

The relationship between punk and dada

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DADA AND PUNK It is difficult to estimate when people began to create different theories, movements and ideologies with regards to what is positive and negative in the world that we live in. A part and parcel of human nature has always been an individual desire to be a part of the perfect world which unfortunately is mainly stimulated by individuals in power. Therefore this bore a disagreement and critique among minorities and has been exploding over the centuries in different forms of cultural movements. One of the greatest cultural trends began in Zurich and it is known as Dadaism.

During World War I a group of individuals created Dada in reaction to what they perceived to be negative and opposite of the values that they believed in. They showed their protest against nationalist, colonialist interest and bourgeois in various forms of controversial art. The new style definitely found its followers in suffocated by war society and even etched in history. Nevertheless, 1970s showed us that Dadaism was not forgotten as it inspired a new generation of people to express their feelings with regards to what is against their vision of perfection.

This created a new cultural movement known as ‘ Punk’ which is characterised by a critique to a political system and society that was framed in a specific pattern. This essay is an effort to present relations between ‘ Dada’ and ‘ Punk’ by analysing and comparing various art forms of ideology they believed in. Therefore the part of this work is focused on the backgrounds and origins of both movements in order to explain motives and ideas of their existence.

Moreover, it will show very important relationship which strongly connects both trends in a form of spiritual protest by using and comparing artworks from both epochs; Hannah Hoch's "Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany" 1919 compared to "The Beatles-Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" 1968, by Peter Blake and Jann Haworth. Also, the controversial CD cover created by Jamie Reid's "God Save the Queen" 1977 compared to "The Art Critic" 1919 by Raoul Hausemann. The analysis of both comparisons will be a detailed explanation of those matters.

First of all, Dada was not just a series of art-historical related events which took place between 1916 and 1923. Dada definitely was an emotional, social and political reaction created against the horror of World War I. With the collapse of pre 1914 social values the Dadaists acted in response with a strong 'weapon' as it involved a disagreement, defiance with ironic, anarchistic and frequently nihilistic gestures. However, they also evolved attitudes and techniques that have become a priority to our artistic sensibility.

The discovery of automatism in the arts, the use of random elements, and the new definition of art which is not limited by any specific content or material is a great concept introduced by the Dadaists. Moreover, the art is situational as there is a result of confrontation between spectator and object which is frequently associated with controversy and chaos. Therefore it can be said that Dada as a novelty bore a historical responsibility for correcting the world problems for all time and a movement to an honourable place in the history of unrealised humanistic visions.

From the aesthetic point of view Punk has its origins in Dadaism. However, this was a cultural mutiny which was mainly associated with a verbal protest through the music. This involved strong offensive expression of disagreement with the whole system and alienation. Nevertheless apart from a very controversial song lyrics Punk rock created different trends than others and innovated a new style in art known as ' Punk visual art'. This new movement did not involve ordinary and predictable paintings.

It is known as intentional infringement, such as the application of letters cut out from magazines and newspapers and the use of black and white in early Punk rock art work. The reason for that was the cost of productions punk zines in colour, however, in more expensive production there was a use of yellow and fluorescent pink contrasted with black. The message that Dada and Punk tried to achieve through their work in the context of desired reality is very similar as both of them bore from a social outburst.

Punk was a form of artistic anarchy against system control and specific pattern of society, whereas Dada was an ' Anti-War movement'. However, very interesting is the fact that they were relatively unrelated and occurred around 50 years apart. Although the vocalist of a very controversial punk rock band " Sex Pistols", Johnny Rotten said he had never heard about ' Dada' there can be found the same themes of inspirations as in Dadaism. Therefore assuming that the group ' Sex Pistols' did not model on Dadaism and any other movements or trends, this might be associated with a human nature. The nature, that does not like to be manipulated, controlled or skipped as a microscopic minority. Fig. 1: ' The Fountain' 1917, Marcel Duchamp According to Griel Marcus, the author of ' Lipstick Traces' book,

both movements are completely nihilistic and propagating belief in nothing and the wish to become nothing. Punk was against everything and at the same time finding its equilibrium in nihilism. This was clearly exposed by 'Sex Pistols' in song 'Pretty Vacant' which involves the Dada cry of "nothing is true; everything is permitted". Moreover, freedom and fighting against the stereotypical art were the keys in Dada and Punk.

Dadaists often asked 'What is art' and in response to their rules breaking used anything they could think of for inspiration. Marcel Duchamp is a great example in this point, because his ironic piece 'The Fountain' 1917(Fig. 1) which he signed 'R. Mutt', was a controversial and provocative way of using a urinal in response to that question. Duchamp's work not only showed groundbreaking, but it opened people's eyes that art is not only classic and traditional. It is an awareness of what art is and could be. Dadaism influenced Punk in reflection to their absurdity.

Punk artists designed cd covers that reflected the idea of breaking the traditional rules by being experimental with images and text to express political and social views. Photomontage was highly used by both, Dada and Punk. However, it was first used by a German group called 'Dada', and later became an inspiration for Punk artists. This involved the practice of cutting and pasting technique for their designs, using materials taken from cardboard, newspapers, magazines, rubbish and anything else that could be inspirational to create a collage. Fig. 3: 'The Beatles-Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' 1968, Peter Blake and Jann Haworth Fig. : "Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany" 1919, Hannah Hoch The most famous work done by Hannah Hoch

is "Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany" 1919 (Fig. 2). It shows a mixture of modernism by including a lot of machinery and high-tech items of the Weimar period which engage with a modern world. These items were the pasted photographic images called from the press and taken from printed and product catalogues, magazines, newspapers and journals which she clipped together preading across the page to form this artwork. In this chaotic artwork, Hoch also shows the figures of women, as she was strongly towards fighting for their rights. A new role of women was a message in this design thus metaphorical kitchen knife in her title referred to stereotypical pattern of both; women in the society and to her own artistic process. Because of uniqueness of this artwork the later artists continued controversial reforms in design and we witnessed a creation of "The Beatles-Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" by Peter Blake and Jann Haworth made in 1968 (Fig3. . Originally it was for the cd cover purposes however it was frequently associated with Dada design as it involved a group of people that the members of the band would like to see as their imaginary audience. This shows that there is a reference to the amount of components that Hoch's used in her design and controversy which also characterised the Beatle's cover, as Jesus and Hitler were intended to appear in John Lennon's vision. Another great example of Dadaism in Punk was created by Jamie Reid's "God Save the Queen" 1977 (Fig. 4), the cd cover for Sex Pistols shocked the nation.

In the result, this controversial, shocking design together with the lyrics led the BBC and the Independent Broadcasting Authority to not play the song.

Reid has offended the image of the Queen Elizabeth II by playing with her portrait and national anthem during Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee in 1977. This censorship did not stop Great Britain from listening to it and made the song to be number one of playlist. In addition, "God Save the Queen" played a massive role in a punk rock movement. Reid's work can be compared to "The Art Critic" 1919 by Raoul Hausmann (Fig.) because of the similarities that can be seen in their designs. They both depict defaced images in the highness of the Queen and the oversized figure with oversized head which is often said to be Hausmann's friend George Grosz. There is a use of reachable resources which are sliding strong, wild and free personal messages. The irony behind this collage shows the character holding oversized Venus pencil, a shoe glued to his forehead and a German banknote situated near his neck. On the right hand side Fig. 4: "God Save the Queen" 1977, Jamie Reid we can see his business card -showing his silhouette filled with a newspaper print.

In addition, the background contains Raul's poem which was randomly chosen informing public performances. Those components show self references as many Dada artists included in their photomontages and the use of materials surrounding them. "The Art Critic" is also a provocative and controversial design as the eyes and mouth are full of irony because we don't know whose are the eyes he sees or whose words he speaks. Knowing that Dada worked before Punk, it can be seen that type and image juxtapositions influenced Reid to follow this direction.

Rick Poynor in his "No More Rules Graphic Design and Postmodernism" book describes Reid's design by Fig. 5: "The Art Critic" 1919, Raol

Hausemann saying that rough, torn stripes across Queen's face and mouth form voids by a cut-up lettering to show the title and the band name on a cover which he called "archetype of a punk rock band". In addition, those are also examples of a Dada photomontage and a Punk photomontage which both used words and images to express verbal and visual meanings. In conclusion, the aim of this essay was to prove the relationship between Dada and Punk through various forms of artwork.

They both were fighting against either the War or the rules of the system. In addition, Dada and Punk were characterised by similar ideology which was very controversial in terms of stereotypical vision of art. The violation of traditional rules and twisting the popular image of art had an impact on future subcultures, in this case Punk. Also, the creation of photomontage technique is shown through the comparisons of work from Dada period and then in Punk, which was born further in the 20th century. They were the evidence of controversy and provocation addressed by personal messages behind them.

Although, there is 50 years of difference in between the movements, it is fair to say that both of them greatly affected our culture and inspired the future generations. References: Raoul Hausmann, The Art Critic. 2010. [online]. Last accessed 20 May 2012 at: <http://iheartartblog.blogspot.co.uk/2010/05/raoul-hausmann-art-critic.html> Audio Raoul Hausmann The Art Critic 1919-1920. 2011. [online]. Last accessed 20 May 2012 at: <http://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/audios/29/707> Chapter 12 Words and Images. 2009. [online]. Last accessed 20 May 2012 at: http://wiki.digital-foundations.net/index.php?title=Chapter_12._Words_and_Images Liam. 2009. [online]. <https://assignbuster.com/the-relationship-between-punk-and-dada/>

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