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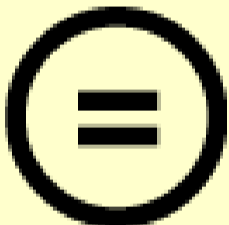
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The Authentic Punk: An Ethnography of DiY Music Ethics

by

Alastair Robert Gordon

A Doctoral Thesis

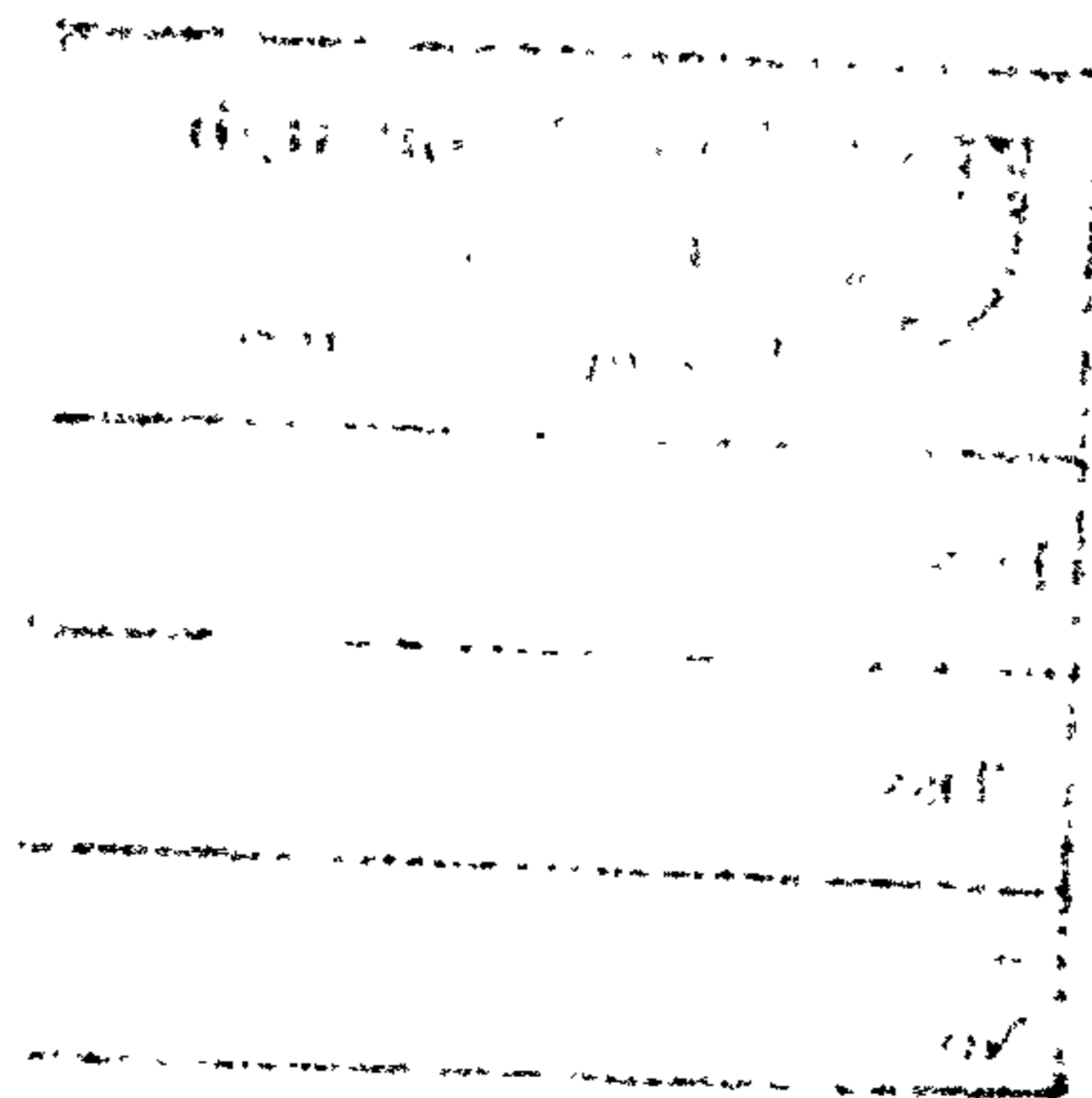
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Abstract

This thesis examines how select participants came to be involved in DiY punk culture, what they do in it, and how, if they do, they exit from the culture. Underpinning this will be an ethnographic examination of how the ethics of punk informs their views of remaining authentic and what they consider to be a sell out and betrayal of these values. I illustrate how such ethics have evolved and how they inform the daily practice of two chosen DiY punk communities in Leeds and Bradford. I show how these communities reciprocally relate to each other. I ask such questions as what do the participants get out of what is often experienced as hard work and toil, particularly where it is fraught with a series of dilemmas bound up in politics, ethics, identity and integrity. I offer a grounded theory of how and what ways those involved in DiY punk authenticate themselves in their actions. This will demonstrate how and, more importantly, *why* DiY punks distinguish their ethical version of punk over and above what are taken as less favourable forms of punk. What happens if previous passionately held DiY beliefs are surrendered? Severe consequences follow should a participant sell out. I present an account of these and suggest that what they involve is not the clear-cut question that is sometimes assumed, either sincerely or self-righteously.

Keywords: Punk, DiY, Ethnography, Subculture, Authenticity, Ethics, Dilemma, Hardcore, Straight Edge, Commodification.

The Authentic Punk: An Ethnography of DiY Music

Ethics

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Thank you to all of the people who were good friends to me through what has proved to be a difficult period of my life: you know who you all are and there are too many to mention here. Friendly insults must be however be awarded to Olly, Jim R, Sean D, Bloody Kev, Bri, Dale and PC Lee, Snedda, ('Da Holmes), Kito, Paula, Ged, Nicky, Dave, Leathers, Steve Charlesworth, Coops, Beautiful Steve, Jimmy and landlady Alison. A general thanks is also offered to all those involved in the Leeds DiY scene, Out Of Step Records and the Bradford 1in12 club, for making this study possible. A big thanks to the Nottingham punk scene (especially Steve, Tim and Pat), Terry for the numerous tattoos and all at Bodycraft for the hospitality when I reached frustrating periods of this research. To my Mother, thanks for being you!

In true punk tradition, unfriendly insults (of the two-finger variety) must, however, be extended to those people who have made this period totally difficult for me. You

know who you are. Also, I give the bird to the bloke who ran into my car on the M1 last March and to the Cimex lectularius who chose my flat to visit during the last year of this research, gee, that certainly was a real help.

Finally this work is dedicated to my daughter, Sarah Gordon and also to the memories of the following people who tragically died during the course of this research. Jaz Toomer, John Paul Morrow, Ralph Hamilton, Robert Heaton, Stig (Icons of Filth), Mark (Poundaflesh) John Hepworth, and Wayne Southworth (Doom, The Devils). Rip. Also in remembrance of the following pioneers: Johnny Cash, Dee Dee, Joey and Johnny Ramone, Joe Strummer and John Peel. All of you will be sorely missed.

For the punks,

Introduction

THIS IS A CHORD, HERE'S ANOTHER, NOW FORM A BAND!¹

A Short Note Before I Begin

Sitting in the front of my father's car approaching the age of 11 on a cloudy afternoon in March 1979, I witnessed a strange sight. Four punks were standing on the corner of the street with dyed leopard-skin haircuts, Mohawks, studded leather jackets emblazoned with strange band names, bondage trousers and ten-hole Dr. Marten Boots. On the back of one of the punk's jackets was a detailed black-and-white painting of someone holding a flag over their shoulder marching across a ploughed field. I had seen punk rockers before and used to pass a Johnny Rotten clone on my way home from school, feeling mildly intimidated at the sight of him. I'd witnessed the furore of the media coverage of the Sex Pistols on the *Today Show* and the Day-Glo displays of *Never Mind the Bollocks* album in the local Virgin record store. But this experience was different. I was mesmerised, and the painting was a complete enigma to me. What was it about? My concentration was broken with my father's voice, booming "look at that bunch of louts!! If you ever turn out like that I'll hang you from the nearest lamppost!" Too late, I was hooked!

By late 1980 I had found out what the symbol on the jacket meant through series of questions to older punk peers and research in the aisles of a local record store: the band was Crass. My friends and I ditched the Sex Pistols in favour of this strange black and white aesthetic band and adopted their anarchist politics. The hostility I subsequently received from my father at this only served to make me more determined to make more headway into the now forbidden world of punk. The austere anarchist politics on those records left me scared but the comments and the

¹ Savage, (1991: 281).

anger chimed with the sense of alienation I felt at my school and in my family. I had no faith in the latter and Crass helped to support these feelings making me realise that it was acceptable to challenge the so-called unquestionable rules of the institutions that controlled our lives. Two years later I had my own band, and a much wider knowledge of anarchist punk music.

Crass weren't acceptable to all the punks in my home town. I naively thought that all punks stood together against society. I was quickly proved wrong. On my way home from school, after I had walked past the stencilled Crass graffiti –'Fight War, Not Wars', 'Destroy Power Not People' – I was faced with the following accusation: 'Crass are a bunch of middle class hippies'. This had been sprayed by the local glue-sniffing, self-named Chaos Punks, who felt that Crass were a sell-out of what they considered to be the original punk ethics of anarchy, chaos and destruction, *not* a vegetarian coterie intent on challenging oppression. That was far too much like the hippies for them. Such complicated and ambiguous politics were clearly not to the taste of the Chaos Punks and a running series of rivalries continued between us during the early eighties.

Nearly twenty five years later, I'm still mesmerised, not so much now by anyone's sartorial display, but rather by the dynamics of punk practice, the quandaries raised by various aspects of punk values, and the accompanying debates about what, and *what does not*, constitute an authentic punk. A whole life-world of DiY punk has developed since punk's inception. This is not unitary; there are factions and splits. There are countless bands, venues, political actions, record labels, distributors, fanzines, to name a small number of activities that are inspired by the ethic of DiY punk and, yes, the divisions have aged with us. Most of all there is an ever-present pressure, sometimes blatantly asserted, sometimes very subtly applied, to remain true

to what is considered an authentic punk ethic. There is of course no one, fixed or absolute conception of what that is. The compass wavers but continually points us forward.

I first encountered hostility to the anarchist ethic of DiY in 1981. Back then, to cross over from being a chaos punk to the terrain of what was soon to become known as peace or anarcho punk, or indeed to move in the other direction, could easily become dangerous to your health and social standing. Accusations of selling out would arise from whatever side of punk you had previously been affiliated to, while hostility could head your way from such youth groups as skinheads, rude boys, trendies and the mods of the mod revival of 1980, all of whom might decide to use you as a punch bag.

One of the most long-standing dilemmas of punk has been about selling out your band to a major label. Was this the way to go, or should you stay local, unincorporated and free? Was there any value in that when your influence was minimal and you were preaching – or playing – to the converted? Could not the battle be waged from within the music industry? But then – whence the authentic punk? Such questions continue to face any relatively successful band who are approached by a talent scout or promoter. The dilemma still raises its opposed questions in circles of punk resistance. That it still exists is perhaps a sign of health and optimism, but it doesn't grow any easier. It continues to split people, to cause heartaches and anger; consciences still go through its wringer.

What follows is dedicated to punk: the life course that should have fucked up my life. Instead, it set me on a path of learning as well as rebellion. This is a story about punk practice and punk values, about how people become absorbed into punk and sometimes disillusioned with it. It is not solely about punk. I feel that such

preoccupations in punk as cultural authenticity and authenticity of identity and conduct, along with the moral and ethical dilemmas which the practice of punk throws up during one's immersion in it, are of significant theoretical value to cultural studies, while what can be learned from them are transferable to other social domains and other forms of social life.

In this thesis I turn the ethnographic lens on my long-standing subcultural experience to try and map out the everyday experience of reciprocal punk scenes. It has long puzzled me why I was made to feel inauthentic just because I hadn't purchased the latest punk release or even knew of its existence. I grew sick and tired of this kind of aspersion, though in day-to-day encounters it was not necessarily made as an aspersion. The inference could be made in sometimes quite discreet, underhand or devious ways. But I continued to feel rather puzzled. I don't feel that I have properly got to grips with it till now. The thesis is about my journey towards a resolution of the puzzle, or at least towards something that may be considered as approximating a resolution of some kind. It seemed that no one else was going to supply it for me, so I decided to embark in a concerted way on a series of investigations that circulate around the quest. This draws directly on punk itself. After my own entrance into the life-world it represents, I soon learned that punk had but one important ethic – if you don't like something, get off your arse and change it: do it yourself! The thesis is me doing it myself. By the way, my father never hung me from a lamppost. It is nevertheless a source of deep regret that we still don't talk.

I shall begin with what the present work is *not* about. It is not concerned with the practice of playing music in bands; with punk attire and style; with the relationship of punk scenes to other musical subcultures whether historical or otherwise; with media representations of punk; with the punk scene in Europe; with touring in a punk band;

with writing and recording punk records; with punk and the internet; with gender and punk; with ethnicity and punk; or with education and punk. I reserve any or all of these for future work! But they become other people's worthwhile PhD topics or research projects. I shall proceed with my own.

The thesis is about two adjacent subcultural scenes whose actions are empowered (or, as it may be, disempowered) by the DiY punk ethic. The majority of the participants who figure in this study consider the greatest proportion of punk music to be caught up in and compromised by the control of major record labels. The interests of these major labels are bound up in capitalist enterprise and driven by its economic imperatives. Their priorities jeopardise the DiY ethic, which is concerned primarily with freedom and accessibility. Those who have sold out, from the Sex Pistols onwards, have been criticised for diluting or negating such freedom and turning culture into a commodity.

The focus is local, empirical and practical. I am not concerned with abstruse theoretical formulations about resistance or freedom but with how the DiY ethic informs and guides everyday social living. That is why the principal method of the research is ethnographic. I have availed myself of my own experience and the opportunities this has created for studying various sites of social action and interaction in order to examine how subcultural ethics shape the discourse and conduct of its participants. The ethnographic work leads to theoretical issues and questions, but it is not driven or determined by them. This is important. There have not been anything like enough closely observed studies of actual youth subcultural scenes, while in the past explanations of youth subcultures have too often been overly theoretical or overly preoccupied by theoretical issues. The danger is of imposing theory on the recalcitrant phenomena, regardless of whether it fits properly or in all cases. The

neglect of work done on the ground, among subcultural participants themselves, has been huge. So far as I am aware, my thesis represents is the first broad ethnographic investigation into over twenty-five years of UK DiY punk rock. Most similar work has been conducted well away from the shores of the UK and has not investigated the *daily* participation of its members or sought to examine how punk ethics inform the practices of scene participants. Broadly speaking, most of the coverage of punk, whether academic or otherwise, is wide of the mark. This has acted as a catalyst for the present work. I have quite deliberately turned my back on books that celebrate the legendary heroes of punk or those obsessed with questions of style. Some of the clothes that are paraded in these publications were very much beyond the purses of myself and my peers. This was where DiY has been so inspirational: we made our own clothes! (Well, at least some of the time.) Punk's early intentions were to reduce or abolish the gap that separates band and audience. Academic and popular writings have since widened this gap again. I am in any case concerned more with the participant than the musician or band. The majority of work on subcultures has avoided any serious discussion of ethics and how they are enacted at the level of the everyday. The general aim of my research has been to address this omission. The specific aims are as follows.

Firstly, I seek to illuminate the daily practice of those involved in DiY punk scenes where their actions are motivated by ethical concerns. As an ethical matter, I do not seek to impose the theoretical doxa of previous subcultural theory onto the participants but instead allow them to have a voice in the research and to speak for themselves, albeit through my mediation. Specifically, I shall articulate how select participants came to be involved in DiY punk culture, what they do in it, and how, if they do, they exit from the culture. Underpinning this will be an examination of how

the ethics of punk informs their views of remaining authentic and what they consider to be a sell out and betrayal of these values.

Secondly, I try to illustrate how such ethics have evolved and how they inform the daily practice of two chosen DiY punk scenes in Leeds and Bradford. I try to show how these communities reciprocally relate to each other. I ask such questions as what do the participants get out of what is often experienced as hard work and toil, particularly where it is fraught with a series of dilemmas bound up in politics, ethics, identity and integrity.

Finally, I offer a grounded theory of how and what ways those involved in DiY punk authenticate themselves in their actions. This will demonstrate how and, more importantly, *why* DiY punks distinguish their ethical version of punk over and above what are taken as less favourable forms of punk. What happens if previous passionately held DiY beliefs are surrendered? Such actions are viewed as well nigh treasonable in certain circles of DiY punk. Severe consequences follow should a participant sell out. I shall present an account of these and suggest that what they involve is not the clear-cut question that is sometimes assumed, either sincerely or self-righteously.

The thesis will adopt the following order. Chapter one will critically introduce the popular and academic literatures on punk in addition to work on subcultures, countercultures and related formations. I will argue why the present work is an advance and a contribution to existing work. Chapter two is a critical discussion of the methodology involved in the study. It makes the case for why I have struck a methodological balance between grounded theory and descriptive ethnography in order to avoid gagging the participants in the research. Chapter three investigates the participants' life histories and how they came to be involved in punk rock and why

they came to prefer DiY. Chapter four is a historical discussion of how and in what ways DiY punk ethics have evolved since its inception, and *how* the introduction of DiY American hardcore in the 1980s changed the cultural landscape of DiY punk in the UK. It resolves itself by articulating how competing versions of punk ethics produce subcultural conflict and seething resentment. Chapter five is an ethnographic account of building a studio in a Bradford anarchist venue, the 1in12, and the difficulties and rewards that arose out of this. It specifically answers the question: what is it like to advance the DiY ethic beyond the previously established parameters of such action, commonly grouped as it is around bands, labels, gigs and distribution. Chapter six offers the term *genre distinction* together with four sub-categories to explain how those in DiY present and authenticate their experiences as valid as *against* other less favourable versions of punk. That theme is then developed through the ethnographic lens of my experience of working in a Leeds punk record shop in chapter seven. This chapter also details how a series of competing versions of DiY punk ethics results in a number of different venues and promotional strategies between Leeds and Bradford DiY gigs. The final section of this chapter examines how the reciprocal ethical relations between the DiY scenes of Leeds and Bradford inform each other through competing versions of DiY punk, cast along the lines of DiY political activism and DiY punk cultural production. Chapter eight investigates why people leave the DiY scene. It examines a number of competing reasons for this. The final chapter turns to the ultimate authentic punk dilemma: bands abandoning the DiY ethic and selling out to major music labels. This is examined through the views expressed by the participants in the study and by the band members themselves.

So to begin:

HERE'S A WORD, HERE'S ANOTHER, NOW HERE'S THE THESIS.

Chapter 1: Punk(s) in Press

Public Service Announcement

[You are listening to Radio Two]

Attention please...attention please....attention please....attention please

Here is a special announcement.

Attention please...

Here is a special announcement

It is with deep regret

That we have to announce to you,

contrary to claims made

by some members of the general public,

that PUNK IS DEAD²

Documenting Punk

The majority of popular literature on punk rock prior to the mid-1990s was either severely wide of the mark, out of date, inaccurate or just *plain wrong*. Punk has been portrayed as a politically inert subculture, dead in the water by the late 1970s; a *violent* subculture; or as a legend constituted by famous bands with very little of interest musically beyond them. Such representations are seriously flawed. They suggest that this 'subculture' has had next to nothing to present as a legacy.

In October 2000 I carried out an Amazon.co.uk literature search with the initial keyword 'punk'. The result of around 200 books was hardly interesting or inspiring.

² Crass (2004:275)

The overarching line of interpretation was of punk as a youth culture that belonged to the 1970s and 1980s. The majority of these books suggested that new-romanticism and new-wave were the *de rigueur* choices of youth subculture for the nation's youth in what they call the post-punk-period. Where were the voices from both myself and my peers whose life experience of punk has occurred during the 1980s and 1990s? Subsequent generations inspired by the first punks, created extensive political, sub- and countercultural activities post-1977 and these activities are largely missing from such accounts. They have been *written out* of history. All the experiences, bands and people simply did not exist, according to the literature. From this exploration into the realm of popular and academic publishing on punk, I proceeded to investigate the recent literature available from internet bookshops.

A repeat search of Amazon.co.uk during September 2004, with the same keyword search revealed 418 entries and an expanding literature the assessment of which in its entirety is beyond the scope of the present chapter. The literature has clearly mushroomed, but is there any improvement on the earlier work and, moreover, is it of particular contextual relevance to my ethnographic subjects? In what follows I will illustrate my thesis by suggesting that a large number of these books *exclude* a central feature of punk culture, that of its day-to-day audience and its day-to-day participants.

The chapter is set out in three sections. Firstly, I shall present a general overview of popular literature on punk rock. Secondly, the theoretical literature of subcultural research will be critically outlined, staking a claim for my own work as an improvement on past and present subcultural research. Finally, I shall examine the work of what I call the punkademic: those academics who chose the punk scenes for examination and analysis. I shall survey both books and journal articles from the last twenty-five years.

The popular literature on punk is broad, ranging from instruction manuals on punk and aerobics (Mancini & Jasper, 2004); through cookbooks (McGuirk, 2004); punk biographies (Gray, 2001; True, 2002; McNeil & McCain, 1996; Cohen, 2001 Parker, 1998; Paytress, 2003); punk autobiographies (Lydon & Zimmerman, 1994; Valentine, 2002; Ramone and Kofman, 1997); punk fiction (Spreecher, 1994; Hister, 2000; Sheppard, 2001; King 2001); punk concert posters and artwork (Turcotte, 1999; Vaucher, 1999); to punk photo-journals (Belsito & Davis, 1983; Connolly et al 1988; Piper, 1997; Stevenson & Stevenson, 1999; Gruen, 2001; Pasanen, 2001; Mitsuru 2003). These select titles, amongst many others, cover some of the key areas of punk's self-documentation. However, with the exception of punk fiction, the everyday practice of punk is simply overlooked.

The books written on 1970s punk were one of the catalysts for the present research. The vast majority of these concentrate on a set period of time in either England or the US (West, 1982; Gibbs, 1995; Vale 1995, 1996; McNeil & McCain, 1996) with the chief magnets of attention being The Sex Pistols (Vermorel & Vermorel, 1978; Stevenson, 1978; Monk & Gutterman, 1990; Savage, 1991; Heylin, 1998; Burgess & Parker, 1999) or The Clash (Green and Barker, 1997, Gray, 2001; Topping, 2003; Parker, 2003; D' Ambrosio, 2004, Needs, 2004)³. Whilst these books provide minute biographical details of what are considered two early, key bands, this is presented at the cost of the wider subcultural context. Literature on the 'classic period' offers a small advancement on this position, covering bands, fashion, media, venues record labels and fanzines (Burchill & Parsons 1978; Palmer, 1981; Marcus, 1993, 1994; Kelly, 1996; Gibbs, 1996; Perry, 2000; Nolan 2001, Colegrave & Sullivan 2001).

³ There are also a number of biographies of the other punk bands of this period and beyond: The Jam, Willmott (2003); Siouxsie and the Banshees, Paytrees (2003); The Stranglers, Cornwell and Drury (2001) to name a small number.

However, what this work seeks to do is reify the punk in terms of a period, a 'classic era' and accompanying fixed or unitary mind-set. This period is set in memorial stone. At each of the subsequent anniversaries (10, 15, 20, Jubilee), old bands are dragged back into the media spotlight and their leaders questioned by media pundits on what it was like to be involved in this classic era? Kelly reflects this view in the introduction to his edited book, *Punk Legends*:

"Gosh, Uncle Danny, what did you do in the punk rock wars?" With each passing year it gets harder and harder to believe that it all really happened, never mind to remember what you saw and heard, to work out what it all meant (1996:5)

To concentrate on that small number of either New York or London bands in a small span of time, and transform them into upper-case 'Legends', is to entirely miss the point. The legacy of punk seems to have largely ignored by the writers mentioned this far. Colegrave and Sullivan (2001) insist that punk is still required but completely fail to recognise that it *never* went away. It just left the well-lit shores of the major record labels for most of the 80s (See Glasper, 2004). They note:

Most of the people that helped us with this book believe that the attitude of punk is even more relevant to today's bland society than it was 25 years ago, and it is time for that movement to arise. It is possible that the current renewed interest in punk is tacit acknowledgement that today's establishment has even more control over youngsters. This control is more sophisticated than in 1976, but perhaps more effective. Kids are passive consumers of media and pre-packaged music ...The media style magazines and the music and fashion industries have designer-labeled and "individualised" for the masses every possible trend to ensure there is no more DiY style or music to interfere with the serious business of catering to the youth market. (2001:384)

From this perspective DiY punk never happened, my subjects DiY projects were not mentioned, only sugar-coated, sold-out media celebrities exist for passive kids. The hierarchical pop music culture that punk set about to overthrow, along with the pompous fame-inflated rock star, have been overlooked. The irony of popular punk literature is its insistence on the culture of the punk celebrity.

Such arrogantly titled books as Gibbs (1996) *Destroy: The Definitive Guide to Punk Rock*, through its rhetorical use of *definitive*, simultaneously bars any fresh

subcultural innovation and reifies the legend status of the punk godfathers. Again the literature is saddled with the same old spread of classic bands.

2002 celebrated punk's first Jubilee alongside HRH's golden event. This passed with a number of 'safe' punk events and no significant insult aimed at HRH. The papers had altered in attitude from their alarmist 1970s scaremongering that established UK punk as a threat to the moral order. Twenty-five years later they were full of mostly cockle-warming, nostalgic views of *the* 'punk years'. They commemorated what was considered to be a short-lived subculture. *The Guardian* (28/05/02) ran an article, 'Face It Punk Was Rubbish', ignoring all the bands that had arisen since punk's origins, focusing solely on acts popular during the alleged heyday of 1976-79. Mullholland, in *The Independent* (31/05/02), began his article 'After the Anarchy' stating 'punk is dead'. He promptly endorsed the claim that new-wave was the genre that had inherited punk ethics. During the actual 'jubilee' period, fresh interest was inspired in the punk 'era': much of it concentrated on John Lydon's subsequent career developments over the last two decades or predictably romanticised *that* era and concentrated on *those* bands and those important *people*, the pioneers and celebrities of punk⁴. Old interviews were reprinted with detailed inspections of the 'key' bands of the period. The legacy was further enshrined to the status of a historical subculture worthy of a permanent display at the London Victoria and Albert Museum. From surveying this literature you could easily be convinced that punk is actually dead. It was not until the mid-1990s that this imbalance was beginning to be redressed. Predictably I have not been alone in my criticisms. Slowly but surely there has been a steady set of biographies published from participants in UK's punk legacy. I shall investigate these books shortly.

⁴ See the 'punk jubilee' specials of 2002 detailed in the bibliography.

The exception to the amount of useless popular literature regarding punk and its 'jubilee' was a number of small articles hinting that there *may* have been some punk subcultural activity beyond the punk years. Just possibly, the Dodo was not dead. The most notable exception was Glasper (2002) in *Terrorizer Magazine* who provided a short testimonial to the street punk and anarcho punk genres. He has since written the excellent *Burning Britain* that details the street-punk genre of post 1977 UK punk⁵. This is a detailed geographical discography and oral history of second wave punk bands across the UK. Presented from the perspective of those bands inspired by what Glasper describes as the first-wave of punk, he demonstrates the country-wide set of bands that occurred in the early 1980s. Glasper's 'second wave of punk' subjects provide a very telling and informative insight into the political and social struggles against Thatcherism, a stark contrast to the privileged status a number of the first wave bands had achieved (2004:8). As most of the band members were unemployed, anger and frustration were voiced via the inherited and inspired DiY ethic to the DiY punk record, many of which were distributed through the early independent distribution company, Rough Trade. Glasper documents hundreds of records released in this way. This ethic allowed numerous unemployed and impoverished young people to articulate their lives to those in similar contexts. As one of Glasper's interviewees stated:

The second wave of punks were the kids who like ourselves had missed out on punk the first time around, who were less pretentious and proud to be punk for the youth culture side of it. The climate of the time included football terrace culture and teenage rebellion against outraged parents (Gritton, in Glasper: 2004:8).

Glasper brackets off the political aspect of punk's legacy, the anarchist inheritance of punk heralded through the inspirational activities of the band Crass: anarcho punk. Rimbaud (1998), former drummer of the band, offered an excellent and informative

⁵ This book only deals with the British street punk genre. He plans to write an anarcho punk book in a similar vein for 2005. See also Joynson (2001) for an annotated and prolific punk discography

insight that chimes with the testimonies and actions of the participants of this study. Indeed Crass, inspired by the actions of the Sex Pistols and the Clash, championed the DiY ethic through their countercultural roots of Stonehenge and communal living in the early 1970s. Crass took the DiY scene into the anarchist political realm and transformed it into street protest, non-violent direct action and animal rights action (see Gordon, 1995, McKay, 1996; c3; Unterberger, 2000). As Rimbaud put it:

Torn sweat-shirts had become 'de rigueur'. Safety-pin jewellery was radical chic. There was still talk of revolution, but it was from the seats of limousines and the safety of armoured minds, empty rhetoric bouncing around the steel and glass offices of the new glitterati. Bacardi and bullshit. Well, we'd seen through the con. There was a whole new generation of dissenters out on the streets, and if we'd have been waiting for orders from general Rotten, we'd realised the mistake. This time we were on our own....It was the first wave punks that had become velvet zippies, it was up to us to put the record straight. We weren't going to be made into another set of market-place victims. This time we were going to make it work. (1998:76-7)

Rimbaud documents what was the beginning in earnest of a politicised DiY punk that began with the actions of Crass. This has a firm foothold and legacy in the actions and practice of some of the participants of this study. It presents an alternative to what Rimbaud considered 'bought-out' punk. I will make much of this argument throughout the thesis.

Finally, Mudrian (2004) offers an excellent insight into the post-1984 legacy of anarcho-punk that became known as Britcore. Following the now tested method of oral history, Mudrian offers an insight into the beginnings of the subgenres of grindcore and death metal; both had links to the DiY ethic and the anarcho punk critique. Perhaps the most valuable insight that Mudrian establishes, alongside the John Peel Show, is the DiY practice of tape-trading as central to the crystallisation and formation of new and separate DiY musical forms and genres⁶.

In terms of punk's American counterpart, hardcore, Mudrian also notes the connections between the two scenes in the mid-1980s established chiefly through tape

⁶ See also Marshall (2003) for an excellent account of tape traders and bootleg collectors

trading and its associated correspondence. Through such trades and the subsequent contacts made, American hardcore became a related genre influence on the British punk scene from the early eighties onwards. There are a number of interesting books written from the point of view of band members (Snowden & Leonard, 1997; Bessey *et al*, 1999; Azerrad, 2001; Spitz & Mullen, 2001; Sinker, 2001; Mullen *et al*, 2002, Keithley, 2003). They present the most detailed and informative contextual backdrop to the present work. In similar terms to *Glasper*, *Blush* presents an overview of American Hardcore from the perspective of the band and DiY label involved from 1980-86. A broad spectrum of US DiY hardcore punk is considered in depth with oral history interviews with the band members of the American hardcore scene. *Blush* introduces the DiY punk ethic, and uses the whole geographical spectrum of hardcore bands and labels to illustrate the successes and frustrations of this project. He summarises the need for a DiY ethic in hardcore punk. American hardcore was predictably out of step with the tastes of the early 1980s American music business:

Hardcore was one of the few forms on which the major labels were unwilling or unable to capitalise. Coke snorting A&R types refused to take the shit seriously. Bands didn't work through typical channels. With hardcore outfits coming from such a self-destructive underground, who were labels gonna sign? Four belligerent kids who'd most likely wind up in a mental hospital or jail? (2001:275-6)

Unlike the UK where the majors were fighting with each other to sign up punk bands to save a record industry in decline (see Laing, 1985), US hardcore largely kept the major labels at bay through their perceived musical ineptitude and unmarketability until the mid 1980s. *Blush* takes the view that those bands appearing after 1986 are subcultural impostors, taking up the well-trodden, subcultural dualism of the authentic/inauthentic, original era/selling-out in the same vein as Rimbaud's 'first-wave' UK punks. I shall examine this in detail in chapter four. *Blush* offers his view on hardcore's contemporary renaissance:

As for the current hardcore renaissance, I don't wanna deny the legitimacy of today's teen angst. I just feel like, "Yo, make your own fucking music! Why ape the music of my salad days?" I can relate to those old Jazz or Blues cats who played back when it was all about innovation rather than formula, and who now see a bunch of complacent, umpteenth generation beneficiaries claiming the forms as their own. Face it, hardcore ain't the same anymore, it can still make powerful music, but it's an over with art form. It's relatively easy to be into now but back then it was an entirely different story. (2001:10)

Such a renaissance, for the UK, happened around the time Blush insists was the period when US hardcore was over. I shall return to the imposition of endpoints and their relation to subcultural authenticity below. A central intention of this study is to dissolve such subcultural endpoints and *instead* examine the *value* of the experience of the participants *regardless* of whatever punk 'golden age' they claimed they were participants of. A shortcoming of Blush's work is his avoidance of the second wave of straight edge hardcore. While he considers the first wave of this genre, its legacy remains overlooked. I recommend Lahickey (1997) for a robust account of the late eighties positive hardcore movement detailed through the voices of the bands and record labels.

Anderson and Jenkins (2001) provide a detailed overview of the Washington DC scene with a heavy emphasis on the countercultural aspects of DiY punk. Most of the voices stem from band members, along with Anderson's autobiographical accounts of his experiences and the voices of core members of the scene. Absent from the account are the daily activities involving the daily reproduction of a DiY scene and how this is achieved. There is a specific rhetorical purpose to this book. DiY is presented as *the* authentic route, par excellence, with no consideration of how and in what specific ways this is achieved: the everyday is left off-limits. In spite of such criticisms, this and Blush's work provide, together, very detailed and valuable accounts of US DiY hardcore.

The literature on DiY punk and hardcore is a significant improvement when set against the misguided, stubborn, and mostly elitist literature on the 'classic' punk era. The major criticism of the collective body of work thus far is its over-reliance on *the musician, manager, venue, label or source close to the band* as the harbingers of authentic experience. The casualty of all this attention is the mundane experience of those *not* centrally involved as band members, *yet* performing tasks *central* to DiY punk's reproduction. There is little detail of the wider context: how do participants get into punk, what do they do in it and how do they leave? More importantly, there is little said of how such participants present themselves as authentic. To rectify this imbalance and examine how and in what ways the dilemmatic authenticity of DiY punk is achieved is one of the central purposes of this thesis.

Thus far I have presented a punk literature devoid of the everyday account. This is certainly not the case as is evident in the voluminous literature of fanzines exclusive to the punk scenes. The DiY ethic of self-expression has an equal foothold in the punk fanzine that has held sway as an individual form of punk expression since the mid 1970s (Perry 2000; Duncombe 1998; Sabin & Triggs, 2002). Assessment of the sheer number of punk fanzines and their content is way beyond the scope of the present work. US titles *Flipside*, *Maximum Rock n Roll*, *Heart AttaCk* [sic], *Punk-Planet* and *Hit-List*; UK titles such as *Raisin' Hell*, *Punk Shocker*, *Fracture* and *Reason To Believe*, with the exception of the last listed, *RTB*, (which refuses columns) all contained columns and letters sections in which expression and points of view are articulated. Yet, such writing still brackets-off the daily experience in a sequential order. Such columns provide limited explanatory power of the everyday worlds of DiY punk. The intention of this work is to illuminate such life worlds.

Theorising Punk

The need for an account of everyday DiY punk in order to situate my subjects in 2001 has been established. I have outlined how the majority of punk literature is inadequate and ignores the lives and legacies of those who entered the various related subcultures in the 80s, 90s and 2000s. Punk has not escaped academic scrutiny. It is my intention in this section to situate punk in the existing cultural studies literature and the first wave of subcultural theory to establish why my particular work presents itself as a significant advancement. Firstly, I shall deal with theory that does not directly mention or precedes punk, yet is relevant to the aims of the present work as an explanatory tool. Secondly, I shall focus attention upon the literature of cultural studies incorporating a consideration of sub- and countercultures and subcultural endpoints. Finally, I shall review the academic punk literature and journal articles that specifically address related areas of punk culture that are discussed in this thesis.

Totalities and Ethnographies

The early locus classicus on selling-out is Adorno and Horkheimer (1944). Their key assertion is that the artistic actions and aspirations of artists were always already part of the capitalist culture industry. The stranglehold of capitalism spelt certain doom for all previously subversive art forms and radical spaces. Specifically, the profit motive siphons the critical essence, transforming it from subversion into a tamed commodified form. It is bought-out for the market. As a consequence, subversive culture becomes mass-produced, uniform, 'standardised' and 'pseudo individualised' (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1995: 155). The only potential form of subversion is evident in previous bourgeois art forms that demand levels of understanding far beyond the reach of the masses. Potentially subversive musical art forms such as jazz are dismissed by Adorno (1941). He stated that the rhythms of jazz replicate the

mechanised production system: they have no subversive quality to them (see Held, 1980: 99-105). Such theory has been described as 'totalising' (Jay, 1973) and over-pessimistic (Rojek, 1995:18). Adorno and Horkheimer's work is enormously subtle, yet the broad argument is one of the commodification and negation of subversive space. Their thesis overlooks discussion of any original spaces of subversive activity. Hebdige (1979, 1988) in the first instance argues that punk had its subversion commodified in this way before later suggesting that the codes of the culture industry have multiple meanings and are potentially subverted by the consumer. However, in spite of this recognition of potential subversion, there is little discussion offered of where such spaces empirically occur. A significant improvement on this theory is offered by Bey (1985), who introduces the term Temporary Autonomous Zone (hereafter TAZ). Here spaces are identified within a commodified culture in which subversive action may be enacted. Bey's term is however somewhat restrictive for the purpose of the present work. The term TAZ is accurate for discussion of political protests, warehouse raves, sit ins and as I shall discuss in Chapter 7, front room gigs, yet the autonomous spaces I visited such as the 1in12 have been in existence for over 20 years so it is stretching the definition to label them as temporary. Instead, I offer the revised term autonomous zone with particular reference to subcultural spaces that attempt to exist outside the culture industry⁷.

The cultural critic, Richard Hoggart (1957) practically continued the theoretical trajectory of Adorno & Horkheimer (1944). He was equally influenced by the work of F.R Leavis (1930) and Q.D Leavis (1932) that also contained the conservative view of the past which took the view of classic literature as character-building and popular literature as slovenly, part of low culture and unworthy of study. In his 1950s Leeds

⁷ O'Connor (1999, 2003a) also makes the same distinction between temporary autonomous zones and autonomous zones.

auto-ethnography, Hoggart's argument was that the commodification of culture reduced the once self-produced and autonomous British working class culture of the early 20thC to an administered and commodified culture. It is these arguments that hark back to a real and authentic past of particular interest to the present work. Such romantic views of a 'golden past' tend to represent the present as inauthentic and uncritical. The above quotation from Blush (2001) with reference to the golden age of US hardcore and anything beyond it as fake is an example of these arguments.

To present the *past* as authentic and aspects of the *present* culture as inauthentic is only one dimension of this argument. The dualism can occur along the lines of a dilemmatic authenticity *within* a particular epochal music scene. Becker's (1963) pioneering ethnography of marijuana users and jazz musicians is an early illustration of how this occurs. My own work is indebted to his observations relating to the concepts of authenticity and selling-out in the jazz musician culture. Whilst jazz musicians viewed themselves as 'hip' and 'outsiders' against the wider society, they developed their own deviant subculture with its own values and norms:

Where people who engage in deviant activities have the opportunity to interact with one another they are likely to develop a culture built around the problems rising out of the differences between the definition of what they do and the definition held by other members of the society. They develop perspectives on themselves and their deviant activities and on their relations with other members of the society (1964: 81).

Outsiders were commonly referred to by jazz musicians as 'squares': those deemed not to understand or even comprehend the special talents and world understandings the hipsters possessed. Somewhat confusingly, in Becker's work this term also operated as a description of how the jazz musicians authenticated themselves *within* their subculture. Square musicians were equally viewed as sold-out and held responsible for undermining the hip musician's artistic integrity and authenticity through their control of mainstream tastes from inside the deviant culture.

Outside the subculture of the musician, the square exerts personal choice over which concerts and music they listen to, in turn undermining the authentic position of the hipsters. The hip jazz musician experienced a difficult position and this 'lies in the fact that the square is in a position to get his [sic] way: if he does not like the kind of music played he does not pay to hear it a second time' (ibid). Through a lack of understanding of jazz culture, the square controlled the means of support jazz musicians relied upon to survive: income through audience revenue. This placed pressure on the musician to play 'inauthentic' mainstream music to cater to the tastes of the squares as this provides a reasonable income for the jazz musician. Being forced to play inauthentic music (swing and big band), Becker argued, placed the jazz musician at the centre of a difficult dilemma: to 'go commercial' or to remain authentic. (ibid: 92) The lure of going commercial hinged on survival need. The freedom of expression in jazz musicianship offered, for musicians and audiences, a chance of creativity but this was compromised through the need to provide revenue in order to survive. Going commercial alienated the jazz musician who is forced to sell out:

If you want to make any money you gotta' please the squares. They're the ones that pay the bills, and you gotta' play for them. A good musician can't get a fucking job. You gotta' play a bunch of shit. But what the fuck, let's face it, I want to live good. I want to make some money; I want a car, you know how long can you fight it? (ibid: 92)

This compromise, Becker argues, results in some musicians refusing any contact with the squares and attempting to remain authentic at all costs. From this position they were able to aim political comment at wider society and its square culture. One group, the XAvenue Boys, totally rejected American society with song titles like 'If you Don't Like My Queer Ways You Can Kiss My Fucking Ass' (ibid: 98) and adopted 'extreme artistic and social attitudes' (ibid). Likewise Becker describes a similar political section of musicians of the North Clark Street area of Chicago. In a

statement that reminds one of anarcho punk, this group of musicians attempted to disconnect from the commercial world of swing and American culture:

They were unremittingly critical of both business and labour, disillusioned with the economic structure, and cynical about the political process and contemporary political parties. Religion and marriage were rejected completely, as were American popular and serious culture, and their reading was confined solely to the more esoteric avante garde writers and philosophers (ibid).

However, it was increasingly difficult to maintain such attitudes and remain a musician. Becker observed that cliques began to congeal where networks of professional musicians located work for each other as they gradually sold-out. Adorno and Horkheimer's argument is upheld: the wide systemic pressure to survive places the jazz musician in a compromised position. Musicians who attempted to remain authentic experienced pressure from immediate family and poverty due to the lack of musical employment and subsequent income:

The man who chooses to ignore commercial pressures finds himself effectively barred from moving up to jobs of greater prestige and income, and from membership in those cliques which would provide him with the security and the opportunity for such mobility. Few men are willing or able to take such an extreme position; most compromise to some degree (ibid: 111).

From this position Becker was able to neatly articulate how and in what specific ways the authenticity of jazz culture and authenticity was undermined by commercial pressure.

Beckers' ethnographic account of jazz musicians represents significant historical antecedents to punk and hardcore DiY cultural production and reflects a number of concerns of the present work. There are two key similarities. Firstly, Becker highlighted an early awareness of the need to retain authenticity and of the consequences and dilemmas of 'selling out' in the face of social pressure, with the resultant consequence of burnout: burnout and selling out are issues I shall focus on in chapter eight and nine.

Secondly, he illuminated how critique and creativity clustered around the identification of authenticity, although the examples cited above demonstrate how difficult it was to continue such a position against the mainstream when the latter firmly held the purse strings of survival: the well-paid gig.

Perhaps the most important critical connection between Becker's jazz musicians and my own work on UK DiY punk scenes is the effort to create free space in which implicit critique of the culture industry and its efforts at catering for mass culture can be achieved. Becker's dissection of the dilemmas of the authentic jazz musician struggling in the face of external pressures remains a key source of reference. Aside from the wider historical settings, the point of departure is that DiY punk raises a sustained and vehement attack on the culture industry through both political action and musical/aesthetic statements.

The BCCCS: Subcultures and Countercultures

From the early 1960s, under the guidance of Hoggart and Hall, the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (hereafter BCCCS) shaped a new academic discipline geared towards the detailed study of power relations, commodities, aesthetics and the daily practices of everyday culture (During, 1993; Storey, 2003). From the 1970s onwards the Centre shifted focus to the study and explanation of youth subcultures, producing two key studies of direct relevance to this thesis (Clarke & Jefferson, 1978; Hebdige, 1979). Clarke and Jefferson presented an edited reader based around the Centre's theoretical subcultural model. Overall, a Marxist class-based explanation, informed by the writings of Gramsci (1973) and the concept of hegemony, attempted to explain why youth subcultures exist. Here the authors note:

Gramsci used the term 'hegemony' to refer to the moment when a ruling class is able, not only to coerce a subordinate class to conform to its interests, but to exert a 'hegemony' or 'total social authority' over subordinate classes. This involves the exercise of a special

kind of power – the power to frame alternatives and contain opportunities, to win and shape consent, so that the granting of legitimacy to the dominant classes not only appears to be ‘spontaneous’ but natural and normal (1976:38).

According to the authors, the arrival of subcultures was a result of post World War Two affluence, consensus and embourgeoisement. Brake (1985) developed Cohen’s (1955) work on deviant subcultures by suggesting that they are a means of collective problem-solving:

Subcultures arise (then) as attempts to solve certain problems in the social structures, which are created by contradictions in the larger societies (Brake, 1985: 36).

The various solutions subcultures took towards wider systemic problems were dependent upon how and in what specific ways such individuals *negotiated* their class position in relation to other dominant or subordinate groups and could divide in three separate non-mutually exclusive ways: sub, counter or deviant. Punk rock can be described as the deviant subculture par excellence. From a BCCCS perspective sub- and countercultures arise out of the collective efforts of youth groups to actively provide an alternative identity to the dominant culture. While youth may predominate, neither sub- nor countercultures are the preserve of youth. Non-youth activities in this respect tended to be played down or ignored, though how the relatively elastic category of youth is defined is notoriously difficult.

A more significant criticism is that the BCCCS together with the literature on sub- and counter cultures were too theory-driven. With the exception of Willis (1978), the study of youth subcultures has been a theoretically driven practice with assumptions made on behalf of the participants. Their personal voices were subdued, if not gagged in the research. Though theoretical approaches are of value in broad explanatory terms, they offer little opportunity for examining and understanding the detailed nuances and subtleties of everyday subcultural life. It appears that subculturalists during the 1970s were understood through a series of theoretical understandings that

revealed more of the researcher than the subculturalist. Many valuable ethnographic opportunities were overlooked during this decade and subsequently lost. Theoretical models held sway as an explanatory tool of subcultures until the mid-1990s when ethnographic work very much in the tradition of Willis (1977, 1978) inaugurated a fresh set of subcultural studies. I will say more regarding how ethnography is a marked improvement on abstract theory in the following chapter.

A clear example of a theory-preoccupied hermeneutic is Hebdige (1979), one of the fledgling works on punk rock. For Hebdige, the control of the punk subculture was enacted in two specific ways. Firstly, in a similar vein to Cohen's (1980) work on moral panics, punk is controlled through denigration in the mass media (the ideological form) or through buying it out (the commodity form) in an Adornoesque manner so to manage control and negate subversive qualities (1979: 92-9). From Hebdige's point of view, it appears all too easy to negate a subculture. This portrays subculturalists as willing participants in their own fate. The present study will advance this position by asserting that DiY punk constitutes itself in opposition both to ideological and commodity forms. As I shall discuss at length the reaction and response from those who claim to be authentic DiY punk and hardcore cultures has been one of self-exclusion from the culture industry; the identity of the latter is constituted through such abstinence. In short, there is a deep-seated commitment to remain at an underground level where the term scene is more appropriate than subculture as both a general and specific descriptor that encompasses participants activities, an issue I will return to shortly.

The theoretical terms subculture and counterculture are, simultaneously, ideological and rhetorical and are useful as broad explanations of why punk occurred. Subcultures as defined by the BCCCS are working class and chiefly concerned with

such issues as clothing *style* and establishing a separate subcultural group identity and aesthetic: they have little to say directly in terms of political issues. Looking only at how people appear rather than also at what they actually do is obviously limited.

Alternatively, countercultures were described in middle-class terms and through the BCCCS as magical in its approach to problem-solving (Muggleton, 2000). To offer an equally neat definition, a counterculture is political as it proactively challenges what it views as structures of oppression. Countercultures present a utopian, revolutionary dream of replacing such structures with a new society or alternative formation geared towards human emancipation and freedom. The legacy of the actions of the 1960s counterculture feed directly on into the anarcho punks of the 1980s in their fight against the Cold War arms race and animal exploitation (Rimbaud, 1998). As I shall discuss below in relation to subcultural endpoints, and in chapter four, such historical goals inform both the ethics and practice of anarcho punk. While in many ways this definition seems appropriate, it tends to play down cross-class trafficking and, by emphasising its idealistic utopian aspirations, neglects the extent of more mundane practical achievements. Counterculture is clearly a slippery term that needs careful framing and contextualisation. Notions of counterculture instantly conjure up images of beat culture, student protest and disharmony during the late-1960s. There is a large body of literature that attempts to document and explain the main elements of this cultural moment (see e.g. Nuthall 1968; Roszak 1970; Douglas 1973; Musgrove, 1974; Foss and Larkin 1976; Eco 2000; Leech 1973). The most suitable working definition of this term is drawn from Musgrove (1973) who defines counterculture thus:

On the ideological level, a counterculture is a set of beliefs which radically reject the dominant culture of a society and prescribe a sectarian alternative. (1973: 9)

DiY cultural production fits with the above definition through its attempt to reject the dominant forms of entertainment and instead provide an alternative space to produce a critical, political stance in which authenticity can be maintained.

In terms of present-day countercultures, contemporary literature focuses on the visible elements of DiY culture such as road protesters, eco-activism and anti-capitalist/globalisation actions in addition to couching these in either rave culture or New Age travelling (Mckay, 1996, 1998; Bircham & Charlton, 2001; One Off Press, 2001; Hetherington, 2000). This literature, with the exception of its coverage of Crass, has screened out DiY punk events of the last two decades from its selective history. Though this has been rectified somewhat through the surfacing of insider punk literature during the last decade, as discussed above, academic countercultural accounts present the cultural legacy of punk rock as more or less barren.

Where counterculture has been subjected to academic scrutiny, George McKay is at the helm. *DiY Culture: Notes Towards an Intro* (1998) is one of the first and most important academic discussions of the concept of UK DiY culture. Whilst well rounded in its historical scope, the main problem with this text follows McKay's own admission that his attempt at charting DiY culture is 'too neat' (1998:2). Any account of such culture will have significant omissions to it. Where McKay succumbs to his own criticisms is his *wholesale* avoidance of punk DiY cultural production. *DiY Culture* produces sound historical coverage of the early antecedents of 80s and 90s protest and hippie culture, yet overlooks punk and hardcore DiY cultural production: it is awarded the blanket term, 'underground culture'⁸. The general narrative is a

⁸ This use of a this conceptual term 'underground culture' by McKay (1998) is indicative of the general lack of uniform conceptual clarity within subcultural and popular music studies. There are currently a plethora of terms ranging from the imprecise use of underground culture, resistance culture, community, subculture, scene and tribe etc. as general descriptors of these groups. This presents a conceptual confusion and the blurring of explanatory boundaries that are on the whole, empirically

reading of UK DiY culture firmly located in the practical, political form of New Age Travelling, direct action, eco-activism, squatting, road protest and underground rave cultures. This is supported through the writings of key activists in his edited volume. McKay has little time for discussion of the UK's DiY hardcore and punk networks that voice very similar concerns and sympathies and also raise their own political issues and campaigns. By drawing on Stephen Duncombe's (1997) critique of political activism as cultural production, McKay unwittingly throws the baby out with the bathwater. Duncombe's argument is that zine and underground culture is a catharsis, redirecting political energies into safe forms:

In my darker moments – I think that Zines and underground culture are not supposed to change anything. Maybe for all their ranting about subverting this and overthrowing that, zines are merely a form of political catharsis, and underground culture is meant only to be a rebellious haven in a heartless world. One of the cultural attributes of a cultural space like the underground is that it allows its participants to engage in a critique of mass society and to construct alternative models of creation, communication and community. But what happens if all this sound and fury stays safely within the confines of the cultural world? What then does it signify? (1997:190)

He then proceeds to note:

But since all of this [DiY cultural production] happens on a purely cultural plane. It has little real effect on the causes of alienation in the greater society. In fact, one could argue that underground culture sublimates anger that otherwise might be expressed in political action (ibid).

McKay proceeds to note that this is a misreading of DiY culture, arguing that today's British DiY activists 'are *more likely* to be voiced by invading [industrial polluters] offices and disrupting work, trashing the computers and throwing files out of the windows' (1998: 5, italics mine). This may well be the case, but McKay and Duncombe have *unnecessarily* separated DiY cultural production and DiY political activism. To portray the two worlds as separate reduces the scope of any work on DiY as they mutually coexist within certain genres of punk and hardcore. McKay's

unverified and wide of the mark. See Hesmondhalgh (2005) for an astute, critical account of such conceptual divergences. The present work conceptually uses the term subculture as an *overarching*, general descriptor of music cultures (including all punk sub-genres, members and associate activities) and 'scene' as the various local interpretations of subculture as *used* in vernacular terms by the study participants, interviewees and author. See pp.34, 43 & 227-8 below.

argument is that the free parties and rave events attended by subculturalists involved in DiY activism are the real and only, authentic UK DiY cultural production worthy of attention. This is only half of the picture. As I suggest in this thesis, DiY punk and hardcore at times operate within the same cultural space and share common political ground with direct action countercultures. In his earlier work, McKay (1996) introduces the work of Crass, yet fails to trace the influence and legacy of that band into contemporary DiY cultural production. Such an error, whilst introducing a silent endpoint into his work for DiY punk, serves as a convenient *distraction* from the punk legacy that has come to fruition in the UK. Overall, it seems that McKay has inadvertently overused the term counterculture as an explanatory tool. By hinting that DiY underground culture is a politically inert subculture, a safety valve and a carnivalesque sideshow distracting from the real, authentic business of halting capitalism's apocalyptic progress, McKay has inadvertently ignored the legacy of DiY UK punk.

I have identified gaps, weaknesses and flaws in the literature. As I suggested earlier, the definitions of sub- and counterculture are inadequate for the task as they are couched in a class-based theoretical imperialism. The broad assertion that subcultures are style-orientated and countercultures are motivated by political concerns is too stark, exclusive, and restrictive for the work presented here. For this I adopt subculture *only* as a wide, descriptive device. It is not employed in the present work for ideological and rhetorical effect and serves the conceptual purpose in what follows as a general *descriptor* of the plurality of punk cultures currently in existence. The term scene, as used by the author, participants and interviewees, is used to describe the various interpretations of punk throughout this thesis, a point I shall return to shortly. Secondly, contemporary work on countercultures is inadequate

because, with the notable exception of Crass, it has overlooked the post-1977 sphere of DiY cultural production. The present work will fill this gap.

Subcultural Endpoints

Popular culture and academic literature frequently use subcultural endpoints: that is, subcultural sell-by dates. The classic endpoint discussed above is 'punk-79' and the somewhat harsher message: 'punk is dead' (or has been 'dead' since 1979). Such devices either rhetorically permit the new, fresh, commodified subculture, oiling the wheels of fresh culture industry product, or neatly box it in as an easily-controlled, authentic historical document. This is problematic. Where does DiY culture start, never mind end? Pearson (1983) has disputed claims (such as those of the BCCCS above) that youth subcultures were chiefly post-war phenomena. Similar correctives have been made concerning the phenomena of moral panics. By establishing that deviant subcultures were visible in terms of distinct style and identity on the streets of London in the late 19th century, together with associated moral panics over street muggings, the ideal of both subcultural beginnings and endpoints has been effectively challenged.

Endpoints have been used across the literature as a method of closure, of bracketing-off subcultural activities beyond these dates. Here are a number of innocent examples of this practice in the literature on the counterculture. Glasper (2004) places UK street punk between 1980-4; Blush locates US hardcore from 1979-86. Mudrian (2004) is one of two exceptions to this in that he provides a constant narrative that *denies* an endpoint. Those who employ and stand by subcultural endpoints risk the embarrassing prospect of a return or reappearance of that culture. Clark (in Muggleton & Weinsierl, 2003) is also suspicious of endpoints and clearly echoes the concerns of the present work stating that 'punk faked its own death' to avoid the

incessant commodification of the culture industry. The author also outlines in the broadest of terms the legacy of DiY and political actions enacted under the punk banner since the first punk obituaries were written. As I have argued elsewhere (1995), endpoints as a continual feature of writings on subcultures place an implicit restriction on future commentaries. The most salient work cited by myself and McKay is Elizabeth Nelson's (1989) study of the underground countercultural press in England. Nelson is one of the key producers of the thesis that the counterculture had failed in its aims by the beginning of the early 1970s. Indeed throughout this work one is constantly reminded of this 'fact' as she keenly commits her version of the failed counterculture to a chapter of history. In the closing statements of her book she notes:

The counterculture may be 'part of history' but it may someday inspire and guide an more successful wave of Anarchist refusal. (1989:143)

This is misguided and plain wrong. It both ignores and denies the rich countercultural legacy beyond 1973 (though she is wary of the totality of her initial statement). McKay goes to great lengths to demonstrate that such a decline was definitely not the case. He maps the keen countercultural legacy and its continuities in the UK, outlining on his way free festivals, Albion fairs, New Age Travellers, Crass, rave cultures, direct action cultures, eco warriors and road protestors (1996:i). Nelson is clearly guilty of a short-sighted and restricted view of countercultural activity and practice. However, as I have noted above, McKay also concentrates his work on political forms of counterculture that embrace direct action and lifestyle politics. In spite of his fairly comprehensive chapter on Crass, there is no hint of how their actions inspired others to embark upon similar projects. The anarchist 1in 12 club scene discussed in the present work is a highly pertinent example of such projects.

Crass themselves placed an endpoint of 1984 on their activities. This was the year they ceased to exist as a band, but it did not represent the endpoint of all endpoints.

The subcultural endpoint is an event I dispense with in the present work. It is certainly myopic to assume that a genre, practice, scene or tradition will not resurface in one form or another. The endpoint also serves the discourse of the authentic punk. Authentic punks present themselves as such by hailing their own subcultural experience as central to a scene. Those subcultural activities which occur beyond 'the original' are deemed to be inauthentic. I shall consider such issues in depth in chapter six.

Post Subcultures?

The theoretical imperialism and ethnographic poverty of the early work on subcultures has been redressed over the past decade. In tandem with the oral histories of punk I reviewed above, a body of literature has emerged detailing the quotidian activities of subcultural scene groupings. Space restricts detailed discussion of these works although taken together this body of literature offers a substantial revision to the BCCCS and subsequent work.

The catalyst for this revision was the explosion of rave culture around 1987 which heralded new academic interest in subcultural activities (Redhead, 1990, 1993, 1997; Russell, 1991; Thornton 1995). The most interesting tangent to the present study is Thornton's work ethnographic work on clubcultures. Through the introduction of Bourdieu in her ethnographic methodology, she argues that those involved in clubculture have to keep pace with the latest dance releases and associate 'cool' genre terms in order to remain 'hip' (1995:115). I have much to say in relation to how punk participants remain putatively authentic and amass the cultural apparatus to do so.

The point of departure between Thornton's work and my own is one that I will pay more attention to when I discuss how the use of scene knowledge is displayed both in the entrance to, and the practice of, DiY punk. Beyond rave culture, post-subculturalist research has concentrated on New Age travellers (Hetherington, 2000); bikers, (McDonald-Walker, 2000); and Goths, (Hodkinson, 2002). Hodkinson's work on goth subculture displays certain tangents with the present study. Primarily his study is yet another testimony to the plurality of subcultures occurring within the broad umbrella of punk from the 1980s onwards and provides support of my use of the term subculture as a general descriptor of a plurality of scenes. Through his insider status ethnographic study, Hodkinson demonstrated what it is to be involved in the goth subculture communicates both locally and beyond (Hannerz, 1993). There is also some discussion of the insider and outsider and this is the point of departure. Hodkinson's interest lies in the styles of the genres as expressed in clothing and musical style and how these are enacted within the different goth scene localities of the UK. He has little discussion of the specific ways goth scenes use genres to present themselves as authentic core members within their culture.

Overall, post-subcultural writers have presented a set of studies that, whilst ethnographically driven, hark back to the old, familiar issue of clothing and genre style. Earlier I noted that Hebdige (1979) produced one of the first academic explanations of punk rock. He made much of the stylistic 'bricolage' (see Levi-Strauss, 1962) the early punks displayed in the late seventies through their 'cut and paste' dress techniques. He commentates on the use of the bin liner and the dog collar as being blessed with fresh subversive meaning by the punks (1979:107). This encouraged early commentary to become overly concerned the politics of style in ways divorced from the underlying ethics and actions of the 1970s punks within an

economic and political context. Twenty one years later Muggleton (2000, 2003) has convincingly set the scene for a group of writers operating under the broad term of post-subcultural theory that contest such modernist theorists as Hebdige. This theory operates in tandem with the postmodern theoretical concerns of the 1980s and 1990s, with a consequent emphasis on a collapse of stylistic barriers within and between youth subcultures. All the distinctive lines have (apparently) evaporated. The over-determinist modernist explanations of the BCCCS that operated with these distinctions are therefore redundant. Or are they? In his concluding chapter, Muggleton (2000) sees a modernist element residual in subcultural style.

The post-subculturalists' over-concentration on style is in keeping with postmodernist accounts of freedom and autonomy⁹. Their accounts are surface-based. What all of the above studies overlook is a consistent and coherent set of subcultural ethics. Whilst post-subculturalists celebrate style, this is couched in an administered culture under the control of Adorno and Horkheimer's (1944) culture industry. My own study pays virtually no attention to the examination of clothing style, instead examining how DiY punks create a moral alternative to monopoly control over culture in their autonomous zones and attempt to reproduce and advance it on a daily basis.

From a DiY punk perspective to remain outside of the culture industry is to remain authentic. It has, from the point of view of the people interviewed for this book, very little to do with their trouser style and much more to do with their ethical philosophy. Whilst I wholly support the return of the ethnographic method to study subcultures in response to theoretical over-determinism, I feel that both the methods of the BCCCS

⁹ There has also been a poststructuralist investigation into style and authenticity that proves to be as frustrating as the over-theorisation of the BCCCS. See Widdicombe and Woofitt (1990, 1995).

and the postmodernist postsubculturalists are of *limited* value in relation to the present work. I want to neither to draw heavily upon theory as an explanatory tool, nor to indulge in hermeneutically flamboyant explanations of style. I want instead to offer a grounded theory approach to the ways in which DIY punk reproduces itself within an ethical framework.

The Punkademic

Lovatt and Purkiss (1996) observed a shift in the ages of those academics who choose to study subcultures (Muggleton, 2000: 4). These academics were younger and already involved in the subcultures they wished to study. Many of these writers simply did not agree with the existing subcultural literature. As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, this is *exactly* the scenario that inspired the present work. The 'ill fit' between theory and practice is being addressed by insiders. Muggleton states:

This situation is producing a new cohort of academic taste makers for whom the deficiencies of established theories are likely to be thrown into sharp relief by their own personal experiences as, say, punks or clubbers. (200:4)

At the Wolverhampton University 'No Future' conference September 2001, on the 25th anniversary of the Sex Pistols gig at the London Hundred Club, I gave a paper on DiY punk. The term banded around the conference to describe the delegates was 'punkademic.' The recent glut in academic literature on punk, I suspect, is due in part to the scenario that Muggleton *et al* illuminate. Let us put this term to work and examine some punkademic literature.

In tandem with the popular punk literature, the equal expansion in academic punk literature and journal articles produced by punks or those who claim to be ex-punks, has expanded from the mid-1980s onwards and deals with a variety of issues that usually reflect the academic's own subcultural experiences. Space restricts full

discussion of these works but the broad frameworks are as follows. Topics of concern to punkademics are: the origins and meaning of punk and its genres (Laing, 1985; Home; 1995); social class and rhetoric (Simonelli, 2002); punk and censorship (Kennedy, 1990); punk and literature (Sabin, 1999); American hardcore and style (Willis, 1993); postmodern theory and punk (Davies (1996); and hardcore punk dancing (Tsitsos, 1999).

The key punkademics directly relevant to this thesis are O'Hara (1995); Leblanc (2001); and O'Connor (1999, 2002a, 2002b, 2003a) in addition to some of the ethnographic work done on punk culture I reserve for discussion below. In *The Philosophy of Punk: More Than Noise*, O'Hara offers a passionate and informative overview of the US punk and hardcore scenes from the mid-80s onwards whilst also presenting a basic insight into the world of American DiY punk. Insider insights are provided into the ethical philosophy of the scene a term I shall deal with shortly. The majority of this work is either derived from interviews performed by the author or from various fanzines of that period. What O'Hara's work does specifically is serve as a testimony to the long-overlooked legacy of DiY punk. Where he tends to falter is though a fixed definition of the ethical framework. His study lacks ethnographic depth, short of his membership in a punk scene but is useful in tandem with the titles I mentioned above. He is descriptive of the ethics of punk yet fails to account for *how* they function in participant terms, how they used to castigate certain punks as 'sell-outs' whilst reflexively presenting the accuser as 'authentic'. This is the dimension absent from the works that I have thus far described. There is an implicit irony in punk that requires detailed examination in order to supply a critical context to DiY punk rock. I shall say more of this in chapter five.

Through an ethnographic study of punk girls Leblanc (2001) presents a valuable and astute picture of a male-dominated subculture, stating that on average males outnumber females three to two (2001:107). In terms of ethics and ethnography, her study has many features in common with the present work in that there are biographical accounts of how the author came to be a punk and how the ethics became a source of liberation and empowerment. My own work advances hers in ethical terms by offering an examination of how a young person becomes a knowing ethical practitioner of punk values and how these eventually transpose them into an authentic, core member.

The theme of entrance in a punk scene is also mentioned in an earlier study by Baron (1989) in an ethnographic study of Canadian street punks. It utilises an eclectic mix of quantitative methods, BCCCS subcultural work and grounded theory, yet offers a rather clumsy mix in which its findings, far from a grounded theory, present little advance on the existing BCCCS conclusions of subculturalists as ‘magical’ problem-solvers. (1989: 311). Where the work is of value is in its suggestions for more ethnographic work in punk and hardcore scenes and also that it illuminates the work beyond the band member and towards the scene participant. The most central value was how political issues were read through their punk ethics, although the squeezing of his subjects into quantitative social class categories diluted the ethnographic nuances of what the punks actually did on a daily basis. The temporal structure of the working day is largely absent from all of the literature. Nothing has been written about what constitutes daytime activity for DiY punks. I hope to redress this balance with an examination of the daily practice of DiY and its consequences on subcultural membership in chapter four.

A number of articles have been written about American hardcore and politics. Goldthorpe (1992) made some interesting links between UK anarcho punk and US hardcore and protest cultures, yet offered little ethnographic detail and succumbed to the classic pitfall of exclusively discussing bands and band activity. A significant advance on this is O'Connor's work on the punk Canadian and Mexican punk scenes (1999, 2002a, 2002b, 2003a). Through his ethnographic work (1999, 2002b) on the Canadian autonomous centre 'Whos Emma', O'Connor's comes closest to my own in this study. Among other things, he traces the securing and development of a punk venue and cafe space in Toronto during the 1990s. This is very similar to my work at the Bradford 1in12 club. However, his study lacks the ethnographic detail of a grounded theory. O'Connor offers little in the way of a transferable theory that could be used to make comparative observations and statements. His work is either descriptive of the centre as a whole or enwrapped in a theoretical gloss that obscures any detailed analysis of how the ethics of DiY punk are utilised to create this space. Elsewhere, O'Connor (2002a, 2002b) has produced valuable, broad discussion of the geographical connections between the American DiY hardcore scenes, yet again there is little detail of how the ethics and the participants of DiY produce such a scene in the first instance. For O'Connor, they appear to have arrived out of thin air, straight off the backs of the original punks. Yet this is not to dismiss this work completely. O'Connor (2002b) equally offers an extremely valuable insight into how the participants of punk use the terms 'scene' as a descriptor of their own world. Here O'Connor is explicit:

When punks use the term 'scene' they mean the active creation of infrastructure to support punk bands and other forms of creative activity. This means finding places to play, building a supportive audience, developing strategies for living cheaply, shared punk houses, and such like (2002b: 226).

Somewhat paradoxically, following from my criticisms, the lack of specific ethnographic detail in O'Connor's work allows the transfer of the term 'scene' to the local punk communities of Leeds and Bradford featured in this work. The term 'scene' as used in the present work has a heavy debt to O'Connor (2002b) who states: 'The term 'scene' is used here in the same way it is used within the punk scene'. The same applies to my own work, with the author, participants and interviewees alike using this terms as the main lexical reference to the placed embodiment of their daily interactions with the punk community (2002b: 225). I shall return to the conceptual issue of scene in chapter eight.

Of equal value and described in much clearer ethnographic detail is O'Connor's work on Mexican punk (2003a & b; see also Sorrendeguy, 2001). Here the ethics of equality and discussion are illuminated in public spaces during anti-globalization protests. Through the application of Bourdieu to his participant observation data, he effectively captures the essence of what I spoke of above: the connection between DiY political activism and DiY cultural production. His article clearly describes how these two modes of activity mutually co-exist. The main problem with it is that there is a habitus, a disposition accounted for, yet again, this habitus appears like magic, a shaping and shaped presence that arises without a trace; with little evidence gleaned that would enable us to see how the entrance process to punk DiY could have helped to produce the subcultural disposition in question. The detailed description, production, creation and application of punk ethics, along with their generation and reproduction, is the clear aim of this study.

I leave the most glaring gap in the subcultural and punkademic literature until last. All of the previous ethnographic work on punk subculture has been done outside the

UK¹⁰. There has been *no* academic ethnographic work done on the legacy of DiY punk in England. This is a huge hole in the literature that the present work is designed, at least partly, to fill. I hope that the illumination of how and why punk ethics in its *daily practices* will move the existing literature more securely into new areas. This will be done through ethnographic methodology and grounded theory, the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁰ The other significant examples of work done on contemporary musical subcultures are Finnegan (1989) writing on local music cultures; Cohen, (1991) on Liverpool bands signing to major labels; Bennett (1999) on hip hop culture in the North East.

Chapter Two: The Ethnographic Punk

Introduction

In the previous chapter I showed that theoretical models of subcultures, whilst they are of general value in abstract terms, cloud the view of the actual punk scenes. I demonstrated how the postmodern backdrop to the postsubculturalist research has resulted in an over-concentration on subcultural style and a neglect of how local scene ethics inform day-to-day practice. In order to make good this neglect, we need work of close observation and engagement. That is why my own work depends centrally on the use of ethnographic methodology. In this chapter I shall present the case for conducting the research in this way.

One of the chief sources of inspiration for my research were the ethnographies of the Chicago School, following the 1920s gang research of Thrasher (1927) through the work of Cressey (1932) and White (1943) that offer a previous subcultural conception of everyday practice *without* becoming obsessed with issues of clothing style as a form of expression. The most significant study in developing and advancing the previous Chicago work, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, was Becker's (1964) research on jazz musicians and the ethics/practice relation in musicians subcultures: the desire to remain authentic in their identity as musicians, precisely in order to retain a sense of artistic integrity, is clearly conveyed in this work. While Becker presents no clear discussion of ethnographic research in this work, it is clear this is his chosen method.

My own fieldwork took place in the Leeds and Bradford DiY punk scenes during 2001, with one of the principle differences from Becker's work being that the musicians were *not* a central object of study. In order to gain a detailed understanding

located within the perspective of the lay participant, I selected the following research methods: semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation and participant diaries. The methods were selected both for their potential to allow the participants to articulate their questions and for the researcher to remain focused on the chosen aspects of the scene. While there are problems regarding the qualitative and subjective epistemology of ethnographic method, to adopt poststructuralist methods such as critical discourse analysis (Billig, 1992) would have reduced the study to an inspection of talk read through theoretical considerations of ideology and power. Likewise, conversation analysis in relation to subcultural authenticity (Widdicombe and Wooffit, 1990, 1995) would have further narrowed the scope of the research. There is value in such work, but I wanted my parameters to be broader. By concentrating on minute selections of detailed subcultural talk the wider context can easily slip from view. I wanted an approach that allows tangential theoretical points to be made when and where they are suitable. I required a methodological framework that would accommodate appropriate reference to the social, cultural and historical contexts of the subcultural scenes being studied. At the other end of the spectrum from fine-grained forms of discourse and conversation analysis, quantitative methodologies, social surveys and fixed-response questionnaires would have not produced the close detail of either the daily lives of the participants or the subcultural ethics governing or structuring their behaviours and practices.

Grounded Theory and Descriptive Ethnography

In light of the problems outlined in the previous chapter, the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) was chosen as the principle methodological approach because of its inductive epistemological concern in allowing the creation of large bodies of interviews, field work journals and participant diaries to generate a theory grounded in

the lived world of study participants. Hopefully, such a theory will have comparative value in its transferability to similar avenues of investigation and beyond. Strauss and Corbin (1990) offer a clear definition of grounded theory:

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and professionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory then prove it. Rather one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge (1990:23)

This work is the most accurate method of surveying and summarising the complex life- worlds of DiY punk. It provides a means not only of generating data but also of analysing it. Its chief strength lies in the ability of the researcher to mix observation with interview and then to produce a theoretical explanation from which to advance the existing corpus of subcultural knowledge.

My reservations with grounded theory as a method were related to the over-systematisation of the data. Redefining field-notes and interviews to a series of codes and sliding scales disrupted the sequential order of the data and the narratives established by the participants in my field-journal observations. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) state, grounded theory ‘represents an over-reaction to positivism’; they offer the critical observation that such theory is often over-dismissive of other descriptive forms of ethnography (1983: 22). The methodological strategy of the present research will strike a balance between grounded theory and what Geertz (1973: 3-30) has referred to as ‘thick description’. Denzin (2000: 15) has called this ‘the interpretation of interpretation’. A total grounded theory would have been too disruptive for the participants and would have distorted the intentions of my field journals.

Why Punk Researchers?

As I stated in the introduction to this thesis, I have been involved in punk for most of my life, having first heard the Sex Pistols shortly after the death of Elvis Presley in August 1977. Over the next 25 years I became a vegetarian, became involved in anarchist politics, and became a musician primarily as a result of my interest in the band Crass. The adoption of punk brought me into conflict with all figures of authority, from parents, teachers and the public, to the police. Through the work of Crass and anarcho punk (anarcho punk will be discussed in ethical terms in chapter four) I found my way into animal rights and anti-war protests. The majority of the 1980s was spent entering into and out of the scene.

After I began to release records and tour with bands in the early nineties, I attended university. As I noted in the previous chapter, reading the literature on punk was disappointing in that it had neglected to cover the experiences I had had through the 1980s. Through a gradual integration into DiY philosophy, I discovered that bands could release records, create squats, organise venues, parties and protests if we put our minds to it. Negotiation and permission from record companies, previously understood as the gatekeepers of the industry, were not required. This was an empowering mindset to inhabit, yet I found it fraught with ethical difficulties and dilemmas, especially over remaining (in the eyes of ones peers) an authentic punk.

I first came into contact with one of the settings of the present research, the 1in12, a collectively-run anarchist social club, in 1990 while driving a band to play a hardcore festival there. Originally formed as an unemployed benefit claimants union according to the Club guide, *What is the 1in12 Club* they state:

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw massive job losses across Britain and Bradford was no exception with GEC and International Harvesters shutting plants in the city. Against this backdrop a particularly strong and active Claimants Union emerged which campaigned vigorously to improve the situation for unemployed and low waged people in Bradford when, in 1981 a government investigation into benefit fraud (the 'Raynor Report') found that '1 in

12' claimants were actively "defrauding the state", the union lost no time in adopting this statistic for themselves (*What is the lin12 Club?*, 1995).

Gaining a council grant to buy a building in 1988, they renovated an old mill, through sheer determination and effort, opening its doors two years later. My amazement during this first visit was that this was a three storey building, complete with bar café and venue, collectively run by punks: no bouncers, high beer prices or entrance prices. There were no managers and everyone had an equal stake. I was seriously impressed with this achievement. My previous personal success in creating DiY space was largely confined to squatting a terraced house for a month. We applauded each other when we managed to get the water turned on under an assumed name. The lin12 was in an entirely different league. It was on a par with many of the European squats that have been established since the late 1960s (see Skelton & Valentine, 1998).

A decade later, as a part-time university tutor, I felt that the lin12 presented a perfect ethnographic focus for DiY culture. The Club is the ideal setting for investigating the junctions where DiY politics intersects with DiY cultural production. Through the 1990s I became very familiar with the lin12. I established firm connections with the club through my band playing there from 1995 to the present, in addition to using the concert floor for band rehearsals during 1997-9.

My band had played all over the European mainland, mostly in the squats, and across the UK we had released records. We relied upon the hospitality, trust and friendship of the DiY support networks that exist across the punk world. At a local level, through my participation in the band with three of the members from Bradford, it came to my attention that there were significant differences between the latter's DiY scene and the neighbouring punk scene in the city of Leeds. Bradford's lin12 scene appeared to be geared towards the close connection of DiY punk and cultural

production, while Leeds appeared to be more concerned with the latter and with remaining avante garde in its approach. The club struggled to survive financially during the late 1990s. It witnessed a move of 1in12 people to the Leeds scene, resulting in the club facing possible closure in 1999. There was also a close connection with 1in12 people and a squat venue in Leeds run by ex-club members. What this signalled to me after over two decade's experience of punk culture was an opportunity to further address the gap in the literature regarding the complex issue of how an ethics produces activity and, moreover, what the participants get out of an adherence to such ethics. My close association with the club had both advantages and disadvantages. It meant that I didn't have to gain entrance into the scene and win the trust of its members, though I did want to be explicit about the purposes of my research and gain their formal consent. This is discussed further later on. On the other hand, my close engagement with the club raised the danger of over-familiarity. I had to make conscious efforts to develop a more distanced, critical perspective in order to become an academic participant observer of the scene, rather than a lay participant. This will be discussed in more detail below. The advantages considerably outweighed the disadvantages, though, in that my prior experience could not only be drawn on; it also provided the inspiration to conduct the study in the first place. The seed had been set for the study.

The Settings and Duration of the Research

The fieldwork was accomplished over a four-month period, divided equally between the two subcultural scenes of Leeds and Bradford¹¹. The chosen settings for the

¹¹ The issues of race and gender issues in DiY scenes has been inadvertently placed beyond the scope of the present research. The reasons for this are twofold; firstly that there are women and ethnic minorities involved in the DiY scenes under scrutiny and they have been excluded from the research is due to the placing of the researcher within the white male dominated studio collective and its counterpart in the Leeds scene, Out of Step skewed the research in this direction. Secondly the

research are the lin12, which has been in existence for over 20 years and had 640 members in 2001¹². The building has a number of collectives that stem from promotions to food-growing. It was selected due to its ideological links with countercultural values and practices and the current anti-globalisation movement and also for its long standing connections to punk and hardcore with its countless shows, record labels, and fanzine production.

Entrance to the lin12 club as a researcher was negotiated through contact made with one of the core members I knew through playing the club. This was considerably helped by being previously known to the club. Beyond this my project had to be accepted by the club's Sunday members meeting. I sent a brief proposal outlining the research project in advance, stating the central aims of the study and the contact details for my research supervisor. This proposal was discussed at a meeting. It was collectively agreed that I would be able to request interviews, engage in participant observation, ask for diaries and conduct the actual interviews from June to August, 2001. This was confirmed in writing by the club. It was not specified in advance exactly what I would be doing at the club. This was only clarified on my arrival by giving a presentation to the club and sketching out any ethical difficulties that could arise during the research. I was informed I would be building a recording studio in the basement in light of my previous recording experience with various bands.

I noted above that Leeds was a multi-sited DiY scene. This entailed visiting a number of venues during the evenings. It was impossible to negotiate access and

snowballing sampling procedure and a distinct lack of availability of prospective interviewees from these groupings equally affected their critical inclusion in this study.

¹² The membership is usually around three hundred. Membership had swelled during this period on account of a rave collective promoting well-attended events that demanded ravers become club members in order to gain entrance. Such events were banned from the club after late 2001 following members' concerns over drug use and the contentious issue of long staff shifts. Membership is presently back at its original levels.

permission by all concerned so I took the ethical approach of being clear to those that asked that I was doing participant observation. Occasionally I was one of the performers. I also negotiated access to one of the core areas of Leeds DiY subcultural activity: a punk and hardcore record shop in the city centre. Staffed by two people who I knew from playing gigs with their bands, I called the shop and it was agreed that I could conduct participant observation there from the end of August until mid-October 2001. Mr. V, as he shall be known in this study, confirmed this agreement in writing. I was informed that I would be involved at all levels of the organisation of the shop and considered as an equal partner during my time there. The same ethical issues of confidentiality were discussed as in the 1in12 club.

Through my fellow band members and their contacts with the Leeds DiY scene a room in a shared house was secured for me at a reduced summer rent. I moved to Leeds from Nottingham on 15th June 2001 in the band's transit van.

Ethics

Throughout the research project I ensured the ethical protection of the interviewees. With the exception of two interviewees, Danbert Nobacon of Chumbawamba and the late Robert Heaton of New Model Army, all of the participants have been anonymised in alphabetical order throughout the research¹³. Heaton and Nobacon, due to their central location in the bands related to the punk dilemmas of selling-out, agreed to be featured in the research by name. All the other interviewees were anonymised as far as possible and all identifying characteristics in the interview data were altered. This was due to possible peer repercussions from occasional compromising, hostile views expressed towards peers and core DiY members. Whilst I consider the majority of the interviewees to be friends and close acquaintances, they still required ethical

¹³ See appendix 3.

protection. Rubin and Rubin (1995:39-40) note that in many ethnographies there is a critical distance between the researcher and subject; informed consent forms are there for their protection. The reverse was the often the case as I completely blended in with my peers during the research. Although subjects were aware of my participant observer status, it was usually when I presented an official-looking informed consent form to some of the interviewees that certain tensions arose: it then became clear that they were not involved in an everyday conversation. The informed consent form registered me in a more official capacity operating within a legal framework. It tended to distance me somewhat from those previously familiar to me, particularly those who are generally suspicious of any official authority.

The geographical locations in the research are genuine as are the names of the venues. Where specific buildings and organisations are mentioned, I have retained their original names. This is also the case with all the bands named in the research. Both the 1in12 and Out of Step, the Leeds record shop, in addition to the Leeds promotions collective, Cops and Robbers, were happy for their organisations to appear in the research under their genuine names.

All of the participants of the research signed an informed consent form (see appendix 2), clearly informing participants of their right to withdraw from the research at any given point and also noting that they could withdraw any comment within two weeks of the interview (Silverman, 2000: 200-2). This occurred only once when the interviewee felt that the comments made could both compromise his personal safety and erase his integrity within the scene nexus.

Due to the reflexive dimension of the research a number of interviews were requested by me within the field setting where I deemed the activities and involvement of specific individuals to be central to the aims of the research. On three

occasions I was declined interview opportunities. The broad reasons given ranged from no specific reason and a shrug of the shoulders to 'I couldn't tell you anything you don't already know, if it's all the same to you, mate'. This illustrates one of the central difficulties of my insider status (see below). Such wishes were respected, though these individuals feature in the general participant observation. Overall there were marginal consequences from such statements of decline. Due to my long-standing familiarity with some of the participants I felt mildly *embarrassed* when faced with rebuttals of this nature. That said, one of those who turned me down was a core member of the studio project I was involved with at the 1in12, Mr. U, and he gave an invaluable contribution to that project. His actions in DiY terms spoke louder than an interview.

Pilot work

The pilot work aided the development of the research and was chiefly refined by a sense of methodological reflexivity, that is thinking critically, and from varied perspectives, about both the pragmatics and the theoretical implications of the methods chosen. Rather than trying to remove oneself from affecting the behaviour of the participants, such reflexivity seeks to study the consequences of the ethnographer's presence. As Hamersley and Atkinson note, there is no way we can escape the social world in order to study it. Nor fortunately is that necessary (1983:15).

At all stages of the research, reflexivity became a constant feature through which I was able to alter the research design in addition to my field conduct. Reflexivity was itself a research strategy affecting my actions as an ethnographer in the field. The original research intention differed considerably from the approach chosen in the end. This was to read the actions of DiY punk ethics through a critical response to the

totalising theory of the Frankfurt School, asserting complete capitalist triumph over creative subjectivity (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944). My critique was channelled particularly through the work of Foucault (1977, 1978). This theory was to be fed into the interview strategy in order to advance notions of resistance at a theoretical level. However, an initial, unstructured pilot interview was patronising, to say the least, with me presented as a knowing academic interviewer and the subject squeezed into the straightjacket of my own theoretical persuasion. I wasn't allowing people to speak. The following section of interview in the Mr. A transcript betrays this initial error of judgement:

Int: Just as a final question, then, or maybe as a discussion point because I feel that this has been more of a discussion which is just as useful as an interview. Uhhm, we began the interview talking about wider political contexts, a wider social, cultural and moral structure that feeds into the shape, or form, of the lin12 and the Leeds scene in general. What issues of knowledge, for you, or cultural, political, economic issues shape the discipline of this scene?

A: Uhh?

It became rapidly obvious that I was forcing a theoretical agenda upon the interviewees and failing to get the level of data required. Through a reflexive reformulation and the subsequent abandoning of the theoretical content in favour of a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) the questions were vastly improved. I carried out a series of five pilot interviews with ex-Leeds and Bradford punks I was familiar with in my home town of Nottingham. These subsequent pilot interviews allowed me to restructure the interview questions until I became at ease with the semi-structured strategy. The value of this method of interview was that it allowed me to explore points of interest not always related to the central trajectory of the interview. From the pilot work, the interviews were transcribed in orthographic terms including laughter and slang.

In addition to this I also visited and played a number of punk events as part of my research. The main pilot work for participant observation took place at a GBH gig at

the Old Angel, Nottingham, 2000, with the field-journal written up after the concert. One of the early problems with this research was that it was all too familiar, the close detail was slipping from view. I have been to thousands of punk concerts over the years. It became quickly obvious that I was missing the obvious. Glaser (1978), and Strauss and Corbin (1990), refer to improving one's skills and experience in a given culture as 'theoretical sensitivity' (1990: 41). Familiarity becomes problematic when it obscures crucial aspects of the field: this kind of acquaintance can block the researcher from seeing things that have become routine or obvious (1990:41). Techniques for enhancing theoretical sensitivity involve a series of in-field exercises designed to improve inductive strategies and introduce ways of seeing the field setting in an entirely different way (ibid: 76). My chosen method was to silently question aspects of the field environment: for example, why is that person selling records in the corner, how are they doing it and to what benefit? This strategy allowed me to begin to produce a fresh perspective on detailed accounts beyond my vernacular experience of the field. This was an entirely successful methodological venture allowing me to *consistently* and reflexively improve my field techniques.

From the interviews and pilot observation I wrote a 3,000 word piece of text analysis on the issue of political correctness in punk. This was submitted to the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University as a piece of coursework for the research methods course I had taken. The ironic use of punk as an ethic of 'get pissed destroy' against its political incarnation of liberty and freedom through rebellion and the subtleties of language use in the 1970s became a grounded theory with direct relevance to the ironic ethic of DiY I maintain in the present work. The first class mark awarded this essay confirmed the success both of the method of interview, the questions asked and the suitability of grounded theory as a

methodological strategy for approaching the research. Yet in spite of this, the use of grounded theory to produce a narrative completely immersed in the data proved insufficiently sensitive to the expressive meaning of the interviewees. I took the reflexive decision to strike a balance between grounded theory and descriptive ethnography in order to avoid gagging my participants' experiences and masking the narrative of their life-histories. From this decision the broad narrative of the questioning strategies shifted towards a biographical dimension in order to track the participants' subcultural trajectory through punk. This enabled me to construct coherent narratives that came to inform the structure of the study: entrance, practice and exit and the associated ethical dilemmas involved in participation.

Question Strategies and Interviews.

All interviews were tape recorded and conducted either at the 1in12 club, the record shop or the interviewee's house. On the tour, interviews were conducted in over ten European countries or in the bands van. Back-up tapes were produced after the interview. No notes were taken during the interview as I considered this a distraction for the interviewee.

I have discussed how my interview questions were reflexively devised and revised out of the pilot work (see appendix one). The questions were field-tested until there was a reasonable 'fit' between the questions and the intentions of the research. The questions were designed to investigate the entrance, practice and exit of a subcultural career with the final section geared towards the issue of the dilemmas circulating around the issue of selling-out. This strategy was effective in terms of introducing a narrative. Semi-structured and open-ended questions also allowed me to explore in detail select points the interviewees made and reflexively alter further questions in the light of any interesting divergence of topic (see Fetterman, 1989: 54). With Heaton

and Nobacon, the open questioning strategies followed the trajectory of the existing interview narrative, although the questions were geared and altered relative to the *specific* actions of each individual's activities, their respective bands and their personal feelings in relation to accusations made that they had sold-out. The final revision to the question strategy was for the focus group done with the Leeds DiY promotions collective, Cops and Robbers. Here the general frame of the questions was constructed not in terms of individual narratives but in relation to how they established their DiY promotions collective and what the specific problems were within the scene contexts of Leeds and Bradford.

To some extent I adopted elements of a life-history approach, asking retrospective questions involving the participants relying upon memory and recollection. Such accounts often proved difficult for some of the participants, as for example when they were asked to remember their punk origins, some of which occurred in the late 1970s. There was the additional and thorny issue of the honesty of such accounts. All the interviewees' testimonies were nevertheless taken in good faith as *bona fide*.

Participants

The participants of the study were drawn from the club members of the 1in12 and the Leeds hardcore and punk scenes. They ranged in age from 20 to 42 years. As a reflection of the ethnic composition of the punk scene, they were white and originated across the class spectrum, with varying levels of educational background. Their geographical origins were in the main in West Yorkshire, with the remaining participants hailing from Manchester, Birmingham, the North East and the southern Counties. The majority were previously known to me as a band member playing in these cities. Although there was some familiarity, and in spite of my previous experience, I was still a relative newcomer to the scene. Interviewees were selected

after I had established some rapport through working with them or through conversations regarding the research during gigs and social events, on the street and round friends' houses.

As I progressed with the fieldwork I managed to make further contacts and the research snowballed from there. For example in conversation I found out one of the club members knew Danbert from Chumbawamba, who had helped to build the 1in12 during the late 1980s. He introduced me to Danbert and he kindly agreed to do an interview. The interview with Robert Heaton came through him producing Mr. J's band. J invited me to the recording and I already knew Robert from the 1980s. He also kindly agreed an interview. The majority of the interviews were arranged during field work, with the exception of those included in the pilot work: these were arranged through mutual friends in the Nottingham punk scene. In all I conducted twenty five interviews, four pilot, with the rest split equally between Leeds and Bradford and one focus group involving eight people. I interviewed three women for this project. Their representation is broadly reflective of the under-representation of women in punk and hardcore scenes (see Leblanc, 1999).

The Diaries

During the years leading up to the research I had already begun to keep a diary of some of the events during my travels with the band. This is referred to only once during the thesis but it helped to lay the footings for it and it also reveals the dual existence of the researcher. This was in keeping with the sociological tradition of a life-history approach (see Bertaux, 1983: 29-47). However, aware that I was not present on all occasions, nor obviously omnipresent in the settings, I asked a number of the key participants in the study to keep diaries. There was a predictably mixed response to this method and the results ranged from sketchy notes to over 3,000 words

in a detailed diary supplied to me by Mr. I. Mr. I proved to be a valuable resource in the field work. Of the seventeen diaries, only Mr. I's features in the thesis. The other diaries either detailed aspects of DiY not covered in the present work, such as touring Europe DiY, or they simply contained information duplicated and covered in greater depth in the interviews. Some of the diarists abstained from writing and instead drew pictures to sum up their feelings. One participant had second thoughts regarding me keeping the diary and refused to let me read it, due to issues of confidentiality. I naturally respected his wishes. In terms of ethical protection I amended the informed consent form to cover the diary material. It took upwards of a year to collate all of the diaries. Overall the diary method proved the least successful of my mixed-methods approach in terms of the effort expended and the material gleaned.

The Field-Notes

Field-notes were written from memory and pocket book notes. Reflexively they were fine-tuned after my initial attempts proved clumsy. Spradley (1980) was of particular help here. The field notes were organised according to the following outline:

1. Space: the physical place of places.
2. Actor: the people involved.
3. Activity: a set of related activities people do.
4. Object: the physical things that are present.
5. Act: single actions that people do.
6. Event: a set of related activities that people carry out.
7. Time: the sequencing that takes place over time.
8. Goal: the things that people are trying to accomplish.
9. Feeling: the emotions felt and expressed.

(Spradley, 1980 78ff in Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983)

This organizational fieldwork tool allowed me to keep a well-organised field journal. After the four-month fieldwork period, 154,000 words of field notes were written. These were geared towards new avenues of ethnographic exploration across the two key fields of observation. Time was consistently set aside in the evenings and

one day per week for the writing and study of this journal in order to reflexively prepare future strategies of the research.

Analysis

The sheer amount of data, consisting of seventeen participant diaries, and 330, 000 words of transcribed interview and journal notes, proved rather formidable. It was a difficult task to familiarise oneself with a large amount of data. Using grounded theory as my principle method, salient and significant selections of the data were compiled in order to begin constructing a narrative ranging from the entrance through the practice to the exit of the participants, concluding with the final discussion of the dilemmas of punk. I avoided a total grounded theory through my wish to avoid gagging the participants, striking the balance between a Geertzian ethnographic method of 'thick description' and the coding of general themes in the research in order to produce general typologies and models of subcultural action. Such analysis involved becoming familiar with the data to the point of saturation. This allowed me to see where the most salient features of the data had made themselves explicit. In tandem with the method of grounded theory, I exercised considerable caution in not forcing the data and allowing the meaning to 'emerge' as it were organically from the data (Glaser, 1992). Through detailed analysis and coding of the data, patterns became visible that broadly reflected my field experiences and also the participant's lifeworlds. This chimed in with one of the key aims of the research – to allow the participants a representative voice in the research.

Associated Problems and Dilemmas

Certain difficulties arose during the field work that were connected with the overall aims of the research. These were manifested in a series of personal dilemmas. I shall

take two as illustrative of the general problems of conducting ethnographic research on one's own subcultural community. Throughout the research I became plagued by the anxiety that I was somehow selling DiY out to academic scrutiny, and that I was substantially better off financially on my research bursary than many of the participants who were mostly in low-paid employment or unemployed. A degree of guilt led to a preoccupation with the question as to *why* certain DiY practices are adhered to. Here I felt like I was playing at being DiY, not actually doing it. The sole reason I was there was *not* for the completion of any particular task at hand (though this was exceedingly important) but to study those doing DiY. I occasionally felt like a complete impostor, a fake: in short a sell-out myself with my feet in two worlds and my interests torn in two. I was investigating sell-out bands and their dealings with major record companies whilst aware that this work could possibly end up in the hands of an academic publisher. This would certainly be my aspiration if the work is to gain credibility through peer review.

Overall I had to strike a consistent compromise between my researcher status and my scene peers. To navigate between these two roles often proved exhausting. I felt that I was occasionally avoided by certain peers. It was as if they were 'shy' of my research. However, as my presence was gradually accepted and I was assimilated into the daily workings of the club, record shop, touring and gigs, this awkwardness began to evaporate. This did present one further difficulty: as I became immersed in the field, I lost the critical distance with which to make clear observations. Glaser's (1980) techniques for enhancing theoretical sensitivity again helped to instil a sense of perspective here. The issue of memory also struck in places where it was difficult to take notes. In this case a pocket book was used. Frequent trips to the toilet allowed

for the privacy of note-writing in order to secure fine detail. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) refer to this as the 'weak bladder syndrome' (1983:148).

As a final point to this: in personal terms, with my involvement in the club's activities progressing, I observed myself growing in political militancy. This was reduced in the multi-sited scene of Leeds. The change clearly illuminated how the context of subcultural scene ethics helps to inform and govern action.

Technical Problems

On four different occasions, I lost valuable interview data due to tape recorders breaking down. Often not discovered until after the interview, whilst reviewing the tapes, I eventually switched to minidisk which proved to be far more reliable. A further crucial problem was related to computer use. Whilst in the field the short life of batteries used in my laptop computer produced a sense of frustration. It was as if my memory was becoming selective in terms of capturing a given event.

Conclusion

I have outlined the broad methodological strategy used to produce the ethnography that follows. Overall this is a multi-method ethnography using participant observation, diaries, semi-structured interviews and a diary approach to generate the field data. In terms of an epistemology I have avoided importing abstract theoretical models into the methodological framework, instead opting for a reflexive balance struck between a grounded theory and thick description in order to ensure a space for the voices of my interviewees in the subsequent accounts and to retain the sense that the subcultural scenes studied intersect at numerous points with various life-history narratives. This is the most appropriate and effective way of gauging how DiY punk

ethics are practically drawn upon and mobilised through their entrance into, practice within, and exit from DiY punk scenes.

Chapter Three: Entrance

Introduction

This chapter sets out to answer three questions: how did people enter the broad punk subculture, why did they become involved, and what was their experience of entry? It presents the case that subcultural entrance is primarily an investigative practice that propels the participant towards an authentically styled knowledge, based around the discovery of what is deemed to be genuine punk rock. The chapter pursues this case primarily through a discussion of the social role of music, for the key motivating factor for entry was an initial engagement with the music of punk rock and its various political manifestations within its own subcultural matrix.

Entrance into this matrix was reported by the interviewees to be propelled by their developing feelings of disenchantment with society. This sensibility inclines them towards a sense of affinity within the subculture. Bound up with it are claims towards an implicit, rebellious subjectivity. Further preconditions for entrance are feelings of loneliness and peer pressure. Both of these issues will be questioned in relation to their validity as factors conducive to forming allegiances with punk. The opening section of this chapter will situate such claims in relation to actors' claims to authenticity.

In order for clarification of what follows in the empirical work I have constructed three levels of scene involvement so that working distinctions can be drawn between levels of involvement. Firstly, the *core*, those that engage with and perform core daily organisational DiY tasks and maintain skills central to the reproduction of the scene; secondly, *semi-peripheral*, those who regularly attend DiY events and have occasional involvement and, finally, *peripheral* members: those that engage with the

scene at a marginal level and have little involvement with core and semi-peripheral tasks.

Entrance to the subculture will be outlined in terms of a two-stage model: primary and secondary investigation. The progression through such stages works through a heuristic process of trial and error. I contend in this chapter that entrance to the punk subculture is such a practice and argue that the early experience of punk rock is through the primary identification with sympathetic peer groupings and a concomitant separation from those peers deemed to be inauthentic. The chapter will examine peer pressure, media engagement, the purchase, consumption and playing of punk records, tape trading and 'hanging out' with subcultural peers. These are integral to achieving authentic subcultural membership, so perceived. Underpinning this discussion of primary investigation will be an account of how the participant entering the punk subculture becomes familiar with punk culture and the discourse which produces and maintains its practice as authentic. Full participation within punk at this stage is restricted and informed through wider social constraints such as age, school and parental restriction.

Secondary investigation details how the selection of peer groupings, and a greater sense of differentiation from other social groups, is combined with a deepening of subcultural commitment, activity and specific scene knowledge through experience and the repetition of subcultural activity. For example, regularly going to concerts and playing in bands, or running record labels, are vital for this deepening commitment. Again, underpinning such activities are claims that the actor's selected peer grouping and subsequent subcultural activity are culturally authentic. Within this chapter I will examine such claims to authenticity and investigate how the study

participants enriched their punk commitments by becoming associated with and forming counter-cultural scenes such as the 1in12 club.

The chapter is broken up into three key sections dealing with pre-existing punk sensibilities, primary investigation, and secondary investigation.

Pre-existing Punk Sensibilities, Loneliness, Isolation and Trend-setting.

What kind of person enters the punk subculture? When asked how they first became involved with punk, a number of the interviewees made claims regarding their authentic status as already being 'critical outsiders'. They had a predisposition towards feeling and expressing disenchantment with their life experiences prior to their first engagement with the wider punk subculture. This sense of prior orientation is a commonplace in punk discourse and had been previously discussed by Fox (1987)¹⁴ whose ethnographic study of punk culture in a southern American city in 1983 revealed similar disenchantment and claims to authentic feelings of rebellion:

Punk didn't influence me to the way I am much. I was always this way inside. When I came into punk, it was what I needed all my life. I could finally be myself. (Fox, 1986 in Adler & Adler, 1993: 378)

Similar sentiments were expressed by the interviewees in the present study. Mr. O was clear on this issue: 'regardless [of punk] I always knew things were a bit shit anyway.' Ms. W stated: 'I already had alternative ideas, I guess, to the mainstream and on how people should run their lives and treat other people: [punk] opened me up to a whole other world'. Mr. F reported: 'I've always had the feeling that stuff wasn't quite right but punk kind of gave me the information'; Mr. G noted: 'before I came into contact with the DiY hardcore punk rock movement, I would have thought of myself as probably a bit more conscientious than your average Joe Bloggs cause I was into recycling'. Finally Ms. M claimed '[punk] hasn't altered me because I kind of

¹⁴ Fox, K.J. (1987) "Real Punks and Pretenders: The Social Organisation of a Counterculture." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol 16, No, 3.

thought that way for the past ten years anyway.’ Andes (1991, in Epstein, 1998) presented a similar frame of reference reported by the informants in her punk ethnography and commented that: ‘Almost all the informants consistently perceived themselves as being “different” from those in their reference group: “normal others”, i.e. their peers, parents and mainstream society in general’ (1998:221).

What the Fox and Andes studies fail to do is to locate such utterances within the realm of claims towards subcultural authenticity and to offset such discourse against ironic claims of the life-transforming capacities of the subculture. It is important to note how some of the above claims, presenting the speaker as ‘always’ feeling this way, belie a sensibility of difference that is ‘predisposed’ to entrance to punk. The claims such as ‘punk hasn’t altered me’ and ‘I was probably a bit more conscientious than your average Joe Bloggs’ stake out the rhetorical claim for the existence of their innate capacities for rebellion, disenchantment and sense of difference: they are authentic rebels. From this position punk is sought out as a secondary conduit and vessel for the investigation, expression and articulation of such feelings of difference. As such claims are made after the interviewees have already become long-standing members of the punk subculture, further explanation is required. Apart from the claims of a sense of difference, what other factors led to the interviewees becoming involved in the wider punk subculture?

One such factor is the general punk aesthetic – the subcultural framework of social critique and its alienated commentary. This acted as a receptacle and magnet for those young people experiencing feelings of difference and disenchantment. It was actively sought out by the majority of the study participants. But how were these subjects specifically drawn to it? A number of the interviewees reported feelings of loneliness and peer isolation. Combined with feelings of difference and disenchantment, such

claims appear to be a valid explanation for punk subcultural entrance, yet this is not initially as clear-cut as one would hope. Respondents spoke of experiencing such feelings at school. Mr. B stated he was 'on me own for a few years', and noted a lack of contact with similar punk peers. Mr. O stated that 'I have always been a bit of a loner,' whilst Ms. W commented on the fact that she 'didn't really gel with the people at school.' From such feelings the young subcultural entrant searches out a subculture in which these rebellious feelings and views can be shared. The sense of difference is affirmed within a community of outsiders.

Loneliness, isolation and peer separation therefore provide a possible motor towards subcultural involvement: a group of rebellious peers with similar sensibilities will provide affinity in a collective sense of difference. Mr.C became interested in punk growing up in a Derbyshire town in the mid 1980s, describing his primary subcultural entrance as 'a lonely existence' and noting that there was a distinct lack of similar peers entering into punk. Due to this relative isolation, he found that his main point of access to punk music was initially buying his music from the major music stores: HMV and Virgin records¹⁵. Such interviewees later sought out punk peer groupings united by their outsider status.

However, it would be a naive to suggest that my informants' sense of loneliness and isolation were the sole factors responsible for punk subcultural entrance. This would fail to explain how other subcultures are, or are not, entered – if at all – from those

¹⁵ The involvement with HMV and Virgin proved to be a retrospective point of difficulty for Mr. C and some surrender/admittance of his early authentic punk status was evident in his interview. He is presently deeply committed to the ethics of DiY, yet he admitted that his initial procurement of punk records came through engagement with these shops and their 'dubious' standing within the DiY punk community. The justification of this was presented due to his lack of knowledge of the scene. In retrospect he argued: 'it was the only way I had of getting hold of the stuff 'cos the distros that you see nowadays that are so common, weren't in abundance [then]'. This justification is a central issue in the defence of authenticity and all I wish to do presently is note how comment on previous engagement with such shops presented difficulties for the speaker which result in the latter, subsequent justification of previous actions. Due to its retrospective, dilemmatic status, full discussion of such justifications are reserved for chapters 6 & 9.

who do not share such disenchantment and isolation. What unites such entrance claims in the present study is a sense of difference from what is considered mainstream or 'normal' culture, but it does not always follow that the potential entrant subscribes to enter a subculture through feelings of loneliness and isolation from their peers. In one interview, the initial entrance to punk was articulated through a clear need to adopt a new 'hip' form of rebellion.

Mr. G spoke of his entrance to punk culture as a result of jettisoning his pseudo-rebellious peers and establishing his role as an original, authentic trendsetter through a new involvement in hardcore punk. Rather than complaining about his loneliness and lack of acceptance within his peer group, full inclusion in his peer group acted as a catalyst for him to enter into the punk subculture. Mr. G claimed he was fully accepted by his peer group, and made the case that he set in place many of its subcultural facets. However, G stated that once his peers had adopted and mirrored this rebellious attitude it rendered himself and his existing subcultural practice inauthentic: for G it became too popular to be authentic rebellion! He decided to advance his existing status as a 'trend setter' by becoming a more authentic subculture member through heuristic examination of contextually relevant, and previously unexplored, obscure punk subcultural groups in order to mark out his authentic difference from school peer groupings.

[I] liked being a bit of a rebel at school. I was always like trying to be the first to do everything. I was the first to grow my hair long out of our group of friends, first to dye it, the first to get sent home from school for having scraggy jeans and stuff. It got to the point where suddenly loads and loads of people would do it and, wanting to be a cool trend setter at the time, I was like I have to get into something different! I was like right, what's cool? OK, I'm going to be a skater.

Here the reverse of the opening sections statements detailing loneliness and isolation is the case. Finding acceptance as a trend-setter within his peer grouping, G outlines the pleasure of being a rebel. He strove to establish a fresh outsider status

and sense of difference as a hip practice in order to gain further acceptance and esteem from his peers, while also simultaneously establishing 'cool' distance from them¹⁶. It also provides a neat example of how an early sense of what it is to belong to an authentic subculture and how its obverse, 'inauthenticity,' is detected. As his initial rebellious example becomes hip and popular amongst his peers, his authenticity was deemed by G to have been undermined and 'sold out': his rebellious 'trend-setting' status is negated and a new authentic subcultural strategy sought out. Such sentiments collide with my previously established rhetorical position of the lonely, isolated outsider as 'prime' material for entrance into punk rock. Here Mr. G is attempting to establish distance from his peers in striving for a new, authentic subcultural identity.

Entering punk subcultural groupings rests on a fulcrum of disenchantment with the established world: a feeling of being at odds with one's peers, wishing 'cool' distance from them, or with society in general: in short a sense of difference. Where loneliness is produced by such feelings (conflict with parents, teachers, authority figures etc.) it has the immanent potential to propel the individual to seek out and identify other peers who share the subcultural norms and values. But the opposite of loneliness, peer celebration, may prove the conditioning ground for punk. In a sort of heroic individualism, Mr. G set out to investigate the subculture more fully for himself through the investigation of existing underground cultural forms, though even this practice still rested on the assumption of rebellion against the established authority of subcultural levels deemed to have become inauthentic through popular subscription. A sense of rebellion against social conformity can be directed outwards, to false standards or forms of sociality, or inwards, to fake punks.

¹⁶ For biographical overviews of the Seattle grunge genre and Nirvana see Azerrad, (1994); Cross, (2001).

Having established that the antecedent conditions of subcultural entrance are centred around a pre-established sense of either disenchantment, loneliness, isolation, individualism or some combination of these, so constituting the central theme of difference, I want now to explore how subcultural entrants first encountered the wider punk culture in their search for a sense of authentic identity. Here the question which comes to the fore is how this initial investigation is carried out that allows the actor to become a full participant? What are the initiating factors that introduce the subculture to the potential participant and vice versa?

Primary Investigation

The next section details the early experiences of making contact with the wider punk subcultural groupings prior to becoming scene participants. Such experiences are central to what I have termed the heuristic practice of primary subcultural investigation. The participant entering a subculture after experiencing feelings of difference (whether popular with or isolated from their peers) is largely restricted by age, experience and legal restrictions from full participation in the subculture. It is important not to denigrate early subcultural participation during this period as trivial, or, indeed, inauthentic. Entering into the subculture in this age group involves a large amount of distress for the participant in terms of resistance from significant others (immediate peers) and conflict with established structures of authority such as teachers, parents and family members¹⁷.

There are three key points of primary investigation in entrance to the punk subculture: media interaction, the introduction of the punk subculture through peer and family groupings, and the first attendance at concerts. The majority of the interviewees reported that they entered punk in their early teens. This age of punk

¹⁷ See Leblanc, 2001: 1-5

entrance has also been previously documented (Andes, 1991:216; Leblanc, 2001: 69-76).

The first of the factors, media coverage of the punk culture over the last twenty-five years, has provided a key inspiration and influential entrance catalyst for a number of the interviewees of this study. Similarly, Leblanc (2001:70) reported that one of her informants was first exposed to punk aged six, seeing the Californian punk band Fear play on *The Saturday Night Live Show* in 1984: her informant's parental response was 'you'd better not get into that shit!' (2001:70). Entrance was eventually made at the age of fourteen. My own interviewees expressed similar memories of media coverage of punk over a twenty-five year time scale incorporating a number of musical genres. Among the older interviewees, Mr. R stated that he first came across punk reading a Sex Pistols write-up in the *Sounds* music paper whilst on a scout camp in 1977. Mr. S saw television reports of the Sex Pistols on the BBC programme *Nationwide* in the same year and this led him to buy the band's records. Mr. I's first contact with punk came through the BBC Radio 1 *John Peel Show* playing the Ramones and Damned in 1977. Younger participants such as Mr. B and D both cited the British heavy metal press of the 1980s such as *Kerrang* and *Mega-Metal Kerrang*. Papers covering underground hardcore bands gave them the impetus to investigate the subculture further. Likewise, Mr. C and Mr. D reported that the American skateboard magazine *Thrasher* and its column on hardcore punk provided inspiration to enter the subculture. Here Mr. B comments:

I got into hardcore specifically around the age of eleven through looking through metal magazines and seeing the odd interview with hardcore bands in there and from there going and picking up these records and checking them out.

This quote neatly summarises the practice of primary subcultural investigation in terms of age and investigative engagement with subcultural music media. The

fleeting glimpses of the obscure bands covered in such magazines led to B's further investigation and association with a peer group with similar subcultural identity. Mr. F stated that the twilight hours ITV heavy metal TV programme, *Noisy Mothers*, introduced him to the punk genre in the early 1990s. Through his involvement in skateboarding and the primary investigation of buying records, Mr. C 'gradually' became immersed in the punk scene.¹⁸ The skateboard magazine *Thrasher* allowed C to become aware of the more obscure US hardcore bands during this time:

I used to read the American magazine *Thrasher*, which at the time was a newsprint sort of magazine. I mean the print run was not so great but it used to make its way across to the UK and in that magazine there was not only skateboarding but there was a music column with interviews with hardcore punk bands. The guy who wrote it, Pushead, [AKA] Brian Schroder had a great influence on me and was responsible for getting me into all kinds of different hardcore punk bands.

However to portray media coverage of punk subcultures as the sole variable in subcultural entrance would be to ignore the wider context of social peer relations. This is of equal importance.

The majority of the interviewees spoke of peer, sibling and parental relations and this is the second key factor in primary investigation. From his initial interest in punk, drawn from his inspiration from *Thrasher*, Mr. C began to establish peer relationships geared towards membership of the punk subculture. Through primary investigation, C was eventually lucky to find another person at his school interested in hardcore. He identified him by seeing records in his school bag:

I happened to be in a corridor outside a geography lesson and there was this guy and he had a bag full of records, like there was the Stupids LP and the Adrenaline OD LP, uhh the Dagnasty LP and I went up to him, as you do in small town like that and you think you have to reach out cause you're in the middle of fucking nowhere like. I got talking to him and got loads of tapes.

Through both the recognition of subcultural badges of membership and his sense of peer isolation, Mr. C was propelled to make direct contact with a potential peer which

¹⁸ For a full, historical account of skateboarding and its connections to punk and hardcore music see, Borden, I (2001) *Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture and the Body*, Oxford: Berg

then blossomed into a friendship¹⁹. Once such peer groupings are established, mutual primary subcultural investigation can occur.

This was exemplified by Mr. Q who reported how he came across punk through his friend's tales of accompanying his elder brothers to punk gigs in the early 1980s. Whilst Q's own brothers participated in the heavy metal genre, thus exposing him to this subculture, his friends' activities in punk appealed to his sense of difference and appeared more interesting to him than heavy metal. He recalled his early experiences of listening to the bands associated with this genre in his bedroom with his friend:

[we] used to borrow and buy records, get drunk and put them on. Me and him used to throw each other round the room dancing to fucking, you know, some of the favorites were like Crucifix Antisect and the Subhumans.

Here the rehearsal of subcultural scene activities through primary investigation is clearly articulated. Q shows how borrowing and buying records, getting drunk and dancing to records, in addition to learning to differentiate between punk genre, were his main activities of primary investigation. Whilst not able to attend concerts at this point, the reciprocal engagement with punk records and similar peers is a central part of primary subcultural investigation.

Primary investigation at subcultural entrance through peer interaction was demonstrated by Mr. O. He first came into contact with the punk scene around 1983 aged thirteen, restricting full participation. His comments relate to his engagement with peers. For O, the first *Chronic Generation* LP, from the street-punk band, Chron-Gen, was played to him, in similarity to Mr. Q, in his friend's bedroom.²⁰ The impact of this record was bolstered by the cover artwork. He stated:

¹⁹ Hodkinson (2002) came across evidence of similar affiliation through the recognition of subcultural badges of membership in his ethnographic study of goth culture. Here he makes specific reference to the affiliations of subcultural members not only within their immediate locality but globally.

²⁰ Street punk is associated with the bands of the early 1980s who espoused working class politics and styles far removed from the anarcho punk scene. Bands such as Glasgow's The Exploited,

It was just like so, it was just fucking pink and yellow and it was Day-Glo as fuck and it was punk rock. It was out there.

Here an excited, emphatic claim towards the authenticity of punk rock is made: O's identification with the Day-Glo of punk rock authenticity serves to mark out the boundaries for him of what is and what is not punk rock in terms of his chief identification with a dominant aesthetic practice of the subculture. First used in punk on the Sex Pistols LP, *Never Mind The Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols* (1977), the key signifier of Day-Glo, for O, was deemed to be an authentic marker of genuine punk rock. The recycling of such codes in Mr. O's example served to authenticate for him the bands popular at his time of entry whilst also signifying to his other peers that he was 'into' the 'correct' music suitable for inclusion in his discourse of entrance.

Thus far the influence of peers, siblings and friends has been chief in the role of primary investigative subcultural entrance, as for instance through introducing music to the potential entrant. However, traditional parental influence in primary subcultural investigation has been presented/portrayed as both a conventional gatekeeper restricting young people from becoming members and participating in a subculture. A clear example of this is the Leblanc (2001) quotation above that details the parental warning of becoming involved in the subculture. Within the present study, the reverse of parental restriction is also demonstrated. For Mr. V his parent (mother) initially introduced him to the punk subculture. Raised by his grandparents in the south of England, Mr. V found that his primary subcultural investigation was kick-started by the music his visiting mother played him, such as the Sex Pistols and Nirvana in the

Birmingham's Charged G.B.H and Leamington Spa's The Varukers are just three examples from a vast array of bands. There is also close connection with the 'Oi' skinhead culture (see Marshall, 1991:67-85). Overall this street punk had an aesthetic of street style and adherents wore, studded leather jackets with band iconography painted on them, Doctor Marten boots and coloured, spiky mohican haircuts. See, for Example, *Punk's Not Dead* and *Punk Lives* (1981-83) magazines for further examples of the street punk genre. (See Glasper, 2004,)

early 1990s. He found this music did not exactly chime with his sense of taste in punk music:

I got into sort of alternative stuff like the bigger bands, like Nirvana and stuff and bands like the Sex Pistols, cause my Mum tried to play me good stuff, and I said to her I really like it but I want something that's faster. It sounds right but it needs to be twice as fast.

What is evident here is the reverse of parental restriction and hostility towards subcultural entrance. Mr. V acknowledges the previous value of the bands mentioned yet he also demonstrated the need to investigate and establish his own niche and personal taste within the subculture. For him the examples played by his mother were only partially compatible with his existing sensibilities and aspirations. What he cleaved to himself was music with greater speed.

In similar parental terms, Ms. M came from a Bradford family of social workers and stated that both her parents 'shaped her ideas on life.' Here the parental relations and also long-standing authenticity is intimated through the claim of 'her parents shaping her ideas on life'. M's primary subcultural investigation in the early 1990s was initially non-specifically described as 'kind of indie music and alternative grungy stuff' which she found lacking. So primary investigation has a chief role in either affirmation or rejection of encountered tastes, or some combination of both. It is above all a trial and error process of selection and assessment of subcultural tastes and activities at the primary investigative level. As with Mr. G above, for M the previously described genres were abandoned once she made contact with peers who were members of the punk subculture.

Thus far peer groupings have been demonstrated through a reciprocal sharing of music and the interaction with media coverage of the wider punk subculture. One of the key, overarching themes of the interview discourse of early entrance to the punk

subculture was tape trading (Marshall, 2003) ²¹. The majority of the interviewees spoke of how they were introduced to the different genres of punk music through the sharing of tapes. Tape trading is important in primary investigation as it allows existing and established subcultural members to share their taste and knowledge of their chosen subcultural genre with less or equally established peers without one or other party having the financial outlay of buying records. It was peer tape trading that eventually inspired Mr. J to enter the punk subculture. He found that his initial experience of punk rock was uninspiring on first contact in 1977. He stated that 'he got off to a false start with the seventy seven sort of stuff'. Finding the heavy metal genre of the time much more appealing, he described his initial thoughts on punk rock as a 'violent fashion' that failed to appeal to him. It was not until some five years later that he began to engage earnestly with the punk genre. This example presents the case that subcultures are not always immediately subscribed to. Through heuristic investigation they are, in the case of these interviewees, returned to after other potential genres are eliminated from their primary subcultural investigations. Mr. J reported that he was eventually inspired to listen to punk after he was given a tape of a band that affirmed his political ideas of the time. After being given a tape by a friend with the metal band, Venom and their 1982 album *Black Metal*, and London anarcho

²¹ Tape trading is a resilient practice that occurs in the hardcore and punk scenes' predating the now popular CDR, tapes were used as the first DIY method for releasing a bands songs. From the late 1970's to the present day the tape was used to also capture the live performance of a band (often referred to as bootlegging). Those on low incomes or in the stage of primary investigation found the relative cheapness of the tape and the ease of reproduction presented an easy way of trading music. Taped records, demo tapes and live recordings found themselves onto 'trade lists' sent through the post or sold for a small amount. Advertising was undertaken in the smaller fanzines and also lists of tapes (trade-lists) were given out at gigs. This practice enabled those unfamiliar with bands in other countries to hear them at little expense and to also make contacts with others around the UK and moreover the world. Finally, during the 1980s there was a concerted effort on from the record companies to outlaw or tax blank tapes. Flaunting this rule chimed with punk's rebellious stance. Tape trading still occurs but has largely been superseded by CDRs and Mp3 file sharing over the internet. See Marshall (2003)

punk band, Conflict, *It's Time to See Who's Who* of the same year, he began to form political opinions:

When I first got it [tape] I was like yeah, two noisy bands. Then after a bit it was like: shit, one of them is talking crap and one of them is talking politics. I started to get into the politics.

The assertion that he preferred music on the tape for political reasons cemented the authenticity of his choice. The investigation of the music, previously un-encountered, allows the primary investigative member to make evaluations and choices regarding the saliency of the music on the tapes.

The same process was evident in the interview transcript of Mr. F. He entered the subculture in 1995 after making tapes of the death metal band, Obituary, and trading them with an older peer, who reciprocated with tapes containing the bands Discharge, Napalm Death and American hardcore bands, Suicidal Tendencies and NO FX.²² From primary investigation of this tape and subsequent peer interaction he found that he was listening to obscure genres of punk and hardcore.²³ He considered this to be a vast improvement on his idea of punk established from clips of the Sex Pistols he'd previously seen on television. From this tape, he investigated the punk genre further and found that the lyrical content chimed with his existing political beliefs. He noted:

[Punk's] definitely got me more into politics and awareness of issues and things like that. I always had some kind of feeling that stuff wasn't right but [punk] kind of gave me the information.

The establishment and affirmation of his political beliefs through his tape-traded introduction to political punk inspired F to take his primary subcultural investigation

It has been established through the example given by Mr. C that the recognition of subcultural badges of membership allowed connections with peers where tape trading

²² For a full account of Death Metal and other genres related to the Scandinavian bands see Moynihan, M. (1998) *Lords Of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of The Satanic Metal Underground*, Los Angeles: Feral House. Chapter 2

²³ See Blush, (2001).

could occur. However non-musical forms of subcultural activity, such as skateboarding, were also reported by the interviewees as a means where peer formation and tape trading could occur. As I noted above, Mr. G decided to become involved in skateboarding as both the next step in his subcultural career and as a means of reinforcing his role as trend-setter in his school. As a result of primary investigation, G became involved with two older peers involved in skateboarding at his school. Through this he was introduced to hardcore punk. G stated that his initial contact with hardcore during this period was 'life changing' and the initial contact was bolstered through tape trading when he was given a tape by a peer with contemporary American hardcore bands on it such as the New York straightedge band, Snapcase. Further primary investigation of the genre then took place. What tape trading allows is both the primary investigation of the subculture's musical output and the subsequent formation of musical tastes.

To recap: through the interaction with media, family and siblings, the establishment of friendships and peer groups with both subcultural entrants of a similar age and those more subculturally experienced, along with tape trading, primary investigation occurs through the heuristic device of trial and error. It is purposive, but haphazard; self-directed, but with spills and setbacks. Specifically, whilst membership of the subculture is initiated through such activities, full participation stops short of regular concert attendance and participation in established punk activity.

The final key issue is therefore concert attendance an issue I will afford consideration in chapter seven. Two of the respondents stated that they attended concerts before the age of sixteen. Mr. R noted that during the early period of punk he was too young to attend the early punk concerts in Newcastle, yet there was primary

subcultural investigation of the subculture within his school peer grouping before he could finally attend a concert:

I remember the Damned played at the City Hall. I think The Stranglers, X Ray Spex was the first punk gig I sort of think. The Stranglers were like mid seventy-seven and the Damned and the Dead Boys played the end of seventy-seven and some of the kids in our school or the kids' older brothers a year above me had gone to that and [punk] was sort of coming through on a school level. And then my first outing was the Buzzcocks and Penetration in like March 1978 when I was just this little geek.

For R. primary investigation of the wider punk scene was practiced through peer relations such as listening to radio and records, watching TV or vicariously observing older peers' activities within the punk scenes. This came before he attended his first concert. The use of 'first outing' belies R's sense of primary investigation of the subculture while the self-referral to 'this little geek' plays down his initial commitment in favour of his fully-fledged punk status at the time of the fieldwork. Here there is self-recognition that R is not a fully-fledged participant of the scene; he recognises himself as marginal. It is this marginal and liminal status that categorises the primary investigative subculture member.

So in concluding this section, we can see that primary subcultural activity is relative and important principally within the actor's world of the subcultural peer group and in the initial practice of rebellion. It is marginal within the older and more established subcultural scene practices of concert attendance and what has been identified as core subcultural activities. The primary subcultural investigator, within the larger subculture and its practice, is relegated to the role of a peripheral member of the subcultural nexus, a relative bystander who, by showing persistence and commitment in searching for what is considered authentic in punk practice, may overcome and move beyond this marginal status and enter into a position of liminality with respect to fully-fledged scene participation, involvement and identity. In order to proceed towards more advanced scene knowledge of the subculture and gain an affinity and

affiliation with it, liminal individuals enter into what I have termed secondary subcultural investigation.

Secondary Investigation

For the participants involved, secondary subcultural investigation is the detailed, practical investigation of existing subcultural scene activities and the amassing of subcultural scene knowledge through the identification, reciprocation and interaction with more potential, experienced and capable peers. This is done through advancement of the previously established examples, and through further engagement with skateboarding, tape trading and interaction with specific media, listening to more obscure underground bands and the regular attendance of concerts in a more committed explorative manner. But how, more specifically, is secondary investigation different to its predecessor, primary investigation?

The majority of participants who spoke of their *deepening* subcultural involvement did so at an age where they had either left school and could attend concerts or attended such events by flaunting the legal restrictions governing entry to licensed establishments in tandem with their perception of punk's rebellious spirit. In this process the existing peer networks formed through primary investigation within the subculture are expanded, strengthened and fulfilled. They are established through repetition until 'authentic' participation is approached though not fully achieved. In short, the fledgling subcultural member in this study deepened their involvement and commitment with other subcultural members through an intensified repetition of subcultural activities. From this, the sense of affirmation is felt, shared ways of thinking are embarked upon and social networks are formed allowing the subject to participate more fully in subcultural activities.

In terms of entrance, secondary investigation is *key* in the formation of subcultural scene knowledge it is at the same time both *heuristic* and explorative. As a final introductory point to this section, it should be made clear that the practice of secondary investigation still marks the entrant as existing at either the peripheral or semi-peripheral levels of subcultural involvement. This is not to say that there is no possibility of full or 'core' participation. Indeed, secondary investigation confirms the movement from periphery to liminality as the individual is poised on the cusp of complete subcultural scene participation and practice.

Within this section I will deal with three key points. Firstly, the formation of and deepening association with punk peer groupings geared towards a specific genre and associate peer groupings gathered around the rubric of authenticity. Secondly, the deepening of commitment to the latter with the formation of link activities such as the production of tapes and fanzines. Finally, as the 1in 12 club and the Leeds scene featured in both the participant observation sections and the interviews, I wish to examine how local punk networking and organization operate in the role of secondary investigation.

In secondary investigation the *gradual* accumulation of subcultural scene knowledge takes place. As a consequence of this deepening of understanding, a sense of subcultural understanding and affiliation occurs heuristically. Here Mr. V provides a clear example of how secondary subcultural investigation takes place in the absence of more experienced peers:

We weren't told that the Dead Kennedys were a classic band and this is a classic band. We were like: where do we start? Oh right well I went to see this band and this band supported and they are playing again and we should check 'em out and we should do it from scratch ourselves. Every time we found a band that was amazing we were like oh right, what label are they on? Follow that up, check out the other bands on that label.

From this practice the vernacular skills used to participate in punk subcultural scene discourse and to become knowledgeable of its sub-genres are produced through *repetitive* engagement. Such subcultural activity, outlined in this quote, is both investigative and exploratory. It is firstly investigative through the trial and error process, as in V's case of finding out what the 'classic bands were' and through the process of ascertaining what is good and bad practice within the subculture. This level of investigation involves refining one's tastes according to a chosen genre of punk. Once selected, the exploration of the specifics of that given genre can occur, which in this case involves searching out and exploring other bands' labels and concerts.

This practice was carried out by Mr. B in his search for an appropriate peer group. He stated how he struggled to find peers who listened to American hardcore during the mid-1980s.²⁴ He found himself associating with 'the metal kids' for company, although the dominance of the metal genre within his peer group and the obscurity of hardcore punk left him with the peer status of outsider and his isolation intact.²⁵ This

²⁴ American hardcore, is the US equivalent and legacy of both the American and English punk scenes and debates are rife in relation to the exact origin of the genre. This was the genre that extended the punk ethic of DiY into the formation of national and global networks. Hardcore was a phenomenon that took a foothold in the UK in the early nineteen eighties with bands such as The Dead Kennedys, Black Flag toured there. Indeed both the aesthetic and musical style of American hardcore has become a relatively stable influence on punk rock in the UK up the present day. Indeed Mr. R speculates that the initial contact with this genre came through tape trading and the Californian band, Crucifix touring the UK in 1984 after recording for the Crass records subsidiary label Corpus Christi: entitled *Dehumanisation*. Also the American band, MDC, (Millions of Dead Cops) recorded and released a hardcore record on Crass records in 1982: *Multi Death Corporations*. In terms of style there are as many sub-genres and styles of American hardcore as there are bands. Overall the tempo and speed of many of these bands was faster, more energetic and the approach to the music more direct than many of their British counterparts in the early 1980s. For an American view of British punk's initial reaction to the Californian hardcore band, Black Flag, See Rollins, H (1995) *Get In the Van*, Washington 2/13/61 and the comprehensive history of American hardcore from 1977 until the mid 1980s: Blush, S. (2001) *American Hardcore: A Tribal History*, New York Feral House. Also see any issue of *Maximum Rock and Roll* 1984-present.

²⁵ 'Metal kids' relates to the once separate genres popular in youth culture from the 1950s onwards. By using the genre term 'metal' in the mid-1980s this serves as a genre location indicator. D is referring to the acceptability of showing affiliation with a number of sub-genres of punk in this time period and this broadly reflects the dissolving and shifting of musical genre boundaries evident in the late seventies and early eighties. The genre of rock known as metal was first invoked in the late nineteen seventies

led to his continuance of secondary investigation resulting in the subsequent discovery of, and his eventual identification with, the sub-genre of straight edge. Stating that he did not appreciate the drinking and drug taking of his subcultural peers, he found that the adoption of the straight edge allowed him to 'resist peer pressure to drink'. His secondary investigation eventually resulted in the direct connection and the formation of a peer group scene associated with straight edge beliefs. This both deepened his commitment to the subculture and provided a sense of affiliation and 'brotherhood':

It was a nice little clique to be in and there was not that many straight edge kids about so you had like a feeling of brotherhood and that kind of thing. I mean if you saw some kids into the straight edge and stuff you understood each other and had a link.

Mr. B's testimony demonstrates the problems that subcultural investigation can present. Through trial and error, secondary investigation continued until the most authentic and personally suitable punk subcultural scene grouping was identified in terms of taste and affiliations formed with it. The affiliation with a group of outsiders, initially to the existing punk scene of the late 1980s and to punk activities couched in hedonism, located the sense of unity and then allowed B to show affinity with a group marginalised within the punk scene. This deepened both his sense of affiliation and his particularistic commitment to the punk subculture.

to describe the sound of bands post rock and heavy rock with bands such as UFO, Judas Priest, AC/DC and Motorhead. Later the 'new wave of British heavy metal' was used by participants as parlance to describe the new metal bands of the early 1980s such as Iron Maiden, Accept, The Scorpions, The Tygers of Pan Tang, Vardis, Venom and Samson, etc. Indeed, the music press of the time (*Sounds*, *Kerrang*, *Melody Maker* and *NME*) coined a term for the plethora of latter bands involvement as NWOBHM. Such genres were viewed as distinct and separate from the genres of punk rock as both the music press and fans viewed punk as a separate genre. However, during the mid-to-late-eighties there was a sea change of opinion as musical styles and genres merged with punk. Punk and hardcore bands began to play metal and vice versa. Evidence of this is most visible and audible in the adoption of American bands such as Anthrax and Metallica playing fast, energetic and angry music of British street punk combined with the dexterity and musicianship of metal, wearing street punk band t-shirts such as Discharge and GBH. Vice versa, punk bands such as Onslaught, Heresy, Concrete Sox and Sacrilege did the same. Overall this genre became to be known as 'Crossover.' a loose term which summarised the blurring of boundaries between punk, metal, hardcore and heavy metal in the 1980s and beyond. For further discussion of this genre see (See Arnett, 1996; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 1991, 2000). For the media coverage on this see the issues of *Mega Metal Kerrang* from 1986 onwards and for criticism, see the UK scene reports from the same period in *Maximum Rock and Roll*.

Thus far, within secondary investigation, peer pressure has remained unexamined. In the previous section on primary investigation, Mr. G considered himself an authentic trend-setter and commented that he controlled the peer pressure in his subcultural grouping. In the role of secondary investigation this changes dramatically. Once immersed in the hardcore punk subculture, G found his peer group through secondary subcultural scene investigation also in the niche genre of straight edge. However, where B clearly articulates the conscious decision to resist peer pressure and become straight edge, for Mr. G the opposite is the case: his role is reversed from his early subcultural experience: he is no longer a trend-setter, rather a follower! He has become the person he chastised for following his rebellious examples at school! G's secondary investigation of the straight edge comes through a peer pressure to conform to existing straight edge beliefs, even though he had little knowledge of what they meant at the time. Of all the interviewees Mr. G was clearest in relation to the peer pressure he felt during his early years to participate in the hardcore scene.

Issues of authenticity become striking here as the subject clearly makes the distinction between being an inauthentic participant in the genre of straightedge and attempting to be a full participant before further secondary investigation of the meaning of this subcultural practice could be performed.²⁶ Becoming straightedge at 16, and initially having no idea what this entailed, G comments on how this decision was a result of peer pressure and a fear of being identified as inauthentic by a more involved straightedge peer:

²⁶ Straightedge draws its title from the DC band, Minor Threat's song 'Straight Edge' and originates in American hardcore from around 1980. In short straight edge is the complete abstinence from drink, drugs, premarital sex and adopts a positive attitude. It is a reaction to the hedonism of past and present youth culture's: this has been termed a 'rebellion against rebellion' Lahickey (1997:xviii). Boston's SSD and Washington DC's Minor Threat and a number of later New York Hardcore such as Youth Of Today, Gorilla Biscuits, Judge and Bold were representative of this period. For full accounts see Sinker (2001), Anderson and Jenkins (2001) Blush (2001) Lahickey (1997).

My decision to be straight edge harks back to a conscientious fashion decision back in the day. I remember going to see [band] and they were all x'ing up and stuff and I x'ed up to be part of the crew. And they are like 'oh, so you're straight edge then?' And I'm like yeah OK, I'm straight edge and then I kind of like found out what it meant and stuff and I was like: Ok I'm gonna be straight edge for a year just to prove I'm not addicted. I was like doing it purely for fashion, to be part of the crowd, to belong. Six years later I still don't feel the need to drink or whatever.

Here there is the clear suggestion that the process of subcultural scene membership is learnt – 'then I kind of like found out what it [straight edge] meant' – but taste is not governed solely by the individual's preference at the point of secondary investigation. For G (as with Mr.V's opening comments above) the clear admission that he did not fully understand the implications of what was involved with the straightedge scene and his admission of succumbing to peer pressure and the need to 'fit in', meant that he merely assumed this role until he could participate long enough to investigate straight edge practice. The question by his peers, 'oh, so you're straight edge then?' also reveals either that there is some affinity being expressed between peers, or, at the same time, that some 'doubt' on the part of the questioner is present. The affirmative response to the questioner reveals the fear G has of being discovered as inauthentic and this leads to further, secondary subcultural investigation. This is where the peer pressure is revealed.

Mr. G's example summarises the central point that secondary investigation of the subculture is governed by the two-way impact of peer pressure and 'bluffing' around questions of identity and taste. As Mr. V stated above, 'no one told us the Dead Kennedys were a classic band.' Similarly, no one told B or G what straight edge was, they had to find out through secondary investigation, although B made a conscious decision to become involved to avoid peer pressure to drink and G did so merely through peer pressure. Once such knowledge is investigated and explored heuristically, detailing how the shared subcultural scene values, rules and norms operate, a deeper form of participation and commitment can occur.

Overall, through secondary investigation the subcultural peer group is sought out and established. I have shown how peer pressure is either refuted or withheld as a practice of gaining entrance credentials. What runs alongside this entrance practice is a deepening of commitment through the more meaningful reiteration and intensification of subcultural activities. The question arises: what shape and form does this commitment take in secondary subcultural investigation?

I have established that the second element of secondary investigation is the selection of a specific punk scene and I now wish to explore more fully the deepening of commitment and the more precise adoption of values within the subculture. As I noted above, two of the interviewees chose to abstain from drinking and drug use in order to demonstrate their level of commitment to a specific punk scene. The other most salient demonstration of commitment was vegetarianism. The most striking similarity between the interviewees was that all of them were, or had at some time in their subcultural careers, been either vegetarian or vegan. Mr. R, O, Q, K, J and C were explicit in stating that the main influence for this change in diet was the discovery of the anarcho-punk genre in their teenage years with its heavy emphasis on animal rights politics. Mr. Q stated on his choice of punk genre that 'if it wasn't anarcho it wasn't good'. He became a vegetarian and later through secondary investigation became active, with other punks from his area, in forming a hunt saboteurs' cell. Mr. C was explicit how his choice to become a vegetarian was both a combination of the need to impress his girlfriend at the time and his investigation of the anarcho-punk genre:

She was a vegetarian and we went to Birmingham like, 'cause this is where I used to go a lot of the time to buy records and stuff. I bought a Ripcord record that day, *Defiance of Power* and there's an anti-McDonalds song on the LP. There we were stood outside McDonalds. There I am chomping on a burger, a proper McDonalds burger, and she's vegetarian. Anyway, I suppose it's the sort of thing where you want to impress your

girlfriend, and stuff, you want to do the right thing. So then like, I was going to be a vegetarian. I ended up doing it and sticking with it and got more into it.

Mr. C shows how the level of commitment is both a combination of peer pressure and the input of the political statements of the genres of punk he was investigating. As I noted above, Mr. Q became involved in the Hunt Saboteurs alongside Ms. W and Ms. M.

The levels of commitment for the interviewees were extended to other activities within their chosen punk scenes. Mr. R made a fanzine and copied tapes for friends before joining his first band in 1984. Danbert Nobacon took inspiration from early concerts by the band Crass, who demonstrated the ease of which goals could be achieved in punk rock through DiY, and took early steps towards forming Chumbawamba. Mr. S became involved in the promotion of gigs for the 1in12 club in Bradford. In short, all of the interviewees spoke of their regular attendance of punk concerts during the later stages of their subcultural scene entrance. The short list of secondary investigative activities detailed here demonstrated, in contrast to primary investigation, the deepening of levels of commitment to the punk subculture.

Authenticity is an implicit feature of the interviewees' talk regarding their commitment to a given sub-genre of punk. The majority of the interviewees chose the anarcho punk scene as an authentic, ethical version of punk rock. To be committed to a specific genre of punk and form opinions of what is and is *not* punk, is at the same time both an index of the actors' commitments to the subculture scene and also a badge of authenticity and separation. It is also a key element of secondary subcultural investigation. Mr. R demonstrated that some of his punk subcultural peers 'just didn't get it'. Their interpretation of punk for R and his peers was inauthentic. Here R voices his opinions of the rise of street punk in the early eighties:

It occurred everywhere, it was stupid, like, especially the press, Garry Bushel and *Sounds* and stuff like *Punk Lives* with the fucking 'punk prime-minister' or whatever. And I mean there are probably equivalents of that now in some sort of cheesy pop paper. I mean you know it was laughable. We used to laugh our asses off at the Exploited. I should show you my copy of *Punk's Not Dead* by the Exploited where it just has these crazy drawings just taking the piss out of these fucking goons you know. So yeah, I wasn't really down with unity 'cause there was like punks who got it and fucking punks who didn't.

I shall reserve detailed analysis of how such comment is engaged in the discursive construction of punk authenticity until chapter six. Presently I wish to use this quote to establish that alongside a deepening commitment to a scene in secondary subcultural investigation, an opinion is formed regarding what is deemed to be – and what is not – authentic punk rock. For the interviewees of this study, secondary investigation involved an affinity towards what was considered an authentic version of punk rock and the active demonstration of a commitment to it. One such example of such a commitment in the field-work was involvement in the 1in12 club scene.

The final element of secondary investigation details how affinities and commitments for the 1in12 Club scene are formed. Indeed, it is not only peers but also organizations, networks and groups associated with punk which act as a magnet for entrance. The 1in12 Club is introduced here as a hub of initial involvement and entrance for a number of the interviewees. The club is an example of a community of outsiders due to its affiliations with anarchism and links with political activities associated with marginalised left-wing groups. The links of these groups with anarchism also acted as a magnet for those followers of the anarcho punk scene. The sense of disenchantment with the world, the dissatisfaction with what was considered inauthentic, was supported through the actors' entrance and affiliation with the 1in12. Located chiefly around secondary subcultural investigation, this organization provided a proper resolution to the initial isolation and loneliness of some of the interviewees. It functioned, from the point of view of the interviewees, as an authentic haven of solace for the socially disaffected. Here I demonstrate how some

of its members came to be involved in it through their secondary subcultural investigation. Many of the interviewees spoke of how the club 'gradually' drew them into full political subcultural scene participation for varying periods of time. The club also represents a fascinating intersection of punk rock and politics.

Mr. C was invited to gig there in 1992; Mr. R became involved whilst living in a squat in Leeds before being invited to promote gigs there. Mr. K and Danbert Nobacon volunteered to help renovate the building in 1988. Mr. S volunteered to promote gigs with the club from 1983 onwards and Mr. O and Q attended those and later gigs. The binding element of attraction to the 1in12 was its anarchist sensibilities that combined with the interviewees' perception of authentic punk: that it is cheap, anti-profit, accessible, inclusive, rebellious, libertarian and political. In what follows there are various claims made by the interviewees regarding the cheapness of the club, its empowering potential and its status as a scene of outsiders celebrated by its sense of difference. Mr. C referred to the club as a 'mixed bag of freaks'. The rhetorical implications of this statement lie in its wry celebration of variety, community and outsidership. Unity consists of difference; solidarity is cemented through social distinction.

I shall now examine three of the members' reasons for becoming involved with the 1in12 club in the perceived entrance stage of secondary subcultural investigation. Mr. H made contact with the 1in12 club through a college friend who played in a band, inviting him to a gig there in 1992. He was impressed with the 'cheapness' and 'collective nature of the club'. The sense of cheapness and accessibility to marginal groups is a common thread of interview discourse, not least because a number of the interviewees were on unemployment benefit throughout the 1980s. Here the authenticity of the club is alluded to in H's claim that the club is not 'in it for the

money', and has 'no leader to dictate to you' through its collective organisation: sentiments which corroborated his disenchantment and affirmed his sense of difference. The impression the 1in12 made on H led to his secondary investigation of the punk subculture through the supportive lens of the established scene peer groupings there. He stated that he 'gradually' became more involved in DiY hardcore and punk through picking up 'flyers' and 'chatting' to others at these events. His subsequent scene relations were formed as a result of attending more of these events.

After a period where he described himself as a 'loner' at the club, H exemplified how an initial friendship was struck up. Here the recognition of what he perceived to be an authentic, common sensibility of punk culture was made allowing him a sense of affinity and affiliation. He became further involved by investigating its various subcultural scene activities. Mr. K came over and chatted to him at a 1in12 club gig:

I was sat at the bar and it was really busy and he actually came up and sat next to us did Mr. K. And it was like 'hello, like how are you?' Fucking hell! Yeah, sound! And it was like 'did you like the band?' And I was like yeah, they're really good. And it was like 'what's your name? Oh, H, 'I'm K' It was like wicked, I [realised] I was just as freaky as all the other people you know.

For H, the initial peer relationships in punk were made through a secondary subcultural investigation within the club where an affinity with the other club members was established. Whilst being accepted, H insisted on describing himself as a loner, stating that he never adopted the 'correct clothing' in order to secure membership and acceptance. This is an interesting rhetorical point in that he considered the clothing secondary to authentic subcultural scene practice. He preferred to wear his own 'normal' clothing style as a marker of authenticity, yet remained accepted as a club member. It is also significant that his rejection of peer pressure to adopt dress codes reflects the club's general disposition. Within the club, H's sense of difference was upheld allowing him the esteem to enter into, and become

further involved with, secondary investigation of the club's activities. He joined the 'mixed bag of freaks.'

Ms. G's secondary investigation occurred when she moved to Bradford to be with her sisters. Here she found through secondary investigation that there was a community that reflected her own ideas on life:

Everyone moved out of my hometown and found better lives through the punk scene and had been to different towns ending up in Bradford, so I followed the sisterly route.

Int: What attracted you to the punk and hardcore scenes there?

G: well it was the people at first that attracted me. I just got on with people so well. Sort of realised they are the best sort of people I have ever met in my life. They are just dead down to earth and stuff and, erm, the music grew on us at first. It wasn't instantaneous with the music thing, it was the people and the sense of community that brought me to it.

G's term, the 'best sort of people', whose chief value for her was that they were 'down to earth', is used here to authenticate the sense of affinity and community she felt at the club. The colloquial phrase 'down to earth' is a vernacular synonym for 'authentic'. Its rhetorical value is reinforced by the sense of contrast implicit in its metaphorical reference. The presupposed opposites of being 'down to earth' are either delusion ('head in the clouds') or deceit ('pie in the sky'). Such terms are used here both to verify and justify G's reasons for attraction to and involvement with the club. While I have previously established that the combination music and politics has been the sole reason for and secondary investigation, in this instance the opposite is the case: for G states that the music came after involvement and identification with subcultural members. The point is not the priority of one or other factor, but the way any can facilitate entry and then confirm and reinforce this in combination with others.

The benefits of such a geographic move in subcultural scene terms, and the subsequent connections made, coincide with the theme of personal transformation through secondary investigation. Initially G described herself as 'shy' and 'lacking in

confidence' when she first moved to Bradford. After about three months of club activity, G noted that she became 'almost over-confident.' This personal transformation was chiefly produced, for her, through a 'sense of achievement from doing DiY activity, stuff that could not normally be achieved.' For Ms. G the 1in12 provided a 'non-judgmental space and a sense of community and family' that increased peer influence and inspired what she considered to be genuine, autonomous activity. Here the claims towards subcultural activity centre around the sense of both personal and collective control governing her activities in the 1in12. Through secondary investigation and participation, her sense of an authentic belonging at the point of entrance was established. The case for this is located around the rhetorical distinction between DiY at the 1in12 and other subcultural and cultural spaces where 'stuff could not normally be achieved.' Authenticity is espoused further in her claims for the 1in 12 providing a sense of non-judgmental community and family. Here the opposites of 'lack of a collective feeling and solidarity' are intimated as inauthentic ways of being.

Finally, Mr. F's secondary investigation of political punk in the taped music described above steered him towards a university degree in politics at Bradford. From there he made connections with the 1in12 scene around 1999. However, whilst he found, in similarity to the other interviewees, what he described as 'like-minded' people at the 1in12, whose atmosphere he felt 'supportive', he occasionally found the relatively advanced ages of his peers and the 'cliquey' atmosphere of the club off-putting. The problem here with the subcultural community of outsiders is that the perceived atmosphere of the club belonging for young newcomers can be off-putting: the existing experience and the full participation of the members there made for a difficult period of assimilation for him. As outsiders to mainstream culture,

established, vernacular daily norms and practices can act as a barrier to the newcomer. Mr. H noted this above. From my participant observation at the 1in12, there is a period on entering the club when one feels initially excluded. This feeling dissipates once familiarity and involvement occur. However, this was in the negative for F: the fruition of secondary subcultural investigation does not always pay off. His feelings of being out of step with the advanced age of his peers and the perceived 'cliquey' atmosphere, led to further secondary subcultural investigation which resulted in a move to Leeds after his University degree had finished. Here is a keen example of how a person may leave the 1in12 club scene, an issue I will deal with in much more detail in chapter eight. For present purposes, F's example has a dual purpose here. Not only does it show how the 1 in12 club is entered; it simultaneously shows how the Leeds scene is also considered for relocation due to its younger scene.

Overall I have established that secondary subcultural investigation in broad terms is the establishment, through the *heuristic* repetition of subcultural practice, of a peer group affinity chiefly identified with a *specific* scene interest in the punk subculture. Secondly, once an affinity is established a sense of commitment and authenticity begins to be generated. What this serves to do is to establish, for the actor, what is and is not an authentic genre/scene of punk rock. In particular, I have shown how the investigation and adoption of the anarcho punk genre led to a number of the interviewees becoming involved with the 1in12 club scene and how this involvement was established along the lines of what they considered to be authentic punk practice. Secondary subcultural investigation involves initial participation within such a scene, continuing until the member has achieved full acceptance and membership status.

Conclusion

Overall I have identified the initial pattern and central theme of entrance to the punk subculture as an *investigative* one: a cultural activity that involves the formation of peer identification, interaction and reciprocal support in order allow the participant to strive towards full, authentic participation in the punk scene. All the interviewees laid claim to the learning process involved before some form of full participation could be recognized by their peers. What though has not been discussed in the above is the ethical history of the punk scenes the participants found themselves immersed in and influenced by. In tandem with a number of the participants of this study the ethical bedrock of punk has evolved and matured with the members of the subculture, constantly being redefined and reinterpreted. It is to the thorny issue of ethics that I now turn my attention.

Chapter Four: Punk Ethics

The name is Crass, not Clash!
They can stuff their punk credentials
'cause it's them that take the cash!
Crass (1978) *The Feeding Of the Five Thousand* (Small Wonder Records).

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set out a relatively coherent ethics of DiY punk rock in order to provide a framework for the presentation of the ethnographic data in succeeding chapters. Such a purpose immediately runs up against a potential difficulty. Trying to show how an overall ethical corpus informs DiY punk rock may easily lead to, or appear to support, the assumption that this is a universal, absolute entity. This is not the case. Understanding any particular manifestation of DiY ethics, in a given milieu or scene, needs to begin with both the similarities and differences it has with other, wider punk subcultural scene groupings. How do they relate to and yet remain distinct from each other? Here it should be remembered that recognition of this analytical point was built into the methodological choice of studying two geographically adjacent punk subcultural scenes in Leeds and Bradford. In the present context, this choice allows the presentation of ethical values without an ironic or realist subscription to a 'core' punk morality and ethos. This is the trap I outlined in chapter one, that a number of biographical works on punk rock have fallen into in advancing their own versions of punk as gospel and, in support of their own ethical credentials, denigrating others as inauthentic.

Authenticity has a shadowy presence in the background of this chapter, but will become openly manifest later on, in the chapters dealing with practice and the passage into and out of punk. It is the key issue, indeed even the key theme, especially of anarcho punk, and the subsequent assimilation of American hardcore punk which is my central focus throughout the thesis. This focus has been chosen for two major

reasons. Firstly, whilst it could be seen as the selective advancement of a specific genre, anarcho punk and hardcore loomed large in the backgrounds of the informants of the present study. Secondly, these scenes have a rich history of resistance and of intensifying what can be called the early 'punk spirit' in its active conjunction of political action, DiY cultural production and punk musical values.

That punk is considered by many theorists as a subculture is my first port of call in developing a relative model of punk ethics. Subcultures and countercultures establish themselves against either a parent culture or a political and economic system, yet they are sometimes set off against each other as if they present radically opposed alternatives.²⁷ The term counterculture may be applied to punk as a political formation in so far as it is concerned with dramatic social political and cultural change, placing itself in direct conflict with parent cultures and hegemonic values, ethics and norms. When used exclusively in this way, the term can easily become set up against that of subculture. This is certainly the case when subcultures are advanced as being chiefly concerned with aspects of style and identity whilst conforming largely to a parent culture. This is a simplistic and misleading dichotomy. Punk, including anarcho punk, may well be both, as for example when we consider its national and international connections (counterculture) and its geographically and temporally specific scenes and groupings (subcultures). There is clearly a considerable overlap between the two definitions and their objects of description. Further, there is at times an uneasy 'fit' between the chosen activity and the term applied to it: is it subcultural or countercultural? I am suggesting that the decision as to whether punk is a counterculture or subculture provides a wider indication of the central argument of this chapter: that the ethics of punk, as realized by the participant,

²⁷ Whilst the term subculture is applied to DiY punk in the loosest sense in this chapter it is presented for reasons of continuity and brevity rather than for ideological and rhetorical effect.

rest upon the acceptance of one or more of a number of competing claims with regard to what punk actually is. Punk is shaped in relation to how it is defined.

Early theories of subcultures had the tendency to present them as coherent, unitary wholes, complete with their own cohesive internal dynamics. This was a falsely syncretic gloss on what was always a far messier reality. In addition, the relationship of subcultures to mainstream groups was presented in dualistic terms. This can easily lead to misconceptions, and in order to help offset them, it may be instructive to return to Albert Cohen (1955) who theorized the emergence of youth subcultures as a response to tensions in the wider culture, perceived by young people as ‘problems’ which he defines as largely status-driven. Subcultures, for Cohen, form through understandings generated between groups of young people with a common understanding of their plight which, in turn, is transformed into a set of practical solutions together with their own internal dynamics of norms and rules. It is worth quoting the author at length here:

The emergence of these ‘group standards’ of this shared frame of reference, is the emergence of a new subculture. It is cultural because each actor’s participation in this system or norms they go by in evaluating people. These criteria are an aspect of their cultural frames of reference. If we lack the characteristics or capacities which give status in terms of these criteria, we are beset by one of the most typical and yet distressing of human problems of adjustment. One solution is for individuals who share such problems to gravitate toward one another and jointly to establish new norms, new criteria of status which define as meritorious the characteristics they *do* possess, the kinds of conduct of which they are capable. (Cohen, 1955:65-6 emphasis in original)

An ethics of punk from this position is entirely convincing – disaffection with or a sense of exclusion from mainstream norms and values can lead to people gravitating toward one another and jointly establishing alternative norms, values and criteria of status which, as in the case of anarcho punk scenes, are antagonistic to those of the mainstream – yet we still need to accommodate the variability and mutability of punk ethics. They are not identical across different DiY scenes and do not remain invariant

over time. The extent of the difficulty here can be gauged by the affirmation afforded to the illusion of uniformity and cohesion by the rhetorical claim of some individuals and groups that, unlike those with whom they are unfavourably compared, their own ethical practice is closer in spirit to what was 'originally' set out in punk's moment of creative emergence. Such rhetoric works at the same time to undermine or annul the validity of the dualistic notion of punk's opposition to mainstream culture in so far as the claim is for a more pristine continuity with an originating ethos.

Like its subcultural predecessors, punk provided a vehicle for its participants in which previously unacceptable forms of behaviour could be simultaneously adopted and accepted within the group while still being able to cause offence to 'straight' or 'normal' members of society. Cohen suggested that new subcultures 'represent a new status system sanctioning behaviour tabooed or frowned upon by the larger society', and that 'the acquisition of status within the new group is accompanied by a loss of status outside the group' (1955: 68). Cohen's work clearly developed the analysis of youth subcultures of the mid-20th century period into a credible argument – or at least the beginnings of such an argument – and so provided a useful foundation (now largely neglected) for subsequent subculture theory. His model is nevertheless far too restrictive in terms of its scope and takes little account of how youth subcultures become relatively accepted and assimilated into mainstream culture over time or how their members in time turn themselves over to positions of respectability. Nor is the model able to account for the divisions and difficulties that occur *within* a particular subculture and how these may give rise to 'new' subcultural formations or splinter-formations (scenes) at the same time as sharing similarities with their subcultural predecessors. The model deals with wider divisions but not with those that occur within a group.

The occurrence of divisions within a subcultural milieu is a useful focus in advancing the present discussion. Such divisions may even be the best place to start in terms of mapping out an ethics of punk rock. Yet when we turn to later theorizations of scenes and subcultures we find that the emphasis still falls on divisions between them or between them and either mainstream society or a dominant culture. For example, work on the sociology of deviance and later some of the research of the BCCCS produced a voluminous literature regarding the problems of difference and conflict *between* subcultural groupings. Space restricts full discussion of all these distinctions; I shall confine the discussion here to three key texts in order to illustrate the argument. These are, in the order of their presentation, Stan Cohen (1972), Howard Becker (1964) and Dick Hebdige (1979).

The issue of divisions between youth subcultures is central to Stan Cohen's (1972) study of mods and rockers, particularly through the attention he gives to the role of the media in amplifying divisions through their ideological focus on the social deviance generated by subcultural differences. Cohen was right to criticise existing models of how subcultures arise *yet* he too presents a homogenous sociological account of such groupings. He adroitly avoids mention of the internal divisions and dualisms 'debated over' in relation to questions of conduct and practice within youth subcultures. Cohen is chiefly concerned with media reaction and the negative construction of conflict between subcultures through the discourse of social deviance. He notes: 'The focus here is on how society labels rule-breakers as belonging to certain deviant groups and how, once the person is thus type cast, his acts are interpreted in terms of the status to which he has been assigned' (1980:12). As well as deviant subcultural action being responsible for an increase in social control, Cohen's thesis argues the *reverse* of this: that the subcultural reaction to its deviance

reflected in the media produces an *expansion* in the deviant behaviour of the subculture. Deviancy amplification is interesting in as much as it is useful in explanatory terms for punk's earlier exploits, such as the Sex Pistols 'controversial' appearance on the *Today Programme* in 1976, but it sheds little light on the question of how an ethics of punk should be mapped. At least in the case of punk, but arguably for many other subcultures, ethics are a continual topic of discursive argument – claim and counterstatement, counter-claim and counter-counterstatement – since they do not have any single or absolute lodestone to which they are oriented. Members of subcultures do not navigate through the vicissitudes of everyday life with a fixed moral compass.

Howard Becker's *Outsiders* (1964), whilst not specifically a study of youth culture and a predecessor of Stan Cohen's work, provides an ethnographic account of artistic divisions within the subculture of the jazz musician. To develop the outline presented in chapter one, Becker makes explicit the relation between the authentic, 'hip' jazz musician and his 'square' counterpart, the musician who places personal interests over artistic integrity. I shall say much more in chapter nine on the dilemmas of such a relationship. Here I want to use Becker to illustrate how subcultures can present various tensions over ethical issues of integrity *within* that subcultural group. Becker refers to such groups as 'cliques', and makes the following observation:

Cliques made up of jazzmen offer their members nothing but the prestige of maintaining artistic integrity; commercial cliques offer security, mobility, income and general social prestige (Becker, 1963:110).

This conflict is a major problem in the career of the jazz musician, and the development of his career is contingent on his reaction to it. Becker's argument is based on the subcultural member's degree of integrity as a musician and reactions within the wider subculture to their conduct. These may be affirmative or give rise to

tensions, disagreements and disputes. Evaluative responses are based upon vernacular ethical norms and values within the subculture. In many respects Becker's work prefigures the ethical dilemmas of punk, and helps to emphasise how issues of ethical difference arise *within* scenes as well as *between* subcultures. These give rise to dilemmas that are often defined around rhetorical claims as to who are authentic and inauthentic members of a subculture.²⁸

In similar recognition of the internal subcultural divisions observed by Becker, Hebdige addressed the internal politics within punk by explicitly commenting on the internal inconsistencies between original and later members of the subculture:

The style no doubt made sense for the first wave of self-conscious innovators at a level which remained inaccessible to those who became punks after the subculture had surfaced and been publicized. Punk is not unique in this: the distinction between originals and hangers-on is always a significant one in subculture. Indeed, it is frequently verbalized (plastic punks or safety-pin people, burrhead rastas or rasta band wagon, weekend hippies, etc versus the 'authentic' people) (1979:122).

Hebdige brings these critical distinctions to the fore, though characteristically he does so through a preoccupation with style. It is as if he has to match the stylistic excess of youth subcultures in his own analysis, but this leads to a distorted perspective. For instance, it is not as if punk antipathy to hippies was based simply on a sartorial objection to beads and flares. In his reading of subcultures, the aesthetics of style prevail over the ethics of conduct. Divisions and antagonisms within and between subcultures have both deeper and broader causes and consequences than a predominant attention to style is able to broach. A primary focus on style is unable to encompass them sufficiently, or to interpret them satisfactorily.

As I stressed in chapter one, the major weakness of studies of youth subculture like Hebdige's is that they driven principally by their authors' own intellectual interests.

²⁸ Sarah Thornton (1995) has also made this distinction between the hip and the square during her ethnographic examination of the underground London rave cultures of the early 1990s.

At best, this can yield some interesting insights; at worst it is highly subjective, analytically wilful and empirically unverified. The shortcomings of such accounts stem from a failure to ground them at all adequately in the views, values and voices of subcultural participants themselves. My own study has sought to overcome these shortcomings through its close ethnographic attention to what participants in two DiY subcultural scenes say and do as members of the subculture. What they say and do is directly informed and influenced by their ethical standpoint.

Overall these approaches gloss over the divisions and present subcultures as unified blocs of subcultural identity or when such discrepancies are identified are discussed along the lines of style (Hebdige, 1979). One of the few advances beyond this impasse has been made by McKay (1996) in his discussion of the internal divisions between various protest factions in the 1994 London demonstrations against the Conservative government's Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of the same year. Here explicit mention is made of the divisions between those protestors who urged solidarity in challenging police attacks on the demonstration through *violent* direct action and those who chose to resist though *passive*, non-violent means. This is summarized in the statement, 'Keep it Fluffy or Keep it Spikey' (1996: 174). McKay helps pave the way towards a clearer understanding of the ethical positions and dilemmas in a counterculture. Central to what follows is a detailed investigation of how such divisions are actually *constitutive* of the ethical positions within the DiY punk rock scenes in this study.

In this chapter I shall outline the major components of punk ethics and explore in detail what is involved in the production of an ethics from a UK DiY perspective. In doing so I shall pay attention to both divisions within and between subcultural scenes, though in developing this focus I do not mean to rule out the question of international

influences – what Ulf Hannerz (2003) calls ‘transnational connections’ – or the impact of large-scale social and political events. Nor do I wish to suggest that the methods espoused by Crass and hardcore punk elements provide the sole model for punk or present the only authentic punk way to proceed. There is no such model, and no one, true, absolute way. The existence of divisions and dualisms attest to this. Punk generates a conflictual, reflexive and relatively internal dynamic with regard to what it actually is, how it is conducted, how it is authentic and how it conducts and presents its political stances. Through its intersection of music and political practice, DiY punk discourse employs a definite rhetorical strategy involving a number of competing claims specific to the identity and values of any particular subcultural variant. It is on the basis of these claims that we can map out the main tenets and principles that collectively add up to something approximating to an ethics of punk.

The three main areas of consideration on which I focus in order to sketch the ethical standpoint of punk are chosen for their direct and specific relevance to both the ethnographic subjects and the subcultural practices observed in the field in 2001. They are the initial inception of punk in the 1970s, the anarcho punk legacy and the incorporation of American hardcore from the early 1980s onwards.

Parasitic Punks and Media Parasites

Declaration of the emerging DiY punk ethic was first set out in the fanzine *Sideburns* in 1976: ‘This is a chord, here’s another! Now form a band!’ (Savage, 1991: 281). This was an expression of a general cultural sensibility that was in keeping with the alienation and sense of frustration at the thwarted creative energies of working-class youth in the late 1970s. Gray (2001) neatly articulates the early punk spirit of DiY: ‘if you’re bored, do something about it; if you don’t like the way things are done, act to change them, be creative, be positive, anyone can do it’ (2001: 153). At that time

there was a significant gap between pop music aesthetics and the everyday experience of unemployed youth. This was registered in an extension of the previously existing DiY ethic of the British counterculture. Influences from this period fed into punk (McKay, 1988:1-53). In ethical terms it has since been manifested in terms of being and remaining authentic. The ethical imperative of authenticity has directly informed DiY punk values and practices, sometimes in quite divisive ways.

Once established in the vernacular of punk culture, those who sell out, ignore, transgress or just step over the mark are met with the moral discipline of those deemed (by themselves and/or others) as authentic members of the scene. Joe Strummer even went so far as to refer to the punks in general as 'being infected with the kind of Orwellian revisionism and doublethink that was guaranteed to deny personal freedom' (Gray, 2001). Gray also cites Tony Parsons as viewing punks' new ethics as 'Stalinist'²⁹ in its approach but this glosses over the internal divisions which ethical tensions and transgressions produce in the subculture, as for instance those based around either support for or refutation of such bands as The Clash (2001: 163). The early period of UK punk reveals the first sinners and transgressors of a putative punk DiY ethic. The Sex Pistols and The Clash are perhaps the most obvious, though similar sell-outs and trade-offs were met with equal subcultural venom in the immediate months of punk's emergence as well as in subsequent years.

After the initial outrage and banning of punk, the UK record industry signed up large numbers of punk bands in order to stave off the general recession which had resulted in the decline of record sales in the late 1970s (Laing, 1985). This incorporation by the industry was viewed by the Epping punk band Crass as utter travesty – a complete 'sell-out'. The term 'sell-out' here refers not only to seduction

²⁹ Tony Parson's in Gray (2001: 163). See, *Westway To the World* DVD special feature interviews.

by the lures of commercial success, but also to compromise or even abandonment of punk principles and values, or what, rather less kindly, we might call an essentialist sense of punk propriety. This was the first significant example of a punk critique of ethical infraction. Penny Rimbaud (1998) stated that:

Within six months the movement had been bought out. The capitalist counter-revolutionaries had killed it with cash. Punk degenerated from being a force for change, to becoming just another element in the grand media circus. Sold out, sanitized and strangled, punk had become just another commodity, a burnt-out memory of how it might have been (1998:74).

This blanket ethical censure gave rise to the offshoot anarcho punk scene with its associated claim of moral and political authenticity in the face of what was considered to be a 'bought out' and sterilized punk subculture. Rimbaud and Crass were in many ways responsible for first voicing the concerns that punk had become watered down and politically inert. For Crass the core ethic of DiY had been overtaken by executive managers, records deals, contracts and money and the result was that the subversive, rebellious and political edge of punk had been eclipsed. Such sentiments were articulated in their first twelve inch record, *The Feeding of the Five Thousand* on the track 'Punk Is Dead':

Yes that's right punk is dead, it's just another cheap product for the consumers head. Bubblegum rock on plastic transistors, schoolboy sedition backed by big time promoters. CBS promote the Clash but it ain't for revolution it's just for cash. Punk became a fashion just like hippy used to be it ain't got a thing to do with you or me. Movements are systems and systems kill. Movements are expressions of public will. Punk became a movement 'cause we all felt lost, but the leaders sold out now we all pay the cost. (Crass, 1978)

The anger in this quote at the 'leaders' (Rotten, Strummer) in their 'selling out' of punk rock stands as testimony to the social movement that arose out of Crass and the subsequently inspired network of anarchist inspired bands at this time. The development of anarcho punk constituted a significant political turn in punk culture. To quote Rimbaud on the beginnings of Crass again: 'When Rotten proclaimed that there was 'no future,' we saw it as a challenge to our creativity – we knew there was a

future if we were prepared to work for it' (Rimbaud, 1984: 62). The influential effect and legacy of this political and musical turn on my fieldwork interviewees has been very substantial. Under the threat of the Cold War and the economic and social decline of the UK at the turn of the 1980s, Crass was organized as a band to provide an accessible and authentic conduit for the anger, protest potential and political concerns of those young people who had found themselves disenfranchised by both sell-out punk and organized political movements. Crass arose out of Rimbauds' response to the challenge posed against punk creativity.

After falling foul of censors on their 'Reality Asylum' track on the Small Wonder pressing of their first LP *The Feeding of the Five Thousand*, they began their own label, Crass Records, as a crystallization of uncompromising DiY ethics. Recording contracts were shunned, and complete creative control of the uniform artwork was retained by the Crass label. Bands had records released at an affordable price (the 'pay no more than' sticker becoming operative here), thus ensuring access and showing sympathy with the low incomes many of audience members were experiencing at the time though unemployment and economic recession. The band themselves lived on a meagre income derived from record sales and only gave interviews to DiY fanzines and played only benefit shows. Under its own momentum, the band quickly established themselves as both Situationist jokers – through a series of pranks on a number of unsuspecting establishment targets – and more importantly as the *ironic* ethical figureheads of the early anarcho punk scene. They found themselves able to release records and compilation albums of other bands with a political edge³⁰. While the political actions and music releases of Crass are too

³⁰ The actions and activities of the band Crass and their now huge legacy is too detailed and wide ranging for the scope of this research. See: Crass *Best Before 1984* sleeve notes (Crass Records, 1985); McKay (1996); Rimbaud (1998).

numerous and wide ranging to document here, their subsequent influence and legacy has acted as a blueprint for the operation of subsequent DiY scenes: in this case the Leeds and Bradford DiY scenes. The grass roots, political example Crass pioneered in their groundbreaking early releases had a marked ethical effect that came to fruition in the number of political punk bands that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Compilation Records and Anarcho Scene Networks

The first anarcho punk compilation that demonstrated the spread of anarcho punk ethics was the 1980 Crass Records compilation, *Bullshit Detector*. This featured twenty-five DiY bands from around the UK, and retailed at £1.35. What this album achieved was the consolidation of the early underground band network, not least through such practical devices as the publication of contact addresses for the bands. The second *Bullshit* album, released in 1982 and retailing at £2.75, contained 38 bands mostly from the UK. The spirit of DiY was clearly present in the sleeve notes to this double LP:

The tracks on this album express the real punk spirit of protest, independence, originality and refusal to compromise, even if some of them do not conform to the media idea of what punk 'should be'. Punk is about 'doing it yourself' and *Bullshit* is a compilation of bands and individuals who have done exactly that - it isn't going to get anyone on *Top of the Pops*, but, because it shows that there are people who want more out of life than personal gain it offers HOPE that there's something the parasitic punks and media parasites will never give us (*Bullshit Detector Two* sleeve notes).

There are two observations I want to make here. Firstly, the ethical rhetorical position of anarcho punk becomes blatantly explicit in the phrase the 'real punk spirit', while the 'originality' and 'authenticity' of DiY anarcho punk resistance is registered as an alternative to the presence of 'media punks': those out for personal gain and fame, those deemed to have become the very things punk came along to challenge. The latter are presented as a target of resistance, and othered as 'parasites' in order to provide a benchmark for where the anarcho punk alternative should

establish its initial foothold: *not to aspire* to the mainstream of *Top of The Pops*, *but to inspire* in the anarcho punk conception of a political freedom built upon bottom-up hope, trust and solidarity. In broad terms the ethical position is couched in clear and definite boundaries of 'them' and 'us'. If one wishes to remain authentic then such an ethical path involves shunning the very things anarcho punks considered punk to have initially rebelled against. Yet, as I shall show later in much more detail, the adoption of this position has an implicit ironic twist in its tail.

Secondly, by the early 1980s, the examples of Crass had clearly established themselves in a strong anarcho punk sub-genre in the UK with its roots firmly set in a rigid and uncompromising reading of the core ethics of DiY punk. The 'anyone can do it' ethos led to inspired 'spin off' projects that both cemented political links and reinforced anarcho punk scenes. The *Bullshit* compilations were mentioned by Danbert as an influential DiY blueprint for Chumbawamba's first compilation of bands known as *The Animals Packet*, a tape released in 1983 of bands making statements on animal rights. He stated in 2001 that Chumbawamba had a track on the second *Bullshit Detector* and had already made a number of contacts from this:

The first thing we did was do a compilation tape which was like mail order which was called *The Animals Packet*. We did a tape of our songs and then we did other bands like the Passion Killers, we did everything, we wrote and recorded all our own songs. We did the artwork, we put the label on the cassettes and sent them out to people. And from that I mean the time was about eighty three we were in touch [with other bands] partly though Crass's *Bullshit Detector 2* which we had a track on and the Passion Killers had a track on. We wrote to everybody asking if they wanted to be on the *Animals Packet* and that brought us in touch with the whole scene around the country which we weren't really aware of or weren't part of. And from that we went to Crass's squat gig in London and that inspired us to go on in Leeds and we got invited to play other ones around the country. And for three or four years we were part of this anarcho punk underground.

Stemming from the inspiration of the *Bullshit* albums, the above quotation clearly shows how the early networks of anarchist punk began to come together and congeal. It illustrates how new projects were inspired and developed around political issues

and DiY ethical principles with the above inclusion of animal rights as a new ethical site of resistance.³¹ These records stand as a more than adequate document of the early UK DiY punk scene, demonstrating the far-reaching impact of the DiY ethic between 1980-84. In total 103 bands and individual performers were included on these records, though this does not accurately index the total number of bands active in the UK at the time.

Anarcho punk held sway with Crass and Conflict at the helm until 1984 in the UK. In previous years Crass as a label had begun to release records by other anarchist bands such as The Snipers, Dirt, Sleeping Dogs, Zounds, Anthrax, Omega Tribe, Captain Sensible, The Alternative, Hit Parade, Lack of Knowledge, Honey Bane, The Cravats, KUKL, Anthrax and MDC. The latter Texan band, MDC, alongside their predecessors from San Francisco, The Dead Kennedys, made one of the first transnational connections with the UK punk scene in 1980. This is the period when the main anarcho punk bands such as Poison Girls, Flux of Pink Indians, the Amebix, the Subhumans, Rudimentary Peni and Conflict achieved popularity and began to form labels of their own such as Mortahate, Spiderleg, Corpus Christi, and Outer Himalayan records. These were used as the main labels supporting the large number of anarcho punk bands not on the Crass label. Anarcho punk was not the only subgenre to continue and extend punk culture into the 1980s. Many of the original bands such as The Clash and The Stranglers continued through this period, alongside the street punk that included bands such as, UK Subs, GBH, Vice Squad, Discharge,

³¹ First raised as an anarcho punk issue on the *Stations of The Crass* record with track 'Time Out' where comparisons are made to human and animal flesh. Animal rights became a central ethical theme over the next decade. Around the time of the *Animals Packet* there were numerous anarcho records voicing animal rights issues such as the promotion of vegetarianism, anti hunting and anti vivisection themes. See for example Flux of Pink Indians (1981) *Neu Smell* ep and the track 'Sick Butchers'. Conflict (1982) *It's Time Too See Who's Who*, (1983) *To a Nation of Animal Lovers*; Amebix, (1983) *No Sanctuary* ep. Subhumans, (1983) *Evolution* ep; Antisect (1983) *In Darkness, There is No Choice*, in particular the track 'Tortured and Abused'.

The Addicts, The Varukers, and Chaos UK, to name just a few³². The other subgenre of Oi combined the earlier working class skinhead fashion and politics of the late 1960s with punk's uncompromising position. Bands such as The Last Resort, The Four Skins, Sham 69 and The Cockney Rejects stand as examples of this and also as testimony to the plurality of competing subcultural distinctions within the wider definition of punk rock.

As I have already noted, these subgenres and subcultures didn't co-exist in peaceful harmony. There were numerous clashes between the various scenes. Divisions between them are emblematic of the conflicts over what constitutes the real, basic and durable punk ethic. This period threw up examples of violent conflicts, most notably between punks and skinheads and street-punks against anarcho punks.³³ Throughout the 1980s many shows were marred by violence, conflict and fighting between the various scene factions within punk. Many street-punks and skinheads viewed anarcho and peace punks as middle class hippies and so legitimate targets of attack. In ethical terms anarcho punk was defined against the values underlying such threats. Mr. R recalls one occasion of attack:

A load of skins came one time when the Subhumans played in eighty three in Durham and erm just randomly beat the fuck out of the peace punks. As peace punks we weren't very united. It was quite a new scene and we were all a bit dippy you know we didn't really know how to cope. The cops busted the wrong people and all this shit happened.

The rightwing, and often racist, perspective of the skinheads was in vehement opposition to the anarcho (or peace) punks of this period. Rightwing forces and

³² See Glasper 2004 for a detailed account of UK street punk and a select number of Oi bands of this period.

³³ This is perhaps an understatement: attacks on what were perceived to be 'lefty' peace punks were often committed by skinheads and punks against anarcho or hippie punks as they became known. Some of the most famous examples of the inter genre venom were the war of words between the Edinburgh band The Exploited and Crass in addition to the Special Duties (1982) 7" record *Bullshit Crass*, Rondolet Records. The documentation of the skinhead violence is captured on the sleeve notes by Andy T 'Whine and Broken Noses' and content of the Crass live Perth 1981 CD *You'll Ruin it For Everyone*, Pomona (1993).

tendencies have proved to be a constant threat to those involved with the DiY politics of the punk left.

Broader political factors were of course also highly formative. The political menace of the cold war and the threat of nuclear annihilation were constant, almost thematic political concerns in anarcho punk. This is a central point in relation to the formation of punk ethics. Rather than examine the complexities regarding the cold war and nuclear weapons and the general recession western capitalist societies were experiencing during the 1970s, 80s and early 90s, I want to suggest that the subcultural reactions to such macro factors had a timely and relative effect on the given subgenre of punks' ethical conduct. This would have been most acute in terms of subcultural members' social class, ethnicity, gender and geographical location in addition to their age and standing within a given subcultural grouping. As an example, Crass made connections with CND in the late 1970s and wrote a number of anti-war songs. The most notable example was the 1980 *Big A Little A/Nagasaki Nightmare* single featuring detailed sleeve notes on cold war issues and the threat of nuclear catastrophe. As the above quote shows, anarcho punk became known as 'peace punk' as a result of these anti-war activities and the political sentiments of the bands and their followers. Mr. K noted that there was a sense during this period that the world was at risk from nuclear weapons of mass destruction and the only solution was to protest against this through any means possible:

There was a real sense that things were fucked up back then. You know people actually thought the world was going to get blown to fuck. I mean we can all laugh at it now, but people actually believed it. I believed it. I was going on CND rallies, I was in CND and we believed that these people had all this power taking all our fucking money off us and our parents to build these fucking weapons, putting us all at risk. It was something I didn't fucking believe in. What were they putting us at risk for?

Crass and the bands that were released through their label voiced similar sentiments. Through a series of statements, actions and pranks they were able to

create a countercultural climate of refusal and dissent which resulted in the numbers at anti-war demonstrations swelling substantially. In 1982 Crass released a series of records condemning the 1982 Falklands war: *Sheep Farming in the Falklands*, *How Does it Feel to be the Mother of a Thousand Dead* and *Yes Sir, I Will*. During 1984 the miners' strike and the heavy tactics of Thatcherite policing provided visible targets for the new punk counterculture scene to protest against. The main events encapsulating such protests and also demonstrating the size of the anarcho punk movement were the Stop the City actions of 1983 and 1984. Rimbaud describes them:

Half riot, half carnival, they attracted thousands of people who in their own ways protested against the machinery of wealth and the oppression that it represented. Windows were smashed while groups danced in the streets to the sounds of flutes and drums. Buildings were smoke bombed while jugglers and clowns frolicked amongst the jostling crowd. People linked arms and blockaded access roads and bridges, while others staged spontaneous sit-ins on the steps of offices and banks. City workers were handed leaflets and told to take the day off, phones were put out of action, locks were super glued, walls were graffitied and statues adorned with anarchist flags (1998: 255-6).

Mr. S attended a Stop the City action during this period and found that they acted as an ethical meeting ground for people. An arena for protest that was outside of the punk concert, this helped to strengthen the UK network of anarcho punk along common ethical lines of concern. The Stop the City actions were just one of many acts of refusal bolstered by the anarcho punk networks. CND benefit concerts and marches, hunt sabotaging, direct action animal rights protests, prisoner bust funds in addition to the picket support of the miners' strike of 1984/5, were all political activities mentioned by the participants.

What can be established thus far is a crystallization of an ethical counterculture that had its scene roots in anti-commercialist autonomy, social protest and independence from related, wider punk subcultures of the time such as street punk and Oi. Here the presentation of anarcho punk music as a vehicle of authentic punk

resistance was set up, with their characteristic practices managing to enshrine and integrate themselves into punk culture throughout the 1980s. However, as I have pointed out, this was not without a sense of ethical irony in that it left the non-anarcho punk feeling unworthy of subcultural inclusion. That the presentation of anarcho punk was predicated on a rhetorical claim of authentic autonomy presented other forms of punk resistance as dishonest poseurs incapable of conducting real punk resistance. For anarcho punk adherents, theirs was nothing but a fashion parade (see appendix 8). The real/contrived oppositional discourse involved in this worked as a mode of cultural self-authentication and moral exclusion, whether this was directed at accommodative leisure habits or oppressive gender politics. As the band Rudimentary Peni made abundantly clear on their 1983 Corpus Christi record, *Death Church*:

The "Punk Scene" is just a big farce. Gigs are pretty much a total waste of time. It's not even as they serve to create a warm and creative atmosphere. All that is created is an atmosphere of indifference and isolation. The average "punk" still wastes his or her time indulging in the same old macho, sexist crap. It's just boys and girls out for the night "getting pissed".

There's nothing I find more tedious than the rows of identical painted leather jackets – how moronic. Nothing changes at a gig. It is still just the same old world where men are big and tough and women are just their "birds", with the sickening habit of plastering themselves with make-up because they want to look nice and pretty for the boys.

No doubt by now, if you've bothered to read this, you'll be nodding your head in agreement as if it's someone else that I'm talking about – well it isn't, it's you. You are a part of all this shit. Why don't you try using your brain and help yourself for once, not just a prat masquerading as a stereotype (Rudimentary Peni 1983 *Death Church*, Sleeve-notes).

Here the boundaries between street punk and anarcho punk scenes are clearly and starkly drawn through the evocation and severely ironic use of the stereotype concept in that street punk is portrayed as a narcissistic monkey parade, a sexist gallery of peacock punks incapable of authentic, real rebellion³⁴. In ethical terms the traditional punk show from this band's point of view has collapsed into 'the same old world' of social conformity offering nothing in terms of an authentic punk alternative. This is

³⁴ see appendix 8, section 4

one of a number of examples where ethical splits between anarcho punks and other, inauthentic punks are drawn out and reinforced. The rhetorical position adopted is that you can only become authentic if you accede to and confirm the thinking of anarchist punks. A major intersection for such thinking rests on debates over punk, money and authenticity. It is to these that I now turn.

Money and Music

Autonomy, independence and freedom are ethical watchwords of anarcho punk. Attempts to manipulate, control and exploit bands by those outside them are strongly resisted. They are resisted in the name of the DiY ethic that is central to anarcho punk practice. It is germane to such practice that it generates a sceptical, if not downright hostile view of the multinational recording industry, especially where labels such as EMI have links with armament manufacture or other ethically reprehensible concerns. This example combines two targets of opposition: the capitalist exploitation of music for the sake of profit, and the capitalist production of military hardware for the sake of profit. Making money out of punk rock was anathema to the anarchist punk scene. Making money out of death and suffering was equally a source of political ire.

Anarcho punk made music central to the dissemination of its moral and political critique. The central aim was to make this as accessible as possible. Such accessibility is itself based on ethical principle. For this reason participants have always tried to make all their products and concerts either free or as cheap as possible. The majority of anarcho punk gigs in the early 1980s were benefits for political causes. All the interviewees in the research stated they were unemployed during this period. This enabled them to participate fully in punk music and punk politics. One of the most striking critical statements came from the band Conflict on the 1984 *The Serenade Is Dead* single on their London label, Mortahate:

A message to all the parasites, such as agents, record companies and managers etc: FUCK OFF!

We don't need you, you need us. We can function without you, but you cannot without us and when all people realise this all your shitlink racket will become extinct. Punk is not a business, it meant and still means, an alternative to the shit tradition that gets thrown at us. A way of saying no to all the false morals that oppress us. It was and still is the only serious threat to the status quo of the music business. Punk is about making your own rules and doing your own thing. Not about making some pimp shop owner rich. Realise the con in the punk shops, fuck them up, they're only businessmen exploiting me and you. I look around at the so called punk bands at the moment and ask this question:- "What the fuck are they up to?" I see major headlines in kids magazines, wall pinups of some of the latest punk rockers hair style. They play in shitholes like the Lyceum for £3 a time, and they claim to be punks, listen the people who play for £3 a time are conning their own people, taking the piss out of their own supporters. Think. Keep playing in places like that and the system wins....Shove your contracts where you shit (*The Serenade Is Dead*, Mortahate, 1984).

The language of this piece, in similar terms to the Rudimentary Peni hostility to fashion punks, is obviously explicit in its venom towards mainstream promotions and record companies that create a 'false' punk geared towards exploitation rather than political resistance. The uncompromising style of the writing and its underlying ethic clearly illuminates the ideal of authenticity of anarcho punk and also simultaneously hails the band in the light of this ideal. The underlying ethical message is that DiY anarcho punk is the correct method of resistance. Participation in the mainstream, or in street punk subcultures, signals an inauthentic subcultural member. The 'system' is in league with the 'business' man; they are the peddlers of 'fake resistance'. They dilute the *core* ethics of the punk scene as they claim them to be (resistance, revolution and political change) through the presentation of punk as a politically inert subculture. This is a central point in this chapter. Those aspects that are deemed to be subcultural (those aspects concerned with fashion, style and identity politics, those that consume punk culture rather than creating it) are deemed anathema to the anarcho punk scene, which presents itself as a counterculture set up in criticism against those members of punk culture who pursue agendas that are not political.

Once again we should resist the representation of punk in ethical terms as a *unified bloc*, void of internal disputes and differences. We can pursue punk's historical

narrative in order to offer further illustrations of this. The anarcho punk genre set itself a time limit: 1984. Indeed all of the Crass record releases, apart from being accompanied by a 'pay no more than' price tag, had a catalogue number counting down to 1984. As promised by Crass, the band split up during this year, playing their last show as a benefit for striking miners on 6th July. What the anarcho punk genre had created during the preceding four years or so was a feeling amongst its followers that some kind of real social change would be the logical outcome of its various scene efforts. The aim was that the structures of power would feel, and indeed *be* challenged. Mr. K noted that:

You felt part of something, you would go on demos and there would be fucking loads of punks there and shit. Like the CND demos, you know there would be two hundred and fifty thousand people there. I mean the first gig I went to was a CND benefit. I mean I wasn't involved in CND but that got me thinking, got me into it, got me thinking about things certainly.

The Orwellian prophecy, with its famous dystopian date, provided the sense of urgency that fuelled the spirit of revolutionary change prevalent in anarcho punk at this time. The demonstrations and benefit concerts were a central part of the anarcho punk struggle. Both Crass and Conflict began to push the direct action line, though bands remained ethically divided between the methods of pacifism and violent direct action. On their 1984 album, *Increase the Pressure*, the band Conflict stated: 'Conflict are not pacifists and have never claimed to be, we believe and strive for peace and freedom but will not let people destroy what little we have.'³⁵ Crass made similar statements on their last single *You're Already Dead* and made token concessions towards Conflict's position while undermining the solidarity of the band's position. Mr. K noted how he had once believed in Conflict's direct action approach to social change, although he is now sceptical of their claims of authenticity:

³⁵ See Conflict *Increase the Pressure* (1984) Mortahate Records for a succinct, sincere and angry lyrical account of the cold war, animal exploiters, political apathy and the escalation of the arms race.

Conflict were fooling people, they were raising people's hopes in that they could change a lot, you know, that there would be a fucking revolution and shit and they weren't to be believed. I mean I saw through them.

While he was likewise doubtful about the validity and viability of what they said, Mr. R also notes that a lot of punks took both Crass and Conflict at their word:

People took them on and I was just that bit older and Crass were the ones that did it right. I think punks, anarcho or otherwise, were looking for a bit of a leader, they wanted something to follow and so Conflict filled that gap quite nicely I think. And then the backlash against them was the whole same thing. It's like build up, smash down. The thing is this thing goes on through society and that we, as anarcho punks should know a bit better really.

After splitting up in 1984, Crass left the legacy of anarcho punk open to Conflict and this resulted in a backlash against them that occurred mainly during the later 1980s. Shortly after the event, Penny Rimbaud ruminated on the ethical minefield involved in maintaining rigid political views. The fun was removed:

[During the first couple of years of Crass's existence] for all the chaos it was immense fun, no one bitched about leather boots or moaned about milk in tea, no one wanted to know how anarchy and peace could be reconciled, no one bored our asses of with protracted monologues on Bakunin, who at that time we probably would have thought was a brand of vodka (Rimbaud, *Best Before 1984* sleeve notes, italics mine).

What this quotation demonstrates is one of the long-standing legacies of divisions in what is referred to as a unified subcultural grouping. As ethical alternatives crystallise into daily scene practices, transgressions become frowned upon. I shall make much more of this in subsequent chapters, so suffice to say here that this statement is one of the first acknowledgements of intra-group subcultural tensions within anarcho punk. Crass ended their activities with a series of poems and keyboard songs, *Acts of Love* and *Ten Notes on a Summers Day*, that seemed to push them out of favour with fans of the musical anger they had produced in their previous work. Conflict continued playing benefit concerts and advocating violent revolution as a theme. Indeed, though the subject of a huge amount of criticism (including some from my own interviewees) and the target of general accusations of hypocrisy from the last two generations of punks, Conflict remain active, still playing benefit

concerts, running their record label, Mortahate, and continuing to make political statements. Their work has become such a long-standing emblem of anarcho punk ethical refusal that they deserve a book to themselves.

Alternative Media

One of the most popular means of musical reproduction, alongside vinyl, was the tape machine. Through such methods of mechanical reproduction, punk music was able to be inexpensively copied, traded and shared.³⁶ As I described in the previous chapter, tapes were central to underground DiY punk during the early 1980s and through the postal system, bands, ideas and lyrics were mutually traded and shared. They were traded between friends and were (and still are) a useful tool for making contact with people, establishing acquaintances and developing alliances. The fanzines sold at gigs contained reviews of tapes and records, and carried adverts and addresses for band tapes. Chumbawamba used this mode of production and distribution to produce the *Animals Packet*. Mr. R reproduced his bands demo tapes for mail order in a similar fashion. He recalled that one of the earliest examples of record distribution stalls was tape- not vinyl-based. When he played a Leeds squat gig in a garage in 1984 with The Ex, The Three Johns and the Instigators, tapes were sold at the back of the venue. It should be emphasized that this was not a money-spinning venture; the price was intended to cover the costs of production only. The main form of income for most of the participants during this period was unemployment and housing benefit. Mr. R told me of how he was able to channel social security money to fund anarcho punk tape projects:

They used to give you money for bedding grants and shit and I put that with my giro and I spent nearly a hundred quid on what now would be a crappy double tape. So I would copy my band's demo tapes on it day and night. And from that my band had a demo [tape out].

³⁶ I will examine this issue in closer detail in chapter 5.

From this tape Mr. R's band was able to establish firm connections with the anarcho punk scene. This led to them playing more gigs and this in turn eventuated in the collectively run Station venue in Gateshead, Newcastle.

The break-up of Crass, the centrepiece of anarcho punk in the UK, may suggest that the practice of DiY suffered a similar demise. The end of Crass was certainly a blow to DiY culture, but a central argument of this thesis is that DiY ethics have been continuous over the past quarter century or so, even through that continuity has witnessed high and lows and been manifest in variable displays of intensity. The end of Crass should *not* be read as the end of DiY countercultural ethics and values, despite views and intimations to the contrary from McKay (1996) and others. The continuation of the post-Crass DiY ethic was stimulated by the introduction of US hardcore. Its subsequent assimilation led to new forms and took on the original anarcho punk genre in musical, aesthetic and political terms.

Bands such as Dirt, Doom, Deviated Instinct, Extreme Noise Terror, Electro Hippies, Extinction of Mankind, Hiatus, Health Hazard, Suffer and One By One are just a small example of the bands that continued the political issues initially raised by anarcho punk.³⁷ They all played the 1in12 Club with some relocating and becoming centrally involved in the organization of music and general club activities. It could also be argued that the structures of experience and sensibility underlying anarcho punk music even intensified as a result of the diminution of political change and the continuing political drift to the right. For Mr. R, the music of anarcho punk was characterised particularly by its ethically fuelled anger. The fast, furious and hectic screaming that were central to fastcore, britcore of the mid to late nineteen eighties

³⁷ For detailed accounts of the continuity of UK anarcho punk during this period and beyond see the UK scene reports in *Maximum Rock 'N' Roll* fanzine 1984 –present.

and UK hardcore, were assimilated and became even more abrasive, fast and angry. R noted that this style of music was a clear expression of the frustration at anarcho punk's lack of political and cultural achievement. The ethical principles of DiY were sound but nothing seemed to have changed: 'As you go on you just get more manic and more fucking furious and you get angrier as you get older, you know and that's shit!'

So although the UK anarcho punk scene may have been in a state of slow decline around the mid-to-late 1980s, this did not mean that its informing ethos had expired. Quite the contrary. Its ethos spread, either through anarcho punk music or in combination with related musical forms such as hardcore, not only in the UK but also, during the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s, all over the continent and the US. A notable illustration of the spread of anarcho punk was the Minneapolis label and fanzine, *Profane Existence*.

Hardcore for the Hardcore

Stephen Blush (2001) neatly summarises the ethics of the American version of DiY punk, known as hardcore, in his first chapter on DiY hardcore. At a tangential point in time to the emergence of anarcho punk in the UK, its hardcore counterpart came to the fore in the US. The two genres share a number of similarities and also bring to the fore the irresolvable argument of punks' origins: UK or US? In spite of this, with the UK and US punk scenes having related head-of-state hate figures in Thatcher and Reagan, the politics and methods on both sides of the Atlantic had a number of mutual points of intersection. Andersen and Jenkins (2001) recognize the degree of convergence between the DC hardcore punk scene and UK anarcho punk (2001: 131, 146). For example, how Crass had managed to galvanise thousands to gather in London for the 'Stop the City' protests of the early eighties was taken as a benchmark

for similar anti-Reagan protests in DC 1984 (2001:180-209). Of course there were differences as well. American hardcore dealt with personal and social issues in equal measure to political statements, while UK anarcho punk was largely concerned with instrumental, political critiques against the cold war, the capitalist state and animal exploitation. In addition to the more experimental forms of punk such as Black Flag, hardcore was also characterized by a faster tempo and a more energetic stage presence. Apart from the early visits to the UK by the Dead Kennedys and then Black Flag, hardcore was a relatively obscure genre in the UK in the early eighties. After its introduction mostly through record and tape trading and the fleeting band appearances in the UK, the DiY ethic began to co-opt numerous genres into its aesthetic style. These included metal, hardcore, and thrash. This also had a reciprocal effect on the hardcore and metal genres. All of these changes were to have an effect in terms of the ethical reproduction of the UK DiY punk scene.

One of the first hardcore imports into anarcho punk was MDC who played fast political music which was up-tempo from its British counterparts, but retained a heavy aesthetic link to many of the anarcho punk bands. For many involved in the British anarcho scene and the wider genres of punk in the 1980s and 1990s, such records introduced a whole new genre and style of music that had been eclipsed through the dominance and style of British punk from 1976 onwards. Hardcore has become firmly cemented into the culture since the early 1980s. However, as Rollins (1995:26-35) notes, the acceptance of the American genre was not easy. Initially British punks were vehemently hostile to the American hardcore band, Black Flag, when they toured the UK in 1980, 1982 and 1984, covering them in spit, bottles and verbal abuse. Through Crass releasing the MDC single, *Multi Death Corporations* on their label in 1983, and the associated London anarcho label, Corpus Christi, releasing the debut LP

from San Francisco anarcho band, Crucifix, *Dehumanization*, in 1984, the political elements of American hardcore began to reach and influence UK audiences. Mr. R noted that American hardcore was beginning to circulate via peer tape circulation around 1983:

A lot of anarcho punks weren't really into this. I had like a few friends that had like weird tapes of stuff like DRI and Minor Threat and these weird new bands. I was one of the first people to get into DRI and it was absolutely, it was as life-changing as anything in terms of it being fast and political.

As I noted above, Crucifix toured England in 1984 with British anarcho bands Antisect and Dirt. Mr. R travelled to Leeds to see these bands and described it as a watershed in terms of influence:

This was like 1984, so it was like Antisect, Dirt and Crucifix. Antisect and Dirt were pretty good of course but Crucifix, they moved, they ran around and they brought it to life in a lot of ways and it showed us British people [how it could be done].

Whilst not yet being the mainstay of the British punk scene during this period, the inspiration of hardcore was clearly becoming evident.

Mr. B and D mentioned a key issue that emerged in the mid 1980s. As a result of the influence of American hardcore, the overt politics of anarcho punk were viewed as unimportant and secondary by these two subjects. Indeed, when asked about the political influence of music, Mr. D noted that 'it's not affected me a great deal politically and I am not really motivated by that sort of stuff, but you know it has in I suppose personal ways'. These personal ways can be identified as a theme in terms of the personal politics that Mr. D later became involved in, particularly the 'straight edge' personal politics of abstinence. Mr. B articulated this in specific terms in that he reacted against the overt politics of this period and was instead concerned with personal issues:

The stuff I was into when I first got into hardcore was heavily political. I mean the British bands [were concerned] with animal rights and politics in general. The US at the time, especially the New York bands and the straight edge bands,

were a bit more apolitical. It was about looking at yourself and more social issues.

The conduct of personal life can of course be said to be political. What constitutes the political is not the exclusive preserve of 'politics in general'. But if there was something of a shift here it could be said to involve a move from concern with politics in a relatively conventional sense to ethics in a relatively conventional sense. While this distinction should not be pushed too far, given the overlap and interlinkage involved, the move changed participants' orientation towards punk, or rather to mainstream punk. For B the latter, more social form of politics created a sense of separation from the majority of the punk scene. He noted that he gained a sense of motivation and confidence in his feelings of difference to the majority of the UK punk and hardcore scenes.

In considering the specific theme of authenticity and the peer rivalry this involves, the claims and counter-claims for authenticity and questions of the valid production of punk music have been legion. Between the Leeds and Bradford DiY communities, a general form of opposition and rivalry exists between punk and hardcore. Mr. G was specific in picking up on this issue. In spite of various genre claims and counter-claims, assertions and refutations, regarding whether or not punk is hardcore and vice versa, Mr. G spoke of his dislike of what he considered to be the inwardness, nihilism and lack of vision in the Leeds and Bradford 'punk scenes':

I think that punk is possibly a bit more rowdy than hardcore. The mindset is a lot more self-destructive: it is not as positive [as hardcore]. It's all about fucking shit up. I'm not bitching about punk because it's all the same thing when it comes down to it, but I think a lot of the punks I have met have this kind of fuck you mentality!

Hardcore appeals to G for the musical diversity it is able to accommodate, whereas in his view punk is more 'samey' and 'set' in its musical ways. He notes:

I think the punk scene is traditional. If you look at hardcore there's all the emo [and] metal bands, there's all the crazy fucked up shit. I mean if you look at the hardcore scene you could pick five bands that are all under the hardcore label

and each one of them sounds completely and utterly different. Dilinger Escape Plan or Canvas? Crazy ass metal, indie rock. In the Clear, fast, old school straight edge. What Happens Next, fast, fast, thrashy punk; Noothgrush, slow as fuck. I think it is a bit more set musically in the punk scene.

Implicit in this evaluative comparison is a claim for hardcore being superior and more outward-looking than punk. Explicit in its discursive accomplishment of this comparison are such rhetorical devices as the use of 'traditional' in a pejorative, negative sense, the carefully weighted exaggeration, the neat balance of contrasts ('fast, fast'/'slow as fuck'), and the throwaway final sentence. Both this and the preceding statement from G provide a clear indication of how subcultures develop, mutate and move on, as a result of their internal dynamics of interaction and the consequent tensions and divisions that occur within as well as between different groupings of what is nominally the same subculture.

Ethics and Elitism

In contradistinction to this, Mr. C found himself gradually politicized through his engagement with punk rock. Viewing his engagement with underground punk rock as a series of 'building blocks', he stated that he didn't really know about DiY during these earlier biographical stages. The connections with anarchism and DiY were made later, though his initial immersion in the punk rock scene has contributed overall to shaping his opinions, attitudes and general outlook:

The way I have done things in my life, you know, some of the paths, shall we say, that I have followed, have been linked directly to the beginning of skateboarding and punk.

The firm connections were made for C around 1986, firstly after he had bought a personally influential DiY punk record, the Bristol band Ripcord's album *Defiance of Power*, he became a vegetarian soon after. For C, vegetarian issues then connected into a much wider awareness of and involvement in politics that helped him to connect him with a broad array of political issues:

The animal rights issue has been a big issue within the hardcore punk scene. A lot of people have picked up on that and gone 'yeah, that's fucking right' and I'm glad that it's still prominent. At the same time it's not just animal rights, it's about a wider perspective and should engage human rights and I see them all as linked. I don't see animal rights as a single issue I see it as a part of a wider issue.

The pressure to remain vegetarian and ultimately become vegan formed a broad political theme in the interview data relating to this period of time. It opened up a further ethical division within punk subculture and drew on further rhetorical descriptors to justify the division and bolster participants' adherence to one side or the other. For Mr. Q, one of the downsides of this division was the production of what he called a 'holier than thou' attitude. In similarity to the 'Bakunin bores' outlined by Rimbaud, Q referred to the 'vegan police' and 'politico police' as becoming predominant in Leeds counterculture at this time. His displeasure and antagonism are clear in his description of these people as 'middle class arseholes incapable of having a laugh.' Mr. C also referred to this rift between vegans and veggies. While he became a vegan himself at this time, he objected to the sanctimony and intolerance it generated:

I'd say I'm fairly lenient, but you know at times there has been a vegan police element which I've remembered. I remember from the days doing hunt sabbing that people would be like fucking going into people's kitchens and looking in people's cupboards and going "what the fuck is this in your cupboard?" That is just ridiculous like.

Clearly, the pressure of morally upholding and maintaining veganism and vegetarianism, combined with the pressure to convert from the latter to the former, was in itself a major political issue of the late 1980s. Within the punk scene generally, the ethics of food, hunting and related matters became a symbolic site for the politics of cultural elitism. These were manifest, contested and fought over within the scene as part of its own ongoing debate over what constitutes the true principles and values of punk's countercultural constellation.

The Straight vs. The Great Unwashed

In the late 1980s, a new division opened up within the punk subculture. Anarcho punk and its subgenre of Britcore merged with residues of the travelling communities to produce the group category referred to by my interviewees as 'crusty.' Those who drank too much, consciously ignored personal hygiene, and begged outside of concerts were frowned upon by elements in the hardcore and straightedge scenes during this time. Straightedge originated on the east coast of America in the late 1970s and early 80s. The major sites of straight edge activity are the east coast cities of Washington DC, New York and Boston. Later, the west coast (1984-5), then, mainland Europe, Japan, Australia and the U.K, became involved. Straightedge culture is now an established micro-cultural phenomenon of most Western capitalist cities and former Soviet Bloc countries.

The key question that arises is why has straightedge developed? There are a number of reasons. The main one is a logical progression of resistance. By taking UK, European and American attitudes to punk as givens (*DiY ethics, alienation and autonomy*), early straightedge used these sub-cultural forms to take the punk idea to its ultimate point of resistance: a rebellion against traditional forms of rebellion. Traditional forms of rebellion are viewed by straightedge culture as being floored and hampered by the destructive consequences of drug ingestion which dilutes and undermines rebellion. The argument of straightedge is that the majority of society is dependent on the consumption of potentially harmful substances and this practice functions as an obstacle in the path of having a clear, critical and positive mind. Drug, alcohol and substance culture is reproduced by peer pressure. By turning its back on the destructive elements of consumption (drugs alcohol, tobacco etc.), and rejecting the peer pressure that enforces and reproduces nihilism, oppressive,

destructive cultural forms and aesthetic practices can be resisted. So goes the straightedge line.

Unsurprisingly, intolerance is one of the main criticisms aimed at straightedge culture, usually by those participants in the punk and hardcore scenes who were perceived by straightedge as weaker and less disciplined as they were. Straightedge started to become the thing that it once opposed. In the more conventional metaphorical sense of the word, straightedge became straight. As Lahickey notes:

Unfortunately as the Straight Edge scene progressed it became hauntingly reminiscent of all the narrow mindedness that hardcore had given me refuge from. Preaching took over friendliness. All of the negative issues brought to light by the positive scene detracted from the power of the music. It all began to make me feel uncomfortable. I was sad to see these shortcomings. I fell in love for the freedom I felt from others. Straight edge became just a different set of rules. (Lahickey., 1996: XVIII)

Ian Mackaye, the reluctant creator of straight edge culture, has distanced himself from some of straight edge behaviour and no longer prefers to label himself as such.

In a recent interview he commented:

I think the straight edge thing appeals to a lot of jocks which is weird because I am not a jock. I was never down with that kind of stuff. It's weird; I don't know what the fuck I am. I am really not sure where I fit because I'm not a computer geek, not a jock, just sort of a normal guy.

People over the years were so hardcore, fucking jump down my throat because they feel I'm not vocal enough or hard enough. I had guys saying, "I can't believe you fucking play places that sell alcohol," or, "I can't believe that you play places where people smoke cigarettes." I had this one kid say to me, "I can't believe you're drinking iced tea." I was like "What?" and he said, "In my book, caffeine is a drug." I said "fuck you." These kind of people were so hard and so ready to attack me because they didn't think I was hard enough – where the fuck are they now? I'm not trying to be so smug about it. But I am 33 now, and I don't give a fuck about all the rumours (Mackaye in Lahickey, 1996:108).

Under the influence of hardcore Mr. B notes how he felt good in the late 1980s to be clean-cut and positive. Together with other straightedge people he states that he felt a kind of 'brotherhood' in being straight and looking down his nose at crusties. He stated:

It was a nice little clique to be in and there were not that many straightedge kids about so you had that feeling of brotherhood. It was sort of like the Leeds mentality as well, I mean going to shows and standing there looking down at

people was good. It was alright. For a while it was like straightedge kids versus crusties and there was a lot of shit.

B found a lot of strength in the hardcore punk scene. He stated that he gained his self-confidence through realizing that he didn't have to conform, that 'he didn't have to be a regular dick!'

At the other end of the spectrum, Mr. K stated that there was a lot of trouble with straightedge in the late eighties. Hostilities within the wider Bradford scene between the straightedge and crusty groups became very tense at points:

I had a few problems with some of the individuals who were involved with [straight edge]. There was a lot of hostility between the two groups. I was like I don't care about your fucking scene and they are just trying to wind us up, those straightedge people. Like the punk scene was pretty [nihilistic] and fair enough they were just trying to wind people up basically and cause shit and they never backed it up. They were just full of shit basically. [One of them] started at me once in a pub and I threatened to batter him with a pool cue.

The hardcore and punk scenes have always constituted and reconstituted themselves through occasional intra-scene antagonism and rivalry. While this could lead to physically threatening behaviour, as the above example shows, the process was mainly realized through a discourse of moral pietism, authenticity and correctness. What are the real and proper forms of resistance to the capitalist social order? For straightedge, a clear, sober, alert and positive mind was set against the nihilism of crusty drunkenness and decadence, in a sort of latter-day puritanical form of dissent and nonconformism.

The anarcho punk base of the lin12 produced the same elements of conflict. The personal politics of straightedge together with its doctrine of resistance through a 'rebellion against rebellion' (Lahickey, 1996) congealed further and became more extreme. From 1991 onwards the militant straightedge doctrine of 'hardline' had developed. A zero-tolerance approach to substance abuse and intoxication was adopted from the New York band, Vegan Reich. Those who smoked or got drunk at

concerts were frowned upon by those who proclaimed a commitment to straightedge. For the hardline straightedge, the capitalist system could only be challenged through a combination of total abstinence of drugs and animal products through a vegan diet on the one hand, and direct action against transgressors on the other. Together these would achieve a 'purity' of body and mind.

In many ways the challenging of capitalist values and beliefs was in tandem with the politics of anarcho and crusty punk and the 1in12 club. Scene disagreements arose over the appropriate modes of resistance. These proved a considerable ethical stumbling bloc. The purist mentality of straightedge had led a number of anarcho punks to accuse its adherents of 'moral fascism', whilst straightedge viewed the wild, inebriate dissolution of the punks as counter-revolutionary. In a description dripping with contempt, Mr. B referred to crusty punks as often 'begging outside shows and dressed in shitstained rags'. B's vituperative tone caps his portrayal of crusty punks as ethical lepers. This antagonistic mind-set became fully manifest when the first UK straightedge hardcore bands were becoming popular and establishing hardcore as a subgenre of punk. Mr. D recalled the heckling of straightedge bands playing at the 1in12 and the 'resentment' towards them during this period. He stated that there was trouble in assimilating this new form of politics and resistance. A good deal of the antagonism was, in his view, hypocritical:

It never pissed me off but I kind of thought it was a bit fucking hypocritical coming from people who ran a place based upon a policy that was kind of accepting of anything apart from stuff that was downright offensive or fascist or whatever. There seemed to be a lot of hypocritical people involved in it [1in12] at the time. There always seemed like there was people that had something to say whereas I went there and never judged anyone on fucking anything. [straightedge] seemed like something new for England you know kind of young outsiders coming in that weren't involved in the old British punk scene. People came in [to the club] to cause trouble and go what the fuck is this sort of thing. People would be at shows fucking shouting their fucking heads off or some fucking nonsense to do with the [straightedge] bands playing and people just didn't seem to get it. The punk scene was err that way inclined [drinking] and then suddenly people came in [1in12] with all these straightedge gigs that weren't into that at all.

The antagonism gradually died down as the straightedge gigs and hardcore bands became assimilated into the anarcho and lin12 scene. In addition, those subcultural members who came into the scene in the metal, hardcore and crossover periods were younger and more receptive to straightedge ideas. Mr. D talked of the hostility between punks and straightedge kids and demarcated the division along age lines. As noted previously, Mr. K had problems with the straightedge, but he soon became frustrated with the intolerant attitudes shown to this genre:

There was this divide as well; you know we were all scumbags. [A straightedger] used to write things like 'freaks' on the club and that used to really piss Joe off. [However] a lot of the punk kids were up their own arse as well, they are hostile to it [straightedge]. We had all these fucking gumby punks carping on about straight edge. I said: "what the fuck are you saying? Shut the fuck up! What do you know? What do you fucking do? You know, you do nothing!"

This proved to be a contentious issue based around affiliation to different subgenres and scenes within the wider DiY scene. More fundamentally, the clash of ethics involved was centred around the antagonism between the personal politics of hardcore, which seeks to extend personal politics into a broader struggle for progressive political change, and the politics of nihilistic punk rock with its approach to resistance couched in the original UK punk proclamation of 'get pissed, destroy'.

In addition to this the straightedge issue had not entirely faded from memory. Indeed a hardline and pro-life band played one of the lin12 hardcore festivals in 1996. Four of the interviewees mentioned this event and stated that it raised concerns regarding the politics of some of the bands that played the club. In the recollection of Ms. W:

Some straightedge band played the club and they had some really dubious lyrics about abortion. I think they were really naïve young men. I think they were about sixteen or seventeen and they had not really formed their opinions or they had not encountered many women. They wrote something controversial on the wall and I remember feeling pissed off about it. We just blasted them and took a photocopy of a little pro-choice poster and put it up over it, because I did find it quite offensive.

What this indicates is that the issue of intolerance in hardcore and punk was still evident during this time. For W, the issue of abortion tapped in to related debate that was a main theme for her and other female interviewees: the lack of women in hardcore and punk. All of the interviewees picked up on this issue. Indeed W noted that she perceived women, alongside minority ethnic groups, to be underrepresented in hardcore.

In terms of motivation, such ethical disputes have at times led to disillusionment with the whole punk scene and a diminution in the desire and willingness to participate within it. For example, some people within the subculture came to see the long-term nihilism of the anarcho punk and travelling cultures as degenerating into a destructive form of lifestyle characterized above all by self-abuse. Mr. S referred to some of these nihilists as 'jitters'. Working behind the bar in the 1in12 in 1995, he summarised one such incident where anarchy was misinterpreted by these people as equivalent to nihilism:

There were a load of people over from Manchester and I had just gone out to collect glasses and I noticed one [jitter] leaning over [the bar and helping himself to free drink] and I knocked his glass out of the way and he says: "what are you doing? What are you doing, I haven't got any money, free beer, anarchy!" So I explained everything about the club to him and how every pint had to be accounted for, because it was all profit and loss and there wasn't any money behind this place. And he just went "ahh, fucking working for the system, you got a job you just ought to walk out!" We got rid of them in the end and that scene seems to have died down, but I mean a lot of them, they could say all the right things, but when it came down to it was what they could get out of it, not what they were putting into it.

This is perhaps an extreme example of the nihilism that arose after the decline of anarcho punk and the defeat of the travellers in the late 1980s and 1990s. It would be misleading to say that it was representative of the anarcho punk scene as a whole. This undoubtedly negative incident was more an aberration than a characteristic manifestation of the views and principles of anarcho punk.

The 1in12 Club

For K the early years of the club were depressing. The Leeds scene of the late 1980s was starting to decline in popularity and the divisions in the club made for a difficult atmosphere. He argued that the consequence of this was a 'siege mentality'. For him this was brought about because the Club did not receive community support and was losing money. He mainly put this down to a general hostility towards punks. K was attacked by New Model Army fans in a Bradford pub³⁸. Disillusioned, he began to withdraw from the club's activities, spending more time in Leeds during the later 1980s. The issues highlighted by K indicate a general theme of disillusionment and struggle that will come more to the fore in chapter six:

There was all these people who had these real fucking fixed ideas about what [the club] was. I think there were horses pulling in different directions. There was a load of these anarchists, boring old anarchists who wanted it to be like a working men's club. And there was all us lot who had the idea of it being like a European social centre. 'Cause we had been to these places in Europe and I had been to loads of squats by this time and we were inspired by the whole fucking thing. And I am not on about some fucking crusty pisshole, we were talking about doing something real good.

Despite featuring the multiple subgenres of hardcore punk, perceptions of the club's purpose and rationale diverged. As Mr. G noted, whilst a number of members of the DiY community straddled the differences between hardcore and punk, such divisions have had an effect on the attendance of the 1in12. The view of the club as a place of overt politics and a politically correct arena by some of the Leeds scene was a common reason given for not attending the weekday and single event concerts held at the 1in12. Not only does the frequently circulating rumour of politically correct punks at the 1in12 inhabit sections of participation within the Leeds scene; I also encountered it in an interruption of an interview I held with a long-standing member of the club (not featured here). The person speaking here exemplified the discourse of the bitter, ex-club member, Mr. BS:

³⁸ An issue I will return to in chapter nine.

Yeah in the early days it [lin12] was set up by the old punks and stuff, yeah hippies and punks, it were alright. You got all the fucking geeks in there now, who, you know don't eat meat that have got a little bit of a line with that. But hey, practice what you preach! They don't know what they've been preaching so they don't even know how to practice it.

They've got a juke box there. They have all the old punk songs on it and they are like 'well, we will have to turn that down, it's too loud that stuff'. Man, it was only something like Wire, or something, and they are all sat around a table, you know, talking bollocks. And I said, well I'm sorry, but this is why I came here to do what I want without being told what to do and you are telling me that I am upsetting you [He demanded a refund but was refused]. This silly little tart comes up and she'd been to University 'Euugh, Eughh! I'm called Daisy and I don't like what you are doing whooh, me mum's a head teacher.' Oooooooh fuck off, fucking arse! Do you want to buy a copy of *Socialist Worker*? Ohhh!

This comment displays a highly contrastive 'then and now' opposition in order to establish the speaker as one of the older, more authentic 'hippies and punks' who founded the lin12. The use of vehement language and strong figurative expressions operates as a way of demarcating the speaker from those he denigrates as falling way short of the ethical mark and being little other than poseurs in both their conduct and conversation (the latter being peremptorily dismissed as 'talking bollocks'). His libertarian, live-and-let-live attitude is bolstered by its opposition to 'the fucking geeks' who have taken over the scene with their namby-pamby ways and political pretensions. In contrast to his professed stance of independence of mind and freedom of action, he has only the utmost contempt for them – 'Oooooooh fuck off, fucking arse!' – which he expresses in telling, scatological terms that prefigure the theme of subcultural exit. I will return to discuss this issue in further detail in chapter six.

Contemporary Hardcore Sell-outs

Earlier I spoke of transnational connections as if these are an invariable source of cultural good. This is of course not always the case, or at least is not always considered to be the case. An example of this within punk subculture is Emo. This form of music had more in common with indie rock than punk, although the methods of cultural production were firmly in the tradition of DiY, stemming from its early inceptions with the DC band Rites of Spring among others. By taking its starting

point from the diverse DiY punk music scene of Washington DC (Anderson, 2001, O'Connor, 2002b), emo bands adopted a subtle, musically competent, and delicate musical aesthetic that shunned the initial brash forms of punk. Emo embraced the personal politics of straightedge and hardcore. Its trajectory of assimilation into the hardcore scenes of Leeds and Bradford proved a source of contention. The emo genre was associated more with the Nottingham and Leeds scenes, with bands such as Polaris and Bob Tilton becoming known for playing this form of music. Mr. B took a cynical view of it, drawing lazily on a stock class stereotype:

There's a lot of people sitting around on stools playing guitars which I'm not really into. There seemed to be a lot of indie kids masquerading as hardcore kids with basin haircuts and glasses sat a round on stools fucking posin' with rosy cheeks, that kind of thing, which I'm not into.

Hip Hop and macho attitudes in hardcore were also raised by Mr. G. in taking issue with the dominance of America in the hardcore scene and stating moral concern at what he considered to be the importation of macho attitudes into UK hardcore. He placed the blame for this on labels such as New York's Victory Records and large independent band booking agents such as Madd in Germany. The lyrical content, the blatant lack of DiY principles, and the denigrating stance towards women in hardcore, were targeted by G as symptomatic of wider ethical problems in the hardcore scene. In broad terms he described the popularity of this as 'chipping away at the old block'. G stated that the American bands demanding large money guarantees to play the UK diluted the power and value of UK DiY:

They are a hardcore punk agency, but I definitely have issues with Madd. Their guarantees are fucking huge! Like I remember when Converge were playing and they wanted like £400 guarantee. I mean we haggled them down, but like they want massive guarantees and then [there's] the riders they send out: they are taking the piss. You know it's like fresh Kellogg's cereal or something [that they demand before playing]. It's like you are a fucking punk rock band, you are grateful if you get fed whatever and someone gives you a floor to sleep on. You don't fucking send out riders, you know what I mean. This is what Madd's all about. So I am like very dubious about them. Unless they had a band that I was like, oh my God I have to put them on, I wouldn't touch them with a barge-pole

G reiterated this view in referring to Victory records:

Victory, I mean Jesus Christ, a can of worms there! It's like there's so many [incidents]. It's like they allegedly advertised in porn magazines and their attempt at a complete saturation of the market. They Victory street teams [upset me] and just the fact that their records are expensive and they don't really do their own distribution anymore.

Mr. R echoed this general hostility to major labels and organised punk rock:

There is so much lame hardcore that goes around and passes for hardcore, passes for punk. 'Holidays in the fucking Sun', you know. Just idiots and tolerance of Nazis and fucking goons you know, like dressed like punk or whatever, it's just a fucking joke. It's not what I ever wanted to be fucking part of. I don't know, some days I am more liberal about it. I am like fucking let people get on with their own thing and at other times I get annoyed 'cause it's just, well [why] can't people just [be] searching and thinking forward?

The three viewpoints expressed here reflect a legacy of how the same critical points of view illustrated in the earlier quotation from Rudimentary Peni and Conflict are still evident in DiY discourse, albeit in a much more genre-dependent way. Such viewpoints form a general sensibility in the Leeds and Bradford punk and hardcore scenes that acts as a catalyst for DiY cultural production and underpins the ethical principles of DiY punk. Implicit within Mr. G's argument against Victory is the claim of a potential American dominance over UK hardcore. What is evident overall in the above quotes is the effort to distinguish DiY authenticity from an ethical standpoint against a business ethic masquerading as punk or using punk as a smokescreen to conceal this ethic. Through their DIY practice, the Leeds and Bradford scenes attempt to achieve an affordable alternative to the mainstream forms of punk production, and the ethical basis of this alternative stands at least implicitly as a critique of multinational capitalism.

Conclusion

As the previous section and the chapter as a whole has shown, DiY ethical principles exert, in the very effort to live by and maintain them, a continuous pressure to articulate their presence through identification of their manifold negations, whether these involve temporary slippage, ambiguous action, or wholesale betrayal. The punk

discourse of authenticity is predicated on the relentlessness of this pressure within such subcultural milieux as those of Leeds and Bradford. Peer debates and rivalries run from the early days of punk in the 1970s through to their contemporary ethical expression in the various scenes, sub-scenes, genre groupings, factions and splinter-formations (operating under the broad descriptor of punk subculture) that define punk today. The conceptual issue of what punk is, or should be, has been underpinned throughout by 'real us' versus 'sham them' dichotomies that are always mutually intertwined in their very oppositions to each other. Such points of view will be discussed in detail in chapters six and nine.

However varied the different groups and sub-groups of the punk scene in my case study region may be on the ground, they can be identified and categorized in relation to two major topical areas: firstly, the overarching, general debates raised in the interviews; and secondly, the spatially defined rivalry between the Leeds and Bradford DiY scenes, an issue I will return to in chapter seven. This should not of course detract from the sub-divisions within each of these areas. As I have shown, conflicts and disagreements are evident within the 1in12 club between opposing points of view on a number of different issues. During the period of my fieldwork, such divides could make the club a difficult place with which to be associated.

Rivalry between the Leeds and Bradford scenes and movement between them is a central theme of the thesis. As I have noted, distinctions have been made between the Leeds and Bradford 'sounds'. From a Leeds perspective, Bradford punks are driven by political anger and chiefly governed by anarcho punk. Alternatively, Leeds is perceived as a scene dominated by emo and pop punk, eclectic versions of hardcore and more accomplished forms of musicianship. In my interviews, Leeds people were described as clean-cut and younger than those associated with the 1in12. Indeed, Ms.

G used the popular term, 'Ladida Leeds', as a point of insult. Bradford people associated with the lin12 were spoken of in interviews as being dirty, crusty and overtly political. As Messrs. F and G pointed out, they were also regarded as cliquy, old and argumentative. This description is obviously far too neat and simplistic, but what lies behind it will be explored in greater depth in chapter seven.

The overarching, general themes of ethical debate that overshadowed the UK punk and hardcore scenes can be split into three relevant sections. Firstly there is the long-standing issue of selling out. This has proved to be both a salient and resilient theme. When questioned about their views on punk and hardcore that is not DiY, the majority of my interviewees spoke of the major label punk acts such as Green Day and Blink 182. This was cemented by the views offered on Chumbawamba signing to EMI and Universal records. These were *not* consistently hostile and a number of possible uses and reason for 'selling out' were offered as explanation and reason for recruitment to the punk scene. For example, reaching a wider audience; being able to earn a living from their music; and subverting the music industry from the inside. These views, along with the alternative accusation of betraying core values, will be discussed further in the final chapter.

Having set up a framework for understanding the key lines of ethical principle and practice among the subcultural groupings and related scenes with which this research is concerned, it is important now to go on to examine how in various ways they inform lived experience within these groupings, and how in various ways they are realized as characteristic of the lived experience of these groupings. Responses to the ethical dilemmas thrown up by participation in anarcho punk and DiY practice are involved at every stage in people's involvement, from entry onto the scene, through

immersion within it, to (for some) eventual disillusionment and exit. These major stages of involvement are the subject of the next four chapters.

Chapter 5: Ethics in Action

Introduction.

What do participants who have chosen to become involved in DiY punk rock do? How and why do they do it, and in what ways can this practice be considered authentic against other constructions of punk rock? Once secondary investigation is completed and the subcultural participant opts for a deeper acquaintance in tandem with the ethical framework of punk outlined in the previous chapter, members approach core status through interaction with the organisational practices of the DiY punk scenes. In most cases they spend an extended period of time *practically* contributing to the production of DiY punk rock. In chapter three I illustrated how the practice of subcultural entrance led to the subsequent construction of authenticity once the various aspects of subcultural knowledge and practice had registered with the participant as s/he moves through primary and secondary investigation towards a position of detailed scene understanding. Through this progression, the ethical frameworks are produced with their associate sensibilities and these crystallise in what the participant considers their authentic disposition reflected in both their subcultural tastes and action. This and the following two chapters will examine how such practice is produced in the everyday activities of what I consider to be core members of the scene.

The chapter will examine my two month field work period at the *lin12*, detailing the events of beginning a studio project in the cellar of the club. In this area of observation the specific focus is upon daily activity carried out between nine am to six pm. The examination of my daily experience of working in Leeds punk record shop, the organization of gigs and their attendance across both fields, in addition to the reciprocal subcultural relationships within and between Leeds and Bradford, I reserve

for chapter seven. In what follows I shall navigate through the daily practical activities of the Bradford DiY punk working days.

Club Work: 11–6pm

The inception of the lin12 club is a major example of a British anarchist social club. This group of collectively organised volunteers banded together in the face of Thatcherist attacks on trade unions, the working classes and the unemployed to form a model and legacy that set and linked DiY punk and anarchist principles as the cornerstone of their actions. Prior to the club obtaining a building in 1988, gigs were held twice weekly from 1981 onwards and this formed some of the bedrock of fundraising activities which the club would draw upon over the next twenty years.

The twice weekly gigs held in several city centre pubs provided the embodiment of the lin12 “way”, providing gigs that were cheap, free from sexist, racist and statist hassles, the usual promoters and rip-offs, dress restrictions and bouncer intimidation. The objective was to create a lively and participative social scene, to stimulate a culture of resistance a space under which the control and direction of the membership for entertainment, debate and solidarity. (*What is the lin12 Club?* 1995)

Under the rubric of DiY the Club released books and records with its own publishing and record labels during this time which were in keeping with the anarchist principles of mutual-aid at the club. The link to the participants of this study has already been mentioned. Mr. S was involved in putting gigs on and Mr.O used to attend these events. Danbert from Chumbawamba mentioned how the band was involved with the OITC in the early years. The first occasion was not intentional:

They started slightly before we [Chumbawamba] did. We had been offered some gig in Bradford and when we got there for some reason it didn't happen, but this other gig was happening which was a lin12 gig and we ended up playing it. It just seemed that what they were doing and what we were doing were totally in the same ballpark. Since then we have always had some contact with them.

During the 1980s the club managed to attract a number of people who had been initially involved with the anarcho punk scene. The latter scene had attempted on numerous occasions to set up such a club. Mr. R noted the collectively run ‘Station

Club' in Gateshead, Sunderland's 'Bunker' collective and 'the Pad' run by the Scottish Crass inspired band The Alternative. These were a testimony to this desire in addition to the numerous examples of squatted autonomous projects throughout Europe from the late 1960s onwards. In 1980, Crass funded a London anarchist centre, 'The Anarchy Centre', through the proceeds from the split single benefit record with the Poison Girls, Bloody Revolutions/Person's Unknown. After agreeing to have nothing to do with the centre following a Crass donation of £12,000 in order to avoid accusations of being 'leaders' of the scene, the Anarchy Centre collapsed.

Rimbaud commented:

Based in London's Docklands, the centre was open for a year or so before collapsing in disarray. From the start, conflict arose between the older generation of anarchists and the new generation of anarcho punks. It seemed that the only common interest, and that only tenuously, was Crass, but true to our agreement we kept our distance. We did however play one gig there before the inter-camp bitching left me wondering if the thing hadn't been a dreadful mistake (1998:124).

Where the lin12 differs from the above venture is that it has successfully avoided closure for over twenty years in spite of manifesting these similar divisions and splits over the years. As the guide to the lin12 explains, these have created serious problems:

At no stage in the Club's history has the relationship between "ideal" and "reality" ever been straightforward. Indeed conflict over whose ideals and which reality has often thrown the Club into deep internal conflict. The diversity of interests, priorities and expectations of the membership, empowered by the open and active process of decision making, has often come at a price. Sometimes members have left, disillusioned and occasionally bitter, but this is the uncomfortable reality of taking responsibility and control. (Op.cit:3)

The field work ranged from daily contact and observation with both of the scenes with the first section being chiefly concerned with the lin12, although I attended DiY gigs in Leeds during most evenings due to the number of opportunities for observation and these were certainly more frequent than the occasional gigs held at the lin12. At the lin12 my activities ranged from building the recording studio in the building's cellar, to sound engineer, to café worker, cleaner and general participant and member.

Below is an account of how the fieldwork was performed which will also serve to demonstrate how the DiY punk scene operates daily in general terms. I intend the latter to illuminate the daily practices of what can be described in general terms as punk culture.

Bradford: Studios and Daily Activity

On arrival at the 1in12 at a matinee gig on a rainy Sunday in early June, 2001, I was welcomed and informed by one of the 'core' members that I would be involved with the construction of a recording studio in the basement of the building in addition to helping out with other tasks. The club functions under the umbrella of a number of collectives. The list for the collectives is as follows: peasants collective (food growing), games collective, library collective, gig collective, football team, drama collective, gig collective and studio collective amongst numerous others. In addition to this there are a number of committees geared towards financial issues, management and the daily maintenance and running of the club. All of the latter operated under the chief ethical banner of the club: Liberty, Solidarity, Equality.

The weekly running of the club was monitored through the membership meetings each Sunday in which forthcoming events and day-to-day issues were collectively discussed and agreed upon. It was at a Sunday meeting that I presented my research to the members with the view to outlining the intentions of the project. During this meeting it was collectively confirmed that I would be participating in the studio project. This was deemed to be suitable on account of my previous experience of playing in bands and my understanding of various recording studios. I agreed to be present at the club from midday to five pm six days a week with mornings and Thursdays set aside for field journal writing. My main colleague in the building of

the studio was the caretaker, Mr. J, who would, when time allowed, assist me in the preparations for building the studio.

Underlying Ethos of the Studio Project

The general ethic of DiY, self management and mutual aid is set in the very heart of the 1in12 club and this is why DiY punk has become a stable, though not completely dominant form of fundraising, entertainment and identity. Indeed the practice I was involved within the club is informed by this, though I hasten to add that my involvement in the studio and music eclipsed my observation of other non-musical club activities that could have taken the outcome of the present work in various non-musical tangents. What underpins the progression of projects within and beyond the club is the DiY ethic of personal and collective responsibility whilst retaining personal and group autonomy.

As I pointed out in chapter three, the ethics of DiY have personal autonomy, control and empowerment as its centrepiece. In terms of action the wider control of recording and practice rooms by private interests results in the majority of DiY musical projects paying inflated practice and studio costs, thus surrendering control and recording quality to such interests, impoverishing band members and labels and presenting added financial pressure on such projects. The chief aim of having a studio in the club is primarily to introduce hitherto unpractised recording studio skills and to enable bands to record cheaply. An overarching reason is to provide an authentic alternative to mainstream studios where band members are disconnected from the processes of recording their music and such skills are off limits to the 'customer'. The project had already been partially realised through the construction of a practice room from 1998-2000 which resulted in a cheap-to-rent, secure, soundproofed practice space and storage area for bands in the basement of the club. The practice room and recording

studio extended the DiY ethic beyond its existing remit of concert promotion, record label distribution and bands. The walls, power supplies and the false roof of the practice room were constructed by club members volunteering for shifts, with the entire project being funded through benefit concerts, activities and donations ³⁹.

The cellar room behind the practice room, earmarked for the studio control room, was roughly eight square metres in an L-shape used for general storage with the small end of the room used to contain the club's floor safe. The aim of my two months of field work at the club was to:

- Hang doors to both the entrance and safe areas.
- To install a soundproofed, sloping roof
- To soundproof all walls, install and cut out a soundproofed control room window to enable communication between the practice room and control room. This entailed fixing batons to the walls (drilling and rawlplugging); cutting fibreglass insulation to shape and covering with plasterboard, allowing for electrical installation of power points, lighting and multicore sockets.
- Cutting to shape and carpeting the walls once all other tasks had been completed

These tasks began mid- June and were completed by early August (see appendix 7).

The initial practice was much more difficult that I originally anticipated.

³⁹ It should be noted that, unlike Leeds 6 whose houses have considerable 'luxurious' basement space for band rehearsals, Bradford musicians had no such space. Indeed the majority of most of the Bradford musicians interviewed for the project inhabited small flats in Manningham where access to the basement was denied or, where it did occur, the space was too small.

Doing DiY to Build Autonomous Studios

As I noted above, participation in Club activities can prove to be a very frustrating business: ‘At no stage in the Club’s history has the relationship between “ideal” and “reality” ever been straightforward’ the Club guide asserted. Indeed in spite of my initial enthusiasm I found this to be the case from day one. It is no understatement to assert that the club struggles to exist on a daily basis. The lack of volunteers and a paid ground staff of two meant that I was mostly on my own during the initial stages of the project with initiative and autonomy becoming my key allies. Audiences and general punters of the club are rarely seen outside of the Club events. The busy atmosphere I had witnessed during such events had completely evaporated to be eclipsed by a different ethos: one of daily grind, struggle and routine club DiY business.

Arriving at the club on my first studio fieldwork visit around midday, I expected to be told what to do. Apart from being advised that I would be involved in the studio, it was completely down to me to get the project moving. Aware that there were three other members of the studio collective, Mr. I, J and X, I suggested that we meet to formulate a strategy to begin work.⁴⁰ As Mr. J was tied up in the running of the Club, Mr. I with a full time job and numerous other involvements in the club including sound engineer, I found that I needed to recruit some help, though this would take at least a week to realise. Mr. J articulated the overall pressure of remaining focussed on a single club activity:

J: yeah, it bogged down a lot because it kept going back to the practicalities of people sort of like people doing stuff, people sort of actually building stuff a lot of people, because they can’t, they get frustrated, because they are not very good at it they don’t actually bother coming down like so. It didn’t follow straight on from the practice room.

⁴⁰ This took place with general long term plans discussed and set out, but the three collective members (with the obvious exception of Mr. J) only had input into this project at a distance.

It just carried on with the studio, it was like it just fizzled out a bit. It was good that someone came along and did it.

The first days spent at the club were not involved with work on the studio project. The autonomous ethic of action there means that it is almost *completely* down to personal responsibility to make any activity happen in the club. I initially helped out laminating membership cards, cleaned the café, mopped toilets, washed dishes and stairs, and assisted with general tasks: activities that form the backbone to the daily survival and reproduction of the Club. Indeed, because of the lack of volunteers and staff it became impossible at times to remain focussed on a specific activity. Members', volunteers' and workers' assistance was constantly required to allow a task to be completed. The obvious reasons for doing field work at the club, watching bands, sound engineering, interviewing members became eclipsed by the mundane. This is an extremely salient point. The reproduction a large scale DiY activity such as the club requires a dedication not to the immediate, visual task of promoting the event, putting bands on, feeding them or even building the studio, but *instead* to the mundane. The thankless tasks of the daily reproduction of the club ensured its survival and personal autonomy was central to the completion of any task and this placed additional pressures on the members and volunteers: issues I will explore in chapter seven. Here Mr. I exemplified in a diary entry his frustrations at being drawn into tasks at the club:

Saturday 21st Aug 2001

Drop in early at the club to take pastry out of the freezer to thaw, draw some funds from the PA collective (I'd paid for some cable and connectors in April with my credit card) - I need to pay for the truck parts I'm about to collect. As I'm leaving the brewery arrive with a beer delivery. No one else is around so I have to take care of it; as they finish the bar steward arrives. They're early, or he's late. But the job got done anyhow in a spirit of no panic solidarity. Or something.

In similarity to Mr. I, as a researcher I was drawn to other essential tasks in the club and I had either to request assistance, or become motivated enough to begin the task myself. Mr. J was asked to show me what the initial tasks of the studio project were.

My practical DiY skills were of limited capacity but I had a determination to make the project happen. J. said that I should begin with hanging a door to allow the safe to be separated from the main control room. Mr. J was soon called away to another task in the club. I wrote the following in the field journal once work had stopped because of a defective drill after my attempts to fix it became fruitless:

18/06/00 Mr. J arrived back at the club and managed to get the drill going. The problem was solved by 'banging' the drill on the studio wall. This was not something I was comfortable with due to the danger of this practice, but after a few 'knocks' the drill appeared to behave itself. An interesting point to note here was that such activities are made 'by all means necessary' and available and done with the equipment at hand. In short a 'make do' operation. Proceeding ahead, we managed to make a start on the studio and drilled the holes in the wooden door frame ready to attach to the door. The most striking thing here was that this was DiY activity to produce the facilities of DiY cultural production.

I shall return to the point of building materials and tools shortly. The following week after the above quote was spent in equal frustration. At almost every turn of building the studio I found myself either isolated and distracted or struggling to achieve the task though my lack of practical DiY skills. I began to feel that I was somehow 'missing' out on the 'real' club activity and that self-observation was pointless. Mr. J helped where he could as did the volunteer, Mr. H. I even thought I had recruited a potential volunteer out of an interested visitor to the club who offered his services one afternoon and never returned. What was becoming evident to me whilst I was confined to this dusty basement was the feeling that I would have to make things happen if this project was to be of any success. This would involve the recruitment of new members into the studio collective.

New Members: the Collective

My longstanding relationship with both the Bradford and Leeds DiY punk scenes and familiarity with the core members allowed the recruitment of two new studio collective members. During the evenings I spent time at gigs, pubs and clubs in Leeds where a number of the participants of the DiY scene socialised. From playing at the

Club on numerous occasions I was familiar with one of the sound engineers, Mr. K, who had helped to both build the club when the building was purchased and had a long standing involvement with music. K had moved to Leeds in 1999 and due to personal issues with another member had reduced contact with the Club. However when I informed him of the studio project and asked if he wished to be involved he agreed to put aside personal differences and offer his services to build the club. K was also a student of sound engineering at a local university and was thus able to use this experience during his summer break to expand his knowledge of studio construction. K lived near myself in Leeds and was able to get lifts from me to the club at 12pm each day. He was clear about why he joined in with the studio project:

It will be a good fucking space and I mean the practice room's good enough. I mean it will be a way, hopefully, of giving people skills, again. Hopefully it won't just become a little fucking, so and so's little recording studio. I do hope people will be able to get in there and be able to learn the stuff. Erm, and make mistakes and fucking fuck things up you know and that we'll be able to, you know, gain another rung in the ladder of production, you know, production sort of thing you know what I mean and it will make money for the club hopefully. Use the space that's there, which is what the fucking building's for you know.

The second recruit, Mr. U, came from a club member who was involved in the Leeds squat venue known as the '120Rats'. He had been heavily involved in the renovation of that building in the Meanwood area of Leeds from a run-down hovel to a fully functioning venue with bar, PA system and living areas. Overhearing my frustration regarding the studio project, U immediately volunteered his services as long as I was able to give him a lift in my car from Leeds to Bradford.

My reaction to Mr. U made in a reply to Mr. J in interview revealed my frustration of beginning the project:

Int: it was totally by fluke. I had no idea how skilled Mr. U was going to be: he was just sat in the cafe one day and I was moaning. I was sat there going 'fucking hell, I have got to go down that fucking room and sit there. I can't you know lift stuff and get stuff right.' Then Mr. U said in one morning said 'I'll come and give you a hand'. And that was the first time I went 'fucking wow!' You know 'people are willing to help me'. And he came down and seemed to know what he was doing and that was great.

The project advanced in terms of a team formation and progressed much faster than I anticipated. For the following seven weeks the project worked four to five afternoons a week. In addition to this Mr. J fluctuated between virtually no contact to dedicating full attention to the project. The other member Mr. I worked largely in isolation from us constructing the studio window at his home. I should also mention that a number of other volunteers, including band members and occasional friends of Mr. U, lent a hand when it was required.⁴¹

Tools and Materials

Suitable tools and materials for the job proved to be a constant source of disruption to the project. Indeed the majority of the tools were gleaned from various club sources, were of various levels of quality and were scattered throughout the building. The majority of these implements were in various states of disrepair and left a lot to be desired. As I noted above the drill was the first stumbling point. With the addition of Mr. K, he personally supplied his own drill after the initial tool completely broke down. We had a small amount of money to purchase tools and these were procured at various stages during the project.

The materials of the project became very interesting and matched the underlying ethos of the club. Indeed the majority of the wood and other material used during the initial stages of the project was 'reclaimed'. This was shorthand for searching skips and derelict buildings for the appropriate wood of which there was a large supply. Large amounts of wood were also sourced from inside the club. The original stage on the first floor of the club was originally built by Club members in 1992 for the New York band, Sick Of It All, to play on. It was only intended as a temporary measure but remained in existence for over eight years before being replaced by a larger stage.

⁴¹ Both studio collective members Mr. U and X politely declined to be interviewed for the research.

The wood removed from the existing stage was channelled into the practice room and studio projects. The recycling of materials is in tandem with the ecological ethical stance of the club scene. I also noticed a change in myself. I could not pass a builders' rubbish skip without 'assessing' it for the 'procurement' of potential building materials. Indeed Mr. I, through this sensibility, managed to acquire a large amount of the studio hardware out of a skip at the back of one of the local colleges in addition to personally lending/donating substantial amounts of his own studio equipment.

Not all of the materials and tools were acquired in this manner. The project had funds for the essential building materials. This came from four chief sources. Firstly, Chumbawamba donated £500 for the studio project gleaned from their royalties by allowing the popular song 'Tubthumping' to be used for a car advert. Secondly, a number of 'cocktail nights' were organised by club members which brought in over £100; thirdly, a number of benefit hardcore punk gigs produces equal amounts of money for the project. Finally, one of the central self-generating funding methods was the hourly rate charged to bands using the practice room.

The majority of the plasterboard, nails, rawlplugs, screws, fibreglass insulation were bought at various intersections of the project. For larger items, such as plasterboard for example, this was transported with Mr. I's van. The majority of trips were made in my old VW Beetle. Cash was taken from the project money stored in the safe and receipts were put back so a running total of building costs could be maintained.

Work

The work on the project continued in line with the ethics of the club scene. The collective organisation of the latter resulted in no single member assuming control.

Occasionally, tasks required only two members so inevitably, one of the members would have to occupy themselves with general tasks such as sweeping and tidying up. I noticed definite changes in my sense of control of the project which tended to fluctuate where appropriate problems were encountered. At the outset of the project I was plagued with doubt that the project could be realised, although as the project progressed my feelings of confidence grew and I became skilled in the use of the tools and accurately measuring and cutting wood effectively, drilling and attaching it to the wall with a degree of accuracy. The sense of teamwork grew in equal strength and very few arguments occurred. All tensions occurred during particularly delicate operations such as installing the ceiling. Overall my sense of initiative grew and rather than being told how to perform a task I went ahead and did it: regardless of whether I was successful or not. If I struggled with a given task I would ask for advice and problem-solving then became a collective activity. Occasionally we would be drawn away from the studio tasks to help with other activities, such as deliveries of food which required being carried up to the third floor of the building, due to the building's lift system being damaged beyond repair.

The sound proofing progressed through three main stages. The measurement and cutting to shape of wooden batons prior to drilling the walls so they could be screwed and secured to the walls took around two weeks. One person would be measuring, one drilling and one screwing the batons to the wall. Fibreglass sheets were utilised as soundproofing, cut to shape and placed in the spaces between the batons. The plasterboards were then measured, sawn to shape and nailed over the batons. This was all achieved by carefully taking into account the electrical and light socket fixings. As Mr. J was a trained electrician, he assumed responsibility for the overall wiring of the project, although other members assisted him with these tasks. We had

to also cut a rectangle of bricks out of the studio wall in order that the control room window could be installed to allow visual communication between the practice room and recording studio. This involved fitting a lintel and laying bricks to ensure a soundproofed 'fit'.

Secondly, the ceiling had spaces cut for the lights and an access hatch for the fuse-box. This proved to be an extremely difficult and demanding task as I shall discuss below. Finally the carpet was procured, measured and nailed to the walls and ceiling taking account of the power sockets and light switches. The door was also correctly hung to bracket off the Club's safe.

Tea and dinner breaks were collectively voted on and usually occurred when we deemed them appropriate. Almost everyday we were visited by various club members and friends who came in to check the progress of the project. Occasionally long discussions would occur over how the studio could be most effectively utilised as a club resource; on other occasions, scene and club gossip was the subject of conversation. At all times the usual distractions would occur. Indeed studio project members would often not be able to attend to commitments outside of the project. There were two memorable events that led to a tense atmosphere in the studio project.

The first was related to the eviction court case for the squat. This was a source of considerable stress for Mr. U and an issue I will return to in chapter seven. He was under pressure to attend the relevant solicitors' meetings, court appearances and general squat meetings to discuss strategies. This had the added pressure of U not being present for some of the studio sessions and when K had to be elsewhere I was occasionally working on my own on the project.

Secondly, the Bradford riots of July 7th 2001, when the BNP attempted to march through Bradford became a memorable piece, in the progression of work on the studio. Indeed the club's building on the Saturday of the riots was a staging post for the Leeds Anti-Fascist action group and the café was open and very busy. Club security was doubled with members looking out of the top floor before permitting anyone entrance. We, as a studio collective, had all agreed to be present in the because of threats from the BNP on the club and its members through a race hate website. On arrival that day, it was discovered that there had been an attempt the previous evening to set fire to the club by pouring engine oil on one of the walls and igniting it. Mr. I was explicit here:

in a way the people that are targeting us, cause they have got a long-standing grudge, that in a way, helps us, because the damage that was actually done the other day in the riots was done by people in a momentary heat, nutters, or rioters, craziness which gave them enough energy to actually resist and also they were in a mob so they had that mob mentality, that they gave each other permission, whereas the people that came down here, like when you are in a mob you don't think anything bad's going to happen to you whereas people aren't afraid they are gonna get caught. They're not gonna get done for arson cos that's a heavy rap and they have had time to think about it so they have probably fucked themselves up by thinking about it too hard, yeah so. You know if they had driven a blazing car into the fire escape that would have done the job.

The atmosphere in the club that day was tense in light of both the failed arson attack, and the riots. There were various members popping in and out of the building, returning with occasional reports of what was happening during the run-up to the riots. Whilst this was happening, work on the studio proceeded as usual, although the wood was cut in the building as instead of the street as a potential security measure. The difference to the majority of the previous work on the project was the number of people who volunteered to help on the studio for the day. At least four others helped to complete a large section of the work. However, with some of the most serious public disturbances since the Bristol inner-city riots of 1981 progressing less than half a mile from the building, the atmosphere was tense. The audible backdrop to that

day's project was the sound of police helicopters, breaking glass and police sirens. J commented that we were 'building a studio whilst Rome burned.'

The daily regime of the club had been eclipsed by a tense atmosphere that penetrated all floors of the building although the club remained inspirational to newcomers. Here Mr. I is explicit in that people commented on the value and worth of the Club:

Here you can ask somebody what their favorite twenty albums are. Half of them are really recent ones because they are the ones they remember the best. I mean the most recent thing was just the day of the riots. Cause, loads of people came in. People had come from London to resist the NF, who didn't turn up, but they were coming in here and going 'Ohhh, this place is great' and stuff like that. I imagined I was in a First World War soup kitchen, you know, on this sort of wagon, a few hundred yards away from the front, cause people kept coming in talking about what was going on and then having their burger and going out again. Mobile phones were ringing and stuff and I was just like serving food which is sort of like kind of mundane really, but it was obvious that they needed to be fed and they did think that this place was great.

Overall, the riots ironically aided in the studio project's progression, though I have to admit that fear was very much evident in the general atmosphere of the work carried out that day. What it also summarised was the intersection of mutual aid: members banded together in the face of a threat to the club and were there as much to build the studio as to protect the building from potential attack.

Mistakes.

During the course of the studio project a number of mistakes were made. Wood was cut to the wrong length, holes drilled in the wrong place and tasks were attempted either because a suitable skilled member wasn't available. It is the ethical sense that 'by all means' necessary the task will continue that provided at least two, key stumbling blocks. The operation of this philosophy often meant that there was no skilled person present to halt the task and inform you that there was a technical error in progress. Indeed, firstly, myself and K and U installed the control room window in reverse, meaning that there would have been a strong reflection obscuring the view to

the practice room. Mr. I inspected the work in our absence and took it upon himself to re-install it correctly. Secondly, K and I attempted to cut, assemble and install the engineer's hatch in the ceiling. This was, in short, a disaster, although we considered it satisfactory with our 'hands on hips' in its present state. The following Monday we arrived to see that it had been perfectly and completely reinstalled by U, who had come in to work on the project on his own over the weekend.

These two examples clearly demonstrate that occasionally initiative in the studio project is a hindrance to its overall progression. The lack of DiY skills in these examples led to material, time and efforts being wasted. Equally, with the correct application of such an ethic the individual effort in tandem with the appropriate skills allowed the project to rapidly proceed to the anticipated stage of completion.

Outcomes and Postscript

The stages outlined above for the studio were completed by early August, 2001. With U facing eviction and K returning to focus attention on his college work, the project stalled for some considerable time beyond the work we had completed. Without the time and dedicated volunteers, interest waned before being taken up by Mr. I, J and X later in that year. The next task was to lay the flooring, though this was not completed until December of that year with the studio equipment installed and fully functioning by early 2002.

That the studio project ground to halt for this time is testimony to the way that the Club functions in general. It returned briefly to the back of the members' minds until inspiration surfaced in sufficient amount to advance the projects' completion. With a steady lack of volunteers and paid staff, all hands were put to the pumps just to keep the club open. Three years later in 2004, the studio project is now fully up and

running, replete with digital technology and full 24track ADAT facility, and with a number of bands successfully recording there. These have since been pressed to either vinyl or CD and stand as a testimony to the mutual efforts of all those involved. The bands to have recorded there and released records are The Devils, Extinction of Mankind, Ruin and Boxed In.

Throughout the building of the studio the feelings of frustration at the occasional lack of progress were counterbalanced with feelings of success and satisfaction. The achievement, through collective effort at either getting a section of the work completed, or accomplishing a particularly difficult task, resulted in a sense of fulfilment. When such an accomplishment occurred we would often stand back and comment on how good the work looked. This was particularly in the eye of the beholder and on many occasions when visitors were gleefully shown some wood screwed to a wall or the correct installation of the ceiling joists, we were often met with puzzled faces and replies of, 'oh, I can see it's taking shape.' However, the sense of achievement was not equally shared by all members. Here Mr. J is candid about this:

I haven't got the same sense of achievement building the studio as I had building the practice room because it is like having your second kid or something. It's like you have done it once. Obviously it's exciting but it's not the first time it's happened and I think when I actually hear a recording out of it that is when it will hit me the most like.

Whilst J notes the lack of feeling fulfilled, he was enthusiastic that the freedom and potential exists in the club to achieve things that were deemed previously impossible:

That sense that you can do what you want, really. Sort of freedom, within reason, to you know. It's like today we can just go, right we are going to build a recording studio.

The lin12 provided that specific space and practical application of punk ethics where these activities can be accomplished if one is prepared to struggle and persevere with the project at hand. Its successful accomplishment allows the sharing of new skills between members.

The euphoric feelings of accomplishment within the group were evident and it is these feelings that act as a spring to the motivational factors of DiY projects such as this. Such feelings were revisited and re-occasioned when I was informed in 2002, after I had played the Club with my band, that our set had been recorded live in the Club studio. On being shown the studio after the show, in full working order complete with Mr. I operating the recording technology, I was filled with a huge sense of achievement. The DiY ethic had been practically extended: Club members had a chance to record cheaply, effectively and to learn new skills. The sense of satisfaction in terms of DiY cultural production had been extended from merely releasing a record on a label, getting it distributed and reviewed in fanzines, to the actual control of the recording process. Mr. R's comments are accurate in respect of these successes:

R: I will just start with some of the positive things. I think the practice room and the studio has definitely improved the club. I am really looking forward to when our band gets a few songs together is to record in the studio that has been built by friends you know in a place that we can have. I mean that is everything that I am about with the band and it was like if we could just have that part of it. If we could have just pressed the fucker there it would have been even better. But I mean that's one amazing, inspiring growth thing. Just being able to go and practice in the practice room is a fucking good laugh as well. So those things are really good.

Overall the frustrations, achievements and successes of the studio outlined above stand as a testimony to the attractiveness of DiY projects that extend beyond the usual practices of running a label, fanzine, band, distro stall, doing gig promotions and touring. I'm not belittling the latter, indeed they are central to the whole remit of DiY punk. But the extension of the DiY ethic into fresh avenues of investigation which results in success is extremely rewarding for all those involved.

The frustrations of the project also serve to illuminate the day-to-day practices and essential tasks that must be completed in order that the studio can both be built and continue to exist. The constant reproductive tasks central to the Club meant that there is an equally high level of member burnout, turnover of volunteers and a lack of

motivation, especially the completion of essential daily tasks distract and remove members from achieving goals swiftly. This factor of 'struggle' as the opening quotation pointed out leads to member burnout and scene exit, an issue I will examine in chapter eight.

The final point is that in terms of DiY cultural production the creation and completion of resources such as the studio constitute an act of triumph and resistance over and against mass or administered culture. Whilst such acts are largely ad hoc, and operate under the anarcho syndicalist badge of mutual aid and 'by all means necessary', the feelings of achievement, however sporadic they occur together with the successful completion of a DiY project, are one of the chief motivational factors of the DiY punk scene. The skills that are shared beyond the building of the studio project are in keeping with the general ethos of the Club and the studio project now functions as a magnet with which to draw new members into the 1in12 Club.

Chapter Six: Genre Distinction

The central task of this chapter is to introduce the general model of genre distinction. This is a transposable explanatory tool that aids the study of how authenticity is intentionally/unintentionally used in both spoken discourse and visual gestures. It operates throughout practice, diachronically and synchronically; within and without the scene; within and without relationships between core, peripheral and semi-peripheral membership; and functions as an interesting subtext to the analytical velocity of the ethnographic data presented here.

My intention is to apply theoretical sandpaper to the glossed surface of punk authenticity. The result may appear as potentially explosive criticism to those subcultural scene members whose vernacular discourse and practice genuinely operates within the ethical guidelines of whatever punk genre they inhabit. The reason for this is that there appears to be an irony operating right at the heart of punk culture, which stands for the obliteration of elitism and the adoption of cultural inclusivity. The core member of anarcho-punk, fully trained in the politics of DiY, by default trades in the language of potentially elitist discourse: be it vernacular or otherwise. I make no apologies for what follows.

Genre Distinction

The combination of primary and secondary investigation produces a subcultural scene body of knowledge and experience for the actor. This is used to present the subject as authentic through regular use of appropriate discourse in the collation of what Thornton (1995) calls 'subcultural capital'. The problem with this term is that it is too wide in reference and has little to say either about how it operates discursively in the production of subcultural authenticity within the peer grouping or how it specifically

locates an individual in such a position. Instead, I offer the term 'genre distinction.' Not only does this concept dispense with the financial implications of the word 'capital'; it also and equally draws upon the aspects of Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital which invokes how specific dispositions and competences shape and inform taste cultures. The concept of genre distinction has specific meaning with regard to the punk subculture and serves a plurality of functions in relation to the construction of subcultural authenticity. The use of genre distinction leads to the acceptance of the participant in wider punk peer groupings allowing them to trade in the authentic discourse of punk rock.

Thornton (1995:11) argues that subcultural involvement becomes 'hipness', referring to this as 'subcultural capital', yet she reveals little of how her participants amassed such capital prior to full engagement within the subcultural scene. Chapter three established the point that the subcultural scene entrant is chiefly concerned with the appropriation of the necessary skills that allow a participant to contribute to punk subculture and equally to present themselves to their peers as an authentic scene member through primary and secondary investigation. The amassing of such experience transposes into authentic conduct: the subsequent subcultural member has at their disposal knowledge of previous subcultural experiences which permits them to conduct reciprocal authentic subcultural activities and to simultaneously distinguish themselves from inauthentic conduct. Authenticity, or the presentation of oneself as such within the subcultural scene, is therefore central to the subsequent actions and conduct within subcultural groupings if one is to be accepted into them. It is my contention that there is a potential subtext to DiY punk that on the one hand views inauthentic action both with suspicion, scorn, jealousy and fear, whilst on the other hails authentic action with awe, respect and subcultural honour. However, the reverse

of the previous statement is also applicable here in that overly authentic subcultural practice may produce scorn and inauthentic action, praise and sympathy. Through a detailed application of genre distinction such processes are rendered visible on four clear fronts discussed below.

Primary and secondary investigation provides, through heuristic activity, the subcultural tools of what is relatively deemed to be the approach to authentic scene conduct. Authentic practice, those activities that reciprocally operate in tandem with the ethical frameworks of punk (see chapter three), can be used at a number of reciprocal levels – discursive and extra-discursive – to simultaneously interpellate and hail the subcultural practitioner as a bona fide, authentic member and reciprocal members as either inauthentic impostors, ‘poseurs’ or outsider group members inhabiting a peripheral, insignificant or uninterested subcultural state.

What I am suggesting thus far relates to the idea of amassing what can be considered genre distinction within a plurality of different levels. The evocation of bands, places, people, records, venues, fanzines, distros and almost any facet of subcultural punk activity and knowledge (the list is both contextually endless and historically relative), collected through primary and secondary investigation, has a potential rhetorical purpose to it. When used in the service of an actor’s subcultural credibility, such knowledge can be used as both markers of the subject’s authentic and inauthentic status.

As most of the interviews retrospectively examined participants’ subcultural involvement, most of the genres involved in punk and hardcore could be easily quoted from a ‘knowing subject’ subcultural position within a given scene. Such usage is not innocent in all cases and in many respects serves a clear rhetorical purpose. Genre usage and the demonstration of this knowledge are central in the construction of that

subject as an authentic member and participant of the subculture. Such devices can be used to perform simultaneously pejorative put-downs in the defence, production and bolstering of one's own authentic subcultural practice or, instead, to defend the subject's own version of authentic subcultural practice. So this presents the question: how is genre distinction used in the construction, defence and identity of the practitioner punk culture?

The central aim of this is to assert how the fine-tuned examination of genre distinction demonstrates the long-standing continuity of the punk genre(s) as a whole and thwarts attempts to place endpoints upon punk while also historically locating some of the claims and counterclaims about competing genres and their contribution to authentic punk practice. I wish to note that this section is by no means a comprehensive overview of all punk genres over the past twenty-five years (thus ironically placing myself as the authentic author of a fully informed and 'all-knowing' historical document!). I focus only on the claims made in the interviews regarding the initial influence that certain musical genres had on the interviewees in their specific forms of subcultural practice.

What follows is an account of how these interrelated sections of discourse are played out in the interviewees' statements of entrance into punk culture. I take care to note here that these are not mutually exclusive, partitioned 'common places' (Billig *et al*, 1992: 17) of discourse and instead mutually inhabit each other. Within this conception of genre distinction I present four non-mutually exclusive tools and their subsequent ethnographic examples to identify how authenticity is constructed within the discourse and practice of punk. These are: the authentic original; membership badges; genre location indicators; and the related yet hated.

The Authentic Original

'Back in the day' was/is a common everyday term used by subcultural members to refer back to a 'golden age' of subculture/scene activity. One of the most common examples of this in punk discourse is for participants to refer to a subjectively considered 'classic' period of punk rock in the 1970s and the associate debates between US and UK versions of punk rock or some important subcultural 'heyday', specific to the participant's experience, involvement and historical, geographical, and cultural location.

Specifically, the authentic original relates to musical genres that are used by the informants to rhetorically define what is and what is not deemed to be punk rock. This operates along both a geographical, ethical and historical timeline. As when Mr. I below talks of the 'pointless wanking' of progressive rock, he sets up punk as an authentic alternative musical discourse, simultaneously offsetting other, previous genres as inferior, elitist or substandard in contrast to the 'honesty' of the punk aesthetic. This method of rhetorically 'putting down' past, present and future musical genres of punk (and other musical genres) is a method of constructing the speaker's authentic version of punk. The most common form of such discourse is related to either the origins of punk rock or to the 'classic' period of punk that is said to have existed from 1977-79.

One of the ways in which authenticity in music is defined is by rhetorically marking out a particular genre in contrast to others, which are deemed superficial, pretentious or sham. This strategy is strongly in evidence in the contradistinction of punk and progressive rock. It is clearly illustrated by Mr. I:

During the seventies when I was kind of a young, middle teenager my peer group were all into this kind of Genesis and Yes [music] and I kind of knew it was wrong but I couldn't put my finger on what it was. Er it seemed like you had to pretend you liked it

even though you didn't. And I didn't really like it, I mean both of those bands have the odd good tune but there is really an enormous amount of pointless wanking.

Here, the first claim of knowing there was something wrong with the music is invoked against the tastes of Mr. I's peers. 'Pointless wanking' is a pejorative, descriptively inflated put-down which both articulates Mr. I's unease with the exclusivity of leading music genres in the mid-1970s, and prepares the ground for his own identification with the inclusivity of punk, which is then set up in opposition to what is commonly regarded as a self-indulgent, even shameful activity. No one, except possibly the most abject masochist, wants to be defined as, or associated with, 'pointless wankers'.

Paradoxically, though, this is a sharp boundary demarcation that runs against the notion of punk culture as inclusive since it requires that 'authentic' music be performatively dissociated from what is construed as 'inauthentic' (pop, progressive rock, or whatever). Mr. I stated that when Peel first played the Ramones in 1976 against the backdrop of the progressive rock of the time, he thought it was a joke, yet a hugely influential one:-

I thought it was a joke and then I realised that it wasn't. I worked out that it was full of energy. You can name this record to your mate and say "here, listen to this it's exciting straightforward and direct." Previously my friends would lend me records and they would be saying "listen to this" if you don't like it means that I am cleverer than you which wasn't a deal that I wanted to be in. So [I heard] the Damned, The Ramones like millions of other people the music they heard on John Peel got me involved in punk (emphasis mine)

Here the specific tool for identifying the construction of authenticity is I's oppositional self/other depiction of early punk music as initially 'a joke' before recognition of its authenticity (against the implied alienating and exclusive properties of progressive rock). Such recognition is implied within the claims that such music is 'straight-forward and direct', exemplifying how primary investigation is carried out and interpreted. The reference here is not so much to the 'pointless wanking' of progressive rock (though he does refer to status-seeking) as to the rhetorical

construction of early punk's musical simplicity, yet the result is the same. What is set up is an authentic, original marker of distinction against progressive rock and the perceived aesthetic elitism Mr. I identified with it.

Early divisions were evident over peer interpretations of American and English punk genres and this reflected divisions between the UK and US in the late 1970s. As Mr. R made clear, such divisions could have alarming consequences:-

My local like Sid Vicious character kind of guy modeled himself on Sid or whatever. I used to think of myself as a bit of a Johnny Ramone you know I had kind of like long hair. This guy came up to me and he's like wiggling going "the hippy, hippy shake!" This was on Armstrong Bridge in Newcastle and it's a hundred foot drop and he cornered me with his mates 'cause my mates got away, and he's like giving me shit for being a hippie, which is ridiculous as I had a Ramones shirt on. The guy didn't get it you know. My Chopper [bike] was thrown over and they had basically picked me up and were threatening to throw me off this bridge. They could have fucking killed me and I was terrified.

The above division is made clear from Mr. R's testimony through his discrimination between 'punks at the time who got it and punks who didn't.' Here the claims of being into the Ramones can be identified as 'authentic original' statements of genre distinction. The Sid Vicious 'look-alike' in this example, is constructed through both his identification with the 'second hand' look of UK punk and is also captured in his misrecognition of what R refers as the authentic original punk look with what he and the band considered central in the formation of the punk genre. Those who didn't 'get this' were performatively hailed by R as inauthentic and indexical to their subcultural ignorance was the potential for misconstrued practice. However, what this quotation equally offers is an example of the extra-discursive business that visual subcultural symbols play. Here, R highlights that an authentic member of the subculture – one who applies genre distinction correctly – would avoid inauthentic action such as misreading haircuts and t-shirts and 'hippyness' when they are allegories of an authentic reading of US punk. However terrifying, R's assailants

were punk parochials. Their transatlantic illiteracy substantially diminished their subcultural status as genuine participants in punk.

What is clear from the above examples is how the category of 'authentic original' operates through the award of authentic subcultural credentials to the speaker whilst simultaneously 'othering' inauthentic genres/participants, whose reciprocal understanding of 'early genres of punk' (Ramones) were initially understood and presented as misguided. Through such devices the subcultural past is constructed along a plurality of potential strategies. The authentic original can be used to either authenticate the speaker through their association/first hand experience and long-standing knowledge of it; it can educate and inform an potentially subculturally inexperienced listener; produce envy, admiration and a plethora of mixed emotional responses/reactions from the listener; and finally serve as a marker of the length of subcultural experience a participant has gained that is not specifically restricted to the boundaries of the subculture.

Membership Badges

These are the historically and culturally relevant, visible and spoken categories and discourses that interviewees used in order to place themselves, or demonstrate knowledge of, key historical subcultural intersections, thus potentially asserting themselves as authentic subjects. Where the 'authentic original' category involved mentioning salient and important band names, records, concerts, places, and most importantly, rhetorical discourses associated with genres, the interviewees were able simultaneously to identify a specifically located punk practice couched in cultural, social and historical space and also demonstrate the extent of their knowledge of the sub-genres and scenes of punk. Membership badges are both synchronic and diachronic. For example, the older interviewees mentioned the 'classic' punk bands of

the 1977-79 period. Later bands were associated with different genres of punk that derive from the international interpretations of either the American, English (as demonstrated by R in the previous example) or European/US punk styles such as hardcore and straight edge. In addition to this, the use of membership badges acts as a demonstration of 'insider' knowledge of both past and present subcultural activities. By mentioning specific genres within the interview setting and through monitoring general talk and action within the ethnographic field, the confirmation of one's knowledge of the culture and status as a scene member is either confirmed or at stake. I have chosen one specific example where the wider arguments of authenticity in punk are rehearsed and act as a catalyst for secondary investigation for Mr. J. The adept articulation of this discussion acts as a membership badge of genre distinction.

Mr. J was involved with the heavy rock subculture until the early eighties when he began to feel that the separation between performer and audience was still apparent at the concerts he attended. The secondary investigation of punk presented itself as a solution to this problem. Thus, for J, underground punk genre provided what he considered to be the authentic solution to this problem.

It wasn't until the eighties 'till I started realising that that all the gigs I was going to were sort of: us band, you audience sort of thing. Everything was sort of bleak. As soon as you got through the door at the venue they just try to bleed you dry. After going to a few gigs at the NEC, just feeling like complete cattle. I sort of bumped into a few mates from the heavy rock days and sort of my mate John, who had pink spiky hair and was hanging out with GBH. We got nattering and I started hanging around and went to see Big Country. That was sort of a semi punk gig and it had loads of energy in a little venue and that was good. I mean that was it. You know when you get into something and go this is where I want to be, this is like what I have been after.

Whilst this section of the interview neatly demonstrates how affiliations with more suitable peers and peer group scenes are secondarily investigated, sought after and formed, it also illustrates how authentic knowledge of the subculture as a membership badge is used to portray the speaker as the same. Here J's criticisms of corporate rock concerts demonstrates and repeats some of the well-rehearsed earlier critiques of

popular music that punk depended upon. The separation of band from audience – ‘you band, us audience’ – is noted alongside the high cost of attending such events – ‘bleed you dry’ – together with the facelessness of the events – ‘feeling like complete cattle’. This is presented as inferior to, and less authentic than, the status of what J refers to as a ‘semi punk gig’ where ‘there was loads more energy’ in a ‘small venue’. Here is where the authenticity is located for J while repeating the wider argument of corporate versus small ‘semi punk’ gig acts as a membership badge. The adept navigation of such a debate confirms J’s status as a subcultural member fully aware of the contentious debates that underpin the authenticity of punk rock. The use of ‘semi punk gig’ belies the knowledge that J has of what he considers an authentic punk concert. The use of such additional terms such as GBH as his peer group also establishes J within the genre of street punk. This was achieved through the interview discourse of his recognition of myself as a fellow subcultural member during the interview.

Genre Location Indicators

In similar ways to membership badges, these locate the interviewee's authenticity within a specific geographical, cultural and historical juncture in punk culture. Such indicators include visible and spoken references to bands/members, records, labels, venues, fanzines concerts, social events, and key figures within a specific scene. The use of such terms is complicated since it can either represent an innocent recollection of a time and a scene and the potential sharing of newly discovered bands, records, labels, websites, concert dates etc., or an elitist signal of cultural knowledge that is used to demonstrate evidence of authentic participation of the punk genre, rhetorically setting aside or displacing the speaker from those who are deemed 'inauthentic' or ill-informed members of the culture. Mr. C mentioned the 1987 Radio One John Peel

sessions as influences on his subcultural development. This surfaces repeatedly as a mainline media support of DiY punk culture. C noted that

at that time you had John Peel doing the Radio One Show and he was putting out Peel sessions with like Heresy, The Stupids and Napalm Death and so you know it was like an early building block sort of state.

Here the specific knowledge of John Peel's sessions are invoked in addition to some of the key bands mentioned during that time. The dual purpose of this statement firstly locates the speaker as having the specific subcultural knowledge of the period of hardcore punk popularised by John Peel in 1987 as 'britcore'⁴². Secondly, use of the phrase 'early building block sort of state' (my emphasis) locates the speaker in the subcultural present demonstrating the appropriation of sufficient subcultural historical knowledge to show they understand previous genre's roles in the construction of the present.

However the previous quote fails to demonstrate the use of spatial and geographical genre location indicators within a specific scene. In what follows the speaker uses a number of subcultural colloquialisms as geographical markers in the Leeds/Bradford hardcore and punk scenes.

O: basically with a question about the 1in12 is like facing me with like a question about Leeds 6 basically, cause it's been there for years, it's like I was going to 1in12 gigs before the Club building existed for fucks sake! Erm, I guess I'm a circumstance of geography really because I was born and brought up within [a] close proximity of Leeds and Bradford.

Here the speaker navigates between innocent location indicators specific to the Leeds subcultural scene by using Leeds 6 as a point of geographical location and pejorative 'authentic original' statements through the claim that he attended the 1in12 club gigs before they obtained a grant for their own building. The innocent term Leeds 6 could be read as a straightforward geographical reference, but the interviewee is using the term as a mutual scene location point with the interviewer. In this

⁴² See Peel's introduction to Mudrian (2004)

instance Leeds 6 has an invested subcultural knowledge and value in that it offers predominantly (but not totally) the potentially informative location of the majority of participants in the DiY scene of that area. Replete with such knowledge, the speaker is able to demonstrate sufficient knowledge as to render them as an authentic scene member to other participants. This point is also of equal value for the sharing of subcultural scene knowledge. As I noted in the previous chapter with regard to primary and secondary investigation, knowledge is subculturally shared through heuristic investigation. Here genre location indicators can equally function to point a subcultural peer to a specific subcultural location of activity, band, label, venue, time place genre etc. Not only is the shared element and aspect of mutual aid in DiY punk rock made explicit in such examples but also it equally illustrates how subcultural knowledge becomes a shared scene phenomenon.

Hated Yet Related

This term refers in discourse and practice to what is deemed by the interviewee as acceptable and unacceptable subcultural genres and scenes, some of which were cited as key influences on their entrance. Unacceptable (hated) genres are legion within the discourse of musical authenticity. Within this discourse, progressive rock has already been mentioned. Pop, ska punk and mainstream versions of punk (Blink 182 and Green Day are key examples) have been spoken of in my interviews in terms of vitriolic animosity and were largely judged, with the exception of Mr.V who has a predilection for ska punk, to be inauthentic genres of punk rock. Such acceptance and hostility in the discourse of punk serve to locate authenticity within the accepted frames of genre distinction. The 'hated and related' is of key importance to those bands decried for having 'sold out' (see chapter nine). Those subcultural practices that have shifted attention from the core ethical values of DiY punk attract vitriol,

scorn, and stereotypical othering and are generally treated as distasteful and unattractive practices from those members who view them as counter to their subcultural scene aims. Mr. R presents a rather telling and lengthy example of this in his discussion of what he considers to be the practices that contravene his version of DiY ethics:

R: You know I can't claim to have a monopoly on punk you know what I mean it is all over the shop. I find that the history is reinventing things which is, and I'll conclude with this, but history reinventing stuff and you really notice it as you get older is that things get misrepresented and you realise no it wasn't like that: what are you on about you know? You realise it and I dunno, that whole strain of stuff that I have been a part of with Flat Earth [records] and that whole anarcho stuff through the nineties and the British, northern hardcore scene and the label and the stuff that you are involved in yourself and that whole part of it, I would say it is not really getting its dues, it is not really getting recognised. It's like all these other things have kind of overtaken it. Because we haven't got the big marketing tools and we are not marketing our shit you know like PhD [distribution] or someone's just like swamping. You know some wankers like that: Victory Records you know these are people that I particularly despise you know. These are people who are just cynical business people you know. They are just cunts, you know, I haven't got a better word for them I'm afraid. I hate them. And I hate what they stand for and they stand for bullshit and capitalism and nothing else. And the fact that people like me, who are trying to make a change, trying to fight against this bullshit they are just being swamped by this and I find that that is the case. But I think as long as I have got a breath in us we will still exist and we will just do our own thing. But my perspective has definitely changed from a big, world changing thing. A big explosive thing like the Crass and the whole anarcho punk thing was big enough to ensnare a lot of people into it and then you have got this very localised, very small underground thing that you are part of cause that is just how it is at the minute. Err, I don't know, DiY does not have to be small but for me it is what I consider worth it. Errm and it's just that there is so much bullshit out there. I fucking hate everyone [laughter]. I think I'll just quit.

What R is castigating here is what he considers to be the biased rewriting of punk history, with the activities of northern DiY hardcore and punk rock being ignored. He is specifically pointing to what he sees as a rewriting and abandonment of some of the core ethical practices around which he has run his record label for the best part of two decades: his present subcultural scene reality has been eclipsed and ignored by the practices he stands counter to. That corporate marketing strategies of the PhD distribution company or the larger independent record labels such as New York's Victory records have obscured the core reasons for being involved in punk rock, for R meant that the political and ethical dimensions have been equally excised. R feels animosity towards this – 'I hate what they stand for and they stand for bullshit and

capitalism and nothing else' – and this in turn increases the pressure for him to continue running his small DiY record label 'as long as I have a breath in us then we will still exist'. A central point here is that through the hated and related [other] the energy is generated for the DIY punk to carry on regardless of the struggles involved in the maintenance and reproduction of the DiY project.

There is an unwelcome, yet essential reciprocal relationship between those practices deemed 'un' DiY and the practices described below. Authentic DiY production requires the other wider non DiY scenes of punk rock as a benchmark in order to both construct and identify itself. This is not applicable in all cases, yet the catalyst for action, in this case DiY, has to be activities that are deemed oppressive, part of the system, major music industry, racist, homophobic, sexist etc. Without such, the DiY scene loses the anchor of its identity. Yet the reverse can equally be the case: animosity is aimed at what are often deemed politically correct club members, from those participants of the non-DiY punk scene who have equal claims on their punk reality. Here this position is articulated by Mr. BS, a punk in a pub in Bradford who interrupted one of my interviews when he found out I was associated with the One in Twelve.

B: the early days, yeah it was set up by the old punks and stuff, yeah, hippies and punks, yeah it were alright. You got all the fucking geeks in there now who you know, don't eat meat, that you know, got a little bit of a line with that now. But, hey, practice what you preach! If that comes into it, practice what you preach for Christ's sake. And they don't know what they've been preaching so they don't even know how to practice it.

Apart from the obvious and interesting evocation of the authentic original category of 'the early days' those who run the club 'now' are castigated as 'fucking geeks'. What is interesting here is that there is scorn placed upon the lin12 from those punks who see their version of punk rock tainted by perceived newcomers to the scene. Equally I surmise Club members would respond with equal vitriol. It would be easy here to replace 'hated yet related' with the term counterculture, but the transferability

of the present model allows the negation political impositions in order that the rhetorical strategies be unveiled.

The hated yet related is an exceptionally poignant issue that drives the practice of DiY punk: the need to remain autonomous and independent from what is deemed un DiY, the need to retain control over the cultural production in order that political and artistic statements can be authentically produced without the appropriation of capital for personal gain. The DiY punk scene is chiefly constituted though its reciprocal Other. It strives to be what the other is not, yet at times they become difficult to distinguish from each other. To the untrained observer, whose interests lie beyond those things punk, such issues may appear trivial or insignificant, yet to those involved the maintenance and reproduction of the DiY culture becomes an extremely rewarding, taxing and equally frustrating pursuit.

Together these four analytical categories allow the investigation and analysis of the *symbolic* production of subcultural authenticity and the struggle for independence that are the subtexts of the following ethnographic accounts.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to illuminate and establish the transposable model of genre distinction and its four non-mutually exclusive sub-sections that illustrate how authenticity is conveyed in subcultural discourse, gesture and cultural action. I shall exemplify the practical value of this model in the following chapter in relation to the reciprocal activities within and between the two subcultural scenes of Leeds and Bradford. This model will also prove its analytical worth when the subsequent dilemmas of 'selling out' are discussed in chapter nine.

Chapter Seven: Authenticity in Action

Cops and Robbers is a publication that attempts to encourage the DiY ethic. This is a term that has no fixed definition and means different things to different people. The gigs advertised in *Cops and Robbers* are all DiY to some degree. That is all door takings go to cover the costs involved in promoting the event. The promoters don't take a cut for themselves. Not all the bands are necessarily DiY, some may have managers, have major label involvement or music press connections, but at least by playing a DiY gig they are forced to prescribe to this idea for one evening at least and your money isn't going to support an industry based upon competition and back-stabbing. DiY is about taking control of your own life and shunning big business, corporate attitudes and all the bollocks that you have to put up with from people who think that money means success (*Cops and Robbers* # 9, October 1998).

Introduction

This is the second chapter dedicated to the practical activities in the ethnographic work in Leeds and Bradford. It is organised into three sections.

Firstly, participant observation from 10am-6pm at the Out of Step record shop in Leeds will be outlined, paying specific attention to how the previous model of genre distinction is evident in subcultural scene discourse and gesture within the record shop setting. I shall also expand on the issues of punk ethical dilemmas as they relate to the commercial activities of the DiY punk record shop.

The second section is concerned with evening 'concerts', bands, and promotion under the rubric of DiY scene organisation. A large proportion of the organisational activities prior to the successful completion of the gig occurs right across the temporal spectrum of DiY punk practice. The majority of the gigs I attended/played during the four month fieldwork period took place from approximately: 6pm – 2am and beyond. The exception to this was the matinee festival and the 'early start' gig; such events generally began around 12pm with matinees finishing around 6pm whilst festival endings were relative to the venue's licence curfew.

Thirdly, the ethical similarities and differences between multi-sited Leeds and single-site Bradford scenes will be examined paying specific attention to the points of

departure where the identity of DiY punk becomes diffuse. This final section represents the reciprocal relationship between the adjacent cities and will present an examination of the similarities, and occasionally contentious differences, between members of the two scenes along the lines of the differences previously outlined in chapter four. Indeed the two groupings occasionally negotiated and constructed their own authentic position within the subculture through and between their relationship to the opposite city⁴³.

Leeds: 'Out of Step' With the World.

The second placement I was involved in was at the Leeds record shop Out of Step⁴⁴. Established in 1999 by two friends Mr. V and Mr. Z (not interviewed), the shop was realised after the pair (both of whom had gained experience working both inside of the music business and in chain record stores) bought the remains of a distribution stall of a friend in Manchester who no longer wished to sell records at gigs. Mr. V recalled how the shop began:

I worked for Polygram for a bit and stuff like that. And I just started talking to people really and I spoke to one of my friends I knew in Leeds and he said Mr. Z is working in a record shop, he's still working in Virgin, he used to work in record shops up north and stuff, maybe you should give him a ring. I phoned him I was like well do you fancy opening a shop and it was like, yeah. And erm, I spoke to him in Manchester a few times and it seemed like a good idea. Then a mate of mine in Manchester did a big distro I always used to buy records off gave up doing the distro. He just said right well my girlfriend's said we're moving house and I've got to get rid of it all cause there's no room for it, it takes up too much time, here's a list of stuff you can buy. He was just giving them out to everybody in Manchester saying, and I was like oh right, I was going through it and going, oh that's a good record and that's a good record. I was like 'how much for the lot?' And he like gave us a really cheap price and I bought all his distro off him. Then because Mr. Z knew people at Revelation and different record labels like that and they had stuff over here at different distros and we just started getting stuff a bit cheaper. I think they were just helping us out really. In the end we got quite a lot of stock really cheap and we searched round for a shop. We got in touch with the Wisdom [*skateboard shop*] who had this shop in Bradford that wasn't doing too well, but they

⁴³ see appendices 4,5,6,7 in relation to this chapter.

⁴⁴ *Out of Step (With the World)* is a 1983 song by the Washington D.C hardcore band, Minor Threat, whose lyrical intention was to detail the struggle of living a straight edge lifestyle in a culture wholly colonized by hedonistic practices. The singer, Ian Mackaye, is often popularized as being one of the originators of the anti-hedonist straight-edge hardcore. See, for Example Lahickey (1998) for a robust account of the first fifteen years of this culture. See also Blush (2001)

were up for moving over here [*Leeds*] so we were like we'll do the shop together. Half the rent, half the electric, half the everything. So we just did it like that. (*Emphasis authors*)⁴⁵

I was a participant observer at the collectively run shop for just over six weeks. Entrance was secured through my familiarity with both V and Z on account of my band playing Leeds and Bradford DiY shows and through my custom at the shop over the previous years. Unlike the studio project there was no real goal other than to sell records, though this view was soon countered through observation. On many points this was an entirely different mode of operation to the 1in12 club. The business was privately not collectively owned by two people although decisions were made on an equal footing. The skills I procured were in terms of stock control, ordering and retail organization. I also learned how to take credit card payments and operate a till. In short this was a retail placement. However there were salient points of departure. The Leeds DiY scene in 2001 was a vibrant and well-populated subcultural scene with a broad spectrum of DiY punk and hardcore genres in clear evidence. This was a multi-sited and faceted subcultural arena. Bradford in comparison had the Club as its centrepiece of DiY activity: Leeds had numerous examples of this activity. I will return to these issues during the final section of this chapter.

Unlike the feelings of initiative and integrity evidently observed in the Club, I was mostly told what to do and also capitalized on my previous experience as a retail assistant in Nottingham in 1998. Long term goals had been eclipsed with quiet times, where one talked to the people from Wisdom, hung out in the street, smoked or ordered cups of tea and coffee from the Turkish deli two shops down the street. Situated at the back of the Corn Exchange – the Leeds intersection of once bohemian stalls which also formed the weekend ‘hangout’ for primary and secondary

⁴⁵Revelation Records is one of the original New York straightedge record labels currently operating out Los Angeles. See Lahickey (1996).

investigation teenage subcultures – Out of Step merged with a number of small second hand retro clothing businesses, tattooists, body-piercing emporiums, head shops, cafes and general bric-a-brac boutiques. However, together with the skateboard retailer in the shop at the time, the shop presented a social arena ripe for primary and secondary subcultural scene investigation.

The shop usually turned around £250 a day and more at weekends. I worked there from 10 –5pm four days a week and worked to a rota system with both V and Z shadowing me in the early stages of the placement. The shop held well over three thousand different punk and hardcore records and CDs in addition to fanzines, t-shirts, stickers, band videos and various subcultural ‘trinkets’⁴⁶. DiY music was held there from all over the world and sold as cheaply as possible. My role was to serve, play records the customers wanted to hear, keep the music aisles in alphabetical order and return sold record sleeves and CD cases back to the aisles if they were still in stock, otherwise to place the storage cards in the reorder box.

The backbone of this shop under the banner of the DiY ethic of independence and self-management was the production of genre distinction. I would have struggled to have worked in this shop had I not had a working knowledge of punk and hardcore music. This is an extremely salient point which I will discuss in more detail below. The shop appeared void of such ethical concerns, though I will assert below that this was not the case. It took the form of three observed dilemmas.

1) The Ethical Consumer Dilemma⁴⁷

⁴⁶ The shop also sold badges, patches, plastic figures of famous band members, such as Ozzy Osbourne, Kiss AC/DC etc.

⁴⁷ Horton, D (2004).

As I noted the shop could be read as any other business. With both Z and V committed to the practice of DiY, both at the shop and in their extra shop 'activities', this was certainly not the case, though it dramatically shifted between these two planes at various junctures. The precursor to Out of Step is the distro stall, a self-managed record stall of various sizes found at most DiY gigs in tandem with the DiY ethic of accessibility and low prices. The latter is chiefly concerned, with selling records to the subculture. Here the shop was attempting to increase the range of music for sale by encompassing the multitude of genres that not only exist within punk and hardcore but also metal and select forms of rock music. Such punk genres did not instantly appear in the shop and this only happened through a gradual period of negotiation. V expands upon such issues:

when we first talked about doing the shop, cause obviously I didn't know what was involved in doing the shop and neither did Z. I was saying right we'll have all the CDs at four quid and no major label stuff and all this. People, when we first opened, and a lot of the kids, were coming in - literally three or four a day - saying, 'got anything by Sublime? Got anything by these' and they were all on major labels. And we didn't stock it. Then after like four, five months or something one kid come in and asked [for a major label record] and he said 'have you got it?' and I was like 'no we haven't got it. Out of interest mate how much is it?' and he said 'oh, I'll get it in HMV it's alright I'll get it in there'. And I went 'how much is it in there mate?' and he went 'twenty two pound'. We looked at the list and we knew we could get it cheaper and if we stocked it, cause it is still the same sort of music, it's just that some of those bands are on a major label. And it's like we can do it for five, six, seven, eight pound cheaper than that. And it's like well, so what do we do: we say we're not going to stock it because it's on a major label or, are we gonna stock it and save loads of money. At the same time while they are picking up that there might be something on the stereo in the shop where they go 'what's that? That's really good', 'Oh it's a band from Leeds does the same sort of thing, it's four quid mate if you want it'.

The latter is an example of the dilemma of selling-out or compromising the ethical concerns at the centrepiece of the DiY scene. Issues touching on the commercialisation of punk, profiting from it and competing with other record shops are the concerns at stake here. Indeed these are hotly contested debates within the global punk and hardcore scenes and I will afford much more attention to these issues in chapter nine. That said there was a constant trade-off with these issues whilst I was a participant observer in the shop. This is not to say that there was a constant debate

but keeping costs low was a persistent and repetitive concern in order to maintain credibility and integrity within the wider subcultural community⁴⁸. Such a dilemma also represents one of the difficulties that is at the heart of what can be termed ethical consumerism and the dilemmatic balance between private and community interests.

2) *The PC*

What became obvious within the shop was the occasional un-politically correct comment that came from a Wisdom shop worker through his derogatory use of the words 'gays' and 'faggots'. V had points of concern in tandem to the DiY ethical issues of tolerance and behaviour that challenged such engrained cultural forms of prejudice, yet was also at pains to renege on his criticism of those who make such comments for fear of both strained, daily working relationships and being considered as part of the 'punk moral police.' The majority of these comments I observed were made outside the shop whilst one was on a cigarette and tea break, and were aimed in general discourse to behaviour deemed un-masculine or 'weak' in some non-specific way. In similar ways to the club, such views were actively challenged by V. Here he is explicit:

a lot of people in the scene think it's a cool thing is to call someone a bender a faggot or whatever and [other shop worker] used to say it loads and cause I kept sort of shouting at "[other shop worker]" telling him he was out of order and in the end he's suggested a happy medium now where he now calls someone a 'bandit'. Well I can't say anything to that you see, I know what he's saying but I can't say to him "[other shop worker]," and he'll go "what? I didn't mean that" It's like ok, well fuck it, I'm not gonna bother do you know what I mean?

Such language was tolerated as a compromise on the bounds of good humour and working relations. My observations at the time considered this to be a reciprocal relationship. The shop worker knew he had overstepped the mark with V in some of his comments and occasionally they were employed to 'wind' him up as he intimated

⁴⁸ With occasionally limited success, in a recent phone conversation with V (01/12/04) he stated that they were still boycotted by certain members of the Leeds DiY community over the issue of what are considered by them to be high prices.

when I questioned him on the intentions of his comments. This was frequently the case in a number of settings where inappropriate comments were challenged on the DiY ethical grounds of tolerance, inclusiveness, liberty and solidarity, though as Mr. BS demonstrated in the previous example this has the potential to also generate further intolerant behaviour in order to present a 'challenge' towards the perceived control of the challenger: in short a resistance technique geared towards 'challenging the challenge.'

Prejudiced views were not just confined to the occasional skateboard shop worker's homophobic and sexist comments. Not all subcultural members who visited the shop espoused DiY, indeed this is somewhat of an understatement and a plurality of views was witnessed. One specific instance of hatred towards the *lin12* and its members was conveyed to me by a male customer in his early thirties over the counter in the shop. He had come in to enquire as to whether there were any grindcore gigs coming up in the near future. I informed him of such an event coming up at the club. The response was telling, he said that 'there was nothing but a bunch of lefty politically correct, dirty anarchists and feminists that inhabited the place' and it wasn't 'real' grindcore if it was held at the Club. I made an attempt to counter his view, stating that that was a particularly 'heavy' point of view to espouse and asked if he'd ever been there, to which he replied 'no'. I left it at that. This customer's use of the term 'real' highlights the consistent and competing discourses within DiY punk concerning themselves with the authentic scene. My experience at the shop proved to be revealing in that; views heavily critical of the DiY ethic of both Leeds and Bradford scenes were occasionally encountered along the lines of authentic genre distinctions.

Such points of view made by this customer obviously articulate the hated and related category I detailed above and are in tandem with the comments made by Mr.

BS used to illustrate this point in the previous section. I questioned V about this customer, asking whether he'd had similar encounters. V stated that such responses are common and to make suggestions that might alter such points of view: for example by playing the grindcore bands' CDs scheduled to play the club asserting that they are worth checking out. My attempt to share information with this person regardless of whether or not it was accepted became a familiar practice in the shop. Overall it was evident that there was a constant trade off between the ethical rule with respect for co-workers and customers.

3) Social or Retail Space? Information Points and the 'Latest Release':

Beyond the retail role of the shop Out of Step proved to be an important intersection of information sharing beyond the web, gig posters and information flyers passed out at gigs. The shop had two racks full of gig flyers and leaflets detailing mostly DiY gigs and political activities, demos etc. in Leeds, Bradford and surrounding areas. Large numbers of posters for gigs also decorated the entrance to the shop. Another dilemma arises in this section, again in the form ethical consumerism: is the shop primarily geared to the production of a social space conducive to information sharing or to retail business? Can a balance be achieved? Such issues are at the heart of an ethical consumerism, sharing its values with many of the ethical stances outlined in chapter four. Information sharing is key to the survival of the DiY network and the shop took its role very seriously in this respect. Two free UK fanzines, Cardiff's *Fracture Magazine* and the Leeds based European focused fanzine, *Reason to Believe*, amongst others, were neatly stacked up at the side of the counter and copies were offered to customers in addition to posters, gig and political demonstration flyers⁴⁹.

⁴⁹ Both these free fanzines are now sadly defunct because of similar lines of burnout detailed in chapter eight. See Duncombe (1998) for an excellent account of fanzine culture in the US. For a theoretical account of fanzine production see Atton (2002).

Indeed out of the two fanzines, *RTB* was particularly geared towards a 'strict' DiY political line.⁵⁰

The age range of the shop customers ranged from early teens to retirement age with the dominant age being teens and twenties. Gender representation was in tandem with the subcultural dynamic of male dominance in terms of numbers with ethnic minorities being wholly underrepresented. Customer involvement slotted into the model detailed in chapter three of peripheral, semi-peripheral and core scene members. Inquisitive customers keen to advance both primary and secondary investigation used the shop as a vehicle for such investigation. Peripheral members occasionally, nervously, lurked in the shop, unsure that their record selections would be in keeping with the popular genres of their associate peer grouping, although we, as shop staff, always made an attempt to see if that person was alright. They hesitantly held back from the counter, keen to be seen to make the 'correct' purchase. Some of the younger teens visited the shop with their parents who stood anxiously waiting for their nervous young offspring to make a (correct) purchase. All appeared eager to make a swift exit. Semi-peripheral and core members made enquiries regarding the latest record releases, detailed on a whiteboard behind the counter. Such enquiries helped to equip and aid the newcomers and established members in the quest of secondary investigation, therefore facilitating their eventual assumption of authentic genre distinction.

These examples alerted me to the potentially intimidating situation for newcomers to both the shop and the subculture. Core and semi-peripheral scene members used the shop as a social resource, both to catch up with the latest DIY scene activities and

⁵⁰ Indeed one of the workers for Wisdom frequently commented to me that *RTB* was *void* of a sense of humor, stating that no one was really interested in 'feminist physiotherapy'. He also described my article in issue one on the origins of Mayday, sarcastically as a 'laugh a minute.' He stated that it was a pamphlet 'specifically geared to furthering the education of the 'miserable and humorless punk police'.

gossip and to make purchases of records. More specifically this was also one of the potential routes to swell one's own authenticity in terms of genre distinction. The 'in' talk and gestures made around the counter of the shop whilst 'new releases' were playing, prior to the appropriate purchase being made, were concerned with the appraisal of new bands, records, expressions of taste, band performances and past and previous gigs, and who or what is involved in the present scene. Indeed the four key areas of genre distinction were frequently heavily invoked at repeated intervals of over-the-counter subcultural discourse. This can be summarised as inadvertent 'counter snobbery' in that those established subcultural scene members who frequent the shop *counter* can often involuntarily intimidate younger members engaged in primary and secondary investigation with their displays of subcultural knowledge and genre distinction.

My specific role here was to select and play such potential purchases, often being asked questions like 'what's this like mate?' Here one's own genre distinction is brought into play. Not only was my own personal taste compromised here; I also had to offer a critical review and appraisal of a given record often very much at odds with my own personal taste. Obviously, at the retail end of this dilemma, castigating a customer's taste was not conducive to selling records in spite of how 'bad' I personally considered it to be.

On occasion the shop became so crowded around the counter that it was difficult to serve customers. This presented role strain for myself, V and Z. On the one hand there is the role of core subcultural member, whose chief aim is integral to the ethical reproduction of the DiY scene, being friendly, informative and having much valued opinions on scene issues; on the other, the professionalism and customer care attached

to these duties proved to be an occasionally uneasy 'fit'. V spoke of the potential difficulties in striking such a balance which were caused by the lack of shop space:

Yeah like in some ways it's hard. I mean what I would love if we could do it. I mean we have spoke about all the different things that you can do. We could have sofas and stuff and you could in some ways like open it up into more of a social area and you know. I mean I wanted to have a fridge and sell like drinks and stuff and have coffee and people come down and read the fanzines and put 'em back if they don't want them and stuff. Erm cause at the minute because the shop's just not big enough. Like you want to chat with people and it's like people don't always appreciate that sometimes. Recently it's not been that busy, but sometimes you got a lot to do and you can't spend an hour chatting to someone. And because the shop's not that big and they can't just have a seat and like sit down with you sometimes it's actually quite an hindrance in some ways to have loads of people hanging round in the shop. Like, especially on a Saturday you get people all round the counter talking to me and you and we're trying to serve people over the top, do you know what I mean? I mean if it was a bigger shop then maybe we could do it, but like at the minute it's good 'cause people do come in and it's like what are you doing and what's on tonight and erm, and you can discuss stuff and people can meet. I mean people will often come in the shop and just stand around and you don't know who they are and it's like 'alright there?' 'Yeah it's alright I've just arranged to meet someone in here'. And they'll [friend]come in and they'll be wearing a Misfits shirt or whatever and it's like whoa, so the obviously, people [meet here] whether it's to talk about something active or whatever, or whether it is just as a meeting point, people do use it. And in some ways it would be really nice to really encourage it but at the minute we just can't do it because the shop's just not big enough. But yeah, people definitely meet here and obviously we have got free fanzines like *RTB* and *Fracture* which we have always got loads of and we always actively try and push it out to people. And obviously posters and shit like that. But surprisingly there are a lot of people that you consider to be actively involved in DiY don't come in and you never ever see, and err, you think, it's not a 'big headed' thing to say we are really important cause really we are nothing. I mean it's all relative and we are not but, I still find it surprising that a lot of people haven't bothered to check us out. It's like you don't know, you don't know what it's like there and, even if you hate it, come down say it's shit and tell us and well you should do this and you should do this. They don't and a lot of people haven't even turned up and it's like, I think it's quite weird. Not making the most of the resources you got know what I mean.

V clearly establishes that Out of Step makes an active attempt to function beyond that of simply a retail outlet and more of a social and critical space. It is a key distinctive factor that they, as owners of the shop, can permit such gatherings even though they clash occasionally with the interests of sales revenue. Secondly, and here V through his identification of his DiY critics invokes a genre location indicator. He is aware that some members of the DiY scene will view the shop as a capitalist enterprise, clashing with their DiY ethical standpoint. To restate the earlier point this is the recognition of a dilemma: striking the balance between a retail outlet and an autonomous zone for sharing information.

The periods so far discussed revolve around my experience of a shop full of customers. This was not always the case and long periods of inactivity were also experienced midweek. Here due to the sheer number of records, fanzines and flyers, one took on the investigation of genres and records not previously heard, thus amassing one's capacity for subcultural genre distinction. Indeed, I traded on over twenty years of subcultural scene experience when I began observation of the shop, yet on exit, considered myself far more knowledgeable in terms of subcultural music issues, people and fanzines: in short, activity in general. Therefore periods of inactivity in the shop were rarely redundant.

What I have established thus far is that there is a series of dilemmas attached to participation and practice within the punk subculture. This will be afforded detailed discussion in chapter nine.

Through the daily reproduction of, and consistent, constant engagement and involvement with the subculture, one easily progressed to a stage of core membership. As numerous people involved with the various punk subcultures in Leeds used the shop as a resource beyond its retail function, the occasional daily sense of community shone through within a plurality of different punk scenes beyond that of the evening gig.

In this section I have sought to establish and illuminate the ethnographic experiences of the Leeds shop. Within the latter account I have described a social space that is replete as a vehicle for the furtherance of primary and secondary investigation, the subcultural trade in genre distinction and the occasional 'counter snobbery' it invokes. The second key observation of this section has outlined the dilemmatic status of authentic practice within the DiY community, whilst this wasn't so evident at the Club discussed in chapter four (due in part to the lack of contact with

either bands, records etc.), it was amplified in terms of the correct forms of knowledge in terms of the evocation of genre distinction around the daily activity of the shop and also in terms of the practice of ethical consumerism: the trade off between the provision of a social space and the effective management of a retail outlet.

What was evident in the daily discourse of the shop and the numbers of flyers and posters on the walls was the amount of gigs and festivals that occurred around Leeds and at the Club. The practice of the DiY punk gig is the arena to which I now focus the ethnographic lens of the following section.

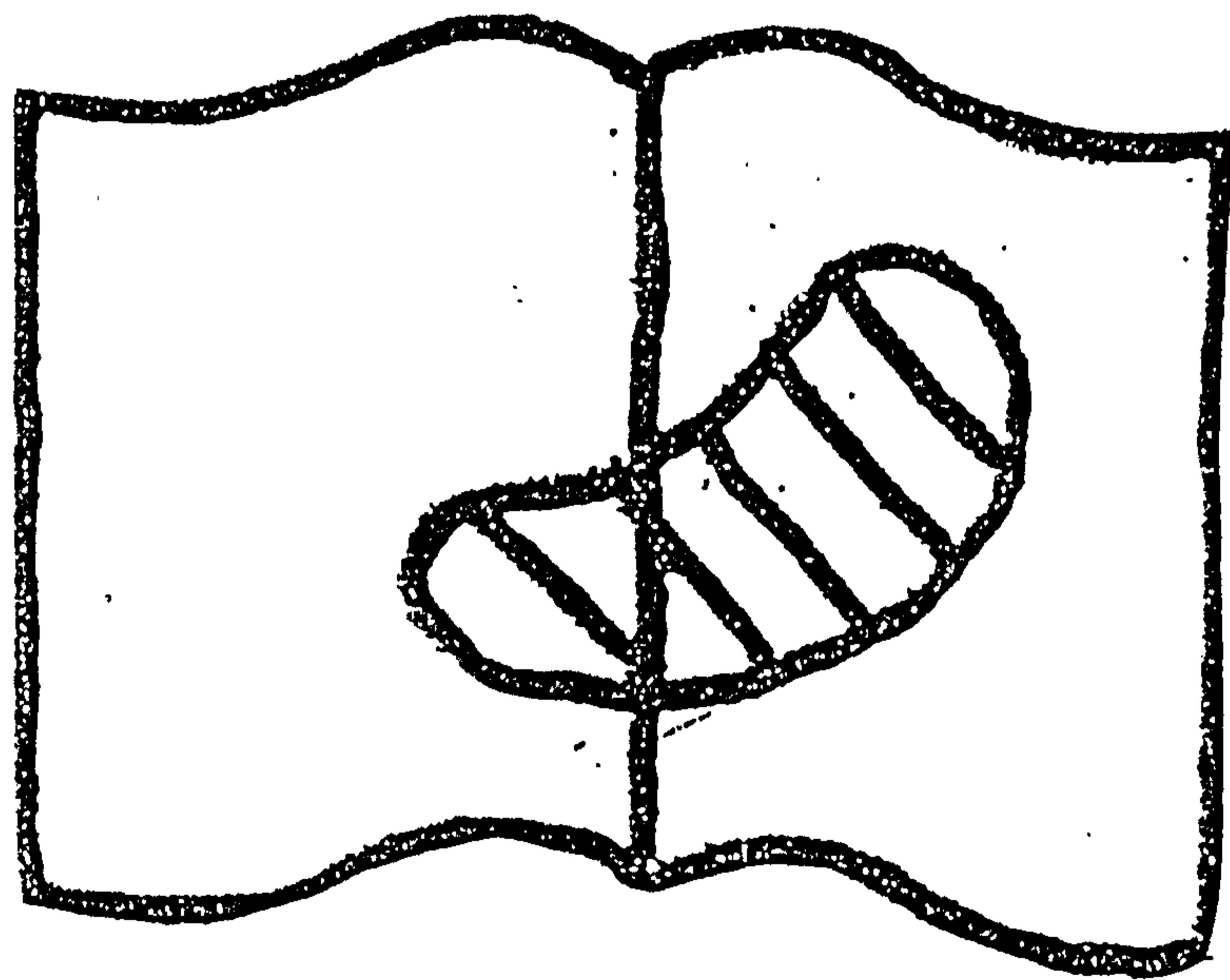
Gigs, Evenings and Afternoons

In chapter four and the previous section I mentioned that the lin12 and Leeds have long-standing punk scenes, existing from the late nineteen seventies. These have a long-standing and detailed history that is beyond the scope of the present work. Suffice to say, in the broadest of brushstrokes, the lin12 club was promoting concerts in the pubs from the early 1980s, and by 1988 had managed to secure a council grant to purchase its own building, finally opening its doors in 1990: it still exists at the time of writing in 2004. Equally, Leeds has maintained a thriving punk scene, on an equal footing to Bradford, though this has mainly been located within a multi-venue scenario. Although one of the most popular venues in Leeds at the time and a regular venue for mainstream and independent hardcore and punk was the now demolished pub, The Duchess of York, with its related promotions organisation 'Flame In Hand', most of the city's punk events were held in a number of city pubs, squats, university student unions and nightclub settings.

Within the window of my ethnography, the venues may have changed and the subcultural scene populations fluctuated over the years, but since the 1990s,

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Bradford's focus for DiY has been the 1in12, while Leeds has remained centred in a multi-venue scenario. During the fieldwork I went to and played over eighty shows in a single four month period. These gigs were unequally spread (in the order of Leeds, European tour, Bradford) across a number of venues and can be compartmentalized and detailed as follows.

Bradford

The 1in12Club.(Capacity 150)

Rio's (Capacity 1,000)

Leeds

The Packhorse (pub) (Capacity70)

The Primrose (pub) (100)

The Royal Park (pub) (Capacity 100)

The Fenton (pub) (Capacity 100)

The Cardigan Arms (pub) (Capacity 100)

Brudenel Social Club (Capacity: 200)

120Rats (Squat venue) (Capacity:70)

The Bassment (Nightclub) (Capacity: 300)

Joseph's Well (Capacity: 300)

Cellar, Basement gigs (Shared houses in Leeds 6) (Capacity:
10-50 depending on available space)

From the venue distribution of the above table one needn't labour the point of Leeds as a multi-sited subcultural scene enclave. The DiY gig will now be examined, along with various aspects of DiY cultural production.

The Mechanics of Promotion

As the epigraph at the start of this chapter demonstrates, the central underlying principles outlined in chapter four that operate under all of the following mechanics of the DiY concert is mutual trust between promoters and performers, freedom from wider external corporate controls, and the enjoyment and satisfaction from successfully organising such events. This is a direct parallel to the studio project. Indeed, what distinguishes such events from their mainstream counterparts is that there is *no* legally binding contract supplied by the band, no guarantee of payment for

the bands or, indeed, that promotion will be carried out, and the venue will be booked. If this sounds rather ramshackle and disorganised, the benefits greatly outweigh the rather loose nature of the organisation. All the associated activities are carried out by the scene participants, without payment, and for the benefit of the community. This is of central importance. It is a key identification marker of the DiY concert. DiY promoters are not interested in making a profit from the proceeds of the gig. Any money made will be channelled across three potential destinations: to the bands playing on the night; to a charity or a suitably deemed political cause; into the promoter's fund where it will be used to support and finance less well attended or less popular future events.⁵¹ The DiY promoters that existed between Leeds and Bradford during the fieldwork were numerous. To name a small number: Sakari Empire, Punktured, Raw Nerve, Bingo Handjob, Infinite Monkey, Armed With Anger, Enslaved, Heavier Than Thou, Devil Rock, Flat Earth, Kito, Cops and Robbers, Collective AKA. These promoters usually spanned from ten to between one or two members. Some have existed for years such as Cops and Robbers whilst others may only exist for one or two gigs.

The whole event is run on a sense of *trust* between the promoter, band, venue and audience. The central consideration of putting on the music event for its own sake, devoid of the profit motive, for the satisfaction in creating a DiY event, is the motor that drives the DiY hardcore punk ethic and this practice operates in tandem with the ethical frameworks I outlined in chapter four. It follows from the underlying principle of trust that DiY concerts are made financially accessible to the audience.

⁵¹ This is a rather optimistic and untainted view of DiY gig promotion, but nevertheless one that was reflected in the ethnographic data. Both from my own previous experience, and that of my counterparts, some of the DiY gigs I have been involved in have been badly promoted, bands have not been paid, and some of the more unscrupulous promoters of the benefit concert have occasionally lined their own pockets with the proceeds.

Booking

In terms of booking the DiY gig is a central aspect of practice within DiY hardcore punk culture and forms a central component of the social fabric of the scene. In spite of the plurality of differences in genres, there are a number of common features, running across these events that allow the general organisational mechanics of DiY practice to be unveiled. Such events are initially organised and arranged within the national DiY network through a phone call, message, band website, and email or socially through reciprocal word of mouth arrangement to one of the promoters listed above.⁵² On a number of occasions a band's tour will be organised by one individual, usually a band member or friend (not a manager), booking on behalf of a band making use of existing contacts within the UK and European DiY network. Alternatively, either from reading a favourable fanzine review and gig reviews, a band will be contacted by one of the promoters and asked to do a show. During the majority of such instances, a representative of the band is contacted through one or more of the above points of contact and asked if they want to play a show on a given date. After agreement, a date is set up (usually, though not necessarily, as part of a tour) and a potential venue selected for the estimated audience number. During the time of fieldwork, there were at least twenty smaller DiY promoters operating between Leeds and Bradford.

Promoters, Venues and Gigs

The lin12

⁵² Adverts for 'gigs wanted' are occasionally placed in the regular fanzine publications of the time of research such as *Fracture* and *Reason to Believe*. Also, rising to popularity at this time was the *Fracture Magazine* website forums: a clear and, presently, well established way of publicising DiY gigs.

The gig, under the umbrella of DiY promotion ranges from the individual to the collective. Events are offered to the 1in12 from members, collectives, individuals and private promoters. Bands are booked through the gig collective which takes all events to the Sunday meetings for collective agreement. On Club agreement, the gig venue is then booked for which a hire charge is incurred for the PA while all the door proceeds are used to pay the bands. Bar staff are scheduled on a rota-basis and the café is opened up so that bands can be fed.

Gigs at the 1in12 fluctuate in terms of attendance. During the weekdays there are a number of problems for those in Leeds to travel to the gigs. This is an issue that I will return to at the end of this section on DiY gigs. The 1in12 owns its own PA and the alcohol licence offers later drinking opportunities than the pub. There are two bars in the club, one in the venue and one on the second floor. The bands are fed in the café on the top floor where food is also available to those attending the gig. Attendance at the club can approach two hundred and fall to as little as single numbers, excluding staff. The well attended events tend to be the hardcore festivals that have run since 1990 running for three days and attracting the heart of the UK's northern DiY community. Such events act as an opportunity to socialise, watch bands around the and offer an opportunity for newcomers to be introduced to the DiY ethic as Mr. G pointed out

I can't remember the exact, time I first went the 1in12, it was like a festival in February, March or something. It was Bob Tilton, Stamping Ground. It was back in the day when emo kids went like that [gestures, laughter], exactly and that was like the first time I went to the 1in12, and I went there and I was like, HOLY FUCK! There was like all these stalls with like CD's for like £6 each and I was like you are joking me. You know I was used to paying like whatever £15 in HMV and I remember spending my food budget for the entire month on Chokehold CD's at the 1in12 the first time I went. And I just got more into it from there on, you know I went to more and more shows and then I started travelling out to shows as well and just got involved with more and more people, then eventually it was like, I'm gonna' put on a show and I think I was like seventeen, I was like just seventeen when I put on my first show.

Here this importance of the 1in12 festival is outlined in terms of how newcomers can gradually approach core member status. Equally interesting is the way Mr. G invokes the use of the authentic original and badges of membership in terms of the 'back in the day' and use of band genres, 'emo'. This importantly signifies how genre distinction operates beyond language use with gestured impression of how the emo kids danced at the festival. The 1in12 festival operates as a focal point to the Northern DiY scene. The majority of interviewees poke favourable of these events as R points out:

It's usually on a Sunday at a festival. There is a general, or there used to be, this feeling of unity. You had a lot of people that you liked from everywhere. I am looking at early to mid-nineties and you'd have people from Manchester and people from Glasgow would come down and people would come and go. You know my girlfriend now was one of those people that used to come over from Manchester. We would have a lot of people coming over and staying at our house and then you'd be going for Special Brew on a Sunday morning with. And then getting up going to the 1in12: and going "let's get fucked up" and then getting fucked up with friends down the club again for another day of the festival and seeing loads of friends and it being a nice day.

This quotation summarises how the networks of punk operate beyond the localities of the Leeds and Bradford scenes. The 1in12 festival operates as a meeting point: a critical space where socialising, record trading/buying, bands playing and new contacts projects formed in addition to drinking having a good time. These were deemed to be the good times at the 1in12 and why all the hard work the members and promoters put in to both the building and the events pay are deemed a success. All of the interviewees spoke of the 1in12 festivals in a favourable light. From a promoter's perspective, Mr. H was explicit in terms of the feelings of satisfaction once a DiY festival had successfully passed:

It's the cleaning up after it that you have got to do as well. But I mean, going back to the heavy fest thing. We were tidying up afterwards and I was just pushing a broom round the floor, half drunk, totally stoned out me head, collecting glasses, brushing the floor. And I am doing, oh God, filthy, mundane tasks and I am fucking on cloud nine doing it. But it is part of the whole, what's involved in doing it, but you haven't finished yet and then it's like: the room is cleaned; all the glasses are put away. You are stood at the door and the room is empty and it looks exact, it looks like nothing has happened, but again, like you say, you can't take away the things that you have done and you lock the door, turn your back on it and have a fucking grin a mile wide.

These accounts underline the feelings of satisfaction I illustrated regarding the completion of a stage of the recording studio in chapter five or succeeding in getting the record shop up and running above. This feeling of satisfaction was a general theme of the interviews. However, whilst the festivals are well attended, there are a number of lin12 events that suffer from a lack of attendance. This is an issue that I will return to at the end of this section.

The overall mechanics of gig organisation at the lin12 operate along the lines of what I will articulate below in terms of the organisation of the Leeds shows. The points of departure are the self-managed and owned building; the autonomous control of the space and access to the other facilities, such as the café, in the building. That said the lin12 suffers as a result of the popularity of the Leeds shows and an exodus of members to that city. The issue of subcultural exit will be discussed in chapter eight

Leeds: The Pub Gig

There are a number of similarities between the lin12 gigs and the Leeds DiY events held in the back and upstairs rooms of pubs. Such venues are detailed above in fig 1 and all continue in operation in 2004. The degree of control is reduced, though all of the venues I visited desisted from employing door staff or intervening in the DiY event. In spite of this, the promoter has to operate the event within the opening hours of the pub and adhere to the general rules of the venue. The pub gig itself usually begins its activities from 5pm.

The promoter arrives with the food for the bands and the PA has been loaded in by the promoter or, if no transport is available, it is picked up by one of the bands with a van at their disposal. As the bands playing the bill arrive, their equipment is loaded

into the venue and a discussion on equipment sharing and order of the bands playing is collectively settled. There are two avenues of possible activity depending on whether there is a full or vocal PA being used at the pub gig. In the case of the former, the sound engineer sets up and tests the PA and proceeds to set up all the microphones for the musical equipment. The process of sound checking then begins. The sound check usually occurs in reverse order with the last band playing checking first. In the case of the vocal PA, the band uses their backline as the only form of amplification. The vocals and, on occasion, the bass drum of the kit are put through the PA. This type of PA is mostly used in the cellar, pub and squat shows I attended in Leeds.

In terms of equipment it is not always convenient or possible for a band to bring all their equipment. It is usually the case that in the case of a touring band playing will have brought all their backline⁵³. In the case of local bands one band will usually agree to lend the drum kit and speaker cabinets to the other bands playing in order to save time changing the kit over.

The order of the bands is settled by the sequence in which they are advertised on the poster and flyer but is also dependent upon what time the bands arrive. On a number of occasions I observed bands arriving immediately before they are due to play. There are three main reasons for this: band members' work commitments preventing them from leaving in sufficient time to arrive early for the gig; lack of clear directions to the venue; and mechanical failure or traffic problems. I also observed that bands often feel uncomfortable with the headline spot due to the ideological connotations and negative implications of 'rock star'.

⁵³ The collective word used for drum kit speaker cabinets and amplifiers.

Occasionally, it has not been unknown for an advertised, headline band to play first or second on the bill in order to disrupt the assumed hierarchy and importance of the last band to play⁵⁴. The period of sound checking also allows band members, promoters and friends the opportunity to meet and socialise. Indeed, I observed this space to be central in the future planning and sharing of ideas for future DiY activities. It also provides a chance to familiarise oneself with local developments and political issues and gossip currently debated in the scene. Coupled with this there is also the opportunity for touring bands to explore the city with local band members who leave the venue after the sound check for this purpose.

The majority of touring bands will bring a distro stall with them. Short for distribution, this stall contains a number of the current bands' recorded output and previous DiY record⁵⁵ releases in addition to fanzines, flyers and band merchandise (hand printed T-shirts, badges, patches and stickers) with some of the bigger stalls carrying well over a thousand CDs and records. In keeping with the DiY gig admission prices, all the items sold on the distribution stall have their prices kept as low as possible. Such stalls, aside from the sound checking and promoter activities, are another central focus of activity throughout the temporal zone of the gig. They act as a point of interest for the bands waiting to play. Records, CDs, tapes, fanzines and 7" vinyl are thumbed through, discussed and inspected by band members and those present at the sound checks and throughout the gig and on many occasions purchases are made. In addition to this, the discussion of the latest releases with the stall-holder acts as an opportunity for subcultural members to familiarise themselves, bolstering

⁵⁴ This scenario occurred in August, 2001 in Hilversum, Holland, when the well-known DiY band, Seein' Red, insisted on playing before my band and donated their pay that night as they heard we were struggling financially on that tour. They summed this up through their actions that night for the all of my band why mutual aid in DiY deserves respect.

⁵⁵ See the Scorched Earth policy website for further details of how distros operate. <http://www.scorchedearthpolicy.de/> <http://www.letbulletsrain.de/>

their genre distinction with the latest releases or find a record they have been searching for or to secure trades of recent releases⁵⁶.

Overall the distro stall also functions as a back-up for touring bands to accrue to lighten the costs of being on the road, or in general for the non-touring bands to make some money for their respective band funds. The presence of the distro stall, in both of the field settings I observed, numbered from none to over eight (usually at 1in12 or all day festivals in the UK). Occasionally, when there are a number of bands playing, there is competition for a pitch for the stall and this can generate inter-band tension. Bands arriving late, when the venue is small, often struggle to find space for their stall. Overall the distro stall operates in very similar terms to Out of Step genre distinction in similar terms to the instances I discussed in terms of counter snobbery in the shop. The stall as the site of potential new subcultural knowledge also trades upon the existing knowledge of the scene participant.

From around 8pm the audience begins to arrive. Audience numbers are dependent upon what I have identified as three inter-linked issues. Firstly, the thoroughness of the promotion for the event is a key factor in the latter's success. If there have been enough flyers and posters distributed and handed out in the correct places, then there will be some interest in the gig from a potential audience.

Secondly, the popularity of the band is a key factor. If one of the bands on the bill has received good reports in fanzines and record reviews and has the word of mouth reputation of being a good act, people will turn up and support the event. Also, if the band has built up a large, local base of friends, this also acts as a catalyst for support. Thirdly, specific to the Leeds scene, there are, on occasion, more than one DiY gig in

⁵⁶ Trading is a key activity on the distro stall. This is how a number of new DiY records are distributed and sold. However, not all trades are agreed and trade prices have to be negotiated.

the city. Competition will be utmost during this time. The collision of gigs was unavoidable at weekends in Leeds. I observed on at least two occasions that there were up to three separate DiY events on one night. In addition to these three core factors, there are a number of other circumstances that affect audience numbers, such as lack of financial capital, other personal commitments, and the summer months when students have left to return home.

Overall, the dedication of the core members of the scene ultimately means that there is always some audience for most of the bands playing. In DiY culture, I observed that gigs will be supported *specifically* because they are DiY. In terms of audience numbers for specific bands, I observed this to be both genre-dependent. Many participants will attend events due to their familiarity, not with a specific band but instead with a band's association with a specific musical genre and scene. It is not uncommon for audience members to have not heard the bands playing. Attendance is largely inspired through an identification both with the genres concerned and with, and adherence to, support of the DiY ethic.

Audience numbers I observed ranged from fifteen people to over three hundred at the bigger events organised by both Cops and Robbers and Collective AKA in Leeds and the Bradford festivals (although a lower, maximum turnout during the field period of 150 can be reported). The DiY pub gig usually contains anything from five to over a hundred people. An important point to note here is that the scene in both settings is male-dominated though not in the patriarchal sense of male domination: women are respected and play key and central roles within the DiY scene⁵⁷. I observed this as a constant feature. I estimated that female participation both in audience promotion and band membership was in the minority with an estimated 1-5 ratio of female-to-male

⁵⁷ See Leblanc (2001).

representation. Additionally, I also observed that people from ethnic minorities were underrepresented in this culture.

The main activities of the audience, promoters and band members before the gig begins, are concentrated in the bar. Whilst there is a representative number of straightedge people within this culture, soft drinks are consumed and the activity of socialising around the bar is common to both Leeds and Bradford. A number of the smaller venues in Leeds have a separate bar from the concert venue and this is a contributing factor in the amount of people who attend the gig. I observed a small number of people who would just socialise in the bar and not pay to get into the gig. Common to the majority of gigs attended in the field setting the doors opened around 8pm. As I noted above there were exceptions to this with the late arrival of bands and occasional problems with either technical problems with the equipment or last minute sections of backline having to be brought in. In all cases there is a table set up at the door of the venue. On the table are various flyers and fanzines advertising future DiY events. On a piece of paper, written on with magic marker is the entry price as documented above. The money is taken and placed in a 'cash box' and in return a hand stamp or marker imprint is made on the back of the hand. Payment at the door is also a contentious intersection of discussion at the DiY gig. If the promoter sets to high a door price then accusations of selling out and 'cashing in' can be levelled at them by those members of the community that consider this a betrayal of core DIY values. Complaints regarding door price from punters with excuses such as 'let me in free, I'm skint', tend to occur frequently at weekend shows; often later in the evening, when people are more likely to be drunk. When the venue is full or the time approaches for the first band to play the event begins and proceeds in much the same way as I described above. The pub gig encompasses the wider, organisational

activities of all the porters and venues described in this section. There are, however, smaller DiY events that are considered to be the most authentic version of the DiY gig by core members. I will now focus attention on these events

Small, DiY Promotions and Gigs

The smaller promoters were core members of the Leeds and Bradford subcultures. Often they would have been personally booking a section of a bands' tour, played in a band themselves, or had previously released or distributed a record for the band amongst other reasons. These gigs ranged from the all dayer hardcore festivals at the 1in12 that ran from the mid nineties, promoted by a multitude of different DiY promoters such as Armed with Anger, Flat Earth, El Sub, Enslaved to Infinite Monkey and Heavier Than Thou. The smaller DiY promoter used either the 1in12 or the pubs in Leeds, house cellars, front rooms or the squat, previously identified as the 120Rats.

Regardless of the size of the gig, the promoter of the event is deemed responsible for publicising the event through the use of posters, flyers and adverts. Flyers are generally constructed following punk tradition utilising 'cut and paste' and xerox methods although the word processor replete with printer and internet access has somewhat changed the aesthetic of these flyers over the last decade⁵⁸. Such advertisements will generally feature: venue cost, time, descriptions of the bands and an information contact phone number. At any given gig there will be a number of bands playing and this ranges from one two to ten bands dependent upon the for the concerts takes (either single gig, two-dayer, matinee or festival).

⁵⁸ Turcotte and Miller (1999) have written an excellent historical account of the US punk flyer tradition.

The flyers and promotion of the events is the responsibility of the promoter although the bands may make their own flyers. I observed in both the field settings that flyers and posters were placed in all the key sites such as shops (Out of Step, Jumbo and Crash and the flyer racks at the lin12) in addition to the venues a month to three weeks before the event takes place and are placed there by the promoter. Fly posting is occasionally used in addition to the promoter attending DiY events prior to their own event and either handing out flyers or placing them on the table where money is paid to gain entrance.

In the Leeds setting the Cops and Robbers DiY listings guide is utilised and used as a key resource within the DiY scene. Failure to place a listing or to advertise an event in this free publication can have a marked effect upon attendance rates at the show. Within the two fieldwork sites the band is occasionally fed a basic meal and provided with an optional sleeping place⁵⁹. As I noted above, in terms of money the band and promoter operating under the rubric of DiY do not ask for a guarantee⁶⁰. The core DiY ethic of keeping events costs low and accessible for the low waged operates simultaneously with the practice rejecting the profit motive as the sole factor for putting on the event. Indeed regardless of playing the event the bands involved will usually have their costs covered. In the majority of instances I observed bands have their transport and fuel costs met in addition with a small amount if any money after the gig. Gig entrance prices range from the Leeds pub and lin12 gigs at £2-4 to the larger Collective AKA gigs at a top rate of £-7 pounds.

⁵⁹ The practice of feeding bands and providing sleeping places to touring and bands that are playing in Bradford and Leeds is a DiY tradition that seeks to produce a sense of support and community to those on the road. This practice did not occur at all the gigs observed but was occasioned at the majority. Vegetarian and vegan food was provided in all cases. See V's dilemma below.

⁶⁰ With the exception of Collective AKA described above.

The cost and conduct of both the promoter and bands and audience at DiY gigs is a major intersection of dilemmas over authenticity and with in the Leeds scene there are a number of difficult questions related to the issue of authenticity that I shall consider in the relevant section below

Within this section I shall account for each of the venues and gigs I visited and what specifically occurred at these events at specific intersections of the fieldwork.

Aside from the larger Cops and Robbers and Collective AKA gigs, the smaller DiY gigs held at the 120Rats and the squat can be described as a 'temporary autonomous zone' (Bey, 1985; McKay, 1996: 156, 1998: 139). Bey and McKay use this term to refer to the spaces for countercultural activity that are independent of official control and surveillance. Such spaces operate *beyond* the control of the established authority of the gig held in a licensed venue. Whilst the 1in12 Club could once have neatly fitted into such a definition, with its C&R-esque style gigs in a series of pubs and public spaces, its TAZ status is revoked by its adoption of a permanent building, along with its legal connections to the independent breweries and alcohol licence provision. The three TAZs I identified, during the field work in Leeds, were the front room and cellar show, the 120Rats squat, and occasional gigs in addition to the Aspire collective gigs and rave events (not covered in the field work or discussed in the present work).⁶¹

Cellar shows are specific to Leeds, although in the global DiY community they are a common phenomenon and have been well documented by O'Connor (2002a) and in

⁶¹ Whilst the Aspire collective is central to DiY political resistance in Leeds, there was no activity evident from them during the fieldwork period. They describe their practices as an 'occasional venue.' Where large buildings in Leeds are squatted for brief time and transformed into a multitude of different political spaces and activities. One of their most famous, previous activities was the squatting of the large church in 1999 on Woodhouse Lane, decorating its steeple with an huge anarchy sign. Four days of partying and gigs took place. See, www.a-spire.org.uk for up to date information on their projects No Aspire events took place during the fieldwork period.

visual terms by (Carroll & Holzman, 2001; Sorrondeguy, 1991; Glantz and Noe, 2003). The domestic environment of the living room and the functional setting of the cellar are briefly transformed during these events into a public and subversive space. Occasional political messages are spoken by the bands between songs.⁶² The cellar show may occur on a core member's birthday or a similar anniversary, but it mainly reflects the intense competition for booking venues in Leeds. Most of these are booked up for months in advance due to the popularity of the scene. Last minute cancellations or the unavailability of any venue resulted in the DiY solution of a cellar gig. The areas of Royal Park, Burley Park and Headingley have large amounts of terraced, rented houses replete with large front rooms and more importantly, large and spacious cellars. Not only are they cheap and accessible for bands to rehearse in (a point I'll return to in the final section of this chapter), they also provide spaces where small DiY events and parties may occur. During the field work I attended at least four such events. Rather than having a pay-on-the-door arrangement, a bucket (in one case a mesh-back cap) was passed around for donations to cover the costs of the bands. Bands often sold their merchandise out in the street, while people brought their own 'carry-out' alcohol and often congregated in the street waiting for the gig to begin. Around thirty to fifty people attend such gigs and more (occasionally approaching 100) during the case of house parties.

Every precaution is taken to ensure that neighbours are forewarned of the noise potential. For weekday gigs, a number of the neighbours were duly alerted. There appeared to be no objections, although a police car drove past one of these events at

⁶² Specifically here I was at a Creation is Crucifixion cellar show in late September 2001, where they were discussing the danger of a rise in surveillance technology. When I spoke to the guitarist outside, he informed me he was very into reading Foucault and gave me two of the bands CDs; one contained a 200 page booklet on how to rewire a game-boy as a hacking device. See *Creation as Crucifixion: Child as Audience: Where Technology and Anarchy Fuck*. Rtmak, Autonomedia Collective.

least once. Cellar gigs tended to begin around 7.30 pm with four or five bands playing short sets, and end before 11pm in conformity with licensing laws, though people did sometimes linger the vicinity after the shows. The actual playing of the gig was a very cramped and sweaty affair with upwards of thirty people in a cellar.

The intensity of loud, amplified punk music in a cellar instilled an exciting sense of risk. Whilst the band played, core members nodded at each other in acknowledgement of the quality of the music; descriptions and evaluations are shouted in each other's ears, though such discussion may not be specifically related to the band at all. When dancing occurred, the intensity of the music increased, though those who did so took account not to hurt other people in the crowd, while people shoved at the back of the room tended to take this as good humour. There was no need for a full PA because of the confined and crowded area. This was a face-to-face event. The lack of division between band and audience, more often than not evaporated any potential cultural hierarchy. Mr. B was very explicit in terms of describing how such cellar shows were indeed 'proper hardcore':

[John Brown's] basement, 1995. Ironside headlined it with a bunch of other bands. Probably about thirty people squashed in to this little basement. And people just started passing the mike around going nuts. Proper, proper hardcore show. (Pseudonym mine)

Mr.G was equally enthusiastic speaking of a front room show seven years after

Mr.B's event:

G: It was Pete's 25th birthday and we had a flyer on the door. He went out for a meal and I made an excuse that we couldn't go and we set it all up: we hired a PA and then he turned up and there was a band playing and 30 kids in our front room and it was fucking awesome.

Int: should there be more front room shows?

G: Definitely, they are brilliant! You can't beat gigs with small atmospheres cause they are just so intimate. Sometimes like when it is your friend's bands and stuff, you get stoked on seeing them play to a lot of people at big shows and stuff, you know what I mean, but you can't beat the intimacy of small shows, definitely. (Pseudonym mine)

As G enthusiastically noted, the cellar gigs are highly regarded and respected in the Leeds scene. They are usually very well-attended, having been mostly publicised by

word of mouth. During my time at Out of Step, a number of people were informed of these shows when they entered the shop and news spread through text message, phone call, email, website and word of mouth. Overall, these shows stand as a testimony of what can be achieved when the conventional spaces for playing music in Leeds become unavailable. The element of spontaneity and feeling of satisfaction when such an event succeeds strengthens the subcultural status of the cellar show, and heightens the general solidarity of the scene and its core members.

The second area that operated under the TAZ banner was the 120Rats squat on the Meanwood Road in Leeds. This was a squat that existed for over eight years and was host to a large number of DiY gigs in the Leeds area. In many ways it was the closest venue in Leeds to the 1in12. There are a number of mutual points of association between the Club Members and the squatters (as mentioned in chapter five; further elaboration follows in the final section of this chapter). The squat was a clear example of what can be achieved through the DiY ethic. They held gigs most weekends (and occasional weekdays) with its own, unlicensed bar established there.

As Ratus, one of the squatters, pointed out in 1995:

Bands who come to play the 1in12 can come to play here, too. Most squats in Europe, the way they do it is, like, if you play in a band you get a drink and food and accommodation. We have the space to do that too. Bands who tour England have a shit time – no food, no money. At least here all the money will go to the band and we'll make them food. (Wakefield and Grrrt, 1995)

The squat hosted both hardcore and punk gigs during its existence. Most of these were friendly, yet chaotic and often drunken events. As with the cellar shows, there was a sharp intensity and raw integrity, although the venue only held around seventy people and there was no elevated stage. Audiences faced the bands on an equal level, while the acoustics of the low ceiling gave an excellent sound to the bands. The painted mural walls and run-down, yet somehow holding-it-together aesthetic, all gave the impression that one was not actually in the UK but based somewhere in

mainland Europe. The gigs I played and attended there during the field work were all benefit concerts for the pending eviction.⁶³ As with the cellar gigs, people congregated outside the squat on old settees and also in small groups in the adjacent courtyards that serviced a number of factories and warehouses in the vicinity. Occasionally, there was a fire in a large oil drum with people standing around it, the off-licence (also a squatted property) did fair trade from those arriving for the gig⁶⁴. All the bands were provided with a basic vegan meal and some cans of beer. The gigs at the 120Rats directly embodied DiY values, and so attracted those core members who presented themselves as most stringent in their invocation of the DiY ethic, as outlined in chapter four. The majority of these gigs were very cheap, often costing as little as £1.50 entrance and £1 a drink. These were in sharp contrast to the other Collective AKA and C&R gigs I shall describe below. Drinking and partying often went on into the early hours and beyond at the squat. Here is an account from my pilot field-work diary of February 6th 1997.

Gradually, as the evening progressed, people began to arrive. What was once an empty room began to be filled with people awaiting the night's entertainment with the average age ranging from sixteen to the late forties. Various stalls began to be set up in which DiY hardcore and punk records, CD's and fanzines were sold well below the established price of the mainstream records shops. As the two other bands arrived and one after the other, they plugged in and began to play. Even without a large PA system the music was loud and people began to settle into the night's entertainment. Around the bar people gathered socially, whilst others sat on the sofas. The room where the bands were playing was beginning to get full.

The entrance fee for the nights was £2, well below the established price of a mainstream event which runs from £7-£30. This would be used to pay the bands present and any remaining monies would be used to pay for the promotion and upkeep of similar events. Whilst milling around, I estimated that there were approaching seventy people in this small building. When we took to the stage after 11pm, the dancing began in earnest.

⁶³ This feeling was produced through the experience of the French Canadian squatters who were mostly responsible for the maintenance of the building. They had extensive experience of the European DiY punk squatting network of which the 120Rats is a reflection of. See Wakefield and Grrrt (1995)

⁶⁴ The squatting tradition in Leeds is known as the Lawton Loophole, named after a landlord who disappeared in the late eighties leaving numerous properties around Leeds open to squat. This allowed people to live rent free. A number of these people have now legally inherited the buildings. The 120Rats, including the block of over five large houses, takeaways, off-licenses and shops, are all part of this loophole. However one member of the Lawton family sought the repossession in 2000 of a number of these properties and the squat was evicted in Oct 2001. It is in 2005 still presently boarded up.

Playing without a stage with the audience inches from your face is an amazing experience as the distance is minimal. You really get a real feeling of closeness as you look into the audience's eyes. After each song the audience cheered loudly in addition to heckling us. Our singer recounted the tale of a recent friend who had sadly died and dedicated the song to him. After the set the audience demanded an encore, not something we felt comfortable doing. "More, more! You bastards, it's still early!" the crowd shouted; some demanded Black Sabbath songs, others, drunken with excitement just cheered. We didn't know any more songs so decided to begin the set over. The atmosphere in the building was electric and the sense of unity and achievement for me was unbelievable. No corporate music here tonight. After the bands finished, people just hung around drinking, socialising and discussing the night's entertainment. No trouble had occurred, no police had been called and all involved were happy. We loaded the bands equipment into the van whilst others stood around outside of the squat talking. The usual comments of "great gig mate!" were passed. I left the squat that night with a firm sense of what could be created without the use of established, mainstream networks and venues. This show had been 'by the kids, for the kids' to coin a cliché. No profit was made except in terms of a profit in unity and excitement.

Though not intended at the time, this account seems retrospectively to perfectly sum up the ethic and aesthetic of the DiY gig at the squat. The bands that played there in 2001 ranged across the genres available in the Leeds and Bradford, though the traditional punk and hardcore distinction I outlined in chapter four mostly remained intact. This division was most evident between a benefit show comprised of eclectic hardcore bands and a series of squat benefit gigs strictly comprised of punk bands heading the bill. The punk/hardcore opposition, whilst occasionally fluctuating, remains central to the Leeds and Bradford scenes as well as across the UK.

Overall, the above examples demonstrate the possibility of a self-policed autonomous zone where music can be both shared and made accessible financially, in line with core DiY values. These shows do not have teams of machismo bouncers, or large PA systems replete with sound engineers' roadies and paid bar staff. They allow those in the DiY community to contribute to and control their own space. During the field work core members repeatedly referred to both 'Rats gigs' and cellar shows as truly authentic DiY punk, yet there other interpretations of DiY worthy of consideration.

Cops and Robbers

In Leeds, due to the plurality of venues, promotion operates at a number of levels and the size of the promotion groups is broadly reflective of club bookings. There are, however, at least two, larger DiY collectives in Leeds geared to booking shows which I will discuss in turn: Cops and Robbers (hereafter C&R) and Collective AKA.

C&R is run by a collective of ten people: eight men and two females. They have existed at the time of writing for seven years and promote gigs at numerous venues in Leeds. To name a select few, the Royal Park, Brudenell Social Club, The Packhorse, The Fenton, Joseph's Well and their gigs mainly operate within the pub gig remit I described above. Their point of departure from DiY punk *per se*, however, is that they also work both with larger non-DiY promotion agencies and bands from outside the punk genre (indie, emo, country, electronica, avante garde etc.) and also with larger independent and major labels although they insist that the band operates under a DiY framework for the duration of the show. This ethos is illustrated frequently repeatedly in their monthly, free Leeds DiY gig listing guide:

The gigs advertised in Cops and Robbers are all DiY to some degree. That is all door takings go to cover the costs involved in promoting the event. The promoters don't take a cut for themselves. Not all the bands are necessarily DiY, some may have managers, have major label involvement or music press connections, but at least by playing a DiY gig they are forced to prescribe to this idea for one evening at least and your money isn't going to support an industry based upon competition and back-stabbing success (*Cops and Robbers* # 9, October 1998).

Here legal contracts advanced to bands are ignored. They usually get the payment required (within reason) while those insisting on large guarantees are not booked by the collective unless they can reasonably predict that the gig will generate enough money for such large costs to be covered. In the event that costs cannot be met these are made up from either the kitty drawn from the more successful gigs or from potentially well attended future events:

We always try to cover bands costs as much as we can. Unless of course there's no money at the gig and even then we give them money as much as we can and we get it back from the later gigs.

C&R have also distanced themselves from the direct *sloganeering* of punk and hardcore, extending their remit described above. Indeed, this is also an intersection of criticism both within the punk and hardcore and Bradford scenes with members levelling the sell-out criticism, an issue I shall discuss below. C&R advance DiY ethics beyond punk and hardcore in terms of transgressing traditional forms of resistance and direct political sloganeering. They consider this ineffective. Instead they choose to build the DiY ethic into the fabric and practice of the event. In contrast to the 1in12, political sloganeering is not a regular feature of a C&R gig. This goes to the heart of some of the reciprocal perceptions between the Leeds and Bradford DiY scenes. During a focus group interview with the collective one of the members made the following comment with regard to the organisation of a DiY event.

As one member pointed out:

You have radical, protest groups or whatever pushing the boundaries and changing society in one way and well you know making you know just pushing the boundaries basically. Then they seem to isolate themselves a lot from the rest of society because and there is like a massive kind of gap that needs to be bridged. I'd like to think of C&R maybe as kind of making and bridging that gap aptly and working from the bottom up maybe. I don't know whether it will ever get us anywhere.

Such distinctions permeate the discourse of the Leeds and Bradford scenes and this is an issue to which I will return in the last section of this chapter. For now their different approaches need to be noted as a significant difference between the two, respective scenes. Beyond the aesthetic and political differences of the bands promoted, C&R organisation is similar to that of the 1in12. For example, promotion tasks are allocated on a volunteer basis:

when it comes down to putting on a gig erm, like err, like someone within Cops and Robbers will be asked to do a gig or the C&R will be emailed and someone like me, Bert or John will take up the role of like organising that gig and this just involves asking people to do various stuff. I mean I am usually asked to do the PA. Maybe Rebecca or Walter or someone will be asked to drive. I dunno the person that's kind of given or taken it upon themselves to organise the gig and organise the posters and makes the food and gets all the people to help out and ask people to you know do their bits and pieces. But they are generally the person in charge of doing that.

At the time of fieldwork, C&R were organising three to five events a week. They produced a small booklet of the same name to advertise not only their gigs but any other DiY event in the area. Their popularity and influence in the Leeds scene is high and their events are well attended. Though they promote and stage a number of the larger DiY events in Leeds, they are not the only large DiY promotions collective in Leeds.

Out of Spite to Collective AKA.

Five people were involved in Collective AKA: four males and one female. This is the other main DiY collective promotions agency in Leeds. Formed in 1995 as Out of Spite, before amalgamating with Mr. V and a friend moving over from Manchester three years later, they changed their name to Collective AKA. At the time of the field work, they organised gigs at the Leeds venues Joseph's Well and the night Club known as the Bassment. Mr. V from Out of Step, at the time of interview in 2001, had just resigned from this punk promotions collective due to his commitments to the shop and through feelings of a distance over core ethical issues of control and DiY. Unlike Cops and Robbers, the collective agreed to use legal band contracts and pay guarantees; use venues that employ bouncers and charge higher admission prices than C&R. Whilst not overtly DiY, a number of their ethical punk principles are enshrined in Out of Spites' promotional practices, such as feeding the bands vegan food only and not buying products such as Coca Cola, providing, instead, generic alternatives; and not charging extortionate door prices.

However, Collective AKA also attracted criticism from those who considered DiY to be an issue of complete ethical control and are considered by some core members to be removed from the DiY ethic in terms of the authenticity of the smaller events of Leeds and 1in12 events. At the time of writing they were mainly promoting large

gigs (with genres loosely described as melodic pop punk, emo, ska punk and post rock, also attracting scorn from DiY core members who viewed such genres and their associate scenes as 'not punk') with average attendance of over three to four hundred people and the door prices of around £5-8 reflected this. On the ethical position of this collective, V's resignation was also over issues of artistic control. He considered the booking agents of the large bands they promoted to be determining the majority of the collective's output, not a practice he felt comfortable with:

I associate the politics and the outlook on life so much with the music and they are both intertwined and to say oh hardcore's fucking bollocks, I'd be a fucking empty shell. But I am starting to. Like with the gigs, I mean you get a load of bands coming through the tour bookers. They say do you want to put this band on and you go 'no I don't' but if I don't put these on I can't put the next band on that I do like, therefore you are kind of forced into doing it. And then when you turn up to a gig no bands you want to see and people will turn up, pay in, watch the band and go home. And you think fucking that's not punk. I mean what's that, that's fucking, it could be Oasis or something else, it's not what I enjoy. I've been doing it for quite a while now and you get great gigs in-between but there's too much of that and you think well, my time could be so much better spent because I come home I don't eat any dinner, I go straight to a gig err, I often put up a band, go to bed late get up for work. Do you know what I mean, It's like well no I've got to stop doing it because there are so many people that are doing it, I don't make a difference really do you know what I mean, anybody can do it. And if worse case everybody stops doing it then someone else can say right well I'm gonna put on gigs. It's like well there's always going to be someone to fill the gap hopefully. Well it is like realistically that is something I don't need to do. I mean I achieved the only thing I wanted to do in Leeds, which was put on a couple of bands that I know weren't gonna play here, and I thought no I'm gonna do it then. And also erm, the fact now that a lot more bands are being offered, previously been offered the bigger clubs, and because we are getting the bigger crowds we can afford to. I mean like it's a whole thing really. I mean some bands say we are only going to do two dates in the country. Oh there's this band, New End Original, and they did two dates I think, London and Leeds cause they weren't even gonna come to the UK. But because they said well we can do it but we'll need £350 per gig to cover the ferry and all that. I was like yeah well we can do that cause it was two members of Texas is The Reason and a member of Chamberlain and a member of Arc, and I was like yeah we can come up with that do you know what I mean?

Such dilemmas are difficult for those concerned and V was visibly anxious over this decision when discussing it. As I described the squat show above, my contrasting field notes of the Hot Water Music Collective AKA show illustrates the stark differences between the large and small punk gig in Leeds.

16/06/01 I join our drummer, Mick, and a few others in the queue for this sold out show. I note that this is the first time I have had to do this for a hardcore show in some years. The queue is comprised mostly of young, white people. And the majority of the 'kids' are obviously into hardcore. The dress codes are baggy jeans, short, cropped hair, band

logo T-shirts, facial piercings and rucksacks. Stereotypically, the uniform of hardcore. There is also a small contingent of punks in the queue displaying the standard mohican and studded leather jackets. On arrival at the door we were met by a bouncer dressed in hardcore attire. I was somewhat shocked to see this as it is *not* the normal situation. In his hand he had a 'clicker' to measure how many punters were admitted. It felt strange and awkward to be under the immediate admittance control of such a person. After being admitted through the door we faced another block before being paid. We were right next to a sign stating that the 'management' have the right to conduct random searches upon entry.

After being charged £5 for entry (*well above the door prices for a DiY concert*) we were in the gig. Around the entrance way, there were various stalls selling the bands wares. I made for the first friendly face I knew. Here Mr. G at his distro stall, From here I noticed that the prices for the band merchandise was well above the usual DiY prices (£10 for a CD, usually £5 -£6 at the DiY pricing level). G told me that he was here to sell stuff on his distribution stall and commented that the Hot Water Music (*main band playing*) stall had already sold £350 worth of merchandise. He also estimated that, due to the event being sold out, that someone was making a lot of money, and not all of that would be going to the bands playing. It is this kind of analytical comment that is central to the DiY ethic that money is being made for non-DiY purposes: and this seeks to discredit and undermine the authenticity of the scene.

When Hot Water Music went on stage, the main act for the night, the crowd went berserk. This band were obviously the main reason for the large audience. It is worth stating that the popularity of American hardcore bands does bring in the crowds and the issue of why British hardcore bands largely fail to attract such audience's demands further scrutiny. The music this band play works under the rubric of what is called 'post-rock' which has its roots in the emocore tradition of American and European hardcore. By mobilising a strong and powerful sound combined with catchy chorus's HWM, drew the audience in. The band had the audience captivated and the dancing was largely good natured and lively. The ring of the audience singing along with the songs rang out above the PA and added to the bands power.

At the end of the set, the band left the stage but the audience wanted more and the band returned with members of support band, Leatherface, to perform three more songs. It was interesting to note that the house lights remained on during this time, spelling out that the ownership of the club did not completely approve of the band running over time. The last song the band played was obviously popular one and drinks were thrown into the audience, adding to the atmosphere ... My eyes focused at this point not on the band but on the lager dripping onto the crowd from the ceiling. No one seemed that bothered about getting wet as they were generally having a good time. After the gig the audience generally filed out and the club turned into a heavy metal disco. In the space of about twenty minutes the band's equipment had been cleared away by roadies and the show was now over. The venue's bouncers patrol the venue in an intimidating manner. It was interesting to note how the change in people and age ranges dramatically changed from the attire described above to the wardrobe of eighties heavy metal.

This lengthy quotation illustrates the stark differences between the DiY event described at the squat above. The points of departure illustrate the difference between the two. The high door charges, inflated merchandise prices and rip-off beer prices are illuminated in comparison to DiY prices of less than half the amounts charged. The bouncers, through their presence, compromised the freedom of the venue: people were policed instead of being self-policed. All of the bouncers, venues, DJs, bar staff and venue overheads have to be paid for and this results in higher ticket prices. The

stage times were set, so there was no chance for the band to play for as long as it chose. The band was paid a guarantee and employed staff such as, road crew, driver merchandise people, and rode on a tour bus. The performance was separated from the audience with a pit of intimidating bouncers and, in view of the number of people at the gig (estimated at 350), the intimacy and familiarity of core members was swept away. The audience was chiefly made up of semi-peripheral and peripheral subculture members with core DiY members in the minority, most of them choosing to boycott the gig and attend other DiY events.

In summary, the progression of pub to cellar to squat to nightclub has been outlined and the contrasts noted together with the organisational minutiae. In whatever venue, or whatever means are drawn upon in setting up a DiY musical event, the most damaging departure occurs when the ethic and aesthetic ardently represented by core members becomes dispersed, sidelined, or removed through core members' self-exclusion from gigs they regard as fake and inauthentic. The further and abiding problem is then created by the absolutist definitions of authenticity that reside at the core – which brings us back to the key thematic of the whole thesis

The 'None at Gig' Issue.

From its inception in the early 1980s, the 1in12 experienced a constant struggle to recruit and retain core members. From the late-1990s the popularity of the Leeds scene dramatically expanded. With the exception of the 120Rats, who maintain close affinities with 1in12 members, the number of Leeds gigs has created a knock-on effect for the club. Aside from the club hardcore festivals, the club faced near closure

in 1999⁶⁵. Members were leaving in droves. Having become tired of the badly attended gigs in the midst of the wider, *perceived* context of what they often described as a depressing, industrial Northern city, they were attracted to the cosmopolitan and multi-sited Leeds scene. Bradford gigs, more specifically the weekday club events, and those where the same band had a duplicate show in Leeds, suffered badly. Mr. I felt aggrieved when he saw those 1in12 members foregoing a club event and instead attending the 120Rats gig:

sometimes you try to arrange an event here, I'm not like that cause I never arrange an event here 'cos I *hate* doing it and I am not that good at doing it. Sometimes I'm involved in an event here and you need some of the familiar faces to help out and you kind of go "can you do something?" and they go "oh no, you know there's a cider party at the 120Rats tonight", And you think that everyone's going to some burned out old building to get pissed when they could do that in a town where they live. So, you know, if I am honest that pisses me off a little bit, But you know there must be enough people in Leeds already to have a cider party of their own without sucking all of our people away.

In short, multi-sited Leeds sapped the energies of both the organisers and audience at the 1in12. Leeds members who attempted to show solidarity and attend club events often found themselves stranded, due to the relatively early times of the last trains and buses back to Leeds. They often had to forego the last band in favour of a bus or train journey. This proved frustrating. Those who remained often had to find lifts back to Leeds from those who had driven to the club. Car use was a relatively limited luxury for a lot of Leeds scene members.

It was stated by a large number of Leeds people during interview that it would be beneficial to move the 1in12 over to Leeds: all of its problems would be solved. Mr. G makes this clear:

G: I always walk past derelict factories in the centre of town and I just look at it and go. If only: you know, so the 1in12: a fucking brilliant club, but the problem it suffers from is that it is in Bradford. If it was in Leeds, cause there's so many more kids in Leeds, than In Bradford, it would do so much better, but people, a lot of the time, people don't

⁶⁵ Such issues are afforded close attention in chapter eight. It cannot be understated that this is just one issue that brought about the crisis at the 1in12. Wider issues of costs and maintenance of an increasingly ageing building added additional pressures among many others.

want to travel to Bradford, cause it adds on so much time and then you've got trouble getting back and then you get back into Leeds city center at like 12.30am, 1am and then you gotta' get back from Leeds centre to wherever you live. And it's like, if you have a show at the 1in12, like this show on Thursday, if it was at the 1in12, and erm, not at the Packhorse it would hardy turn out. I mean it is a crime because Leeds is only ten miles away, but like a lot of people don't travel and won't travel that far. And so while I would love to be able to put the shows on at the 1in12, to support the Club and cause it's a cooler venue than a pub, a lot of the time I can't because they just won't get the turnout.

He then ruminates on the causes of why the 1in12 suffered from a low turnouts during this period.⁶⁶

G: I think to be honest it probably stems from going to too many gigs there where there's no one, with a really low turnout and as a result the gigs tend to be boring, and probably too much time spent not doing anything. I mean when you have been to a lot of festivals or, 'cause I mean shows at the 1in12 always seem to start really late as well and if you get there on time 8pm and the show doesn't start 'till 10pm you end up hanging around for a couple of hours and the amount of time I spent hanging around. I mean you can think of a lot of worse places to spend hanging around, but when you go to somewhere for a show and you are looking forward to seeing the band you know what I mean, it's like any time you have to wait once you get there is kind of like an agonising wait time. It's not like WOW I'm in a cool club I could go use the library like you might do normally, it's just a bit like there's this band on I wanna see playing in two hours and it puts you in a different mindset I think to an extent. Erm, and I think just the amount of time I spent there, sometimes it just feels like the 1in12 is boring. And I feel bad saying that because the 1in12 has so many good things going for it and I love the club, it's just because it is in Bradford I think because I have been to that many dead shows there.

I will develop the issue of why 1in12 members exit the club in the following chapter. The quotes from Mr. I and G illustrate a larger issue that loomed large in DiY punk discourse and action during two years leading up to the fieldwork period of 2001. The identities and perceptions of the Leeds and Bradford scenes began to take on some very interesting issues that were informed by both inter-and intra-perceptions of both of the scenes. It is on those issues that I now focus attention.

Ladida Leeds vs. the Bradford Scum.

The Leeds and Bradford scenes represent two related yet distinctive approaches to DiY punk ethics. The history of the 1in12 is connected to the anarcho punk ethical tradition. The Leeds scene is bound up with the American hardcore tradition although there are significant areas of similarity such as the 120Rats, Punktured promotions

⁶⁶ The club has recovered somewhat since this period of crisis. There have been a large number of successful shows there during the last three years, although the occasional 'dead-show' does, inevitably occur.

and the punks picnic gigs in Leeds and the hardcore festivals at the 1in12⁶⁷. Nevertheless there is a significant reciprocal polarisation between the two scenes. I outlined in detail both of these positions in broad terms during chapter four and also illustrated the wider differences between straightedge, emo, punk and hardcore and how identification with such genres serves to provide both membership status and authenticate its respective members. Migration within and between these scenes can often be viewed as problematic. To subculturally *shift* from a punk to a hardcore scene is occasionally viewed by core members from both of the respective sides as a sign of lack of authenticity, of a sell-out.

What follows illustrates my model of genre distinction in significant ways. Relying mostly on criticisms of placing responsibility on those who left the Bradford scene for weakening the strength of the club, they equally cast scorn upon those Leeds members who never attend the club's weekday events, or who visit the club and misinterpret the core beliefs of the place. During the interviews, six core members of the Bradford scene referred to themselves as 'The Bradford Scum', whilst the Leeds scene was described as 'posh', full of 'poseurs,' 'posy', 'expensive' and 'beautiful'. The catch-all term for the scene was 'Ladida Leeds.' These two membership badges, 'Ladida Leeds' and 'Bradford Scum', are relative to the wider economic contexts of the two, respective cities. Bradford was conceived as 'run-down', 'a bowlful of shit', a decrepit city in permanent recession by the Bradford interviewees, whereas Leeds was observed as cosmopolitan, trendy, nice and clean. The scope of the research and insufficient space restrict full discussion of the wider economic and cultural status of the two cities, yet it is obvious that such status is of central importance in shaping how subcultural members construct their identities. Perhaps most significantly, this is

⁶⁷ There was significant overlap between the specific scenes. The observations noted here were between the core members of the 1in12, and their counterparts in Leeds.

embodied in the self-ironic reclamation of the word 'scum' by Bradford members in contrast to the way they refer to people on the Leeds scene. By using this term as a badge of membership, a deliberately paradoxical elevation of Bradford 'scum' is achieved over 'Ladida' Leeds pretensions and self-deceit, so that punk credentials become once again fully burnished and bright: you can't be a proper punk if you listen to jazz and wear clean clothes.

The differences between anarcho punk and hardcore were outlined in detail in chapter four. As a reminder, anarcho punk was chiefly concerned with the anarchist politics of liberation, solidarity and challenging social oppression. In short, its chief status is countercultural: vegetarianism, animal rights, anti-war and anti-globalisation achieved through the DIY politics of the club. Leeds was perceived as I noted above as posh: its well-populated, multi-sited and multi-genre subcultural scene offered a huge array of potential activities. The hardcore scene (as I noted above, specifically C&R) distanced itself from the overt sloganeering politics of anarcho punk, instead choosing subtle methods that avoid direct political preaching. The difference was perhaps best summarised as: 'keep it fluffy or keep it spiky' (McKay, 1996:174).

Such divisions are clearly reflected in musical genre differences. Bradford was associated with basic thrash, crust and grind music that was fast, noisy and 'pissed off' in approach (see Mudrian, 2004). Leeds, on the other hand, was associated with technical proficiency, subtlety, and complicated arrangements that transcended the traditional boundaries of punk and hardcore. Equally important is the Leeds hardcore umbrella with its multi-genre and quirky approach that has proved to be very popular there.

The reciprocally reductive descriptions of the Leeds and Bradford scenes clearly operate along the lines of the stereotype⁶⁸. Such hard-and-fast distinctions can potentially harm the diversity between and within the Leeds and Bradford scenes and obstruct recognition of their numerous points of similarity. There are too many points of similarity to warrant employing these stereotypes to full effect. The stereotypes are not in any case justified, whatever the circumstances, yet they were frequently drawn on and reproduced by both Bradford and Leeds subcultural members. We shall now see in more detail how this occurs.

The Bradford Scum

As I noted above, there are important differences in musical terms between both of the scenes. Mr. C summarised these through his use of genre location indicators and membership badges whilst also echoing Leeds as a subcultural boomtown and Bradford as a scene in decline:

because Leeds is quite metropolitan, you know a sort of beautiful place like you know where the beautiful people congregate, but ugly people congregate in Bradford and like err, all the ugly people lived in Bradford like so the other people were punks, I suppose, like you know, erm crusties, whatever like you know and all the clean-cut kids lived in Leeds, but, apart from a few exceptions like, and anyway like so it sort of clips Bradford. Bradford's gone down the pan, erm which is fairly contentious but I know some people would agree with me, and Leeds has got a really good, vibrant scene like you know.

The stereotypical description here is abundantly clear, and goes considerably beyond any conventional *blason populaire*. Bradford is definitively presented as a place where the 'ugly' people congregate and Leeds where the 'clean cut kids' live. The opposition itself, however, is not clean-cut. C recognises the difficulty of invoking the stereotype to maximum effect by stating, as a form of repair work, that 'a few exceptions' have left Bradford for the subcultural scene destination of Leeds. He also indicates that Bradford contains the 'punks' and the 'crusties' by his use of descriptive

⁶⁸ See Pickering, M (2001) *Stereotypes: The Politics of Representation* London: Berg, for an excellent, detailed and critical account of the stereotype.

membership badges. The practical application of such opinions often made 1in12ers' feel discomfort when visiting Leeds. C often experienced feelings of difference and unease when he attended Leeds show:

Bradford people have said that they feel excluded in Leeds. They felt that it's very kind of maybe snobby, but I counter that kind of view with the fact that you can go anywhere, any pub, any place any town, any gig and you'll feel the same. I think it's about the fact that if you know someone then you're comfortable if you go somewhere and you don't know someone then you'll feel slightly uncomfortable. Uhh and there's inroads, get to know someone, get to know someone else. Get to know them ... you get to know their friends, get to know you and whatever and that's how it works you know it's interaction I suppose and that could be the one thing. I might have felt it at times but I know, I know a lot of the old people, older people that have been involved in the Leeds scene and like, you know from the out set, the DiY element like. So therefore I've never felt really excluded because I go way back so I don't feel I've got to prove myself any of the new kids like and if they don't know me I really don't care It's not I really don't care it doesn't bother me like. I'm not, I do my thing and I'm not, not really. It's a bit difficult sometimes with what I do. I don't know there could be more fast bands I suppose, you know, I dunno, it's expensive Leeds, posy. Uhhm, it's not Bradford erm, it's big it's too far to walk (laughter) erm, beer prices are fucking extortionate err, the record shops that were good have all closed down, Duchess closed down.

Here C argues that familiarity with the Leeds scene reduces such feelings of unbelonging, yet the stereotypes are resiliently evoked: Leeds is 'posy', beer prices are 'fucking extortionate' and there aren't enough fast bands there. Such views are presented against the backdrop of the 1in12 which is, by default, set up as *not posy* with its remit of cheap beer and its gig bliss full of fast, honest bands.

During the field work period, the 1in12ers' that attended gigs and parties stuck together both at the gigs and the parties that occurred at the weekends. Here C, again, makes direct reference to the distinctions between the two scenes through his discussion of a Leeds scene party he attended:

It was like Bradford scum on the stairs (laughter), Leeds kids in the house and stuff and like you know on the seats and stuff and us lot outside, fucking, oer, argh oer like this (gestures) and we were just throwing each other off the stairs like and just hanging each other off the top of the stairs and throwing each other around and that and falling all over the place and singing Black Flag songs and fucking being idiots really.

Here the sharp distinction of 'clean-cut' Leeds and Bradford Scum presents the *civilised* Leeds scene as adopting the correct position of using seats whilst the Bradford scum were banished to the stairs. They distinguished themselves from the

Leeds scene through a display of drunken and unruly behaviour. Through these distinctions, lin12 members establish their authentic status as rebels within the conformist Leeds subculture. Throwing each other off the stairs is in direct contrast to the bourgeois convention of 'using the seats'.

However, there were spaces within the Leeds scene where lin12 members did feel at home: at the 120Rats. With the exception of Mr. I who explicitly raised concerns over club members neglecting the lin12 for the 120Rats, the majority of the interviewees stated that the squat was the most comfortable Leeds destination for them as it directly reflected the core DiY values of the lin12. Ms. G was clear on this matter:

The squat. I just love the squat, because you can go there and everyone goes heeyyyy! You know. It's similar to Bradford people and you'll walk in and it's just great. And everyone at the lin12 is just so up for what they are doing. It's a really cheap night out and it's always a good night out. You know it's really: the squat basically

With the rest of the Leeds scene I don't like going to strange pubs and getting kicked out at stupid times and having to pay loads for drinks. I really don't like that and I don't think there's any need for it and that's part of the reason people like us set up and run the Club. Not wanting to harp on about that too much. I just hate going. I don't like going and trying to be quiet and not putting my feet up on chairs and. I just really hate that sort of thing. I just want to go to a gig and do whatever I want.

The scene beyond the 120Rats is described in similar terms to C's: 'strange', governed by rules and expensively priced drinks. The 120Rats chimes with the sensibilities of the club members' sensibilities: the TAZ status of the building allows licensing laws, bouncers, high beer prices and general external laws and controls to be effectively banished. For the lin12 member and the squat, the rejection of such rules is interpreted as a wider freedom and autonomy unavailable within the wider Leeds scene.

There are lin12 members who do not visit Leeds and create an equal measure of unease among the 'posh' Leeds people as the Bradford scum experienced when visiting gigs and parties other than the 120Rats. H stated that he rarely, if ever, visits

the Leeds scene although he can 'spot' 'Leeds people' when they attend gigs at the 1in12:

You know what I was saying earlier about image and about how people look? Err, it's quite funny. It's like who's more hardcore than you, you know. He must be hardcore, or he's far more hardcore than him. But then when you see, if there's a gig here [1in12] and loads of people come over from Leeds right. It's a bit cynical probably, but you could probably pick 'em out. You know, and what the fuck do they carry around in their rucksacks all the time! [laughter]. They have got their walkman on. They are wearing a coat, and big fucking rucksack.

Leeds people are distinguished and recognised at the 1in12 through their style of clothing. They are considered to be neat and tidy rather than dirty and crusty. Such views create a mirror image of each other. This is illustrated by Mr. J, who described the Leeds kids who visited the 1in12 as 'rather yuppie and younger', whilst Ms. M stated that those people and gigs in the Leeds scene:

tended to be more emo, I think. I'm not really sure what emo is but. It seems to be more into musical things rather than the more punky stuff. I think they get a lot more people to their gigs 'cause it's like a massive city with a big student population. And they have gigs in different pubs around town. So it's easier for people to go because it's not this club down a dingy alleyway. It's in pubs what people drink in anyway. I think one of the best things about Leeds is the 120Rats which unfortunately is getting evicted isn't it?

Ladida Leeds

As I noted earlier, a selection of Leeds scene members viewed Bradford as a decrepit and rundown northern city. For the majority of them the only decent subcultural attribute the Bradford scene had was the 1in12. There were, however similar problems in terms of reception when those Leeds members visited the 1in12: they were perceived as 'posh', 'emo' and 'clean-cut' to name but three of the stereotypical descriptors. In return, the 1in12 was viewed by the younger Leeds scene as 'crusty' 'punk,' 'aging', 'dirty' and 'cliquey'. As Mr. G points out

The vibe I always got at the 1in12, and even still do to an extent is not that it is not a young persons atmosphere, but I don't feel as comfortable there maybe as I do, because the age range there is a lot higher then it is in Leeds. And a lot of other shows and for a long time I always felt that it didn't feel comfortable dancing 'cause everyone was like old and stood there and you didn't dare dance. It's not so much like something that anyone's said or I think people really feel, cause I obviously it's blatantly whatever age it doesn't really matter, but you know how you get vibes about places and the 1in12 just

has a vibe that show-wise doesn't always fill me like with anticipation. Just because there's been that many shows with no-one there or virtually no one there because it's located in Bradford.

lin12ers were perceived as 'old' and 'punk' by the younger members of the Leeds hardcore scene and the lin12 was viewed as a place where one couldn't dance or feel comfortable at the shows. Mr. C states that a lot of the Leeds people think that the club is politically correct and they can't relax as a result of this:

You know a load of people think that the club is really politically correct and I really have a lot of problems with this PC type of mentality and tag that people attach to other people who they perceive as being, you know someone who will get all high and mighty about particular uses of language like you know, erm.

What is at stake here are two contrary impulses within punk: on the one hand breaking down barriers and challenging conventions, while on the other adopting behaviour that is ethical, non-exploitative and considerate to others. These two punk impulses often clash, leading to argument and dissension about what are taken to be the core ethics of anarcho punk ethics and the traditional 'get pissed, destroy' punk mentality. One of the C&R members summed this up in simple terms:

I think a lot of it boils down to the divisions between Leeds and Bradford of what is and what isn't punk or hardcore. That's why I have always seen, well not always seen but recently seen that the Leeds scene celebrates more about a way of producing things than of sticking to rigid punk genres.

Here I can return to one of the earlier points I made above in relation to the lin12 experiencing a lack of turnout at their gigs. One of the reasons that some of the Leeds people don't go to such shows is that they feel intimidated with the cliquey atmosphere there. They choose to remain in Leeds unless there is a really popular event occurring at the lin12. This is similar to the way that the lin12ers choose to frequent the squat rather than the Leeds scene as a whole. A related yet separate reason for this is down to the single site of the lin12 and its lack of variety. Mr. G pointed out:

There's a lot of the old 'timers' should I say within Bradford, you know a lot more of the established people. When I think of the younger kids that go to shows, like there's Mr. F from Bradford and there's like a couple of others, but there really aren't that many kids

from around Bradford area, and when you compare it to Leeds where there's an awful lot uhm I think Bradford struggles. I mean, you know it's really good that the 1in12 is there, I love the 1in12 but I think it would do so much better if it was in Leeds. If you could uproot the 1in12 and move it across and out it in Leeds I think it would go from strength to strength, 'cause there's that many more shows in Leeds. If you could put it in a similar city [the problem would be solved.] (emphasis authors).

This is a solution that is often aimed at the irresolvable situation of Leeds versus Bradford yet only concentrates on the musical activities of the club. As I noted in chapter five, music is only one of the activities that the Club participates in. Those members who are involved in non-musical activities and provide a valued contribution to the club would be left stranded by such a move. They would be deprived of a valuable community resource.

The proposal is typical of misunderstandings between the respective scenes, though it is not shared across the board, nor are the activities of the Leeds scene badly received when they are introduced to the Club, as one of the of C&R members articulated:

I have never really understood these divisions. I got kind of got disillusioned with it. I went to Bradford and I thought it was cool, certain key people that were involved and I felt encouraged and supported with my bands.

Such quotes reveal that there is also a wide amount of mutual respect between Leeds and Bradford scenes although such divisions are recognised. Such acceptance is an equal part of the politics that exist between the two scenes alongside the mutual interest of DiY. However, the advantages of the Leeds scene for one member of C&R are obvious:

I think basically there's more of us and it's not just that there's more scope for things because there's more venues there's more there's different gigs going on, there's a bigger social circle. It's like cause the thing that I think the thing that got to me about Bradford was because it were basically incestuous it was kind of everybody knew everybody's business.

These potentially gossip-free attractions proved too tempting for many in the Bradford scene, and from the mid-to-late nineties there was a steady stream of ex-club members moving across. During the fieldwork period, the move to Leeds by core members placed additional stresses on the remaining members of the 1in12. The 120Rats

amongst the plurality of other punk venues offered a wider social circle, a sense of distance and a comfortable context in which to exist. But in gaining this, it raised the question – do they retain their authentic anarcho punk-status, or as Mr. R put it in an email to me in 1999, inherit the label of ‘another rat leaving the stinking shit’?

Conclusion

In this chapter I have covered the contradictions between the Leeds and Bradford scenes in terms of the Out of Step shop, where genre capital is invoked in order to bolster authenticity, and the gig settings and experiences that operate from the Leeds 6 front room and cellar to the city-centre nightclub. The latter raises important questions about where the boundaries of the core DiY ethic lie and how far practice can move from them without becoming seriously compromised. Finally I have discussed the mutually oppositional depictions of the Leeds and Bradford scenes and how this ultimately places additional stress on the core 1in12 club members. For them, the continual pressures of running the building on a diminishing base presents unbearable stress and can lead to burnout. Membership depletion is just one factor that can lead to a 1in12er leaving the scene.

Chapter Eight: Exit

Don't worry you'll get over it
You'll grow up, you'll calm down
Another youth, another fashion
You'll get over it you'll calm down.
(Dick Lucas, Subhumans, 1982)

Introduction

I demonstrated in the last chapter that the pressures generated from the blossoming Leeds DiY scene presented problems for the 1in12 member. For a large number of members, this resulted in a move to Leeds. This connects up with one of the *assumed* central tendencies of DiY music that its participants sooner or later exit the scene. That there is a large age spectrum within this culture (interviewees ranged from 20 to 42) stands as testimony that the scene manages to both retain the majority of its core membership and recruit younger members. The common interpretation of scene exit can be broadly outlined in terms of the member ceasing active participation and instead adopting new interests, concerns and general life activities that arrest future involvement and participation in the DiY scene. This assumption is prevalent in the interview transcripts from core subcultural members, yet they demonstrated little intention of leaving the scene by using general rather than specific examples of exit strategies.

That the words scene and subculture are readily and repeatedly used as descriptors throughout this chapter requires some clarification. The lexical term scene is used by the author, participants and interviewees in tandem with O'Connor's (2002b) empirically driven methodology. It is used by the author in the same way as the punks of the study use it. To remind the reader how this term is applied and operates in punk culture, O'Connor notes:

When punks use the term 'scene' they mean the active creation of infrastructure to support punk bands and other forms of creative activity. This means finding places to play, building a supportive audience developing strategies for living cheaply, shared punk houses, and such like (2002: 226).

Therefore the term scene in the present work describes the local corpus of both the Leeds and Bradford DiY practices the participants are engaged in *and* equally the overarching, similar, yet different practices of related DiY punk scenes across the UK and beyond.

The term subculture is both a general and specific term of reference for a plurality of related and non-related musical/non-musical arenas or networks in which participants of DiY scenes may find themselves. For example, it may relate to corporate punk rock, rave parties, new age travellers, goths etc. that do not have DiY punk and hardcore as their ethical centrepiece. Thus subculture operates as both a general and specific term that can relate to a whole *cluster* of scenes, practices and genres and also to more situation-specific aspects of these. It can equally be used to describe punk culture in general terms. It should also be reasserted that this term is *not* being used in tandem with the rhetorical and ideological baggage of its label mate, counterculture: it is simply used as a descriptive tool.

The central aims of this chapter are twofold. Firstly, I want to establish the claim that most core members of DiY culture do not leave the scene *per se* in terms of ceasing involvement. Indeed this is clearly evident from close scrutiny of the evidence of the number of 1in12 members' now presently active within the Leeds and associate UK and European scenes. In short core member exit runs along geographical lines: members exit a scene through such lines, they do not necessarily alter the learnt practices of DiY culture, they merely perform and adapt to new DiY tasks in different geographical locations and subcultures. Secondly, I wish to examine the discourse of scene exit for evidence of how authenticity is constructed from a core

membership perspective. I shall argue that members' claims to subcultural authenticity are bound up with, and constructed through, the general and specific descriptions of scene exit. I will discuss how such claims to authenticity have a dilemmatic quality in that any form of scene exit can be read as an index of either disillusionment with the scene or the dilution of authenticity expressed through statements of guilt.

The present chapter will be split into four sections. Firstly, I will consider the broad themes of scene exit. The majority of the interviewees, when asked the reasons why people left the scene, presented a number of interesting commonplaces that specifically function as explanatory linguistic devices for why people exit the scenes but at the same time act as devices that both 'other' those who are not core scene members and also serve as devices to constitute the participant's authentic scene status. Secondly, the scope of the argument will be reduced by specifically examining exit from the 1in12 club and introducing the issue of subcultural burnout to establish the claim that scene exit is more prevalent from the 1in12 in Bradford than from Leeds. Thirdly, I will briefly examine the Leeds scene, accounting for how the rise in numbers and its multi-sited DiY framework acted as a magnet for 1in12 members. Additional attention will be paid to the low levels of scene exit from the Leeds scene. Finally, I conclude this chapter by restating its central claim that the core membership of hardcore punk constitute a group for whom scene exit means: either remaining within the given environment or by utilising their geographical contacts within the wider punk subculture to move onto fresh DiY punk and hardcore related scenes. Here I will also restate that the issue of authenticity is central to both hardcore punk culture and scene exit. From the original UK inception of punk rock the level of participation and its flipside, the lack of understanding and 'true' involvement, have

been described in terms of 'real' punks and 'posers'. I shall first turn attention to the general, reasons for exit referred to in the interviews and the specific issues of this issue within the DiY scene.

A number of common responses to the question 'why might a person leave the scene' became evident from analysis of the interview transcripts, although exit was referred to in general terms and a gap became evident between hypothetical and actual exit patterns of member exit description. Reasons for exit can be situated within a common typology of scene exit: vanishing people; careers and education; age, children and death; and finally issues regarding the local scene and site of participation.

It should be noted that virtually none of the core interviewees had exited the scene by *totally* removing themselves from wider subcultural activity. They were all active in DiY practice at the time of the fieldwork. What underpins the typological themes associated with subcultural exit is a stake in the core of authenticity. Through their status as core members, exit by other scene members is 'othered' and described as the actions of peripheral and semi-peripheral members not *core* activists. Exit is interpreted as the opposite of authentic involvement.

The Vanishing People

Core members made mention of those participants who 'disappear' from the scene, those people that are seen at gigs, are socialised and engaged with duly at a superficial level. In short, such participants are marginal, yet centrally linked to the general populace of the DiY social arena. Mr. R noted that there are 'hundreds of examples' of such people he has experienced over the years and stated that he 'largely did not have a clue where they went, they simply disappeared.' Indeed Mr. D described

himself in these terms, stating he was part of the 'vanishing people' after he found the 1in12 club's attractions became, for him, stale: he left Bradford to join a band in the south of the UK. Within the interview data, similar terms used to describe exit were that people 'vanished', 'disappeared' or 'left' the scene, that they were no longer 'visible' or 'active' as members, yet the exit of the vanishing people has a knock-on effect within the DiY scene. For core members, the 'vanishing people' will continue to arrive and leave and perhaps become marginally involved before they exit. This reduces the numbers attending and supporting DiY music events. As an observer and participant of the DiY scene, myself, for numerous years, the scene can be described as one trading on a high turnover of semi-peripheral and peripheral membership: in short the scene experiences ebbs and flows. As attendance fluctuates at concerts, this affects core membership motivation. For this reason, the first category of general exit is established as a device that is reflexively linked to, and constitutive of, the commitment, dedication and, most importantly, authenticity of the core membership.

Core authenticity is reinforced when contrasted with semi and peripheral members who leave the scene. Mr. D stated that people who briefly engage with the scene may not find it to their taste: they marginally experiment with the scene's activities before making the decision not to fully participate and find another less-authentic course for their lives. This assumption was also made by Mr. C when he claimed that a general reason for exit is that people 'go normal', they 'get into football and start reading *The Sun*'. Or, as another interviewee suggested, they become involved in wider subcultural activities such as rave culture, drum and bass or DiY hip-hop or other subcultural genres more suited to their musical tastes. In defence of his own authenticity, Mr. C stated that he had no plans to exit the scene: that he 'kept his hand in' and hadn't resorted to 'wearing Calvin Klein aftershave just yet'. Claims such as

this invoke a stereotype of what one might do, or is perceived to do, post-exit. Wearing of expensive aftershave or reading *The Sun*, are assumed to be sure signs of no longer identifying with, or ceasing to hold a firm commitment to, the values and practices of DiY music. From the point of view of the present ethnographic data, leaving the scene for core members remains a preserve of semi and peripheral members of the DiY scene. This creates pressure on core members to reflexively establish their commitment against a section of the DiY community that is in a constant state of flux through subcultural exit.

Careers and Education

The most likely cause of scene exit cited in the data is the adoption of a career. Described in the interviews as 'getting a job,' 'doing the nine to five,' 'starting one's own business' and 'getting a career', the underlying implication was that such activity would take priority over involvement in DiY activities. The lack of career intentions exhibited from core members again served as a badge of authenticity. Dedication and commitment to DiY punk would become a casualty to choosing a career. Such a choice is viewed as a lack of commitment to the scene, although many of the interviewees held full and part-time jobs of mixed status and responsibility, ranging from postal to bank workers. The reasoning implicit in the interviews is that such employment allows the individual to both work for a living wage and participate in the DiY punk scene, while the general view of a career *per se* is couched in the idea of work as total commitment, leaving little time to set aside for DiY activity. Waged work is seen either as a means to continue participation in the scene, or as devotion to a career, propelling the person on to a new life course, shifting and eclipsing previous DiY concerns, leading one to abandon their previous life activities. This distinction is identified as dilemmatic. To adopt the later course of action is bound up with the

potential to surrender one's claims of authenticity as a scene actor. That all of the core members had no career at the time of writing, and were instead either involved with part and full-time work and education or receiving benefits, enabled them to continue authentic participation within the punk scene even if this meant that such participation stretched the members time resources to the limit and sent them towards a possible state of burnout.

As a related point, education was cited by the interviewees as a possible avenue leading to scene exit. Education was used in one instance to state how inauthentic peripheral and semi-peripheral members were in using their student-status as a means of involvement in the scene prior to leaving and adopting careerist life choices. Here Mr.Q is explicit when discussing people who left the Leeds scene in the late 1980s in that he views such transgressions as inauthentic and shallow:

As far as I can tell they fucked off 'cause they had finished their university courses and got jobs got suits, and I know one who got into record management and I think worked for a big label. A lot of them I met finished their university courses, took their piercings out, got a nice fucking suit and went and got a job.

There are two points that can be raised in relation to this quote. Firstly authenticity and commitment remain central. Such examples of scene exit activities were used to illustrate how semi-peripheral members in higher education were in fact masquerading as core members. Thus education both allowed the resources for participation in the scene but also provided the potential resources for scene exit. Secondly, and a point I shall discuss in further detail below, the discourse of 'selling out' is implicit here. That one member of the said grouping 'worked for a big label' can be read as implying that core principles of the scene, previously adhered to, have been abandoned, leads to assertions of selling out, of abandoning such principles. The uncompromisingly harsh tone of 'fucked off' and 'nice fucking suit' illustrates the hostility aimed at those who abandon the core DiY values. Taken together, both

points demonstrate how claims of authenticity are made in contradistinction to use of DiY scene as an identity vehicle before eventual exit. The contradistinction becomes a benchmark to establish one's own claims to scene authenticity: one re-establishes firm views against selling out and having a career. That a number of interviewees were involved with education (both further and higher) and remained active within the scene can be used to show that those who are involved as core members do not fall foul of inauthenticity. Exit in general terms is used as reference for reinforcing the virtues of scene authenticity.

Age, Children and Death.

Aging, children and death were all cited by the interviewees as reasons for scene exit. I shall take discuss each of these in turn. Age was discussed at three different levels. Firstly, advanced age propelled some of the interviewees towards rethinking their position and dedication towards the scene. Mr. E noted that as he aged the priorities of hardcore punk began to decline in importance. He expressed the fear of 'being left on the shelf at thirty five years of age'. This is an important point as it suggests the dichotomous relationship between age, participation and goals. In a scene where I observed the average age to be located in the early twenties, not teens, such concerns and fears were expressed in relation to feeling the pressure to leave a scene that had large numbers of younger people participating in the scene. Mr. K pointed to this unease by stating that he often felt like he was 'an overgrown kid in the extended playground of adolescence.' As the scene became younger he felt old and alienated, but still determined to be involved. He stated that he was often questioned by non-punk peers on his continuing subcultural involvement: for K, his involvement is his life:

It's all "what are you gonna be like when you are fucking sixty with all your tattoos?" and I say I don't fucking care you know. Did I still think I would still be into punk when I was thirty-five? No! You don't know. Things happen. I mean you never know what's going to happen in your life. I might be dead tomorrow, you know what I mean?

Far from suggesting scene exit will occur, K advances the point that he merely continues with his life in the traditions learnt through lengthy involvement. This serves to establish that, whilst he is advancing in years, lengthy participation and dedication to the scene operates both as a badge of authenticity and a symbol of personal struggle to achieve an advanced age in a subcultural groupings. However, on the other hand, it also raises the dilemma of feeling old in what could, ostensibly, be described as a youth scene. To be young in such a scene is one of the central sources of solidarity. My observations of levels of acceptance both between and through the DiY scenes on age lines suggests that the case of DiY hardcore working under the description of a youth subculture rests on questionable foundations.

Secondly E was also keen to point out that his concerns and subcultural dedications shifted ground after his father died and he felt obligated to care for his aging mother: a shift in priorities had taken place relative to his age. He was equally keen to point out that, in career terms, working low paid jobs that enabled participation in DiY, proved to be more stressful as he got older. He expressed disdain at sometimes not being able to feed himself properly due to his low pay and as this state of affairs progressed he found himself questioning his involvement in DiY punk, though he still found it so enjoyable and stimulating that he had no immediate plans to exit.

Thirdly, age provided the elder members of the scene with the choice of exit from certain scene activities. Indeed, Mr. I (aged 42 at the time of interview) noted that DiY bands and gigs no longer held his attention, yet he still wished to be involved in the production of such events in the role of either a sound engineer or van driver. Part

of the reason for this partial exit from the immediacy of the proceedings was down to his physical condition and length of time spent in the scene:

I've reached the age now and the circumstances where I don't particularly enjoy gigs very much. I'm going a bit deaf and I can't be arsed with people shoving into me and all that. I want to sit down and pay attention, not be deafened and pushed around a lot. I'm short, I can't see what's going on at the front. If there's a crush, I mean to me a gig is a place where you can't see properly, you can't hear properly, so why would you want to go there, so I tend not to.

For I, the concert is a place that no longer holds appeal, yet he manages to be involved in the practical end of the organisation and the mechanics of the event. This can be explained both in terms of his relatively advanced age as a scene member and also in terms of health issues related to his perceived deafness. However, what Mr. I asserts above all is his continuing dedication to DiY culture. This in turn upholds the argument that scene exit is not a clear-cut issue in terms of direct and total disconnection from the scene.

The issue of children was mentioned by all interviewees as a possible general reason for scene exit. In spite of this only one out of the twenty-five interviewees was a parent and he was estranged from his child at the time of interview. The general view espoused by the interviewees was one of abstinence and viewed the world as 'too fucked up' to have kids. Bringing more children into the world to contribute to what they considered to be the pending economic and ecological disaster was considered to be unfair on the child. That said the relatively small number of interviewees with children was not overly reflective of the membership of the lin12. Lots of lin12 members do have kids. During my observation there were a number of children present during club activities, yet these belonged to members of the other collectives in the lin12 not studied for this project. Children also involve a shift of responsibilities arrest participation but it was made clear in interview that having

children did not ultimately mean exit from the scene merely evoked a brief hiatus from the scene.

The final area of general scene exit discourse relates to relationships and involuntary exit. A number of the interviewees mentioned subcultural exit as a consequence of failed personal relationships. Mr. G stated that his ex-partner lost interest in the hardcore scene in Leeds and no longer wished to participate. He was explicit in stating that the relationship broke up shortly after this with her not being seen at events after this break. Many similar examples of this can be found in the interview responses, though the finer mechanics and intimate details of such issues were withheld by the interviewees. Secondly, death is an irrevocable cause of scene exit that was not gained from the interview data but from my own personal experience of the DiY scene. During the period this study was carried out, eight core members of the UK DiY scene met with tragic, early deaths. This is the ultimate form of scene exit, although in many respects their activities and lives continue to be celebrated through the activities of the DiY scene and traded on as a badge of true authenticity⁶⁹.

Scene Issues

Within this subsection the broad issues of potential exit arising from issues within the DiY hardcore punk scene will be considered. Again the issue of authenticity looms large as the interviewees raise issue with activities which force them to consider exit strategies. It should be stressed that these are only suggested strategies as to why a person might leave the scene, not actual accounts of this practice. I shall split this section into three major themes.

⁶⁹ Indeed, there have been eight tragic deaths of members closely associated with the UK punk and hardcore scenes during the four years of this research: see my opening acknowledgements.

The first general theme related to scene politics was an abiding concern with the lack of rewards from input into DiY punk. In a sense, this precludes what will be said in relation to burnout in the 1in12 club. The commonplaces of why a participant might leave the scene were generally articulated through statements such as 'when it stops being fun and you feel you are wasting your time'; 'when the pros outweigh the cons' and 'when it becomes more negative than positive.' In spite of these statements being used to constitute how exit might occur, there was very little evidence in support of such disillusionment being translated into full exit from the subculture. As I will articulate below, when participants' expectations are no longer met by the scene, they move on, although this does not act as a rule that they will exit the wider subculture to adopt a new life plan. As I noted above, Mr. E began to prioritise his activities but this did not lead to his exit, only a reconsideration of it. In similar terms, Mr. D found that the Bradford scene had become 'stale', though this merely led him to pursue wider subcultural DiY scene activities in the South of England. He noted that those who exit or vanish from the scene often reappear with a new band, label distro, fanzine or promotion activity. Exit from the scene in these cases is used as a space to reassess and take stock of one's activities before embarking upon fresh projects and/or returning to the original scene or moving to/starting a new scene. Mr. R noted that after running a DiY record label, promoting bands and being involved in the 1in12 for sixteen years, he eventually moved out of Bradford. In spite of this he continued to play in a band and remain involved in promoting gigs. He stated that the reason for him winding down his concerns with the label was because of money being owed to him and he was constantly trying to recoup money owed to the label. R states that 'DiY does not work' for him and the lack of honesty of those that owe him money has led him to consider exit as an option. He wound down his label as a result of this.

The issue of burnout is suggested here in that the aims and intentions of R's label have been usurped through unforeseen and difficult obstacles, forcing him to evaluate his commitment to the label project. R stated that he was much more comfortable pursuing work in his band than being constantly frustrated with the intricacies of running a DiY record label.

Taken together, what this collection of commonplaces asserts is that scene exit does not occur *per se*, it merely shifts to other activities within the DiY scene or wider subculture along the lines of either shifting location or the choice of activities one is involved in.

A further illustration of this is related to the scale and pace of genre progression within the hardcore DiY punk scenes. As a participant observer of the Leeds and Bradford scenes I attended and played nearly eighty concerts within the field work period. Indeed, certain weeks in Leeds there were eight hardcore related shows available to attend and up to three at the time. In tandem with this the amount of monthly record releases from bands was bewildering. Within *MRR*, *Fracture* and *RTB*, I counted for one month on the global DiY hardcore and punk subculture 580 record reviews and 99 fanzine reviews across the three DiY publications⁷⁰ Mr. K made explicit mention of the effort required just to keep in touch with the minimum of this output. He noted that if one does not attend concerts or buy records for a relatively short period on time, one may find 'oneself outside' of the current debates and musical styles of hardcore. Genre distinction has to be constantly maintained. One interviewee was keen to point out that as hardcore punk genres change and releases multiply, there is a possibility of alienation: that 'one day you will wake up and find yourself outside of the scene.' What underpins this particular point is an

⁷⁰ Taking into account the evidence of duplicate reviews of records between the three fanzines

adherence to the idea of authenticity: it requires constant effort to maintain levels of knowledge about developments within this particular music scene, yet remaining up-to-date with such developments chimes in with claims of subcultural authenticity. This leads to counter claims and criticism from within the scene. K noted that one of the faults he found in the Leeds DiY scene was that it had a predilection towards becoming colonised by 'record collecting nerds'. This practice had usurped what punk was originally supposed to be about, to be 'raw and spontaneous.'⁷¹

Finally, I wish to deal briefly with the issue of selling out and also to arguments and disagreements within the punk scenes. In selling out, the band in question leaves the fold of DiY punk rock and embraces the world of corporate music subcultures as a career through engagement with a major record label. This involves relinquishing control of certain aspects of their artistic practice. In many respects this commonplace of selling out is similar to the discourse of 'career and education as selling out'. I shall say much more on the discourse and dilemmas of selling out in the following chapter, presently I wish to note here a band like Chumbawamba, who signed to EMI in 1997, used their new position to advance the cause of their subterranean connections and support of DiY activities. At the time of the fieldwork not only had this band aided the funding of the recording studio at the 1in12, they had also funded a number of political organisations with money gained from deals with multinational corporations. Whilst Chumbawamba had exited the DiY and independent music scenes' in favour of more lucrative practices, they remained involved at the level of funding practices central to the politics of DiY scenes'. This did not prevent the band from being chastised and criticised for 'selling out' and turning their backs on the 'authentic' or 'real' scene. As in other cases, such criticisms

⁷¹ See the record sleeve for Poison Idea (1984) *Record Collectors are Pretentious Assholes*. Bitzcore.

of exit serve to bolster the credentials of core scene members. This is a rhetorical strategy which I have shown occurs across the general and broad discourse DiY criticism of others is integrally is bound up with claims of self-authenticity. It also supports my counter claim that whilst a band may have left the immediate cultural practices of DiY, their future actions and support of it may simply proceed from a fresh and wider subcultural location.

'Make it Stop!' The lin12 and Member Burnout/Exit

The ethnographic data provides strong supportive evidence for exit from the lin12 club scene during the 1996-2001 period, though it is counterbalanced by a number of core members remaining completely dedicated to the building and the general DiY project it houses. Within the fieldwork period evidence of scene exit arose out of the lin12 club with little suggestion and evidence of exit from the Leeds scene. Through interviews, observation notes and general conversations with past club members during the field work period, and my long-standing association with both the Leeds and Bradford scene, a large number of people (I estimate at around forty) had ceased daily involvement with the lin12 and had moved away from the city, either around the country or to the adjacent city of Leeds. Indeed, over half of the interviewees of the study had left Bradford prior to or during 2001.

The lin 12 club faced a crisis meeting in November of 1999 in which the issue of closure and thus its own exit from the subcultural map was seriously debated. What became evident from this meeting was the issue that member exit, and a lack of participation and use of the club, (as I pointed out in the previous chapter) presented strains on the decreasing pool of core members who found themselves faced with an increasing number of tasks. This proved to be a difficult set of circumstances. The commonplace accounts given in interview to describe the approach to club activities

of the time were that there was simply 'too much to do', the feeling of 'fighting a losing battle' and of 'banging one's head against the wall'. As the morale of the club fell during this period, so did attendance at concerts and other 1in12 events. The club managed to argue with itself against closure and the crisis meeting helped to sustain the will to continue by formulating strategies to increase involvement. By the time of the fieldwork in 2001, the morale of the club had lifted and it had managed to turn itself around, chiefly through the recruitment of volunteers and new members⁷². However, although the crisis meeting staved off the motion to close and sell off the building and return the 1in12 to a free floating organisation, operating as a multi-venue concern, one of the aims of the present section is to explore and establish why exit occurred and why members migrated away from Bradford to the most popular destination of Leeds. It is to these issues that I now turn.

Exit

The primary reason for scene exit given in interview, and also in general conversation with the author during this period, was burnout. There exists a large body of work related to this phenomenon, chiefly revolving around the work of Maslach (1983, in Schaufeli, 1993). The majority of this and related work concentrates on professional employee burnout in the caring professions and also utilises a quantitative methodological strategy with the 'Maslach Burnout Scale' (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). However Pines (1993) has conversely argued, through qualitative research, that burnout 'tends to afflict people with high goals and expectations' (1993:34). Broadly speaking, Pines's thesis holds that people burnout when they enter an organisation with high expectations and are met with constant and frustrating

⁷² This was achieved by allowing well-attended raves to be held in the building. Those who attended these events had to become a 1in12 member in advance or entrance would be denied.

blockades of varying impact: through constant task frustration the person burns out. Although the club is by majority a voluntary organisation, it holds many similarities to the burnout factors of professional domains yet also establishes new examples of how burnout may occur.

Within this section I will outline and explore an empirical five-point typology of factors that are central to member burnout and exit from Bradford and the lin12 club scene. I consider the above crisis meeting as broadly reflective of the levels of burnout experienced by club members during the ethnographic period. The key issues outlined as factors for burnout are outlined in the following typology:

1) The adoption of tasks and multi-tasking and frustration

2) 'Core' member exit, isolation and the decline of a sense of community

3) Maintenance of politically correct, single issue politics

4) Fallouts and disagreements

5) Access to time and resources

I shall selectively debate each of these sections before moving on to the consequences of exit both from the club member's perspective and the politics of maintaining a single building.

In tandem with Pines' claims above, the majority of members interviewed stated that on initial involvement they had high expectations of what could be achieved in the space of the lin 12 club. Mr. J stated: 'when I got here I was like trying to change everything, I was totally enthusiastic about doing everything.' He went on to describe his future plans, but stated that he became de-motivated when the plans were criticised by members. References to attempts to change the lin12 club were common in the interviews and are similar to Pines' suggestion of repeatedly frustrated

high expectations becoming a catalyst for burnout. As I noted in the previous chapter, involvement in the 1in12 club allows the potential freedom and scope for members to make their choice of club activities their own and mutually support other members in their activities. However, exit is hastened when such activities become frustrated. These frustrations occur along three interrelated lines.

Firstly, on the adoption of a task, the member manages to make the task their own. Ms. G spoke of how she re-organised the office and took over the membership card administration. She encountered difficulty and frustration when she discovered that she was now expected by other members to be solely responsible for this task and associated duties. This distracted her from other chosen, ideal tasks in the club. Once such tasks have been adopted I observed that they are difficult to relinquish: frustration builds as un-negotiated expectations grow.

Secondly, within this period, the number of members leaving the club meant that the relative number of tasks steadily increased and became more difficult as the organisational and practical skills, built up by and practiced over the years by the migrated members, were lost. Skill loss presented a 'lag' where members had to assimilate new tasks, thus adding to the frustration by members faced with new tasks. Core members of the club began to find themselves under pressure as daily tasks were neglected or reluctantly even perfunctorily carried out. Rather than leave them, there is a tendency to adopt such activities on the back of an already full schedule. This is done out of necessity rather than through a genuine wish to accomplish such tasks. As a consequence, the aims of the building as a space where projects can be carried out became diluted as I illustrated in chapter five. The central DiY principle of 'if you don't like something change it', becomes hostage to the increased daily, organisational pressures of tasks. Mr. I related how frustrated he became working in the café when

he would much rather have devoted his time to more interesting club activities that suited his skills:

The sort of work I would rather be doing is physical things 'cause we are talking about the best things I am good at and I can do [them] and be useful, and also get a sense of satisfaction when you look at it. But you can flip burgers all day long and people come in while they go shopping and go out again and that's good because that's a useful thing for them. Obviously they are going to forget about it.

This quote illustrates and introduces a third line of frustration: that members become diverted from, or are unable to give full attention to, the tasks and activities that inspired them originally to become involved in the club. Mr. I stated that there were countless examples of projects that had been started in the club that remained abandoned or unfinished due to the lack of core members and the distraction away from the tasks at hand. Mr. S noted how frustrated he felt when members of the bar collective cancelled their shifts or failed to turn up. This meant that occasionally he had to work double shifts or was left with the difficult task of trying to cover the shift at such late notice. Multi-tasking was a major reason for burnout. Apart from the two paid workers at the club (bar steward and caretaker), the rest of the core members were balancing club involvement with either families, part-time work, or music projects. Their frustration led to periods of crisis as those who work at the club cannot always take the added pressure. Within the crisis period members saw the attraction of multi-sited Leeds scene as an opportunity to release themselves from the continuing frustration of the Club.

The second level of the club exit typology directly leads on from my previous point and points to feelings of a loss of community⁷³. The exit of core members had consequences for those left at the club. For the purposes of brevity I shall restrict this discussion to three of them. Firstly, Ms. G and Mr. S referred to a previous club caretaker who burned out by taking too much on in the club and becoming angry with

⁷³ Here the term community is used interchangeably with scene.

other members for failing to support him. Both interviewees noted how this individual became isolated and shouted at other members in meetings. They viewed his exit as a good thing both for himself and the club, even though they would struggle to replace him. This suggests that not all core member scene exit is viewed negatively; there is the potential to recognise the levels of distress burnout may produce in a member. Secondly, the general core member exit during this period reduced and arrested the potential levels of enjoyment within the social dimensions of the club. Mr. R recalled how the creative input of the French Canadians working at the club, on their exit to Leeds, reduced the 'fun value' of participating at the club⁷⁴. Here R produces a central point in relation to exit. As the social groupings are gradually reduced in the lin12 through member exit, the capacity for meaning, solidarity and enjoyment are reduced. Against a backdrop of a decline in fresh input during this period, those members left behind endeavoured to maintain and reproduce club activities with smaller numbers. Thus the third consequence of exit, isolation, becomes a factor that impacted upon club activities and member exit. R. noted that as club members left Bradford, the housing communities in Manningham began to dwindle and the sense of community was lost. R, K and W mentioned that the street they lived on in Bradford once contained 12 flats with over fifteen individuals living in the immediate vicinity in housing association flats. As the majority of these members left, the increased isolation within club activities, and externally in the community housing, intensified feelings of the urge to also leave Bradford. R. noted that his mental health began to suffer through the isolation of living in Bradford on his own:

I have got respect for anyone that is still there man, because it is hard work man. It was a poor time for my mental health and I had to leave. I ended up in this flat on my own and

⁷⁴ The French Canadians went on to provide creative input at the Leeds 120Rats.

I had my friend Pete downstairs, fair play but the walls were thin as fuck. I had people stomping about above me and I was on my own. My girlfriend was like living away for a year. I mean I was depressed, I was seriously depressed. I had to fucking get out of there.

In conjunction with this, R made explicit that such isolation was reflected in the daily interaction of the club. He ran a record label out of the basement of the 1in12 and he stated that the daily repetition of being isolated and stuck in a 'cold cellar' packaging up records for mail order, collating records (folding sleeves and covers) and performing administrative label tasks, merely amplified his feelings of wishing to exit. Years of cold winters in the cellar and freezing nights spent at the computer in the club, organising DiY music distribution and band activities, eventually took their toll.

Early in 2000, R left Bradford scene for Leeds citing burnout as a specific reason. This leads into the third point of the typology: the dilemma of exit guilt. Those who reduced involvement in Bradford were occasionally viewed as 'leaving the sinking ship' especially those who left following the crisis meeting. Both R and W mentioned that there was some scepticism from existing club members and he felt that he had distanced himself from some of them when he stated he felt a 'bit of the cold shoulder.' As he had formed new networks of friends in Leeds, such contacts were occasionally referred to by existing club members as 'your new mates'. In similar circumstances, W made the same observations and expressed the feelings of isolation, depression and anxiousness once the number of familiar people she knew at the 1in12 had begun to dwindle. The feelings of guilt at leaving were also oriented to the insularity of the 1in12 club. She described her guilt in terms of 'leaving her family'. She also felt some resentment from those who remained at the club:

There was a bit of resentment. I just felt that you were getting resented because you were leaving a sinking ship and they were kind of like "ahh, Bradford is not good enough for you then?" Nothing was actually said but [I felt this to be the case].

Overall, the consequences of a group of friends leaving the lin12 scene led to feelings of increased isolation both inside of the lin12 and also in the wider housing and social communities. Taken in tandem with what I described in the first section on multitasking and burnout, the fragmentation of social groupings through member exit and the consequences of increased isolation enhanced the likelihood of member exit.

The lin12 can be described as a residue of 1980s and 1990s single-issue politics. Single-issue politics and the pressures to remain politically correct were described in at least three of the interviews as a potential factor of burnout. Indeed, the maintenance of strong views and politically correct positions, in conjunction with the factors outlined above had proved to be a contentious issue inside of the lin12. Mr. C, a member who exited the club in 1999, spoke of the difficulties of maintaining such views. Underpinning these views under the banner of the club's guiding principles of 'Liberty Equality and Solidarity', should help to provide an atmosphere in the club geared to such concerns. However, what clashes with this is the punk ethos of 'get pissed destroy' and its anti-conservative ideas of rejecting rules and barriers. C described his time at the club as being constituted by 'calling people over their shit.' Any language use that was deemed offensive or oppressive was challenged. C stated that this position of 'constant fights' proved to be one of the factors leading to scene exit. He stated that he had become tired of constantly falling out with people over what he considered trivial issues and this in turn depleted his energies to remain involved in club activities. What the interview with C highlights is the inherent sense of irony that weaves its way through the club's existence. The clash of the politically correct with the rebelliousness of the punk scene at the heart of club affairs tends to lead to occasional infighting and members being banned through a transgression of such language use. Indeed I have previously discussed this issue in

chapter four and six in relation to genre distinction although its incorporation into issues of burnout and exit secures its place in terms of member exit. A clear example of the challenges of such language use became explicit in Mr. S's interview transcript:

The quiz team were down here on Tuesday and a couple of people came in, a man and a woman and were playing pool. This lad who does photography had been taking photos for his college course and there was one of this woman and someone goes "have you got a bird?" Nothing happened and then as the man and woman were leaving, this woman laid in about the foul and abusive fascist language that had been used [by us]. And we went "What?!", and we'd forgotten what we'd said, OK it's not a nice thing to call women, and it ended up with this bloke [with us] saying "fuck off you language fascists!"

What this quotation serves to do is outline that the lin12 is both an arena where politically correct and un-politically correct language use are both used and challenged. The maintenance of such views and the challenging of digressions trades on a dense intersection of views that connects up politically correct practice with vernacular language usage. Through observation at the club, there are frequent betrayals of un-politically correct language, although blatant transgressions are either dealt with through a direct challenge or more serious examples of transgression through the Sunday meeting where the member faces being banned from the club. The reproduction of the Club's value system along these lines, as Mr. C points out, has a tendency to draw energies and this often results in members falling out.

Transgression of the *core* values is a further reason for exit from the lin12. It can lead to a person being banned from the club for a prolonged period of time. During the field work period one member was banned from the building for ignoring repeated warnings over smoking cannabis in the building and compromising the club's policy on this issue. Also in both K and Q's interviews, they made mention of a friend with mental health problems banned for making fascist statements and salutes in the building in a vane attempt to attract attention. Such decisions are often not popular and in the latter instance, K and Q both felt that it was an unfair decision to ban the person concerned. Whilst full exploration of this example is beyond the scope of the

present work, it serves to show that there are tensions over club decisions that often lead to fall-outs and frustrations whilst also demonstrating how involuntary exit from the club may occur through collective decision. It should be added that in all instances of a member being banned from the club, they are invited to the Sunday meeting to argue their case to fellow members.

The issue of member frustration has been illustrated at a related, yet separate level of club activity. However, in seven of the interviews carried out with 1 in 12 members, the issue of *preciousness* over the club building became explicit. The word 'preciousness' in the interviews was used invariably to illustrate the lack of *separation* club members felt between the club as a work and social arena. Linked to the issue of multi-tasking, core members described how they found it difficult to relax in the club. For example when the present caretaker attended events and saw people dropping ash on the floor, or visited the toilets only to find a water leak, he found that it was almost impossible to relax. He experienced feelings of both hostility and frustration whilst still caring intensely about the club. Core club members spoke of taking the rubbish out and finding themselves asked to work on their nights off if the club was particularly busy. Taken against the backdrop of external responsibilities, the potential for relaxation can be drastically reduced through and the lack of established boundaries between the club's working and social life. With such a heavy self-investment in the club feelings of preciousness can be very difficult to avoid. Mr. I outlines this neatly as he noted in his diary the urge to visit the club on his way home from work, only to be faced with a large amount of unfinished tasks:

(13/07/01) I finished work in Halifax at 8.00 and dropped into the club on the way home to see how the punk's picnic was going on. Passing the gig floor it was clear that sound-checking was just starting. In the café, band food was ostensibly being prepared. What was actually happening was that a mass of people had occupied the seating area and were in the process of variously spilling and/or drinking a range of low-grade alcoholic products which they'd bought elsewhere. A lone representative of the putative organisers

was dishing up dodgy looking grub. A sensational amount of washing up was piled on the draining board.

To visit the club only to be faced with a multiplicity of tasks proved frustrating for the above diarist. He explicitly noted in his account of club activities how such selfishness, irresponsibility and lack of respect for other club members drove him towards burnout. Here is his account of the tasks he performed at the club before he returned home:

Before putting the room back in order, a place had to be cleared for the cups and plates scattered all around the place. I rolled up my sleeves and got stuck into the kitchen chaos. After a while some kind of equilibrium was achieved in the kitchen and I gathered up the dishes from the room and started on those, and then set to scooping up the empty cider cans and Buckfast bottles (ibid).

This diary entry clearly demonstrates where frustrations can build whilst also serving to demonstrate how the space in the lin12 for core workers can be sidetracked from its original purpose. Mr. I finds it increasingly difficult to pursue the club tasks he really wanted to be involved with such as working on the studio project. The collision of the work and social arena is always a potential catalyst for member burnout.

As most of the core club members during the field work period either held down full and part-time jobs, had children, attended college courses, or were involved with other DiY projects (records labels, playing in bands, running distros and promoting gigs), another reason for lin12 exit is an overarching consequence of these issues. It is no coincidence that the loss of unemployment benefit and Income Support under the Conservative government in 1996 had a marked impact on the participation of members in club activities. The introduction of Employment Training, Job Seeker's Allowance and the Labour Government's 'New Deal' as a replacement of the earlier benefits, invaded and restricted the free time available for members to participate in DiY and club activities. They were forced into 'training' schemes for jobs. In spite of

this Mr. I notes that the uncompromising sensibilities of many club members means that they often find themselves back at the club after short spells of employment:

(10/07/01) Over the years the lin12 demographic has shifted from unemployed-and-pissed-off-about-it to employed-and pissed off about it. Those lin12ers who present themselves at employment agencies or job interviews don't, on the whole, seem to stay employed for too long. We're all a bunch of misfits and that's what glues us together.

On the face of it, it might be considered that the changes in the benefit system would have made the lin12 unworkable. However, in spite of this, core members still volunteer and still remain involved and this is a salient point: there are those members who continue to remain in Bradford and strive to be actively committed to the club in spite of the significant numbers of member migration. Against the backdrop of member frustrations migration, and member exit (at the time of writing) the lin12 continues to exist on the strength of its dedicated core members. As an overarching point, the changes to the benefit system were not a recurrent interview theme mentioned as a possible catalyst for member burnout. The lack of resources and the constant struggle for money presented itself an equally important issue. At the time of the fieldwork, the reports that came through the meeting in conjunction with my participant observations signalled that the club was breaking even, although the above crisis meeting was called as the club had found itself in deeper financial trouble than it usually faces (the club runs at a deficit over certain periods of the year). Apart from the initial grant to buy the building, described in chapter five, the club is dependent upon beer sales and the revenue it derives from these, donations, the activities of the collectives, renting out the club's space, and the café and bar income. The constant struggle for money impacts upon core member morale and adds to the frustration and burnout documented above.

However as I noted in chapter five and as a final point, the physical fabric and resources of the club act as a constant source of anxiety and frustration. Such

resources can be split into two separate sections: macro and micro. At the macro spectrum, Mr. I noted in diary form that the roof of the building required urgent attention as did the lift motor. As a consequence of the latter, all loading of heavy equipment has to be carried in through the winding staircase at the left of the building. At the micro (as I noted in chapter five) I observed, whilst working on the studio project, that the majority of the wood used was either recycled from other areas of the building or taken from skips around the city. The tools used were brought in by the members as those the club owned were in various states of disrepair. On a number of occasions the studio work ground to a halt on account of the tools breaking down. Taken as a whole these four factors, lack of benefits and time, financial problems, macro and micro resource problems, amplify the frustrations of the club members and in some cases contribute to exit.

Overall, what has been broadly documented above provides a catalogue of reasons for member burnout and scene exit from the lin12. From the multi-tasking and peer expectations, the consequences of peers leaving Bradford and the sheer enormity of the task of running the building in the face of constant financial pressure, to the lack of resources and fresh volunteer input, all ultimately place pressures on the core of dedicated members left to maintain and enhance the building. The fact that the building remains in existence stands as a testimony to those who remain dedicated to the core ethics of the lin12. The slogan from the twenty years anniversary of the lin12 was 'twenty years of constant struggle'. This illuminates and supports what I have argued above. Indeed, I have outlined both in chapter five and above a selection of some of the possible reasons that might contribute to member burnout, although such pressures did not prove to be a uniform catalyst for exit. As an adjunct point, those members who did leave Bradford and cease daily input in the lin12,

nevertheless remained active in DiY punk culture within other UK scenes with Leeds being the most popular destination. It is to this city that I now turn.

Leeds Hardcore: The Attractive 1in12 Burnout-Receptacle.

In the previous chapter I articulated the, occasionally venomous, views and perceptions reciprocally exchanged within and between the Bradford and Leeds punk subculture communities. Leeds became the receptacle for those in Bradford who had either burned out or wanted to become involved with the thriving and diverse Leeds scene.

'Bradford's a bowlful of shit', a 'shithole', and a 'depressing Northern town'. These were some of the hostile descriptions used by ex-club members who presently inhabit the Leeds scene, yet all of them appear to still support the club at a distance through occasional attendance and voluntary work. As I have noted in the previous chapter, the Leeds scene is constituted by its plurality of genres and a healthier context in which to live. Nearly all of the ex-1in12 club members who presently reside in Leeds spoke of Bradford in the detrimental terms described above, citing Leeds as a far more favourable and less depressing place to live. Whilst there were examples of residual guilt over leaving the 1in12, all of the interviewees stated that they were better off in Leeds and this contentment is duly reflected in the lack of evidence of scene exit from Leeds. The four examples I wish to briefly discuss present support for the argument that the Leeds scene manages to retain its subcultural membership.

Firstly the promoter of one of the gigs I played with my band at the 120Rats squat, was an active member of the Leeds DiY community during the field work period. He left the scene to return home in the south of the UK because he was unable to gain funding for his degree course. He left the city reluctantly. Secondly, Mr. G, one of

the younger interviewees, left Leeds in June 2001 to travel to Russia to do voluntary work. He stated that he used many of the skills he had learnt within the Leeds DiY community as a tool to achieve this, and noted that he was determined to return to the UK and continue work with record label and concert promotions. Thirdly, the long-standing squat, the 120Rats, was evicted in late September 2001 after a long-standing court battle. Post-eviction, two of the squat members relocated to a social centre in Belgium, using the resources and contacts they had made during their involvement with UK DiY. They informed me that they had no immediate plans to return. Finally, as discussed in chapter seven, Mr. V ceased work with the promotions group Collective AKA. V stated that this was due to his time being totally dominated with other scene activities such as being in a band, running a DiY record shop and record label. It is to be noted that his exit from this organisation did not mean that he made firm plans to totally exit the scene.

Against the backdrop of the large numbers of ex-lin12 members on the Leeds scene the relatively small numbers of exit from Leeds presents a picture of a vibrant and healthy music scene.

Conclusion

Implicit within the typology of scene exit I have offered is the assertion that in spite of fluctuations between all three of the scene membership levels, the latter reproduces itself along the lines of continuity that I have previously argued in chapter one.

There are three important points of interest that can be drawn from this typology. Firstly, there is little doubt that an exodus occurred from the lin12 from 1996 onwards and this contributed to rise of activity in the associate Leeds scene. This migration supports my argument that scene exit, does not necessarily mean that the

wider subculture is abandoned, merely that similar activities are continued and connections within the DiY scene are utilised elsewhere. Those that left the scene transposed their skills to fresh projects elsewhere. Secondly, I wish to assert that the input of *core* membership acts as a driving force for both the cultural matrices in question, but is, at the same time subject to and dependent upon the input of peripheral and semi-peripheral scene membership and participation. In the case of the *lin12*, the gradual decline of core members was exacerbated through the relative reduction of input from semi and peripheral members. This in turn led to financial stress, burnout and fallout among some of the core members leading to their exit, leaving an increasingly smaller core membership to continue running the club. In Leeds, the lack of evidence for subcultural exit suggests that the multi-cited and multi-genre variety of the scene allows the DiY subculture sufficient breathing space and reduces stress. In the case of the *lin12*'s single building, the problems of burnout and the concentration of activity there make for a more acute sense of frustration when the scene loses membership. To put it in simple terms, the turnover of peripheral and semi-peripheral members and the decline in the core has a greater effect in Bradford than Leeds.

Finally, there is the perennial question of authenticity. There are two levels of authenticity attached to exit practices: othering for the constitution of self-authenticity, and exit dilemmas and the compromise of authenticity. For the former I have shown how general interview descriptions have used exit as a category for the establishment of authentic membership. Examples are used of both factual and hypothetical instances of scene exit that serve as a device to constitute the member as authentic. I have shown how this occurred in the general realms of career, education, the reproduction of subcultural knowledge and selling out. In the case of the latter, I

have shown how geographical scene exit provides a dilemma for the member: that leaving the scene to travel to a 'new' or different one renders one open to criticisms of inauthenticity and selling-out from those remaining. This was graphically described in the example of the 'your new mates' criticism levelled at Mr. R from a remaining club member. Not only does this provide a level of guilt for the leaving member, it also reflexively invokes the former category, that those remaining are authentic and hold a valid position from which to criticise those who exit. The dilemma of guilt is therefore invoked as a consequence of a decision of subcultural exit. This shows once again that issues of authenticity are of central concern to any explanation of the DiY hardcore punk subculture. Such issues are both constituted by claims towards what elements of DiY practice are deemed as part of authentic scene membership against what are not. This consideration produces the concomitant dilemmas of surrendering such authenticity and how ascertaining this is to be reconciled against criticism from those who wish to assert themselves as authentic. It is to these issues that I now turn my attention.

Chapter Nine: Dilemmas

HMV, in their moral righteousness, refuse to sell records which contain four letter words as they are regarded as obscene and in bad taste. Yet Thorn-EMI, their parent company, manufacture and export weapons of war and instruments of torture worldwide. Does that cause a public outcry? Does it fuck! (Chumbawamba, *Revolution*, 1985)

Disaffection and disapproval is *the* weapon of the authentic punk. This creates a number of dilemmas. Chief among these is the drive to remain 'authentic' and not succumb to the temptations to 'sell out'. While these predated punk, they are central to its practice. Since the 1970s well-trodden debates have raged around the Sex Pistols, Clash and other first-wave punk groups 'selling out' and so losing the cardinal value of authenticity. Such debates represent a complicated intersection of views and remain a constant source of subcultural tension. By dropping the Sex Pistols from their label in 1977, EMI inadvertently established a suspicious link between themselves and punk culture. This has now become a long-standing issue, with a spate of perceived sell-outs to EMI over the last twenty years⁷⁵. This multinational company has a bad ethical track record. Zero (1996) points out:-

Thorn EMI was, and is, a major defense contractor; they manufactured components for such missile systems as the Pershing, Cruise and Trident; they supported the nuclear industry; and they would not divest from South Africa when there was a public outcry for companies to do so. One of the industries that EMI has connections to is the record industry - they own EMI Music, Virgin Records, Capitol, Chrysalis etc. Recently, Virgin Records purchased Caroline, a record production and distribution company, effectively making this once independent company a part of a sprawling multinational (1996:2).

Similarly, *Profane Existence* criticized EMI in 1992:

EMI is typical of major labels with its links to the most evil parts of the capitalist system. Thorn EMI the parent company is a major investor and constructor of weapons systems, nuclear weapons, guidance systems, vivisection and security control equipment favoured by countries like Chile and South Africa. They are also major contributors to the Conservative Party (*Profane Existence*, 23, 1992).

As the thesis so far has clearly established, critical opposition to capitalist values and institutions is central to DiY punk, but as we have seen from the outset, there is a continual tension between political activism in punk, which involves directly

⁷⁵ See appendix 8 for examples of the documents of selling-out in punk.

challenging such values and institutions, and cultural production in punk, which involves expressing opposition to such values through music and/or organisational practice. This can lead to a dilemma between on the one hand, utilising capitalist products (guitars, drums, shops, studios) or becoming annexed to capitalist institutions (signing a recording contract, doing promotion) for the sake of a wider audience, and on the other, rejecting these strategies in favour of localist cultural autonomy and a more purist sense of identity, practice and solidarity. Both share the same end-result, however. They leave the actual political and economic institutions of capitalism intact. This does not mean that neither path as represented in the dilemma should be followed, and many honest, well-intentioned people have done both. But it does perhaps guard against inflated subcultural self-regard and what we might call punk hubris. Many of the interviews and observations in the fieldwork have raised exactly this or other related dilemmas, and they seem centrally contingent on what it is that DiY punk genuinely tries to achieve. DiY punk is a cry for a return to making music for its own sake, for its intrinsic pleasure and satisfaction, rather than for the sake of profit above and beyond any other value. It is equally about creating a sense of trust and concord between people, rather than reducing the social relations of music to what is allowed or not allowed in the small print of the recording contract.

Since the whole issue of 'sell out' is central to DiY punk and what it opposes, attaining the quality of dilemma for so many of its practitioners, and affecting passages of entrance and exit as well as practice, it is appropriate to explore it in greater detail. This is what I shall do in this short, concluding chapter.

DiY punk is the production of music by the artist and label with no links to a major label organisation. Under the DiY rubric, the writing, recording, promotion and

distribution is done by the bands and labels themselves⁷⁶. At the level of performance, shows, tours and promotions are also done in this manner through networks of likeminded people. In terms of the literature (reviews in fanzines) there are safeguards in place to ensure corporate music finds no mouthpiece there. For example, *Maximum Rock and Roll* states in its review submission guidelines:-

We will not accept major label or related ads, or ads for comps and eps that include major label bands (*MRR*, 174, 1997).

And at the start of the reviews section:

Don't send wimpy arty metal corporate rock shit here. Don't have your label give us follow up calls as to whether we received and are reviewing your record. Specific criticisms aside, it should be understood that any independent releases deserve credit for all the work and money that goes into it (*ibid*)

Likewise *HeartattaCk* [sic] state:-

We will not review any record with a UPC or bar code or UPC bar code sticker on it, and we will not review any record that is financed by one of the so called independent giants as in Dutch East India, Caroline, Cargo [.....] We are only interested in supporting the underground do-it-yourself scene, and it is our opinion that UPC codes along with 'press and distribute' (P&D) are not fitting with the do-it-yourself ethic of hardcore (*HeartattaCk*, 7, 1995).

Such asseverations are not confined to DiY zines. Labels, distributors, distros and promoters can all experience a reaction should they walk towards the corporate world.

But the price of apparent authenticity may simply be anonymity, while so-called selling out may have the benefit of bringing punk values to a much greater number of people. What's involved in the dilemma is nothing like as straightforward as is sometimes assumed. Let us turn to some examples.

In 1985, Bradford band, New Model Army, signed to EMI after four years of DiY and independent record releases:

⁷⁶ Distribution is a further area of dilemma for the DiY label. Since a number of independent distribution companies collapsed in the early 1990s (Red Rhino, The Cartel, Revolver) major labels have sought to control distribution in the UK. Alternatives arose with PhD, and Shellshock. However those dedicated to DiY in a strict sense view distribution of records with the latter a sell-out. One of the most respected DiY distributors in the UK is Active. See www.activedistribution.org

We were approached by all the majors. The reason we went with EMI was because we decided that we had the best record deal. Erm we were offered total control of the producers, total control the product in inverted commas. It's a hard word to say. Erm we were basically, we were basically signed by a guy called Hugh-Stanley-Clarke who was less than sort of compos-mentis really at the time. And all record companies were looking for U2 the next U2. This was the thing, they wanted to get their band, we didn't know. They hated us. We made a horrible row, which we did up until we split, err, 'till I left. We made a horrible noise but, 'cause we were selling out gigs they wanted to sign us. So the EMI thing came along, we were offered the greatest amount of freedom erm, after research into all the other major labels, where the money came from all the rest of it, we decided that everybody was as bad as each other.

NMA's signing prompted the London anarchist band Conflict to release a record entitled 'Only Stupid Bastards use EMI!' as a comment on the perceived hypocrisy of the signing. This was a play on NMA's 1984 anti-drug statement 'Only Stupid Bastards use Heroin!' It resulted in NMA shows being picketed and boycotted. A leaflet handed to me at a NMA concert in Guildford in 1987 cited the band as 'supposedly an anti-establishment band' and accused them of having 'sold their credibility when they signed to EMI'. Yet as Robert Heaton (late NMA drummer) said to me in a 2001 interview:

You weren't even aware that you were affiliated with a band anyway from a point of artistic freedom. You know that's your only connection. I don't know fuck all about Conflict, I mean, I have never met any of them so I don't know what to fucking say: but from the aspect of what we were talking about earlier, the punk thing as long as you are doing what you want to do then that's, you know, then that's the essence innit. You know Conflict. I presume Conflict's view would be that if you are signed to a global conglomerate, you know corporate nightmare, then you are helping to destroy the world which is a fair point. But how do you remain separate from that? In any aspect of your life? You know there's one well known band from Leeds [Chumbawamba] came to see us and they used to boycott our gigs and you know they were giving out leaflets outside and you know, we said come in and chat to us, you know for fuck's sake! And they, I hold my hats off to them because they were doing their damndest to not be part of the system. You know I'd go 'I admire you totally', but the weak link was you know we don't make records we don't we make our own clothes, we don't do such and such. We release tapes. So who makes the tapes? Now there are like four companies in the world that make tapes.

Similar targets of abuse have been the US, Orange County punk bands Rancid, Social Distortion, The Offspring and Green Day in addition to Bad Religion, L7, All, DRI, Jello Biafra, NOFX, and the UK's Blaggers ITA and Back to the Planet⁷⁷. These bands all signed to the majors in the early-to-mid nineties and felt the wrath of the

⁷⁷ See Arnold (1997) for an account of Green Day, Rancid and the Sex pistols selling-out punk.

DiY scene. Perhaps the most notorious case of a band charged with selling-out is the Leeds band, Chumbawamba.

After a significant period of DiY production very much in a similar vein to Crass with their DiY label Agit Prop records, Chumbawamba signed a distribution deal firstly with Southern Records before moving to former Flux of Pink Indians bass player's label, 'One Little Indian Records', from 1991-7. All of Chumbawamba's records continued with the theme of refusal and DiY anarchist resistance, although they had considerably shifted position from their original DiY intentions with the 1985 record *Revolution* (as cited in the epigraph to this chapter). After over 15 years as DiY and independent anarchists, they signed to EMI Europe and Universal Entertainment in America. Most of the respondents in the interviews commented on this when asked about what they considered as sell out.

Chumbawamba have been responsible, alongside Crass, for producing music framed in anarchist politics. After becoming notorious for throwing red paint over late Clash front man, Joe Strummer, and for their critiques of Live Aid with the record *Pictures of Starving Children Sell Records*, their credibility was damaged when they did the unthinkable: sign to EMI in 1997. Since then they have used their position to rally people to the anarchist cause, among other things through their hit *Tubthumper*. A series of stunts ensued including the changing of the latter's song lyrics to 'Free Mumia Abu Jamal' at the 1998 Brit Award ceremonies and throwing a bucket of water over the Deputy Prime Minister, John ('Two Jags') Prescott. Anne Widdicombe also received a cream pie in the face. They have donated large sections of their earnings to political causes, including the studio I helped to build during the field work at the lin12. In spite of these stunts, they have come in for some serious criticism from those who claim they have sold out. *Maximum Rock and Roll* simply

reran an old interview where they were quoted as saying: “The time has come to take a choice, stop taking orders from his master’s voice!” Chumbawamba put their first record under DiY principles, financing, recording, producing and screen printing the covers themselves. Their record *Revolution* concentrated on the theme of EMI and their retail outlets HMV. A Chumbawamba flyer distributed at the time of the record’s release in 1985 made the point that ‘every time you buy from Thorn-EMI you put your cross in their money box, you support the death-lines’. They believed that ‘we have to start delving deeper than the glossy high street packet – start reading the small print’.

When I interviewed Danbert Nobacon on 10th October 2001, he took up the issue of signing to EMI:

Ideologically, it was a massive leap to go onto a major label, cos’ for years we’d said we would never, ever do it and we never would.... but we had come to a point where we just thought you know we have done our own label, we’ve been with indies, small indies, big indies, why not give it a chance and we just thought. I mean, we, we talked about it for like a month, going backwards and forwards and in the end we thought we should just do it ... and we’ll probably have a really good year where they throw loads of money at us and we’ll just have a great time and you know we’ll get our records out and then they’ll probably dump us. So it actually lasted a bit longer than that to our surprise and er that didn’t happen till’ after the next record. But I think because they knew, and people in the business knew, that that song [*Tubthumper*] was going to be a hit, then it was a really safe bet for ‘em. It meant that we could finance stuff like that and finance projects by other people again ... so for a time there was another ideological thing. We got offered an advert and we had always said: no way! And we would never let our music be on an advert, but we’d never ever been offered one and suddenly Renault in Italy said ohh, you know, we’ll give you twenty thousand quid or whatever. If you let us use Tubthumping and in the end we said yes and gave the money to two pirate radio stations, which financed them for like five years each, you know ... and for a while, while all the hype was going on we got a few offers like that ... and we were able to, you know, finance a lot of things for a couple of years afterwards. You are suddenly presented with all these opportunities which you never ever think’ll come your way, and you just have to take each one as it comes ... Err, we got quite a few letters. Err, just saying, you know, how could you do this, we supported you all these years and you just throw it back in our faces. I know in America we got into some arguments with some people in Philadelphia, and they’d been to the gig and that, but they were just ahh you know, thus, but ahhh. Yer appealing to ten year olds.

Chumbawamba has been one of the loudest voices in the anarcho punk community, raising issue with EMI's arms manufacturing connections, but their move to this label

was met with mixed views by members of the 1in12. For example, Ms M had this to say:

I know them and I totally respect them because even though they did sign for the major label and everything, they stayed in this scene as well ... But they have given money to this place [1in12]. They've helped build this place. Erm Alice [Nutter] having a party on Friday, everyone from here is invited, no matter who you are, you know it's the 1in12 ... You know they sing about EMI, slag 'em off ... it is really hard, it's not black and white is it? you can't say I'm never going to do it, uhh, it 'ud be good if people could get the message across within the DiY scene, but maybe that's just too idealistic.

K and H both took this up:

The EMI thing? Yeah all that. It's just them trying to pull a stunt isn't it and it backfired on them ... Well Danbert's thing about that was that they felt that they were somewhat being exploited by One Little Indian, so and because of the level and the amount of coverage they were getting. If you are gonna' be exploited, be exploited by someone that can do it efficiently. What pissed me off though was their whole slagging of punk subculture just, fair enough but then to turn around and do something like that is sort of. You know, if you got something to say, I think the punk scene doesn't stand a lot of criticism. I was their whole kind of like, you know, they did have a lot of shit off crusties and all that whole fucking scene back in the late eighties and early nineties, you know. And they would get attacked, they got attacked and stuff a couple of times.

Alice Nutter got bit in the fucking face or something, you know and they wrote articles to the papers slagging crusties and travelers and punks off. They basically said they are nothing and propagated their message was more important. Our medium is the message, you know, we are gonna' go to EMI we're going to get this message across, whether they did... The whole fucking contradiction is political. You know it's like the same thing with the Clash isn't it, fucking brilliant I think I agreed with a lot of what they had to say and then they turned into a bunch of twats. Whether they signed to CBS is fucking incidental, cos' every fucking punk band around at the time was doing the same.

Chumbawamba totally went out on a limb and signed to EMI, um. Fuck knows why EMI signed them. I could never understand why it's kinda' like they were co-opted or something.

Yeah it was again, I think. It's like allowing you. The whole DiY thing is that us three are in a band, we do everything DiY, we're in total, you know. The only executive decisions are made by us right? Er, you get to sign to someone like EMI, or any of these big record companies. All of a sudden our band actually is no longer three people its twenty, it's a crew of twenty-five and the decisions we make then become very difficult. Here's our record, "well I'm sorry you can't say that", eh what? "No, no you can't have that picture, no I'm sorry, you will have to do this." What the fuck is this?

This whole commodification thing is well, which is like you know, killing the fucking band and a band is an expression of our culture, isn't it, and then to have that expression of your culture taken by someone else and sold as an expression of culture ceases to become an expression of our culture. It becomes a contradiction.

These responses reveal, in full discursive detail, many of the ins-and-outs of the dilemma facing Chumbawamba as this was taken up, debated, and turned around from every conceivable angle by DiY punk subcultural members. Each member faced the dilemma themselves and acted it out vicariously. This was a measure of how deeply

it struck into the heart of what DiY punk is about, ethically and politically. The final point can be made by Mr. C:

For a band that sells out and doesn't have anything to say why am I going to be bothered? I'm not. It doesn't affect me at all. Green Day? Who cares? Chumbawamba, different story, you know it is a different story. I am saddened by what they did. I think the best thing I can do is pity them because that is a harsher human emotion to lay into someone with. At one time I would have been angry. Chumbawamba had a long history with the anarcho punk scene and did the dirty. They went on *Top of the Pops*.

For any self-respecting punk, going on *TOTP* is the *ultimate* sell-out, even the Clash refused this opportunity. Nothing could be calculated as a worse way of 'doing the dirty' – that is, not acting 'cleanly' in respect of ethics and politics. This raises the question *why*.

The key point to be made in their defence is that Chumbawamba used their post-EMI-signing period to fund DiY activities *across* the political and cultural production spectrums. They made donations to pirate radio stations, gave £70,000 to Corporate Watch, and put money into the *lin12*, so helping to fund the studio project I worked⁷⁸. The actions of Chumbawamba in signing to a major label encapsulate the tug-of-war that pulls people in DiY punk in contrary directions.

The justifications offered by artists for signing with a major record label can be reduced to two popular arguments. Firstly to gain a realistic income ('I am sick of being poor and putting all this effort in, we can't afford to do anything') though this is highly unlikely for the vast majority of musicians who sign to labels and remain unsuccessful⁷⁹.

Secondly, in terms of artistic recognition and progression there is the desire to *transcend* the already converted autonomous spaces and *enter* new and previously unexplored spaces in order to reach (and duly inspire) a wider audience. From this

⁷⁸ See *The Observer* 27/01/02 p11. 'Chumbawamba's Tune Turns the Tables on US Car Giant.'

⁷⁹ See Albini, 1994, in *MRR* #133; Frank and Weiland, 1997 for a realistic account of the negative side of the major record contract.

perspective DiY punk is, by default, considered to be inward-looking. To become (in) famous and subvert such new spaces was Chumbawamba's strategy: to manipulate the music industry as noted above, to voice previously unheard or suppressed political views (for example showing videos made by the striking Liverpool Dockers at the Brit Awards) and spread these views around a much wider base than that achievable by the DiY punk purist.

However successful such attempts may be, responses from the hardcore DiY adherents offer inevitable scorn, resentment and anger after a band that was once DiY band is regarded as having sold out. As Mr. C stated above: 'Green Day? Who cares? Chumbawamba, different story, you know it is a different story.' The hostile side of the dilemma level such accusations as: they 'did the dirty', are 'not punk', are 'hypocritical money grabbers' (Chumbawamba boycotted NMA shows then went and signed themselves), and represent 'mainstream sell-outs that have become part of the system'. Selling out to a major label often means facing a boycott and the withdrawal of support from inside the DiY community. As previously outlined above by Heaton, the boycotts and pickets by Chumbawamba outside their NMA shows in the late 1980s, provided bad publicity, yet he maintained that they had never been a part of the DiY philosophy to begin with. NMA were not dedicated to that philosophy, had never held the anarcho punk torch, and simply viewed the transition from DiY to independent to major as a *natural* progression that allowed them to spread their subversive message among a wider audience. The justifications he offered were that the band cost the label more than they signed for and that they were a 'thorn in the side of EMI' by negotiating a record deal that allowed them *total* artistic freedom: in short, they retained their integrity; at the least, an argument based on the retention of their artistic integrity could certainly be mounted. This may be a legitimate argument

but the view from the DiY camp can be unforgiving and austere. A very dim view is taken of any contact with major labels. Such contact is seen as diluting the power and solidarity of underground culture. Here Boff from Chumbawamba is explicit:

They [MRR] stopped reviewing our records because they decided that they weren't punk anymore. That's such a bizarre project – to judge punkness on the basis of style (Boff in interview, Sinker 2001:124).

However, not all of the interviewees were as militant on the matter of Chumbawamba selling out. Mr. S & H both stated that they could *totally* understand in many ways why they had signed. They said that Chumbawamba had been exploited by a number of independent record labels and, as a consequence, were tired of being ripped off. The only solution was to sign with a major and be exploited effectively. This offered the bonus opportunity of being able to subvert the company from the inside. Mr. I also revealed sympathetic views towards bands who sign to major labels:

If bands are important, if groups and music are important, which they might be, then I think it's obviously better if they do it themselves. But I mean if some major corporation band rang up and said you know, we're fucked on a Wednesday night, the gig's fallen through and we want to play at the 1in 12 club. Provided I knew they weren't a bunch of sort of sexist, racist assholes, if I thought they were going to say something reasonably interesting, some people want to be here, I'd be more than willing to bring them here and go: look this is how you can do it without the major corporations.

It's like doing a DiY label, but still driving around in your Mercedes truck, filling up, or risking driving past Shell. It didn't make that much difference, you're still filling at some major petro-chemical corporation, you're still totally up to your neck in sort of deep environmental death, kind of ecosystem.

This is the central key to this dilemma. The majority of the system is controlled and monopolised through corporate control, so the spaces for potential political subversion are shrinking. They exist only in small pockets. Mr. I similarly suggests that DiY activity is necessary yet there are few spaces where one can be completely DiY, from the oil used to produce the vinyl, through the chemicals in the plasterboard and insulation used in the 1in12 studio project to the technology patents in the recording

equipment, there are very few spaces where everyday contact with multinational corporations can be avoided. As Zero (1994) points out:

A percentage of every CD made is paid to the Phillips Corporation because they have the copyright on the format. Does this mean that everyone that makes CDs is bad and part of the evil arms making empire? If I drink coke, wear Nike shoes, drive a Volvo or any foreign car ... should I be chastised for it? Is it worse to support arms builders or destroy the environment by wasting paper or driving my car? This politically correct stuff is usually too dogmatic and, believe me, fighting with people who use Caroline to distribute independent records is fighting with your own team. Know your enemy. Plus once again, where is the punk rock rule book and does everyone have to play by it? (1994, *MRR* # 133)

Nevertheless the DiY spaces that operate beyond corporate control and funding are extremely valuable and play a *central* role in offering a space virtually free from corporate dictum and control, where political voices can be raised free of control. Yet because this space is delimited, the effectiveness of these voices is questionable.

As I noted in chapter four, there is a distinct ironic elitism involved in the dedicated practice of DiY. Claiming that DiY cultural production is the only authentic form of culture, means that exclusivity is just around the corner: 'only' quickly becomes translated into 'elite'. Creating a set of scene rules (not signing to majors, not working to contracts, keeping prices cheap etc.) and applying these in an absolute manner in the production of DiY, flies in the face of the original intentions of such core punk rock freedoms as breaking down the rules and challenging boundaries. Anti-elitism can end up, via an awful loop, in the position it so radically opposes. There is an equally absolutist reaction to those who are deemed to have sold-out above and against those still practicing and involved in DiY. This presents a fiercely unforgiving critique by those who cling to stringent DiY ethics. Such an unrelenting, inflexible stance is itself condemned by others in and around the scene. 'Cliques', 'PC' and 'elitist' were some of the denunciations expressed in interview towards this stance in the DiY community. As Mr. S, BS and the customer in the Out of Step stated during interview and observation, they (1in12ers) are a bunch of 'punk police'

and 'language fascists'. Such views were often aimed at the lin12. Although I observed on many occasions behaviour that were far from what could be described as PC, the club was viewed as a bastion of political correctness. Indeed, Mr. D provocatively described the lin12 as often populated not by hippies but by a crowd of 'footie hooligans'. However, the open-ended status of the DiY ethic maintains that if there is a *perceived* problem with being DiY, then being negative towards it will achieve nothing. The preference instead is get involved, think positive and do something about it. With DiY there is always the opportunity for anybody to get involved in activities and to change the existing state of affairs from within. In reality, due to the lack of available funds and the relatively small numbers of people involved, the capacity for large-scale DiY action in the UK is limited and the knock-on effect is that attendance fluctuates at DiY functions. The justification for Chumbawamba in signing to EMI was that they could increase their financial resources in order to properly fund DiY projects. As Boff noted:

Obviously we could say "No we won't have an advert with our music on it" but when we are offered forty thousand dollars for thirty seconds of music every day for four weeks, then what we do is give that money to an anti-fascist organisation, social center or community group (ibid: 128).

Turning their money towards small-scale DiY projects has allowed Chumbawamba to retain their moral and ethical integrity even though the DIY community remains divided over their actions⁸⁰. The positive and negative views of their signing to EMI remain largely irreconcilable inside of the Leeds and Bradford DiY scenes.

There are those who are militant on the non-DiY front and hail DiY purists as hypocrites. Jello Biafra, onetime singer with the San Francisco band, The Dead Kennedys, and whose record label, Alternative Tentacles, has been the second

⁸⁰ It would be unfortunate for me to present Chumbawamba as disconnected from the lin12. They have maintained constant contact with the club since its inception. The last event they played there was an acoustic show, November 2004

longest-running independent label in the US, was severely beaten up in 1990 by 'crusty punks' for allegedly selling-out punk rock (Schalit and Sinker, 2001: 33). He chastised the American fanzine *Maximum Rock n Roll* as 'little ayatollahs' for creating a new set of divisive rules in the punk community and called those who criticise musicians who sign to major labels 'small-minded and righteous.' The interviewer and Biafra said in their exchange:

Int: *Maximum Rock n Roll* seems dead set on this line of sectarian purity, where anything that creates a base for mass support is looked upon with suspicion and ultimately rejected as a sellout

Biafra: It's the same kind of fundamentalist mind-set that makes fundamentalist Christians so dangerous, and the same mind-set that has isolated the animal rights and vegan movements. You take one step out of line and they bite your head off. Young people who are curious about the politics spend ten minutes with people like that and they decide that they would rather be apathetic. This is what has turned a lot of people off punk politics (ibid: 44).

Such harsh criticism reflects the often *polarised* views that exist in punk on selling out. The problem is at the centre of DiY politics. DiY purists have been accused of being inward-looking, preaching to the converted and being subculturally elitist with little chance of ever reaching to the broader body of people whose support would make DiY a significant political tool of empowerment. The purists in turn accuse those who defect of intellectual slack-mindedness, political populism and ethical bankruptcy. The dilemmas strike deep.

This thesis has attempted to establish the basis for these ethical dilemmas in lived subcultural scene experience by providing a closely detailed ethnographic overview of the complex world of DiY punk as it existed in and between two cities in the North of England in 2001. Whilst this world was shot through with divisions and peppered with elitism both in its rhetorical use of genre distinction and its badges of countercultural authenticity, what it achieved, albeit unsung and unnoticed out of the mainstream, was of immense cultural value. It was a rare example of what can be created beyond the confines of an administered culture. In some ways the scenes in

described formed a virtual minefield of arbitrary rules of conduct. On the other hand, there was a felt sense of achievement and empowerment: whether it was through making a studio, starting a record shop, setting up a record label, putting on a show at the squat or in someone's front room, or through sheer determination in making some venture succeed against the odds, the subculture provided certain distinct spaces of freedom. Such spaces are rare and impressive.

The dilemmas described in this thesis retain a sharp, at times corrosive quality which helps to shape and inform subcultural conduct. Such conduct is fraught with a collection of thorny issues which will not be readily resolved or made amenable to any off-the-hook remedy, not least because they are bound up in wider issues of global monopoly capitalism and its stranglehold over (mass) popular culture. Whether or not resistance is best produced from inside the major labels, or from the temporary autonomous spaces of small-label records, squats, DiY gigs, and bands described in this thesis, remains an open question, especially in relation to the abiding issue of cultural authenticity. The entrance requirements, practice ethics and points of exit of a DiY scene have been abundantly described and analysed in the thesis, and these have thrown up some enduringly difficult issues. Do you choose DiY anarcho direct action punk, or DiY cultural production? Are these mutually exclusive or can they be made compatible? Can effective political statements or actions be made from within the culture industry? Perhaps the most difficult issue of all is whether there has ever been, or can ever be, an authentic punk. In the 'true spirit of DiY', the response to this issue must finally reside with the reader.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Questions.

Questionnaire

Ethical statement to be provided to the interviewee

Age?

Sex?

Education?

Family?

Background

- 1) Do you live in Leeds?
- 2) Do You Live in Bradford?
- 3) Do you attend DiY events in both scenes?
- 4) Can you tell me how you first got into punk and hardcore?
- 5) How old where you?
- 6) Tell me how this has effected you.

Leeds

- 1) Tell me about the punk/hardcore scene in Leeds?
- 2) Tell me what you do in it?
- 3) Have you recently participated in the scene?
- 4) What is the most memorable occasion for you?
- 5) What do you like most about the scene?
- 6) What do you dislike about the scene?

Bradford

- 1) Tell me about the punk/hardcore scene in Bradford?
- 2) What do you do in it?
- 3) Do you go to the 1in12 club?
- 4) Tell me about what you do there?
- 5) What is the most memorable occasion for you?

6) What do you like most about the club?

7) What do you dislike most about the club?

Commitment

1) How long do you intend to remain in the scene?

2) Do you know anyone who has recently left?

3) What might the reasons/issues be for leaving the scene?

Authenticity

4) Tell me about your view on punk and hardcore that is not DiY.

Appendix 2: Research Consent Form.

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this project.

My name is Alastair Gordon and I am a postgraduate student at Loughborough University. I am engaged in a research project called DiY Cultural Production. My Supervisor, Mike Pickering, is directing the project and can be contacted at email address@uni.com should you have any questions. Alternatively, you can contact me at me@emailaddress.com or on (mobile telephone number)

- I would like to emphasise that
- Your participation is entirely voluntary
- You are free to refuse to answer any question
- You are free to ask questions
- You are free to withdraw from the discussion at any time

You are free to withdraw any comments you make within two weeks of the interview

The interview will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The tape recording I shall make of our discussion will not be heard by anybody but myself and the research team. Excerpts from the results may be used in research reports, conference papers and or/publications, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included in any written or verbal use of the data.

Please sign this form to show that you understand, and consent to what is written above.

_____ (please sign)

_____ (please print name)

_____ (date)

Thank you,

Ref _____ Interview Number

Appendix 3: The Participants.

Ψ = pilot interview

Ages presented were at time of interview in 2001.

Mr. A: (male) Revealed his age as mid 20s. Moved from Bradford to Leeds 1999. Participated in various bands in the 90s whilst running a DiY record label and distro stall. Presently travelling the world. Ψ

Mr. B: (male) 27. Has played in numerous U.K hardcore bands. Left Bradford for Nottingham in 1995. Now employed as a body piercer. Ψ

Mr. BS: (late 30s) Rudely interrupted an interview with Mr. K and offered some rather unsavoury views on 1in12 punk in addition to hailing himself as Bradford's most knowledgeable and authentic punk. Currently under a rock somewhere.

Mr. C: 28. Ran a DiY distro and record label until 2002. Left Bradford for undisclosed destination (1999). He returned to Bradford 2003 to be involved in the 1in12. Presently sings in a band and is employed as a graphic designer. Ψ

Mr. D: Revealed age as late twenties. Played bass in various straight edge bands in the early 1990s. Left Bradford for Nottingham in 1996. Now works as a tour manager.

Mr. E: 33. Left Bradford in 1990 for Nottingham. Sang in DiY bands and promoted hardcore shows in Nottingham. Presently lives in London, is still singing in hardcore bands. Works at a large record shop. Ψ

Mr. F: 20. He left Bradford for Leeds in 2001. Plays in various Bradford crust bands. Runs a fanzine, DiY website and is centrally involved with booking bands at the 1in12. He is still active at the 1in12.

Ms. G: 23. Core member of the 1in12. Involved in the café, gig booking and general day-to-day running of the club. Presently lives in Bradford and is still closely involved in the 1in12.

Mr. G: 21. A native of Leeds until 2001. Ran DiY record label, was a core member of the Reason to Believe Collective, promoted gigs across Leeds. Left Leeds 2001 to travel world. Present whereabouts unknown.

Mr. H: revealed age as late twenties. Volunteered at the 1in12 from 1999 to present and participated in various bands. He promoted various heavy music festivals at the 1in12. He still lives and works in Bradford and still volunteers at the club.

Mr. I: 42. Sound Engineer and general handyperson at the club. Played in a classic anarcho punk band for ten years before leaving and moving to Bradford in 1999. He still performs various roles at the 1in12.

Mr. J: 37. Caretaker at the 1in12. J also drummed in one of the key 'britcore' bands of the eighties and nineties and plays on in a number of bands. He was a member of the studio collective and built the club practice room. J resigned from the club in 2003 but maintains close connections there.

Mr. K: 35. One of the sound engineers at the club and studio collective member. K has a long standing relationship with the 1in12, helping to build the place in 1988. There are few roles in the club K has not been associated with. Moved FROM Bradford to Leeds in 1999. He is presently involved in DiY promotion and playing guitar in a band. Currently unemployed.

Mr. L: 38: Robert Heaton, drummer with Bradford band, New Model Army. Played the 1in12 in the early 1980s when it was hosted gigs in various city pubs. He co-wrote and released ten albums with them before leaving in 1999. After the band focussed his attention on recording and promoting bands and live music in Bradford, external to the DiY scene. Tragically, Robert died of cancer November 4th 2004.

Ms. M: 25: Café Worker and volunteer at the 1in12. Promoted a DiY hardcore festival at the club in 2000. She was a part-time degree student at the time of the field-research. Currently lives in Bradford.

Mr. N: Interviewed for European DiY tour research, not included herein.

Ms. N: Interviewed for European DiY tour research, not included herein.

Mr.O: 34. Zine writer and distributor, general scene participant. Moved from Bradford to Leeds in 2000 and back again in 2003.

Mr. P: Interviewed for European tour research, not included herein.

Mr. Q: 34. Drove bands on DiY tours, general scene participant. Moved from Bradford to Leeds in 1999. Currently makes guitars in the basement of his house when he is not driving bands on the road.

Mr. R: 37. Ran a record label and distro stall for 17 years before winding it down in 2001. He moved from Bradford to Leeds in 2001 after over a decade active at the 1in12 to which he still retains firm links. He remains active as a drummer for a touring DiY band and is currently unemployed, though this has never stopped him being busy.

Mr. S: 39. Bar worker at the club. Alongside Mr. J, S was the only other paid member of staff at the 1in12. He is involved in the daily running of the club bars. Moving to Bradford in 1982 for a university degree, he became involved with the 1in12 promoting the early gigs and never ceased involvement.

Mr. T: 40. Danbert Nobacon, singer with Leeds band Chumbawamba. Together with his band he was responsible for a series of statements, actions and pranks throughout their existence. Part of the early DiY Leeds squatting scene. Agent-provocateur. Campaigned against EMI and multinational before the band signed a contract with them in 1997: at the 1998 Brit Awards he threw a bucket of water over Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott as a protest in defence of the (sacked for striking) Liverpool dockers. Presently he is still causing trouble and still resides in Leeds.

Mr. U. Declined to be interviewed for the research. 120Rats Squatter. Studio collective member.

Mr. V: 23. Partner at the Out of Step Record shop. DiY gig promoter, band member and record label. Moved from Manchester to Leeds in 1999. Currently still working at the shop and playing in bands.

Ms. W: 28. Worker at 1in12. Gig promoter, 1in12 cafe and bar worker. Left Bradford for Leeds in 1999. Whereabouts unknown.

Mr. X: Declined Interview. Studio collective member.

Mr. Z: 30. Out of Step Records partner. Moved from Manchester from Leeds in 1999. Not interviewed for this research. Runs a DiY record label, plays in two UK hardcore bands promotes gigs. Still works at the shop.

Cops and Robbers are still active promoting gigs in Leeds.

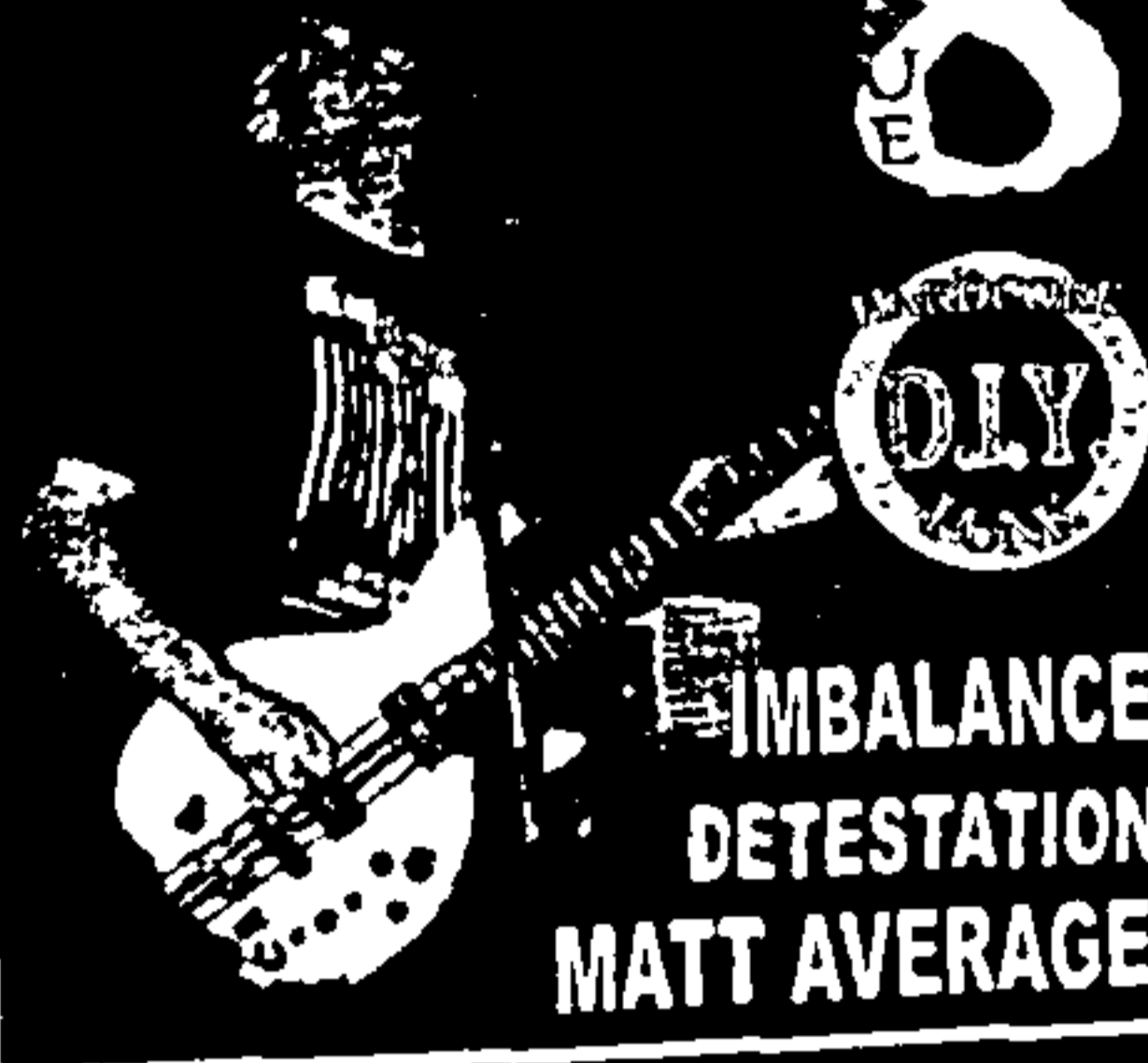
Appendix 4: fanzines

**NO BARCODES
NECESSARY**

ISSUE 8

DIY

**IMBALANCE
DETESTATION
MATT AVERAGE**



THIS ZINE BOUND UP, DROWN, BILLY MATE POWER LTD **no.2**

**YOU'RE NEXT
FILTHY
TRASH**

FEATURING:
ATHEBIX
& **NICK
TOCZEK**
& **FRANK SIDEBOTTOM**
& **cult maniax**

WITH
**A CARTOON
reviews
MAMMALS
LOTS MORE**

20p



Appendix 5: Leeds Flyers

THURSDAY FROM 8PM DRS-4Y-£8

THE NEIGHBORS
THE VOORHEES
THE FIG 4.0



Thursday 12th July 8pm
Royal Park Pub
Queens Rd
Leeds Six



Sakar! Empire presents...

Halo
Swedish kids rock'n like Hoover

D-Rail
Hot new local hardcore faves

This Day Must Die
Putting the Rock back in the Leeds scene

ONE MORE BAND TO-BE-CONFIRMED

All at The PackHorse

£3 gets you in
Be there at 8pm
Info : sheep@sakar!.co.uk



Sakar! Empire **Thu 26th June 2001**

Catharsis

Newborn

Thirty Seconds Until Armageddon

the devils

7:30pm
Friday 3rd August
The PackHorse
Leeds
£3



Skull & Crossbones Presents

John Holmes
Playing thrash hardcore with rock and groove (the coolest blazing Dutch)

Thirty Seconds Until Armageddon
From Newcastle playing gutted thrash-core hardcore

The Autumn Year
Heavy one rock that will take your breath away

The Sex Maniacs
Inspire black flag having illegal sex with it than your class



Wednesday 25th April 2001
At The Royal Park Pub
In The Park Leeds 15th
Doors 8pm £2 Entry

"Hi, my name's Tommy Vance and on **SUNDAY 22nd JULY** I'm gonna bring you an evening of Classic Rock!!!!"



JOHN HOLMES

"NWOBHM - 21st CENTURY STYLE"

KHANG

"APPARENTLY STONER.... PEBBLES, STONES.... IT'S ALL JUST ROCK TO ME!"

J*R

"ROCK AND INDEED ROLL!"

SEX MANIACS

AC/DC, KISS, WHITESNAKE
ADD THEM TO THE LIST!"

AT 120 RATS LEEDS
(meanwood road, behind the globe pub)
£2.50 STARTS AT 8.30 p.m

ALL MONEY GOES TO THE 120 RATS
HELP FIGHT THE EVICTION.
PUNKROSSROY@HOTMAIL.COM

OUT OF SPIRIT PRESENT THE 4TH ANNUAL...

PUNK ROCK

EXTREMELY LOOSE

Friday July 27th

Les Tricolor Allstars...Consumed...
Dugong...Douglas...Mercy Suite...
And none of them knew they were Robots.

Doors 7pm.

Saturday July 28th


Capdown...Goober Patrol...
The Jones...Joe 90...
...Kevlar(ex starmarket)...
...Kids Near Water...
Travis Cut...One Car Pile Up...
Dog on a Rope...The Foamers...
Cleatus...The Sex Maniacs...
Eighty Six...Buzzkill.

Doors 12pm.

Sunday July 29th

The Propagumbhis (last ever show)...
Vanilla Pod...Southport (last ever show)...
Dogpiss...Pylon...Blocks.

Doors 8pm.



NO DRUGS POLICY:
 ANYONE FOUND SMOKING,
 TAKING OR DEALING DRUGS
 WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE
 THE BUILDING IMMEDIATELY

The 1in12 Club is an independent, autonomous social
 culture collective, run by you, for you, for your enjoyment.
**PLEASE RESPECT THE CLUB & DO
 NOT GIVE THE AUTHORITIES AN
 EXCUSE TO CLOSE US DOWN!**

INFINITE MONKEY AND BINGO HANDJOB PRESENT...

**1 IN 12 CLUB
 2 DAY FESTIVAL
 13/14TH OCTOBER**

Good Clean Fun (US), Creation Is Crucifixion (US), Vanilla Pod*, Voorhees*, Polaris*, Tangaroo, Fig 40, Kevorkian Solution, WORM, Shank*, John Holmes, Canaan*, Joe Ninety, Knuckledust*, Four Letter Word*, 30 Seconds Until Armageddon*, Bobby 6 Killer + loads more hc/grind/punk/emo/post rock/metal etc bands (*=tbc).
www.geocities.com/snuffian or snuffian@yahoo.com or phone 0113 275 6788 (Ewan) for more info

lunatic swedish hardcore thrash double header
 *fukk the kids tour 2001

DS-13
Best Swedish Hardcore Thrashers the best effort of ANTI-CRIST, MOR AT, and MIND THREAT!

E.T.A.
I.E. FUKK YOU! Hardcore punk thrash metal. 1st 7" and the MC's 47 tracks. Youth Crime, Be 12 & Near (SUSTAINING) ONE DAY 2 1994's 8005 release!

JULY

- 17th-London: The Swan w/Fero's Mustis & Black Sabbath
- 18th-Bristol: The Whitehorse w/Daves Glam Rock Band & Martin's Luratic Fringe
- 19th-Nottingham: The Old Angel w/Voorhees & Gap'n Scuzz
- 20th-Bradford: 1in12 Club w/Strala & The Devils & a showing of Martin's Crude's 'Orange' punk 1991
- 21st-Glasgow: 13th note w/Ebola & The Tree Curst
- 22nd-Scarborough: The Manners Club w/Ebola & Acter Mendis

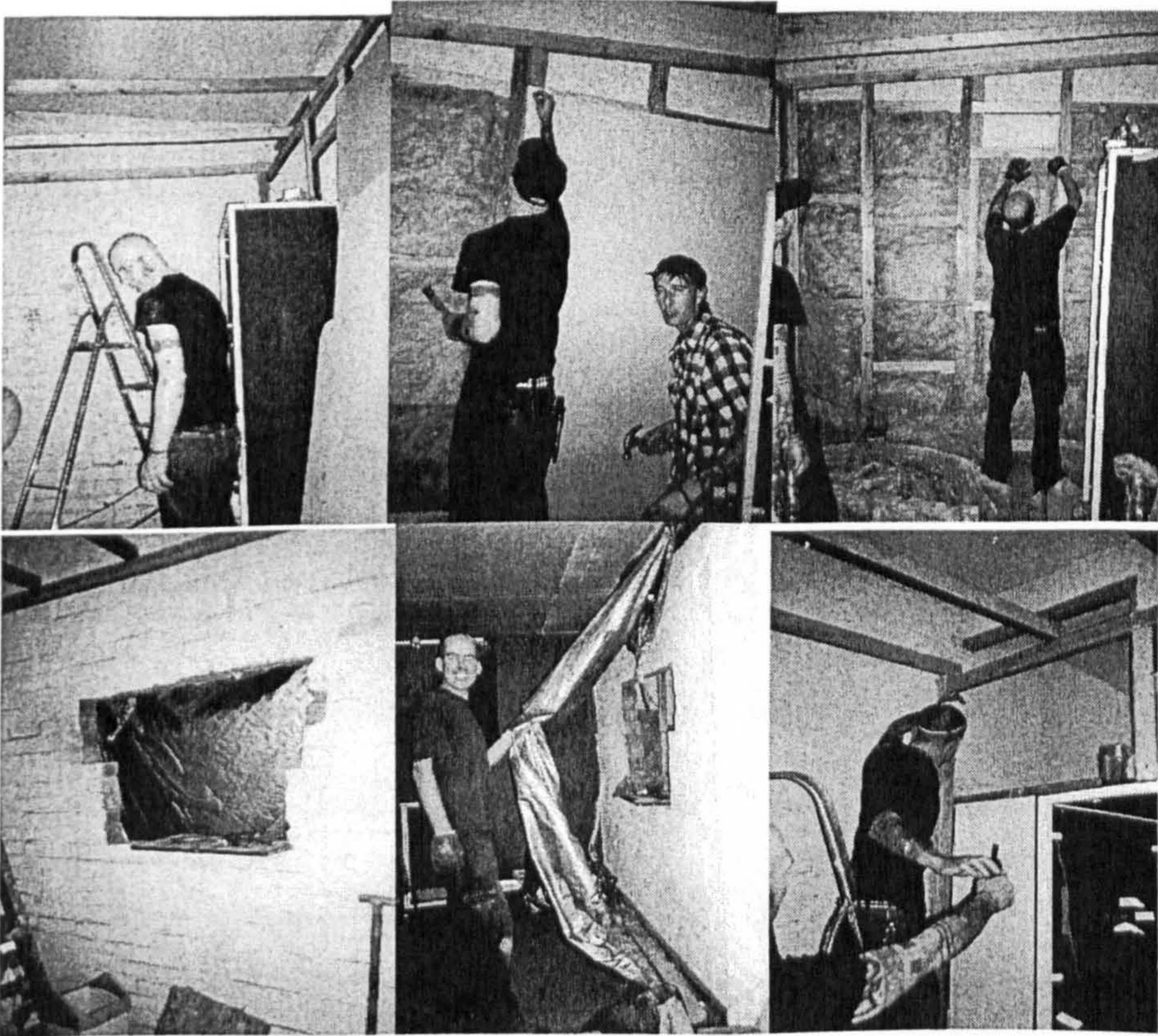
up to date info can be found at:
www.anselwtracords.co.uk
<http://surf.to/eta>
www.ds13.com

not gang?
 not punk?
 fukk off.

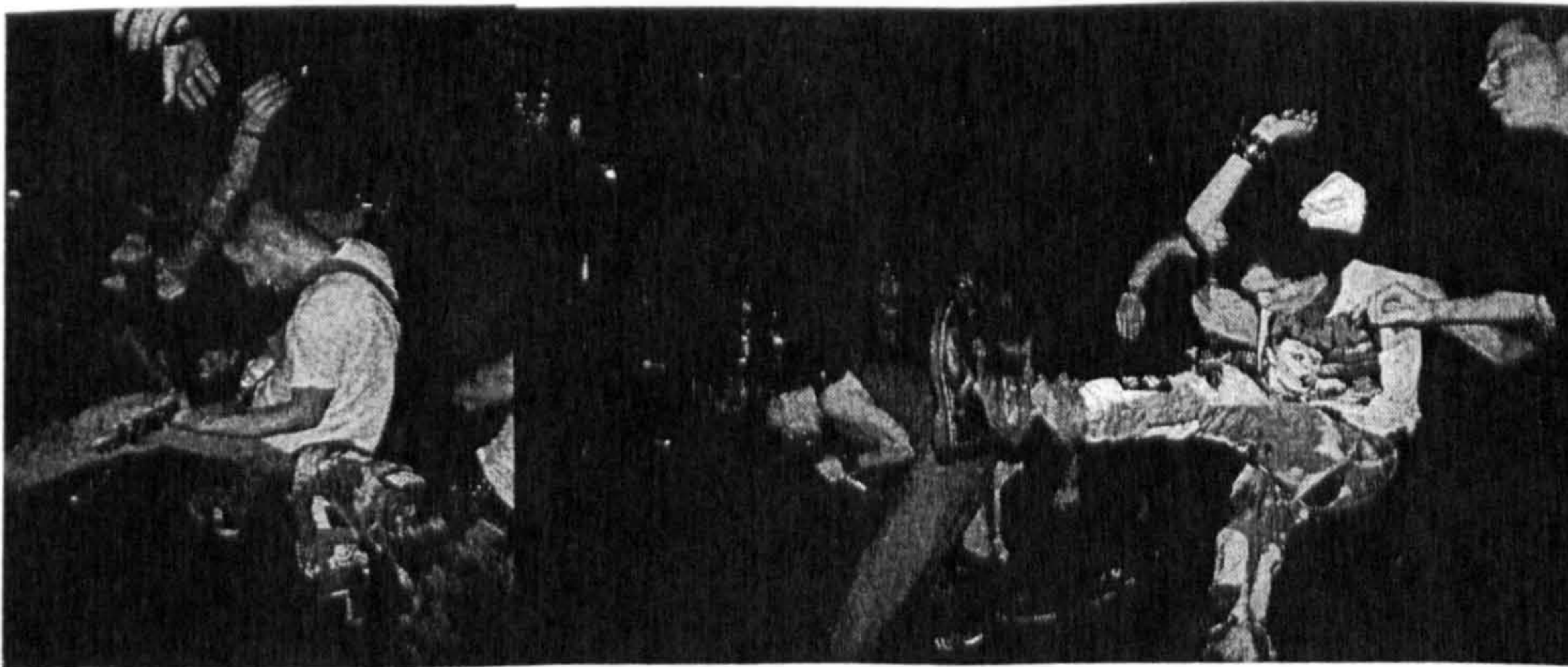


Appendix 7: Photos

Recording Studio project 1in12 Aug 2004 (Photo: Mr. J)



Amde Petersens Arme playing at Bradford 1in12: 15/02/01 (Photos: Bobby Vimto)



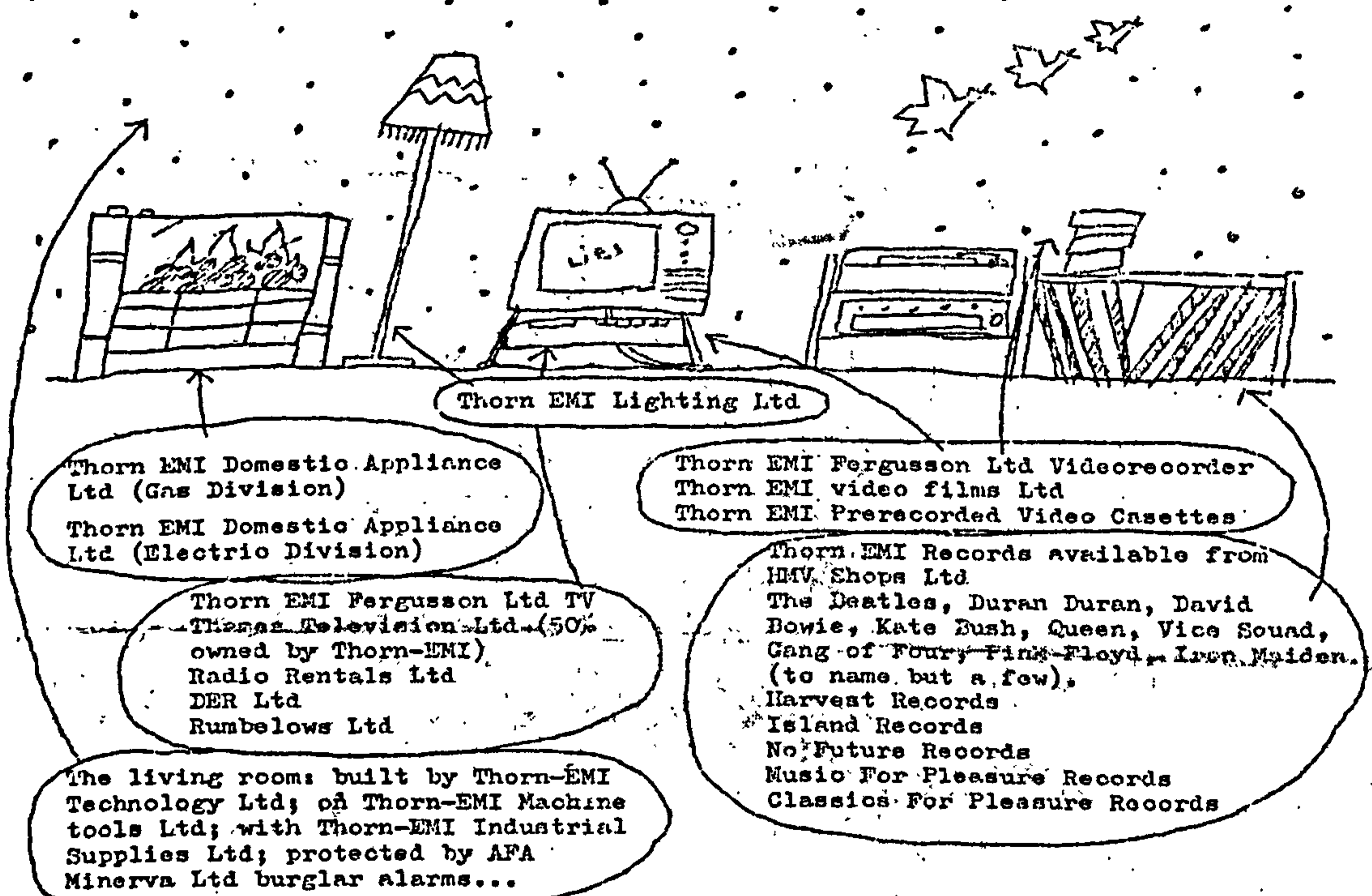
Out of Step Records, Leeds



Appendix 8: Selling Out

THEY'RE IN YOUR LIVING ROOM... ^{THEY'RE} EVERYWHERE

All the products listed on this page are owned by (and thus make profit for) Thorn-EMI Ltd. The company's 1983 trading profits were £400.4 millions...



Meanwhile, in the kitchen, there's Thorn EMI domestic Appliances Ltd and Kenwood Ltd Mixers and blenders. In the hall is a Thorn Ericsson telecom Ltd telephone...and for the more adventurous amongst us, needing to go outside - Thorn EMI Social Centres Ltd (in other words, Bingo Halls), or Thorn EMI Films made at EMI's Elstree Studios Ltd, and shown at Thorn EMI's Cinemas Ltd (ABC Cinemas).

The Thorn-EMI success story. MAKING A KILLING: There are over 40 wars going on in the world today - and how many of the 17 countries that Thorn EMI exports to are fighting each other? I wonder.



CHUMBAWAMBA



Leaflet written and printed by Sky & Trees, Box 4, 59 Cookridge St, Leeds.

Chumbawamba : Anti Emi Flyer (1984, Authors Collection)

N.M.A.

NEW MODEL ARMY

SUPPOSEDLY AN 'ANTI ESTABLISHMENT' BAND
USED TO BE ANTI-WAR BUT SOLD THEIR
CREDABILITY WHEN THEY SIGNED
TO ~

EMI

A MAJOR MANUFACTURER OF WEAPONS
SYSTEMS, TRACKING RADAR AND ANTI-
PERSONELL MINES, WITH A TRADING
PROFIT OF AROUND £400 MILLION EACH
YEAR. ITS MANY SUBSIDIARIES
INCLUDE ~

H.I.M.V.

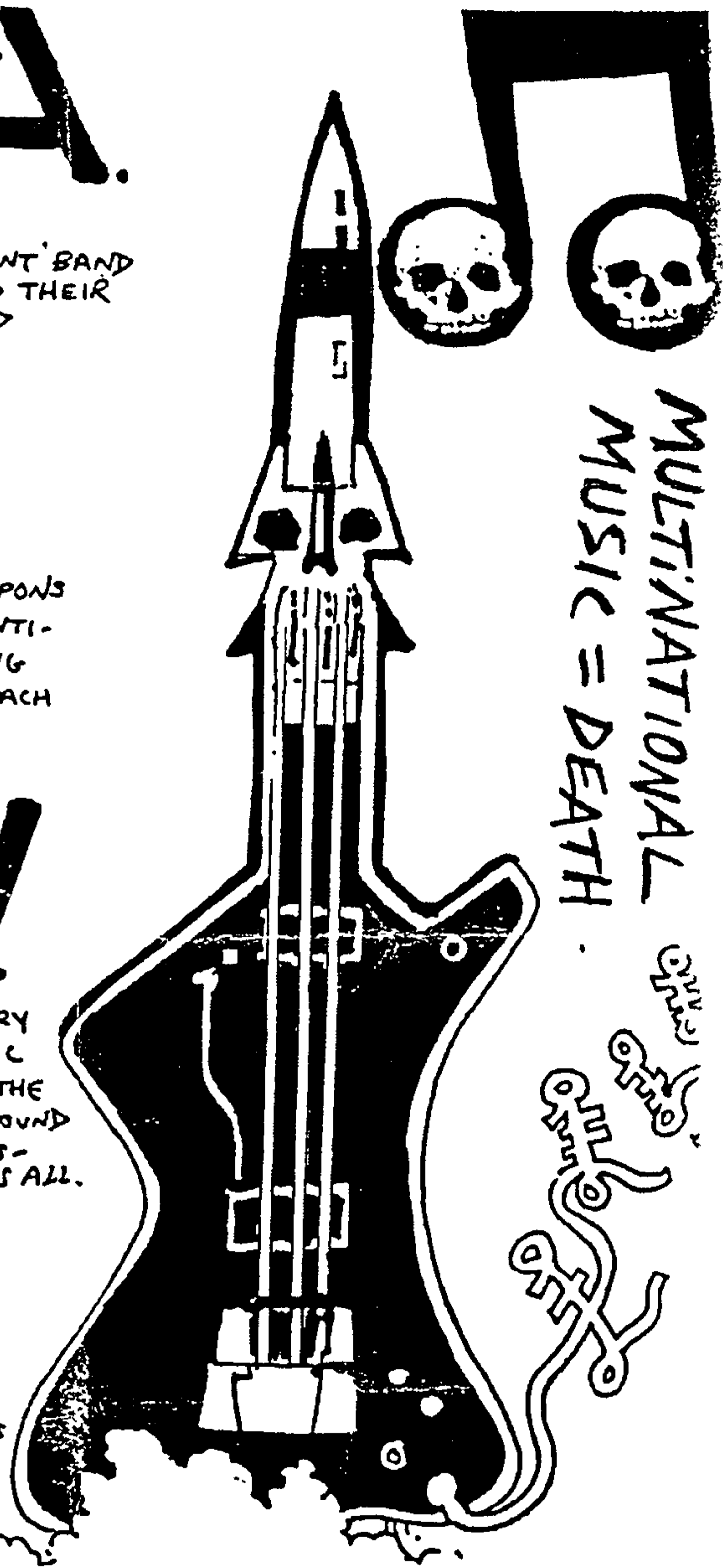
THE MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY
IS CLOSELY LINKED WITH ELECTRONIC
WARFARE. JUST AS DISTURBING IS THE
USE OF RECORDED, MASS-PRODUCED SOUND
TO DISSEMINATE THE EQUALLY MASS-
PRODUCED MORALITY WHICH INFECTS US ALL.

BUY

FROM INDEPENDANT OUTLETS AND
INDEPENDANT BANDS WITH NO LINKS
WITH MULTINATIONAL WORLD
EXPLOITERS. BETTER STILL BUY A
BLANK TAPE HOME TAPING IS
KILLING BIG BUSSINESS MUSIC
- AND ITS FUN!

DIE

THIS ISNT FUNNY. IN THE NEXT 24 HOURS
£1 1/4 BILLION WILL BE SPENT ON ARMAMENTS WHILE
10,000 PEOPLE WILL DIE THROUGH LACK OF FOOD. A
WEEKS SPENDING ON ARMS WOULD FEED 500 MILLION
OF THE WORLDS HUNGRIEST PEOPLE FOR A YEAR.
YOU ARE HELPING THEM DIE AND PREPARING YOUR DEATH



Anarcho punk flyer, Critical of New Model Army signing to EMI in 1985 (1986, Authors Collection.