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Punk: the movement. Analyzing British punk music as
a driver of change in the 70's crisis.

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ABSTRACT

Social movements always occur in specific places and due to particular socio-political conditions at specific periods. Masses assemble aiming to disrupt the prevailing turmoil in order to develop new cultural and political values. In the 1970s, the British population confronted a harsh economic inflation that led to an industrial, economic and social chaos. Millions of young British were unemployed without any chance of future opportunities. At the same time, a new music style emerged in Britain, punk music. The inactive British viewed in punk the vibrancy of action. Punk music was the force that drove individuals to take action in the social unrest. Punk was a social movement in itself. Through an analysis of British punk as a music style, I will disclose how it influenced the social and political sphere creating a new aesthetics and new forms of activism.

Key words: social movements, punk music, 70's, Britain, punk movement.

Los movimientos sociales surgen en lugares específicos, debido a determinadas condiciones socio-políticas, dadas en un momento particular. Congregaciones de gente tratan de mitigar la turbación social y así desarrollar unos nuevos valores políticos y culturales que se alejen de los ya establecidos. En los años 70, la población Británica se encontraba ante una de las más duras inflaciones económicas del país que trajo una desestructuración industrial, económica y social. Miles de jóvenes británicos desempleados se quedaron a la espera de un futuro poco prometedor. Paralelamente, un nuevo género musical llegaba a Inglaterra, la música punk. El paro al que estaban sometidos los británicos se vio alterado por la viveza del punk. La música fue lo que impulsó a los británicos a participar en una revuelta social. El punk era un movimiento en sí mismo. Mediante un análisis del punk británico como género musical presentaré cómo influyó a la política y a la sociedad creando nuevos valores culturales y nuevas formas de activismo político.

Palabras clave: movimientos sociales, música punk, años 70, Reino Unido, movimiento punk.

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INTRODUCTION.

I-State of the art.

For the last centuries, social movements have been analysed in terms of either politics or culture. On the one hand, social movements have been understood as political actors, where the importance of political messages, activist's values and ideology prevails. On the other hand, social movements have been the subject of cultural investigations where politics are barely noticed limiting attention to the artistic productions or to the sociological link to social movements. The main interpretative frameworks have analysed this dual approach of politics and culture as two different sections of reality neglecting the possibility of an interrelation between both (Eyerman and Jamison 4), whereas, the conjunction of culture and politics actually creates the ground in which social movements occur. Indeed, the main subjects of any social movements are artists who take action in politics; their creations are influenced by political ideas or influential for political actions. Likewise, social movements have set the context and conditions where culture flourished or, the other way round, culture creates the grounds where social movements occur.

Eyerman and Jamison consider this framework in their work, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (1998). They interpret social movements as central elements for the reconstruction of culture. They analyse the relations between culture and social movements in terms of a cognitive approach, stating that social movements are knowledge producers; moreover, they are the social force that creates and experiments with new social forms and which is able to redefine culture (9). However, social movements do not emerge out of anything, they occur in specific places, at particular times, due to concrete socio-political conditions, historical contexts and cultural traditions. The importance of the relation of all those factors is crucial for a complete understanding of

any social movement; social movements redefine cultures by creating new aesthetic values and new social identities and traditions, as well as by re-politicizing society by means of artistic expressions. Eyerman and Jamison analyse social movements and its conjunction with culture and politics through music: “We saw, and felt, how songs could conjure up long-lost social movements, and how music could provide an important vehicle for the diffusion of movement ideas into the broader culture” (1). It is worth pointing out the importance of music as a means of expression for communities, as well as for conveying ideas that can be efficiently spread. Music can be identified as a container of knowledge, therefore, a crucial element for any social movement as in it dwell new ways of expression, creativity, and the intrinsic power to move consciousness.

Eyerman and Jamison were aware of the importance of music for social movements and they explain the most important movements of the United States in terms of music. Nevertheless, the geographical limitations of this work do not contain the importance of music in many other areas of the world. Besides, their approach only focuses on social movements; hence, the role of music is displaced to a means for social movements, to a container of the main ideas of the movement or to a medium of communication. For that reason, it would be interesting to consider music as a social movement in itself, as the cause, not the medium to the effect, or in the words of Robert and Moore: “as an organizing catalyst” (3).

Other theorizers of social movements as Corte and Edwards are nearer to the approach of music as the source of social movements; they understand music as a crucial factor for obtaining resources from where social movements emerge, what it is referred to as “resource mobilization”(2). In their research, Robert and Moore, explored this term in order to analyse what was happening in England in the 1970s, in concrete, what happened in the Rock Against Racism movement in the UK:

[...]examining the relationship between music and social movements entails not only examining music as a cultural dimension of social movements that is crucial for setting frames, forging collective identities, and expressing ideologies, but also for the mobilization of resources, which includes mobilizing structures such as independent media that provide an important infrastructure for a social movement organization (3).

In this way music is not merely the container of ideas with a political message or part of a cultural tradition; it is in itself identified as a social movement. Nevertheless, this scope of music cannot be widely verified, or at least, it is not clear for all musical traditions to mobilize a complete social sphere. For the last decades, music failed as a mobilizing resource because either it followed commercial aims rather than social mobilization purposes or its active participants were so idealized that the social sphere was not represented, nor called to take action. In 1970s, a different conception of music and society was developing in Britain, punk music arrived from the other side of the world and it was going to fit perfectly in the middle of the political and social turmoil of Britain, hence, mobilizing the British society.

II-Historical context.

The early years of the 1970s in UK were a period of rapid economic growth, marked by tax cuts, deregulation of mortgages, and a massive use of credit cards. This economic welfare was doomed to vanish due to the poorly managed political policies of the conservative's Heath government, which was leading at that moment. The inflation in UK increased a 20% by 1973, mainly due to rising wages, the inflationary budget of 1972 and the oil market shock in 1973, which was the climax for a crisis ("The Economy"). By January 1972, the unemployment in UK passed one million ("UK Unemployment"); this caused regular and widespread strikes lead by miners and trade unionists, who called for a change; although, at the same time, some ranges of society and the government blamed the trade unions of the economic crisis. In fact, the most notably affected industry was coal mining, where there was a powerful trade union. However, that was not the only industry affected, the vast majority of the working class suffered the harsh politics for an economic recovery: salary cap, high manufacturing costs, downturn in shipbuilding, free-market and overseas competition. The strikes continued, to the extent that from January until March of 1974 a three-day week was imposed, meaning that the generation of electricity was restricted due to the industrial action by coal miners, a measure for reducing productivity in the workplace, which was taken by trade unions in order to protest. The effect was that the

commercial users of electricity were reduced to three particular consecutive days of consumption each week, limiting the working hours on those days. The consequences were that homes, business and essential services were without electricity for up to one third of the day (“Three-day week”).

That was one of the strikes with the worst consequences, but not the only one. There were rubbish strikes, leaving rubbish all over Central London’s Leicester Square, attracting rats and health diseases. In addition, some schools were closed, some ports blockaded and even gravediggers were on strike (“Then was the winter”). The main media at that moment, for instance, *The Sun*, called the winter of 1978-1979 the “winter of discontent”, they were referring to the opening of Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, in an attempt of defining this period of industrial, economic and social chaos (“Weatherwatch”). Apart from the stated problems of the period, in the 1970’s the Irish Republican Army (IRA) conducted a campaign against Northern Ireland and the British security forces as well as against the State. They carried out several attacks, to the point of killing 21 people in a pub bombing in Birmingham (“Birmingham”).

The social unrest the British were living caused the birth of extreme social ideologies. The social discrimination that black people and immigrant workers suffered reached its height in the 70’s with the National Front party. The situation became unstable for every member of the British society, the fear of a civil war spread all over the country, and the government was facing one of the greatest depressions since the beginning of the century (Turner 63). The need for a change was patent; indeed, there were several attempts to change the situation, such as changes in the government, strikes, and different economic policies. Nevertheless, this was not enough to change the social agitation of the British population. They realized that the change was not in the hands of the government or anyone external to them; they realized that the change was in their hands and the power to do it was inside them. The self-sufficiency ethic that the British needed came from the source of the major changes, or, as it has been already stated, from a “mobilizing resource”, which is music.

Nonetheless, the music up to that period was not involved in any social change and did not support the self-sufficiency ethic. Mick Farrent, a correspondent of *New Musical Express* analysed the musical situation in 1976.

There seems to be a kind of rule emerging that when rock and roll gets wrapped up in too much money, it begins to lose its guts. The kind of insulation that the corporate salesmen wrap around the musician tends to shut him off from the kind of essential street energy that is so vital to the best of rock and roll. ... We are going through the worst depression since the 'thirties. In global terms, the fear of civil war is probably greater than it was even at the height of '60s paranoia, and in quieter moments I tend to wonder just how long the food, water, air, etc., are going to last. Do we hear any of this reflected in rock and roll? Not often. Most of the time it seems as though all either musician or audience want to deal with is pure escapism (Farren 18).

At that moment, a revolution in the musical sphere was taking place in Britain, punk music started in the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, but the British would be the ones who used the force of this “mobilizing resource” to achieve the acclaimed alteration of a stable depression.

III-The origin of punk music.

Back in 1974 in the USA, a group called The Ramones started to play in a new club in New York: CBGB. The concert did not last for more than twenty minutes, they wanted to be fast and direct, and they did not want to bore their audience with ten minutes impressive solos. They wanted, in words of The Ramones guitarist, Johnny Ramone:

That when kids see the Ramones that they feel that they can go out and do this too. That's what rock 'n roll was supposed to be about. Late 60s things got away from that, people started overindulging with long solos and...you watched someone like Jeff Beck or Jimmy Hendrix and you felt like you'd have to practice for 20 years to be able to play this song (*Blank Generation: Punk Rock*).

Television was a group with a similar ideology to The Ramones and with a common scenario, the CBGB. One of their songs was “Blank Generation” written by the band singer, Richard Hell, this song carried a nihilistic message: “It avoids clarifying ‘blank’, you know, ‘cause that’s the whole point. It’s empty, it’s blank. It’s up to you to make it up” (*Blank Generation: Punk Rock*). These ideas of a new music style with vibrant, though,

simple and raw chords, as well as a new style with safety pins and chopped short spiky hair were going to arrive in London by the hand of Malcolm McLaren, a music manager who will be discussed later. London was calling for a change, and the vibrancy of this new music style was prepared to channel all the rage of British society.

It has been stated the importance of culture and politics for analysing any social movement, the work of Eyerman and Jamison is worthy for pointing out how these two factors converge, as well as how music can be an important means for the diffusion of the movement ideas. However, a further analysis must be done to understand what happened in Britain in the 1970s. Music was not just a means for expressing the social unrest of the British, neither was it a cognitive entity of political ideas. Music was the “mobilizing resource” British society was calling for. The vibrancy of the new music style that came from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean was the flame that society needed to brighten up and to some extent, burn. Joe Strummer, the singer of one of the main groups of British punk, The Clash, states that “Punk rock for me was a social movement” (D’Ambrossio 5). Punk was a social movement in itself, mainly because at the core of its style lied the idea of self-sufficiency, anyone can do anything. That is what the population in Britain needed to hear in the turmoil of the 1970s.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the British Punk movement as a driver of change, understanding by movement the conjunction of politics and culture, and how the style of punk music was the source that created the values of this movement. Therefore, I am going to provide an analysis of the musical, social, and political situation of the movement. First, I am going to examine the musical style of the British punk, which was the cause of a social change. Then, I will analyse the social mobilization, which eventually enables political action. After that, I will interpret all the political activities related to the movement. Finally, I will present a view of the legacy of this movement and the causes that determined its end.

PUNK AS MUSIC.

British music at the beginning of the 70's was losing its connection with the audience. The rock bands at that moment were making a fortune while British population was unemployed and having difficulties to cover essential needs. An academic who analysed the punk rock subculture, David Simonelli, portrayed the situation at that moment: "Eric Clapton toured Europe in 1977 in a customised train attached to the Orient Express, while at home, amongst the readers of the newspapers in which Clapton's tour was publicised, about one in ten adults were out of work" (2). The excess of the rock industry was ending, people were not willing to support something that neither represented them, nor served them. Joe Strummer, the singer of The Clash, reflected upon the situation stating that: "the hippies around now just represent complete apathy" (qtd. in Bindas 3). He condemned the excesses of the rock musicians as "responsible for taking that life force [music] and turning it into a death force. [British people have] been led into the death force by a bunch of rock stylists, and left to die with their style" (3).

A new music era was coming to the world's attention and it was going to enter in Britain by the hand of Malcolm McLaren. McLaren was a student of art who was interested in the ideals of the Situationist Internationals. The commitment of the Situationists is to design circumstances that aim "to provoke an audience into confrontation with itself and society, with all its attendant social repression" (Simonelli 226). As an artist, Malcolm McLaren was aware of the importance of art as a means of expression, as well as a form of provocation. He and his partner, Vivienne Westwood, opened a clothing store, Let It Rock, at King's Road, London, with outfits in the style of Teddy Boys. Those were identified as a violent and provocative subculture at that moment, something that fit perfectly with the Situationist ideas of McLaren and Westwood. However, after a long trip to New York they decided to change their style into something exceptionally bizarre and awfully provocative. McLaren and Westwood imported the anti-fashion style of Richard Hells, the singer of Television, which consisted in clothes with safety pins and staples to hold the pieces so it did not rip off. Nonetheless, that was not the only contribution they were going to bring

back to London, while in America McLaren became the manager of the New York Dolls for a brief period (Blake 37).

The New York Dolls was a glam rock group with a peculiar sense of fashion that was going to catch the attention of McLaren and Westwood. Their shows were significant because of the image they portrayed with their long hair, their leather pants, V-neck shirts and fancy colours. McLaren wanted to go further and when he became their manager, he dressed them in red leather for a show where soviet flags were on the background of the stage in America. He intended to attract the media and cause agitation, but he did not succeed, on the contrary, what attracted the media attention was actually the drug addiction of the members of the group (Blake 38).

McLaren and Westwood returned to London with the aim of a rebellion in the middle of all the socio-political British turmoil. They changed the name of their clothing store to SEX, they started to sell a new style of clothes that included leather pants, rubber clothes, and rip off T-shirts held together with safety pins. Many young people were attracted by the outfits of this shop and started to dress in that way, in a kind of antithesis with the hypocritical fashion at those times, “people were extremely absurd, and still stuck into flares and platform shoes and neatly coiffed longish hair, and pretending the world wasn't really happening”(*The Filth and the Fury*). Despite the initial success of the store, McLaren was not completely content with the results, he knew that he could do something more for a whole generation of aimless youths. McLaren decided to guide what would be the most iconic band of punk music, the Sex Pistols.

Among the young people who frequented Westwood's shop, we find the formers of the Sex Pistols. Paul Cook and Steve Jones were clients of the shop and the components of a music group along with Wally Nightingale. Later on, a shop assistant of SEX, Glen Matlock, joined the group. They asked McLaren to be their manager, and he accepted on condition they “got rid of Wally” (*The Filth and the Fury*), so they did, but then they had to find a new singer. John Lydon was the member they were looking for, his apathetic character would be the defining element of the group and a source of inspiration for others. The band was completed and McLaren was ready to use it as a weapon for social mobilization. Later on, he confessed that “[t]he media was our helper and our lover and that

in effect was the Sex Pistols' success . . . as today to control our media is to have the power of government, God or both" (qtd. in Savage 165–66). He was aware of the power of music as a mobilizing resource, but probably he was not aware of the dimensions it was going to take.

As a manager, McLaren suggested The Sex Pistols to look at the American group Television as a source of musical inspiration. The style of Television was provocative, in words of its leading singer, Richard Hell: "It had to do with aggressively not looking to please the audience. Playing songs that are kind of psychotic...the way the world felt. But also lyrical, but really loud and physical. And everything ragged but...intense" (*Blank Generation: Punk Rock*). The Sex Pistols took the idea of intensity and combined it with Hell's song message Blank Generation in order to express the rage of a whole country, even though they did not know how to play or sing, "so what?"¹ They did not need anything more than, in words of Richard Hell, "the most moronic riff you can get ...but kind of there, it's just not-it's the same note" (*Blank Generation: Punk Rock*). Just one note was enough to produce one of their first songs "Pretty Vacant", which would mobilize a whole generation. Jon Savage described the situation as " [...] so new that you realized you'd have to go home and start shedding quite a lot of the bands you took around with you. It was like being re-programmed" (*Blank Generation: Punk Rock*). Sex Pistol's first song and shows encourage others to form new bands. Other sources of inspiration for new bands were the influences that came from the other side of the ocean, the American punk groups. Besides, many other youths who until that moment did not even wonder why they should do anything for their own, their country, and their socio-political unstable situation found in creating a punk music band a resource for being active.

One of the groups that was already formed when they heard for the first time the Sex Pistols was The 101'ers, whose leading singer was Joe Strummer. After seeing one of the Sex Pistols' shows, Strummer left that group to become the member of one of the most remarkable groups of punk music, The Clash. Their musical profile rose so fast that in 1976

¹ Testimony of John Cooper Clarke about the first concert of the Sex Pistols at St. Martin's College of Art. Someone in the audience shouted they did not know how to play, and they replied "so what?" (*Punk: Attitude*).

they were backing the Sex Pistols in their first tour through Britain, the Anarchy Tour (Simonelli 132). Shortly after, they were one of the most influential bands of punk. Despite the influence of the Sex Pistols, the music style of The Clash was more elaborate and polished than Sex Pistols' style and their lyrics were more political and socially concerned. Both bands have been compared as pioneer bands of the British punk, nonetheless, an analysis of the leading singers reveals clear differences: "While John Lydon, Johnny Rotten, had a rage against the system, Joe Strummer had a more evolved, more finely tuned sort of political awareness"(*Blank Generation: Punk Rock*). That is the analysis of the songwriter, Viv Goldman. She emphasised the difference between both bands, claiming that The Clash transformed the anger of the punk music into protest music, while the Sex Pistols just released anger towards the system.

The other source of inspiration for The Clash was The Ramones: "When we first heard The Ramones's album, how influential that was, because it was just like totally...like...really short songs, really hard attack, no nonsense. It was just like cut down bare to the bone, you know, and that was inspiring" (*Blank Generation: Punk Rock*). The short riffs, the stripped down technique and the anger of the singers were the heart of punk music. The easiness of those techniques and the attitude of a society devastated by unemployment made it possible for millions of British to start making some noise. John Ritchie, known as Sid Vicious, who was the latter bass player of the Sex Pistols stated clearly: "You just pick a chord, go twang, and you've got the music" (Blake 27). The amount of all the music bands that started under the influence of the first punk chords is infinite. People found in punk music what society and the government lacked at that moment: the ability to create something and the power to do it.

Some more influential punk groups were The Damned, the Buzzcocks, Subway Sect, Siouxsie and The Banshees, Generation X and The Slits. However, the appearance of new groups was so common that "apparently, everybody in the audience started a band. All seven million" (*Punk: Attitude*), states the punk poet John Cooper Clarke about one of the first Sex Pistol's shows. The sources of inspiration were analogous for all groups; nonetheless, each one understood punk music uniquely, for instance: The Damned understood punk music as a kind of entertainment. The Buzzcocks attitude was less

politically and socially committed than other groups, although they expressed the feelings of a whole generation who was “bored”². The Subway Sect had an avant-garde style. Siouxsie and The Banshees was representative of McLaren ideas and Westwood clothes. Generation X style was quite elaborate with some influences of British 60’s music; and The Slits was highly influenced by reggae music.

All those groups assembled in venues and clubs, although not every place could bear the violent punk chords. Likewise, many others would not allow them in as they questioned the authority and most places rather preferred conventionalism to trouble. The Sex Pistols as the pioneers of punk were also the firsts to share their music with British youths. Their first concert was at Saint Martin’s School of Art in November 1975. It ended up when the pub rock band they were playing with, Bazooka Joe unplugged their equipment, after seeing how the Sex Pistols wrecked it (Blake 30). They continued playing in colleges until April of 1976, when they played the first night of a residency at El Paradiso, a club in Soho, although it was effortless for the manager to obtain the license to play as it was a strip-tease club, nevertheless it still attracted many youths and helped punk music to inspire more disheartened British youths. The number of places where punk gigs occurred was increasing as the number of groups rose. Some of the most recognized venues or clubs in London were The 100 Club, the Marquee, the Vortex, the Roxy, Nashville Rooms, and the Rainbow (Blake 31). This situation was not unique for London; the punk music was wide spreading all over the country. The Sex Pistol’s gig in Lesser Free Trade Hall in Manchester is “one of the most influential gigs of all the time” (“Sex Pistols gig”).

By September 1976, Malcolm McLaren decided to go a step further and arranged the Punk Rock festival in the 100 club, Oxford Street, London. It was not just to reunite the main punk groups, but for an appearance of punk in the media. That was just the beginning of the public conquest of punk. After this festival, some tours appeared, as the Sex Pistol’s Anarchy Tour, supported by the Clash and The Heartbreakers.

The clubs, venues, festivals and tours were not the only place in which punk music occurred; it was becoming a way of living and a resource for young people to gather and

² Reference to the lyrics and title of one of Buzzcocks’ song, “Boredom.” Buzzcocks. “Boredom.” *Spiral Scratch*. New Hormones, 1977. CD.

create something on their own. Punk musicians met at Forest Hill, which was the house of Don Letts. Chrissie Hynde, the lead singer of The Pretenders, depicted the situation in an interview: “All the guys who were working behind the bar were living up at Forrest Hill with Don Letts, myself, we all stayed up there” (*Punk: Attitude*). Don Letts was the DJ of one of the most iconic clubs of punk, the Roxy Club. In that interview, Chrissie Hynde explained how the relations between the people involved in punk music were established. They were all living in a community, there was not a division between the audience and the musicians as in previous music styles, neither was there a confrontation between groups, indeed they conformed a network which promoted not only a swift widespread of punk music, but a call for action. British society could not provide an occupation for the British youth, but punk music could do it. Punk music was the mobilizing resource that stimulated people to do something for themselves. They started forming bands, new fashions, discographies and even magazines. They were sick of the careless attitude of the government; they were acting for themselves.

LONDON CALLING: PUNK AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT.

“Come out of the cupboard, you boys and girls/ London calling, now don't look to us” those were one of the first verses of The Clash’s song “London Calling.” Joe Strummer, the leading singer of The Clash, summoned British youth to stand up for action in 1979. Even if it was released at the late period of punk, it contains the essence of this movement, a call for action in the British turmoil. The previous analysis of the economic and social situation of Britain provides a depiction of the 70’s hard conditions for citizens. Nonetheless, the most affected social group was young people:

At home in 1975, many working-class teenagers had a hard time finding their first jobs because of the recession. Eight million people, 15 per cent of Britain’s population, were between ages 13 and 21. Two thirds of them were working class, and a quarter of their totals were on the dole (Simonelli 123).

Apparently, there was no future for eight million young people; nevertheless, they encountered in a new music style the determination to do something in order to remain useful in a useless society. The reason for music to be the core element for mobilizing the main social stratum of society’s future lies in the attitude of punk. Individuals started to take action when they stared at their new musical “idol” figures playing as good, or as bad, as they could do it. Punk music procured them the power to create something of their own, of interpreting reality as they saw it and of expressing their own ideas. Those ideas of self-reflection and self-sufficiency were the pillars of the Do It Yourself ethic that appeared in behalf of punk music. The combination of individualism and self-sufficiency created the perfect ground for an equalitarian society.

For explaining a social movement, it is important to consider the terms individual and individuality, especially if it concerns the punk movement. Individual and social are opposite terms; however, it is impossible for a mobilizing structure to succeed if both terms do not converge. Punk music would have never been a movement if there had not been social connections between the partakers. “[...] feelings do not suffice to make movements. As work on both protest and social capital indicates, collective action and mobilization, which is what the birth of punk is about, is far more likely in the context of dense social networks” (Crossley 94). The social networks of punk make it possible for

many young British people to get involved in punk music, whether as components of a band, creators of a magazine or independent media activists, producers of independent record labels, or even fashion designers. Nevertheless, it was in the individuality of each member of that social network where punk music found its character as a social movement. Johnny Rotten explained how from the point of view of the stage they saw the audience as part of the show, how each individual contributed to the movement by being themselves:

It was incredible good to see the audience being individual. There was some absolutely stunning original people out there. [...] People that had no self-respect suddenly started to view themselves as beautiful in not being beautiful. Women started to appreciate themselves as not second-class citizens. Punk made that clear (*The Filth and the Fury*).

British young population recovered with punk music what society denied them long ago, their individuality, which means, their freedom to act, behave, think and express themselves, as they wanted. Don Letts, who, as Johnny Rotten, experienced at that time how the movement developed, explained the importance of individuality and the role it had for his career:

It was about self-interpretation, empowerment, individuality. Doing your own thing, I can't tell you how much this DIY thing, how important it was, I mean it worked for me, I reinvented myself through the whole punk-rock thing. When it kicked off and everybody's picking up a guitar, I wanted to pick up something too, but very quickly the stage was full up, so I picked up a super-8 camera and reinvented myself as a film maker (*Blank Generation: Punk Rock*).

Don Letts was the DJ of the Roxy Club, moreover, when he regains his individuality and, therefore, self-confidence, he decided to achieve something more. There was no authoritarian structure in punk that disallowed him to be a filmmaker. He just thought that he would like to film, and he did it. The retrieve of individuality brought the Do It Yourself ethic. Anyone was capable of doing anything, that was the core value of DIY ethic and what motivated British youth to create an alternative social structure and an alternative culture to the pre-established one. The Do It Yourself ethic contributed to both the reformulation of culture and the construction of a mobilizing structure, what it is understood as the endowment for changing the current situation of society. Roberts &

Moore considered that “the methods of cultural production known as the do-it-yourself ethic have facilitated the creation of commercially independent media for communicating ideas and forging social networks” (10). They also signal the importance of Do It Yourself ethic as the main cause of the creation of independent media and alternative distributors within the participatory community of punk (11). Aside of massive creation of new music groups that was explained in the previous analysis of punk as music, there was also a massive appearance of magazines, record labels, and fashion designers to mention the most important occupations for the movement.

Punks begun to create their own magazines, called “fanzines” as they were non-official for the mainstream media and at the beginning, they only dealt with music issues (fan’s magazines). In his analysis of punk, Moore reinforces his argument of DIY as the conductor for creating a new culture stating that:

The DIY ethic states that punks should not be content with being consumers and spectators but instead should become active participants in creating culture by starting their own fan magazines (commonly known as “zines”), creating their own record labels, starting their own bands, and creating a network of venues for live performance. An underlying idea is that these media should be autonomous from the culture industry and the “mainstream” media as much as possible, to serve as an alternative form of cultural production which can facilitate artistic experimentation by minimizing the impact of commercialization (2).

Punks were not confident of the mainstream media that neither represented them, nor gave them the opportunity to express themselves. The DIY ethic emboldened young people to create their own means of expression and in fact, they created them. The first fanzine appeared in Britain in July 1976, *Sniffin’ Glue*, published by Mark Perry. In an early issue of the fanzine, Perry encouraged their readers to produce other fanzines as he proclaimed, “All you kids out there who read ‘SG’ don’t be satisfied with what we write. Go out and start your own fanzines” (qtd. in Savage 279). Soon after, many other fanzines appeared, but with diverse themes. Some of the most important ones were *Temporary Hoarding*, *Jolt*, *Strangled*, and *Sideburns*. *Temporary Hoarding* was a fanzine where readers showed their concern about racism, sexism and fascism by sending to the fanzine’s producer letters expressing their thoughts about those issues for the producers to publish them. *Jolt* was a feminist fanzine created by Lucy Toothpaste, the fanzine issues

focused on the female musicians of punk music. *Strangled* was a fanzine that followed a particular punk group, The Stranglers. The last important fanzine was *Sideburns*, the first publication was in 1977 and contained the emblematic image of three basic chords of guitar adding a DIY ethic statement: “This is a chord. This is another. This is a third. Now form a band” (qtd. in Savage 280). Those first fanzines were produced with basic material the creators had at their homes, a pair of felt-tip pens, scissors and glue, then they were photocopied and distributed. They did not need anything more for expressing their ideas.

The opposition to the established forms of expression and consumption did not only concern magazines. In 1978, Tony Wilson and Alan Erasmus created an alternative record label under the name Factory Records, based in Manchester. Factory Records released albums until the late twentieth century, having recorded bands as Joy Division, New Order or Happy Mondays (*24 Hour Party People*). Likewise, a new fashion style emerged following the DIY ethic. Vivienne Westwood, who was the partner of Malcolm McLaren, brought the style of Richard Hells in New York to London. Punk fashion included safety pins, spiked hair, leather trousers, chains, clips, and ripped t-shirts. Even if it was Vivienne Westwood the one who imported this fashion, punks adopted the idea hastily. It was a fashion easy to follow; with everyday material, an old ripped pant held by a safety pin, was enough. British youth had limited resources, this new fashion allowed them to create their own identity through creative fashion without investing any money. Besides, punk fashion was another means of expression for the British, in an interview for the documentary of punk *I-2 FU*, Vivienne Westwood expressed what the meaning of punk fashion was:

I was absolutely disgusted and angry and wanted to see what could be done to stop the world being such a terrible place. So, you would read this as if I was trying to say, you know, we don't want this establishment, you know, and the idea of the Queen having a safety-pin in her lip, I saw her as the head of this pinnacle of hypocrisy. And we were trying to see if we could make some chinks in it, you know, destroy, put a spanner in the works, that symbol of the swastika in everything. Just to make people understand how we felt, because what we were also saying is we don't accept the taboos of society, we don't accept any of those values (*I-2 FU*).

The British youth were not going to tolerate the hypocrisy they were living any longer, they started expressing it with music, fanzines, clothes, and life-style, but it turns

to something beyond the word “style”. Punk allowed British youth to recreate themselves; punk provided the power to express their discontent with society, and to create an alternative to the criticized values.

With punk young people were able to express themselves, as they understood that no one was going to take action for them. The DIY ethic and the empowerment of the individual were not only important for the creation of alternative forms of cultural production, but they were the main weapon to fight inequality. British women became aware of their potential that at that time was relegated to a passive role in society.

Punk didn't do much to challenge male sexuality or image . . . But in the early days it did give a lot of women confidence. Boy bands were getting up on stage who couldn't play a note, so it was easy for girls who couldn't play a note to get up on stage as well. By the time that they developed, women were singing about their own experience in a way which I don't think they'd done before (qtd. in Savage 418).

Punk made it clear that anyone was perfectly able of doing anything; women were considered as second-class citizen, now they were ready to take action. Punk gave women the opportunity of exploring the gender boundaries, they started to form punk music groups such as The Slits, the Adverts, Siouxsie and the Banshees, X-Ray Spex, and the Ludus. Through music, they could explore their own power and anger; however, they also contributed to other aspects of the punk movement, they were the producers of important fanzines such as *Jolt*, *Secret Public*, or *City Fun*. Moreover, the liberation of women's creativity and power revealed the feminist visual art of Linder Sterling, who was the designer of the cover of Buzzcock's single “Orgasm Adict,” and the fashion style of punk created by Vivienne Westwood, as stated previously.

Women were not the only ones to reclaim their power. The economic crisis at that time promoted the appearance of racism; indeed, the National Front was one of the main political parties in the late 70's. In contrast to some views of punk as a racist movement, founded in the confusion of extremist skinheads with punks, due to the similarities in their appearance, punk was a movement totally against racial discrimination, as well as against any kind of xenophobia. For instance, punk music style was influenced by Rastafarian culture, punks found many similitudes with what they expressed.

The feeling of oppression that blacks felt in a white British society mirrored the sense of oppression that punks felt in a bankrupt society determined to impose its cultural authority on them at all turns. By 1976, with the economy in a shambles, oppression by the white man easily translated into the authoritarian cultural dominance of the middle classes (qtd. in Simonelli 230).

Punks did not only identify with Rastafarian fight and values, they included ska rhythms in their songs. In many of the venues or clubs of the punk movement, they alternate punk gigs with reggae DJ sessions. However, that was not enough for punks with DIY ethic, Rock Against Racism, in 1976, was a campaign of the punk movement that aimed to defeat the racial discrimination and the National Front. In 1978, RAR organized a concert that attracted audiences up to 100,000 (Gilroy 121).

Punk started as an artistic rebellion, but it soon became a social rebellion. The main values of punk music, which reside in individualism and hence, in the DIY ethic, were suddenly conveyed to other aspects of punk culture, punk venues, fanzines and fashion. The creation of a new culture in opposition to the mainstream cultural hypocrisy was the main aim of the punk movement. It is considered a movement due to the alternative structures punks created, to the large scope it acquired, and to the groups of action that appeared. Moreover, punk was not just the creation of a counterculture to the mainstream culture; punk influenced the main culture to the extent that “Suffused with self-reflexive irony, these punks have recycled cultural images and fragments for purposes of parody and shocking juxtaposition, thereby deconstructing the dominant meanings and simulations which saturate social space” (Moore 307). Mainstream media captured negatively the punk movement usually in a desperate attempt to stop a social revolution; besides, some members of the government tried to stop this counterculture by banning some concerts, or dishonouring publicly punk practices and appearances.

ANARCHY IN THE UK: A POLITICAL MOVEMENT.

“Anarchy in the UK” is considered one of the anthems of the punk movement. It was the Sex Pistols’s first single and one of the most direct messages to society about the English government. Johnny Rotten, the leading singer of the Sex Pistols, stated with outrage, “Anarchy for the UK/ It's coming sometime and maybe/ I give a wrong time, stop a traffic line./ Your future dream is a shopping scheme” (Sex Pistols, "Anarchy in the UK"). Its provocative lyrics aimed to move the consciousness of thousands of British young people, the lyrics follow asking them: “Is this the M.P.L.A. / or is this the U.D.A. / or is this the I.R.A.” (Sex Pistols, “Anarchy in the UK”). The MPLA is a political group in Angola, which fought for the liberation of Angola, UDA stands for the Ulster Defence Association, which were loyalist supporters to the Northern Ireland conflict, and IRA, which stands for Irish Republican Army and it, was opposed to Britain and in favour of Northern Ireland unification. All those acronyms stand for groups that lead violent insurrections, just as UK should do “I thought it was the UK.” However, “Anarchy in the UK” denounces the apathy of UK: “Or just another country another council tenancy”, Britain is just the home of British local authorities, “council houses”, homes built and rented by authorities. The lyrics are calling for action, an uprising of British youth against government to fight for their country, a country for the British people. In a press interview, McLaren clearly stated what the aim of this song was:

Writing a song like ‘Anarchy in the UK’ is definitely a statement of intent – it’s hard to say something constructive in rock these days. It’s a call to arms to the kids who believe very strongly that rock and roll was taken away from them. And now it’s coming back. ‘Anarchy in the UK’ is a statement of self-rule, of ultimate independence, of do it- yourself, ultimately (Kent 27).

With “Anarchy in the UK”, the Sex Pistols signed a contract with an important record label. Despite the anti-system messages of their songs and their support to alternative record labels, the contract with a mainstream record label represented the inclusion of their ideologies in the mainstream. In an interview with the *Daily Mirror* McLaren expressed his intentions of placing the Sex Pistols’ songs in the corporate establishment as a mobilizing resource for political and social change:

Punk is the gross enemy of apathy. The Sex Pistols created a spark of life and energy which has now turned into a forest fire. The everyday lives of the street kids were poverty-stricken garbage – financially and spiritually.

Punk action then turns into an outright frontal attack on the system.

Don't forget this was a generation brought up on distant pop stars who sang about sex and love from their tax havens. ...Long established stars are frightened. We constitute a basic challenge to the whole way the record business is organized (Stewart 10).

“Anarchy in the UK” was not the only song of the Sex Pistols that addresses directly to the political and social structures, in May 1977 “God Save the Queen” was released. Its title is a mock of the national anthem of England and a direct critique to the British monarchy, which for the Sex Pistols and for millions of youths in the 70's was not an honourable representation of English people. The Sex Pistols produced this song in response to the upcoming Queen's Silver Jubilee, a commemoration of her 25th year on the throne. The song criticizes the hypocrisy of celebrating a commemoration for the Queen when millions of youths were just “We're the flowers in the dustbin/ We're the poison in your human machine/ We're the future, your future” (Sex Pistols, “God Save the Queen”). However, there was no future in England for them “And there is no future/ In England's dreaming/ No future, no future,/ No future for you/ No future, no future,/ No future for me” (Sex Pistols, “God Save the Queen”).

This song reached the number one position in the singles chart; nevertheless, it never appeared as the first one, as the British Marketing Research Bureau manipulated the chart so it only appeared a blacked-out song title at the top (Savage 265). The reasons remain unknown, but they are presumably conducted to avoid embarrassing Queen Elizabeth II (Cloonan 121). That was not the only attack that authorities shaped in order to undermine the massive impact of the song. The BBC and other radio stations banned the record, so it virtually had no airplay. Nonetheless, labelling the song as immoral or prohibited just increased the number of sales. Not completely satisfied with the large audience it received, the Sex Pistols managed to play the song in a boat through the river Thames in front of the Westminster Palace on the 7th of June, the same day as the Queen's Jubilee ceremony. However, they could not perform it as the authorities thwarted it. All the media rejected the

Sex Pistols; numerous press headlines made fun of their music and style, for instance, *The Mirror* stated, “The prize for the best jokes will be a Sex Pistols record. The worst ones will win TWO Sex Pistol records” (Jackson 17). They were mocking the fact that they were so awful that the losers will obtain two Sex pistol’s record instead of one. Nonetheless, despite all the media critics, their singles were still on the top charts.

The Sex Pistols’ lyrics were the ones that caused major impact in society; however, they were not unique. They were calling all youths and other punk groups to mobilize to change the situation. The main topics of punk songs included: royalty, critique to the established structures of society, USA, boredom, record labels, riots, sexual taboos, and hypocrisy. In his analysis of “The Politics of Meaning in Punk Rock”, David Pottie discusses the importance of punk lyrics as a mobilizing resource “Punk lyrics therefore emphasized social and political comment and cast their oppositional stance with outright denunciation” (11). He continues describing how important is the individual rebellion for political and social change, first reflected in punk groups such as the Sex Pistols, but particularly in each individual, “Individualistic rebellion is constantly validated in our society and it offered an easy model of social and political opposition” (Pottie 6).

Punk music changed the ideology of millions of youths in Britain, it created a social awareness of politics throughout the alleged “future” of Britain. Nonetheless, punks did not have any political organization to support their ideas. Pottie argues that the importance of those ideas did not reside in creating an opposed political party to the established ones, but in changing the consciousness of young people. “Even though youth have no political organizations to represent their interests, punk youth are frequently presented as politically and culturally emancipated, the potential vanguard of social change.”(Pottie 7)

Other of the punk anthems considered a direct call to arms was “White Riot”, released in 1977. The Clash experience in the incidents of the Notting Hill Carnival in 1976 was the source of inspiration for this song. The Notting Hill Carnival was a celebration of Caribbean culture; however, it turned into a riot when police was attacked while they were trying to arrest a presumed pickpocket who was black. Civic tensions erupted provoking a fight between the police and black youths. Paul Simonon and Joe Strummer were at the event and eventually ended up involved in the incident:

The rioters found a couple of pale-faced recruits in Joe Strummer and Paul Simonon, who hurled bricks and tried to set fire to a car. At one point, however, the two found themselves the target of black hostility: the incident persuaded them they were still outsiders in someone else's fight (Blake 124).

Simonon and Strummer saw how their black neighbours were united and fighting for themselves, while the white youth were not even concerned with their critical situation. "White Riot" was a call to arms for British youth to do something for their future: "Black people gotta lot a problems/ But they don't mind throwing a brick/ White people go to school/ Where they teach you how to be thick" (The Clash, "White Riot"). The lyrics asked if British youth is going to remain impassive towards their situation just obeying orders or if they are going to take control of their lives. However, the intention of the song was misunderstood; it was believed to be a racist song. Racism in England emerged from the socio-economic turmoil, allowing parties as the National Front to obtain increasing numbers of members, it was already receiving up to ten per cent of the popular vote in the elections of 1974 (Gilroy 118). Paul Simonon, the bass guitarist of The Clash clarifies their intentions with "White Riot":

I remember there were a lot of places that wouldn't let us play, all over the country, universities, and that was probably something that they read that we have a song called "White Riot". They thought we were some sort of National Front group, whereas, really, the song was about white people getting up and doing it for themselves because their black neighbours were doing it for themselves, and so it was, the riots and whatever. So it was time for the white people to get on with their own situation, which I suppose was the beginning of the punk thing (*Punk: Attitude*).

This song was not the only racist controversy that punks had. The punk fashion included swastikas in its outfits that caught up society's attention, resulting in classifying them as Nazis. The purpose of punks was not to claim racist ideologies, but to denounce the similitudes of their situation with a fascist regime: "fascism had won the Second World War: that contemporary Britain was a welfare-state parody of fascism, where people had no freedom to make their own lives—where, worse, no one had the desire." (Marcus 118).

In order to make clear what was the position of punks towards racism, in 1976 punk musicians created a campaign against the racial conflict supported by other rock and reggae musicians. It was called Rock Against Racism, and in 1978 a festival was organized under the same name. RAR featured The Clash, the Buzzcocks, X-Ray Spex, and Generation X among others. The festival caused great impact and it extended to other areas of UK. Some political parties such as the Anti-Nazi League, which was formed a year after the creation of the RAR campaign, helped to organize the event. RAR was not the only political campaign of the punk movement. It has been stated the importance of the movement for equality and for the empowerment of women. In 1978, punk activist created Rock Against Sexism, which aimed to challenge the issue of sexism.

Nevertheless, the punk movement had to deal with many difficulties. In 1976, the Sex Pistols organized a nationwide tour to present their new single "Anarchy in the UK" Special guest such as The Clash, the Damned, and Johnny Thunder and The Heart Breakers supported the tour. However, due to the provocative lyrics and the recent controversy with the Sex Pistols, the local government of some cities cancelled the tour and in others the Sex Pistols were banned. From the sixteen scheduled performances, they could only play in four cities (*Blank Generation: Punk Rock*).

Likewise, in 1977, The Clash organised the White Riot Tour, accompanied by the special guests the Buzzcocks, The Slits, The Jam and Subway Sect. The police prevented The Clash from playing in many cities, as well as other groups of the tour. The government's opposition to these groups was extended all over the country. The councilor of the Greater London Council (GLC), which was the top-tier local government administrative body of the capital of England, Bernard Brook Partridge, defined publicly punk groups as:

"[...] nauseating, disgusting, degrading, ghastly, sleazy, prurient, voyeuristic and generally nauseating. [...] I think most of these groups would be vastly improved by sudden death. The worst of the punk rock groups I suppose currently are the Sex Pistols; they are unbelievably nauseating. They are the antithesis of humankind. [...] You know, I think the whole world would be vastly improved by their total and utter non-existence" ("Punk Rock").

The opposition between local authorities and punk groups was evident. Authorities feared the mobilization that punk music scaped over British youth. Punks were not afraid of showing their discontent with the government representation, which was rather oppressive. They were aware of the situation of England and willing to make a change.

CONCLUSION.

I-No future.

Johnny Rotten cried out many times, “there is no future in England’s dreaming,/ no future,/ no future for you,/ no future for me” (Sex Pistols, “God Save the Queen”). Punk music developed so quickly that anticipated its own clash. In January 1978, Johnny Rotten finished a concert asking the audience “Ever get the feeling you’ve cheated?” after singing Sex Pistol’s “No Fun.” Both Johnny Rotten’s final question and song were very representative of the situation of punk in 1978. Punk was no longer a revolutionary movement in which youth could express themselves and create new social environments; instead, it became a fashion, in other words, another commodity of the system, which former punks wanted to avoid.

The punks ruined it. They adopted a uniform image in attitude, and the whole thing was about being yourself. The cliché punk look, which became the postcard punk with a Mohican, and all black, with spiky hair and all that. It was never like that to start with. They didn’t have the money to go out and buy a 50 quid leatherjacket, it was very much a do-it-yourself kind of thing, you know? And all those garbage, trashy bands, basically all saying, “Yeah, we’re a punk band,” wrecked it outright. It became acceptable, absorbed back to the system (*The Filth and the Fury*).

The new punks were not committed with social or political issues any more, they saw punk as something they could follow by adopting some style and attitude. This massive appearance of punks would not have been considered something negative if the values of the punk movement would have remained the same. On the contrary, the punk movement stopped being a mobilizing resource to become a conformist fashion.

[...]working-class street punks saw the music and the rebellion it represented as primarily fun instead of revolutionary. The working-class punk was unemployed because he could not find work, and punk was his angry protest against his lot in life. Middle-class punks claimed that they understood the capitalist values behind work and that they would not adhere to them (Brake 78).

Punk was no longer the movement of change and action, it become a passive standpoint. In 1979, Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister of the UK. She represented all the values that punks rejected: capitalism, privatization, monarchy, and above all, conservatism. Nonetheless, at that moment, British punks were in the culmination of

their own decline. Sid Vicious, the bass player of the Sex Pistols, committed suicide in February of that year, after being accused of the mysterious murder of his girlfriend, Nancy Spungen.

The last events of the punk scene along with the raising of extremist groups that adopted punk outfits, as the Skinheads, did not contribute to the persistence of the movement. From a musical perspective, the groups that were formed in the following years embraced new styles such as ska, reggae, and a more polished version of rock. Besides, many of them signed with mainstream record labels and became a legend of the history of rock, such as The Clash. Others, such as the Buzzcocks, turned their themes to pop lyrics about love, being still recognized nowadays for their single “Ever Fallen in Love (With Someone You Shouldn’t’ve).” The social and political perspective also changed, the situation of Britain improved from 1976 to 1979, and therefore, the political turmoil and social outrage lessened.

It seems that since the beginning punk was not meant to last. The short direct songs with vibrant rhythms were a representation of the movement in all the aspects. Chrissie Hynde, who is the lead singer of The Pretenders, comments on the ephemeral life of punk:

Punk inherently was going to have a short life-span because the beauty of Punk music, anyway, was that no one could really play very good. And what happens is that if you get into music, and you actually like playing and you want to make music your life...if you wanted to pursue that, inevitably you got better at your craft (*Punk: Attitude*).

II-Legacy.

To state that punk died is a hard statement that must be reconsidered. To some extent, the essence of punk was brief, quick and intense; however, its attitude has prevailed through time. Punk mobilized British youth to create something new and even if at the end of the 70’s it was in decline, the empowerment of those generations was present in the future. British punk left a musical, cultural and political legacy that remains in time and not only in Britain.

After the 70's punk music adopted new forms, the main new styles were the new wave and the hardcore. The new wave was a more melodic version of punk, while hardcore was a more aggressive version of punk. Punk was also mixed with other genres such as reggae and ska. In other cases, punk remained as it was, but more elaborate, being labelled as punk rock.

The attitude derived from punk music was in some way lost at the end of the 70's, mainly the individuality. However, as more people started to act, as they wanted, more people lost the fear of expressing themselves. Nevertheless, there were also people who just followed the behavioural patterns of others in order to fit in the stereotype. Concerning individuality, the main element of punk culture was the Do It Yourself ethic. This ethic was one of the key elements of punk as a mobilizing resource and has been adopted by other cultures as an escape from consumerism. Some of the alternative industries that were created during the punk movement are still maintained and others have emerged in the same style.

Regarding politics, it is true that punks lacked political organization; however, at the end of the 70's punks started to organize political activities as well as becoming activists. They started organizing concerts and festivals for specific purposes, writing political magazines, and fighting against discrimination. For instance, the Riot Grrrl punk movement in the 90's, developed from the punk women's movement of the 70's, which addressed issues as sexuality, women's empowerment and feminism.

The way punk developed in Britain influenced the way it reached other countries. Punk emerged in U.S., but it was in Britain where it acquired its true form and values. Moreover, at the end of the 70's British punk returned to the U.S. and was the root of hard-core music in America. In other countries as Sweden, Denmark, or Holland the punk movement was also very influential. The Sex Pistols and other British bands were on tour there several times. All the groups that originated in those countries belong to the last period of the 70's. In Spain, the punk movement was also developed in the last years of the 70's. The Spanish punk was highly influenced by the British movement. It emerged after the death of the dictator Francisco Franco, mostly at the beginning of the 80's. The repression of Spanish youth was canalized by punk chords, the areas in which

it acquired more relevance were in Barcelona, where hard-core predominated, in Madrid, where a softer version of punk prevailed, and in Euskadi, where it emerged with the same power as the first British groups.

After the 70's, punk music was still alive in many other countries and in many other forms, but with the same values. Dylan Clark analyses in his work how the punk movement ended. He argues that Punk died when it started to be commercial, hence, to become part of the social chain. However, he understands the "death" of the movement as a reminiscence of its inherent values:

Perhaps that is one of the great secrets of subcultural history: punk faked its own death. Gone was the hair, gone was the boutique clothing, gone was negative rebellion (whatever they do, we'll do the opposite). Gone was the name. Maybe it had to die, so as to collect its own life insurance. When punk was pronounced dead it bequeathed to its successors - to itself - a new subcultural discourse. The do-it-yourself culture had spawned independent record labels, speciality record stores, and music venues: in these places culture could be produced with less capitalism, more autonomy, and more anonymity. Punk faked its own death so well that everyone believed it. Many people who were still, in essence, punk did not know that they were inhabiting kinds of punk subjectivity. Even today, many people engaged in what might be called punk think of punk only in terms of its classical archetype. Punk can be hidden even to itself. Punk had to die so that it could live. By slipping free of its orthodoxies - its costumes, musical regulations, behaviors, and thoughts - punk embodied the anarchism it aspired to (Clark 9).

Punk did not disappear; its significance is still visible nowadays. Moreover, the principles of punk are still present, although they are no longer identified as punk. All the alternative media created nowadays have their roots in punk, as well as all the self-reliant initiatives, rooted in the DIY ethic.

Punk music started in the U.S., but it was in Britain where it unleashed all its potential. McLaren as a Situationist visionary managed one of the most iconic British punk groups, despite their short existence, the Sex Pistols. The vibrancy, directness, and energetic style were the inspiration of a British youth generation. Despite the socio-political turmoil of Britain from 1976 to 1979, millions of youths had the ability of recreating themselves through punk. Punk music acted as a mobilizing resource that drove the consciousness of young people to recreate the established values and culture. New forms of behaviour were defined where individuality and self-reliance prevails.

Besides, costume orientations were redefined, new fashions that enabled people to express themselves according to the economic circumstances of the moment. Punk music developed into punk movement. The massive appearance of punks constructed a solid social network. All the people involved in punk belonged to a participatory community where everyone contributes with their own ideas and creations, as well as with provocative inclinations. The social network of the punk movement was also important for political activism. In their lyrics, punks criticized the hypocrisy of the British government and society, soon after those ideas were actively developed. Punks organized several events to spread their ideology, by festivals and interviews for the mainstream media. However, punk's main purpose was to counterattack the main establishment, industries and mainstream media by creating their alternative organizations. Punk music was not only another genre or style; punk was a movement that drove Britain towards social and political change.

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