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Being punk in higher education: subcultural strategies for academic practice

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Since its beginnings in the late 1970s, punk culture has been associated with counter-mainstream ideology and anti-institutional antagonism. In particular, formal education has been criticised in punk for sustaining oppressive social and conceptual orders and associated behavioural norms. Drawing on literature and interviews, this paper focuses on the experiences of higher education teachers who self-identify as punks, and considers how they negotiate and reconcile their subcultural and academic identities in their academic practice. The findings reveal that participants' affiliations with punk subculture give rise to countercultural pedagogies in which both the ethics and aesthetics of punk are applied in classroom contexts. Furthermore, the participants draw upon subcultural ethical and epistemological narratives to formulate and rationalise their responses to the state of contemporary UK higher education.

The relationship between punk and formal education is ambiguous and complex. The beginnings of punk's narrative are typically located in the late 1970s, against a backdrop of ostentatiously virtuosic rock music, manufactured pop music and late free-market capitalism (Moore 2012). Punks positioned themselves in opposition to these cultural, political and economic status quos, and to the mainstream institutions that were seen to support the dominant order (Hebdige 1979). State-funded schools and universities have been portrayed by many punk artists as an invidious aspect of institutionalised culture, mediating knowledge in the service of state ideology. In one such example, Suicidal Tendencies' song Institutionalised (Muir and Mayorga 1983) plays on the idea of institutionalisation by linking education with mental health. The song's protagonist Mike is considered mentally ill by his parents because of his frustration with life and desire to remain in his bedroom all day. This exacerbates his frustration, which in turn reinforces his parents' belief that he is mentally ill. As they inform him he is to be sectioned, Mike replies angrily that he has already attended their 'institutionalised learning facilities' that 'brainwash you until you see their way', and that it is in fact they who are 'crazy' (Muir and Mayorga 1983). This vignette depicts the common punk theme of marginalisation, in which outsiders are misunderstood, diagnosed and ultimately subdued by an institutionalised system. In its antagonism towards this system, punk can be seen as not only non-institutional but an anti-institutional counter-culture. The do-it-yourself (DIY) ethics espoused in punk culture promote the rejection of mainstream cultural infrastructure, and the establishment of a supposedly emancipated alternative social world through unmediated knowledge share and community building (Moore 2010; O'Hara 1999). Thus punk might be seen to constitute an alternative education system, with its own artefacts, practices and foundational ideologies.

   This oppositional narrative glosses over a history of reflexive engagement between punk and formal education. In particular, the early punk aesthetic was in large part formulated by academy-educated artists and musicians familiar with the compositional practices of the postmodern avant-garde (Gordon 2005; Moore 2012). Yet a clear unease surrounds this relationship, issuing from a sense that it is contradictory and unethical. Much of the discussion of the punk/education nexus grapples with the problem of how 'punkademics' (Furness 2012) might engage in higher education without compromising their punk identity

and values (e.g. Haworth 2012; Moore 2012), and defend themselves against 'co-optation lurk[ing] around every corner' (Deleon 2012, 315).

Identity is approached in this paper as relating both to 'an individual's identification with different groups', and to 'an image that we construct of ourselves [in terms of] humanist notions of individuation, self-actualisation and […] self-awareness' (Kreber 2010, 171). In an academic context, Winter (2009) suggests that 'identity schisms' (124) can occur as a result of value conflict at the nexus of academic and 'managerial' identities, particularly when academics are 'engaged in academic work that embodies corporate ideologies, values and practices […] that conflict with a central valued and salient [professional] self' (122). Winter's conception of academic identity is delimited to academics' relative identification with their organisation and their profession, amounting to what Kreber (2010) refers to as the 'immediate social context' (172), and as such does not accommodate consideration of academics' wider sociocultural backgrounds. Yet if we understand identity to be 'essentially intersubjective, dialogical and relational in nature' (172), then cultural (including subcultural) subjectivities that are, prima facie, external to the immediate academic context nonetheless participate in academics' identity formation, and thus impact upon their approaches to and experiences of academic practice. Drawing on interviews with five UK-based academics who self-identify as punk(s), in this paper I consider how punk identity might inform academics' values and teaching practice. Furthermore, I consider whether punk ethics and practices might offer helpful responses to the state of contemporary higher education in the United Kingdom.

Punk and institutional education

Punk has been an object of study almost since its emergence (e.g. Hebdige 1979). More recently however, punk has manifested in academe beyond simply being an artefact, informing research methodologies, academic publishing and pedagogy. In 2008 for example, Jim Groom, a learning technologist at the University of Mary Washington, Virginia, used the term 'edupunk' to call for 'an EdTech movement towards a vision of liberation and relevance' in protest at online learning platforms such as Blackboard's 'capitalist will to power' (Groom 2008). Edupunk has since burgeoned into an international movement inspired by DIY ethics and punk aesthetics, and promoting autodidactic approaches to learning. Although the ethics of Edupunk has become somewhat contested, amid accusations of co-optation, watering down and the 'positing [of] the entrepreneur […] as saviour' (Groom 2010), it has nonetheless thrown up the possibility of a 'third space' based on collaborative social networks that 'route around established disciplines' (Cunnane 2011). Edupunk, Punk Scholars Network and other examples evidence a growing alternative infrastructure that skirts the periphery of traditional academe, yet is sustained through social media. Within such spaces, alternative, non-institutional intellectual activity can intersect with mainstream scholarship, and in so doing disrupt scholarly norms and boundaries.

Punk's presence within the university proper has been discussed in a number of publications, including an edited volume (Furness 2012). Many have suggested an affinity between punk ethics and the critical pedagogy movement (e.g. Haworth 2012; Malott 2006; Miner and Torrez 2012). Such arguments can be persuasive, but there are reasons to be cautious. Firstly, as Gordon (2005) suggests, the ideological heterogeneity of punk defies attempts to assert a set of common, core ethics; punk has, for example, manifested itself

across the political spectrum from far right to far left and cannot therefore be reduced to a specific political bent. Secondly, these comparisons tend to be made in first person accounts by educators who both openly identify as punk and align themselves with critical pedagogy, and thus are bound up in the authors' reflective rationalisations of their own practice. Treated as case studies however, they offer insights into how punk educators across a range of contexts negotiate their ethical positions in the coming-together of their punk and academic identities, and how this impacts upon their academic practice in the classroom.

Malott (2006) proposes 'pedagogies of insurrection' based on an understanding of punk rock practices as 'spaces of non-alienated labour outside the boundaries of dominant society' (159). Relating this to Bey's (1985) anarchist notion of the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), Malott (2006) argues for the potential of localised autonomous activity to effect change beyond itself and promote the 'experience of enlightenment' (Malott 2006, 160). Shantz (2012) also writes of the influence of Bey's (1985) work on punk activism in his ethnographic account of the Anarchist Free Skool (sic) in Toronto. Shantz provides two AFS course descriptions in his appendix. These read as a striking hybrid of university module guide and political manifesto:

> This course will be a broad introduction to anarchist theory and practice, as well as a look at the history of anarchism and anarchist struggles.
>
> […]
>
> This course seeks to reconnect anarchism with the struggles of working people to build a better world beyond capitalism of any type. (Shantz 2012, 143)

There is perhaps an irony in Malott (2006) and Shantz (2012) calling for the establishment of radical educational spaces from tenure-track university posts. In later writing, Malott (2012) reflects upon his earlier resistance to 'university culture', which denied him 'any strategic room for adaptability' (Malott 2012, 65). He chronicles how, through subsequent employment in a little-known and under-resourced institution, he found balance between his skate punk and academic identities by engaging critically with power structures and developing links with 'activist scholars' (Malott 2012, 65). Malott (2012) acknowledges the competitive pressure to achieve prestige in US academia, but justifies his career trajectory on the belief that the radical Left needs to be represented in elite institutions, however much this might contradict punk ethics. Ultimately, it is through reflective engagement with the dilemma of participation and opposition that Malott constructs his academic identity.

A similar unease is portrayed by Haworth (2012), who recounts being called a 'fucking sell-out' (1) by a student, a pivotal experience that prompted him to interrogate his values and behaviours and critically examine the relationships between anarchism and education. He characterises this relationship as one of 'tension and ambiguity' (2), but argues that while formal institutions have 'oppressive tendencies', there may be 'ways to make use of the institutional space without being of the institution' (Haworth 2012, 5, his emphasis). Miner and Torrez (2012) likewise conceive of their presence within the university as a form of 'infiltration' (32), and like Malott (2012) justify it on the basis that outsider perspectives need representation within the university.

Dunn (2008) argues for punk to be studied within International Relations (IR) as an example of counter-hegemonic globalisation. While the relationship between punk and academia is not his central focus, he nonetheless argues for punk's pertinence to his discipline beyond its being an object of study. He juxtaposes an IR conference and a punk show, noting that 'while the discipline of IR pontificated down the street, I swirled in the mosh pit wondering: what relevance did I and the [conference community] have to these kids?' (Dunn 2008, 194). Dunn recalls that it was through engagement with punk as a teenager that he became aware of labour struggles and the experiences of subaltern groups, which in turn prompted him to engage proactively with current affairs. Contrasting this with his current position as an academic, he concludes that 'academia has alienated me from the world that I am trying to understand [by] decrying emotions and passion' (Dunn 2008, 210).

Erricker (2001) offers a more detached, third-person discussion of the relevance of punk to education. His exploration is broadly epistemological rather than ethical in emphasis and focuses on the destabilisation of 'knowledge sustained by tradition' (74) by outsider perspectives. He defines the punk as one who feels they do not fit with, and subsequently challenges, the institutionalised order and 'introduce[es] the subjectivity of the knower into the frame' (2001, 77). Accordingly he ascribes the label of punk onto Kuhn, Wittgenstein, Hayden White and Paulo Freire, on the basis that they interrogated the assumptions of their disciplines and disrupted the dominant conceptual order. Erricker (2001) thus considers the intellectual (as opposed to ethical) utility of punk, and ultimately asks: 'what if we treat all epistemologies subversively and relativistically, by denying them the status they confer on themselves?' (74).

Punk is not the only form of popular culture to be explored for its academic potential. McLaughlin (2008) identifies a 'pedagogy of the Blues', where what she refers to as the 'Blues metaphor' (xiii), in which the life narratives of blues singers, the lyrical content of blues music and the historical associations of blues are intertwined, is employed as a didactic framework for exploring race, class and gender. Aligning it with critical pedagogy, McLaughlin (2008) sets it in opposition to 'techno-rational' (21) curricula that delegitimise knowledge and values that sit outside of what state administrations deem important and correct. She asserts its potential to undermine the 'banking concept' (Freire 1970) whereby students' minds are conceived as vessels to be filled, and to provide students and teachers with the tools to become 'uncov[er] injustices' (McLaughlin 2008, 21). Beyond this however, McLaughlin argues for pedagogy to be approached as art, to emancipate the learner from strictly rational modes of apprehension. She calls for the performative characteristics of blues to be harnessed in the act of teaching, leading to pedagogy as 'an embodied art form in which

Bladen (2010) proposes a 'gonzo' pedagogy that takes inspiration from the writings of Hunter S. Thompson. Identifying the ideological subtext of gonzo culture as rejection of mainstream hegemony, Bladen (2010) considers it in relation to contemporary higher education, and via a Gramscian analysis asserts that the pressures of student recruitment, quality assurance and league tables have become internalised by teachers and detracted from their focus on teaching and learning. At the same time, he argues that financial and social pressures can impact upon students' motivation and engagement, and that lecturers' 'outdated content and […] unsophisticated delivery style' (Bladen 2010, 38) can compound this. Like McLaughlin (2008) with blues, Bladen considers the application of gonzo pedagogy in terms of form as well as ideology, proposing a teaching style wherein 'the gonzo lecturer-as-

performer uses a variety of techniques' (38) such as personal narrative, exaggeration and humour, 'to liberate [themselves] from […] oppressive, institutional hegemony and students from a dry, often un-engaging educational communication style' (38).

To summarise here, it is clear that these educators have identified in punk and other forms of popular culture ethical and aesthetic values that resonate with their academic values, and participate in the formation of their academic identities. It should be noted that, with the exception of Bladen (2010) and Erricker (2001), all of the authors reviewed here were working in US universities at the time of their writing. Although many of the themes covered are germane to higher education in a general sense, Malott's (2012) and Miner and Torrez's (2012) references to US cultural expectations highlight that the experiences of academics are contingent upon different cultural, social and policy contexts. Since all participants in this study work in the United Kingdom it is worth giving some space here to an overview of UK Higher Education.

Contemporary higher education in the United Kingdom

Higher education discourse of the two last decades has been characterised by themes of marketisation, managerialism and employability. White Papers and other publications by successive governments have set out visions of educational purpose using distinctly business-like rhetoric, emphasising efficiency, global competition and value for money and rationalising higher education funding in terms of macroeconomic return. The funding strategy for UK higher education has moved incrementally towards a tuition fee-dependent model where student recruitment bears directly upon the funding available to universities. Cribb and Gewirtz (2013) argue that the shift in the dominant values of higher education towards those of business and global competition has resulted in a 'hollowed out' higher education sector with no ethical core, in which the traditional orientation of universities towards 'the celebration of human learning and achievement' (342) has been relegated to the sidelines amidst 'gloss and spin' (341).

Against this backdrop, it has been suggested that academics' sense of identity can become destabilised when the perceived culture of the institution or sector contradicts their understanding of the intrinsic value and purpose of education (e.g. Harland and Pickering 2011; Kreber 2010; Skelton 2012; Winter 2009). However, the level of debate surrounding this perceived cultural shift has arguably given rise to dualistic analyses of academic values and identity in terms of the 'clash of values between traditional academic cultures and the modernising corporate cultures of higher education' (Winter 2009, 127). In contrast however, the literature reviewed above suggests that identity schisms cannot always be understood in terms of a traditional/corporate dualism, and may instead relate to other, more entrenched academic norms, such as the notion of detached scholarship (e.g. Dunn 2008) or perceptions of racial discrimination (e.g. Miner and Torrez 2012). Haworth (2012) warns against the assumption that resistance to neoliberal visions of higher education correlates to a desire to return to the liberal ideal, noting that many activists are 'more privy to the complex historical problems of how universities operate, [and wish] to distance themselves from the reestablishment of these structures' (5).

The participants

Six educators' voices are presented in this chapter. The first of these is my own. I am 35 years old at the time of writing and hold lecturing posts in the disciplines of education and music. I have been teaching in higher education for five years. Although I have never selfidentified wholly as a punk (in the subcultural taxonomy of 1990s South East London I was an Indie Kid), I have always identified with punk practices, ethics and culture, all of which are woven into my lifestyle and worldview. This study proceeds in acknowledgement of this interested position and with the understanding that my analyses are inevitably coloured by it.

The remaining five voices belong to academics working within UK higher education, across a range of disciplines. Four are members of the Punk Scholars Network, and responded to my participant call asking for teaching-active academics who self-identify as punk(s). One is a personal contact. They are as follows:

Name	School/faculty	Position	Age
Chris	Music	Senior Lecturer	50
Elke	Politics	Hourly-paid lecturer	41
Ivan	Sociology	Research fellow	40
Amin	International Relations	Lecturer	31
Francis*	Theology	Hourly-paid lecturer	38

*names have been changed

Unstructured interviews were conducted with each participant, themed around the intersection of the participants' punk and academic identities, their perceptions of UK higher education and their teaching practice. An inductive approach as outlined by Thomas (2006) was used to code the data into thematic categories.

'Two sides of the same coin': Becoming punk educators

All five participants had identified as punk since they were teenagers. Although their definitions of punk were differently nuanced, these all corresponded to resistance to dominant hegemonies, boredom, conservatism and elitism, and also to learning. For Vlad, there was no sense of discord between academic life and punk culture; instead, he had experienced a symbiotic relationship between these two aspects of his life since first attending university in newly post-Soviet Russia, where a reactionary spirit on campus coincided with punk activity, including the occupation of university buildings as squats and performance spaces. From then on, punk and academia were, for Vlad, 'two sides of the same coin, [both] about freedom, the opening of meanings, discovery […] exploration'. Mehmet's views regarding punk and education were similar to Vlad's. He felt no sense of contradiction or betrayal, and had become aware that formal learning and subcultural learning could be mutually enhancing when, as a high school student, he sought to challenge the narratives presented in history textbooks and was 'praised for [his] critical thinking'. Claire attributed her intellectual development as a teenager to discussions at anarchist bookstores, and recalled an impromptu

speech at a show as a critical juncture in her life when she was awakened to the value of education, and to her own desire to become a teacher. Philip spoke of his interest in alternative culture stemming from his early encounters with punk, while Heike, like Dunn (2008), had developed her interest in politics through engagement with punk.

Never Mind the Bollocks: punk awakening and the gestalt shift

My analysis of interview data revealed three main themes that were of concern among participants. The first related to the prevalent epistemologies and methodological conventions within the participants' disciplines. The second related to the state of UK higher education, from the perceived obsession with measurement and accountability to its time-consuming bureaucracy. The last concerned the ideological assumptions perceived to be inherent in mainstream curricula.

There was a sense among the participants working within the social sciences (Mehmet, Vlad and Heike) that their field had become too introspective at the expense of outward purpose. Vlad suggested that sociology had become 'a monastery commenting on itself', with little interest in developing 'new research that can change the world'. He felt this led to meaningless discussion and the 'horrible ritual of talking about things [we] already know anyway':

> Nowadays reading academic articles is boring and time-wasting [for me]. […] I have to force myself to finish and by the end it hasn't taught me anything new at all.

Mehmet echoed this position, and spoke of the 'navel-gazing' tendencies of social scientists to deliberate at length over 'esoteric' issues of ontology and epistemology. As with Vlad, this was for Mehmet a distraction from the central purpose of his discipline:

> Why waste time arguing with someone that your ontology is more valid in a pluralist discipline that doesn't agree on the nature of knowledge? You can leave that to the side

Relating this to his students' experience, Mehmet explained that this culture led to anxieties about 'not understanding the discipline', which in turn sapped students' motivation. He was keen to emphasise the primacy of conviction and original thought over the 'window dressing'. Employing the Sex Pistols' slogan, he recounted discussions with tutees:

> […] cos it's a social science context, and there's […] an overwhelming backdrop of that scientific, positivist approach, the students are freaking out about what to put into their theoretical framework chapter and into their methodology, and I say 'never mind the bollocks, what's your opinion? Why do you have it, and can you lead me through the steps that led you to it?'

Mehmet spoke at length about the inherent conservatism that he perceived within the social sciences, and his belief that restrictive protocols exerted a control over the flow of knowledge within the field, inhibiting innovation and leading to 'boring' thought:

> If you think about the window dressing [too much] your thought will suffer and you'll end up thinking like a boring person, the way those categories and conventions make you think.

Similarly, Vlad told his students that there was no need to write at length 'about theories and methodologies and so on, that's boring.' Of greater importance was 'honesty', which he related to punk ethics, and accordingly he encouraged students to write about 'something they've lived through themselves'. He conceded that because of its overt subjectivity 'in some ways [this was not] science', but was opposed to the dominance of detached research within the social sciences and sought to promote more subjective research writing:

> I am regularly trying to get rid of this anathema. Although very often it doesn't look very academic, I enjoy reading it and it's something that I learn a lot from, it's something new, because [when] someone who went through some problems of violence or community writes about it, that's great because who else would write about it?

Heike, although in agreement with Vlad and Mehmet about the need for change within the social sciences, was more cautious about actively challenging the dominant norms in a teaching context, 'because [she] wanted the students to graduate [and didn't] want to fuck up their chances'; she reasoned therefore that radicalism needed to take on 'subtler' forms, chiefly through 'lifting somebody onto a more critical plain'. Her approach was characterised by pragmatism, but also by an anxiety of complicity in an academic culture at stark odds with her own values, and which in her view inhibited the university's ability to effect change.

Also reflecting upon the impact of UK higher education (HE) culture on the 'front line' of teaching, Claire spoke of 'often meaningless' aims and learning outcomes, stemming from an obsession with accountability and bureaucracy. She felt that these strictures inhibited the live-ness of pedagogy and left 'no room for spontaneity, for interaction in the moment with one another'. She suggested that the precariousness of the academic job market served to compound this situation, since 'rules [could] be used to bash you over the head with the possibility of unemployment'. Relating this to her punk background however, she asserted that she had 'forgot[ten] to stand in line when they were handing out risk-adverse tendencies'.

Of most concern to Claire, Philip and Mehmet was the dominance of mainstream worldviews that went unchallenged within curricula. Philip spoke of assuming rhetorical positions that would lead students to engage with the possibility of different perspectives and support independent critical thinking, something he aligned with the 'punk ethos':

> I'm very fond of the avocatis diavoli kind of approach. […] I'm not telling them what to think, you know. […] I think it comes back to where we started really, the punk ethos. The wonderful thing that I remember about punk was […] 'don't listen to what anyone else is saying, it's rubbish.' And that was a tremendously useful starting point, particularly in our subject areas it seems to me.

Mehmet's approach was similar. He felt that, for all the emphasis on 'critical thinking', not enough space was given to alternative worldviews that might provoke students to examine their assumptions. Harnessing what he saw as punk's ability to awaken people to the possibility that 'things aren't always what they seem', he took a performative approach to teaching in which he shifted between worldviews:

> I play the punk rocker. I might play the Marxist even though I'm not a Marxist, but that's how you achieve the gestalt shift. […] My job as a scholar and educator is not

lifting the veil as showing you the truth, but lifting the veil on the idea of there being one truth. The punk thing to do is say 'well why are you so certain?'

'Here's a chord. Here's another. Here's another. Now form a band[ii]': agency, responsibility and experience in the classroom

Each of the five participants spoke of drawing from punk culture and practice in the classroom. For some, this was in response to normative teaching and curriculum design that they perceived to be constraining and outmoded. Claire, who had been a secondary school teacher prior to entering higher education, found the top-down pedagogies and curricula she had encountered in institutional education to be 'constricting and largely irrelevant'. Recounting her own experiences of being a student, she identified within the university a tendency to patronise young people, and to devalue ways of knowing associated with youth culture:

> They […] had the attitude of 'you know nothing because you are young,' instead of thinking actually your ideas hold merit, […] let's talk about them further.

This was in stark contrast to her experiences of the Anarchist bookstore she attended as a teenager, where 'punks would take the time to talk with rather than at a 14 or 15 year old who was incredibly shy and inarticulate'.

Vlad also spoke of the need to position students' ideas at the centre of their intellectual development, and to recognise their personal experiences as a legitimate source of knowledge. He felt it was important to accommodate the cultural phenomena and artefacts through which young people sought meaning, since young people 'look for the answers to their problems in popular culture'. Vlad tried to 'engage students as much as possible about their own experiences', and saw this as an opportunity to learn 'with' and 'from' students. Claire also spoke of 'learning alongside [students] and valuing their experiences', and related this to the autodidactic DIY principles of punk, enshrined in 'the whole here's 3 chords now go do thing1 - here's the info, here's the skills, go apply, learn, change and educate us on your return.' She gave an example from teaching in a Theology context:

> One of the courses I created focuses on religion and conflict and it works incredibly well doing that there. 'There is the name of the country and the religions, there is a room, go and sort it out and report back however you want.' It becomes like an academic battle of the bands at the end of the course.

Mehmet, together with 'other punks of the department', had seized the opportunity to design his own module 'specifically around the idea of punk awakening', as it offered a chance to escape the restrictive schemes of work prescribed by senior colleagues. They had sought to simulate 'the punk experience for students who haven't had it subculturally', avoiding dispassionate analysis and instead, like Vlad, encouraging students to engage their own ethical beliefs in their investigations.

Rise above! Changing and reclaiming higher education

I asked all participants about their educational values and how these related to their experiences of working within the UK higher education sector. In all cases, there was a perception that ethical change was needed, although this corresponded to different things. For

Claire, this meant reasserting the social and moral purpose of education, and shifting the emphasis away from skilling an 'elite' and towards achieving social justice:

> [It] forces [students] to conform to a learning structure set up when Britain was an empire and the elite would rule the masses. […] It is a redundant system. Learning should be for the betterment of the individual, the community and society.

She felt that Higher Education had a responsibility to protect and secure justice for marginalised groups, a cause to which she felt punk values were particularly applicable:

> It is [being] willing to wear the mantle of the Other to make a change that makes punk so strong, or at least potentially strong. If a bunch of snotty nosed kids can do it, why can't we?

Reflecting on the impact of marketisation on learning culture, and on students' understanding of what higher education was for, Claire identified an obsession with grades that was 'getting worse and worse as they adopt ever more the business model', and detracted from the intrinsic value of learning. Heike perceived the 'decline' of British higher education as stemming from the state's funding strategy, which in contrast to the European model commodified the educational experience, rendering it responsive to consumer demand. She suggested that the threat of unemployment within the current system promoted a conservative attitude among teachers, which she found frustrating. Similarly, at sector level, fears for survival sustained what she saw as the neoliberal identity and purpose of UK (and US) higher education, and undermined universities' potential to effect change:

> The agenda of [UK] higher education is not to effect change but to train future professionals. And that precludes or prevents radical change. […] the Anglo-American system is built on foundations that don't want radical change because if [they] promote radical change then [they] undermine [their] identity and longevity.

Heike felt that in Germany (her native country), where the education system was not reliant on student fees, the culture of higher education was in a healthier state than in the United Kingdom and that academics 'had more opportunities to be radical'. Within UK HE however, she distinguished between academics who were complicit in the status quo and those who sought to change it, and suggested that the potential and responsibility for change, as in punk, lay at the level of the individual:

> The institutional umbrella is reliant on the people who are committed to a certain mission, [but] we're not all total sell-outs. […] The individual academic has often retained some sense of 'I want to make a change'.

Mehmet spoke of the pressure exerted on his department to undertake teaching and research activity that 'ticked the boxes' of a status quo. While this was widely resented among his colleagues, he was immune to it 'cos [he was] too punk'; by resisting these expectations he maintained his punk integrity and projected an example of resistance to his students:

> I can see colleagues sensing the pressure, but I refuse it at such a deep level that I don't even feel it anymore. I wear T shirts of punk bands to my lectures, and I don't do it ignorantly, it's a deliberate sign […] about being myself in the face of those imperatives, and getting on with projects and engaging in those contexts despite those pressures.

Regardless of official learning outcomes that he gave little thought to, the outcome he most desired was for students to develop a sense of responsibility for the world:

> My real aim is to convince someone of the urgency and the open-endedness of this challenge that we face, and the need to try to develop responses [because] the system is fucked. Or to be more specific, the current nexus of economic and political logics involves huge degrees of social violence, distributed unevenly, and that sucks. I don't know the answer […] but we need to come up with responses.

Discussion

In general terms, the participants' responses conveyed themes of frustration, boredom, individual and collective responsibility, and resistance to the status quo. These themes chimed with their understandings of the spirit of punk, which they all spoke of applying in their academic practice. As in the literature reviewed earlier in this paper, participants tended to reflect holistically on their experiences and detailed, specific examples of applying punk practices pedagogically were relatively sparse, but their application of punk in their teaching can nonetheless be collated into three broad themes.

Performativity

Mehmet and Philip both spoke of acting out different roles and opinions within the classroom to highlight the possibility of different perspectives, which Mehmet likened to 'play [ing] the punk rocker' to antagonise and disrupt. This is as much an application of punk's aesthetic as of its ethos, in that, as McLaughlin (2008) and Bladen (2010) suggest for blues and gonzo, respectively, he employed the form by which punk's ethos is embodied. More than simply constituting a performance in the mimetic sense however, in proposing 'performative pedagogy' McLaughlin (2008) emphasises also a potential to perform, in that word's other sense of effecting change; this sense that was also implicit in the participants' reflections. Furthermore, to draw analogously[ii] from Butler's work (e.g. 1993, 1999 [1990], 2004) and related work (e.g. Benhabib et al. 1995; Hey 2006; Olson and Worsham 2000) on performativity in relation to gender identity, and on performative resignification, we might argue that participants' invocation and embodiment of punk constitutes a performative resignification, untying punk as a concept from its normative associations and, in applying it in an educational context, disrupting what they perceive as a scripted pedagogical status quo. Punk thus provides a form through which the participants perform resistance in response to identity schisms felt within the academy.

Autodidactism and amateurism

The idea of learning for oneself is a longstanding ethical principle of punk and a dimension of the broader DIY principle, implicit in the 'here's a chord […]' maxim discussed earlier. While the notion of autodidactism within formal education is arguably, in an absolute sense, oxymoronic, Vlad and Claire's placing emphasis on students taking responsibility for their own learning, and on the accessibility of knowledge to those who sought to acquire it, bore the spirit of these principles. Mehmet's honesty in declaring to students that he '[didn't] have the answers', and Vlad and Claire's acknowledgement of learning from and with students, point to pedagogies in which the traditional delineation of teacher and student is disrupted, and the active acquisition of knowledge is presented as everybody's individual and collective responsibility. Such approaches display a resistance to, in 'the idea of there being one truth'

(Mehmet) – an idea implicit in 'techno-rational' (McLaughlin 2008) education systems premised on Freire's 'banking concept' (1974; cited in McLaughlin 2008) – and point to the emancipatory potential of critical thinking.

The notion of amateurism is also, in many respects, anathema in higher education, particularly in the current global iteration that prioritises the development of skills for professional service. Yet beyond its meaning-in-use as the opposite of professionalism, amateurism connotes an 'altruistic commitment and […] personal investment in the activity undertaken […] that can generate important knowledge contributions outside formal standards and accreditation' (Edwards 2015, 869) that provides the intrinsic motivation for autodidactism to flourish. Claire, Mehmet and Vlad all stressed the importance of harnessing students' curiosity and enthusiasm, and recalled its centrality to their own learning.

Experience and praxis

Related to autodidactism, this concerned the placing of students' experiences and subjectivities at the centre of their learning. Claire felt that 'you can't actually make a difference in the world until the sociocultural context of your own life is made clear', and like Vlad encouraged students to focus on their own lives as sources of knowledge. As such, detached, disinterested modes of inquiry were discouraged in favour of experiential and emotionally invested approaches. Where Dunn (2008) lamented his own disengagement from the 'world [he is] trying to understand' as a result of his enculturation into dispassionate, passive scholarship, Mehmet and Claire were emphatic about the responsibilities that accompanied knowledge, to the extent that learning and action were conceived as inextricably bound together in the educational experience, each an aspect of the other. These understandings were closer to Deweyan notions of experiential learning as a non-dualistic 'organic connection between education and experience' (Dewey 1938, 25) occurring symbiotically within and throughout a 'lived experience', and with moral implications, than to the more recent connotations of experiential learning in the contexts of professional skills development or accreditation (e.g. APEL). These understandings were thus also at odds with the privileging of skills for business and economic growth within higher education discourse (see Cribb and Gewirtz 2013).

Experiential learning can also be approached here in terms of praxis, understood by Freire (1970) as simultaneous and symbiotic thinking and action for the purpose of transformation and emancipation. Kolb (1984) notes that 'praxis [involves] the process of "naming the world", which is both active – in the sense that naming something transforms it – and reflective – in that our choice of words gives meaning to the world around us' (29), and in this regard praxis, like performativity as conceived by Butler (1993, see above) can constitute 'that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names' (13). Such an understanding is writ large in Mehmet and Claire's rationalisation of learning in terms of responding to 'economic and political logics involv[ing] huge degrees of social violence' (Mehmet) and 'the betterment of the community, society and the individual' (Claire).

Obviously, these themes are not exclusive to punk educators, or necessarily radical per se. Indeed, it could be argued that they are already implicit in learning outcomes that place emphasis on criticality, self-directed learning and reflectivity and moreover that the norms, cultures and policy climate they oppose are commonly critiqued in higher education literature (e.g. Carr 2009; Cribb and Gewirtz 2013; Williams 2012, 2016). What is important here

however is that, in the context of profound feelings of values incongruence and identity schism (Winter 2009), punk served as an ethical, epistemological and aesthetic resource for participants (and those educators whose accounts are discussed in the literature review) in their resistance to a perceived status quo. It is significant that arguments for the educational value of other subcultures (e.g. gonzo (Bladen 2010), blues (Mclaughlin 2008), hip hop (e.g. Dimitriadis 2001; Hill 2009)) tend to be made in similar terms, commonly asserting an affinity with critical pedagogy and a social justice agenda and advocating a performative embodiment of the forms' aesthetics in the act of teaching. All such arguments are inherently counter-cultural in that they present these forms as strategies for resistance against the dominant cultural order, both within and outside of the academy. This is not to reduce these different subcultural pedagogies to a generic ethos, but rather to emphasise that, just as subcultural forms of popular culture express different groups' experiences of living against the grain of the dominant culture, whilst simultaneously constituting lived practices of resistance for those who identify with them, so too can they be seen to provide ethical, epistemological and aesthetic frameworks for their affiliates' academic practice. Such cases highlight that, just as students 'look for the answers to their problems in popular culture' (Vlad), the enduring influence of popular culture on academics' identities and practice warrants attention.

Bladen (2010) describes the gonzo lecture as a 'counter-cultural' activity, and it is in terms of a counter-cultural orientation that these educators' experiences are best understood. We might consider this in relation to May's (2001) suggestion of three 'moments' in US higher education, later applied by Cribb and Gewirtz (2013) to the UK higher education context. The first and second moments describe the liberal arts college ideal and subsequent shift towards market-oriented training and careerism. The third accounts for the 'counter-cultural movement [who] sought immediate relationships to people, power, truth and morals and rejected all mediated relations in these spheres' (May 2001, 253; cited in Cribb and Gewirtz 2013, 343). Cribb and Gewirtz (2013) suggest that this counter-cultural movement has been muted in the UK context during the last 35 years, while instrumentalism has gained pace and the liberal ideal has struggled to gain footing. Across the interviews and literature reviewed in this paper however there is clear evidence of a reactionary disposition that conforms to May's (2001) characterisation of the counter-cultural moment in HE. May's (2001) notion of counter-culture relates to the domain of education and does not equate to the use of that term in the popular culture context. Yet as has been demonstrated in this paper, these two senses can coalesce in the experiences and identities of punk academics. The grand punk narrative set out at the beginning of this chapter has obvious facility to these educators as a mythological tool, encapsulating and ennobling their ethical frameworks and validating their responses to the pressures of academic life in a troublesome higher education climate.

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[i] This is a reference to the famous cover of the Sideburns fanzine's first issue, which featured diagrams of three guitar chords and the instruction 'Here's a chord. Here's another. Here's another. Now form a band'. This slogan has now taken a place in punk lore as a mission statement enshrining the DIY ethics of punk culture.

[ii] This is not to claim equivalency, and my analogy here is necessarily reductive; a more thorough application of Butler's theories to a discussion of punk and pedagogy would be valuable.