1.2 Composing 'Down on the Street' Music: quests for authenticity and ethics in Detroit underground rock from early punk to the garage revival

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× *Abstract*

This article traces concepts of authenticity and social ethics of punk rock communities in Detroit from the origins of punk to the 1990s Garage scene. Comparing Detroit with other American punk scenes, I sketch the social context as well as ideas of what it meant to be punk and make punk music. I then show how these influenced, and were influenced by, the politics and demographics of punk musicians and fans. Using oral history, fanzines, and documentaries, I argue that that independent punk rock musicians and fans were motivated by a sometimes-contradictory politics of aesthetic and economic, sonic and political, authenticity. This made punk communities, and Detroit specifically, vulnerable to social conflicts, exclusiveness, and violence in the 1980s, but ultimately pushed punks to create alternative culture producing systems and spaces that were non-exploitative, socially and musically progressive, and sustainable.

Keywords: authenticity, ethics, Detroit, punk, memory.

Detroit rock lived and died a few times in its history if one believes the rock critics in old **Cream** magazines or punk fanzines. This often occurred when the writers did not particularly like the direction music seemed to be heading, whether bands or music spaces got too popular, drew smaller crowds, released music that was too overproduced and safe or too low fidelity and grating. Though it had its ups and downs in popularity and cultural impact, Detroit rock never went away. But when punk and independently produced rock arrived in the 1970s, a preoccupation with ethics in rock performances and commodity production, marketing, and consumption was paramount, calling for rock to fulfill a higher purpose than simply making quality music for people to enjoy.

Using cultural theory and key texts on popular music and punk rock, this article will trace what authenticity meant to fans, writers, and artists in punk rock communities, using oral histories and locally produced independent media to zoom in on the cultural and political nuances of punk in the Detroit area. Authenticity is a powerful but often vague and floating signifier that gives meaning to many musical experiences and often decides what music gets considered valuable. For critical theorists like Stacy Thompson (2004), Punks in America made their claim to authenticity first as an aesthetic one in making rock gritty and dangerous again, and then as an economic one as the scenes evolved and they developed alternative production and distribution methods. They claimed a mission of taking back an edge that rock lost as it reached the top of the charts, and in an early herald of Attali's (1985, p. 143) dream of the 'Composition' era of music, they called on everyone listening to become active producers, building up the labels, stores, and venues needed to do it.

Like many throughout the country, young Michigan punks felt they were bringing real rock 'n' roll back

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to Detroit after it had been lost in the malaise and musical corporatization of the 1970s. Here they had a rich history from which to draw inspiration, which they did selectively to establish their roots in the punk rock canon and ethics. The striving for authenticity created sonic and political contradictions and progressive developments in Detroit punk from the first 1970s punk wave to the 1990s garage scene. This reflected a broader national politics of authenticity starting with early 1980s hardcore punk colored in important ways by the class and cultural environment of Southeast Michigan.

There were two major streams conceptualizing what it meant to be authentically punk. For those like the Ramones or the Germs, punk rock meant simple playable music and a confrontational iconoclastic attitude that was not afraid of, and in fact valued, offending traditional values and sensibilities. Other punks like the Clash, Minor Threat, and the writers of Maximum Rock 'N' Roll saw punk as a music of innovation and experimentation, which valued social responsibility and fighting against injustice (Yohannon, 1982). This did not necessarily mean a conflict between the two viewpoints, more of a dialogue and a spectrum. Principled and serious anarchist groups like Crass released simple music that grated the ears and made spectacles that unashamedly bashed religious or family life. Snotty bands like the Descendents or the Ramones were not afraid to make serious songs about war or politics while other juvenile groups like the Butthole Surfers made experimental and innovative music.

Punks in America thought popular rock music had become corporate, decadent, and separated from regular people. Artists like Joey Shithead from D.O.A in Vancouver Canada to Boston fanzine writers said they were driven to punk because of their alienation with popular music and rock generally. These sentiments could be understood as a search for authenticity in a corporatized rock world that seemed calculated for the lowest common denominator. The punks viewed their own music mission as creating an alternative culture to the mainstream and to rebirth the spirit of rock 'n' roll as they imagined it; small-scale, made for the love of the art, and relatable to the day's youth (Blush, 2006).

Authenticity in music can be seen as a language of power developed by interpersonal dialectics between people and between people and cultural products. In this view, it is wielded by those with the power to express themselves as an authority in deeming a person or thing authentic and hence worthy of consideration, purchase, and even praise. This has motivated many historical declarations of rock's death politically, musically, or economically (Dettmar, 2006). However, it can also be seen as a quest for expressing and experiencing meaning and truth sought by all from casual music consumers to record company executives to musicians playing anywhere from arenas to basements (Barker & Taylor, 2007).

The 1970s were certainly a time that disaffected youth could demand a deeper ethics and genuine dialogue and recognition between their fellow citizens. Simon Frith in *Performing Rites* (1996) argued that because of growing baby-boomer consumption capacity as the rock generation aged and gained more wealth and cultural sway, the music industry began an intense period of professionalization and vertical integration of the means of producing, distributing, and marketing music.

Because punk rock was not an organization collectively acting in concert with class or identity-based activist groups, but itself a culture of commodity forms functioning within capitalism, their resistance to monopolization had to be expressed through more ideologically fragmented and liberal forms. David Ensminger (2016) in *The Politics of Punk,* argued that in the especially atomized world of the US and UK, this desire for resistance expressed itself in the form of a resistance of everyday life. For fans this was creating an ethical practice of consumption. For labels it became about ethical production of their commodities. For artists it was about expressing their alienation through their performances. Kevin Dunn (2016) in his work on global punk argued for similar everyday political resistance common across all punk communities of the world. Of course, punk scenes and artists also engaged in more traditional forms of direct action or raising money and awareness for certain causes or groups, but as an insular community this was the main mode of resistance. In this way, punk expressed in culture what Raymond Williams (1997, p. 121-127) called 'emergent' ideologies that spoke to the boredom and alienation among contemporary youth of the 1970s onward which they could not express through the traditions of the dominant culture.

The young punk fans of the late 1970s and early 1980s living around Detroit started their own quest to revive the spirit of rock 'n' roll in the area. They took inspiration from the UK, LA, and DC punk scenes, but also had a local tradition to borrow from and look to for an authentic sound and ethics. In the 1960s and early 1970s, music was everywhere in Metro Detroit. Motown had reached an iconic status as an interracial crossover hit factory that all Americans could enjoy. It helped redefine Detroit culture and black American identity as it offered

a vision of black middle-class achievement and integration (Smith, 1999). At the same time Detroit lived up to its reputation that would be enshrined in KISS's 1976 anthem 'Detroit Rock City' with bands like the Amboy Dukes with Ted Nugent, Iggy Pop and the Stooges, MC5, and Bob Seger with his Bob Seeger System and later Silver Bullet Band. These groups were not just releasing influential art or chart hits. They were also local figures entertaining at high school dances, fairs, and mall openings in the area (R. Faleer, Personal communication, February 27, 2019).

Much of this had gone away by the late 1970s. Some of the musicians from MC5 and the Stooges stuck around like Fred 'Sonic' Smith's Sonic Rendezvous Band, and Ron Asheton's Destroy All Monsters. This early punk scene was more diverse including female musicians like Niagra from Destroy All Monsters and Diana Balton and Kirsten Rogoff from the band the Algebra Mothers, and more friendly to LGBTQ+ people. They formed the nucleus of the short lived early punk rock scene in Detroit that existed out of the disco club and gay bar with an art deco interior, Club 870, commonly known as Bookie's (St. Mary, 2015). However, when a new wave of punk rock came to Detroit in the wake of the breakup of the Sex Pistols and the independent punk releases from SST and Dischord records, a new group of teenagers with early memories of the Detroit music scene came into being.

For the second wave of punk in Detroit, the authentic spirit of rock had to be revived, and the existing punk scene consisting of older performers and fans of the former glam and proto-punk scene were not the ones to do it. Relations between the older punks at Bookies and the predominantly teenage crowd who would form the initial hardcore punk scene was sometimes combative. The mostly young middle-class white boys from the suburbs enjoyed some of the local Bookie's music sneaking into the bar with fake IDs, but others saw the Bookie's bands as rehashing New York or British new wave and unwilling to give their new bands a chance. The older patrons and artists detested the younger fans' homophobic epithets and penchant for a new more aggressive form of expressing musical experience, slam dancing (Miller, 2013). While the patrons may have conflicted with each other, this was where the young teenagers got their first taste of live punk music and the well-respected national acts, they saw their inspired them to get serious about their own music.

A few months earlier, a music fanzine started in the Fall of 1979 called *Touch and Go*, named after a Throbbing Gristle song and inspired by the DIY punk magazine *Thrash*, also looked to create authentic rock and punk. Started by Michigan State graduate and elementary school teacher Tesco Vee and his former classmate Dave Stimson, the magazine immediately made it clear that they were writing to advance new, interesting, and independent bands against the stagnant establishment of arena rock, radio, and the record industry. The first issue started with an opinion piece by Stimson, who wrote that, with the advent of record shops and clubs that regularly feature punk and new wave, 'we can see the beginning of a serious alternative to the crap we've been subjected to for so long now. You know the kind of noise I'm talking about — *Led Zeppelin, Foreigner, Styx, Foghat* — the list is agonizingly long.' Stimson then stated the purpose of the magazine saying, "we represent an alternative to mainstream rock 'n' roll journalism, which you probably know is just as banal as the music they write about." (Vee et *al.*, 2010, p. 3).

The first few copies of the fanzine sold just 50 to 100 units each, but they made their way to Barry Henssler, Andy Wendler, and Todd Swalla; middle-class high school students and record collectors from Maumee Ohio who had just begun to play shows with their own punk band, *Necros*. *Touch and Go* inspired them to start their own fanzine in the same style, *The Smegma Journal*, and they quickly got in contact with their older colleagues, becoming good friends and occasional partners in delinquency (Rettman, 2010). The next connection to spark Detroit hardcore came from Steve Miller, Mike Achtenberg, and Craig Calvert, living in East Lansing near Vee and Stimson, who started a band called The FIX, initially inspired by seeing UK punk band The Stranglers play in Lansing.

This independent style of recording and distributing music was brought over to Detroit by 1981 when Black Flag played their first Michigan shows at Lansing's Club Doo Bee, and Detroit's Bookies bar, both opened by *Necros*. Their first Bookies show turned out to be a significant one for the Detroit scene in July of 1981 (Swalla, 1981). More importantly for Detroit hardcore, the show was attended by John Brannon as well as Larissa Strickland and Dave Rice of L-Seven and the fanzine *Anonymous*,[2] future Fate Unknown vocalist, Shawn Snow, and dozens of skaters from the local Endless Summer skatepark who would go on to form local bands like Bored

2. Dave Rice had been an experienced patron and artist at Bookies as he was an original member of the earlier Detroit punk band the Algebra Mothers.

Youth and McDonalds (Rettman, 2010, p. 51). Corey Rusk, who became the bass player for *Necros*, recorded one of these Black Flag shows, passed it around to friends and spread the word about the new documentary releasing that summer, *The Decline of Western Civilization,* directed by Penelope Spheeris (1981). A wave of networking and inspiration had come to the young hardcore fans around Southeastern Michigan.

That same Summer saw the release of singles by *Necros* and *The FIX*, released on the newly founded Touch and Go Records, and could be ordered via *Touch and Go* or *Smegma Journal* magazines through the mail or bought at record stores in Lansing or Ann Arbor for $2.50. Tesco Vee created the label, though he partnered with Corey Rusk of *Necros* to get it off the ground. One hundred of the *Necros*' single and two hundred of *The FIX*'s single were pressed. Almost a dozen of Touch and Go's earliest releases were recorded just in Rusk's basement (Rettman, 2010, p. 30).

The musicians and fans looked to local contemporary bands for inspiration and identity as well as some choice artists of the past. They had great respect for the *Stooges* and *MC5*, and *Touch and Go* showed a respect even for old founders of rock like *Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent*, or *Chuck Berry* (Vee et al., 2010). But it was more their attitude, the danger that more conservative elders felt about them at the time, and the impact they made on rock that they wanted to emulate rather than copying their sound. They looked to contemporary British and American punk bands they saw live or read about in local fanzines and UK magazines like *Sounds*, *Melody Makers*, or *New Musical Express* to develop their sound and methods of making and distributing music (T. Vee, Personal communication, September 9, 2018). Tesco Vee and members of *Necros* began a correspondence with Glenn Danzig of the *Misfits* and Ian Mackaye of Minor Threat, took inspiration from their music, and shared pointers on how to produce and disseminate their music and publications. When Black Flag and *D.O.A*. came to Michigan in the Summer of 1981, they gave *The FIX* encouragement, contacts, and information on how to tour, which they did across the West Coast that Fall (Rettman, 2010).

From the affordability of the magazines, shows, and releases, to the encouragement of others to make their own bands and perform and record original material, punk was imagined by those in the scene as a populist project. John Brannon, when recalling the peak days of the hardcore scene, said, "The whole thing about being in a band at that point, there was no separation between the kids and the audience and who's on stage. It was music for the people." (Miller, 2013, p. 211). John Kezdy of the Effigies in Chicago said that to the kids in the broader Midwest, the scene was about understating themselves by shaving their heads and dressing in simple jeans and T-shirts. In their view this was a statement against narcissism and elitism, and it placed the music and the message they tried to communicate at the center of attention (Blush, 2010, p. 237). Their hatred of any artistic pretensions ran so deep that some got upset at *The FIX* just for changing into performance clothes at shows rather than playing in what they wore on the street (Rettman, 2010, p. 66).

This romanticized view of the folk, living punk ethics and attitude every day, and performing for the community rather than self-aggrandizement produced an effect of authenticity and belonging for those that engaged in the scene. This reached its height for many with the six-month life of the Freezer Theatre between 1981 and 1982. Situated on Cass Avenue and Alexandrine Street in the blighted neighborhood south of the Wayne State University campus known as Cass Corridor, The Freezer Theatre was an abandoned storefront that was briefly a calypso and reggae venue. Band members from *Necros*, *L-Seven*, and *Negative Approach* worked out a deal with the owner, a 'speed-freak' and 'liberal hippie' simply known as Fred, for them to build a stage and host all-punk weekend shows in exchange for a cut of the proceeds. They spray-painted the walls with names of bands that played there from in and out of town, and got their own all ages venue with, "no fuckwad promoters ready to throw ticket stubs away and pimp the bands." (Vee et al., 2010, p. 406).

This was where the hardcore punks felt like they had crafted a real scene for the first time as it was a central hub where people met every weekend. Touch and Go Records celebrated its first compilation EP *Process of Elimination* (1981) showcasing eight local bands with a show at the Freezer that all featured bands played in. They reveled in their Cass Corridor slumming, emphasizing in their oral history statements and music from the era the abandonment and hopelessness in both the city and their own lives. Necros and Negative Approach published some early examples of horror punk. This is part of what attracted the Misfits, who became personal friends with Tesco Vee and members of Necros, to play in Detroit so often that the local hardcore scene became like a second home for them (Mock, 2014). The young punks had created the basic economic bones needed to have a coherent scene with the ethics of DIY and a scrappy independence that characterized more famous scenes in DC or LA.

Their dedication to a narrow punk attitude and aesthetics however also acted as a gate-keeping tool that contributed to the scene's demise. The over-emphasis on fast, simple songs and the denunciation of added complexities or slower tempos made some feel that the scene had become just as stagnant as the music industry they all railed against. The ideal for groups like *The FIX*, *Necros*, *Negative Approach*, and the *Meatmen* was to create music that was new and exciting, so they celebrated and pushed for novelty. Barry Henssler of Necros said, 'This was supposed to be a music of no tradition! The whole point of it was to say, fuck the past!' and wrote a song about the stagnation and intolerance of the scene called 'Count Me Out' (Rettman, 2010, p. 157). Members of *The FIX* thought the scene became stale even by the time the Freezer opened because the young men became so caught up in trying to out-hardcore each other they forgot how to make, or even let others enjoy, good music (S. Miller, Personal communication, March 3, 2018). For them, the scene was about experimentation and individual expression, not trying to be faster or more aggressive than everyone else, like they thought it was becoming.

Rising violence at shows also led to the initial scene's decline, and this came from both new punk fans asserting their right to the space, as well as neo-Nazi skinhead fans (M. Deck, Personal communication, May 10, 2018). Neo-Nazi fans at punk shows became a problem throughout the US and UK starting with the rise of the National Front in Britain in the 1970s. People like Tesco Vee and members of *Negative Approach, Necros*, and a newer band called the *Allied* were fans of Oi! rock from the UK which was associated with the skinheads, and they promoted it in their publications, performances, sound, and social circles. However, while they were either not aware of were not interested in the contemporary struggles between Rock Against Racism and the fascist National Front in appropriating the culture of Oi! and skinheads in the UK, some of their fans picked up the racism and violence associated with it (J. Brannon, Personal communication, August 8, 2018; T. Vee, Personal communication, September 9, 2018). By 1984 many of the initial hardcore bands had broken up or moved to new genres.

Indie punk continued through the mid-1980s out of the Greystone Ballroom, an old theater on Michigan avenue owned by famous manager of the *Grande Ballroom*, Russ Gibb. This was run by Corey Rusk of Necros who also took control of Touch and Go Records. Greystone along with a few other venues like Blondies, the Hungry Brain, and St. Andrew's Hall helped Detroit punk get through the low ebbing years from 1984 to 1988 when punk and hardcore nationally seemed to have lost its original coherence and popularity in independent rock. During this time scenes still held independent music venues, stores, and labels that distributed new records, but bands found it harder to get reliable punk gigs and the bigger labels like *SST*, *Dischord*, and *Touch* and *Go Records*, which moved to Chicago in 1987, were not putting out music that sounded like their original hardcore days. Instead, they released more experimental or melodic music like Sonic Youth, Hüsker Dü, The Butthole Surfers, and Dag Nasty (Azerrad, 2001). In this era, the two streams of punk rock conceptions of authenticity reached new heights on both the side of social responsibility and on the side of angst and nihilism.

In the late 1980s, GG Allin was at his most active releasing music and touring, though never for very long stretches as he quickly ended up either in prison or the hospital during his tours. GG Allin took the nihilism and love of offending traditional mores and manners to new extremes during performances, frequently bloodying himself with sharp or blunt instruments, physically and sexually assaulting audience members and threatening them with further physical violence or rape, masturbating or defecating on stage and engaging in coprophagy (Phillips, 1993). In the classic 1970s punk style of 4-power chord guitar driven songs, short simple bridges and solos, and snarling nasally vocals, GG Allin made Misfits' songs seem utterly quaint.

At the same time *Fugazi*, the succeeding band of *Minor Threat* and *Rites of Spring* were taking the ethics of social justice and independent community building to their peak. Beginning in 1987, Fugazi created experimental melodic hardcore sounds combining heavy driving baselines and drum patterns with guitar riffs and vocals that moved back and forth between soft and melodic to noisy and chaotic denunciations of misogyny, intolerance, and consumerism. This was unified with an intense dedication to music production and performance ethics against violence, intolerance, exploitation, and profiteering (Brannon & Jayaswal, 2003).

If punk in America was caught in a dialectic between the violent offensive nihilism of G.G. Allin, and the earnest social justice and unshakeable ethics of *Fugazi*, Detroit in the late 1980s and early 1990s was more on the side of G.G. Allin. This was partially because after Touch and Go Records moved to Chicago, there was no iconic organization to unite groups of people into a coherent scene where newer perspectives and diverse struggles could be negotiated and organized like in DC with Dischord or LA with SST and later Epitaph. Also, the initial Oi! influences, which always emphasized a sort of working-class disillusionment and rebellion rather than the more middle-class social responsibility, remained influential in the scene. Some of the more

prominent bands at the time included The Almighty Lumberjacks of Death (ALD), with a rough mid-tempo Oi! sound and attitude with songs about drinking beer, street prostitutes, and hard living in the working-class residential areas of Detroit, and Cold as Life, a metalcore influenced band whose shows were infamous for their violence. Both bands had their own 'gangs' made up of local friends and fans like ALD's West Side Boot Boys (Doom, 2015). Unlike the bands in the original hardcore punk scene, ALD and Cold as Life actually started in Detroit with members who had grown up in the city.

If anything could be described as a central organization to bring people in the punk scene together, it might have in fact been the biggest white nationalist record company in America, Resistance Records, based out of Detroit (Dyck, 2017). Whereas by the late 1980s most of these types had been violently forced out of punk spaces, the scene in Detroit continued to have issues with right-wing violence as well as bands and fans associated with groups like the Northern Hammerskins at shows. Drummer 'Jiney' Jim, who briefly played in ALD, also played in the Oi! band the Rogues at the same time, and when he left ALD the Rogues went openly far-right in their politics releasing on the white nationalist label Rock-O-Rama in 1991. Other white nationalist bands from the Detroit area included Max Resist, Liberty 37, and Hellbilly. This is not to say that the performers encouraged reactionary people like that. In fact, the singer for Cold As Life Rodney 'Rawn Beuty' Barger, became notorious for violently persecuting neo-Nazi types who revealed themselves as such at shows (J. Doom, Personal communication, 22 September 2018). The gritty, gruesome angst and nihilism of punk was alive and well in Detroit and with pockets of violent punk and skinhead gangs and clubhouses in the residential areas of the cities they became for some the face of the scene.

This was not total however, as other bands with explicitly progressive politics developed and remained active within the Detroit scene throughout this time as well. An anarchist band The State, who's guitarist and singer came from Ann Arbor and had connections to the left-wing White Panther Party, played throughout the 1980s into the 1990s (P. Woodward, Personal communication, November 16, 2018). A communist band called Forced Anger played from the mid-1980s until 1991 and the guitarist 'Commie Scott' from Flint then formed the band Mount Thai. One of the biggest punk bands to come out of the Detroit scene in the 1990s was the Suicide Machines whose rapid hardcore and ska infused songs had explicitly anti-bigotry, anti-violence, socialist, and anarchist themes. In terms of bands that included women and people of color however, that would largely need to wait until Detroit indie music branched out, most prominently in the Garage scene (S. Koskinin, Personal communication, November 16, 2018).

Perhaps counter-intuitively, the more diverse acts in Detroit were also less political, at least outwardly. As a sort of bridge between the punk and garage scene there were the *Gories* and the *Laughing Hyenas*. Both bands infused blues beats and guitar riffs into their punk, the Gories faster and looser, and the Laughing Hyenas darker and heavier. The Laughing Hyenas had Larissa Strickland on guitar while the Gories had Peggy O'Neal on drums and African American Mick Collins on guitar and vocals. The Laughing Hyenas had songs about hard living and petty crime in the poor residential areas of Detroit and Ann Arbor while the Gories were more in tune with classic rock 'n' roll themes of fast living, good times, and social alienation (Detroit Punks, 2015; J. Brannon, Personal communication, 10 August 2018). Later, in 1998 the Soledad Brothers, three white Detroit men named after the three Marxist Black Panther activists who were imprisoned in Soledad Prison in the 1970s, continued this blues rock sound infused with punk attitude. What is interesting about these bands is that they recognized and emphasized the African American contributions to their sound. Many in the original hardcore scene, where John Brannon and Larissa Strickland of the Laughing Hyenas originally came from, denied that there was anything black about the music they played despite the hardcore sound being largely developed by an all-black band, *Bad Brains* (Rettman, 2010, p. 94; Miller, 2013, p. 211).

Once the initial wave of simple, aggressive, macho punk rock died down across the US, the scenes had more space and labels had more interest in more sonically innovative bands, and this created more opportunities for women and African Americans in the Detroit area looking for artistic expression. The Gories front man Mick Collins would form an early Detroit garage band in 1992 called the Dirtbombs, performing with guitarist and Taiwanese American Ko Melina and a revolving door of Detroit musicians. The *Detroit Cobras* had a female singer, guitarist, and bassist. *The Demolition Doll Rods* started in 1994 also had a woman lead singer and guitarists as well as drummer. The *Von Bondies* had founding member Marcie Bolen on guitar as well as a series of women bassists, and of course there was drummer Meg White from the *White Stripes*. Most of these bands released not on Detroit based labels but indie labels based in Seattle like *Sub Pop* or *LA like* In *The Red Records* and *Sympathy for the Record Industry*. These bands emphasized simplicity in dress and sound which Eric Abbey (2006) attributed to an inspiration from the early hardcore scene as well as a postmodern nostalgia and kitsch from mid-century rock n roll.

In some ways this was a return to a sound and authenticity similar to early punk from the Bookies scene as well. Their music was simple to play, and several of them like the *Gories* and the *Demolition Doll Rods* did not even have a bass player. While still largely dominated by male artists they also did not have the hyper-masculine aggression of 1980s Detroit punk and even played with androgynous aesthetics on stage. One could argue, particularly with the Doll Rods, that these groups continued to objectify women's sexuality, but the fact they had women on stage as lead guitarists, drummers, and singers in the first place is a notable change. The *Doll Rods* and the *Detroit Cobras* having women sing assertive songs about getting or leaving lovers, and the *Doll Rods* putting their male member in extra skimpy, feathery outfits provides an interesting example of what Mimi Schippers (2002, p. 16) called 'gender maneuvering' in underground rock scenes that questioned and transgressed traditional gender norms.

By the end of the 1990s Detroit had a unique independent punk and garage rock scene that was notable by the number of women musicians and the stripped-down sound and aesthetics that echoed the values of the older independent punk and hardcore scene. It went through developments like other punk scenes that pulled those involved in different directions for their sound and message. From the beginning there had been a debate within punk on whether it should be a populist, easy to play and participate in music, or a music of personal expression and experimentation, and whether the message should be one of shock and angst or of resistance against injustice. Bands played with these ideas and styles, mixing them together, taking them to extremes, and neither one really triumphed over the other. The hatred has stuck around in punk music in both Detroit and the wider US. But thanks in large part to the communities of production and exchange punks managed to build, it got channeled toward more coherent progressive ends rather than lashing out at the world and in the process reproducing some of the same discriminatory violence and power hierarchies as the general society they were alienated from.

The development and success of the garage rock scene is a significant development for homegrown Detroit music that has not received enough scholarly attention, especially given Detroit's unique racial, cultural, political, and economic history going back at least to the 1960s. Tracing a line between the early punk and hardcore scene through the declining years of the middle to late 1980s until the punk and garage revival from the mid-1990s to the 2000s will be an invaluable task as even the popular history sources dry up largely after 1984 and don't pick up again until the mid-1990s. This will bring opportunities to parse out how and when the Detroit punk scene matured, what perspectives this can give regarding the trajectories of the national punk scenes, as well as provide a unique cultural lens for an America and Detroit emerging from the Cold War into a globalized economy and culture.

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