

# Aging, Nostalgia and Older Punk Women's Fandom

Laura Way

University of Roehampton

*[laura.way@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:laura.way@roehampton.ac.uk)*

## Abstract

Despite their continued engagement as audiences throughout their lives, there is some suggestion that Aging, or older, fans have been at large omitted from fan studies (Middlemost, 2022). This does seem to be shifting, however, and there is a growing body of fandom scholarship concerning Aging fans. Indeed, in the context of punk, there has been a growing recognition of the continued significance of punk to older participants and fans (e.g. Andes, 2002, Bennett, 2006, Davis, 2006), contrasting earlier work which theorized punk as a youth subculture (see, for example, Hebdige, 1998). This reflects the increasing academic interest in the aging popular music audience more broadly (Bennett and Hodkinson, 2012). Despite such positive shifts, aging women continue to be marginalised in such discussions concerning punk and older fans, meaning that much theoretical and conceptual understandings of aging punks have failed to fully consider the interaction between aging, gender, and fandom.

KEYWORDS: aging, gender, fandom, punk, nostalgia

## Introduction

Despite their continued engagement as audiences throughout their lives, there is some suggestion that aging, or older, fans have been at large omitted from fan studies (Middlemost, 2022). This does seem to be shifting, however, and there is a growing body of fandom scholarship concerning aging fans. Indeed, in the context of punk, there has been a growing recognition of the continued significance of punk to older participants and fans (e.g., Andes, 2002, Bennett, 2006, Davis, 2006), contrasting earlier work which theorized punk as a youth subculture (see, for example, Hebdige, 1998). This reflects the increasing academic interest in the aging popular music audience more broadly (Bennett and Hodkinson, 2012). Despite

such positive shifts, aging women continue to be marginalised in such discussions concerning punk and older fans, meaning that much theoretical and conceptual understandings of aging punks have failed to fully consider the interaction between aging, gender, fandom and/or subcultural affiliation.

Drawing upon findings from (in-depth and e-mail) interviews with older punk women and participant-created zine pages by older punk women, this article explores how nostalgia, through a particular focus on music fandom, is used by aging punk women to construct the significance and meaning of punk to them 'in the present' and in a context in which they are now 'older'. Furthermore, the way nostalgia is commonly conceptualised will be explored through examples of melancholy (Meurling, 2014 in Lövgren, 2015) and the notion of nostalgia as utopian (Pickering and Keightley, 2006). I begin this article with a consideration of relevant literature pertaining to punk and gender; fandom, aging and punk; and the significance of nostalgia to fandom studies. This will contextualise the discussion going forward as well as justifying research with older punk women who have previously been marginalised and largely rendered invisible in academic discussions concerning punk and aging. From here, I will outline the methodology and methods behind my research with older punk women that this article draws upon, highlighting some of the underpinning approaches, before discussing ways nostalgia was 'used' by these women in constructing the ongoing significance of punk in their lives and/or to construct their identities as changing over time.

## Punk Fandom, Older Women and Nostalgia

There is now a growing body of research focusing solely on punk women or considering gender in punk more broadly (see, for example, Hanson, 2017, Leblanc 2002, Liptrot, 2014). Existing research concerning punk women has largely revolved around three broad areas—female punk musicians (e.g. Berkers, 2012, Cohen, 2001, Denim, 1977, Kennedy, 2002, Reddington, 2007), punk women as a minority within a male-dominated subculture (Griffin, 2012, Leblanc, 2002, Roman, 1988), and women within the riot grrrl movement (Davis, 2001, Monem, 2007, Piano, 2003) (with riot grrrl considered an offshoot of punk or as a 'punk feminism').

The empirical focus which is of most relevance to my own research with older punk women concerns studies which consider those who identify as or affiliate with punk foremost, rather than those classed as 'punk musicians', as I was not seeking to recruit a sample based on the criteria of them being a musician. Where academia focuses on punk women, rather than women who are punk musicians, the attention is usually framed by these women being perceived as a minority within a masculine subculture (punk). Punk is understood as a masculine subculture in terms of males outnumbering females as well as punk being seen to rest upon notions of masculinity (Griffin, 2012, Leblanc, 2002, Roman, 1988). The most notable piece of work which considers female punks (owed to its length and detail) is 'Pretty in Punk' by Lauraine Leblanc (2002). This research considers how punk girls/women negotiate gender within a subculture which is typically, as noted above, coded as male (Leblanc, 2002). Whilst Leblanc's (2002) findings shed a light on the construction of femininity and resistance amongst punk women, Leblanc (2002) focuses on those she terms 'punk girls' and this is reflected in the demography of

her sample with only two participants from the sample of forty being thirty years old and above. This begs the question, what about older punk women?

## Fandom and Aging

This article opened with the observation of a tendency to omit aging, or older, fans from fan studies (Middlemost, 2022). Fan cultures have been traditionally perceived as youth-based phenomena and this can result in older fans being positioned as acting inappropriately for their age (Jerslev and Petersen, 2018). Those who retain subcultural involvement 'post-youth' are often viewed, rightly or wrongly, as 'refusing to grow up' (Bennett and Hodkinson, 2013). This marginalisation of older fans in empirical work might reflect how they are perceived in terms of their fandom in line with broader narratives of decline with regards to aging. There might be a tendency, for example, for aging fans to be viewed as 'affirmational' fans, who hold deep attachments, but who are not 'transformational' fans who rework or transform texts/objects (Harrington, 2018) and therefore:

Because affirmational fans are 'doing nothing' visible with their fandom other than enjoying it, they are overlooked in fan studies. Indeed, to some scholars, non-productive, non-networked fans may not be 'fans' at all (see Coppa 2014) (Harrington, 2018: 237).

Such a dichotomy of fandom is problematic and further marginalises aging, or older, fans. Though care then does need to be taken concerning the discourses pertaining to such studies, there has been increased academic interest in the aging music audience and, with this, consideration of music fandom for those 'post-youth', or those whose fandom is deemed 'life-long'. Harrington and Bielby (2010) summarise the four key age-based issues which have received attention from fan scholars as: age norms within fandom; life milestones and fandom; changes in the fan (self) over time; and changes in the fan *object* over time. Indeed, the concept of 'enduring fandom' (where fandom is maintained across the life-course) opens up these areas of exploration in terms of conceptualizing how the meaning of fandom can change and/or how expressions of it do (Jerslev and Petersen, 2018). Examples of studies which explore this 'enduring fandom' include Cavicchi's (1998) work on Bruce Springsteen fans; Vroomen's (2004) work on older female fans of Kate Bush; Stevenson's (2009) research with aging David Bowie fans; and Anderson's (2012) work on older female Duran Duran fans.

There have been several research studies which had made aging, or older, punks their focus (Andes, 2002, Davis, 2006, Bennett, 2006, Bennett, 2013) and considered enduring fandom in this context. Initial work on aging punks suggested that there is limited scope for maintaining a successful punk identity as one gets older (e.g., moving beyond 'post-youth'). Davis' (2006) consideration of aging punk women and men, for example, argued that a punk identity can be retained successfully as one ages if an individual maintains their subcultural involvement through a creative or organizational role e.g. gig promoter or record label owner. They, essentially, 'make a living' from their punk involvement, pursuing 'punk

careers' (Davis, 2006). Andes' (2002) stage model concerning 'growing up punk' is perhaps also relevant here for thinking through such (successful) aging. In this model, Andes (2002) offers three stages—rebellion, affiliation, and transcendence, respectively—with a predisposition stage of felt difference. The third stage of transcendence is where we might locate older punks. This stage is characterized by punk being defined through values and ideology, an increasing participation in punk at a creative or organizational level and often a move away, by the individual, in defining themselves as punk. The conceptualization of this stage, then, is in keeping with Davis' (2006) research findings concerning older punks.

This notion of punk being defined through values and ideology by those involved is also demonstrated in Bennett's (2006) research with older punks. Bennett (2006) argues that older punks can maintain a punk identity through adulthood by modifying aesthetic or discursive practices. This can involve engaging in some accommodation, for example, when it comes to punk style or dress, as well as internalising 'punkness' (Bennett, 2006). Bennett's (2006) sample, however, comprised only of older punk men with Bennett (2006) musing that older punk women may have privatised their fandom as they got older. Whilst Bennett's (2013) later work on older punks does include women as well as men in its sample, an analysis of gender is completely lacking. This limited inclusion of older punk women in research samples, or attention to gender analysis where they are present, opens the knowledge produced to critique for being 'malestream' (Gurney, 1997, Oakley, 1998), referring to male-dominance (in terms of researchers, samples, and perspectives) and highlighting the generalisation of findings from samples comprising of only men to represent women as well. As evidenced, then, existing theoretical and conceptual understanding of punks fails to consider the interaction between aging and gender, leaving various questions unanswered when it comes to older punk women. This brings us now to the last part of this contextualizing section in which I will briefly introduce and discuss the concept of nostalgia in relation to aging and (music) fandom.

## Nostalgia

Nostalgia is something we draw upon in the construction, maintenance and reconstruction of our identities (Davis, 1979 cited in Milligan, 2003, Jacobsen 2023) and the relationship between nostalgia, music and aging has been evidenced (e.g., Davies et al, 2022, Grimes, 2020, Jennings and Gardner, 2016). Davis (1979) notes the difficulties in defining nostalgia and how it differs from other subjective states that are orientated to the past (for example, recollection, history...) and suggests that nostalgia is distinct in how we juxtapose it to aspects of our present lives which then imbues it with special qualities. Davis goes on to define nostalgia as "a positively toned evocation of a lived past in the context of some negative feeling toward present or impending circumstance" (1979: 18). Similarly, Jacobsen (2023) describes nostalgia as entailing a longing or yearning of return; it involves giving a positive meaning to the past which also comprises a bittersweet feeling. Further distinctions have been drawn between nostalgia experienced first-hand and

that which is experienced second-hand. The latter can be termed 'simulated nostalgia' (Baker and Kennedy, 1994) or 'vicarious nostalgia' (Goulding, 2002), highlighting how this is seen as a less real nostalgia with it being experienced through the memories and or recollections of others (Dauncey and Tinker, 2014). In addition, Stern (1992) also speaks of 'historical nostalgia' whereby the past referred to in the nostalgia is a time before the individual was born.

Returning to definitions of nostalgia more broadly, however, it is questionable as to whether this present negative feeling is always necessary or indeed whether nostalgia always comprises a positively viewed past. Meurling (2014 in Lövgren, 2015), for example, defines nostalgia as both melancholy and pleasurable which could then open up how nostalgia is conceptualised to recognise that this 'evocation of a lived past' might not always be 'positively toned'. Pickering and Keightley (2006) very neatly capture this through their proposition that we should recognise nostalgia too as also capable of using the past as a basis for renewal and/or satisfaction in the future—nostalgia does not always entail a desire to return to an idealized past but can provide a way of navigating ahead in the present. In this sense, then, nostalgia can be both melancholic and utopian, with the latter providing ontological security (Pickering and Keightley, 2006).

With regards to music, Schulkind et al. (1999, in Grimes, 2020) speaks, for example, of how nostalgic feeling can be prompted by engagement with music during one's youth, and, more broadly, music can be a stimulus for accessing nostalgic feelings (Pickering, 2018, in Grimes, 2020). Grimes' (2020, in press) work is particularly relevant to my focus on punk, as he focuses on identity and memory through research with those who once identified as anarcho-punks. Grimes' (2020) participants, for example, used nostalgic narrative to construct their continued connection to ideologies, beliefs and values that they had acquired during their affiliation with anarcho-punk during their adolescence. These nostalgic narratives showed how their memories represented, in some ways, an idealised past as well as how they drew upon nostalgia as a resource for continuation (Grimes, 2020).

When it comes to fandom and nostalgia more broadly, Jones' (2023) work engages with these themes from the perspective of participants' continued relationship with the subject of their fandom over time e.g., as the participants themselves age. Focusing on fans of two TV shows (*The X-Files* and *Twin Peaks*), Jones (2023) considers the role and impact of nostalgia for and on fans in the context of the shows' respective revivals, highlighting how fans give their own meanings to nostalgia with it offering fans ways to express their identities, experiences, and life course. A comparative to TV revivals within punk fandom might be reunion gigs by bands, something often viewed too through its relationship to nostalgia. Lohman (2017) in research with aging Dutch punks, for example, comments on the notable trend at the time of her work for punk nostalgia, demonstrated by the organization of reunion gigs and also the re-releasing of old recordings. Furthermore, Adams (2008) provides performances by reformed punk bands as an example of an attempt to recreate the glories of subcultures past, concluding that nostalgia is inevitable as members of a subculture age and, in turn, engage in mundane (adult) lives.

## Methodology and Methods

This article draws upon qualitative research with older punk women; comprising of in-depth interviewing, interviews by e-mail, and participant-created zine pages. Women who took part in an interview were also invited to bring items to the interview which they felt were significant in speaking to what punk meant to them. Across these three modes for generating data, twenty-nine women engaged in the research. This resulted in seventeen in-depth interviews, five email interviews, and eight zine pages, respectively. What follows next is a brief consideration of my methodological decisions and the feminist underpinnings of this research, including discussion of the methods utilised in this research, how sampling was approached and some key ethical considerations.

This research was grounded in understanding the participants' social worlds (Bryman, 2004) so qualitative methods were deemed the most appropriate in achieving this. The research was also grounded in feminist and inductivist approaches. Feminist in the sense that that the research and methodology was 'shaped by feminist theory, politics and ethics and grounded in women's experience' (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2006, 16). Feminist research often focuses too on women's and other marginalised groups' lived experiences (Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leckenby, 2004, Nagy Hesse-Biber et al, 2004) and this sat with my aim of challenging the relative silence in academic discussions when it came to the experiences and voices of older punk women.

There are various examples of insider research involving punk (including Leblanc, 2002, Taylor, 2011) and there exists extensive writing on techniques of insider research amongst music subcultures more broadly (Sharp and Threadgold, 2020). In this research I was aware that in some ways I could be considered an insider. Punk has been an important facet of my identity since childhood and my own involvement in punk was fundamental in deciding to explore punk academically. My dual identity as both an insider and a researcher required a reflexive approach throughout the research process so as to balance potential benefits with potential difficulties (Hodkinson, 2005).

The research employed a triangulation of qualitative methods—in-depth interviews, email interviews, and participant-created zine pages. The use of in-depth, semi-structured interviewing was deemed a suitable method for recording subjective experience as well as being capable of considering the participants' biographical journeys (which is what I was particularly interested in capturing). As data collection using semi-structured interviews progressed, and I was increasingly aware of the geographical restrictions and time constraints which limited the amount of interviews I was able to carry out face-to-face, I began suggesting to those expressing interest the possibility of them answering questions via email which led to five women taking part in these.

Sampling entailed a call for participants online and by word of mouth with some snowball sampling emerging from this. I set my initial criterion for inclusion as 'punk women over the age of 30 years old'—I was keen to allow potential participants to decide whether they fitted this description rather than my imposition of what was being considered as 'punk'. Those who expressed interest in being interviewed were provided with an information sheet which detailed the purpose of the interviews as well as explaining how they were encouraged to bring items to the interview which helped them talk about the significance of punk in their lives. Additionally, the information sheet said how they were invited after their interview

(in their own time/space) to create and submit a zine page on what being punk means to them. Only two participants took up this offer and so thought had to be given again to this element of the research. It was decided to then to use a 'call out' method too separately for older punk women to create and submit such zine pages. This generated some further interest and submissions with a further six submissions received. These zine pages were collated into a zine which was copied and distributed to the authors as well as being given away for free at a local zine fair. I offer some further details concerning the zines next.

### *Zines with Older Punk Women*

Participant created zine pages were used as a creative and participatory method and employed via a 'zines as creation' (Way, YEAR) approach. This entailed zines being treated as primary data and produced as a part of the research as opposed to the use of pre-existing zines being analysed as secondary data (Way, YEAR). With regards to how I am defining zines, I am particularly drawn to definitions offered by French and Curd (2022) and Watson (2000) which, brought together, define zines as low-budget, non-profit, 'DIY' (do-it-yourself) publications comprising collage, photography and/or writing. Participants who engaged in the zine page making were not provided with such a definition and it was assumed they would have existing knowledge or awareness of zines. I have reflected on my assumption here and how it may have limited participant uptake of making a zine page elsewhere (Way, 2020).

In trying to balance achieving insights relevant to my research foci with upholding zines' democratic ideal and capacity for agency (Fletcher 2017, Ptolomey, 2020), I tried to not be overly prescriptive with the prompt provided to zine making participants. Their guidance asked that their submission be easily printable onto one side of A5 paper and, as noted above, be on the theme of 'what does punk mean to you?'. In addition, the guidance said they could choose whatever format they wished, stating: 'you might write a poem, create a collage, or simple write a piece about what punk means to you (or think of other possibilities I haven't!' This was important to me in terms of offering a multi-modal form of communication through the zine pages (Ptolomey, 2020) as well as not enforcing particular views about how zines should look or how they should be made. There was some variation in approach taken by the eight participants (including collage, drawing...) but the majority (four participants) submitted a page each of typed prose. This is reflective of the broad spectrum of zine making approaches both historically and contemporarily, despite the common association between (punk) zines and the 'cut and stick' style approach (Robinson, 2019, Duncombe, 1997).

### *Ethics*

Ethical clearance for this research was granted from my affiliated academic institution prior to commencement. In line with Downes et al.'s (2013) acknowledgment that anonymising research participants can be problematic in research concerned with DIY cultures (e.g., punk), the women I researched with were offered the choice to be named or not. More participants than not said they wished to be named. Those who did not wish to be named chose their own pseudonyms. In terms of the zine pages, some authors put their names on their

pages which was taken as a sign of them not wishing to remain anonymous whilst others remained nameless.

## Discussion

As mentioned above, the in-depth interviews with older punk women assumed a biographical approach and this included questions being asked about their exposure to and entry into punk. A question about this also featured in the e-mail interviews that took place with the smaller sample of women. With regards to the participant-created zine pages, their prompt of 'what does punk mean to you?' did not necessarily lead them into a biographical journey, though some of the women used their zine pages to reflect upon what punk had meant to them on first exposure/entry.

The discussion that follows concerns findings drawn from older punk women reflecting on their initial entry into and/or exposure to punk. Music was predominantly expressed as that which initiated or facilitated the women's entry or exposure back in their youth. I draw upon here Green's (2016) concept of 'peak music experiences' to describe these as it refers to music experiences which are "described as especially affecting, important, influential, or even pivotal" (2016, 333) and this is particularly fitting here. When reflecting on these pivotal, or peak, music experiences, this entailed the women I spoke with looking back positively on such experiences and all the older punk women who were a part of my research conceptualized their initial exposure to and entry into punk as beneficial for them.

## Bands, songs, nostalgia

As noted above, across the interviews with older punk women, when asked about their initial entry into and/or exposure to punk, music was presented as key. It was expressed that this was, for example, often through hearing a particular band, song, or collection of bands and songs. Talking about this, reflections about music were typically bounded up in nostalgia, with these pivotal bands/songs demonstrating how the music conjured emotional responses in the women. As Jess described it, "I still feel how I felt when I first heard it". Presenting those emotional responses to the music experienced in 'punk past' as still being generated in 'punk present' highlights how these emotions have been sustained, despite the passing of time. It serves to create a connection between the punk youth and the older punk, and this sense of nostalgia aimed at particular bands or songs was important in how the women constructed musical significance in their punk present, and 'older' punk selves:

I will admit though there are some songs that just have to be danced to, regardless of age or anything else. [It's] the music, the meaning behind them, the memories that they are a fundamental part of, Étaín.

In the quote above, the emotional ties created by particular songs, through the memories associated with them, shape the interaction with them in the punk



present. Étaín highlights how this can entail getting up and dancing to these songs “regardless of age”. This comment is suggestive of age, or the process of aging, restricting the decision and/or ability to dance or, implies a change in participation in dancing to bands over time. However, the pull to be physically connected to some songs overcomes these due to the perceived past they evoke.

Similarly, Sharon said about listening to “old favourites” before going out to a gig which generates a nostalgic feeling through the phrase’s sense of affection for the bands from her youth that she will return to at specific times. The emotional pull of such bands could also prompt gig attendance, amidst a more careful consideration of gig attendance experienced by some of the older punk women I spoke with. Naefun spoke, for example, of how she was more likely to attend a gig if an ‘old’ band were playing. This can be indicative of an emotional investment in an ‘old’ band (e.g., being a fan of a band for years and years because of some investment in them). But, as Breeden and Carroll (2002) point out, nostalgia is often bound up in reflections concerning our youth and there is the sense of this here with these ‘old’ bands, for example, reminding you of a previous time, particularly one’s youth or initial exposure to punk. Bolin (2014) notes that life course fandom is rooted in nostalgia for the life stage at which one became a fan, but we see here not so much a nostalgia for that life stage per se but for the band which generated those particular emotional responses during that period in life.

Items that the participants brought with them to the interview often connected them to their past, particularly their youth, demonstrating how reflecting on “punk past” could contribute to their construction of “punk present”. Often these items came from a music context, be it a gig ticket or poster, photo from a music event and/or things produced by bands or about bands (e.g., t-shirts, records). Lövgren (2015) writes of the clothes kept by older women being ‘charged’ with memories and containing recollections of situations and relationships. The same can be said of other material items, such as those mentioned above, and there is indeed a body of scholarship which consider objects in the context of memory (see, for example, Digby, 2006, Maalsen and McLean, 2018, Marschall, 2019). One participant, Sam, brought a number of vinyl records to her interview, but speaking about a particular vinyl record she had brought, she said: “...this was the first one I ever bought when I was probably about 14, 15 [...] Sex Pistols’ picture disc and it cost me five quid from [names shop]”

The memory of purchasing said record was very clear in Sam’s mind with the naming of the shop in which the purchase was made. Sam noted in her interview how she had kept nearly all of the records from her teenage years, and concerning the aforementioned Sex Pistols picture disc she commented:

“...sound’s rubbish on it, sound’s dreadful, but I’ve got it”.

What is deemed important here, then, is the continued ownership of this record. This can be understood more when considered in the context of Sam seeing punk music as predominantly situated in a particular era. This could be an example, then, of ‘consumed nostalgia’ (Cross, 2015). Sam spoke of her Sex Pistols’ collection, describing how she had “bootlegs” and “counterfeit” records but how she just “like[d] to have ‘em in [her] collection”. Gonzalez (1977) describes bootlegs as records which have been manufactured and released without authorisation, containing at least one previously unissued recording, whilst counterfeits are records which are unauthorised reproductions. Whilst such records might be

considered as lacking authenticity in terms of not being part of artists' official release collections, some might consider such recordings as holding greater authenticity in terms of breaking down the distance set up by the commercial recording industry and sounding more like 'the real thing' (Neumann and Simpson, 1997).

Woodward and Greasley's (2017) work is also relevant here on how collections (e.g. CD or vinyl collections, wardrobe collections) can be best understood through theoretically framing them as "assemblages", understanding how people relate to the different material goods within the collection as a whole. Taking Sam's ownership of bootlegs and counterfeits alongside the bands' official releases, as well as hinting at an urge to accumulate quantity rather than quality (Fiske, 1992 in Anderton, 2006), almost feels like the 'obsessive completism' noted amongst record collectors and this has also been linked to fans gaining greater cultural capital based on the size of their record collection (Anderton, 2006). There is a suggestion, then, that it is not the quality of the sound of the records which are important here for Sam but merely having them in her possession, with nostalgia informing her continued consumption of such records.

Three other women in addition to Sam had chosen to bring a record, or records, to their interview with me to help them talk about the significance of punk to them. Milly had with her a particular single which she detailed whilst talking about how she first became involved in punk:

...going back to the anarcho[-punk], the main thing, apart from the anti-establishment thing, was the animal rights and that had a huge effect on me and in 1983 I became a vegetarian, overnight, and I've got the Flux of Pink Indians single here, so the Neu Smell single. I bought that and I read it and that was it, overnight, I just didn't eat meat and I've been a veggie for 31 years now, simply because it just opened my eyes to the meat industry and the cruelty involved, so that had a massive impact on me.

Whilst this record was significance to Milly with regards to her early punk involvement, in her youth, again suggesting some nostalgia, there is also a clear sense of the significance going beyond this with the record presented as pivotal to a change in values and/or beliefs which have been maintained since. A similar expression could be found in one of the participant-created zine pages (see Figure 1 below).

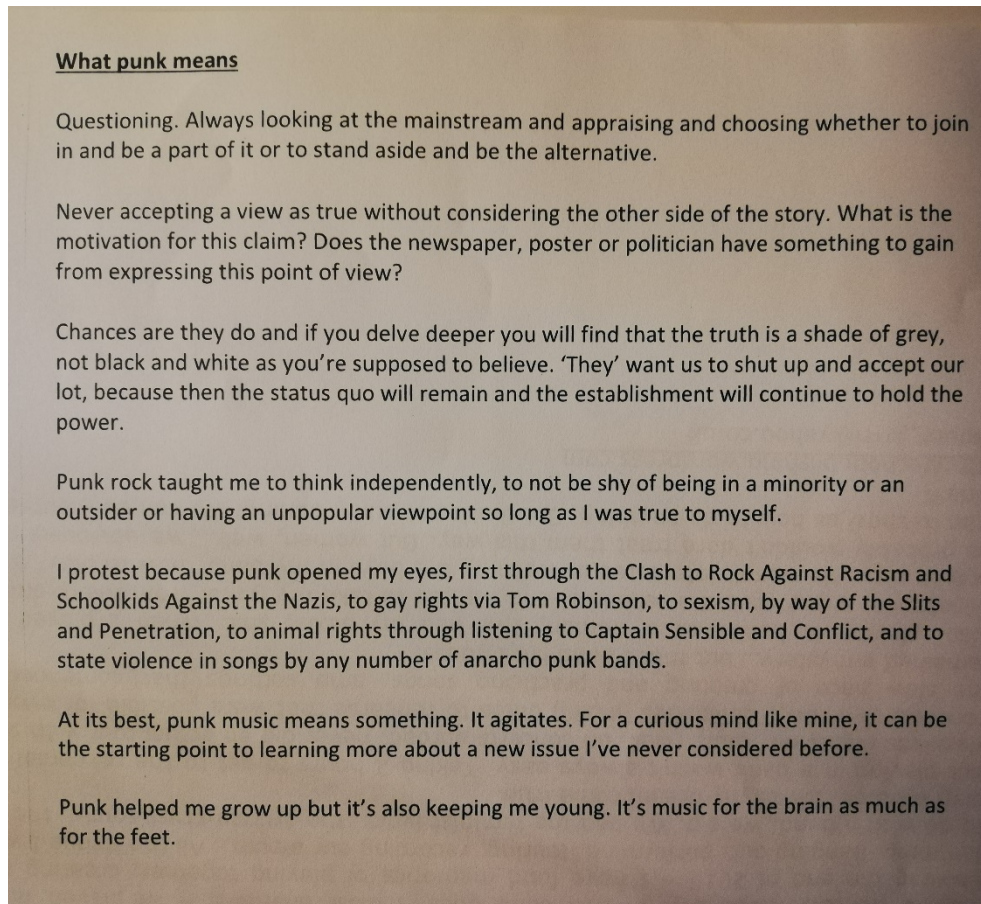


Figure 1: 'What punk means' by Anonymous

In this zine page the author writes that "punk opened my eyes" but this greater awareness (of racism, gay rights, sexism, animal rights, and state violence) is constructed as being facilitated by particular bands and their songs. Punk music is remembered as something which prompted learning and the implication is that this has continued to the present.

## Not Always 'Rose-Tinted Glasses'

Whilst much of this article's discussion has centred around seemingly positive, or pleasurable (Meurling, 2024 in Lövgren, 2015), nostalgia, it is important to recognize too, albeit more briefly, how else nostalgia can be conceptualized. The earlier consideration of how nostalgia has been conceptualized highlighted how nostalgia might not necessarily always comprise of a positively viewed past. Nostalgia can prompt reflection but this reflection, then, does not necessarily need to be through 'rose-tinted glasses', instead couched in more critical reflection (or indeed 'melancholy', Meurling (2014 in Lövgren, 2015)). Yet also, as was noted earlier, reflecting on the past might entail that reflection being used to provide direction in the present, with nostalgia being utopian (Pickering and Keightley, 2006). Kate, for example, talking about the bands and songs she had enjoyed in her youth, said:

Although, going back and reflecting [on] some of the kind of [...] crap that was in some of those lyrics, I was definitely buying into something that wasn't particularly great, mostly misogyny...

There is this utopian quality in Kate's nostalgia, with this reminiscing about these once important bands and their songs now in a sense being tainted yet this nostalgic reflection meaning Kate can situate herself now in terms of her greater awareness concerning, for example, sexism and feminist values. This fits with this notion of nostalgia providing ontological security in the present (Pickering and Keightley, 2006) and, as Davis (1979) highlights, one of the uses of nostalgia is that it allows us to move through life by being reflexive about how we once were and how we are now. It can provide a sense of how far we have come and provide a means for moving forward (Davis, 1979). Rebecca brought, amongst other things, a CD to her interview as an item to talk about the significance of punk. The CD in question was a punk compilation album. Talking about this Rebecca said:

I think that I've gone better because [...] I've like, you know, found the bands with women in and I find the bands who are doing it themselves who haven't sold out to EMI [...] rather than just listening to this [Rebecca gestures to the cd], you know, the Sham 69 over and over again...

Sham 69 are an English punk band who were first active between 1975 and 1980. This positions them as one of the bands during the initial 'wave' of punk in Britain during the late 1970s. Rebecca offers them as an example of a band who might be part of one's initial exposure to punk or punk education but uses this reflection to provide a sense of how far she has now come—she has expanded her repertoire of punk music and done so in a way which challenges the usually male dominated representation of punk.

## Conclusion

As discussed at the start of this article, there has been a tendency to marginalise older fans in scholarship concerning both fandom and subcultures and to date, the experiences and understandings of older punk women have been very much neglected. Drawing upon qualitative research with older punk women, however, offers further insights to how fandom can be constructed 'post-youth' and the enduring fandom that is experienced by some older, or aging, women. The fandom focused upon in this article has been fandom concerning music, related to the peak music experiences involved with initial exposure to and entry into punk. Examples have been offered as to how such fandom can be significant for older punk women when it comes to maintaining punk identities across the life-course. Related to this, nostalgia, based around music, is something which can be drawn upon by older punk women to highlight consistencies between 'punk past' and 'punk present', or their 'punk youth' and their 'older' punk selves. Speaking to literature, however,

that questions nostalgia always being conceptualised through a positive lens (Meurling, 2014 in Lövgren, 2015), thought has also been given to how the nostalgia older punk women engage in can have melancholic undertones which aids constructions of how their punk identities are now different and/or distinct to their 'punk past' and, indeed, how nostalgia can be utopian and rather than signaling a clinging to the past, provides ontological security, and even direction, for the present. This gives weight to arguments concerning how a life-course analysis allows us to consider how participants can change their fandom over time and offers one way nostalgia can play a part in this. Whilst some initial considerations have been offered here, it is hoped these can begin to illuminate the role of nostalgia and music fandom in the construction and maintenance of punk identities amongst older punk women.

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