

KONSTANTIN BUTZ & ROBERT A. WINKLER (EDS.)

HARDCORE RESEARCH

PUNK
PRACTICE
POLITICS

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From:

Konstantin Butz, Robert A. Winkler (eds.)

Hardcore Research

Punk, Practice, Politics

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For more than 40 years, hardcore and punk have promised to offer an alternative to what is perceived as the norm and the mainstream. *Hardcore Research: Punk, Practice, Politics* provides a comprehensive insight into some of the most active, outspoken, and widely received scholarly positions in the academic discourses on hardcore and punk and combines them with a variety of new and emerging voices. The book brings together scholars with personal ties to past and present hardcore and punk scenes, who present both insightful and critical examinations of the rich and varied histories of this subcultural phenomenon and its current reverberations at the intersection of cultural practice and academic research.

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Introduction

Konstantin Butz and Robert A. Winkler

Beyond *Hardcore* '81

We're a little late to the party. When the idea for this anthology arose during an American Studies conference that we both attended in the spring of 2019, we hoped to be able to publish it in 2021: exactly 40 years after Canadian punk band D.O.A. released their infamous album *Hardcore* '81. Since that record arguably introduced the term "hardcore" in the subcultural context of punk music for the first time,¹ and as numerous popular publications on punk and hardcore culture similarly locate the term's emergence around 1981 (cf. e.g. Blush; Cogan; Keithley; Markey and Schwartz), we thought 2021 would be the perfect year for a publication that looks back at the rich, diverse, and ambiguous events and developments that shaped this subcultural and musical phenomenon up to this very day. We were convinced that the 40th anniversary of hardcore should not pass unnoticed, and thus started brainstorming forms and formats for how to look from today's perspective at this impressive time span. If we were going to "celebrate" 40 years of hardcore, we thought that the most obvious headline for our birthday card could be a simple and yet suggestive homage to what, four decades ago, had been called *Hardcore* '81. We thus came up with the title *Hardcore* '21. Indeed, for the first few months that we began working on the book and reaching out to possible contributors, we were quite content with *Hardcore* '21, as it explicitly marked the contemporary point in time from which we hoped to establish new and critical approaches to hardcore while simultaneously evoking associations with the very first appearances of the term in the North American punk scenes of 1981.

1 The record was accompanied by a festival (and tour) called "Hardcore '81," which, alongside D.O.A., presented other influential bands such as California's Black Flag and Nevada's 7 Seconds. In 2021, D.O.A. embarked on a tour through Canada and the US in celebration of 40 years of *Hardcore* '81.

However, a certain pandemic massively interfered with—or better, screwed up—both our own schedules and the schedules of our contributors. Due to COVID-19, priorities were adjusted, deadlines had to be postponed, and some authors unfortunately were forced to cancel their contributions because of pandemic-inflicted obligations. It became very clear that *Hardcore* '21 would definitely not be ready for publication in 2021, and, with the passing of time and eventually the beginning and progression of 2021 itself, we realized that this title would no longer work for our book. We did not like the idea of publishing an anthology called *Hardcore* '21 in the year '22—let alone '23!—as that would effectively miss the point of alluding to the concrete occasion that inspired it in the first place. Nevertheless, even with an outdated working title and ever-growing delays in our production schedule, many authors remained aboard, first-draft essays went on their way, and we realized that—obviously—our interest in hardcore and its manifold influences was not dependent on a mere date or number anyway. After all, maybe our concentration on the years 1981/2021 and an alleged 40th anniversary had been a bit too obsessive: Why be so formal about a cultural formation whose core values seemed to be organized around questioning and rebelling against formalities and orthodoxies?

The last thing we wanted and want to do with our book is adhere to the contingent and often meaningless ritual of celebrating (sub-) cultural evolutions as fixed events within determined historicizations. Certainly, the year 1981 was decisive for the establishment of “hardcore” as a term that people started to understand within the specific context of punk culture. But who exactly could actually prove that this term had never before been used to articulate that culture's specificities—be it in music, style, or attitude? At least as a musical genre, the roots of hardcore seem to precede the term's popularization in 1981. For instance, in his article, “Rise of Suburban Punk Rock in Los Angeles,” historian Dewar MacLeod mentions the extraordinary fastness and loudness of Orange County band The Middle Class on their seven-inch record *Out of Vogue*, and Hermosa Beach band Black Flag on their own seven-inch record *Nervous Breakdown*—both released in 1978—and states: “With these two singles, hardcore was born” (127).² From this point of view, we would have to add at least three more candles (and an altered date) to our cake that read *Hardcore* '81, and, still, we could not be sure if there was not yet an older

2 See also MacLeod's detailed study *Kids of the Black Hole: Punk Rock in Postsuburban California*.

record, another long-lost article in an overlooked fanzine, or just a forgotten conversation between a few young punks that—even earlier than the above examples—referred to hardcore as either an adjective or a noun with which to express a dedicated involvement in particular subcultural activities.³ Scene member Steven Blush, in his much-cited book *American Hardcore*,⁴ summarizes it this way: “Regardless of the precise origin, when Punks said, ‘Hardcore,’ other Punks knew what they meant. Hardcore expressed an extreme: the absolute most Punk” (16).⁵

Blush’s shift from the “precise origin” of the term to its expressive meaning within the context of punk indicates that hardcore might best be understood as a rather flexible and processual concept that evolves discursively from the conversations and exchanges of its protagonists, instead of relying on a historically fixed definition. Whereas a record such as *Hardcore ’81* can bear witness to the linguistic presence of a certain term at a certain time by putting a year on it, the “extreme” that fills the term with concrete meaning depends on the respective punks that enunciate it and actually say (and live): “hardcore!”

From *Hardcore California* to *Hardcore Research*

An insight into the diversity that might characterize such an understanding of hardcore as a sustained discourse and lived practice can be found in another very early source: a publication that actually uses the word in a book title for the first time and explicitly ties it to the evolution of punk cultures. In their 1983 *Hardcore California: A History of Punk and New Wave*, Peter Belsito

3 Marc Spitz and Brendan Mullen in the “This is Hardcore” chapter of their oral history *We Got the Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story of L.A. Punk*, for instance, classify hardcore as “[l]ouder, faster, angrier” and date it around the year 1979 (x). Similarly, George Hurchalla in *Going Underground: American Punk 1979–1992* and Tony Rettman in *Why be Something that You’re Not: Detroit Hardcore 1979–1985* argue that the underground phenomenon of hardcore kicks off at the end of the 1970s.

4 Blush’s account also serves as basis for Paul Rachman’s 2006 documentary *American Hardcore: The History of American Punk Rock 1980–1986*.

5 Blush exemplarily highlights the close interconnections and ties between punk and hardcore and indicates that they are productively intertwined and related. Acknowledging this inextricable pairing, in this introduction, we chose to use the abbreviation “hardcore/punk” whenever we felt that a specific differentiation between the two was neither necessary nor possible. For the most part, the boundaries between punk and hardcore are fluid.

and Bob Davis present a comprehensive overview of early 1980s punk and hardcore scenes in the two cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco. “Everyone mentioned in this book,” the two editors claim, “originated in the hardcore” (7). They continue by exemplarily specifying the term:

Hardcore: a bleached-blonde defiant sixteen-year-old living alone in a downtown hotel; sleazy but on her own. Hardcore: the S.S.I. [supplemental security income] recipient being paid off by the government to stay out of trouble renting a rehearsal studio with his monthly check. Hardcore: the corporate flunky who quits his job to manage a band of acned adolescents. (ibid.)

With this descriptive introduction, Belsito and Davis evoke the varied cast of 1980s hardcore types that ranged from teenagers to adults, from poverty-stricken musicians to self-proclaimed band managers and way beyond, as the multitude of characters populating the photographs and texts of their book prove. What all of them have in common, the editors emphasize, is that these are “people who did it themselves” (ibid.), thereby anticipating the strong influence of autonomous do-it-yourself (DIY) ethics that shape hardcore cultures until today.⁶ And although not everyone mentioned in *Hardcore California* “has continued in the hardcore,” Belsito and Davis conclude that “they all know what it means” (ibid.). Thus, they parallel Blush’s account of hardcore and the term’s semantic reliance on shared knowledge among like-minded people who feel affiliated with punk culture.

Both sources—the books by Blush and Belsito/Davis—seem to conceive of hardcore as an epistemic concept that shapes its protagonists’ way of producing meaning and knowledge within a certain local, temporal, and subcultural context. Belsito and Davis, at the end of their preface, gear their take on the fast pace of 1980s hardcore scenes in particular, and the future of hardcore in general:

6 For a comprehensive account of the emergence of DIY hardcore/punk record labels in the early 1980s, see Alan O’Connor’s *Punk Record Labels and the Struggle for Autonomy: The Emergence of DIY*. Rebekah Cordova traces the educative aspect of hardcore/punk’s DIY ethos in *DIY Punk as Education: From Mis-Education to Educative Healing*; Daniel Makagon takes a look at self-organized hardcore/punk concerts in *Underground: The Subterranean Culture of DIY Punk Shows*; and Paula Guerra and Pedro Quintela present nine essays on independent, autonomous, and improvised hardcore/punk publishing in their anthology *Punk, Fanzines and DIY Cultures in a Global World: Fast, Furious and Xerox*.

Every 18 to 24 months a new generation passes through the scene. There are bands discussed in this book that weren't even formed when we began compiling information in 1981. The people change, but the scene stays young. Later, even the title of the pop underground and its philosophy *will* change. Regardless of the name they choose, the hardcore are always the hardcore. (ibid.)⁷

Forty years after Belsito and Davis acknowledged hardcore as the “pop underground” and described its early adherents, hardcore and its philosophy has *indeed* changed, progressed, and eventually become the autonym of a subculture that—while fans and aficionados would certainly still claim that they “all know what it means”—has actually diversified into a whole variety of movements and subgroups.⁸ From packs of privileged young white men who turn their suburban boredom into ultrafast and violent music performances, to ethically aware communities engaged in the peace movement, civil rights, anti-racism, and animal liberation; from kids who organize DIY concerts in countries all over the world to bands that relentlessly tour the globe and thus either rely on old or establish new networks for like-minded musicians; from punk rockers who turn to spirituality and preach abstinence from alcohol and drugs, to feminist and queer groups fighting patriarchal structures and undermining heteronormative sexuality: what unifies everyone who identifies with the term hardcore is an either self-proclaimed or imposed position outside of normative structures.⁹ In this sense, “hardcore has always remained

7 Throughout this introduction and in the articles of our anthology, quotes in italics are emphasized in the original unless noted otherwise.

8 Beyond the various forms of the subculture of hardcore tied to punk that constitute the focus of this anthology, there are a number of other (sub-) cultural phenomena that make use of the same term, the most obvious ones being hardcore pornography (see e.g. Linda Williams) and hardcore techno and rave (see e.g. Jeremy Gilbert).

9 A list of publications that touches on all facets of hardcore can obviously not be exhaustive, and will always remain preliminary. In the following we make a few suggestions (beyond the works of the authors who contribute to this anthology) of where to start reading about the respective topics: For an extensive collection of primary and secondary sources documenting the nexus of hardcore/punk, race in general, and whiteness in particular, see Stephen Duncombe and Maxwell Tremblay's *White Riot: Punk Rock and the Politics of Race*; Jonathan Pieslak delves into the complex relation of hardcore/punk scenes and radical deep ecology groups in *Music and Radicalism: An Introduction to the Music Cultures of al-Qa'ida, Racist Skinheads, Christian-Affiliated Radicals, and Eco-Animal Rights Militants*; Phoenix X Eeyore provides insights into the history of earth

the hardcore” in providing the means for different manifestations of a critical subcultural avant-garde—be it aesthetically, ethically, or politically. As an emancipatory movement that set out to question, challenge, and alter the existing structures of both corporate and independent music scenes as well as particular social conditions and society at large, hardcore’s main “political” claim was and still is to offer an alternative to what is perceived as the norm and the mainstream.

In the year 2023, there are still hardcore bands, hardcore shows, hardcore zines (both online and in print), and—just as Belsito and Davis with their 1983 publication—there are still people who write and compile books, essays, and texts that comment on, document, and analyze hardcore. And, in fact, with regard to the latter activity we have an actual (and pretty precise) anniversary to celebrate: While we missed the “birthday” of *Hardcore* ’81 and while it remains hard to really pinpoint when exactly hardcore emerged as a subcultural formation, it is pretty safe to say that *Hardcore California*, exactly 40 years ago, indeed constituted “the most complete document in existence dealing with this subject” as the editors themselves had rightly estimated (7). Thus, while we would (now) definitely refrain from framing our anthology as a booklet to accompany the 40th birthday ceremony of hardcore itself, we really like the idea of contextualizing it as an acknowledgement of 40 years of analytical and

and animal liberation in the US hardcore scene in *Total Revolution? An Outsider History of Hardline: From Vegan Straight Edge and Radical Animal Rights to Millenarian Mystical Muslims and Antifascist Fascism*; for accounts of the emergence, proliferation, politics, and contradictions of Straight Edge see Ross Haenfler’s *Straight Edge: Clean-Living Youth, Hardcore Punk, and Social Change*, Gabriel Kuhn’s two books *Sober Living for the Revolution: Hardcore Punk, Straight Edge, and Radical Politics* and *X: Straight Edge and Radical Sobriety*, Brian Peterson’s *Burning Fight: The Nineties Hardcore Revolution in Ethics, Politics, Spirit, and Sound* as well as Robert T. Wood’s *Straightedge: Complexity and Contradictions of a Subculture*; the history of homocore/queercore is covered by David Ciminelli and Ken Knox’s *Homocore: The Loud and Raucous Rise of Queer Rock*; for our German-speaking readers we recommend the excellent *Homopunk History* by Philipp Meinert; Curran Nault analyzes the connection of queer theory/practice and hardcore/punk theory/practice with emphasis on queercore mediamaking in *Queercore: Queer Punk Media Subculture*; for decidedly feminist takes on hardcore/punk see e.g. Lauraine Leblanc’s *Pretty in Punk: Girl’s Gender Resistance in a Boys’ Subculture*, Vivien Goldman’s *Revenge of the She-Punks: A Feminist Music History From Poly Styrene to Pussy Riot*, and, for our German-speaking readers, *Our Piece of Punk: Ein queer_feministischer Blick auf den Kuchen*, edited by Barbara Lüdde and Judit Vetter, as well as *Punk as F*ck: Die Szene aus FLINTA-Perspektive*, edited by Diana Ringelsiep and Ronja Schwikowski.

documentary *writing* about hardcore and consequently: 40 years of *hardcore research*.¹⁰

Although the editors of *Hardcore California* themselves explained that the content of their book “didn’t come from the record room at the library” as they drew “more on experience than on dry research” (ibid.), we still—and for that very reason—perceive them as pioneers and practitioners of doing active and concrete research on the specific subject matter of hardcore, who in doing so proved that it is not only possible but also extremely insightful and thought-provoking to publish a whole book on such an eclectic subcultural topic. With their work, Belsito and Davis paved the way for far-reaching and comprehensive approaches to hardcore and punk that have eventually materialized in the works and analyses of dedicated (academic) researchers—some of which we have the privilege of bringing together in this volume. They provide proof that while hardcore developed as a subcultural phenomenon over the last forty years, it simultaneously migrated into academic fields as a subject of diverse scholarly disciplines including anthropology, philosophy, American studies, Chicana/o Studies, cultural studies, musicology, political science, queer studies, sociology, history, and literature. It is from these discursive standpoints that the scholars in this anthology establish their analytic accounts of past and present hardcore/punk.¹¹

Hardcore Researchers

As most academic authors working on hardcore/punk bring a decidedly personal interest to this cultural and musical phenomenon and many explicitly mention their own involvement in hardcore/punk scenes and networks,

10 Of course, there has been analytical writing about punk in general before Belsito and Davis used the specific title *Hardcore California* in 1983 and thereby introduced that particular term into the existing literature on punk. The most obvious example would certainly be Dick Hebdige’s 1979 *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, which still pops up in every introduction to books and essays on punk, hardcore, and alternative (youth) cultures. Interestingly, the word “hardcore” does appear at one point in Hebdige’s book; however, he merely uses it to refer to members of the British subculture at hand, i.e. “hardcore members” who preferred the “derisory connotations” of the name “punk” as opposed to “the more neutral ‘new wave’” (112). Thus, Hebdige does not implement the word as a specific subcultural term or autonym in itself.

11 See footnote 5 for a comment on the abbreviation “hardcore/punk.”

this book delineates a scholarly field that is deeply embedded in self-reflexive subcultural engagement. In this sense, our anthology is both about hardcore/punk as a subcultural phenomenon and about ways of doing research that are literally *hardcore*—i.e., with the utmost dedication and emancipatory ideals. It introduces various academic perspectives that engage different methods of professional research to analyze and dissect the subcultural fringes and broader cultural interconnections in which hardcore/punk materializes. What we think of and tentatively frame as “hardcore research” with the title of our book fuses passionate interest, live and lived experience, and academic rigor. Our anthology thus brings together different notions of both subcultural and scholarly practice by interconnecting the authors’ practical involvement in hardcore/punk contexts—ranging from musicianship to political activism to cultural and journalistic commentary—and their methodological expertise in different academic fields. From this angle, our contributors are “hardcore researchers.” They work and teach in academia; most of them received doctoral degrees through directly working on hardcore/punk; and all of them have personal histories of active participation and passionate interest in hardcore/punk scenes around the globe.¹² Their personal and pro-

12 The contributions in this anthology mainly focus on the North American context, which is probably not too surprising given the fact that we both come from the field of American Studies, and thus have mainly approached the study of hardcore/punk from that specific angle. Consequently, in compiling this book, we reached out to authors who have been influential for our research and who work with a similar focus on North American hardcore/punk. However, we want to explicitly emphasize that the notion of “hardcore research” would by no means be complete by considering only North American scenes. In fact, there are countless studies that document and analyze hardcore/punk cultures all over the globe. For a first impression of the richness of “hardcore research” beyond North America, see for example: Russ Bestley, Mike Dines, Alastair Gordon, and Paula Guerra’s two edited volumes *The Punk Reader: Research Transmissions from the Local and the Global* and *Trans-Global Punk Scenes: The Punk Reader. Volume 2*; Julian C H Lee and Marco Ferrarese’s anthology *Punks, Monks, and Politics: Authenticity in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia*; Marquis H.K.’s *Thirty Years of Anger: One Man’s Journey through the Australian Underground Hardcore Punk & Extreme Metal Scenes*; Deon Maas and Keith Jones’ documentary *Punk in Africa*; Jennifer Milioto Matsue’s *Making Music in Japan’s Underground: The Underground Tokyo Hardcore Scene*; Olga Rodríguez-Ulloa, Rodrigo Quijano, and Shane Greene’s *Punk!: Las Américas Edition*; Ingo Rohrer’s *Cohesion and Dissolution: Friendship in the Globalized Punk and Hardcore Scene of Buenos Aires*; and Jian Xiao’s *Punk Culture in Contemporary China*.

fessional biographies predestine them as experts who present insightful and critical examinations of both the rich and varied histories of this subcultural phenomenon, and its current reverberations at the intersection of cultural and academic practice.

While we might be among only a handful of academics who would have considered acknowledging (or commemorating) the occasion of an alleged 40th anniversary of hardcore and, even more specifically, the 40th anniversary of analytic *writing* about hardcore, we are by no means the first ones to think about the nexus of hardcore/punk and academia in general. In 2012, Zack Furness edited the volume *Punkademics: The Basement Show in the Ivory Tower*, stating that he did so because he was “intensely curious about the ways in which people reconciled their interests and understood the dynamics between [the] two very different ‘scenes’” of punk and academia (8). In his book, Furness presents around a dozen essays that uniquely illustrate “what other people had to say about scholarship on punk” and “broadly speaking, [...] what kind of sense people made of their punk/academic situation” (ibid.). We understand the anthology *Hardcore Research* as a contribution to and perpetuation of the project that Furness initiated a decade ago with *Punkademics*, and we reinforce his contention that academic scholarship on hardcore/punk has not only contributed to rethinking punk history, re-conceptualizing its dynamics, challenging hegemonic narratives about punk and its politics, but also—most significantly—that it “expand[s] the parameters of research itself” (18). As the subtitle of *Hardcore Research* implies, we are interested in what kinds and interpretations of *punk(s)* pervade and underlie hardcore, what kinds of *practice(s)*—both cultural and academic—our authors find compelling, and what kinds of *politics* shape and drive the scenes, participants, and articulations of hardcore/punk. In nodding to the 40 years of writing about hardcore that we can look back at today, our book provides a heuristic presentation of contemporary perspectives that constantly foster that ongoing discourse and the accompanying dialog between hardcore/punk scenes and hardcore/punk research(ers). While far from being exhaustive, and indeed without any interest in claiming completeness, the selection of contributions that we chose to present in this anthology introduces sixteen individual takes on a flourishing subcultural phenomenon that continues to provoke extremely diverse analyses, reactions, reflections, and discussions. The different articles do not holistically define what hardcore research is, but they offer distinct insights into the richness of what it *can be*.

Cover and Concept

On the cover of this book, we are extremely pleased to feature a photograph by Farrah Skeiky, a well-known Arab-American photographer, creative director, and writer based in Washington, DC. In 2020 she self-published the book *Present Tense: DC Punk and DIY Right Now*, which she describes “as a response to those who might think that DC punk died out in the 90s, or speak to the creativity of this community in the past tense” (Skeiky). She conceives of her book as “an argument against nostalgia, against complacency. It is a celebration of one of the most revered traditions of modern music, in the context of today” (ibid.). In that sense, we consider Skeiky herself an actual hardcore researcher, as her photographic work documents a striving scene while being characterized by an extraordinary sense for those particular moments of physical and musical intensity that have always defined hardcore/punk performances. Her extraordinary shot of the crowd—or the “pit,” as many hardcore/punk kids would call it—in interaction with musicians of the Baltimore hardcore band Turnstile not only perfectly captures such a moment but also features a contemporary band that, particularly with their 2021 album *Glow On*, proves that—more than 40 years into its existence—the genre of hardcore music can still bring forth highly innovative art and expression. In a sense, *Glow On* represents a popular and critically acclaimed version of what—to again invoke the draft title of our book—could in fact be regarded as Hardcore ’21, which of course makes a photograph of Turnstile even more fitting for the cover of this anthology.¹³ In addition to its remarkable account of present-day hardcore, the “pit” in Skeiky’s photograph also parallels the way we look at the organization and presentation of the contributions in this book. It implies a concrete instruction for our readers:

13 Yes, we know that there is no accounting for musical taste and not everyone who follows contemporary hardcore might necessarily place Turnstile on the top of their record shelves (or streaming playlists for that matter) but a brief look at the video “Turnstile Love Connection” or their Tiny Desk appearance (you will find both on *YouTube*) indicates to what extent they exemplify a version of hardcore that goes beyond a thirty-second song of three distorted guitar chords—which, of course, would still be a perfectly fine and genre-defining way of playing hardcore as well. Personally, we love both. Regardless of Turnstile’s position within the contemporary hardcore scene, we regard Skeiky’s photo of them and their audience as an exemplary document of the participatory moments and openings that hardcore music can create for both musicians and audiences alike.

Just as the “pit” does not work according to a strictly choreographed arrangement and instead offers a multitude of opportunities to enter and to participate, we refrained from imposing a fixed sequence or chronology upon the different contributions that constitute *Hardcore Research*. Of course, it is possible to read this book from front to back, but we would rather invite you to approach the articles presented here similar to the setting of a hardcore show and just (stage-) dive right into it at your convenience. You might bump into a text that you will wholeheartedly disagree with; you might pogo along with authors and theories that you are familiar with and that you call friends; you might slam dance with contentions that you find either convincing or far-fetched: whatever you take away from *Hardcore Research*, it is our hope that you find it inspiring for further reflections on the complex facets of the topic at hand. The best-case scenario for us would, once again, be metaphorically linked to the setting depicted in Skeiky’s cover photograph. In analogy to Turnstile’s lead vocalist Brenden Yates, who screams out his version of hardcore directly from within the crowd, from within the individuals that carry him and make his performance possible, from within the different shouts and cheers that constitute the many-voiced pit that is hardcore, we encourage you to read *Hardcore Research* as an invitation to articulate and contribute your own voice: whether it is to shout back, sing along, or present your own individual lyrics.

Content and Contributors

To guide your choice of where to enter *Hardcore Research*, in the following, and in accordance with our table of contents, we alphabetically list our contributors and briefly introduce the titles and topics of their respective articles:

Gerfried Ambrosch uses his article “Changing Perspectives: From Participation to Observation (Autoethnography of a Punk Researcher)” to consider the change in perspective that accompanies a switch from participating as an active member of the hardcore/punk scene to observing it as researcher. He undergirds his reflections with references to his own experiences as a touring hardcore musician.

Ellen Bernhard, in “Milo Goes to College, Ellen Goes to Grad School: The Series of Events that Turned an Afterschool Hobby into a Hardcore Pursuit of Punk Rock” takes us on her journey from high school to grad school and the academic interest she develops in the hardcore/punk scenes and music that

shaped her youth. She writes from the perspective of a generation that grew up with (and learned about hardcore/punk from) the internet, and considers the relevance of the punk rock ethos for her teaching activities in the field of digital communication.

In “A Network of Hardcore Researchers: Punk Studies, Punk Scholarship, Punk Pedagogy,” **Russ Bestley**, **Mike Dines**, and **Francis Stewart** provide an overview of punk scholarship with a particular focus on the Punk Scholars Network (PSN) and the history of changing methodological approaches towards the subject of hardcore/punk. The many works they reference in their bibliography provide an excellent starting point for further reading into the academic study of punk and hardcore.

Marcus Clayton, in “Dancing on the Corpses’ Ashes’: On Post-Hardcore Performance and Erased Nonwhite Bodies,” engages the punk ethos to highlight the underestimated survival of nonwhite, Afrolatinx, and queer bodies through the power of performance. He presents a close analysis of hardcore/punk videos with a particular focus on the work of El Paso’s late 1990s post-hardcore band At The Drive-In.

Brian Cogan, who published the comprehensive *Encyclopedia of Punk Music and Culture*, and **Kevin Dunn**, author of *Global Punk: Resistance and Rebellion in Everyday Life*, seized the occasion of our anthology to converse about their careers writing about hardcore/punk. Representing very different academic trajectories, in their contribution “Hardcore, Punk, and Academia” they discuss their involvement within punk scenes, how their personal experiences and interests have led them to the similar task of writing punk scholarship, and what it means to be a “hardcore academic” from their individual perspectives.

Sean Cullen, in “Survival of the Streets’: Krishna Consciousness and Religion in Hardcore Punk at the End of the Cold War,” discusses conceptions of the hardcore subgenre of Straight Edge, as well as the notions of the sacred and the secular within hardcore/punk, by looking at the influences of Krishna spirituality on the American punk scene in general and on hardcore vocalist Ray Cappo and his bands Youth of Today and Shelter in particular.

Recalling Canadian hardcore punk band D.O.A.’s debut album (the predecessor to *Hardcore* ’81) in the title of his contribution “*Something Better Change*: Hardcore and the Promise of a Liberating Punk Education,” **David Ensminger** reflects on hardcore punk praxis in the context of a pedagogy that helps students to empower and emancipate themselves from existing power struc-

tures. In doing so, he includes considerations of the chances and challenges of contemporary internet phenomena and online education.

Shayna Maskell looks at the construction of race within hardcore/punk by reconsidering the narratives associated with the seminal all-black hardcore band Bad Brains. In “‘There is no hope for the USA’: Bad Brains and The Sounds of Race in DC Hardcore,” she analyzes the band’s history and their performances of multiple racial identities in view of the complicated aesthetics of racialized sound, the reinterpretation of rock ‘n’ roll, the lyrical parallels to folk music, and the inclusion of reggae.

With our contribution “Ms. Bob Davis and *Hardcore California: A Conversation About a Forty-Year-Old Document of Hardcore Research*” we come full circle and include an exclusive interview with one of the editors of *Hardcore California: A History of Punk and New Wave*. In addition to recalling the genealogy of her and Belsito’s 1983 book, **Ms. Bob Davis** touches on early punk and art scenes around the famous DIY venue Valencia Tool & Die in San Francisco and her unique career as a musician, academic, and transgender activist.

In their article “Writing *from* Hardcore: Interwoven Lines of Becoming,” **Alain Müller** and **Marion Schulze** explore heuristic potentialities to capture hardcore as a constructive force by referring to the conceptual apparatus of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. In doing so, they reflect on the intimate relationship between hardcore and their own research as academics.

Alan Parkes’ comprehensive account “White Punks in the Chocolate City: Hardcore and Local History in Washington, DC” provides a detailed insight into youth cultures in late twentieth-century DC by showing that the history of hardcore stands not only to expose the significance of the subculture, but also the histories and deep-seated political and social realities which influenced its members.

David Pearson offers a rare musicological approach to hardcore in his article “The Musical Aesthetics of Hardcore: Straightforward, Strident, and Antagonistic.” While offering analytical accounts of hardcore style and rhetoric through readings of exemplary songs and their notations, Pearson articulates a straightforward critique of postmodern theory, which we encourage to read in fruitful and productive contrast to Daniel S. Traber’s rather postmodern contribution to this anthology.

In her article “Adventures of a DIY Oral Historian: How the Hardcore Punk Rock Scene of the 1980s Continues to Influence My Life as a Writer,” **Stacy Russo**, author of the book *We Were Going to Change the World: Interviews with Women from the 1970s & 1980s Southern California Punk Rock Scene*, offers a very

personal reflection on her writerly practice and its interconnections to her experiences in the early California hardcore scene.

Daniel S. Traber, in “Whose Loud Fast Rules? – Always Already Post-Hardcore,” presents a unique look back at the last (almost) 40 years of his preoccupation with punk and hardcore by establishing an incomplete and random list of what he labels as post-hardcore precursors. Traber engages and relies on postmodern thought and theory, which we encourage reading in fruitful and productive contrast to the straightforward critique of postmodernism that David Pearson articulates in his contribution.

With his article “Have You Never Been Mellow?” – Joy and Ugliness in Punk and Hardcore Aesthetics,” **Maxwell Tremblay** presents a very pointed and witty commentary on the singular aesthetics of punk and hardcore by discussing it within the scope of personal observations and accompanying philosophical and cultural implications.

Extending and recapitulating the findings of her highly comprehensive book *Queer-Feminist Punk: An Anti-Social History*, **Katharina Wiedlack**, in her contribution “Queer-feminist Hardcore/Punk: Academic Research and Community Support in the Age of the Pandemic,” maps out how queer-feminist hardcore/punk answers to the contemporary moment. She considers the backlash against queers, trans* and non-normatively gender individuals, and women* spearheaded by the Trump administration, the interconnections between queer-feminist hardcore/punks and the Black Lives Matter movement, and the ramifications of—and subcultural reactions to—the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last but not least, we would like to point to the “Contributors” section with author biographies at the end of this book. Besides short CVs, it includes a questionnaire for every contributor listing up to three of their most important publications on hardcore/punk, three records that shaped their interest in hardcore/punk, three theoretical books that are important for them, and the first hardcore/punk show as well as the first academic conference they attended. We regard this information as providing not only interesting insights into the personal and academic backgrounds of our authors, but also inspiration for further reading, hearing, and looking into the subcultural and academic discourses that underlie and pervade the articles in *Hardcore Research*.

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