

B R A I D S

ANARCHA-FEMINISM IN PUNK

[47]

MMXXIII

Cincinnati, OH —

BRAIDS has been privately printed
by the press of the author. A total of
3 copies have been printed.

This is copy 3.

Lucky you!



AUTHOR'S NOTE

To know who we could've been without the degradation experienced in womanhood, look at girlhood. Look at who we were before. All imagination & autonomy & neutrality towards the world.

The image of a braid tied around me while compiling my writing, artwork, & thoughts for this zine. The image of a skill passed on from thousands of years ago — hundreds of generations of women — a way we touch one another's bodies so gently. A symbol of culture to archeologists. A symbol of delicate work for our function & beauty both to a little girl. Our woven body parts, our woven lives.

I fear we've done something horrible to womanhood. Most of our only concept of it now is how it benefits the state. Mother, goddess, whore. Doesn't it get tiring? Being a system when all you want to be is yourself?

When I was a teeanger, I thought the scene would offer an alternative to this. But is it any different when women have to dress with more intention & more manufactured beauty to be recognized as the same subculture as men? Is it any different when we're called riot grrrl no matter how we sound, & our success is separated from men's? Is it any different when women are predictably assaulted at every venue, & nothing ever changes?

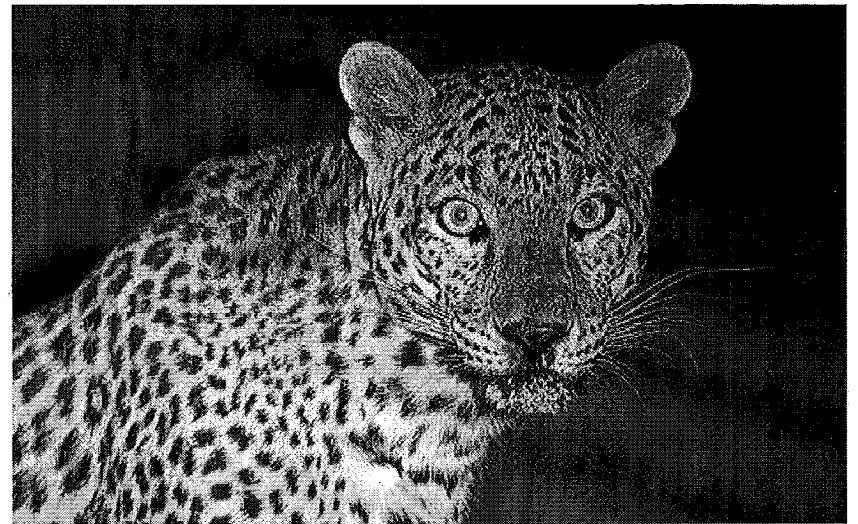
Punk needs help. Please help it.

Love, [47]

A N A R C H A ?

Anarchism is a rejection of the innate power of every form of hierarchy. Not just the state — the existence of it through borders ... their boys in blue ... their boys in white coats ... an all-mighty omnipotent god above ... and humankind as ultimate, above Him, above other sentience, above our home on Earth — AND the weighted categories it loves: race, gender, queerness ...

What has it done for us, anyways? Hierarchy has carefully removed us from our birthrights — the seesaw of the sun and moon tracing slowly to a peaceful death, and the power of sex as terror management for this. **THE POWER OF SEX.** Love between soldiers, praising menstrual blood, understanding that intimacy is not a scarce resource between people ... there should be nothing to fear. **THERE SHOULD BE NOTHING TO FEAR.** Removal of hierarchy is removal of coercion. Who would you be if there was nothing to run from? **WHO WOULD YOU BE?**



It's only natural. Flora and fauna carefully keep entire ecosystems in balance with their own jaws and shadows, unrelated to societal presumption ... friendships stare parallel into each other's eyes ... artists, public libraries, a lot of the world wide web.

I dream of the day women are lifted from it all. The day we're who we'd be if we had nothing to run from. The day we are no longer mother, goddess, or whore. The day we are no longer woman or man.

F E M I N I S T ?

The painted open 'O' is deplorable, but so is 'punk's not dead.' **Cut off the infected limb.** Save the heart still pumping blood through valve and dreamscape.

This is ours. After institutional rejection after institutional rejection, we found it through the embracement of being amateurs that used to be our death sentence, and now, **THIS IS OURS.** So - why isn't it? What's so liberating about a frontman raising his voice at me? **Violence is most radical for those who have been denied it.**

The scene has tried to push us out of it (with hands and hands and hands) for-ever, but we always hold so tightly in each other's grasp. We are used to not belonging here. **We don't belong anywhere. Let's make somewhere we belong.**

THEY ASK WHY WE DON'T WRITE LOVE SONGS /
WHAT IS IT THAT WE SING THEN? / OUR LOVE OF
LIFE IS TOTAL / EVERYTHING WE DO IS AN
EXPRESSION OF THAT / EVERYTHING THAT WE
WRITE IS A LOVE SONG!

- Crass, "Step Outside & Rocky Eyes"

A LOVE SONG

Listen to yourself how I listen
To you. Crash your own bodies against

Each other's vulnerabilities, shouldered onto
your knees,
Trust us to pull you back on
your feet.

Hear the brass clash of chain fastened on
by your own fingers, the clang
Against spiked collars disguising owner as
owned

Against steel-toed protection against getting
walked over, or trampled, and
Against the violence of the anger of
your own voice - and

Listen to me how I listen
To you. Face the frontman onstage, cry and

Cry out with her groans, and moans, with
choir and our organs' songs,
Hear our rejection past our holey
clothes and

Listen closely to whispers of persons unknown,
Hear us loud, but hear us quiet -
Hear us softly and hear us silent.

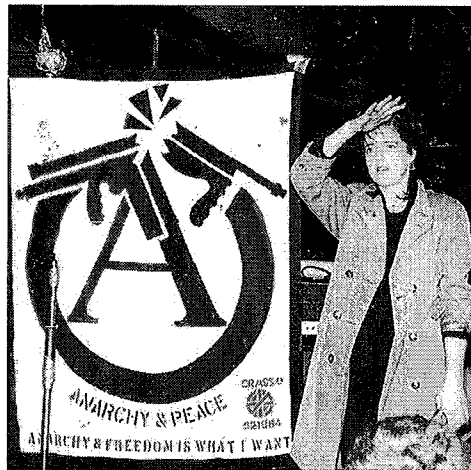
MEET YOUR MAKERS



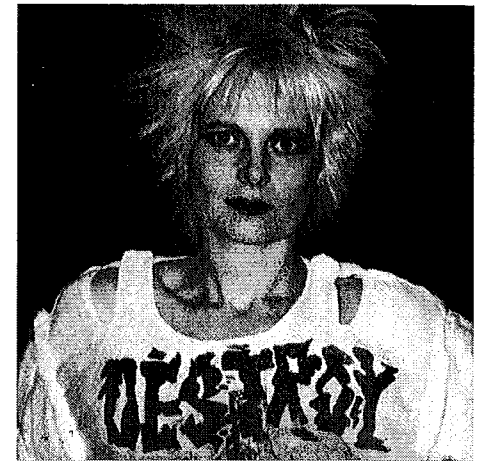
VI SUBVERSA was the lyricist, lead singer, & rhythm guitarist of the British punk band Poison Girls. She released her first single with Poison Girls as a mother of 2 at 44. As a self-identified anarchist who worked with the anarchist newspaper *Freedom*, her lyrics were largely about what it means to be a woman & a mother under institutions

like marriage & medicine & social patriarchy.

GEE VAUCHER is a visual artist who co-founded the anarchist Dial House in Essex & did the majority of the artwork (including album art) for Crass Records. Her paintings, collages, & prints are explicitly anarcho-pacifistic & feminist, & are often satirical using famous figures, symbols, & photographs.



VIVIENNE WESTWOOD was a fashion designer who largely created the look of punk we recognize today. She co-founded the boutique SEX with Malcolm McLaren selling bondage gear & her own designs where the Sex Pistols were scouted, formed & styled.



POLY STYRENE was the lyricist & lead singer of X-Ray Spex. She was a mixed-race second-generation Somali immigrant living in the UK, & was known for speaking out against consumerism & quick response manufacturing, which her stage name and most of X-Ray Spex's lyrics & art direction comes from.

BJÖRK GUÐMUNDSDÓTTIR is an Icelandic singer, songwriter, & record producer, known for expertise in creating experimental & avant garde music. Before she gained notoriety with her alt rock band The Sugarcubes, she fronted the anarcho-punk band K.U.K.L. & toured with Crass.



ART BY WOMEN VS ART OF WOMEN

There's a tradition old as time of keeping women away from art, despite us always ending up artists. For so long the arts of women have been looked down upon - textile artists called 'crafters' or women just being expected to know how to fix a hole with needle and thread (this power devalued). For so long education in the arts has ostracized women, within students and faculty and curriculum. For so long that we don't even notice it anymore.

Instead, women's representation in art is our bodies' aesthetic value on display. How many times have you seen a painting of a naked woman with no head? What is there to say for her? Who is speaking for her? The objectification that produces statues of women is the same objectification that counts men's bodies to be sent to war. In this system, neither of us are as valuable as a human. We are only valuable as value.

SO, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO? CONSUME ART BY WOMEN! DEVOUR IT WHOLE. ROLL THE TASTE OVER YOUR TONGUE. OKAY, HERE:

AN ANARCHO-PUNK PLAYLIST FOR THE ANGRY FEMINIST SOUL ...

1. ~~GIRL~~ ON THE RUN - Honey Bane
2. I'VE HAD ENOUGH - Conflict
3. JUMP MAMA JUMP - Poison Girls
4. HIDDEN FROM HISTORY - Bright Girls
5. BERKETEX BRIDE - Crass
6. MERRY GO ROUND - DIRT
7. SEXISM'S SICK - Lost Cherrees
8. KILLING FLOOR - Naked Aggression
9. WILL YOU BE ME? - Kimya Dawson
10. MASCULINE ARTIFICE - G.L.O.S.S.



IS YOUR REFLECTION / ALL THAT YOU WILL
RECOGNIZE?

— Crass, "Poison in a Pretty Pill"

Now, an excerpt (of the ending) from ...

INTERVIEW WITH WOMAN AT A DINER

(A Play in One Act)

SCENE 5

WOMAN is now back home in bedroom. There is an unmade bed, a nightstand with a pile of unread books, a desk, a rug, and a FULL LENGTH MIRROR.

WOMAN closes the bedroom door, takes off heels and tosses them on the rug. Woman drops skirt to ankles, then steps out of it.

WOMAN

(Examining hands.)

My nails do look like shit.

FULL LENGTH MIRROR

How is it even possible how much you look like your dad?

WOMAN

Literally, like identical. I dunno though, sometimes I wish I still looked like Mom.

FULL LENGTH MIRROR

You kinda look like Christian Bale. But like only when he was in *Little Women*.

WOMAN

That's not true and you know it.

FULL LENGTH MIRROR

It's the smile.

WOMAN

Yeah right.

FULL LENGTH MIRROR

And how would you know? Do you even know how to see yourself?

WOMAN

Well it's not like you ever helped me.

FULL LENGTH MIRROR

You look kinda pretty today. Kinda. No not from the side like that like just from the front. Don't you think so?

WOMAN

I think I'm just here.

WOMAN undresses fully and feels the touch of all ten fingers around the waist; nude, but not naked.

End of scene.

END.

Okay ... but what else can you do?

★ **EVERYTHING STARTS WITHIN.*** The only way through the gender binary is out. Question the cop inside your mind every day, but also question the surgeon in your mind, the one wielding a scalpel and scrutinous eye. Question everything - your relationships, your goals in life, where you get your media, how masturbation feels. Everything is deeply woven.

* This one especially is spoken to you, fellow woman. Unlearn it all.

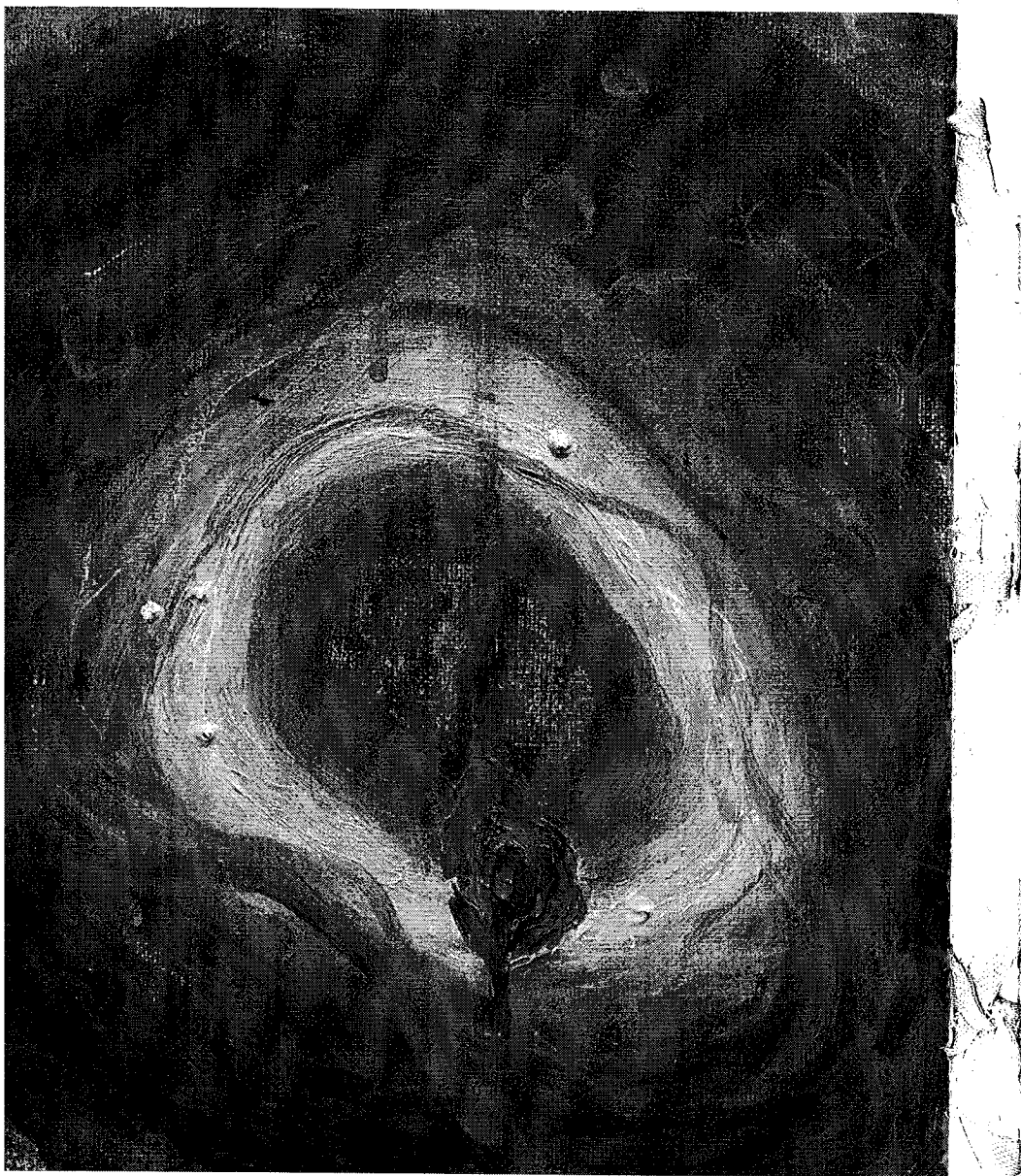
★ **LISTEN TO WOMEN.** Don't just listen to be somebody who listens, holy fuck. Find what resonates. Ask questions. Admit your ignorance but then do something about it.

★ **DIRECT ACTION.** Have you ever heard the saying that love isn't a feeling, it's an action? There are ways to give back to women, big and small. Not all of them are valorous - like being broadcasted waving signs and shouting chants. No, go separate tampons and cans of soup into separate bins at a shelter. Donate somewhere local. Educate yourself, too.

Thanks. I love you.



[REDACTED] [47] is an [REDACTED] poet, painter, and amateur bookmaker studying [REDACTED] at the University of Cincinnati, where they're an [REDACTED] for [REDACTED].



"Glow"

Acrylic, 8 x 10"