect decisions of the organisation cannot yeild expected practical results unless and until they have the response and support in the political will of member states. I trust that mankind will succeed in halting and reversing the course towards the precipice.".

Therefore, the U.N. can only be a persuasive force, not a police force with the power to arrest. It is a world forum, a debating arena in which the nations present their grievances- if it suits them. However, if nations do bring their problems to the U.N., it is often to accuse and counteraccuse. The U.N. becomes a forum of propaganda. That being the case, one might ask: "How can the U.N. use its influence for peace?".

A perverse but simple truth is that it can't. Throughout mans' existence almost all political systems have failed in time.

National behavior is based on self interest and survival. An obsession with the latter imparts to the nation-state system, not only the law of this jungle-like political system, but its morality as well. As a consequence, war has become a permanent feature of international relations.

Thus the questions arise: "Do you really believe that the U.N. is God's way to peace? Has the U.N. really united the nations in peace?".

Nineteen eighty-six is to be declared the "International Year of Peace". This statement only insures in me a negative outlook on political affairs in '86.

MAJOR PROBLEMS FACING THE UNITED NATIONS

1. Nuclear arms race & the U.S.A.- U.S.S.R. confrontation.
2. North-South world economic imbalance; foreign-dept crisis in developing countries.
3. Hunger and poverty in Africa, gradual desertification of the continent.
4. Drugs, international traffic.
5. International terrorism.
6. South Africa's apartheid policy & relationship with neiboring states.
7. Namibia's independance from South Africa.
8. Israel and the Palestine question.
9. Turmoil in Lebanon.
10. Iran/Iraq conflict.
11. Southeast Asia, Vietnamese occupation of Kapuchea.
12. Central America, guerilla warfare in El Salvador & Nicaragua.
13. Afghanistan, Soviet intervention.
14. World refugee problem, with more than ten million people affected.
15. Human rights abuses.

This listing is based on the speeches presented at the 39th session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1984 by 150 representatives, including 16 heads of state or government. (See U.N. Chronical, Volume XXI, Number 8/84.)

-God bless

Figure 9: No Idea fanzine no.1 p. 6-7, 1985 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt, Flickr accessed on June 28,2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/4639669800/in/album-72157624135051308/.)

Continuing in the same vein, the article entitled ‘Popcorn Pointers’ (see figure 6) provides further proof of the middle-class affiliation of the Gainesville discourse. While the article itself is humorous, it implicitly reveals an upbringing tied to notions of middle-class habits, such as frequent movie-going. When viewed in the context of the above-mentioned findings linked to the language used within the *No Idea* zine, such a habit and the certain level of affluence that it connotes, further underscores the scene’s connection with the middle-class. Similarly, the choice to compile an article about the taste and price of popcorn in various Gainesville cinema theaters exposes motives that do not derive necessarily from social necessity but are rather tied to notions of teenage boredom, in turn, associated with a privileged middle-class position. Ultimately, then, and similarly to the

conclusions drawn from the earlier examination of the Doldrums flyer, the content and form of such articles again confirm the contention that the members of the Gainesville subculture were middle-class and shared that upbringing and subsequent values. Therefore, it is exactly an embodied value system and representations tied to middle-class identity against which the Gainesville punks constructed their identities, as evidenced by both the visual and textual discursive production of the subculture examined in this chapter.

To momentarily return to the Floridian cultural context as that was delineated in chapter 1, such a rejection of their middle-class upbringing can, in turn, be linked to the historical specificity of the 1980s Florida locale. Defined by an extreme commodification of life and a state of hyperkinetic mobility and rootlessness, the state simultaneously showcased a severance of community bonds caused by the constant influx of retirees and tourists. At the same time, the emergence of a culture of individualization promoted by the technological advances of the era, such as TV and air-conditioning, further reinforced identities that were predicated upon a homogenized, generic and commodified culture rather than a local authentic one. Following Robinson's claim that 'the middle classes are arguably the source of normative representations of Americaness' and as such the subjects on which the discursive production of dominant culture primarily inscribes itself on, I argue that Florida's middle-class discourse best represented the state's cultural conventions as these were constructed in the 1980s. [101] As a result, the construction of the Gainesville subcultural identity against middle-class cultural codes can be viewed as a response to the historical specificity of Florida. In order to combat such a lack of an authentic culture, situating them beneath a 'mask of universality' and 'invisibility', the Gainesville punks, evidently showcasing middle-class affiliation, had to construct alternative networks of communication on which to root a sense of belonging and of

[101] Robinson, *Marked men*, 2.

distinct and genuine identity traits. [102] By adopting the position of the victim within their own class discourse, the members of the Gainesville scene were able to construct a self-styled minoritized community that predicated them as the 'bearer[s] of an embodied particularity', usually characterizing 'actual' minority communities within mainstream culture, rather than the 'bearers of normative invisibility'. [103] To achieve such a status, the cultural conventions dictating their class discourse had to be subverted.

However, the close reading of the *No Idea* fanzine suggests that the subversion of such codes was only possible on a first, superficial level. Let us return to the Popcorn Pointers article. While its humorous approach is clear, the article at the same time reproduces a lot of the same cultural conventions linked to middle-class ideology that it set out to subvert in the first place. Initially, the article implicitly promotes the very habit of modern movie-going that can clearly be linked to expressions of the commodification of life, as movie enthusiasts become passive consumers of meaning through movie productions, in turn, tied to mainstream culture's identity representations reproduced though mass media. Secondly, however, it would be possible to oppose such an argument by bringing forth the ironic character of the article itself. On a third level, nevertheless, the article's mere reproduction of cultural codes tied to middle-class discourse, i.e. movie-going and the use of the appropriate language tied to the class group, keeps the subject-audience grounded within the discourse of middle-class representations, regardless of the piece's intention. The language used by the article and the thematic topic it reproduces, presupposes an audience that can decode such representations, whether the piece's intention is ironic or not, and as such keeps the audience and, thus, the fanzine itself within the relevant middle-class discursive framework.

[102] Ibid., 194.
[103] Ibid., 3; Butz, *Grinding California*, 41.

At the same time, the very good use of the English language displayed in said article ties back to the Reagan and U.N. piece examined earlier and functions in such a way as to confirm Hebdige's argument that '[n]otions concerning the sanctity of language are intimately bound up with ideas of social order'. [104] The zine's use of a language, characteristic of a middle-class upbringing and, in turn, tied to positively-perceived notions within American mainstream culture, such as textual eloquence, alludes to an acceptance of the sacred character of language as defined within dominant culture. In contrast to the British fanzines of the 1970s and 1980s that attempted to violate the authorized codes through which the world is made sense of and order established (i.e. language), whenever the *No Idea* zine attempted to subvert the mainstream middle-class cultural conventions through its texts, it was automatically returned within the framework of meanings and codes of the middle-class by its sheer use of language. In turn, the utilization of such language affirmed notions of a dominant social order.

But were there other instances where the very cultural codes that the Gainesville scene sought to transgress found themselves represented within the subcultural discourse? A close examination of the discursive production of the 1980s Gainesville scene in the form of the *No Idea* fanzine rather predisposes us towards a positive answer. The first six issues of the publication, ranging from 1985 until 1988, reveal a correlation between the representations of gender and race typical of an American middle-class discourse and the respective representations to be found within the Gainesville subculture. In the case of the American dominant culture and subsequently Floridian culture, there appears to exist a strong interrelation between class and race on a first level. Following again on Butz's footsteps, by appropriating Dalton Conley's findings in his work that investigates the 'persistence of black-white inequality' within the context of the United States, such a

[104] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, 91.

correlation between race and class is confirmed. Conley showcases how '[a]t all income, occupational, and education levels, black families on average have drastically lower levels of wealth than similar white families'. [105] In turn, such a conclusion is reaffirmed by this study's findings highlighted in the first chapter. While the median Floridian family income in 1990 was $32,212, white families had median family incomes of $34,928, Blacks earned $20,334 and Hispanics $26,907. On a second level, however, further confirming the concept of intersectionality as that was delineated in this study's introduction, American dominant culture also displays an interconnection between race and gender in terms of the ability of identity representations to constitute power relations within a discursive framework. As such, we witness in mainstream American culture a strong correlation between white race and a hegemonic masculinity, as they converge on a higher level to assume a position of power within the contours of middle-class discourse. Robinson's description of the invisibility of white males as the 'necessary condition for the perpetuation of white and male dominance, both in representation and in the realm of the social' alludes to such an interconnection. [106] Here, Robinson establishes a link between masculinity and whiteness as those 'merge' to construct the norm against which all other American identities are formulated. But how do these intersections of identity forms translate within the Gainesville scene?

As far as the correlation between a middle-class affiliation and whiteness is concerned, the very number of the black members of Gainesville bands confirms the intersection of the identity categories. Among the ten bands chosen by the *No Idea* editors to represent the Gainesville scene in the section 'Gainesville rules and you don't' of issues number 4,5 and 6, only two of them include a black member. One of bands was Mutley

[105] Dalton Conley, *Being Black, living in the red: race, wealth, and social policy in America*, (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1999), 300.
[106] Robinson, *Marked men*, 1.

Chix and the other, The Young Pioneers. Furthermore, Fetzer's response, when inquired about the representation of racial minorities within the 1980s Gainesville scene, supports such a link between race and class identities: 'There definitely was a smaller percentage of black people in the scene for sure. She was one of them ('English'- Mutley Chix member) and this guy, Fred. I mean you could name them, so that shows you the way the population is or the scene is'. [107] Finally, the quote from Fetzer's answer, 'shows you the way the population is or the scene is', itself implicitly alludes to a direct correlation between the Gainesville locale, tied to a middle-class discourse, and the identity representations to be found within the scene. The two terms appear interchangeable in her speech.

Similarly, and regardless of whether the bands featured in the fanzine, were based in Gainesville or not, the representation of blacks in the 1980s issues is scarce, further confirming the application of Robinson's concept of the self-victimization of white middle-class males to the Gainesville scene. The notion of such a white minority within their own class system, that nevertheless espouses many of the same values that it hypothetically denounces, is also illuminated by the close reading of a Young Pioneers interview (see figure 10). When asked about the messages behind their songs, the Young Pioneers utilize the lyrics of one of their songs to criticize the conformity showcased by members of mainstream cultures which is then extended to distinct subcultures:

> People are much too preoccupied by themselves. You go on campus to the business school and look around and everywhere it's gold chains, corporate job interviews, and "Hey baby wanna go work out so we can be physically fit and beautiful?". Then go to the Plaza and see where people are supposed to be conscious of world issues, altruistic, and new/progressive. There's too much posing like, "Oh I'm skate punk/rasta/country/Bauhaus/death/too cool."

[107] Debra Fetzer (Mutley Chix member) in discussion with the author.

By first listing a number of signifiers of the cultural conventions of the mainstream culture, against which the punk subculture identifies itself (gold chains, corporate job interviews etc.), and subsequently juxtaposing it to distinct representations of subcultures (I'm skate punk/rasta etc.), what the Young Pioneers imply is a rapprochement of the conventions of dominant cultures and subcultures. The extract acts as evidence of the fact that eventually subcultures fail to escape the discursive framework of the dominant culture in which they were created. In the words of the band, it is only the signifiers tied to different forms of white middle-class manifestations that change form, as their signifieds all remain connected to the initial dominant discourse. The fact that all '[p]eople are much too preoccupied by themselves', as well as 'skate punk/rasta/country/Bauhaus/ death/too cool' ultimately become mere re-manifestations of the initial 'business school' mentality, representative of a white middle-class discourse. Finally, the manner in which the Young Pioneers list the different forms of subcultures (skate punk, rasta, country etc.) is reminiscent of Hebdige's commodification process through which subcultural representations are returned to the mainstream, exhibited earlier in the skateboarding ad. The different styles, including punk, in turn related to distinct subcultures, acquire a fixed meaning through the commodification process, as that meaning needs to be easily recognizable to become a product. The 'gold chains' ascribing to the 'business school' mentality are rendered not to different from the skateboard alluding to the punk subculture, in the sense that they now both operate within the commodified mainstream cultural codes. Punk becomes a stabilized commodity, one of many subcultural styles, and, thus, loses its initial ability to transgress the framework of the dominant discourse.

I'll pay you in spirit.
That's very kind of you then. You're catching on! That is excellent! Yes, once again the universe....
I'll wave to three people going down the street on my way home.
There you go. Then you've paid me a bundle that I've got to pass on to someone else. He's catching on.
I'll even show you what I looked like in Kindergarden.
(takes photo) There's little Var. Look at him, innocent smile and innocent eyes just staring out. That's it! A child! Tying up that universal theme once again: everything is one.
NI: Why do you have a grudge with MUTLEY CHIX?
I have a love for the MUTLEY CHIX. A great love. I'm many people and I take swift actions on some sides and I don't on others. I can tell you who I am, where I'm going, and I can give you what I've got. I love the entire populus of Gainesville. When I went to New York I saw all these hard people and I thought, "Gosh this is bad. The kids have to grow up thinking like that." I couldn't help but give everybody eye to eye contact. They're not into that up there. I guarantee I made about 50% of those people smile. People who hadn't smiled for years looked at me right in the eye on the subway, in the streets, and in the bars and they saw that smile. They didn't know if I was crazy, gay, or whatever. All they saw was I was happy and had nothing but love to give them.

(PART 3: Dirk the Fluctuating Drummer with Vocals to Match, Razorless man)

NI: What do you like most about the music you play?
DIRK: The fact that we feel it. I think that's what sets us apart, because so many people seem like they're jumping on the bandwagon. You can be punk rock and protest this and that, but too often it's just cliche.
NI: Are there messages behind your songs?
D: Yeah, "Young Pioneer."
"Railroad travels along the line,
So do people without any time,
The ones who follow blindly the powers at hand,
Or even the coolest band,
But I'll jump the track,
And show them my back,
Because I don't take to mindless conformity kindly,
Jump the track,
Let out a wail (show them my tail),
Escape the bullshit,
Do not fail,
Blaze your trail!!"
People are much too preoccupied by themselves. You go on campus to the business school and look around and everywhere it's gold chains, corporate job interviews, and "Hey baby, wanna go work out so we can be physically fit and beautiful?" Then go to the Plaza and see where people are supposed to be conscious of world issues, altruistic, and new/progressive. There's too much posing like, "Oh I'm skate punk/rasta/country/bauhaus/death/too cool." Even the protesters like SCAR, a lot of them are in for the social scene. Protest just to protest. "Aren't we just like the 60's, golly gee." Speaking of the 60's, deadheads are sick; a culture with the pretentions of all the ideals of hippie love. It's just 1980's spoiled-rotten middle class kids. GRATEFUL DEAD shows are sick. It's all based on selling tie-dyed shirts and acid. It's all narcissism.
NI: Are you a skate band, an oi band, or just plain death-metal or what?
D: I'm really sick of all these bands that are dropping labels, "Well we're a mixture of punk rock and we've gotten a little more psychedelic over the ages and put some funk in there and we do a little country now." That's so f'n trendy it's sick. (Vic strums a tune of gondola music on a ukelele) I think Don Ho has more musical influence on us than any single performer on the face of the Earth.
Mike: Perry Como.
D: I like to call us altru-rock.
(meandering talk)
D: Did Troy tell you about the Marine Corps?
NI: He said he was a hippie and a Marine.
D: Hippie? I WAS THE HIPPIE!! I was a skinhead when it was cooler that ever: back in the 60's.
VIC: It was cooler in the 40's.
D: You weren't around in the 40's!
VIC: No, but I've seen pictures of guys with mohawks and skinheads in the 40's.
D: That's because they were fighting WW II. I'm not talking about war, I'm talking about cool, man. I was a skinhead in the 60's and now everybody's a skinhead and I have long hair now. (chuckle)
MIKE: It's coming back in.
D: What, long hair? Golly shit, I guess I'll have to get dreads now. (space....) You have a fanzine that a lot of punk rockers read and I have an important thing to say to them: Slam dancing is beautiful, because you can express your frustrations and hatreds by throwing your body around and bouncing off everyone while not wanting to hurt anybody, but maybe yourself. When these guys are singling out people and starting fights they show what a joke they are. If they really were tough they'd be hanging out at Trader Tom's Titty Bar and f'n with bikers and people that want to fight. They come, instead, to a punk rock show with a bunch of progressive/alternative kids and act tough, because they know those kids aren't into fighting. It's sick. Why are all the poor and redneck kids abhored by punk rock? Because the violence is real where they come from. When your mom is breaking a bottle over your daddy's head, you're not going to go to a party where people are faking their violence. The fact is, the skinhead trend was started by Desmond Decker, a black man from Jamaica, when he went to England and imitated the silly working class people in Jamaica. The English kids picked up on it, because the same silly working class were in England. It's characteristic all across across this western civilization that if you're so stupid and have so few things to be proud of, you're going to be proud of your f'n race. There are Rastas that are just as bad, but they don't even live in America so let's not get into that.
NI: Final comments?
D: I want to say to anyone out there reading this: if you feel competitive about this whole music thing, you suck and you're losing it, because there is no competition. People are going to express themselves in their own way.
MIKE: Anybody who thinks they can play and has a song should go out and play it, not worry about competing.
NI: It seems to me that the way you would want to compete is with your own self to push yourself to do better, but there's no point in, for instance, YOUNG PIONEERS trying to one-up some other band.
D: Let's make him a Pioneer! Let's make him a Pioneer!
TROY: You just won the Congressional Medal—
MIKE: —The Pioneer Medal—
TROY: —of Freedom. We'll have to draw you up one.

Figure 10: No Idea fanzine no.4 p. 17, 1987 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt, Flickr accessed on June 28,2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/4639826553/in/album-72157624012502019/.)

The fanzines also demonstrated the correlation of white middle-class identity and dominant masculinity. Again, on a first level, by examining the sheer number of female participants in the Gainesville bands featured in the section 'Gainesville rules and you don't', it is evident that the women within the Gainesville subculture constituted a definite minority. Among the eleven bands presented in the recurring piece, only two of them featured female members, those two bands being the all-female bands Mutley Chix and Cindy Brady's Lisp. Similarly to the intersection between middle-class identity and whiteness, an overview examination of the first six issues of the *No Idea* fanzine alludes to a minorized position of women within the subculture. Such a statement holds true for women both as members of Gainesville bands and women as members-participants in other subcultural manifestations (concert-goers, contributors to the fanzine content, members of non-Gainesville punk bands).

On a second level, then, the close reading of the discursive production of *No Idea* further confirms such a connection. The cartoons that feature in the first six issues of the fanzine negotiate or lampoon controversial topics within the contours of the scene. They reveal a total absence of women from its imagery. What initially appears as an innocent representation of commentary on distinct issues that trouble its members, disguised as a 'natural' state of affairs, in a closer examination leads us to the realization of an existent dominant masculinity within the punk subculture, especially as cartoons act as 'micrography' of the world they are referring to. Similarly to how in mainstream cultural manifestations ideology masks under a 'veil' of naturalness the cultural codes that pervade it, essentially blocking any alternative readings and interpretations of the world around us, the cultural manifestation of the punk subculture's conventions through the comics of *No Idea* masks the dominant masculinity that pervades its discourse. Take for example the two comics featured in figures 8 and 11. While they both satirize certain manifestations

existent in the punk subcultural, they simultaneously implicitly project an image where men are the ones who are eventually to blame even for the violation of the proper subcultural codes. In the first case, the cartoon lampoons the commodification of the punk subculture, as it simultaneously renders men as the sole active producers of meanings. The 'prep' girl that 'got an A-symmetrical haircut' and 'going punk', is discussed about, by the two high-schoolers in the cartoon, as if she is a passive subject, a spectacle to be seen. It is only the decision of the two teenagers to 'go punk' that the cartoon itself lampoons, implying that the meaning construction process within the subculture is focused on male actors. Similarly, the second cartoon that satirizes itself the over-aggressive, over-masculine character of the hardcore and punk shows of the era, defined by the mosh-pit, does not offer an alternative option where the feminine is actively creating meaning. Even by their wrongdoings, it is only men that are 'actively' violating the ideal conduct within the subculture, as that is defined by the fanzine. It is implied, then, that men are the ones that should repair such a violation of codes, constituting them the gatekeepers of the discursive production.

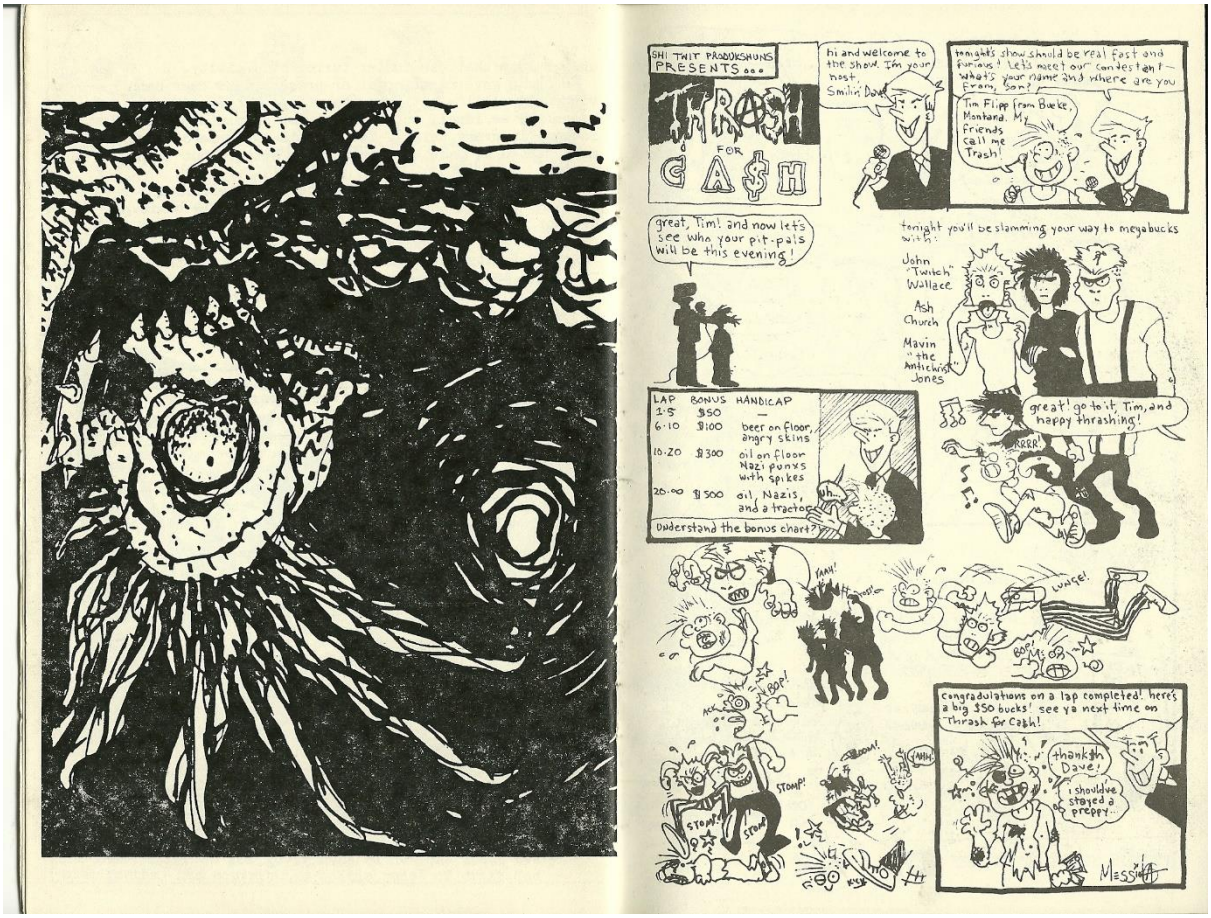


Figure 11: No Idea fanzine no.2 p. 28-29, 1986 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt, Flickr accessed on June 28,2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/4639201311/in/album-72157624011036413/.)

Let us now move on to the opposite side of the gender prism, and examine the way in which female identities were expressed and negotiated within the discourse of the Gainesville scene. Did they operate within the framework of the hegemonic masculinity exhibited in the subculture, or did they, despite their marginalization, challenge the conventional identity representations tied to the dominant middle-class culture? The close reading of a Mutley Chix interview featured in *No Idea* issue number 5, offers some insight into this question (see figures 12 and 13). Beginning the analysis from the closing statement of the Mutley Chix, the rhetoric of the band provides links with two separate phases of feminism-in-rock. On the one hand, the band's comments concerning active female participation in the subculture, initially, approximate what has been termed as 'Post-punk demystification', a phase of feminism-in-rock related to 1980s post-punk

female-based British bands such as The Slits and The Raincoats, in turn tied to notions of 'questioning conventional ideas of femininity' and conceptions of masculine expertise and mastery. [108] On the other hand, and subsequently, The Mutley Chix rhetoric also provides a parallel to the ensuing Riot Grrrl movement stemming from the early 1990s Washington State punk subculture. A subcultural movement that combined feminist consciousness and punk style and politics, Riot Grrrl introduced into post-punk feminism conceptions linked to Post-feminism, such as an attempt to reclaim and redefine identity traits conventionally coded female, for instance glamour and emotionality. [109]

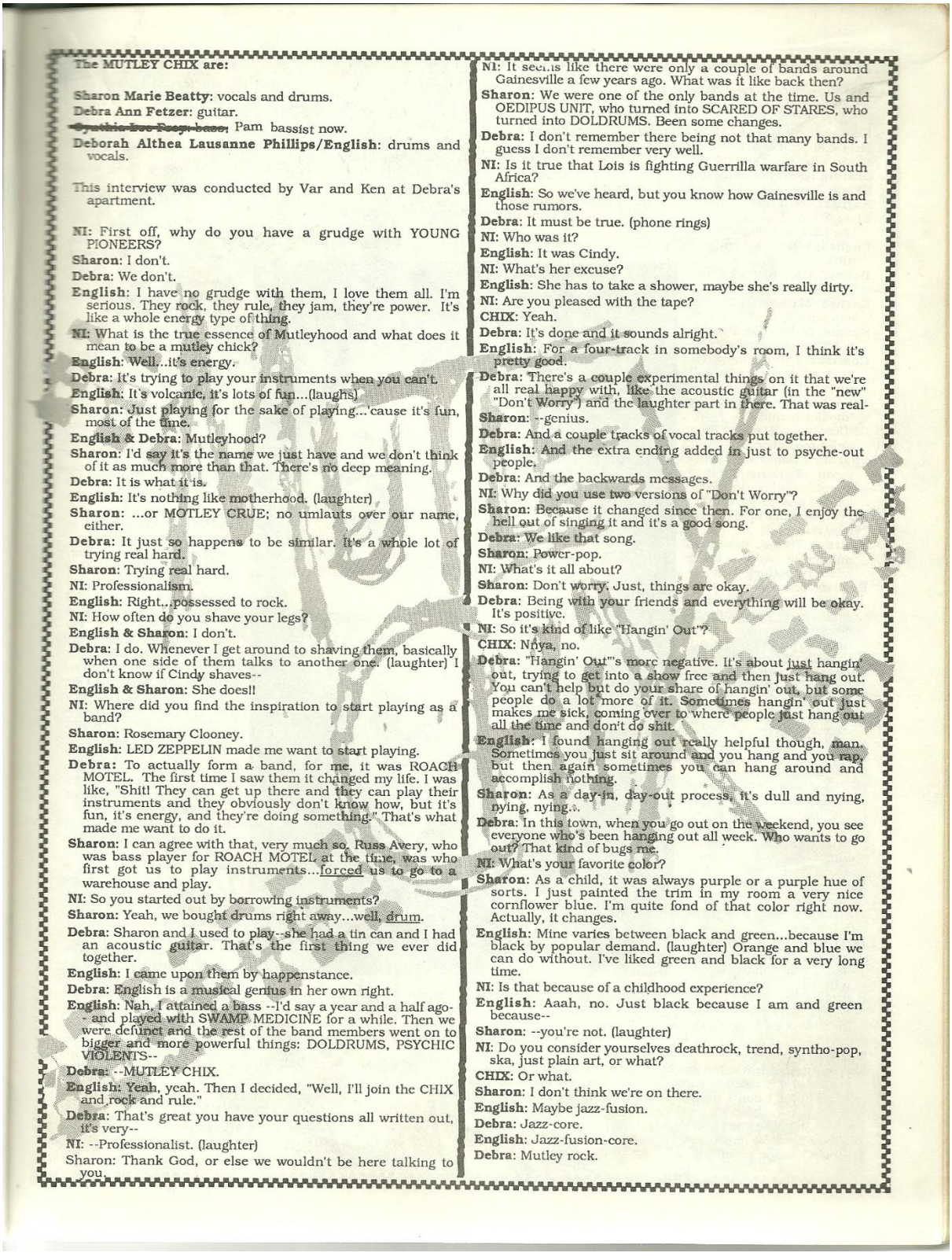
[108] Simon Reynolds, and Joy Press, *The sex revolts: gender, rebellion, and rock'n'roll*, (Cambridge; Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 324.
[109] Reynolds and Press, 'There's a Riot Going On: Grrrls Against Boy-Rock' in Ibid., *323-331*.

NI: Did you derive your name from the Hanna-Barbera cartoon character, Mutley the dog? (laughter)
CHIX: No.
English: (snickers like Mutley the dog) I'd like to think we did.
Debra: Nope, it didn't even enter our minds.
NI: So what exactly is the "Mutley Chix three-day diet plan"?
Sharon: I don't believe in diet.
Debra: Three stx-packs of Black Label...uh?
English: And a Bud. (pause) Macaroni & Cheese and tuna.
Sharon: Well...a bagel a day at least. Frijoles from Burrito Brothers occasionally.
English: When I get really hungry it's Macaroni & Cheese and tuna.
Debra: A lot of Diet Coke. (chuckles)
English: Macaroni & Cheese and tuna.
Sharon: Do you like Macaroni & Cheese and tuna?
English: I don't know. It kind of grows on you, I guess.
NI: What do you mean by "musically nude"?
CHIX: Musically nude? (in a well-tuned chorus)
Sharon: I would say I don't mean anything by it. I should make up some kind of answer for that?
NI: Yes, we made up the question! (laughter)
Sharon: To me, it sounds musically void-- there would be nothing there.
English: One who was without the essence of the music they are attempting to create or mimic...or it could be just playing a guitar with no clothes on.
NI: Who do you know that fits that category?
Sharon: Huey Lewis.
English: J B Jll Jon Bon Jovi!! J B Jll
Debra: There's tons of people. tv99, mtv, all that general bullshit.
NI: What happened to Retro/fit and Mutley Chix Productions?
Sharon: Retro/fit does not exist as a store anymore, but other things will come about from the owners of that store. Mutley Chix Productions...
Debra: You mean in doing shows?
Sharon: All our names got blacklisted from all of the Rec Halls where shows were put on, so we can't do it anymore. Other people have had to take that upon themselves, like Fat Harry has in all his glory, wonder, and splendor. I wish we could do shows.
NI: What's next for Mutley Chix?
English: Stardom.
Debra: Cindy's leaving in August, so we'll be looking for a new bass player. There'll be some changes coming down at the end of summer, I don't know what's in store. I couldn't predict, but...
Sharon: It will be great and hopeful.
English: It will be music, nevertheless.
Debra: A change, growth.

Sharon: The changes we've gone through seem to have worked out alright and hopefully this will also follow.
NI: How many members have you been through?
Debra: Three, sort of. It depends what you consider. Sharon left for a while and English joined. Lois left and Sharon came back. Now Cindy's leaving.
NI: What are all the hardcore bands going to sing about when Reagan's out in '88?
English: How Reagan used to suck. How we should've impeached him. (laughter)
CHIX: How the next president's going to suck. (laughter)
NI: Do you have anything to say to the kids in high schools who might read this magazine and be inspired to do something?
Sharon: Just say no to drugs. (laughter)
Debra: Try to play. For myself it just hit me; "I like music so much, I don't just have to be there watching it and groovin' to it, I could try and play it." Especially to girls, because society tries to make you think your position is: if you really like music, it's more of a groupie and sexual thing. That's why I feel so strongly about being in an all- girl band.
English: I know a lot of women who listen to music and they are like, "Wow, this is great! This rocks! I wish I could play this!", and it's not that they tried and cannot do it, it's they assume, "I'm not going to get anywhere because I'm a female."
Debra: It's so easy to fall into that groove where you go, "Oh, you look so much better. If you ever had a chance you could be a sexy girl in a video," instead of trying to do the music yourself. It's a hard thing to break out of because it's pushed down your throat so much.
English: There's really not much you can't do unless you decide you can't do it.
Sharon: It's not that we're in this band because we are female and think, "Well, we can do it too!" We're just people who have decided to do this.
NI: If you had to make a final comment, what would it be?
Sharon: Play music if you have any desire to do so. It's a wonderful thing to do. Whether you can play or not, it's a good release.
English: Jah be praised. Rock or try.

WRITE TO:
MUTLEY CHIX
P.O. BOX 15241
GAINESVILLE, FL 32604

Figure 12: No Idea fanzine no.5 p. 18, 1987 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt, Flickr accessed on June 28, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/4648356379/in/album-72157624157041338/.)



The MUTLEY CHIX are:

Sharon Marie Beatty: vocals and drums.
Debra Ann Fetzer: guitar.
~~**Cynthia Lee Reap**: bass~~, Pam bassist now.
Deborah Althea Lausanne Phillips/English: drums and vocals.

This interview was conducted by Var and Ken at Debra's apartment.

NI: First off, why do you have a grudge with YOUNG PIONEERS?
Sharon: I don't.
Debra: We don't.
English: I have no grudge with them, I love them all. I'm serious. They rock, they rule, they jam, they're power. It's like a whole energy type of thing.
NI: What is the true essence of Mutleyhood and what does it mean to be a mutley chick?
English: Well...it's energy.
Debra: It's trying to play your instruments when you can't.
English: It's volcanic, it's lots of fun...(laughs)
Sharon: Just playing for the sake of playing...'cause it's fun, most of the time.
English & Debra: Mutleyhood?
Sharon: I'd say it's the name we just have and we don't think of it as much more than that. There's no deep meaning.
Debra: It is what it is.
English: It's nothing like motherhood. (laughter)
Sharon: ...or MOTLEY CRUE; no umlauts over our name, either.
Debra: It just so happens to be similar. It's a whole lot of trying real hard.
Sharon: Trying real hard.
NI: Professionalism.
English: Right...possessed to rock.
NI: How often do you shave your legs?
English & Sharon: I don't.
Debra: I do. Whenever I get around to shaving them, basically when one side of them talks to another one. (laughter) I don't know if Cindy shaves--
English & Sharon: She does!!
NI: Where did you find the inspiration to start playing as a band?
Sharon: Rosemary Clooney.
English: LED ZEPPELIN made me want to start playing.
Debra: To actually form a band, for me, it was ROACH MOTEL. The first time I saw them it changed my life. I was like, "Shit! They can get up there and they can play their instruments and they obviously don't know how, but it's fun, it's energy, and they're doing something." That's what made me want to do it.
Sharon: I can agree with that, very much so. Russ Avery, who was bass player for ROACH MOTEL at the time, was who first got us to play instruments...forced us to go to a warehouse and play.
NI: So you started out by borrowing instruments?
Sharon: Yeah, we bought drums right away...well, drum.
Debra: Sharon and I used to play--she had a tin can and I had an acoustic guitar. That's the first thing we ever did together.
English: I came upon them by happenstance.
Debra: English is a musical genius in her own right.
English: Nah, I attained a bass --I'd say a year and a half ago-- and played with SWAMP MEDICINE for a while. Then we were defunct and the rest of the band members went on to bigger and more powerful things: DOLDRUMS, PSYCHIC VIOLENTS--
Debra: --MUTLEY CHIX.
English: Yeah, yeah. Then I decided, "Well, I'll join the CHIX and rock and rule."
Debra: That's great you have your questions all written out, it's very--
NI: --Professionalist. (laughter)
Sharon: Thank God, or else we wouldn't be here talking to you.

NI: It seems like there were only a couple of bands around Gainesville a few years ago. What was it like back then?
Sharon: We were one of the only bands at the time. Us and OEDIPUS UNIT, who turned into SCARED OF STARES, who turned into DOLDRUMS. Been some changes.
Debra: I don't remember there being not that many bands. I guess I don't remember very well.
NI: Is it true that Lois is fighting Guerrilla warfare in South Africa?
English: So we've heard, but you know how Gainesville is and those rumors.
Debra: It must be true. (phone rings)
NI: Who was it?
English: It was Cindy.
NI: What's her excuse?
English: She has to take a shower, maybe she's really dirty.
NI: Are you pleased with the tape?
CHIX: Yeah.
Debra: It's done and it sounds alright.
English: For a four-track in somebody's room, I think it's pretty good.
Debra: There's a couple experimental things on it that we're all real happy with, like the acoustic guitar (in the "new" "Don't Worry") and the laughter part in there. That was real-
Sharon: --genius.
Debra: And a couple tracks of vocal tracks put together.
English: And the extra ending added in just to psyche-out people.
Debra: And the backwards messages.
NI: Why did you use two versions of "Don't Worry"?
Sharon: Because it changed since then. For one, I enjoy the hell out of singing it and it's a good song.
Debra: We like that song.
Sharon: Power-pop.
NI: What's it all about?
Sharon: Don't worry. Just, things are okay.
Debra: Being with your friends and everything will be okay. It's positive.
NI: So it's kind of like "Hangin' Out"?
CHIX: Nnya, no.
Debra: "Hangin' Out"'s more negative. It's about just hangin' out, trying to get into a show free and then just hang out. You can't help but do your share of hangin' out, but some people do a lot more of it. Sometimes hangin' out just makes me sick, coming over to where people just hang out all the time and don't do shit.
English: I found hanging out really helpful though, man. Sometimes you just sit around and you hang and you rap, but then again sometimes you can hang around and accomplish nothing.
Sharon: As a day-in, day-out process, it's dull and nying, nying, nying...
Debra: In this town, when you go out on the weekend, you see everyone who's been hanging out all week. Who wants to go out? That kind of bugs me.
NI: What's your favorite color?
Sharon: As a child, it was always purple or a purple hue of sorts. I just painted the trim in my room a very nice cornflower blue. I'm quite fond of that color right now. Actually, it changes.
English: Mine varies between black and green...because I'm black by popular demand. (laughter) Orange and blue we can do without. I've liked green and black for a very long time.
NI: Is that because of a childhood experience?
English: Aaah, no. Just black because I am and green because--
Sharon: --you're not. (laughter)
NI: Do you consider yourselves deathrock, trend, syntho-pop, ska, just plain art, or what?
CHIX: Or what.
Sharon: I don't think we're on there.
English: Maybe jazz-fusion.
Debra: Jazz-core.
English: Jazz-fusion-core.
Debra: Mutley rock.

Figure 13: No Idea fanzine no.5 p. 17, 1987 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt. Flickr accessed on June 28,2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/4648970914/in/album-72157624157041338/.)

Debra Fetzer's closing statements are characteristic of both rock-related feminist phases. The Mutley Chix guitarist's incitement to '[t]ry to play', specially 'to girls,

because society tries to make you think your position is: if you really like music, it's more of a groupie and a sexual thing' points towards a rejection of traditional representations of femininity as passive, sexualized subjects that only supplement a hegemonic masculinity. She goes on to add that 'it's so easy to fall into that groove where you go "Oh, you look so much better. If you ever had a chance you could be a sexy girl in a video," instead of trying to do the music yourself'. Here, Fetzer further alludes to the position of passivity that women find themselves into the meaning-construction processes of mainstream culture. At the same time, her statement acts as a critical account of the cultural conventions that constitute women, through mainstream media representations, as passive subjects that are there to be looked at, to simply satisfy the male gaze. [110] Finally, she concludes that such a framework of identity traits is 'a hard thing to break out of because it's pushed down your throat so much'. Such a statement, if examined alongside 'English''s comment on the fact that most women interested in music fail to actively engage with it as they assume that '"I'm not going to get anywhere because I'm a female"', refers to Foucault's conception of disciplining within the mainstream discourse of culture. [111] Identity traits such as passivity and an inner sense of incompetence and inferiority in comparison to dominant masculinity, become 'hardcoded' onto female bodies within the mainstream American culture of the era, rendering the consideration and espousal of alternative characteristics almost inconceivable.

Such a 'discipling', however, did not contain itself only within the mainstream cultural discourse but was similarly replicated within the Gainesville subculture, as another of Fetzer's quotes from her interview with the author reveals. When questioned about the experience of being an all-female band in the 1980s Gainesville scene, Fetzer responded:

[110] Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' in *Visual and Other Pleasures,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 14-26.
[111] Michel Foucault and Alan Sheridan, *Discipline and punish: the birth of Prison,* (London: Penguin,1975).

‘I think we were accepted but I do think we were perceived as a “girls-can’t-play-joke-band”’. Nevertheless, she goes on to add, ‘But it didn’t matter to me, cause just like Roach Motel was a joke band but they were, like, the originators of a big, huge scene. So, it’s not really a joke’. [112] What the first part of Fetzer’s response, then, alludes to, is a reproduction of the same values and stereotypes of a hegemonic masculinity tied a normative American middle-class culture, against which the Gainesville punks identified, within the Gainesville subculture itself.

Continuing with the close reading of The Mutley Chix interview, let us now turn to the first part of the interview and specifically to the answers related to the question ‘What is the true essence of Mutleyhood and what does it mean to be a Mutley chick?’, as they provide further links to feminist ideology. Fetzer’s response (‘It’s trying to play your instruments when you can’t’) corresponds to both Riot Grrrl and post-punk feminism ideology. On the one hand, the Riot Grrrl movement idealizes the sheer process of ‘getting up and doing’ and the empowerment that derives from such an act. [113] As such, it constructs a ‘veritable cult of incompetence’ and promotes a refusal to acquire musical skill as a means to retain authenticity, tying, thus, back to the punk subculture’s ‘concept of authenticity’ previously examined. [114] On the other hand, as the originator of Riot Grrrl ideology, post-punk feminism was similarly characterized by its preoccupation with the demystification of the ‘means of musical production’ along with ‘conventional rock and roll structures’. As such, its members attempted to create an alternative network of labels, shops and zines, providing, then, further linkage to the Gainesville subculture and the No Worries fanzine created and disseminated by the members of the Mutley Chix. [115]

[112] Debra Fetzer (Mutley Chix member) in discussion with the author.
[113] Reynolds and Press, *The sex revolts*, 327.
[114] Ibid., 328.
[115] Ibid., 307, 314.

Simultaneously, another quote from the Fetzer interview further ties the Mutley Chix mentality with the post-punk demystification movement, and its agit-funk strand specifically. Agit-funk bands, drawing on neo-Marxist ideas such as Antonio Gramsci's hegemonic 'common sense', attempted to reveal through their musical production 'the *scripted* nature of interpersonal relations, [and] their socially programmed inauthenticity', or alternatively the ideological imperatives that constitute and determine everyday life. As such, for them, 'the personal [became] the political'. [116] Accordingly, when asked about whether feminist beliefs permeated the Mutley Chix and if, subsequently, the band identified against femininity as defined within mainstream culture, Fetzer responded: 'I think we were always just ourselves, like strongly ourselves. Cause we didn't feel like to be anything other than who we were, which is what punk kinda is'. She, then, went on to add, alluding to post-punk demystification's 'personal is political' concept: 'I think we're all feminists just by the fact that we're Chix and we're strong minded women, you know, with opinions. But no one was particularly politically minded. We were all politically minded in a sense but not advocates'. [117]

To continue with the close reading of the interview, 'English''s response to the same question clearly refers to the above-mentioned rejection of conventional representations of femininity. She instantly stresses that '[i]t's nothing like motherhood' and her reply illuminates her willingness to disassociate the band's image and production from notions tied to traditional femininity such as motherhood. Even the slightest correlation between the two, created through the noun 'hood' as a potential part of the compound word 'motherhood', elicits an answer from her that prohibits any possible ties between the band and the notion of motherhood, as part of the traditional feminine identity

[116] Ibid., 312.
[117] Debra Fetzer (Mutley Chix member) in discussion with the author.

discourse. In a similar manner, when asked to comment on the regularity with which the members of the band shave their legs, both "English" and Sharon Beatty deny the activity altogether. However, Debra Fetzer acknowledges the habit, which implicitly refers to a strand within the post-punk and Riot Girrrl feminism, in turn, connected to Post-feminism, that set out to reclaim conventions linked to traditional female areas such as emotion, glamour or the domestic sphere. The logic behind such a reclamation was for female subcultural members to reach an empowered state via embracing their 'supposedly feminine qualities', tied to an inferior position within the dominant culture, in order to 'confuse and disrupt the whole process' of the interpretation of mainstream cultural codes. [118] At the same time, her negative response to the author's question of whether the band identified against mainstream representations of femininity, delineated above, further links to such a notion of reclamation. Finally, however, and in contrast to the answers of the band, the posing of the question itself by the fanzine publishers refers back to the hegemonic masculinity permeating the Gainesville discourse. While the humorous approach is evident, the question itself instantly sets the band apart, marginalizing it as it immediately reminds the reader that it is in fact an all-female band that is being interviewed, whose members most likely abide to female-beauty-related conventions, in turn, linked to the notions of passivity within the mainstream culture.

Having now examined the subculture's discursive production of flyer art and fanzines in the form of the *No Idea* fanzine, by utilizing both a visual culture analysis perspective and a closing reading approach towards the textual production of the discourse, it is now time to move on to the analysis of the liner notes and images accompanying some of the seminal releases of the Gainesville scene. Similarly to the meaning-constructing media of flyers and zines, the lyrics and images examined here will be considered in terms

[118] Reynolds and Press, The sex revolts, 326.

of the semiotic challenges they present to the mainstream culture and their capacity to manifest representations of the gender, class and racial identities existent within the Gainesville discourse. However, in contrast to the printed forms of the subcultural media, the liner notes must also be considered in correlation to the music that accompanied them and subsequently re-signified them. Following Konstantin Butz's argument, appropriated in turn from Simon Frith, in order to analyze the lyrics of the Gainesville bands, 'the presentational frame must be kept in mind, as it adds an important dimension to the textual content that songs mediate'. [119] As such, while the lyrical content of the songs will provide a basis for the analysis, their performance element examined in subchapter 3.1 and informed by concepts such as Julia Kristeva's 'abjection' and Ronald Barthes' 'grain of the voice' will complete the meaning construction process. The two will meet 'at a higher level, that of the story', approximating in a way the function of Barthes' conception of the semiotic term of 'relay-text'. [120]

2.3. LINER NOTES

> Text of pleasure: the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria: the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, is linked to a *comfortable* practice of reading. Text of bliss: the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language.
>
> Ronald Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* [121]

[119] Butz, *Grinding California*, 108.
[120] Barthes, *Image - Music – Text*, 41.
[121] Roland Barthes, *The pleasure of the text*, (New York, N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1973).

Ronald Barthes' definition of the concept of the 'text of bliss' as a textual production that 'imposes a state of loss' and 'brings to a crisis [the reader's] relation with language' reverberates with Hedbige's conceptualization of punk rhetoric. For Hebdige, punk rhetoric is not self-explanatory as 'it may say what it means but it does not necessarily "mean" what it "says"'. [122] What Hebdige describes here, is the potential of the text of the punk subculture to create a disruption in cultural communication through its use of language. By exposing the arbitrary nature of the correlation between a signifier and a signified, punk text eliminates fixity in language and instead favors 'the idea of polysemy whereby each text is seen to generate a potentially infinite range of meanings'. Such an approach, then, which is more concerned with 'the *process* of meaning-construction rather than with the final product' is the ideal prism through which to examine the controversial lyrics to be found in the debut EP by the seminal Gainesville group Roach Motel, *Roach and Roll.* [123]

The first song of the EP, titled 'I hate the Sunshine State' immediately grasps the attention of the listener as it features lyrics such as 'Old people everywhere - Rednecks, Cubans and what's worse - Fratboys and new-wave fags who forgot where they left their purse!' (see figure 14). On the one hand, the song provides a description of the transient nature of the Florida state, created by the influx of retirees and mainly Cuban immigrants in the 1980s, which, as was delineated in chapter one, contributed towards the lack of a local authentic identity. On the other hand, however, the lyrics of the song feature an array of xenophobic (Cubans), homophobic (new-wave fags) and derogatory (Redneck) terms that run counter to the egalitarianist punk value systems. How is, then, one to interpret

[122] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style,* 115.
[123] Ibid., 117-118.

such a contradictory textual production, especially when viewed in congruence with the rest of the band's lyrics?

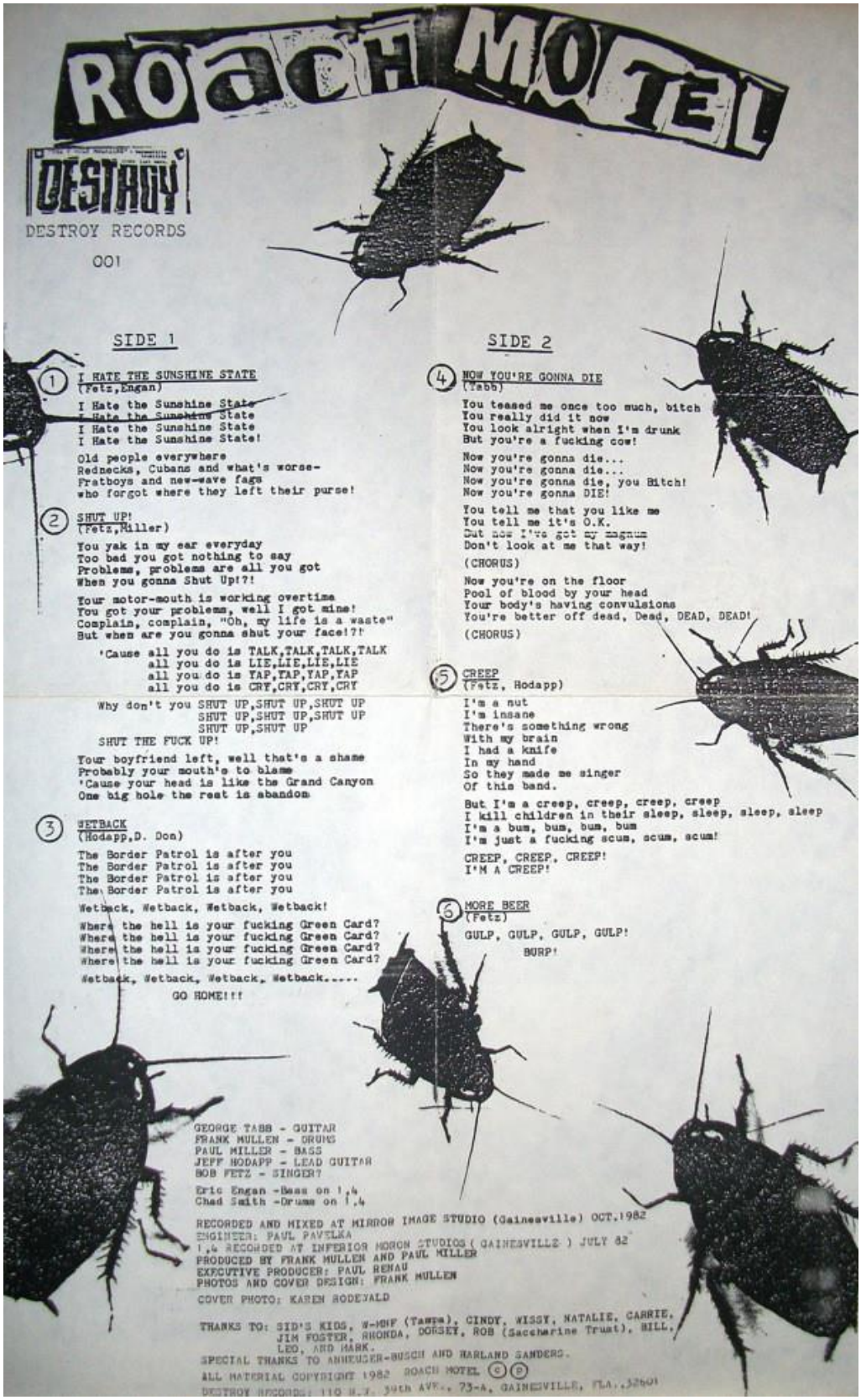


Figure 14: Roach Motel's Roach & Roll EP lyric sheet, 1982 (© 2018 Discogs® , https://img.discogs.com/RJRqUVU6qqrnTUX6W7dbgzeWa0I=/fit-in/600x978/filters:strip_icc():format(jpeg):mode_rgb():quality(90)/discogs-images/R-460192-1314534746.jpeg.jpg.)

In ‘Shut Up!’, the band generates a number of misogynistic comments playing into the stereotypes of overtalkative, oversensitive women. Lyrics such as ‘You yak in my ear everyday – Too bad you got nothing to say’ and ‘SHUT THE FUCK UP!’ clearly paint the picture of a discursive environment where a hegemonic masculinity is prevalent. In ‘Wetbag’, Roach Motel replicate a racist rhetoric towards Mexican immigrants by utilizing lyrics such as ‘Where the hell is your fucking Green Card?’ and ‘GO HOME!’. Continuing with the fourth song of the EP, ‘Now you’re gonna die!’, the band constructs a storyline where its ‘hero’ imagines himself brutally murdering a woman because she ‘teased [him] once too much’. Again, the song plays into a misogynistic rhetoric where the sexually frustrated protagonist, unable to handle the blocking of his sexual energy, resorts to murder as a coping mechanism. Finally, ‘Creep’ acts as means for the ‘singer of this band’ to admit to the fact that he is a ‘creep’, a ‘scum’, a ‘bum’ that ‘kill[s] children in their sleep’. So, what are we to make of these blatantly misogynistic, xenophobic, homophobic and racist remarks by the band?

The convenient way to interpret such rhetoric would be to attribute such comments to a further, however more blatant than the one previously explored, transfer of discursive characteristics such as a hegemonic masculinity, racism and xenophobia from the middle-class Floridian discourse to the discourse of the Gainesville subculture. However tempting, such an approach would simply be an oversimplification. Given Barthes’ and Hebdige’s above-mentioned semiotic theories, we can attribute Roach Motel’s lyrics to an attempt by the band to produce a blocking in cultural communication channels. By providing ‘critical attention to the relationship between the means of representation and the object represented’, between ‘form’ and ‘content’ of their music as a work of art, Roach Motel were able to reveal ‘the ideological implications of form’. [124] By juxtaposing the form of

[124] Ibid., 118-119.

punk music, loosely tied to an egalitarianist value system, and the misogynistic, homophobic, racist content of the songs, the band succeed in 'stripping' 'form' of its perceived naturalness. Form and content evidently do not agree and as such reveal the arbitrary nature of cultural codes. Roach Motel utilize here, thus, the rhetorical device of irony, frequently featured within punk subcultures' discursive production.

What Roach Motel further succeed in achieving through their lyrics, is an 'escape of the principle of identity'.[125] While punks disassociated themselves from the mainstream culture and 'played up their Otherness', they often also disguised their own origins as in a way to escape any possible interpretation of their work within the dominant discursive framework of meaning. [126] Utilizing Julia Kristeva's concepts found in her work on signification, Hebdige argues that 'the signifying practices embodied in punk were "radical" in Kristeva's sense: that they gestured towards a "nowhere" and actively sought to remain silent, illegible'.[127] Hebdige's argument, then, applies very well to Roach Motel's lyrics. Their textual production, full of racist, misogynistic and homophobic rhetoric, clashes with the 'presentational frame' of punk music and its connoted egalitarianist value system, to prevent the reader/listener to accurately 'read back' to the identity origins of the band. The audience is left confounded as it is not able to decode the 'bricolage' of cultural codes brought together by Roach Motel. Such production, thus, 'unsettles the reader's [and listener's] historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, [and confuses] the consistency of his tastes, values, memories'. Ultimately, Roach Motel succeed in creating a disruption, a breakdown within the dominant framework of cultural codes. They are 'nowhere'.

[125] André Breton cited in Ibid., 121.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid., 120.

While Roach Motel's lyrical production approximates the concept of the 'text of bliss', the following lyrics by another principal band of the 1980s Gainesville scene, The Psychic Violents, correspond to the contrasting concept of the 'text of pleasure':

when I wake up
it's all a blur

feel so empty
shiny shell
feelin' empty

i'm all alone
i don't see you
i'm all alone
i don't see you

'Outa Here.'
Psychic Violents. *Walk on Water.*
Self-released, 1987.

As a text of pleasure, The Psychic Violents' lyrical production 'comes from culture and does not break with it'. The correlation between the cultural context of the Florida State, examined in chapter 1, and the lyrics of 'Outa Here.' is apparent. Lyrics such as 'feelin' empty' refer back to the absence of a local authentic identity that an adolescent growing up in Florida could subscribe to. Similarly, the 'shiny shell' metaphor ties in with the

consumer-oriented discursive framework of the 1980s, where identity construction was mainly attributed to the accumulation of commodities. If we add the hyperkinetic and transient nature of the State in the 1980s, the popularization of TV and shopping centers to the above-mentioned conditions contributing towards a lack of local collective urban identity, then the feeling of loneliness expressed by The Psychic Violents singer, Charles Pinion ('I'm all alone') acts as a cumulative artistic articulation of the Floridian cultural context that resulted in the pursuit of an authentic punk identity within the Gainesville discourse. Finally, Pinion's feeling of emptiness also harmonizes with Robinsons' concept of middle-class white males as agents of a universal 'invisibility'.

Furthermore, an excerpt from the lyrical production of the equally influential for the Gainesville scene, the all-female band of Mutley Chix, is another instance that approximates Barthes' text of pleasure. In this case, however, rather than a correlation between the lyrics and the cultural context of Florida, the extract reveals an interconnection between Mutley Chix' lyrical production and the cultural context of the punk subculture of the era, meaning the wider homological value system that permeated it. The lyrics for the song 'Pus' reverberate the concept of 'abjection' as a common theme within that value system in both the British and American punk subcultures of the 1970s and 1980s. As Karina Eileraas argues, abjection was evidently tied with the lyrical production and performances of feminist punk bands of the period as a way to resist conventional representations of femininity. Following Elisabeth Grosz's argument that "[i]n the West, in our time, the female body has been constructed not only as lack or absence but with more complexity, as a leaking, uncontrollable, seeping liquid; as formless flow; a disorder that threatens all order', Eileraas postulates that girl bands appropriated such negative representations of femininity in an effort to ironically reverse 'images

foundational to misogynist symbolism'. [128] Abjection, in this case, became interchangeable with the concept of 'ugliness' as a resistance tactic employed by girl bands to challenge 'cultural representations of "pretty" femininity'. [129] Such an approach is evident in the lyrics of the Gainesville band:

> And when I squeeze out the pus
> I think of us
> I'm infected with your love
>
> Morning, noon, and early eve
> pus is oozin', oozin', oozin'
> right through my sleeve
> like unhealed scabs that are picked too soon
> is like your love it makes me swoon
> infected with your love
>
> I'm infected, more than you ever could know
> like a blister on my big right toe
> and when I squeeze out the pus
> I think of us
> I'm infected with your love

[128] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1994), 194; Eileraas, 'Witches, Bitches & Fluids: Girl Bands Performing Ugliness as Resistance', 124.
[129] Ibid., 122.

‘Pus (a love song)’

Mutley Chix. *True Grits*.

Self-released, 1987.

What immediately becomes apparent when performing a close reading of the Mutley Chix lyrics is a coupling of the concept of abjection represented by the ‘pus’ that keeps ‘oozin’, oozin’, oozin’’ and the concept of ‘love’ as that is experienced by a woman. Sharon Beatty, the producer of the lyrics, experiences love as an infection that approximates the symptoms of an actual, physical infection culminating in bodily secretions such as ‘pus’. Beatty further likens a love that makes her ‘swoon’ to ‘unhealed scabs that are picked too soon’. Following Eileraas’ argument that ‘girl bands constantly couple symbols of conventional female “prettiness” with violent and destructive images’, I argue that Beatty and the Mutley Chix take part in such an approach. ‘[L]ove’ as experienced by a woman within the discourse of a hegemonic masculinity is accompanied by notions of passivity, inferiority and a pursuit of a moral and bodily decency tied to manifestations of a ‘pretty femininity’. ‘Love’, then, becomes for women a painful, excruciating experience, that is only comparable to corporeal pain which acts as a reminder of ‘the violence to and alienation from the body that obedient performances of “pretty” femininity entail’. [130] Finally, while the concept of the abject, represented by ‘pus’, acts a correlative to the corporeal pain experienced by the Mutley Chix, it also functions as a way to further reject notions of a compliant, passive, ‘pretty’ femininity which has, in turn, been constructed on the basis of a blockage of the ‘uncontainable’ female bodily fluids that threaten to contaminate the outside world. By acknowledging and embracing such bodily functions, the Mutley Chix and contemporary girl bands of the

[130] Eileraas, ‘Witches, Bitches & Fluids: Girl Bands Performing Ugliness as Resistance’, 124.

punk subculture, ‘remap’ the female body, challenging what is considered acceptable as its’ manifestations in an effort to, ultimately, ‘rewrite the discursive practices or cultural “scripts” that inscribe female bodies and minds’. [131]

Following this brief examination of the lyrical production of some of the seminal bands of the Gainesville scene, it is now time to move on to chapter 3, pertaining to the performative element and the corporeal manifestations of the punk identity. Firstly, subchapter 3.1 will examine the already-established correlation between Julia Kristeva’s concept of ‘abjection’ and the performative and corporeal manifestations of the punk identity, based, in turn, on instances where such an intersection was exhibited within the Gainesville scene. Together with the concept of abjection, the subsection will appropriate Ronald Barthes’ concept of the ‘grain of the voice’ in order to investigate the lived ‘punk’ body’s ability to generate occurrences of a total evasion of its discursive framework and subsequent ideological constructions. Consequently, subchapter 3.2 will look into the interrelation between the semantic practices and bodily performances exhibited in the Bakhtinian festival, on the one hand, and the Gainesville scene, on the other.

[131] Ibid., 134.

CHAPTER 3

PERFORMATIVITY/ CORPOREALITY

3.1. ABJECTION, PUNK REPRESENTATIONS AND THE PUNK BODY

> We should therefore not underestimate the signifying power of the spectacular subculture not only as a metaphor for potential anarchy 'out there' but as an actual mechanism of semantic disorder: a kind of temporary blockage in the system of representation.
>
> Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The meaning of style* [132]

> There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated.
>
> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* [133]

Julia Kristeva defines the abject as that which 'disturbs identity, system, order, [w]hat does not respect borders, positions, rules'. The abject is '[t]he in-between, the ambiguous, the composite' or more plainly, 'a criminal with a good conscience'. To follow Kristeva's simplifying example, such a criminal transgresses the legal framework of the law, on the one hand, and simultaneously refuses to be disciplined by the moral codes tied to such a

[132] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style, 90.*
[133] Kristeva, *Powers of horror,* 1.

system, on the other. He or she stands completely outside the system of law, tied in turn to a moral order, within our given dominant discourse of culture and, thus, confounds our interpretive mechanisms of meaning, our ability to decode his actions and intentions. Let us now move to a more gruesome example. There is no moment more adept at undermining meaning wholly and describing the production of abjection, as Kristeva herself argues, than one's encounter with death in the form of a cadaver. The cadaver is the ultimate 'border-crosser' as it decimates the distinction one makes in order to live. A random confrontation with an actual human corpse produces a nauseating feeling as it confronts us with what we push aside, expel in order to live. 'It is death infecting life'. [134] It tears down our internal border that separates between the living 'Self' and death as the 'Other'. The transgression of such a border, inevitably, leads to a 'nowhere' where meaning can no longer exist. At the same time, while the cadaver altogether eliminates the existence of such a boundary, bodily fluids such as feces, for example, act as a reminder, as signifiers of the other side of the line which are constantly dismissed for the 'Self' to live. As Kristeva argues, 'Such wastes drop so that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit.' [135]

The quotes in the beginning of this chapter and the short interpretation of the concept, consequently, illustrate a direct relation between the signifying power of the punk subculture and Kristeva's abjection. Such a signifying power lies, paradoxically, in the fact that it can lead the observer of its manifestations towards a place where signification is no longer possible. Punk, similarly to abjection, has the potential to altogether disrupt the process of meaning interpretation within a discursive framework as it points towards a 'nowhere' rather than an 'elsewhere'. It leaves observers bereft of the ability to interpret its

[134] Ibid., 4.
[135] Ibid., 3.

signifiers as an ‘Other’ constituted by the ideological implications of the mainstream culture, against which they can posit their own identity. Subsequently, it threatens the observers’ identities as a whole. To return to Kristeva’s example, punk appears to reconstitute the ‘wastes [that] drop so that I might live’ within the semantic interpretive realm of the mainstream discourse as its subcultural expressions reach ‘beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable’.

However, not all the manifestations of punk possess such an ability. In the case of the textual or visual production of a punk subculture, it is only in the initial stages of the construction of its discourse that punk has the opportunity to wholly disturb the discursive framework of the dominant culture. It is in the moment before punk style, music or representations tied to the subculture, such as style or skateboarding, re-enter the framework of the meaning-interpretation mechanisms of the dominant discourse through the recuperation process of either the commodity or ideological form, as described in chapter 2. As such, in the case of the Gainesville subculture, it is the discursive production of Roach Motel that mainly displays such a capability, as it ties back to the seminal stages of the construction the scene.

As far as the visual production of Roach Motel is concerned, the concept of abjection features prominently in the flyer promoting Roach Motel’s first show, examined in subchapter 2.1. By utilizing the technique of bricolage to bring together the cut-out images of the aborted fetus and the breakfast bowl of cereal, as a signifier tied to the referent system of American middle-class happy family life, Roach Motel succeed in displaying the arbitrary nature of codes of such a ‘mythological’ system. However, in doing so, Roach Motel also produce a breakdown in the meaning construction-interpretation process. Whether a part of the discourse of the mainstream culture or the Gainesville subculture, the observers of the flyer are left confounded as they struggle to

assign meaning to the collection of the signifiers displayed on the flyer. The signifieds of death (fetus) and healthy life (cereal bowl) clash, they are irreconcilable, and as such prevent the observer from interpreting their coming together. However, what is more important in this case, is the fact that the fusion of the mutually-repellent signifieds simultaneously subverts their original meaning. 'It is death infecting life', or vice versa, life infiltrating death. Ultimately, however, both signifieds lose their initial, clear-cut assigned meaning, designating a disturbance in the order of cultural codes.

The textual production of the Gainesville subculture is similarly tied to abjection. Roach Motel's discursive production in the form of the lyrical content of their first EP, *Roach and Roll* is again the prime example of such a convergence. As was already noted in subchapter 2.3, the coupling of an array of xenophobic, misogynistic, racist lyrical content with the form of punk music, in turn tied to an egalitarianist value system, reveals the arbitrary nature of cultural codes, as the discrepancy between 'form' and 'content' gives the lie to the 'naturalness' embedded upon form through ideology. Simultaneously, the clash between 'the presentational frame' of punk music and the textual production of the lyrics prevents the reader/listener to accurately 'read back' to the identity origins of the band. Roach Motel's lyrics, thus, closely approximate the qualities of the abject. They both disturb order and identity, as they produce a breakdown in the communication of cultural codes within the discourse of both the mainstream culture and the punk subculture.

Such subcultural discursive production stands, then, at the edges of order, as that is constituted by the mainstream culture, constituting a direct correlation between the concept of the abject and that of the punk subculture. Similarly to the feces that remind us of the border that needs not to be transgressed if the order of life is not to be threatened, the punk subculture and its representations act as an implied reminder of the constructed character of the mainstream culture, of that border of cultural codes within a discourse that needs to

stand if order is to be maintained. Punk, thus, represents the disorder 'that hovers at the edges or borders of our existence'. [136] Such a disorder, in turn, finds expression in most of punk representations, whether that is punk style, lyrics or performance. Torn garments, for example, barely held together by safety-pins, indicate such a 'tearing' of cultural codes, simultaneously indicating imminent disorder. Similarly, as evidenced earlier by the Mutley Chix lyrical production, the representations of the abject in the lyrics of female punk bands and their performances are abundant, alluding to a further correlation between, not only abjection and the punk identity, but also abjection and representations of normative female identity. The Gainesville band, among the feminist bands of the post-demystification or Riot Grrrl era, illustrate the employment of the concept in an effort to ironically reverse misogynistic representations of the female identity and body as 'a leaking, uncontrollable, seeping liquid', a constant producer of abjection. Punk it appears, then, is abject.

The opening statement of the first issue of the *No Idea* fanzine, accordingly, reads:

> Think of vermin breeding in rotting flesh. Think of the stench of putrefying pigshit. Think of scumsucking maggots feeding on disease drenched diarrhea. Now think of skating forever on the perfect wooden ramp. Think of beautiful wildflowers. Think of living forever in peace on a clean Earth. See the contrast? That's NO IDEA.

What this short extract alludes to is exactly that loss of meaning produced by the concept of abjection. Notice the references to different forms of the abject, the 'vermin breeding in rotting flesh', 'the putrefying pigshit' and the 'disease drenched diarrhea' that all indicate the border that needs not to be transgressed. By reaching, however, that border that produces a loss of meaning, the writer of the short passage envisions an array of scenes that are dominated by notions of a poetic 'freedom', an authentic identity that leads back to the 'culture of authenticity' pursued by the punk subculture. Here, we are met with an

[136] Grosz, 'Language and the Limits of the Body: Kristeva and Abjection.', 108.

instance of what Barthes terms as 'jouissance' produced by a text. Such a concept describes 'the moment when my body pursues its own ideas-for my body does not have the same ideas as I do'. [137] What Barthes delineates here is an instance when the body separated from the intellectual capacity of its subject, ultimately, transgresses the codes of a discursive framework, approximating abjection again. It follows 'its own ideas', separate from the ideological implications that constitute a discourse and, consequently, identity.

As such, given the fact that the discursive production of punk subcultures, in general, and the Gainesville subculture, specifically, ultimately is returned within the discourse of the mainstream culture, whether through the recuperation process described in chapter 2 or the reproduction of identity representations tied to the mainstream culture (normative middle-class white masculinity, in our case), it is perhaps only through bodily materiality that its members could transgress the borders of the mainstream discourse. In this case, this study will utilize Barthes' concept of the 'grain of the voice' to describe such a process of loss of meaning.

'The grain of the voice' for Barthes is 'the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue'. It is 'the very precise space of the encounter between a language and a voice', an 'in-between' state in song where 'melody explores how the language works and identifies with that work'. Barthes additionally uses Kristeva's conceptions of the 'pheno-song' and the 'geno-song' to further illustrate his point. For Kristeva, the 'pheno-song' describes the cultural conventions constructed within a discursive framework that constitute a certain song, such as the 'rules of the genre', 'the composer's idiolect' and the 'style of interpretation'. On the other hand, 'geno-song' has nothing to do with representation or the communication of cultural codes but rather is tied to the 'materiality' of language itself. From that space, one is able to identify the 'grain of the voice', a place

[137] Barthes, *The pleasure of the text*, 17.

where ‘signifiance explodes’. Another of Kristeva’s conceptions signifiance, contrary to signification which signals meaning, indicates its loss. That loss, in turn, produces the pleasure of ‘jouissance’ as both the producer of the voice and the listener break out from their ‘subject’ position within a discourse. Finally, Barthes postulates that the place where the grain of the voice is, is ‘in the throat, place where the phonic metal hardens’, allowing us, thus, to link back the concept to the Gainesville subculture. [138]

The musical production of the seminal Gainesville bands of the 1980s punk subculture, namely Roach Motel, Doldrums, The Psychic Violents and Mutley Chix, showcases a discernible ‘growl’, produced by the bodily strain of the throat, that characterizes the voice of the performers. Simultaneously, such a growl is transferred to the sound of the music, as the over-trebled, screeching guitars together with the raw, pounding drum beats and aggressive bass lines produce a similar aesthetic. [139] Besides, for Barthes, the grain is as much ‘the body in the voice’ as it is the ‘limb as it performs’, extending, thus, the notion to the instrumental part of a song. [140]

This suggests, in turn, that the grain existed within the 1980s musical production of the Gainesville subculture, as this was simultaneously tied to performances characterized by excessive, chaotic bodily movement, raw energy and amateurism rather than technical proficiency. Exemplified by Roach Motel’s ‘fast, aggressive, chaotic music’ that translated into their live shows, such performances appeared to be centered around a bodily materiality that expressed itself through music and language rather than a certain style of interpretation (see figure 15- Roach Motel live performance). Matt Walker writes about Roach Motel’s shows with hardcore legends, Black Flag: ‘The shows on that short tour were extremely violent affairs, as hardcore shows often were. A member of the Tampa

[138] Barthes, *Image - Music – Text,* 182-183.
[139] Roach Motel, *Roach & Roll*, Destroy Records, Vinyl, 7", 45 rpm, 1982.
[140] Barthes, *Image - Music – Text,* 188.

crowd had his jaw broken in three places, and Fetz was dragged off the stage by his feet'. The bodily materiality of Roach Motel performances then found its way into the 'mosh pit', the aggressive form of dancing existent in punk and hardcore shows, where audience members violently slammed their bodies into each other in congruence with the chaotic, aggressive and franticly-paced music of the band. [141]

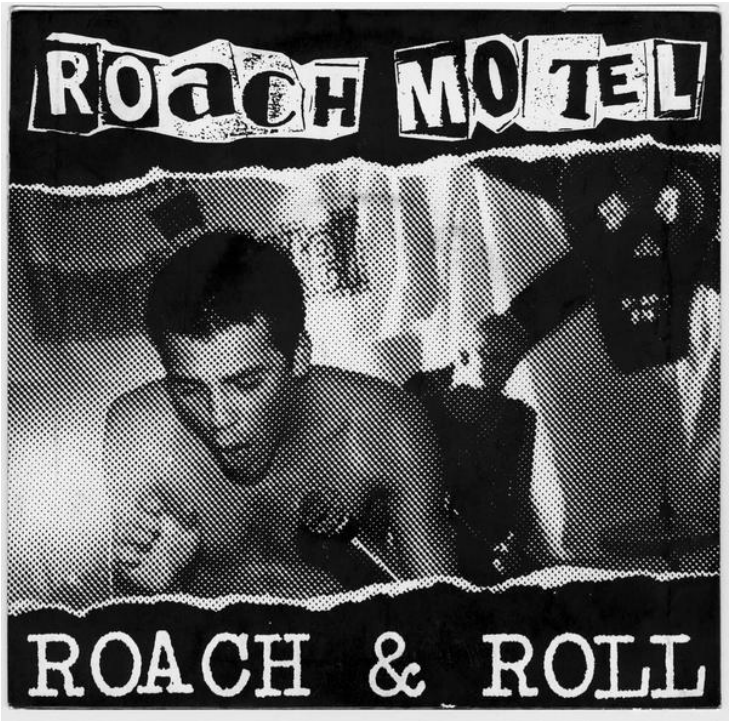


Figure 15: Roach Motel's Roach & Roll EP cover, 1982 (© 2018 Discogs®. https://img.discogs.com/Rn3hy0ZgyHfLglLQ_xVs3urCis4=/fit-in/600x593/filters:strip_icc():format(jpeg):mode_rgb():quality(90)/discogs-images/R-460192-1314534646.jpeg.jpg.)

Such practices then, exemplified by a sign to be found outside the venue of a 1982 Roach Motel show in Gainesville that read 'Not responsible for injury or death', were capable of producing momentary instances of bodily ecstasy, of audience members becoming 'mere tissue' and ultimately, of a loss of discursive meaning, of signifiance and Barthes' jouissance. [142] During those moments, 'it is not the psychological 'subject' in me who is listening [or performing]; the climactic pleasure hoped for is not going to reinforce

[141] Walker, *Gainesville Punk*, 23,25.
[142] Ibid., 25.; Gina Arnold cited in Butz, *Grinding California*, 231.

- to express -that subject but, on the contrary, to lose it'. [143] Two examples from within the Gainesville scene further illustrate such a loss. On the one hand, it is the over-energized, aggressive performances of the Doldrums lead by their charismatic front-man Peter Brightman. Tom Nordie, a Gainesville musician and music journalist, remembers the Doldrums shows: 'Pete Brightman was a riveting frontman. [He] was charismatic and wild-eyed and looked like he was about three shots of Jack Daniel's away from killing somebody and made me feel [like], "damn, stay out of that guy's way"' (see figure 16). [144] On the other hand, however, it is the case of Hot Water Music, the highly influential Gainesville band of the 1990s that exemplifies the concept of jouissance.

[143] Barthes, *Image - Music – Text*, 188.
[144] Walker, *Gainesville Punk*, 45.

Figure 16: Doldrums benefit house party, Gainesville, 1988 (Photograph by Ken Coffelt. Flickr accessed on June 28, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/8126378075/in/album-72157631860962324/.)

Walker describes Hot Water Music' live shows as 'an explosion of pent-up energy and emotion', to add, 'Maybe not since the Doldrums had the energy of a Gainesville punk band's live shows been as captivating'. Matt Sweeting, a member of many Gainesville bands in the 1990s and now a No Idea Records employee, confirms such a contention and further alludes to the bodily materiality pervading the band's shows: 'they would play anywhere, anytime and absolutely go bananas, it was really cool. I feel really lucky to have gotten to see that.…Chris has thrown his guitar through the wall and he's shirtless, and Chuck is bleeding, and George and Jason are just in the moment. That was their

everything, it was awesome' (see figure 17). [145] Sweeting's description furthers alludes an experience tied to music and live performing that the band itself has termed as 'The Lifting'. Chuck Ragan, one of the band's guitarists and vocalists in a 2008 interview with Satellite magazine, defined 'The Lifting' as 'a reference for us that described our music and what it did for us, or the place or vision that it brought us either energetically or spiritually. In short, it's a fully positive, exhilarating and uplifting experience through music on your own or with loved ones'. [146] However, more telling of The Lifting's connection to an intense bodily materiality in turn tied to music production and voice, is Ragan's and Chris Wollard's, the band's second guitarist and vocalist, account of such an experience in a 1999 interview with Flipside fanzine. Ragan initially reveals the band's mentality in terms of performing by stating that 'That's our time, that's our space, that's our outlet to release, so we do everything we can to get it all out at the time. By the end, you're fucking spent'. However, Wollard's account is more striking: 'Sometimes you're just so worked up. All of a sudden it's over and your body can't even handle that. You're just sitting there, and sometimes it's really hard to wind down.' He then goes on to add that he would often vomit after shows as a result of the performance's intensity. [147]

[145] Ibid., 90-91.
[146] Ibid., 91.
[147] Ibid., 105.

Figure 17: Hot Water Music show at The Hardback, Gainesville, n.d. (Photograph by Matt Geiger. In Gainesville Punk. By Matt Walker. Arcadia Publishing, 2016, 88.)

Here, the concept of Lifting as described by the band, approximates very closely another one of Barthes' concepts, 'floating'. While Barthes uses the conception to describe the ultimate goal of teaching as 'a floating which would not destroy anything but would be content simply to disorientate the Law', as it transgresses '[t]he necessities of promotion, professional obligations (which nothing then prevents from being scrupulously fulfilled), imperatives of knowledge, prestige of method, ideological criticism', the concept can be used to explicate Hot Water Music's 'Lifting'. [148] Similarly to how floating 'rises' above the ideological imperatives tied to knowledge, method etc., 'The Lifting' produced an instance, a space where the body momentarily rid itself of its discursive constraints and expressed an inner bodily materiality working at music and language. It is in such

[148] Barthes, *Image - Music – Text,* 215.

instances, then, that agency can be attributed to the discursive 'subject', whether listener or performer, of the Gainesville scene, as she or he operate momentarily totally outside the cultural codes of mainstream culture and subculture. Such a subject, then, operates fleetingly within a space where the ideological imperatives that define race, class and gender identities within a discourse do not exist.

Finally, Barthes' argument concerning the lack of grain within what he considers to be an 'average' culture further alludes to the fact that the concept is more likely to find expression within the contours of the subculture. Barthes goes on to content that a 'culture, defined by the growth of the number of listeners and the disappearance of practitioners wants art, wants music, provided they be clear'. [149] As such, he delineates the contours of a popular mainstream culture where the listener/ performer experience 'pleasure' only when they can decode an emotion clearly defined by the existing codes within such a system. However, while the punk subculture has the capacity to operate outside such codes, as evidenced by its 'grain of the voice', there also exist the possibility that its characteristic 'growl' or 'grain' is reduced to a mere 'style of interpretation', Kristeva's pheno-song, through the fixity of meaning that the dominant culture inevitably imposes upon the punk subculture.

Let us now turn to the consideration of the correlation between the Gainesville punk subculture and the notion of the Bakhtinian festival. Here, the emphasis will be on the performative element of the punk identity rather than its relation to a corporeality that transgresses discourse. In juxtaposing, then, the subversive performances found in both the Gainesville subculture and the Bakhtinian festival, the goal of the subchapter is to attempt to provide historical continuity to the concept of punk by considering whether both the

[149] Ibid., 185.

carnivalesque and punk representations can be accounted as distinct manifestations of a shared need of escape 'from the strictures of the established order'. [150]

3.2. PUNK PERFORMANCE AND THE CARNIVALESQUE

> For a short time life came out of its usual, legalized and consecrated furrows and entered the sphere of utopian freedom.
>
> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* [151]

To begin with the examination of the convergences between the Gainesville subculture and Bakhtin's carnival, the opening statement of the seminal Gainesville fanzine, *No Idea* identically parallels the function of the medieval carnival as a producer of a 'utopian freedom', as described in Bakhtin's above quote. The opening *No Idea* quote, examined in detail in subchapter 3.1 (see figure 5) and functioning as a type of 'manifesto' for the Gainesville scene, conjures up mental images of such a utopian freedom as the reader is asked to imagine 'of skating forever on the perfect wooden ramp' or 'living forever in peace on a clean Earth'. The objective of participation within the subculture or Bakhtin's festival, then, appears to be identical. As Peter Jones further elaborates in his article *'Anarchy in the UK: '70s British Punk as Bakhtinian Carnival.'*, Bakhtin's delineation of the carnival fully fits punk's description:

[150] Peter Jones, 'Anarchy in the UK: '70s British Punk as Bakhtinian Carnival', *Studies in Popular Culture 24*, no. 3 (April 2002): 25-36.
[151] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984), 89.

> [T]o consecrate inventive freedom, to permit the combination of a variety of different elements and their rapprochement, to liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths, from cliches, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted. [152]

If one breaks down the outline of the carnival into separate 'objectives', then the interconnection between the carnivalesque and the punk subculture becomes apparent. Firstly, the carnival's capacity 'to permit the combination of a variety of different elements and their rapprochement', corresponds directly to the technique of bricolage utilized within the Gainesville subculture. Bakhtin additionally postulates that the '[c]arnival brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with insignificant', further approximating as such the conception of bricolage's 'semiotic warfare'. [153] In similar manner to how Roach Motel, whether in their lyrical or visual productions, pursued the rapprochement of mutually 'repelling' signifiers in order to subvert their original meaning, Bakhtin's carnival brought together elements from high and low culture in an effort to produce an 'inventive freedom' and 'a liberation from the prevailing truth and established order'. [154] Similarly, the examination of the second 'objective' which refers to an emancipation 'from conventions and established truths, from clichés, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted', alludes to the punk subculture's capacity to reveal the constructed nature of ideology, following the subversion of cultural codes. Again, Roach Motel's attempt to expose the arbitrary nature of such codes and lift the 'veil' of naturalness with which ideology masks signifiers in language, bodily performances or visual productions approximates the function of the carnival as liberation 'from established truths' and the 'universally accepted'.

[152] Ibid., 34.
[153] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, (*Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984), 123.
[154] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World,* 10.

To continue with the convergences between punk subculture and the carnivalesque, both concepts appear to coincide as far as their participatory character is concerned. As Jones argues, the abolishment of distinctions between audience and performers evident in punk concerts approximates the collective participatory character encountered in carnival. [155] Bakhtin writes: 'Freedom and equality are pressed in familiar blows, and coarse body contact... no separation of participants and spectators. Everybody participates'. [156] In a further syllogism, the 'coarse body contact', mentioned in the above quote, correlates to the 'mosh pit' of punk and hardcore American scenes, amongst them Gainesville. The 'mosh pit', lamented in the cartoon production of the *No Idea* fanzine examined in subchapter 2.2 as an overly aggressive manifestation, is the space where punk or hardcore concert-goers violently push or slam into each other. It is also a space, however, where all distinctions between race, gender and class are temporarily suspended, where 'freedom and equality are expressed in familiar blows'. [157]

Similarly, the examination of a photograph depicting one of the typical 'house party' concerts that dominated the Gainesville scene in the second half of the 1980s further exemplifies such a convergence (see figure 18). The photographic evidence displays no separation between audience and performers in the Doldrums house concert. Members of the audience are depicted viewing the show from an angle located behind the band itself, transgressing thus the typical form of the music concert based on the separation between performer on stage and viewer, and the simultaneous prestige that such a distinction instills upon the band. To return to the Fetzer interview with the author, in remembering the first Roach Motel show she attended, she paints a very similar picture: 'First of all, they weren't good musicians which was great. I particularly like it when its raw. Raw and also

[155] Jones, 'Anarchy in the UK: '70s British Punk as Bakhtinian Carnival', 30-32.
[156] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 265.
[157] Ibid.

comical, like funny. Like people yelling to the audience and people yell back, throwing stuff at you. An interactive experience.' [158] Punk and carnival express 'a spirit of egalitarianism' that is further showcased by the implementation of members-fans of the subculture in the discursive production of the scene. [159] The cover of the *No Idea* cover in its sixth issue confirms such a contention as it features an infamous fan-member of the Gainesville scene, Patrick Hughes (see figure 19). The same stands true for a Doldrums flyer that features the same picture, indicating again the participatory character of the scene (see figure 20). Such a convention is, then, characteristic of the punk subculture in general, as fans often feature on liner notes booklets, fanzines and even album covers.

Figure 18: Doldrums/ Mutley Chix house party, Gainesville, n.d. (Photograph by Ken Coffelt. Flickr accessed on June 28,2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/8132824973/in/album-72157631875663426/.)

[158] Debra Fetzer (Mutley Chix member) in discussion with the author.
[159] Jones, 'Anarchy in the UK: '70s British Punk as Bakhtinian Carnival', 32.

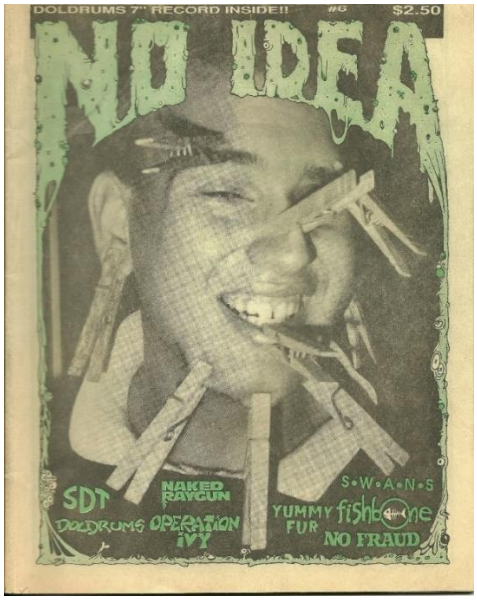


Figure 19: No Idea fanzine no. 6 cover, 1988 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt. Flickr accessed on June 28, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/7910897390/in/album-72157631361036600/.)

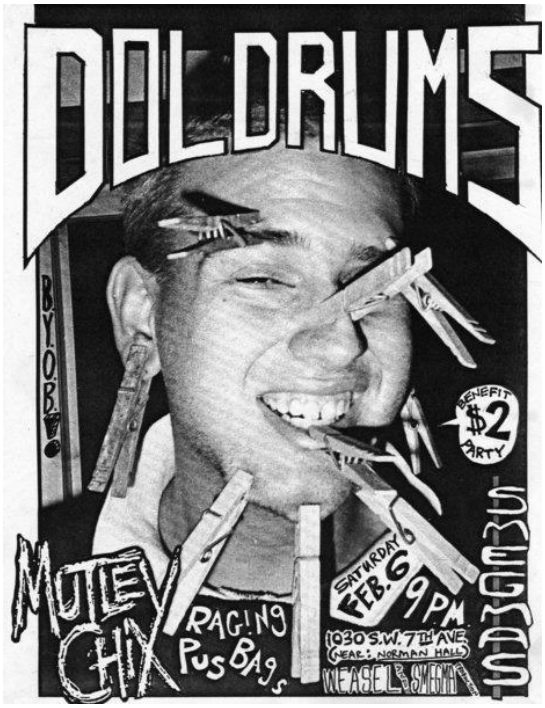


Figure 20: Doldrums benefit house party flyer, 1988 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt. Flickr accessed on June 28, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/8126396475/in/album-72157631860962324/.

Nevertheless, where punk and carnival approximate each other the most, is their preoccupation with expressions of the 'grotesque body'. In carnival, as Bakhtin theorizes, 'the grotesque body is not separated from the world', as 'it is unfinished, outgrows itself,

transgresses its own limits'. Such a body stands in direct contrast to a 'classical body' that represents authority and established order, a body that is considered as whole, finished, with clearly delineated limits.[160] Bakhtin's conception of the grotesque body subsequently mirrors punk's correlation with the concept of abjection, as examined in the previous subchapter. The capacity of the abject to transgress borders, to disturb system and express the 'in-between', in turn paralleled in punk's ability to represent the potential disorder that 'hovers at the edges or borders of our existence' in both its discursive production and bodily expressions, finds a correlative in Bakhtin's definition of the grotesque body. [161]

The grotesque body for Bakhtin is represented by the body's orifices, excretions and filth, by anything that disturbs the borders of a closed, disciplined and concretely defined body, in turn, tied to a notion of social order. Such a body, then, is reminiscent of the expressions of the abject within the discursive production of the Gainesville scene. The aborted fetus in Roach Motel's flyer, the dripping pus in Mutley Chix's song or the textual representations of the abject in the opening statement of the *No Idea* fanzine all approximate expressions of transgression of the closed, 'classical body' and in turn of the borders of social order itself.

Nevertheless, the grotesque body is never more clearly delineated than in the form of the masquerade. For Bakhtin, the 'essence of the grotesque' is the mask. [162] As Simon Reynolds and Joy Press argue, following Lawrence Grossberg, the mask in the form of the masquerade constitutes a celebration of the 'absence of any center or identity', 'an inauthentic authenticity' in a sense. [163] As such, such a celebration of the 'fragmentary' alludes back to the grotesque body's capacity to disturb system and express an 'in-

[160] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 265; Jones, 'Anarchy in the UK: '70s British Punk as Bakhtinian Carnival', 32.
[161] Grosz, 'Language and the Limits of the Body: Kristeva and Abjection.', 108.
[162] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 40.
[163] Lawrence Grossberg cited in Reynolds and Press, *The sex revolts*, 291.

betweenness' that runs contrary to the 'classical body's' complete separation from the outside world. Masquerade, thus, brings back into the ordered world representations of what stands at the borders of such an established system, of what disturbs 'closed' identities constructed within dominant discourses.

Finally, these types of representations, expressed by masquerade, also correspond to performative elements within the Gainesville scene. The Psychic Violents' frequent implementation of zombie make-up in their live performances, worn by lead-singer Charles Pinion, is such an instance (see figure 21). Corresponding to the zombie theme existent in the flyer production of the scene, the physique of the monstrous undead perfectly sums up the qualities of Bakhtin's grotesque body. Unbound by discipline, not even by death, these 'atavistic, primordial figures transplant the ooze of our most primal selves into the body politic and social discourse'. [164] What 'hovers at the edges… of our existence', death and what hovers at the edges of social order, unruliness and chaos, are here returned by the punk subculture into the world.

Let us, then, conclude.

[164] Ensminger, *Visual Vitriol*, 129.

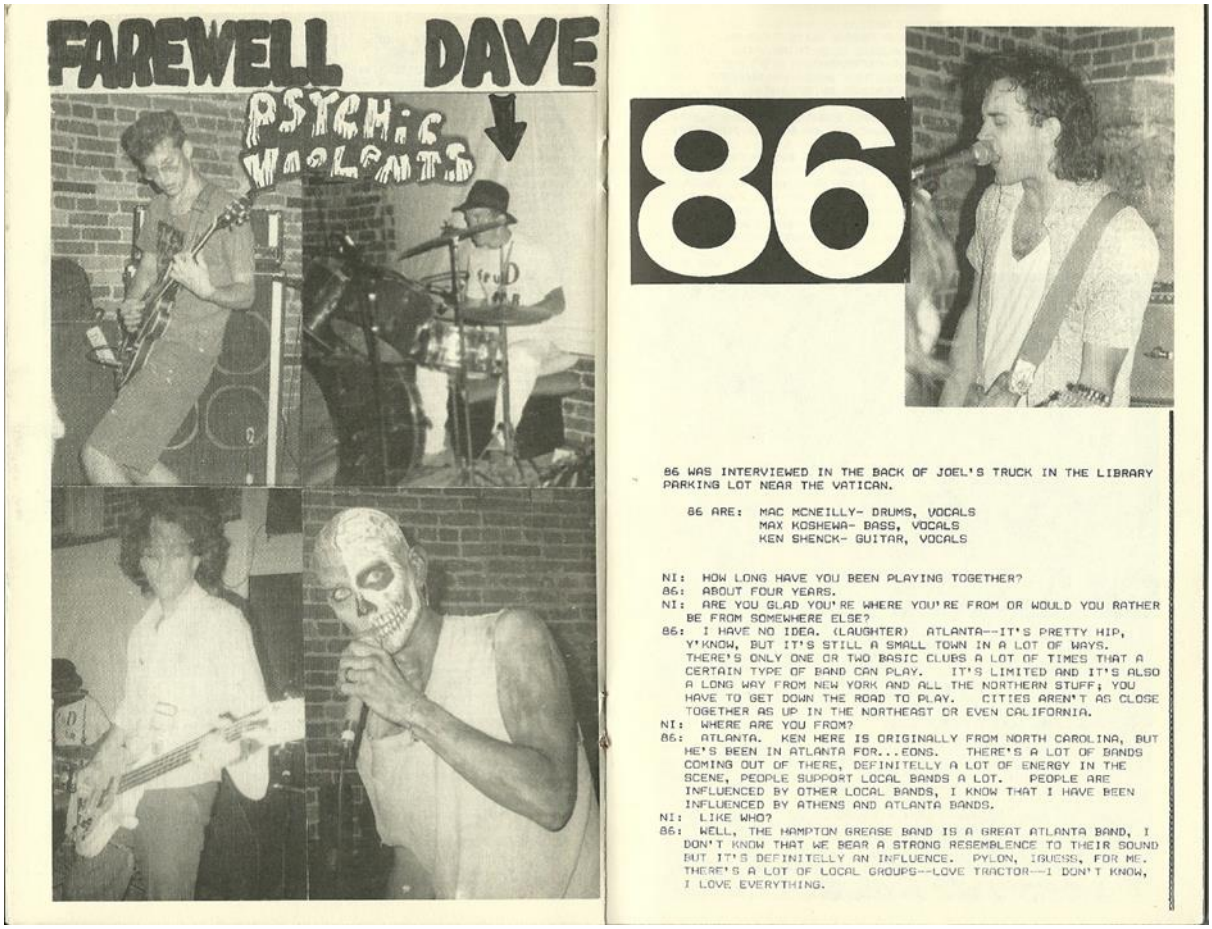


Figure 21: Psychic Violents live performance, Gainesville, 1986, No Idea fanzine no.6 p. 22-23 (Courtesy of Ken Coffelt. Flickr accessed on June 28, 2018, https://www.flickr.com/photos/kennelco/4639931946/in/album-72157624135651424/.)

CONCLUSION

> Finally, in the history of signifying systems and notably that of the arts, religion, and rites, there emerge, in retrospect, fragmentary phenomena which have been kept in the background or rapidly integrated into more communal signifying systems but point to the very process of signifiance. Magic, shamanism, esoterism, the carnival, and 'incomprehensible' poetry all underscore the limits of socially useful discourse and attest to what it represses: the process that exceeds the subject and his communicative structures.
>
> Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* [165]

In its attempt to recreate and simultaneously deconstruct the discourse that constituted the 1980s Gainesville punk subculture, this thesis focused on three distinct, but interconnected, thematic sections. It began with a short sociocultural account of the wider historical context of Florida, in order to historically ground the Gainesville subculture. It then moved on to the analysis of the discursive content of the subculture. As such, it performed a close reading and semiotic analysis of both its textual and visual production in the form of flyers, fanzines and liner notes. While it concentrated on the examination of the ways in which the subcultural production was 'made to signify disorder', it simultaneously investigated distinct types of identity representations as these were manifested within the scene's subcultural products. Gender, race, and class were considered as the 'axis[sic] of differentiation' on which the Gainesville punk identity was based. [166] Moving on from the discursive content of the scene, it consequently compared

[165] Julia Kristeva, and Leon Samuel Roudiez, *Revolution in poetic language*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 16.
[166] Brah and Phoenix, 'Ain't I A Woman? Revisiting Intersectionality', 76.

representations of the punk identity manifested in its bodily performance, to Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject, on the one hand, and the concept of the Bakhtinian carnival, on the other. Finally, while the its thematic sections acted as reference points on which this thesis built, Dick Hebdige's theoretical framework explicating the function of subculture, functioned as a common denominator that informed and tied together the whole work. [167] Similarly, the analysis of an interview with Debra Fetzer, a member of the 1980s seminal Gainesville punk band, Mutley Chix, grounded the conclusions reached throughout this study to the experience of actual participants within the 1980s subculture.

In terms of Hebdige's theoretical postulations, this thesis functioned as a case study of his more abstract concepts concerning the construction, dissemination and dissolution of subcultures. Many of his theoretical postulations regarding such mechanisms, and deriving from the examination of 1970s British subcultures, were confirmed when testing them against the Florida case. More specifically, fundamental concepts for the study of subcultural discourses such as 'bricolage' and 'homology' were precisely mirrored within Gainesville's discursive content. [168] The scene's members' utilization of bricolage to produce semantic disorder and reveal the arbitrary nature of cultural codes, both within the discourse of the mainstream culture and the subculture itself, was exemplified, for example, in the work of the seminal Gainesville band, Roach Motel. Similarly, the existence of recurring themes within the discursive production, such as the transfer of value systems tied to punk's 'culture of authenticity' to other expressions within the subcultural contours, such as skating, attested to Hebdige's concept of 'homology'. [169] In turn, this illustrated the value of Hebdige's work as a 'universal' theoretical template with which to study distinct subcultures.

[167] Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*.
[168] Ibid., 104,113.
[169] Moore, 'Postmodernism and Punk Subculture: Cultures of Authenticity and Deconstruction',

Moving on to this thesis' conclusions regarding the examination of discursive identity representations, its findings displayed a series of intersections and transfers of meaning that occurred both across the distinct identity forms of gender, race and class and between mainstream culture and subculture. Beginning with the examination of the sociocultural context of Florida, this study reconstructed the historical context that allowed for, and facilitated, the construction of the Gainesville punk identity. As such, it traced its establishment on the basis of a lack of a local authentic identity, existent within the mainstream cultural discourse of the era. In turn, such a lack was primarily predicated on an emergent culture of individualization and commodification of life characteristic of 1980s Florida. It was, thus, against such a cultural context that the Gainesville subcultural members posited their 'authentic' punk identities.

In a further logical step, then, and by utilizing Sally Robinson's theoretical work in *Marked Men* to explicate the conclusions reached via the examination of the subcultural discursive production, this study was able to further focus the identity manifestations against which the Gainesville punks were identifying, from the level of a wider Floridian mainstream cultural context to a more specific middle-class Floridian discourse (see subchapter 2.1). On the one hand, the analysis of the subculture's textual and visual production revealed that the members of the Gainesville subculture characteristically employed signifiers tied to representations of middle-class identity, such as the icon of Ronald Reagan, in order to construct an identity based against the middle-class as the ultimate 'Other'. On the other hand, however, such an analysis also uncovered an implicit affiliation of the subcultural members with the very same middle-class against which they identified. It was here, then, that this study appropriated Robinson's 'mask of universality' concept in order to elucidate such a paradox. [170] Following Konstantin Butz's cue in his

[170] Ibid., 194

study of the 1980s California skate punk and hardcore scene, I argued that members of the Gainesville scene stylized themselves as minoritized victims within their own identity group in an effort to escape the homogenizing 'mask of universality', in turn evidently tied to the middle-class Floridian cultural context the Gainesville punks found themselves in. Finally, such a convergence between the identity construction processes and, also, discursive stylistic choices (e.g. in flyer art, see subchapter 2.1) to be found in both the 1980s Gainesville scene and California scene showcased a homological relationship between the two local punk subcultures. Such a relationship, then, predicated on DIY networks of cultural communication, would be a good starting point for further research related to subcultural studies.

But did the Gainesville punks manage to eventually escape the middle-class discourse in which they were brought up in and against which they identified? In order to answer such a question, this thesis employed Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of 'intersectionality' as a lens through which to examine gender, race and class as overlapping identity forms. [171] As such, it looked to examine whether the well-documented correlation between middle-class and white racial identity, on the one hand, and middle-class identity and a hegemonic masculinity, on the other, both existent within 20th century American mainstream culture, found expression within the discourse of the Gainesville subculture. The examination of the discursive products of the scene, mainly the *No Idea* fanzine, ultimately, lead to the conclusion that the links that existed within the mainstream Floridian culture between race, gender and class, were reproduced within the Gainesville subculture itself. The sheer number of women and non-whites members of the scene together with the identity representations reproduced within its discursive content that,

[171] Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Policies'.

while, on a first level, denied notions tied to middle-class identity, on a second level, implicitly reaffirmed them, painted the picture of the Gainesville subculture as a predominantly white, male-dominated discourse.

Consequently, and in an effort to simultaneously further contribute to the incorporation of psychoanalytical theory in subcultural studies, the third and final thematic section focused on the performative element and corporeal manifestations of the punk identity as a means through which to examine punk's capacity to altogether evade such discursive strictures. Therefore, it investigated a possible correlation between Kristeva's concept of the abject as that which wholly defies established order and distinct manifestations of the punk identity. [172] While it concluded that the two are directly interrelated, it also differentiated between two separate forms of punk expression approximating the abject. [173] On a first level, manifestations tied to the punk identity employed representations of the abject as way to signify disorder. In such cases, therefore, the abject was tied to a fixed meaning within mainstream and subcultural discourse. On a second level, however, there existed moments within the Gainesville scene where abjection surpassed its performative role and inscribed itself on the bodily materiality of the Gainesville punks. It was during these instances of 'signifiance', of a loss of meaning, e.g. *No Idea*'s opening statement, that the subcultural members were able to wholly transgress discourse and experience the pleasure of 'jouissance', of breaking out of their 'subject' position. [174]

Similarly, in an effort to locate similar moments within the musical discursive production of the scene, this study employed Roland Barthes' concept of the 'grain of the voice'. As such, the application of the concept of the 'grain' to both the interaction

[172] Kristeva, *Powers of horror,* 4.
[173] Grosz, 'Language and the Limits of the Body: Kristeva and Abjection.', 108.
[174] Barthes, *Image - Music – Text,* 182-183.

between voice-language and body-musical instruments, indicated instances within the Gainesville discourse, such as Hot Water Music's 'Lifting' (see subchapter 3.1), where its participants appeared to become 'mere tissue', escaping momentarily the constraints of their discursive framework. [175] What the Gainesville punks were not able to achieve when they attempted to transgress mainstream discourse through meaning-construction processes, was only possible via an eventual loss of meaning approximating the abject and the 'grain of the voice'.

Finally, the last part of this work set out to examine the relation between the semantic practices and bodily performances evident in the Bakhtinian carnival and the respective ones existent within the Gainesville subculture. Its conclusions demonstrated that the two are inextricably linked. On the one hand, concepts and practices typical of the Gainesville punk subculture, such as bricolage or the egalitarian participatory character of live shows, were directly paralleled to relevant expressions found within Bakhtin's carnival. On the other hand, Bakhtin's 'grotesque body' as a transgression of the ordered, disciplined 'classical body' closely approximated instances of the abject punk body disturbing system within the Gainesville punk subculture, mainly evidenced by the performances of bands such as the Psychic Violents. [176] By establishing, then, a strong link between the carnival and the Gainesville punk subculture, it was within the hopes of this study to illustrate the existence of a historical continuity between the two concepts, accounted for as distinct manifestations of a shared need to escape 'from the strictures of the established order'. [177]

It is here, then, that I return to Kristeva's quote in the beginning of this chapter, to add the punk subculture to the 'fragmentary phenomena… [that] underscore the limits of

[175] Ibid., 182; Gina Arnold cited in Butz, *Grinding California*, 231.
[176] Bakhtin, Rabelais and his World, 265; Jones, 'Anarchy in the UK: '70s British Punk as Bakhtinian Carnival', 32.
[177] Jones, 'Anarchy in the UK: '70s British Punk as Bakhtinian Carnival', 26.

socially useful discourse and attest to what it represses: the process that exceeds the subject and his communicative structures'. Why do such phenomena appear in certain historical conjunctures? What drives societies towards the need to escape discursive strictures? Is there a common link between such a need manifested in distinct historical moments and, if so, what are the shared cultural conditions that precede and underlay the emergence of these phenomena? These are all questions that in my opinion would drive subcultural studies forward, by not only focusing on contemporary case studies, but by attempting to employ a wider historical scope to incorporate relevant manifestations from our recent, and not so recent past. Because if we further investigate across time what our 'socially useful discourse' represses, what stands at the borders of our existence, what we push aside, expel in order to live, then we might better understand the mechanisms of our 'signifying systems' and ultimately, human nature itself as a 'micrography' of our discourse.

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