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grunge, the Seattle Sound, and the Politics of Dislocation

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

COMMUNICATION

by

Linnea Zeiner

Committee in charge:

Professor Patrick Anderson, Chair
Professor Patty Ahn
Professor Julie Burelle
Professor Nancy Guy
Professor Erin Hill

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University of California San Diego

2025

DEDICATION

Andy Wood *Lead Singer* ***Malfunkshun, Mother Love Bone***
January 8, 1966-March 19, 1990

Chester Bennington *Lead Singer* ***Linkin Park and Stone Temple Pilots***
March 20, 1976**-July 20**, **2017**

Chris Cornell *Singer, Songwriter & Drummer* ***Soundgarden, Temple of the Dog, Audioslave***
July 20, 1964-May 18, **2017**

Dolores O'Riordan *Lead Singer & Songwriter* ***The Cranberries***
September 6, 1971-January 15, 2018

Kristin Pfaff *Bass* ***Janitor Joe and HOLE***
May 26, 1967 - June 16, 1994

Kurt Cobain *Guitar, Singer & Songwriter* ***Nirvana***
February 20, 1967-**April 5**, 1994

Layne Staley *Singer & Songwriter* ***Alice in Chains , Mad Season, Class of 99***
August 22, 1967-**April 5,** 2002

Mark Lanegan *Writer, Poet, Lead Singer* ***Screaming Trees***
November 25, 1964-February 22, 2022

Mia Zapata *Lead Singer* ***The Gits***
August 25, 1965-July 7, 1993

Mike Starr *Bass* ***Alice in Chains***
April 4, 1966-March 8, 2011

Scott Weiland *Singer & Songwriter* ***Stone Temple Pilots, Velvet Revolver***
October 27, 1967-December 3, 2015

Sinead O'Connor *Singer & Songwriter*
December 8, 1966-July 26, 2023

Stefanie Sargent *Guitar* ***Seven Year Bitch***
June 1, 1968 - June 27,1992

Taylor Hawkins *Drummer* ***Alanis Morissette & The Foo Fighters***
February 17, 1972-March 25, 2022

My sincerest thanks and all my love to my Mom and Dad for supporting this dream…

and
for Nana, Papa, and Pam from afar.

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To Patty Ahn, who patiently trained me to capture sound and use new tools to study ethnomusicology. I am forever grateful for your encouragement in my struggle to learn editing in Adobe Premier. Your catalog of work including your recent documentary, “BTS ARMY: Forever We Are Young”, has set the goal post for me in considering the work that studying popular music can accomplish. Thank you for your bright spirit that shines and inspires everyone who is fortunate enough to be mentored by you.

To Julie Burelle, who I was fortunate enough to meet years ago at San Diego State’s Digital Humanities Initiative and then become a student in your Indigenous Performance Seminar, thank you. You helped me connect the important practice of refusal to grunge looking to the importance of sovereignty of the body in performance. Our conversations on Artaud and the abject inspired new lines of inquiry for me. Thank you so much for your support and encouragement.

To Professor Nancy Guy, I am forever indebted to you for introducing me to geomusicology. Thank you for inviting me, a non-musician, into your interdisciplinary seminars exploring ethnomusicology. You inspired projects, such as mapping the

artistic lineage of grunge, that remain in focus for me now and in the future. You reinforced that music is about connections, which has helped me situate my listening to better understand musicians' practice and the importance of place in creating genre.

Thank you to Erin Hill, for your critical feminist perspective that has sharpened this dissertation. The importance of the feminist voice in this precarious time for the academy and in society at large cannot act in deference to hegemony. Your feedback has been essential to shaping the next chapter of a larger project on subcultural feminism, and for that, I extend whole-hearted gratitude.

Continued thanks and gratitude to my intellectual family at San Diego State who has remained a sounding board for this critical work as well as a cheering section. To Professor Eve Kornfeld, who is always supportive from near and far, and to Paula DeVos, a champion of all my efforts, I extend my deepest and sincerest appreciation. You helped me find my intellectual footing and assisted my journey into a Ph.D. program. Always, you are my dearest guides and inspiration.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

grunge, the Seattle Sound, and the Politics of Dislocation

by

Linnea Zeiner

Doctor of Philosophy in Communication

University of California San Diego, 2025

Professor Patrick Anderson, Chair

This dissertation traces the distinct identity of grunge as a unique *subculture*, a *signifying practice* and a genre of hard rock music from its temporal and geographical locations in the Pacific Northwest. In outlining three integrants of grunge*,* the project

also defines *The Seattle Sound* within the grunge genre through textual and sonic mappings of a specific cultural geography affected by the urban cartography of Seattle and the dynamic meteorology of the surrounding Puget Sound. A *soundscape* of Seattle grunge is defined in this project through a small interconnected community of artists in the mid 1980s through the early 1990s situating its heavy sound as uniquely connected to *place* and communal practice.

The terrains of style*,* artistic praxis, and vibrational acoustics are continually examined within this work paying careful attention to *economies of noise* that are affectual foundations of *place*. Urban improvement projects, commercial aerospace industries, and marine commerce are just a few examples of poignant *soundmarks* found in grunge, that allow the listener to experience a new hard rock genre formation and hear the lived-experience of the artists. In formatting this project in the sonic and performative domain, this dissertation aims to add to the growing field of Geomusicology which understands genre formation as a dynamic cartography of socio-historical analysis, political economy, cultural studies, geographical analysis, and Sound Studies. Ultimately, this dissertation claims a space for grunge as a comparative tool in interrogating multiple forms of displacement, including gender, social, cultural, racial, and biopolitical dislocation in late 20th-century American history.

INTRODUCTION

For many, the sound of grunge is absolutely recognizable and at the same time indescribable. Attached to that sound are unforgettable performances from Nirvana that leveled formulaic shiny and sexy videos into dark, loud, and ragged dirges. And then, of course, flannel. Lots and lots of flannel.

My relationship to grunge has been continually tied to different points of intersection between the sense perception of a *grotesque* aesthetic and the rib-cage splitting reverberation; underneath the slurred tempo curling into tuning that draws you deeper into depths unforeseen; and finally within its seemingly somnambulistic politics that produce jagged and guttural screams. Grunge has always resonated anguish and melancholic delight in its contradictions, creating an undertow of understanding for those that feel the same way.

All genres beg an origin story of sorts, especially popular ones. Chance encounters, fortunate contracts, and sheer talent draw narratives akin to the American notion of upward mobility, even for those bands who hail from across the pond. Floating in the background is the mention of inspiration from other artists and their success fomenting the sound that would break through the charts and make artists rich. The format of the origin story itself as an architecture for describing music has indeed foreclosed the possibility of sounding out a genre from the *affects* of place. Rather, it precludes the possibility of downward mobility and dislocation from the *affects* of society as origins of unique sound and shared inspiration, and instead, works to formulate personae and celebrity.

It has been a journey to truly listen to grunge in order to find its history and relay

its subcultural meaning; to be able to explain a meaning that is hidden only by its ordinary existence. By now I've spent over thirty years with grunge, finding different sounds that had different meaning in different situations. I listened to artists in their own words at different points in their careers talk about their work; words animated in the pages of memoirs and captured in spontaneous moments of interviews and documentaries (as well as mockumentaries). From their words and my time enter-twined with grunge, I started hearing noise. Noise that previously saturated songs, coloring its texture and reflecting back an experiential sound, now stood out in particular phrasing and measures that my ear hadn't caught.

I've spent most of my life in noisy environments with traffic and airplanes dominating the backdrop of my memory. Even growing up on a sailboat had a lot of noise; diesel engines chugging away, a rusted steel pier that creaked, sails clanking against masts, and, on Lake Michigan, a lot of storms. I was listening to Soundgarden's, "Room A Thousand Years Wide" when for the first time I experienced this wincing drone in the intro of the song and then continuing in the background. Its pitch was annoying and absolutely unlistenable, yet it had been in the background all this time. It wasn't a musical sound, it wasn't an amp, reverb, or a distortion engineered from a sound board. It was familiar from my outside environment.

Jolted with curiosity I started with what I was familiar with…the piercing vibration with the same wincing volume that the sustained note did in the song-an airplane engine. I started experimenting with turbine engine tests on YouTube, listening to different run-ups. Soon, I honed in only on Boeing and a test of a Rolls Royce Turbine clip that forever changed how I heard that song from *Bad Motorfinger* and how

I listened to grunge from there forward.

In many ways, this dissertation is a rediscovery of something that I've lived with for a long time. It has been a way of looking back through personal memory attuned to different physical aspects of musical production and connecting meaning-making to place. Exploring what *The Seattle Sound* is within grunge is really a geographic undertaking in which I've incorporated unavoidable elements of weather, industry, and artistic mentorship. Industry as I found through my research was a pervasive element with an extreme amount of noise, just as Duff McKagen explained to *RollingStone* in 1991-that Seattle was "noisy".[1] I have followed the cues left by McKagen, Vedder, Cornell and others which has led me to smithies, alleys, bridges, and airports to evaluate acoustics, volume, and seismic disturbances.

Beyond the urban elements of geography, are the geologic and meteorological considerations that *affect* the conditions of place and inflect their own mood to the spaces where artistic creation happens. Thanks to the extensive work of Cliff Mass who has a gift for explaining the weather of the Pacific Northwest in terms a layperson can understand,[2] I was able to further investigate the weather as described by grunge artists who hailed not just from Seattle, but surrounding areas of the state of Washington. Weather has proved to be a significant area of research for this project, demonstrating a unique climatology that instills a sense that grunge undertakes in its lyrics and analogies. This is not the end, but the beginning of more connections for understanding grunge in environmental and socio-economic conditions of genre formation.

---

[1] Michael, Azerrad. "Guitar Grunge" *Rolling Stone*, April 18, 1991.

[2] See Cliff Mass. *The Weather of the Pacific Northwest*. (Seattle; University of Washington Press, 2001)

This dissertation traces the distinct soundscape of grunge as a unique genre of hard rock music from its temporal and subcultural locations in the Pacific Northwest. It sources textual and sonic mappings of a specific cultural geography that are essential to understanding the creative praxis of an interconnected community of artists in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In this Geomusicology project, I illustrate the acoustic and artistic dynamics of The Seattle Sound that are distinguished by the economies of noise present and pervasive during this time. I further situate grunge within linguistic frameworks as well as examine the subcultural formations of artistic kinship that fomented their lived experiences into the music they performed.

First, grunge, is explored as a unique subculture with shared signifying practices that synesthetically3 create noise. Within the historiography of subculture studies, 'noise' was Dick Hebdige's signifier for what punks produced in their symbols and attributed it to “a (no) sense without direction or conclusion much like avant-garde music.”4 However, this project examines noise in a larger context to include an intersection of music analysis and sound studies, considering noise as a critical tension between the artists and temporally influenced socio-economic conditions of place. Noise is also examined as a shared feminist praxis of grunge, refracting the scopophilic gaze through the female grotesque. The insatiable dominance of the preying male gaze eroticizing the female form as Laura Mulvey has described5, is interrupted by grunge,

---

[3] Synesthesia from Wassily Kandinsky's work is utilized to engage with the symbolic practices of grunge that enmesh the visual and audial meanings of color. See Wassily Kandinsky. *On The Spiritual in Art* (New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1946) and Michel Henry. *Seeing the Invisible: On Kandinsky* (New York, Continuum International Publishing Group,1988).

[4] Dick, Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style.* (London; Routledge, 1979), 107.

[5] Laura Mulvey. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” in *Screen*, (1975).

reversing the pursuit of gratification by performing a grotesque spectacle of hysteria, illness, and horror. This practice is extended beyond genre and into other artistic mediums, connecting Riot Grrrl, grunge, and Alternative rock musicians as well as artists Sue Williams and Cindy Sherman. Williams and Sherman have not been connected in any way to grunge before, making this dissertation the beginning of recognizing grunge as a critical practice, which extends beyond musical genre.

Important to this study of grunge subculture, its signifying practices, and the genre of grunge as a whole, is the impact of affect. Utilizing Kathleen Stewart and Steve Goodman's6 dynamic understanding of affect, this project interrogates seismic and sonic conditions created by economies of noise which directly impact musical practice both consciously and unconsciously. Stewart describes the impact of affect as "charges that come to life through the body viscerally inducing an actual charge of immanent acts and scenes-a relay".7 Goodman, leaning on Benito Spinoza, envisions affect "as the ability of one entity to change another from a distance, understanding that vibrational forces in carrying this power have a politics of frequency.8 Together, sonic vibrations can be seen as aggressive and pervasive expressions of enterprise on the body, as well as a means of micro-political interventions inspired by sonic shocks to the system.

Noise, in response to political frequencies, is performed by the *signifying*

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[6] Kathleen, Stewart. *Ordinary Affects* (Durham; Duke University Press. Kindle Edition, 2007). Steve Goodman, "The Ontology of Vibrational Force" in *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne, (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[7] Kathleen, Stewart. *Ordinary Affects* (Durham; Duke University Press. Kindle Edition, 2007), 39.

[8] Steve Goodman, "The Ontology of Vibrational Force" in *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne, (New York: Routledge, 2012), 70-71.

practice of grunge. Grunge's musical performance becomes an important act of refusal to conspicuous consumption, commodified culture, as well as interpolative discipline that the state imposes in order to make the outliers of society legible. The refusal of grunge is categorized here as a post-modern one, embracing a *tragic consciousness*[9] and refracting it back visually and sonically through self-subjectivation.

Because of a significant gap in cultural studies and musicological scholarship of grunge music, it continues to be misconstrued as a "popular" rock genre, is cannibalized[10] as a fashion trend, memorialized as a masculinist rock genre, and is artificially eulogized in heroin abuse and suicide. These are critical misrepresentations of grunge, eliding its feminist subculture and overlooking how subculture music in a larger sense is created and lived. This dissertation aims to fill the gap of meaningful socio-cultural and historical work on grunge, but also lend itself to a growing field of Geomusicology that understands musical genre and its political praxis through the important lenses of lived-experience and the framework of political economy.

Unfortunately, much of the feminist work[11] conducted on grunge has conflated Riot Grrrl and grunge, contributing to a mis-alignment of music history and alternative feminist praxis during the 1990s. The feminist articles referenced did not center their

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[9] Robert Doran examines "tragic consciousness" through Frederick Nietzsche's dialectic between the unhistorical and the historical, gripping with the consequences of the Dionysian and Appolline understanding of life and the atmosphere it creates. Robert Doran. "Utility, Aesthetics, and History, *Comparative Literature Studies* (Vol. 37, No.3, 2000): 331.

[10] Deborah Root's terminology to depict the destruction of culture through appropriation and accumulation. See Deborah, Root. *Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation, and the Commodification of Difference.* (Westview Press; Boulder, 1996).

[11] Gayle Wald and Joanne Gottlieb, "Smells Like Teen Spirit: Riot Grrrls, Revolution, and Women in Independent Rock", *Critical Matrix* Vol. 7 No. 2 (Dec 1999); 1-18); Helene A. Shugart "Isn't It Ironic?: The Intersection of Third-Wave Feminism and Generation X", *Women's Studies in Communication*, Vol. 24 No.2 (Fall, 2001); 131-168; Susan Hopkins, "Hole Lotta Attitude: Courtney Love and Guitar Feminism", *Social Alternatives* Vol. 18, No. 2 (April 1999).

forays into popularized music through a framework of subcultures, and therefore produced critiques that had a profound misunderstanding of Riot Grrrl and grunge performances. Additionally, the small representation of feminist work attempting to enter a subcultural feminist praxis with its own *hidden transcript*[12] that queered its performances, excluded Riot Grrrl and grunge from intellectual relevance. In doing so, the work displayed an indifference to a cultural turning point in main-stream feminism that embraced female masculinity in commodified spaces such as popular culture and popular music and further diminished the contribution of subculture feminisms.[13]

This project, while demonstrating shared *signifying practices* as refusals, situates Riot Grrrl and grunge as different subcultures that produced different genres of music. They are also carefully separated as subculture feminisms from "Third-wave feminism"[14] of the 1990s, noting the significant divergence from a white western modernist perspective from queer, women of color, and music subculture's critical practice of feminism. Both subcultures became highly visible in the 1990s, and as Angela McRobbie has noted, consumer ethics inscribed feminine pleasures guised in feminist values…[15] In exploring the signifying practice of grunge, this project

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[12] James C. Scott defines the “hidden transcript” as derivative in the sense that is consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript. See James C, Scott. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. (New Haven, Yale University Press. 1990), 4-5.

[13] See Linnea Zeiner. “grunge feminism: performing gender paradox in queered plays of hypertextuality.” M.A. Thesis. San Diego State University 2015. Aztec Publishing.

[14] The Wave Metaphor is utilized sparingly in this dissertation indicating a specific temporal usage of the popularized zeitgeist and does not reflect the author’s own terminology. Third-Wave feminism, while often associated with Riot Grrrl during the 1990s differs significantly from the subcultural feminist praxis explored here. See Linnea Zeiner. “grunge feminism: performing gender paradox in queered plays of hypertextuality.” M.A. Thesis. San Diego State University 2015. Aztec Publishing.

[15] Angela, McRobbie. “Young Women and Consumer Culture: An intervention”, *Cultural Studies* Vol. 22, No. 5 September (2008); 531-550.

disentangles Riot Grrrl and grunge from consumptive possibilities by elucidating the aesthetic predominance of the *female grotesque* and the politics it performed.

Some coverage of women in grunge from sociology[16] has produced some meaningful understandings of grunge in cultural memory and its gender maneuvering. Catherine Strong's findings elucidate the gender hierarchy of rock music history, creating male-centered narratives that diminish the contributions of women like Courtney Love in grunge into sexist critiques, rather than holistic musical memory.[17] Mimi Schippers' ethnographic research into alternative rock subcultures in Chicago in the early 1990s and her larger work exploring masculinity and femininity in grunge lend important initial understandings of a *signifying practice* in grunge that is subversive to binary gender identity,[18] but has not delved into deeper interrogations of indeterminacy performed by heterosexual cis-women and cis-men in the grunge subculture.

This dissertation is the first work to claim that *The Seattle Sound* is a *soundscape,*[19] created by the musicians who earwitnessed prominent sound marks, *signals*, and *keynotes* present in the urban and sonic geography of Seattle. All of the sounds of Seattle occurring in the mid-1980s to early 1990s such as vibrational acoustics from pile driving, airplanes landing and taking off from SEATAC, and even the

---

[16] Mary Ann, Clawson."When Women Play the Bass: Instrument Specialization and Gender Interpretation in Alternative Rock Music", *Gender and Society*, Vol. 13. No. 2 (April 1999):193-210.

[17] Catherine Strong, *Grunge: Music and Memory* (Farnham; Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2011. Catherine Strong "Grunge, Riot Grrrl, and the Forgetting of Women in Popular Culture", The Journal of Popular Culture, Vol. 44, No. 2; (2011): 398-416.

[18] Mimi Schippers, "The Social Organization of Sexuality and Gender in Alternative Hard Rock: An Analysis of Intersectionality", *Gender & Society*, Vol. 14. No. 6: (2000): 747-764. Mimi Schippers. *Rockin' Out of the Box: Gender Maneuvering in Alternative Hard Rock*. (New Brunswick; Rutgers University Press, 2002).

[19] A specific definition is constructed in this dissertation based upon the work of R. Murray. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Turning of the World*, (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1977).

noise created from the Ballard Bridge being constantly raised impacted grunge music. Therefore, grunge is an acoustic marker of historical lived experience in a temporally situated urban geography.

In considering grunge's unique power through its dropped tuning and deep distortion, *drift*[20] as a musicological occurrence is an *affect* of closed-in spaces where sounds bash against genre. Condensed, but not contained; pressurization of sound (ampoules) is its own scientific plane with laws of vibrational force influencing the feeling, the frisson,[21] of music. The very nature of sound is to travel, to *drift*-a word that implies a freedom in its application and usage in a purely grammatical and relational understanding. Drifting is a flow that does not necessarily implicate an orderly path. The very close stages where metal and punk bands performed, sometimes simultaneously in venues like Gorilla Gardens,[22] have to be considered as a contributing source of a new genre earwitnessed within the interactive performativity of artists and audience performing together.

Seattle grunge, both punk and metal genres, are hard and extremely heavy. Like heavy metal's inception from the machinery of industry in the city of Birmingham with

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[20] Jeff, Ferrell's conception of drift and its politics are utilized to understand the shifting dynamics in sound, practice, and place in this dissertation. See Jeff. Ferrell. *Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge*. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018).

[21] *"Frisson is a physically felt signature of an emotion, a somatic marker. Like nausea and disgust, or a rapid heartbeat and anxiety, this feeling in the body coincides with an emotion in the mind (and thus makes the body-mind distinction much more blurry.*" See Project Frisson from the MIT Media Lab (January 2019-August 2024); https://www.media.mit.edu/projects/frisson/overview/#:~:text=Frisson is a physically felt,mind distinction much more blurry).

[22] The Rock Theater, a former two screen movie theater was converted into an all ages music venue with two stages: the OMNI Room and Gorilla Gardens. "Gorilla Gardens" became the catch all name for its location at 410 5th Avenue, Seattle.

its own physical *affect*s,[23] grunge, reflects its situated experience within a fordist and post-fordist landscape. The *economies of noise*, which are covered in depth in chapter three, were promoted for the purposes of commerce and condoned by city ordinances. Compounded by the dynamic meteorological conditions of the Puget Sound,[24] the *affects* of the noise produced in Seattle, and particularly the neighborhoods and spaces where grunge subculture existed created a unique *soundscape* that temporally represents an urban ethos.

To map the urban cartography of Seattle is to undertake a multi-level examination that stretches from the depths of the underground areaways in Pioneer Square left behind from the great fire of 1899, to 19% and 20% grades in Capitol Hill and Queen Anne, to streets reaching unexpected heights like Myrtle Avenue in High Point, [25] across the vast waterways of Elliot Bay and Lake Washington, all the way to the skies where commercial and military aircraft fly. This is the framework of a *soundscape* constructed for the flow of commerce, where noise has intentional and physical manifestations, but no boundaries. The industries of fishing, aerospace construction and transportation, and the official municipal goal of urban improvement all contribute to the *economies of noise*. This is the dynamic urban *soundscape* of Seattle that induced grunge; a genre with its own *soundscape* compounded in a physical and economic conditions of place, influenced by these sonic and seismic

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[23] See Leigh Michael, Harrison. “Factory Music: How The Industrial Geography and Working-Class Environment of Post-War Birmingham Fostered The Birth of Heavy Metal.” *Journal of Social History,* Vol. 44, Issue 1 (Fall 2010): 145-158.

[24] See Cliff, Mass. *The Weather of the Pacific Northwest*. (Seattle; University of Washington Press, 2001).

[25] Elevation of 520 ft. The 20 Steepest hills in Seattle Oct 13, 2011. https://www.seattlepi.com/seattlenews/slideshow/The-20-steepest-hills-in-Seattle-31436.phpSee the SeattleTopographic Map for overall height differentials.

conditions.

As Adam Krims argues, “music both represents the city under changing regimes of accumulation and also functions within the developing spatial practices of new urban working populations.”[26] In the timeframe of the grunge genre formation from early 1980 through 1991, Seattle was experiencing economic contractions, vacillating between fordist and emerging post-fordist enterprises. Grunge existed beneath and between the established labor practices attached to the land, sea, and air. The manufacturing of goods and materials of fordism remained dislocated and detached from the service industries promoting commercial ventures and homogenized culture. Two competing sectors that embodied drastically different everyday practices produced contrasting modes of life that existed through vacillating microeconomic factors. Therefore, it not only important to study grunge as a genre with an artistic lineage and symbolic practice, but as a meaningful praxis that has recorded its discourse within these specific stages of late capitalism in Seattle.

In focusing on five Seattle bands, this dissertation is asking three key questions. First, what does the unique formation of space as a cultural formation, musical influence, and communal practice produce sonically. Secondly, how does Seattle grunge, particularly specific bands that collaborated like Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam, and Soundgarden, reflect their rhizomic[27] formation and how does that relationship influences in their music. Finally, what are the sonic clues in the music that signal the

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[26] Adam Krims. *Music and Urban Geography* (New York; Routledge 2007), xxxviii .

[27] Utilizing the rhizome as a way of studying grunge is influenced by the work of Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's conception of music's 'transformational multiplicities'. Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Brian Massumi, trans. (Minneapolis; University of Minneapolis Press, 1987).

location of Seattle and the spaces where these artists collaborated and created? What do they indicate and what importance do they carry for understanding genre formation?

The stakes of studying grunge as a subculture, a *signifying practice*, and a genre of music influenced by sonic geography, are important to outlining an artistic lineage of grunge that incudes the contribution of women. Reinstating women to grunge studies situates gender and gender identity formation as an important historical point of inquiry into the tension between popular music and feminist praxis. It also calls into question the commodification of the female body and the gendered expectations within society that are echoed in mass-music production. Engaging an examination of women in subculture also calls to the forefront a necessary inquiry into the inequitable treatment of female gender identity in mass communication, specifically rock journalism, and exposes the unfair radio exposure and concert lineups that favor men.

Additional consequences of treating grunge with critical inquiry is the exposure of downward mobility and displacement in late 20th-century American history. Investigating the creation of urban topography reveals the impact of racist institutional barriers that redline neighborhoods, as well as economic priorities of urban geographies that favor commerce and profit over cultural diversity and creative production. This dissertation concludes by acknowledging the pricing-out of artistic spaces to live, practice, and perform assuring that corporate structures hold power in determining the music and aesthetics that are produced for public consumption. The consequence is that music as a critical art-form is smothered, replacing the avant-garde with palatable sonics that are acoustically and aesthetically safe and

homogenous-the exact opposite of grunge's ethos of creativity.

The project of studying subculture's refusal began in earnest by Dick Hebdige with punks in 1970s London utilizing Gramscian understandings of hegemonic relations to draw boundaries of class and class-resistance.[28] Built upon the structure of Marxist frameworks for examining culture, by Raymond Williams,[29] and later Stuart Hall,[30] Hebdige argued that *style* is an indirect affront, expressed by a subculture's utilization of bricolage; the visual defiance of *style* is a gesture towards a 'nowhere', actively seeking to remain silent and illegible with 'noise' being produced in regard to avant-garde music, making a (no) sense."[31] Illegibility, however, is not necessarily silent, particularly for subcultures with a musical praxis.

"Noise", as Jacques Attali has argued, has cultural meaning, particularly within the dynamics of late-capitalism.[32] This is a critical divergence of textual reading, from the visual prominence of cultural studies, to the acoustic of sound studies; yet this is an important juncture of interpretation in order to examine subculture's embodiment of a sonic environment and their gestures of resistance. Jonathan Sterne has argued against the privilege given to the visual as sound offers us dimensional avenues of

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[28] See Dick, Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. (London; Routledge, 1979).

[29] Raymond, Williams. "Culture is Ordinary [1958]" in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*. Robin Gable, ed. (London; Verso, 1989). "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" in *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. (London: Verso, 1980). *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. (New York; Schocken Books 1974).

[30] Stuart, Hall and Tony Jefferson eds. *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain*, (London, Routledge, 1991). *Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. (Thousand Oaks; Sage Publications 1997).

[31] Dick, Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. (London; Routledge, 1979), 114-155

[32] Jacques, Attali *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press,1985).

exploration[33] as well as in Emily Thompson's mind offering the act of hearing and listening as a mode of understanding the physical impacts of modernity.[34] One framework does not negate the importance of the other, in fact in concert together it is possible expand the analyzation of everyday life and the semiotics of refusal into sonic dimensions that produce dynamic interpretations of style. This approach has deeper meaning for recognizing even the oblique gestures of subcultures.

Approaching style visually and sonically places the practice of bricolage in what Lévi-Strauss envisioned and Hebdige utilized into a different spatiality. Lévi-Strauss saw bricolage as a collage of understanding through physically constructed means. Introducing bricolage to study punks, Hebdige saw meaning in the found objects that punks utilized, such as the safety pin, because of the implied dialectical relationship with the reduction in scale that reverses the real [emphasis added] object in its totality.[35] Now, acoustic inclusion into a bricolage framework helps map sound objects as tensions that directly effect lived experience. In this way, noise may still be found to be avant-garde as Hebdige argued, but its dynamics indicate levels of scale intertwined in the fluctuations of a hegemony that include an *economies of noise*.

To map sound, the grounding of Marx's historical materialism and Gramsci's moving equilibrium of hegemony utilized by Hebdige[36] do not have to be abandoned. They are indeed a part of the *affected* landscape in which subculture is formed. The

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[33] Jonathan, Sterne. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. (Durham; Duke University Press, 2003).

[34] Emily, Thompson. *Sound, Modernity, and History; Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America 1900-1933*. (Cambridge; The MIT Press, 2002).

[35] Claude Lévi-Strauss "The Science of the Concrete" in *The Savage Mind., George Weidenfield and Nicholson* Ltd., trans. (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1962),16.

[36] Dick, Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. (London; Routledge, 1979), 16.

audial-visual field now must include meaning-making practices including the impact of acoustics on everyday life. Thus responses of subculture are able to code more than the physical object, but also the sound object. Therefore codes can be considered on a textual spectrum of sight and sound.

When we talk of codes and coding by subcultures it is implicit, as Jaques Attali has argued, "that [codes] are rooted in the ideologies and technologies of their age, and produces them."[37] In revisiting Hebdige's London where punk subculture formation coded its style of refusal, the obliqueness of style can remain, visually; yet the sonic implication, inspiring a code such as 'the teddy boy' look, could be symbolic not just of upper class appropriation, but also of its accent. Taking and reclaiming class structure in Straussian terms is a construction- an organic reorganization to make sense of society. In this case, the new construction turns the orientation from the upper class private school gent to the downtown mischievous aspirations of a 'jack the lad', whose vocalization reflects his retaking of his identity and reforming it subversively. We can hear this in Johnny Rotten's drawn out phrasing and manipulated accent that reverses the role of the "Teddy' and conjugates a new form of audial language. Consider the song "Anarchy in the U.K." from their album, *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols* (1977)[38]

> "*Right.....now.....(sinister laughing)*
> *I am an Antichrist*
> *I am an anarchist*
> *Don't know what I want but I know how to get it*
> *I wanna destroy [drawn out] the passersby*

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[37] Jacques Attali. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press 1985) , 37.

[38] Sex Pistols, “Anarchy in the U.K.”, 1977 on ”Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols”, 1977, track# on, EMI.

'Cause I [sustained].... wanna be anarchy
No dog's body" [39] *[spoken drunkenly]*

Rotten's performance is one that requires extra exertion as even the English working-class accent in the singing voice traditionally sounds American and lacks the adherence to a British class structure. He deliberately manipulates the approach to singing the lyrics in order to clarify that this is a working class lad, unconcerned with class propriety and in fact brashly advertising his lower-class as a station of anarchy.

The technologies that are temporally situated, as Attali argues, not only imbed themselves lyrically, but also define the sonic production, or reproduction. Therefore it is the tempo, the timbre, and the uneven measures of the Sex Pistols that reproduce confusion and anxiety. The extensive vamping, overly simplified cut-up lyrics, and the insinuation of amateur musicianship can be examined within sound studies as well as queer musicology into the *affect* on gender and masculinity during this socio-economic moment in the city of London.

Attali's reference to codes intersects society and technology in order to better understand how sound is culturally processed and reproduced. In the urban environment where Attali's argument resides, R. Murray Schaefer defines this as a sonic landscape, one that produces a *soundscape.*[40] His musical taxonomy organizes and defines *soundmarks*, *signals*, *keynote* sounds, and the practice of earwitnessing to understand the formational dynamics of *soundscapes*. The *soundscape* here in this dissertation is treated as a specific *affected* landscape in which a subculture is formed.

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[39] Sex Pistols, "Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols: "Anarchy in the U.K." , EMI 1977. Songwriters: Stephen Philip Jones / Paul Thomas Cook / Glen Matlock / John Lydon.

[40] R. Murray. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Turning of the World*, (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1977).

The *soundscape* is ultimately a tension that is created upon artistic praxis on which performance of musical style accentuates its dynamics back in a dialectic. In order to examine this process, an entire environment must be observed; through meteorology, topography of specific urban neighborhoods and undefined spaces as well as locations of practice influenced by place and highly influenced by the *economies of noise*.

As Jonathan Sterne has noted, the meaning of the *soundscape* has become popularized since Schaefer introduced the term and as a result has brought different interpretations surrounding the place of modernism and postmodernist reaction to sonic sociology.[41] The *soundscape* in this dissertation lies within the surrounding sonic geography of Seattle, King County, and the Puget Sound. Sonic Geography as itself is a particular point of inquiry that seeks to investigate how sonic environments are defined, valued, experienced, and communicated as Alasdair Pinkerton and Klaus Dodds explain.[42] In terms of scale, sonic geography includes a larger physical region of inquiry connecting spaces and places on multiple levels which would include the seismic movements that occur daily in Washington[43] or the dramatic shifts in climates

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[41] Jonathan Sterne. "Soundscape, Landscape, Escape", *Soundscapes of the Urban Past: Staged Sound as Mediated Cultural Heritage*, Karin Bijsterveld, ed. (New York; Columbia University Press, 2013)181-193.

[42] Alasdair Pinkerton and Klaus Dodds, “Radio Geopolitics: Broadcasting, Listening and the Struggle for Acoustic Spaces”, *Progress in Human Geography* Vol. 33. No. 1. (2009): 10-27.

[43] Seismic shaking and Hazards in the Seattle basin have been analyzed with a wide collection of data in Andrew A. Delorey and John E. Vidale, "Basin Shear-Wave Velocities beneath Seattle, Washington, from Noise Correlation Rayleigh Waves", Bulletin of the Seismological Society of America. Vol 101 no. 5 2011); 2162-2175. See also Earthquake and Faults Graph (2007) {Department of Natural Resources, Washington State) https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/geology/geologic-hazards/earthquakes-and-faults#active-faults-and-future-earthquakes.4

in close proximity,[44] particularly from September to October which cause jarring temperature changes.[45] The *soundscape* is contained within the larger sonic geography and includes neighborhood, its individual geography, topography , *keynote* sounds and *signals* from the local *economies of noise*. For example, a place of living and rehearsal such as the Music Bank for Alice in Chains located under the Ballard Bridge and adjacent to the Ballard Locks, would be reflective of its local topography as well as areal acoustics such as horns from boats or plane noise from landings or take-offs from SEATAC.

A critical component of the dynamics of the *soundscape* of Seattle, grunge, and *The Seattle Sound* are elements of industry prioritized through policy that produce acoustic and vibrational impacts. I call this the *economies of noise* in the framework of Steve Goodman's philosophy of sound.[46] This is an interrogation of noise in which Goodman designates vibrational forces (physics of acoustics) as part of capitalism's manipulation of noise. Goodman describes vibrational affection as the ability of one entity to change another from a distance through *affect*."[47] Mapping the *soundscape* of Seattle to define The Seattle Sound in this framework requires considering Ground-Borne Vibrations (VdB) from Pile Driving, increased dBa levels that cause Threshold shifts in hearing, as well as increased Sound Pressure levels from multiple uncorrelated

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[44] As noted by Cliff Mass, "temperature differences are driven by variations in the temperature between water and land or between mountain slopes and the nearby atmosphere-intensities of slope winds, sea breezes and other phenomena create a unique system of weather in the Northwest. See Cliff Mass. *The Weather of the Pacific Northwest*. (Seattle; University of Washington Press, 2001)105.

[45] Ibid.,18.

[46] Steve Goodman. *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear* (Cambridge; The MIT Press 2009).

[47] Ibid., 71.

sources[48] (such as a GE90-11B[49] engine on the Boeing 777 and even Emergency Vehicle Siren)[50] as *affects*.

While *affect* for Goodman is defined within Spinoza's "ecology of movements", Kathleen Stewart takes *affect* into a more personal and visceral response for the individual. Stewart defines *affect* through an ensemble of influences as something that deeply disrupts or disturbs an expected emotional response and imposes a deeper feeling that cuts, slaps, hits, scares, wounds (or re-wounds), instantaneously conjures up unexpected memories, no comforting finale.[51] The individual by experiencing *affect* by Stewart's definition and in concert with Goodman is enduring audial, physical, and emotional impacts.

The question then becomes how does *affect* as an embodied experience influence practice. If *affect* is experienced deeply by an individual, then within a community of practice, *affect* is a shared commonality. Sense perception and subject formation is inspired within the spatial conditions of place, this place consumed by sound, drawn within socio-economic limitations that have historical and material impacts, especially within late capitalism. This is subject formation attempting to position itself within or subsist on the edges of the organized urban environment where

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[48] Sound and Acoustics: Sound Pressure Level. Engineering at Alberta Open Resources. https://engcourses-uofa.ca/books/vibrations-and-sound/12-sound-and-acoustics/sound-pressure-level/

[49] Multiple jet engines will be examined for vibrational acoustics. This particular model can produce 115,000 to 127,900 pounds of thrust, exceeding 140 decibels on the runway at takeoff, potentially generating 2000 Pa.

[50] Emergency Vehicle Sirens can produce 110-129 dBA; dBA represents weighted sound or rather "the physical measurement of the sound energy emitted from a source of noise" This is actually what the flow of the sound intensity feels like and incorporated the perception of loudness in the measurement. 120 dBA is at the threshold of feeling (the equivalent of a jet taking off) from Sound pressure vs. sound power Daikin.co.UK. See also Noise Comparisons from Purdue Chemistry Department https://www.chem.purdue.edu/chemsafety/Training/PPETrain/dblevels.htm

[51] Kathleen, Stewart. *Ordinary Affects*. (Durham: Duke University Press. Kindle Edition, 2007), 1.

economies of noise are an essential component of the profit centers existing through abstraction to be organized within the vocabulary of the state.[52]

Frederick Jameson has taken issue with the nomenclature of 'late capitalism', offering instead, a comprehensive definition of an 'image society'; a temporal and economic state formulated from a cultural logic imbedded in postmodernism. As Jameson explains this cultural logic, he helps us better understand the complexity of the expressive abstractions that formulate ideas resting in exposure, rather than in the mystery of anticipation, a westernized hope of upward mobility, and the linear idea of “progress".[53] His critique of the levity with which capitalism has been previously presumed allows us to delve into a closer understanding of abstractions in art, in writing, movements dedicated to the reality of existence and the precarity of class consciousness and stability, particularly in the late 20th-century.

The temporal focus for grunge is the mid-1980s through 1991 in this dissertation. This is a time period that, within Jeff Ferrel's framework of *drift* caused wide-spread socio-economic and cultural displacement.[54] Those who were not legible to the state, do not 'fit' into the matrix of commerce, or adhere to its rules are displaced. Ferrel sees this displacement as place of mobility where new concepts of physical, social, and political spatiality are created, bringing about new ways of thinking and being. But, since they do not adhere to the state, these different modes of mobility are unanswered, often having creative reflections of existence which

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[52] See James C. Scott. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. (New Haven, Yale University Press,1998),13.

[53] See Frederick, Jameson. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. (Durham; Duke University Press, 1991).

[54] See Jeff, Ferrell. *Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge*. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018).

document this new temporality and spatiality in music and literature for Ferrell.[55]

Drift should not be interpreted as something easily done or light in relation to *affect*, but a dislocation from hegemonic formations of class and their conditions. As subjects subordinated, but untethered, the spatiality that Ferrel describes has room for the process of subject formation to draw outside the boundaries, to resist in different ways. For subcultures with a community of practice, the *signifying* process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject according to Judith Butler can be embodied creatively.[56] This process of subjectivation[57] is as much external as internal as Butler expands on Michel Foucault's definition of the struggle against subjection. This in correlation with *drift*, gives a personal and intimate depiction of the subject's marginalized identity, opening up the structure of class itself to be seen as something that produces cracks and fissures in the systems of government, creating opportunities for underclasses to be understood communities in process, rather than legible subjects.

The mid 1980s into 1991 marked economic precarity in an acute way in the Pacific Northwest as well as on a larger national scale. Large scale unemployment tied to the reorganization of the Boeing corporation, laying off thousands of workers, the environmental protections of the Spotted Owl diminishing the once thriving logging industry are just a couple of examples covered in this dissertation. Aside from the large economic adjustments is a spatiality of horror associated with the State of Washington.

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[55] Jeff, Ferrell. *Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge*. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018).

[56] Judith Butler. The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection. (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1997), 17-18.

[57] See Michel Foucault "The Subject and Power" pg 781 and Judith Butler. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1997), 15.

The serial killer Gary Ridgeway during this same period was active in King County, dumping his victims in The Green River Preserve, earning him the moniker The Green River Killer.[58] The periphery of this activity was preceded by Ted Bundy (1974-1978).[59] As concluded by Warf and Waddell, imbalanced socio-economic conditions with opportunities to conduct themselves clandestinely are ideal for places to be transformed into horrific landscapes. They argue, “[serial killers] live and kill within particular constraints of the economy, transportation, and housing markets whose uneven structures over time and space." [60]

As Julia Kristeva argues, pre-meditated crime lays open the fragility of the law, but does not pose a crisis of morality nor constitute the abject in itself.[61] It is the transgressions of behavioral codes of conduct by subcultures, as Dick Hebdige notes, that allow for expressing deviant behavior utilizing forbidden contents.[62] In adopting the horror of the missing and murdered by taking the name, Green River, for example, grunge disturbs the syntax[63] of the symbolic social moment. The order of morality is abducted into an abject deviance relishing in transgression that is repeated with every flier, album, and performance.

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[58] King County.gov: Green River Homicides investigation; https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/sheriff/courts-jails-legal-system/sheriff-services/investigations/green-river.

[59] *Ted Bundy was not immediately linked to the two missing women from Lake Sammamish State Park twenty miles east of Seattle in 1974.*

[60] Barney Warf, Cynthia Waddell. "Heinous spaces, perfidious places: The Sinister Landscapes of Serial Killers", *Social & Cultural Geography*. Vol 3. No. 3, 2002. 321-345.

[61] Julia, Kristeva. *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982).,4.

[62] Dick Hebdige. *Subculture the Meaning of Style*. (London; Routledge, 1979), 91.

[63] Utilizing Hebdige’s interpretation of Kristeva’s (1975) argument of ‘radical’ signifying practices in ”The Speaking Subject and Poetical Language”. Dick Hebdige. *Subculture the Meaning of Style*. (London; Routledge, 1979), 119.

Subcultures of rock have historically been associated with transgressive behavior, bordering occasional criminality, and experimenting with drugs. Grunge is no exception. What differentiates grunge as a subculture and as a genre is the prominence of the abject and themes of pain and critical vulnerability, displayed by cis-men and wimmin[64]. Observing how this pain is performed in grunge is acute to understanding the process of this subculture's subjectivation and the embodiment of individual's artists experiences. This is ever evident in the texture of the grunge genre; its dropped tuning, droning guitars, heavy drums, distortion, and the *grain of the voice*.

Roland Barthes' interpretation of Julia Kristeva's intertextuality to understand performance in the *grain of the voice* provides a tool of examination of subjection. For Barthes, the pheno-song is equivalent to the artist's 'subjectivity', 'expressivity', 'dramaticisim', and their 'personality'.[65] Along with that is the geno-song representing the volume of the speaking and singing voice, the space in which the significations germinate 'from within the language and in its very materiality'...it is the culmination (or depth) or production where melody actually works on language…".[66] This is the heaviness and gravely vocal chords of singers like Kurt Cobain and Mark Lanegan as well as the depth of signification represented in the expressions of pain and suffering by all the bands covered in this dissertation; Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam, Screaming Trees, and Soundgarden.

To understand the *signifying practice* of grunge as a subculture is to invite the

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[64] The term, "Wimmin", along with "grrrl" regularly appeared in grunge and Riot Grrrl material culture from the 1990s. This subversive language is further explained in Chapter 2 to designate this particular subculture feminism.

[65] Roland, Barthes. "The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980. (Chicago; Northwestern University Press, 2009), 270-271.

[66] Ibid.

critical junction of Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism[67] and Michel de Certeau's creative praxis into subjectivation.[68] Leaning on Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*[69] and writing in the aftermath of the student protests in May of 1968 in France, de Certeau lays claim to the intricate power of gesture and its dimensionality as a sliding space of strategy and creative tactics. Blumer and de Certeau interpret the small, yet impactful practices that alter a practice into a performance, reflecting sonically experiential motivations.

Practices formed from lived experience and created as sonic expressions are incredibly important to understanding a lineage of heavy metal and its evolutions into other genres such as grunge and rap metal. Examples such as Tommi Iommi from Black Sabbath dropping his tuning from E to C# ultimately creating the dark sound of 'heavy metal'. Genre, then, reflects temporal cultural life in situ-constructing its own social organization while marking a history performed sonically, as scholars such as Leigh Michael Harrison have demonstrated for the creation of heavy metal in Birmingham, England[70] and Brett D. Woods[71] and Jason James Hanley[72] have outlined

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[67] Herbert, Blumer. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. (Los Angeles; University of California Press, 1969).

[68] Michel, de Certeau. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Steven Rendall, trans. (Berkley, University of California Press,1988).

[69] Michel, Foucault. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Alan Sheridan, trans. (New York; Random House. Kindle Edition, 1977).

[70] Leigh Michael Harrison. “Factory Music: How The Industrial Geography and Working-Class Environment of Post-War Birmingham Fostered The Birth of Heavy Metal.” *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 44, Issue 1 Fall 2010; 145-158.

[71] Brett D, Woods. “Industrial Music for Industrial People: The History and Development of an Underground Genre”. Dissertation Florida State University 2007.

[72] Jason James, Hanley. “Industrial Music for Industrial People: The History and Development of an Underground Genre”. Ph.D. Music Dissertation. Florida State University (2007).

for Industrial Music.

The underlying question being asked in this dissertation is not only what lived experience created musically, but what do the lyrics and the sounds of the music really mean. Susan McClary's interest in the social meanings produced in music, particularly of the historical presentation of the 'mad woman' in operatic works such as Salome by Oscar Wilde and Richard Strauss give a feminist framework to understanding risk and reclamation by female performers.[73] Grunge's musical technologies utilized by both men and women performers include the *female grotesque* and hysteria with elements of romantic agony expressions.

The *female grotesque* observed in grunge's *signifying practice* is utilized from Mary Russo's feminist intervention into Mikhail Bakhtin's work on the *carnivalesque*[74], "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory".[75] By utilizing Julia Kristeva's theory of the abject, as a derangement of identity and as a coding of social and political crisis done through linguistic transgressions of the norms, codes, structures of language",[76] Russo is able to resuscitate the *grotesque* into a feminist reading of the visual and the psychological. For grunge, the cavernous grotto, the horror, and the dissected body become sites of refraction, where refusals are constructed lyrically, and performed visually. The *female grotesque* in its style becomes a drifting semiotical situation where

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[73] See Susan McClary, "The Musical Representation of Madwomen", in *Feminist Endings: Excess and Frame: Music, Gender & Sexuality*. (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 2001), xx

[74] Mikhail, Bakhtin. *Rabelais and His World*, Helene Iswolsky, trans. Cambridge; The MIT Press, 1965.

[75] Mary, Russo. *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity*. (New York; Routledge. Kindle Edition, 1994), 199. Mikhail Bakhtin. Mary, Russo. "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory", in *Feminist Studies/ Critical Studies*, ed. Teresa de Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

[76] Mary, Russo. *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity*. (New York; Routledge. Kindle Edition, 1994), 199.

there is a blurring of the process of subjectivity that is conducted in graphic terms.

In utilizing the term refractive, I am mobilizing the *female grotesque* as a dynamic range of *abject* possibilities performed audibly and visually. Aligning with Hebdige's refusals for *punks*, refraction engages oppositional tactics, as described by bell hooks to disrupt the "the gaze",[77] or better still, induce repulsion. Understood through Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"[78], but centered in hook's oppositionality, the control of white masculinity's scopophilia to shape and consume the erotic is interrupted in the signifying practice of grunge. Explored in this chapter as a repulsion to a sexually available female body, refraction depicts a decaying object of desire, sometimes in hysterical form, that refuses to be commodified or admired by heterosexuality's expectations of the performance of the female gender.

The female *grotesque* in grunge is inseparable from the body and therefore is a place to engage decay, dissection, and illness as feministic gestures of refusal. Grunge's relationship to the aesthetic of illness is a close one that constantly evolves. Engaging with the lived-experience and writing of Susan Sontag,[79] illness is explored here as a key component of grunge's performance of the *grotesque* in its aesthetics. The congruence of Tuberculosis, its diagnosis, its *affects*, and eventual stereotype within the emotional state and the corporal appearance of the afflicted, is shadowed here in examining musical performances.

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[77] bell hooks "The Oppositional Gaze" in Black Looks: Race and Representation (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 115-131.

[78] Laura Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in *Screen*, 1975: 342-352.

[79] Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor*. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1978).

The largest space left in cultural studies of subcultures is for feminist[80] and queer[81] examinations of social formations. Rock musicology has also privileged straight ideas and values as queer musicologist Phillip Brett has critiqued.[82] This dissertation utilizes both the feminist musicology of Susan McClary and the queer musicology of theorists Phillip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, Joke Dame, and Jack Halberstam to situate music as a dynamic cultural expression that considers identity formation, subjectivity, and refusal into individualized art forms. All of these scholars help discern dragged notes, pitches, vibratos, and timbres that represent subversions of binary gender construction while assisting the visual examination of gender performativity. This kind of analysis is essential in order to evaluate the vocal performances of grunge artists such as Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love who regularly defied American rock's heterosexually gendered personas.

Grounding this subcultural exploration in a queer framework is indeed *turning* the *orientation* of the ensemble of literature in order to provide an architecture that is attentive to the background as well as the foreground without being constrained to structural epistemologies of consciousness that do not embrace different directionalities; rather, this is a contextual understanding of conscious cultural

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[80] See *Women Take Issue: Aspects of Women's Subordination* (1978) by the Women's Studies Group at the CCCS; Sue Thornham. Feminist Theory and Cultural Studies: Stories of Unsettled Relations (London; Arnold, 2001.

[81] Judith Halberstam, What"s That Smell" in *Queering the Popular Pitch*, Sheila Whitely and Jennifer Rucenga, eds. (New York Routledge, 2006).

[82] Phillip, Brett. "Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet" in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*. Brett, Phillip, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

production within the framework of Sarah Ahmed's queer phenomenological project.[83] In arguing for a shift in phenomenology's singular and gendered direction, Ahmed critiques the heterosexual orientation of the field of phenomenology as well as its internal orientation of spatial relations *affected* by the historical ordering of objects. Cultural textual interpretation in a queered orientation provided by Ahmed, assists us in integrating Marxian historical materialism within the culturally and economically created consciousness of E.P. Thompson,[84] while turning a recognition of our own situated and embodied knowledge into a sensory awareness.

In drawing out a queer phenomenology, Ahmed states that our consciousness relating to objects of thought, feeling, and judgment, as well as objects in the sense of aims, aspirations, and objectives are restricted by orientations of understanding. Our orientation then, informs our sense perception in attending to what is around us; therefore this is an opportunity to not only engage differently in examining subcultures, but recognize differences that are performed, in order to read cultural meaning. This is in tandem with Ruth Solie's[85] and Susan McClary's[86] Feminist Musicology scholarship that has extended musicological analysis beyond a formalistic interpretation of chords, and instead, privileged the cultural meaning in order to understand the physical and

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[83] Sarah, Ahmed. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. (Durham, Duke University Press, 2006).

[84] E.P. Thompson. *The Making of the English Working Class*. (New York; Vintage Books), 1966; "Time, work-discipline and industrial capitalism." *Past & Present*, Vol 38, No. 1 (1967) 56–97; "The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century." *Past & Present*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (1971) 76–136.

[85] Ruth A. Solie. *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*. (Berkeley: University of California Press 1993).

[86] Susan, McClary. Feminine Endings: Music, Gender & Sexuality. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

social attitudes of music that have significant impacts on cultural landscapes."[87]

methodology

To understand grunge as a subculture that created a unique style as an *oblique* gesture of *refusal* and as a genre deeply influenced by its urban geography, I employed a mixed-methodology to engage with a wide variety of primary sources that range from material objects, sonic samples, mixed-media, geological reports, art installations, municipal records, as well as digitized artifacts. My overarching post-structural historical analysis is heavily informed by queer theory and critical feminism in order to perform media, textual, performance, sound studies, and musicological analysis that is situated in a postmodern visual economy perspective.

As primarily an historical project, archival research has been crucial; ranging from rock ephemera and music collections, autobiographies and memoirs written by grunge artists, to congressional archives reviewing Noise Pollution and EPA regulations. Cultural geographical work has been accomplished by reading local underground music publications like *THE ROCKET* as well as reviewing interviews, performances, and music videos of grunge artists. Zines and other rock ephemera were accessed through Special Collections at the University of Washington, the Seattle Museum of History and Industry Special Collections, the Seattle Public Library, San Diego State University, Bowling Green State University's Music Library & Bill Schurk Sound Archives, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Archives in Cleveland, OH.

Grunge artists' own documentaries created in the midst of their appropriation

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[87] Susan, McClary. Feminine Endings: Music, Gender & Sexuality. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), XVII.

have been extremely helpful. Projects like: *The Year Punk Broke* (1992)[88] documenting the European tour of Sonic Youth and Nirvana in 1991 right before the release of *Nevermind;*[89] the documentary *HYPE!*[90] directed by Doug Pray critiquing the appropriation of grunge in the midst of its popularity; and *The Nona Tapes*[91] a mockumentary created by Alice in Chains poking fun at their own popularity with Jerry Cantrell in drag as an over-zealous music reporter. All of these pieces allow the artists' perspective to be examined in the temporal moment of grunge becoming popularized on a massive international scale. More recent documentary work[92] that is ethnomusicology focused directed by Dave Grohl (Scream, Nirvana, Foo Fighters) has provided valuable insight into the sonic dimensions of place and its impact on the music produced in New Orleans, Seattle, New York, and Washington D.C. Other documentaries like *Hit So Hard*[93] and *The Punk Singer* [94] focus on the experience of women in the grunge and Riot Grrrl scenes, giving insight into the lived-experience of performing in masculine territory, touring, as well as addiction.

What Grohl does with the help of other musicians from around the United States is connect the urban landscape and cultural geography of place to unique

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[88] *The Year Punk Broke*. David Markey (Director). Geffen Pictures, et al. (1992)

[89] Nirvana, *Nevermind,* ℗ 1991 Geffen Records.

[90] *Hype!* Doug Pray (Director). Helvey-Pray Productions (1996)

[91] Alice in Chains: *The Nona Tapes*. Rocky Schneck (Director). Sam Asianian, David Naylor, and Katherine Shaw (Producers). 1995.

[92] See "Sound City" and "Sonic Highways"Grohl, Dave. (Director). (2014). New Orleans: In the Clear [Television Series Episode 6]. Roswell Films and Therapy Content (Producers), Sonic Highways, Home Box Office (HBO). Grohl, Dave. (Director). (2014). Seattle: Subterranean [Television Series Episode 7]. Roswell Films and Therapy Content (Producers), Sonic Highways, Home Box Office (HBO).

[93] *Hit So Hard*, P. David Ebersole (Director) Tight Ship Productions and The Ebersole Hughes Company, (2011).

[94] Sini, Anderson dir. *The Punk Singer.* 2013. New York, New York. IFC Selects. Streaming.

musical practices. When Cyril Neville the percussionist for the Neville Brothers exclaims, "you can hear the paddle wheels and the clackity-clak of the streetcar in the city...which ends up in the rhythm"[95] he is talking about genre being created from location, the physical aspects, the meaning that is attached to the sonic conditions of the environment. This ethnomusicological work aligns with Leigh Michael Harrison's Geomusicological work drawing the connections from the conditions of place and the physical *affects* to the creation of the genre of Heavy Metal. For bands like Black Sabbath and Judas Priest. Harrison argues, "physical and social surroundings gave birth to new place-specific forms of autobiographical music that cues the listener into the very community that shaped the lives of these musicians.[96]

Socio-historical conditions require careful assessment of census data and other primary sources such as written minutes of municipal meetings, proposed neighborhood improvements from the Downtown Seattle Development Association Records, and economic investments in urban geography. In addition to those sources, meteorological data from the Office of the Washington State Climatologist, seismic activity from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) along with the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network (PNSN) in partnership with the University of Washington's Department of Earth and Space Sciences were accessed. Additionally, data from the Federal Transit Authority (FTA), the Federal Aviation Association (FAA), and Boeing Production Archives were reviewed to determine thresholds of acoustic vibrations and

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[95] Cyril Neville in New Orleans: In the Clear [Television Series Episode 6]. Grohl, Dave. (Director). (2014). Roswell Films and Therapy Content (Producers), Sonic Highways, Home Box Office (HBO).

[96] Leigh Michael Harrison. “Factory Music: How The Industrial Geography and Working-Class Environment of Post-War Birmingham Fostered The Birth of Heavy Metal.” *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 44, Issue 1 Fall (2010), 153.

state and national laws that allowed noise from the aerospace economy to dominate air waves in Seattle.

As Raymond Williams has noted “We have to break from the common procedure of isolating an object and then discovering its component. On the contrary, we have to discover the nature of a practice and then its conditions.”[97] In that vein, several art installations and museums served as interactive and textual research for this project such as The MoPop's *Taking Punk to the Masses: From Nowhere to Nevermind,*[98] which I have utilized since 2016. Other immersive and hypertextual installations such as *The Immersive Van Gogh Exhibit*[99] and Barbara Kruger's *Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean You*[100] were exhibits that connected gesture to practice and *micropractice,*[101] assisting this project engage with the layers associated with polysemic expressions in subcultures and symbolic practices.

The Art Institute of Chicago opened up multiple vantage points in which to observe the practices of expressionism, impressionism, and abstraction. In turn the distortion of celebrity in Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's work, Vincent Van Gogh's

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[97] Raymond, Williams. “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory” in *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. (London; Verso, 1980), 15.

[98] Museum of Pop Culture, “Taking Punk to the Masses: From Nowhere to Nevermind”. Seattle, WA. Exhibit.

[99] Immersive Van Gogh Exhibit Cleveland; Cleveland, OH. Accessed 2021. Created by Massimiliano Siccardi. https://www.immersivevangogh.com

[100] The Art Institute of Chicago, Thinking of You. I Mean Me. I Mean you., Installation by Barbara Kruger. Exhibited September 19, 2021-January 24, 2022. https://www.artic.edu/exhibitions/2930/barbara-kruger-thinking-of-you-i-mean-me-i-mean-you

[101] Leonard Clyde Hawes invites us to think of practices on multiple scales-that a micropractice is only observable in a 'finely attuned' visual and audial way, making their invisibility an act of power without the pronouncement that noticeable practices carry. Leonard Clyde, Hawes. "Conversational Performance and the Politics of Experience", Text and Performance Quarterly, Vol. 18. No. 4 (October) (1998): 273-299.

illusionary reality, the horror and *female grotesque* of Cindy Sherman, the *synesthesia* of Kandinsky, and the cut-up methods of Sue Williams and Barbara Kruger became guides to understanding the texture of the audial and visual of grunge's aesthetics. Their work also helped develop a more specified definition of the *grotesque* and aesthetics for this project as it goes forward. The aforementioned artists have not previously been connected to grunge in any way; yet I feature these artists as theoretical frameworks to understand the *female* and *uncanny grotesque* and how specific gestures and colors represent a 'grunge aesthetic' in its symbolic practice. In this way I am linking their work to grunge with a shared oppositionality.

The use of music streaming platforms, such as Apple Music provided access to grunge albums that previously were hard to access, such as early *TAD*, *Green River*, *Skin Yard*, and *The Gits* recordings. In the Apple Music database was also original album cover art that was utilized in interpreting the *grotesque* aesthetics in grunge and that is focused on in the second chapter. SiriusXm and specific programming on its channels Lithium as well as Ozzy's Boneyard also supported this project. Hosted shows like Duff McKagen's (*The Veins*, *Guns N Roses*, *Velvet Revolver*) "Three Chords and the Truth"[102] provided background to the Seattle punk, rock, and grunge scene from his experiences as well as Tom Morello's (*Rage Against the Machine*, *Audioslave*) "One Man Revolution".[103] Other programming such as Lithium's “Virtual Faded Flannel

[102] Three Chords & The Truth Hosted by Duff McKagen and Susan Holmes McKagen. Accessed on SiriusXM. Show Website https://duffonline.com/radio-show/

[103] Tom Morello's "One Man Revolution". Accessed on Lithium, SiriusXM https://www.siriusxm.com/music/tom-morello

Festival: The ‘90s Alt & grunge lineup of Your Dreams"[104] gave historical context and musical memory to the history of grunge and how that memory is continually reinscribed as masculine. Interviews with Perry Ferrel (*Janes Addiction*, *Porno for Pyros*) and others gave personal connection to the music scenes, tours, and festivals that occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s in which this dissertation is focused.

To initiate a critical listening of music that I have such a personal connection to, I initially compared and contrasted musical attributes listed from Pandora's The Music Genome Project®[105] beginning in 2014. Interviewing their manager at the time who had been part of the formation of the company helped me better understand the aspirations for their analytics and how their unique algorithm utilized by musicologists inspired genre specific attributes describing vocals, phrasing, and musicological elements. For this dissertation, I have utilized authentic transcriptions with notes and tablature from Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Alice in Chains, and Soundgarden analyzing their compositions and detailing their musical attributes throughout this dissertation.

Social Media sites of grunge artists that are still touring such as Alice in Chains and Pearl Jam have chronicled their own histories and are important to recognize as the artist's own memories and historical record, built apart from public memory. Individual Instagram accounts such as @grunge_bible, @theposies, @grungerock90s, @davenavarro, @l7theband, @soundgarden, @pixiesofficial, @mskathleenhanna, @joanjett, @kimletgordon, @tommorello, @foofighters, and many others provided

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[104] Lithium's “Virtual Faded Flannel Festival: The ‘90s Alt & grunge lineup of Your Dreams. July 16, 2020. https://www.siriusxm.com/blog/lithiums-virtual-festival-the-90s-alternative-grunge-lineup-of-your-dreams.

[105] Pandora Media, LLC, All Rights Reserved. Pandora and the Music Genome Project are registered trademarks of Pandora Media, LLC. On Feb. 1, 2019, SiriusXM Holdings, Inc. acquired Pandora Media, Inc.

primary insight into artist's projects, memories, and inspirations for their collaborative work in the past and present. I also utilized podcasts from musicians such as Shirley Manson's (Garbage) "The Jump"[106] and Liz Phair's iTunes Originals Session (2005).[107]

The lyrical analysis conducted in this project is an interplay of deciphering linguistic formations and specific literary themes imbedded in the *grotesque* in grunge. Linguistic choices have meaning and the style employed details the identity of the speaker. Within a specific context the language created performs cultural sovereignty , as Gloria Anzaldúa[108] has emphasized this point for subculture identity in chicano communities. To understand accentuations in meter and the particular style of a written piece, and in the case of grunge lyrics, Zsófia Demjén's[109] work on *affective* states helps connect linguistics and literature to understand lyrical style in grunge. Utilizing the literary work of Sylvia Plath, Demjén melds Roger Fowler's 1996 study on Stylistics to understand "'the different ways in which people express their thoughts and how that indicates, consciously or unconsciously, their personalities and attitudes'".[110]

Within grunge lyrics there are personal expressions of *subjectivation*. I studied particular phrasing that invokes melancholia, disorientation, romantic agony, rage, and sometimes, humor. At first observation this is Sigmund Freud's repressive theory in action, causing *affect* and its resulting emotive signs, but the performance of these

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[106] Shirley Manson. The Jump with Shirley Manson Podcast 2020-2021. Accessed on Apple Podcasts.

[107] Liz Phair. Liz Phair iTunes Originals Session 2005. Accessed on Apple Podcasts.

[108] Gloria, Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: La frontera: The New Mestiza*. (San Francisco; Aunt Lute Books 1987).

[109] Zsófia, Demjén. *Sylvia Plath and the Language of Affective States : Written Discourse and the Experience of Depression*, (London; Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

[110] Ibid.

emotional words and their inspiration in the cases of "Polly"[111] and "Rape Me"[112] by Nirvana depict a closeness to the 'present' that is not naive.[113] Rather, the author, in this case, Kurt Cobain, takes on the burden of the victim to self-inflict the persona of the kidnapper and rapist on himself in a subverted murder ballad as only grunge can do.

Understanding the history of the murder ballad as an American misogynist form of controlling women's behavior as Christina Ruth Hastie has explained,[114] lets us observe songs like "Polly" and "Rape Me" as subversive in their inversion of gendered mechanisms of performance art and cultural norms; instead opening up new questions about social roles and responsibilities by using subjectivation. To further understand the format of the murder ballad and how that might be treated in grunge, I utilized Voyant[115] to conduct textual analysis. I isolated *grotesque* terminology, specific symbology and single words to differentiate grunge punk and grunge metal linguistic styles. I also indexed *grotesque* themes ultimately demonstrating propensities by certain bands and song-writers to utilize phrasing that identifies their personal lived experiences.

The important search functionality of Voyant allows a lot of musical ground to be

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[111] “Polly”, Written by Kurt Cobain. Nirvana, *Nevermind*, ℗ 1991 Geffen Records. Lyrics accessible © Primary Wave Tunes, The End Of Music.

[112] “Rape Me”,Written by Kurt Cobain. *Nirvana*, *Nevermind*, ℗ 1991 Geffen Records. Lyrics accessible Lyrics © BMG RIGHTS MANAGEMENT US, LLC.

[113] Sigmund, Freud. "The Future of an Illusion" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. James Strachey, trans. Vol XXI (1927-1931) (London, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis. 1954), 5.

[114] Christina Ruth Hastie. "This Murder Done": Misogyny, Femicide, and Modernity in the 19th-century Appalachian Murder Ballads. MA Thesis. University of Tennessee, Knoxville 2011.

[115] Voyant is an open-platform web-source to conduct analysis and reading of digital texts. https://voyant-tools.org

covered in order to make a solidified conclusion regarding recurring themes and words within the genre of grunge. It assisted in compiling the recurrence of specific words for each band to make a quantitative conclusion about the prolific use of "bones", "death/ dead", "love", "drowning", "liar", and "cry" to name a few. While this quantitative lyrical analysis is useful, it does not replace the importance of each band's contribution to grunge. In a purely quantitative situation, Nirvana has the least influence on the themes within grunge simply because they produced the fewest albums. Yet, their public reception has taken over music memory where Nirvana emerges as the sole signifier of the genre, its style, and grunge's relationship to heroin and depression. In the body of work produced by Seattle grunge artists, it is notable that Nirvana only produced four albums beginning with *Bleach*[116] in 1989. Screaming Trees put out their first album, *Clairvoyance,*[117] in 1986 and made a total of seven albums as a band. Mark Lanegan, their lead singer, additionally made two solo albums[118] during the time frame of this dissertation with Soundgarden and Alice in Chains both making six and Pearl Jam three albums. Nirvana, then, becomes dwarfed in scale which does not fully represent the body of work written by Kurt Cobain or the grunge style that was created. Sheer quantitative data does that. It overwrites, what should be recognized, especially with subcultures.

Kurt Cobain's writing, utilizing the cut-up method, has less verbiage than a typical Alice in Chains or Soundgarden song. Again, from a quantitative stand-point

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[116] Nirvana, *Bleach*, ℗ 1989 Sub Pop.

[117] Screaming Trees, *Clairvoyance*, ℗ 1986 Velvetone.

[118] Mark, Lanegan. The Winding Sheet,℗ 1990 Sub Pop, and *Whiskey for the Holy Ghost* ℗ 1994 Sub Pop.

viewing his lyrics through Voyant does not accurately display the prominence of deictic expressions of place, time, or social expression nor value-laden and ideological perceptions which this project aims to uncover in the genre. Finally, some of the *signifying* language I will mention here and in further detail in the following chapters are references to meteorological conditions, physical and mental illness, human anatomy, referential language of the *female grotesque*, strong emotions of a romantic, violent, or hopeless nature; drugs and references to intoxication and drug rituals and practices, psychotropic events and experiences as well as psychedelic observations.

There are polysemic layers to these references and linguistic orientations that express lived-experiences of the artists and other subjects such as "Polly"[119] and "Jeremy"[120]. These two songs addressing rape and gun violence respectively are mentioned to indicate their place as artifacts to study within popular music and within subcultural praxis. Additionally, words such as 'death' and even 'suicide' are extremely important to track in grunge as well as methods and tools inflicting pain such as guns and knives. Details of place, utilizing descriptive phrases of the urban settings of Seattle with references to loudness and volume are also paid close attention to. What is noticeably absent from grunge's language is heterosexual objectification, sexual enticement, graphic descriptions of sex, sexual conquest, sexual availability, and the objectification of women.

chapters

This dissertation follows a traditional chapter format with signposts within each chapter helping to focus on specific details. I begin this project with a subterranean

[119] Nirvana, *Nevermind*, ℗ 1991 Geffen Records.

[120] Pearl Jam, *Ten* ℗ 1991 Sony Music Entertainment.

excavation of grunge. This first chapter locates grunge beginning in its urban ethos, influenced by economic conditions that are temporally and geographically set. While defining grunge as a subculture formed within specific areas of Seattle, the urban geography of the city itself and the surrounding rural conditions outline a unique juxtaposition of influence on subculture participants. The layered geological make-up of Seattle and the expansive seismic conditions that create a spatial condition of *place* that is uneven and indeterminate draw grunge in both a physical and artistic status. Also in the first chapter, grunge's unique rhizomic relationship and community of practice is distinguished, drawing a detailed and interconnected musical lineage. The chapter highlights the influence of female kinship and mentorship, differentiating grunge from other hyper-masculine subcultures and music scenes.

In the second chapter I explore grunge as a *signifying practice*. I examine different musical technologies utilized by cis-women and cis-men to subvert compulsive heterosexuality and hypermasculinity such as *sapphonics.*[121] I argue that despite being subsumed into commercial success and popular media representation unwillingly, grunge's symbolic messaging of refusal never changed. Instead, issues of gender inequality, rape, and misogyny were continually centered, aligning with certain platforms propounded by mainstream Third-wave Feminism and feminisms of color in the 1990s. I argue here that the *signifying practice* of grunge served as a notable exception to commercialized media representations of femininity and within popular music. Through performances of refusal, utilizing hysteria, romantic agony, and the *grotesque*, grunge interrupted the music industry's ability to commodify the binary-

[121] See Elizabeth Wood, "Sapphonics" in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology.* Phillip, Brett Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2006).

gendered female body. The grunge body practiced and performed its own subcultural refusals of gender subversion in order to establish corporal sovereignty amongst pervasive hyper-sexual coding.

The third chapter of this project, *The Seattle Sound,* compiles the language of grunge, its oppositional aesthetics and *micropractices*[122] of performance and ties it to the *soundscape* of Seattle. This is a geographical and meteorological mapping of genre formation in which natural and industrial sounds are intersected with creative spaces. In this sonic and physical cartography, the *noise*, rhythm, and timbre of grunge are acutely situated into the lived experiences of the artists. R. Murray Schaefer's work on *soundscapes* is influential here to understanding the practice of *earwitnessing* of artists and understanding the *keynotes* and s*oundmarks* that form sonic identities in communities of practice located in the Jambox, the Music Bank, and Galleria Potatohead. Exploring these multi-purpose creative spaces where artistic mentorship and kinship formations were made, *The Seattle Sound* of grunge is mapped.

The vibrational *affects* of the surrounding *soundscape*, and the visual aspects of the dynamic meteorology of the region is examined within a historic lens of the city where the grunge artists lived and worked. Seattles' *economies of noise* from industries such as aerospace, fishing, logging, and military operations are argued here to be unescapable sonic and influences of grunge and *The Seattle Sound*, much like

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[122] The term micropractice, utilized by Leonard Clyde Hawes, is defined as "conversational on a close scale-they situate, identify, produce and these interlocutive subjectivities-it is a microtechnology of subject(ive) experience located within voice's bodies." See Leonard Clyde, Hawes. "Conversational Performance and the Politics of Experience", *Text and Performance Quarterly*, Vol. 18. No. 4 (October) (1998): 25.

industry of post-war Birmingham influenced the genre formation of Heavy Metal.[123] Special attention is given to the creation of a grunge *soundscape* by looking at Soundgarden, Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam, and Screaming Trees as well as the rhizomic formations of Mad Season and Temple of the Dog.

In the conclusion of this project, I meditate on the narcosonic attributes of grunge and draw out possibilities for understanding grunge'*s* sound through the psychotropic. The practice of heroin and its relationship to Alice in Chains is touched upon, drawing from the work of Inigo Williams,[124] James Middleton,[125] and Steve Goodman[126] to build a framework for listening to the embodied sonics of grunge and lived experience through the micropractice of heroin. Furthermore, I look to *synesthesia* as a way to engage deeper with grunge's lasting aesthetic memory and expand on meaning-making within the *grotesque* for the temporal history of late 20th-century western culture.

Finally, I expand on the *economies of noise* and urban aesthetic organization to consider the impact on genre formation. I argue through the frameworks of political economy and gendered politics of celebrity, that subcultures with a community of

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[123] Leigh Michael, Harrison. "Factory Music: How The Industrial Geography and Working-Class Environment of Post-War Birmingham Fostered The Birth of Heavy Metal." Journal of Social History, Vol. 44, Issue 1 (Fall 2010): 145-158

[124] Inigo, Williams. "Narco-sonic Affect-Becoming Intense." December 17, 2004. http://transcendentalempiricism.blogspot.com

[125] James, Middleton"Heroin Use, Gender, and Affect in Rock Subcultures" Echo Vol. 1.1 (Fall 1999); online.

[126] Steve, Goodman. Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear. Cambridge; The MIT Press, 2009),

practice are subject to shifting capitalist maneuvers[127] that displace artists physically from their creative spaces, but also dissects their work through appropriation,[128] essentially robbing the artists of their creative sovereignty and their ability to express their points of view. Lastly, I consider the ramifications of physical displacement for future critical work conducted by subcultures and call for future research in Urban studies to engage with Sound Studies and Geomusicology.

[127] Graham, Murdock and Peter Golding, "Capitalism, Communication and Class Relations" in *Mass Communication and Society,* James Curran, Michael Gurevitch, and Janet Woollacott, eds. London, Edward Arnold. (12-43).

[128]Raymond, Williams. "Culture is Ordinary [1958]" in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism.* Robin Gable, ed. (London; Verso, 1989), 99.

1. SUBTERREAN

This chapter begins at the bottom, where real grunge lies-deep in the earth. In outlining grunge as a subculture formed in the urban geography of mid-1980s Seattle, there are cracks and crevices to consider; the neglected and abandoned spaces of alleys and areaways buried beneath city streets. It is through this indeterminate landscape that grunge'*s* texture emerges. Beginning with the urban ethos of Seattle street culture and downward socio-economic dynamics of the early 1980s, this chapter travels through illegible spaces of practice, layered geological terrain, carved and constructed urban topography, and seismic infrasounds. The texture of grunge'*s* style reflects the lived-experiences of its subculture within these spaces and situated within the larger *sonic geography* of the Puget Sound.

The interconnected community of practice that is formed within these spaces is drawn here in its rhizomic relationship, which this chapter argues is the reason for its interwoven sounds. These sounds reflect a deep relationship with the *abject* and the lyrics of grunge depict themes of illness as well as a critical vulnerability, not seen in hard rock before, especially by cis-men. Within this subculture, the process of *drift* is uncovered and the themes of illness, the *abject*, and the *grotesque* are examined here as symbolic gestures of grunge, unique to their subculture and their genre.

urban ethos

"A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities."[129]*-Michel de Certeau*

Before grunge had a sound, Seattle had a *soundscape* and an urban ethos reflective of its economic precarity in the early 1980s. Boeing, the largest employer in the state of Washington, had suffered during the 1970's, losing a huge military contract followed by the national energy crisis. At its height Boeing's workforce had been 100,000 strong, but by the beginning of the 1970s there were only 32,500 employees. 'The Boeing Bust', as it was called, made the 1980s a time of scarcity for the city of Seattle.[130] Almost simultaneously Seattle endured a housing crisis with rents increasing 25-50%, while apartments were being quickly converted into condos, accounting for 1/3 of the population being effected.[131] The city's attempt to slow this process with a brief moratorium on condo conversions[132] did not have the desired effect.

Uniquely, Seattle's population in 1980 reflected a majority of young adults, ages 20-24, with the second largest age group being 25-29. Predominantly white, and

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[129] Michel, de Certeau. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Steven Rendall, trans. (Berkley, University of California Press. 1988), 117.

[130] Sharon Boswell and Lorraine McConaghy, Nov. 3. 1996 (part of their centennial issue of the Seattle Times 1896-1996).

[131] Seattle City Archives.gov. https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/online-exhibits/urban-refugees-the-1978-housing-crisis.

[132] Ordinance 107500 July 17, 1978.

slightly more female than male.[133] Seattle represented a disproportionate community of young people directly impacted by not only Boeing, but also the decline in fishing, mining, shipbuilding, and the logging industry. According to the 1980 census, of those two groups, the majority were single and unmarried.[134]

Thurston Moore's (Sonic Youth) and Michael Lavine's book, *Grunge*[135] is a photographic documentation of Seattle from the early and mid-1980s and into the early 1990s. Most meaningfully, through Lavine's photos, the book captures the street culture from the 1980s, showing punks in the alleys and "the ave" (University Avenue). Lavine's photos and Moore's commentary situate a "grungy" scene of Seattle, shot in black and white. The punks are a mess in these random photos that Lavine took; more homeless than hip and dirtier than Hebdige's describes London punks of the 1970s. Their pale faces are hard and weathered, their bodies adorned with ripped jeans, ripped sweaters, trench coats, a few second-hand leather jackets and bandanas. Hair in Mullets, Mohawks, and 'Goth hawks' they are in doorways and alleys, hanging out, smoking...some with their skateboards. One of Lavine's photos labeled "Trashed"[136] shows a young punk passed out in a trash can, like he fell into it like his own lazy-boy.

Amidst the graffiti in the background shots taken by Lavine is a familiar smiley face on a skateboard. The untitled photo[137] shows a graffitied smiley face with "XX"d out

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[133] Census Data U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, Bureau of the Census Library 1980-published in 1983 with corrections addendum.

[134] Data is accounting for the population of students at the local Community Colleges and the University of Washington; representing a population outside of those solely involved in academic life.

[135] Michael, Lavine and Moore, Thurston. *Grunge* (New York; Harry N. Abrams 2009).

[136] Ibid., 77.

[137] Michael, Lavine and Moore, Thurston. *Grunge* (New York; Harry N. Abrams 2009), 77.

eyes and a tongue sticking out to the left of its mouth on the back of a skateboard. This is a familiar sign, now, associated with Nirvana. But as Lavine documents, the smiley face existed before Nirvana did on the streets of Seattle, halfheartedly scrawled in door jams and personal belongings. Lavine's photography, more than the official photographs in Seattle's archives, show the uncharted spaces and the individuals who remain illegible. It reveals the urban ethos of the city and its spaces; such as alleys and abandoned buildings where grunge hung out.

The urban ethos of grunge is representative of its spaces within Seattle and the larger connection to the city. Adam Krims defines 'urban ethos' as a channeling of *place* into the sonic implicating that genre is produced from the community's experience of sound in the city.[138] Grunge, through that argument, has an ethos first *affected* by its layered geography, then its urban topography, and finally the community tied to that *place*; an ethos that is a scaled meaning of the spaces that connected practice produce into a subculture's unique style of sound.

Graffiti and other forms of material culture and communication assisted in shaping an ethos, centered on music, and reflective of their lived experience. The local underground rock paper, *The Rocket*, was formed in 1979 which would hone local ideas and focus on the music scene of the Pacific Northwest. Two artists associated early on with the paper were Matt Groening, a cartoonist, who would later gain widespread recognition for his show, "The Simpsons".[139] Another major contributor to the paper and to the urban ethos of rock in Seattle was Art Chantry, who designed

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[138] Adam Krims. Music and Urban Geography (New York; Routledge 2007), 17.

[139] The Simpsons TV Series 1989- , Created by James L. Brooks, Matt Groening, and Sam Simon. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0096697/

album covers for Mudhoney's *Piece of Cake*[140] and Mark Lanegan's (Screaming Trees) solo album, *Whiskey for the Holy Ghost.*[141] Chantry's work has been on display at The Smithsonian and the Louvre, highlighting his amalgamation of 1980s graphic work and industrial trade catalogs.[142]

Both Groening and Chantry's work mocked post-modern daily life, drawing a subcultural vocabulary for refusal to any commercial viability. Groening's infamous weekly comic strip "Life in Hell"[143] embraced his misery living in L.A, gathered an underground following and expanded into wide media distribution spanning thirty years. Chantry, in particular, can be seen as embodying the ethos of grunge, entitling his style as "the 'subculture' of design" that leans towards an industrial layout seen in the tool catalogs of the 1940s and 50s."[144]

Yet another artistic contributor to *The Rocket* and the urban ethos of grunge is the photographer, Charles Peterson. Peterson's work has perhaps become the most prolific visual chronicler of grunge; capturing the upending movement of grunge in brash black and white shots. His photos of fans jammed together in small clubs, Kurt Cobain airborne into the drum-kit, and massive crowds at Reading are more recognized than his entire body of work. His photography carries the tough tangibility of grunge; ripping open a rough interior that grunge displays in its vulnerability. His cover shot for Soundgarden's Louder than Love album, displays movement as a

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[140] Mudhoney, *Piece of Cake*, ℗ 1992 Warner Bros.

[141] Lanegan, Mark, *Whiskey for the Holy Ghost* ℗ 1994 Sub Pop,.

[142] See Steven Heller. "The Daily Heller: Art Chantry Reconsidered in His Own Words". June 6, 2022

[143] Matt Groening. "Life in Hell". Comic Strip.

[144] Smithsonian American Art Museum. 2005: https://americanart.si.edu/artist/art-chantry-7244

gesture-where Chris Cornel's bare abdomen is twisting and bent over; his long dark hair falling down aside his face in black and white takes what could be a visually appealing and powerful masculine photo confuses its shape and form. The ability of the album to catch your eye appeals to an absence of the lens' ability to capture the body in its contortion.

Describing an urban ethos is to understand a distribution of possibilities, always having discernible limits as well as common practices. For the subculture of grunge, creating culture and promoting local artists was paramount.

> "*Only by supporting new ideas by local artists, bands, and record labels can the U.S. expect any kind of dynamic social/cultural change in the 1980s. This is because the mass homogenization of our culture is due to the claustrophobic centralization of our culture. We need diverse, regionalized, localized approaches to all forms of art, music, and politics."*[145]
>
> *-Jack Endino (excerpt from the Manifesto in his zine, Subterranean)*

Zine making and DIY distribution channels assisted in Seattle's urban ethos. One zine in particular, *The Subterranean*, created by Jack Endino, promoted sub-cultural production at the level of the individual. Endino, also was a contributor to *The Rocket*, was the guitarist in Skin Yard along with drummer Matt Cameron (Soundgarden and Pearl Jam) and a producer to many other bands through Sub Pop. Endino made it clear in his writing that the ethos of Seattle was in opposition to mass culture.

"I called it Subterranean Pop because my theory was that there was a tremendous amount of music happening in America that had the potential to be very popular. But

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[145] Jack Endino. *Subterranean*. [zine] Excerpt copied from the original at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame library and archives.

because the distribution channels and the media channels were shut off, those acts had to work their way out of the ghetto. So it was an underground culture..."[146]

The ethos of the underground terrain of grunge embodied DIY practices to connect itself beyond localized urban areas, spreading into the Pacific Northwest. Like the *punk* scene in Washington D.C. that had *Dischord Records*, an independent label founded by Ian MacKay (Fugazi), the Seattle scene created their own mechanism of producing and promoting their musical practice. C/Z Records was formed in 1986 and would release the very first grunge albums from The Melvins, Green River, and Soundgarden. Two years later, Sub Pop Records would form in 1988 and release the very first album from the grunge community, Mudhoney's "Superfuzz Bigmuff" (1988).[147] Shortly after, they would release singles by Nirvana[148] and Mudhoney's collaboration with Sonic Youth, "Halloween".[149] Sub Pop's founders, Jonathan Poneman and Bruce Pavitt, following the ethos of Seattle's emerging subculture would famously promote the Record Company, not necessarily the artists.

The unusual approach of promoting a subculture musical style embodied by a record label coincided with the urban ethos of grunge and its antagonism towards commercialized culture. By bringing only the label to the surface of the commercial music economy, the artists themselves remained shadowed. This was a direct affront to the creation of celebrity that entailed palatable sound stories to "explain" the music and to commodity the artists themselves in sacrifice to mainstream appetites for

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146 Mark, Yarm. *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge* Crown Publishing. Kindle Edition.), 97.

147 Mudhoney, *Superfuzz Bigmuff*, ℗ 1988, Sub Pop.

148 Nirvana, "Sliver/Dive" (Single), ℗ September 1, 1990, Sub Pop, Blue Vinyl.

149 Mudhoney & Sonic Youth, "Halloween" 1988, Sub Pop on *Sub Pop's Singles Club*.

particular types of rock stars.[150] It also enabled the act of promotion to be feel more organic or at least be chronicled as such when Nirvana's mass appeal tokened the name Sub Pop as a forever attachment to grunge glory.

Caroline Records, while located in New York released several grunge albums such as HOLE's "Pretty on the Inside" (1991)[151] and was considered part of the extended community. They would hilariously denounce "grunge" and disassociate themselves from main-stream journalism by tricking *The New York Times* into believing that there was a special slang associated with the Grunge scene. The article, contained the "Lexicon of Grunge: Breaking the Code"[152] in which Megan Jasper, an employee of Caroline made up words and phrases like "Swingin' on the flippity-flop" (hanging out) and "Plats" (platform shoes). The article was celebrated by *The Seattle Times* in their article, "Great Day for Grunge: N.Y. Times Done Dirty"[153] Jasper would later join Sub Pop as an employee and is now a Vice President. C/Z Records in solidarity of Caroline's subversion of *The New York Time's* attempted appropriation, sold t-shirts for $10 with the "Lexicon of Grunge" printed on them.

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[150] *Large labels such as Columbia that signed Alice in Chains would produce Press Kits with artist biographies and glossy group photos to align concert promoters to "buy" the band. These packets would describe the music through the image created for the band's consumption, not the unique and uneven subculture style of grunge.*

[151] HOLE, *Pretty on the Inside,* ℗ 1991 Caroline Records.

[152] "Grunge: A Success Story" by Rick Martin. Nov. 15, 1992. New York Times.

[153] Jean Godden. Feb 26, 1993. "Great Day for Grunge:" The Seattle Times.

registers of rock

Seattle, as a *place*, embodies many competing sounds audible and inaudible, but all vibrational as part of a larger sonic geography. As a city, Seattle is and has always been a shifting *place*; a *place* of mechanical and sonic movement; from the depths of Elliot Bay where sonics are used to track Salmon and underwater pile driving occurs to the consistent opening and closing of bridges like The Freemont Bridge, that opens thirty-five times a day, to reconstruction projects that dig, grade, and move earth, to seismic vibrations, and, of course, areal sonics from the aerospace industry.

Pile Driving in water produces extremely high sound levels in both the surrounding air and underwater environments.[154] During the pile driving a "Mach Cone" is produced of extremely high pressure. Measuring this pressure that is occurring is recognizing the absorption of radiation waves created that can be detrimental to fish. Other seismic events are not limited to earthquakes, but can be created through mining cause infrasounds.[155] Historically considered low risk registering below 20Hz, infrasound sources are now monitored and measured.[156] A study conducted by the University of California San Diego in 2010 on mining explosions in Washington State over the course of twenty-eight days, found 206 events. Within these seismic events producing infrasound vibrations that travelled up to 50km.[157] These acoustic vibrations, according

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[154] Per G. Reinhall, Peter H. Dalh, Acoustic Society of America (2011); 1209-1216."Underwater Mach wave radiation from impact pile driving: Theory and Observation.

[155] Infrasounds are generally categorized as frequencies below 20 Hertz. Some examples of natural infrasounds are However there is some debate about differentiating levels of audibility for different types of infrasound, See Geoff Leventhall's Review.

[156] History of Sonar Communications. https://dosits.org/people-and-sound/history-of-underwater-acoustics/world-war-ii-1941-1945/ history of sonar communications

[157] Infrasound Monitoring of Local Regional and Global Events. Stephen J. Arrowsmith and Douglas O. ReVele Los Alamos National Laboratory.

to Steve Goodman, represent an infrasonic soup submerging modern cities; a constant presence of rumbles, gurgling, and murmurs...in a sense, turbulence, that citizens are constantly enduring as industry proliferates spaces of profit.[158] Vibrational Artist Mark Bain calls this seismic landscape, 'a screamingness of the earth'.[159] These vibrations that make up the landscape of *place* are integral parts of the economic framework of cities such as Seattle. If a city supports these sound submersions through ordinances, then *place* as a holistic category absorbs these vibrations. Sonjah-Stanley Niaah defines "'place' where identity, philosophy, and history merge into the articulation of self within formations of musical production…".[160] *Place*, then, in a physical and sociological sense imbues its relationships with the physical groundwork and socio-physiological foundation for new social formation and practice.

Seattle as a *place* has shifted and evolved through its Office of Economic Development, its Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), and other Municipal Offices such as the Office for Long Range Planning , which mark parcels within its city limits that are not "being used to full capacity".[161] The economic utility of the city is a visible construct, where design must implement spaces of opportunity. As Krims' argues "...if a city supports a different economic activity, then multiple registers will also

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[158] Steve, Goodman. *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear*. (Cambridge; The MIT Press, 2009), 78.

[159] See Steve, Goodman *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear.* (Cambridge; The MIT Press, 2009), 77. More on Mark Bain can be found in the collaborative Lab for the Unstable Media. https://v2.nl/people/mark-bain

[160] Stanley-Niaah, Sonjah. "Negotiating A Common Transnational Space: Mapping performance in Jamaican Dancehall and South African Kwaito", Cultural Studies (Nov. 10, 2009), 758.

[161] In the roughly 100 pages of the report, The City of Seattle and its Executive Department of Economic Development put forth plans for continued expansion for "job growth" and to utilize land to its fullest capacity to fulfill those job growth goals. Seattle Industrial Development Corporation Final Report September 1993.

shift. One will observe mutations in the character of its spaces, its buildings, its retail storefronts, its residential stock and, just as important, the kind of people that will inhabit it."[162] For those that do not fit into new shifts in the economic framework of urban development, they are displaced to the edges that have not yet been annexed into the aesthetics of profitability.

The State of Washington itself consistently endures seismic activity produced from shifting plates equated with the Seattle Fault, the Cascade Subduction Zone, and crustal faults to the east.[163] Most notably, Seattle is surrounded to the North, East, and South by four active stratovolcanoes, Mount St. Helens , Mount Rainier, Mount Baker, and Glacier Peak. The unique geological setting of Seattle and its surrounding areas also endure glacial movements, rock avalanches, and the occasional Seahawks game[164] that complicate an already seismically diverse geo-landscape. In addition to active volcanos above the surface, Washington has active underwater volcanos that erupt and cause acoustic and seismic energy. These Tertiary waves (T-waves) have frequencies of 4-50Hz.[165]

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[162] Adam Krims. Music and Urban Geography (New York; Routledge 2007), XVIII.

[163] Washington State Department of Natural Resources. Faults and Earthquakes in Washington State. 2014. [map]

[164] The Pacific Northwest Seismic Network measures the waveforms produced at Seattle Seahawks football games. "The Beast Quake" of January 8, 2011 was caused by fan response. A small magnitude earthquake was produced.

[165] See compiled data from US Navy SOSUS-NOAA with diagram from Dziak, R.P., S.R. Hammond, and C.G. Fox, 2011.https://dosits.org/people-and-sound/examine-the-earth/volcanoes/ ; Bohnenstiehl, D. R., Dziak, R. P., Matsumoto, H., & Lau, T.-K. A. (2013). Underwater acoustic records from the March 2009 eruption of Hunga Ha'apai-Hunga Tonga volcano in the Kingdom of Tonga. Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research, 249, 12–24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvolgeores.2012.08.014

In 1993, the University of Washington Magazine wrote, "Fault line puts Seattle at risk of 'The Big One'".[166] The catchy and disturbing title confirmed what seismologists had been slowly discovering since the 1950s; that a fault line had existed beneath the city of Seattle putting over 2.5 million people at risk. The revelation that this specific fault line threatens to produce what is called a 'megathrust quake', darkened the already concerning situation. Seattle, unlike San Francisco, had not been alerted to the presence of seismic activity in dramatic fashion. After the massive earthquake of 1906 causing more than 3,000 deaths in San Francisco[167], researchers at several universities began studying the St. Andreas fault line in earnest. Rebuilding was necessary to endure horizontal shaking and movement causing new construction and building codes to be created for the areas surrounding where the earthquake had occurred. Seattle was already rebuilding in the early 1900s after their great fire, but unaware of the threat lying beneath and so construction was not reinforced for heavy seismic activity.

The Pacific Northwest Seismic Network (PNSN) now monitors any activity originating from the fault as well as earthquakes associated with the surrounding volcanos. They have reported two types of activity from the Seattle fault "deep tremor episodes and tremor bursts"[168] The deep tremor episodes that they have observed lasted two weeks, a long duration of shifts which is observed by analyzing waveform envelopes.[169] This activity is deep below the surface and is not physically detectible.

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[166] Bill Cannon. March 1993 "Fault line puts Seattle at risk of the 'The Big One'. University of Washington Magazine.

[167] See USGA History of the 1906 Earthquake. See also The Center for Legislative Archives; San Francisco Earthquake, 1906. U.S. National Archives.

[168] Seismic-cite Deep Tremor Signal Cascades Article-referencing work from the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network PNSN

[169] Ibid., pg 1.

However, those who navigate the waters surrounding Seattle are keenly aware as they must avoid the 'lake bottom forests'-the first indication that an earthquake had occurred that they saw in the 1950s. The trees that dropped and died 800-1400 years ago, exist underneath the surface of the water. They still stand upright buried under 200ft of water.

The fault line is a serious complication to Seattle's subsurface which has a geological formation that includes unusual glacial stratigraphy[170] that produces extremely localized seismic hazards. According to research from The U.S. Geological Society, the city of Seattle due to this geographical condition, is prone to landslides, earthquakes, and seismic shaking, particularly in Pioneer Square, SoDo, and lower Duwamish neighborhoods[171]. In wet conditions, landslides are a particular concern as well as liquefaction.[172] This phenomenon is also a concern surrounding Seattle at its edges of Elliot Bay to the East and Lake Washington to the West.

The localized seismic activity in the city is also surrounded by duration sequences of magnitudes produced by Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Rainer, Glacier Peak and Mt. Baker. During the '90s; specifically the periods of 1988-1992, 1996-1996 and 1997-1999[173] there was an uptick in activity. They are the same type of dacite volcano as Mount

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[170] Glacial stratigraphy is "The science of rock strata, or layers. It is concerned with all characters and attributed of rocks as sequentially timed layers and their interpretation in terns of mode of origin and geologic history." US Geological Society Glossary; https://volcanoes.usgs.gov/vsc/glossary/stratigraphy_stratigraphic.html

[171] [2] see Ralph A. Haugerud, Kathy Goetz Troost, and William T. Laprade. "Geology of Seattle, a Field Trip", in Geological Society of America Field Guides, Series 49, 2017.

[172] According to the Seattle Department of Transportation, liquefaction is listed within the Designated Environmentally Critical Areas are defined in SMC 25.09.012; geological hazard areas; landslides, liquefaction-prone areas (sites with loose, saturated soil that lose the strength needed to support a building during earthquakes; seismic hazard areas, steep slope erosion, hazard areas, volcanic hazard areas, flood-prone areas.

[173] Cascades Volcano Observatory October 30, 2023 in Vancouver, WA

Vesuvius. Dacite volcanos do not erupt, but rather explode through the top crust. To break through that crust, immense build up and power actually break rock. From this type of volcano, "an eruption brings tephra[174] falls, pyroclastic[175] flows and pyroclastic surges, ballistic projectiles, and lava. Debris avalanches, lahars, and floods commonly accompany eruptions, but can also occur during dormant periods[176]. Mt. Rainier is the closest volcano to Seattle at 60 miles to the Southeast; Glacier Peak is around 70 miles to the west, Mt. St. Helens is 189 miles to the south, and Mt. Baker is 130 miles to the north by the Canadian border. These four volcanos in Washington State are part of eighteen in the United States deemed to be of 'High Threat Potential'[177] and are constantly monitored by groups like the Cascade Volcano Observatory (CVO) , the U.S. Geological Survey Volcano Hazards Program (USGS), and the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network (PNSN).

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[174] Tephra is the general name for anything thrown into the air during a volcanic eruption. This ranges from ash to 'volcanic bombs'. U.S. Geological Society “Earthword-Tephra” https://www.usgs.gov/news/science-snippet/earthword-tephra.

[175] U.S. Geological Society, "How dangerous are pyroclastic flows?" https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/how-dangerous-are-pyroclastic-flows "A pyroclastic flow is a hot (typically >800 °C, or >1,500 °F), chaotic mixture of rock fragments, gas, and ash that travels rapidly (tens of meters per second) away from a volcanic vent or collapsing flow front."

[176] R.P. Hoblitt, J.S. Walder, C.L. Diredger, K.M. Scott, P.T. Pringle, J.W. Vallance. Volcano Hazards from Mount Rainier, Washington, Revised 1998. Open-File Report 98-428.USGS.

[177] See John W. Ewert, Angela K. Diefenbach, and David Ramsey. 2018 Updated to the U.S. Geological Survey National Volcanic Threat Assessment. Scientific Investigations Report 2018-5140. U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Geological Survey.

urban geography

Urban geography represents a particular dialectic between spatial legibility and illegibility. As James C. Scott has argued in his book *Seeing Like A State*[178], intensional aesthetic planning charts visibly create order for the possibility of creating profit regions. Control and management of borders historically have inspired cartography for political interpretations of power tied to the enclosure of land. The implication drawn from this practice is that improvements upon the land are necessary in order to provide benefit, organizing an imperialization of property with designated ownership and direct lines to profitability.[179] Legibility, then, demands physical and monetary accounting of activity, which in the urban setting, designs its sectors carefully in order to promote the visibility of improvements, profit, and future earnings within its boundaries.

So, when exploring Seattle's unofficial and official neighborhoods, designated public and private spaces, and micro-environments, the *soundscape* is an *affected* component of legibility. Together, urban geography and the *soundscape* represent a relational spectrum of *place* and *space* that is comprised of visual and aural *affects*. This is important when understanding the infrastructure of particular communities of practice and what *soundmarks* are present that become an intricate understanding of *place* to the subculture. These *soundmarks* also become possible acoustic influences in the practice of earwitnessing in the areas of Bell Town, Ballard, Pioneer Square, University and St. Anne neighborhoods. An example of a prominent *soundmark* would be the sound of the Freemont Bridge one of 150 bridges in Seattle's city limits, and

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[178] James C., Scott *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. (New Haven, Yale University Press,1998).

[179] James C. Scott. Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed. New Haven, Yale University Press,1998), 55.

"one of the busiest drawbridges in the world".[180] The simple opening and closing of the bridge registers a *soundmark*, a background component of establishing cultural geography of *place*.

The acoustic imprint caused by the opening and closing of a bridge establishes a *soundmark* that is part of a community's identity is important in mapping the establishment of spaces of practice. The *affect* of the *soundmark*, and in turn, its origin and continuance must be an important focus is on the acoustics of the neighborhood in determining industrial pursuits over the health of individuals and community members. With that is attached an acoustic ecology, which contends with the sounds of industry as well as natural occurring acoustics.

R. Murray Schaefer would collectively designate a neighborhood sonically as a *soundscape*. Within the *soundscape* are *soundmarks*, which are "community sounds" by which the neighborhood is culturally adhered to. In definition, the "*soundmark*, derived from the term landmark, refers to a community sound which is unique or possess qualities which make it specially regarded or noticed by people in that community."[181] *Soundmarks* are monolithic acoustic identifiers that reflect the character of a community."[182] Examples would include the sound of water lapping up against the pylons near the Seattle Ferry Terminal and the blast of the ferry whistle signaling the departure to Bainbridge Island.

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[180] Tyrone Beason. "Seattle's Gritty Bridges" *The Seattle Times.* December 3, 2015, 6.

[181] R. Murray Schaefer. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Turning of the World*, (Rochester; Destiny Books, 1977), 10.

[182] Ibid., 239.

Alleys & Areaways

Infrastructure as part of urban geography's goal is important to note in understanding the acoustic influence on the grunge subculture. The geological makeup of Seattle is both steep and low, with differentiations occurring on many streets without warning. These dramatic inclines and uneven terrain necessitate accommodations for travel, incorporating structures such as bridges and stairways. Seattle has hundreds of staircases. These are not easily traversed as the grade of some of these stairways are incredibly steep and some very high. Infrastructure thus depends on the ability of a city to make its profit areas accessible to its residents, particularly workers as well as visitors. This also implores large areas of exchange and multi-modal transport, such as the Port of Seattle to be not only functioning but protected from interruption.

Seattle is a city with a lot of alleys. Within the densely packed downtown area, there are over 217,500 square feet of these clandestine, urban pathways.[183] As Adam Krim's has argued, the aesthetic re-organization of urban spaces aims to synthesize the unseen and undesignated spaces into visible and useful places.[184] Alleys in themselves are unique urban pathways which are public spaces; spaces that are often not maintained, which have diverse traffic from bikes to motorized vehicles, to foot traffic. They are also subcultural spaces-dumpsters, *places* to smoke, gather, drink, do drugs, make out, they are dark, less surveillance, back entrances, they also echo, have certain

[183] Tera Hatfield and Jenny Kempson and Natalie Ross. Seattleness: A Cultural Atlas (Seattle; Sasquatch Books, 2018),90.

[184] Adam, Krims. *Music and Urban Geography.* (New York; Routledge, 2007), XXI.

sound structures.[185]

Alleys are entry-ways into understanding the urban geography of Seattle. An alley served as the entrance to The Black Dog Forge, where Pearl Jam created *Ten*[186] and Soundgarden practiced for *Badmotorfinger;*[187] the doors to the smithy and the Galleria Potatohead decorated with iron and graffiti, welcoming Black Smiths, artists, and musicians to work in a space together. One of the opening shots in the movie *Singles,*[188] features the brick wall with "MotherLoveBone" graffitied on it by Jeff Ament (Green River, Motherlovebone, Pearl Jam). The shot, cinematographically captured from the perspective of a car driving by in the dark, is featured in the very beginning of the film along with recognizable landmarks such as the Space Needle. The emphasis on the alley wall from Director Cameron Crowe demonstrates where the Seattle scene is located and how music is performed and shared…not on main-street.

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[185] In addition to Krims, Jeff Ferrel in his sociological examinations of the invisibility of drift discusses what alleys hold as social spaces separated from the surveillance of urban aesthetics. Jeff, Ferrell. *Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge*. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018).

[186] Pearl Jam, *Ten*, August 27, ℗ 1991, Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

[187] Soundgarden, "Badmotorfinger". ℗, 1991 A&M Records.

[188] Cameron, Crowe, dir., *Singles*.1992; Los Angeles, California; Warner Brothers, Streaming.



Figure 1. Entryway to the Black Dog Forge from the alley in between 2nd Avenue and 3rd Avenue. Photo courtesy of Lydia Heard, September 24, 2009.

The sound structures of alleys, particularly if they are not maintained uniformly open different possibilities for acoustic expressions and for earwitnessing to occur. The tempos of laughter echoing, of footsteps, garbage dumpsters banging...all of these are important sounds for subcultural life. One particular rhythm echoed in Alice in Chain's "Man in the Box"[189] is the sound a manhole cover makes when a car drives over a lid that is slightly loose. The immediate beat of the bass drum, then a tom and layered with bass guitar are prominent, rich, and abrupt. The eighth rest sets the tension for the quick eighth note into the quarter note. They are singularly featured in the recording and then joined quickly with Jerry Cantrell's wailing guitar.

[189] Alice in Chains, *Facelift* , ℗ 1990 Columbia.

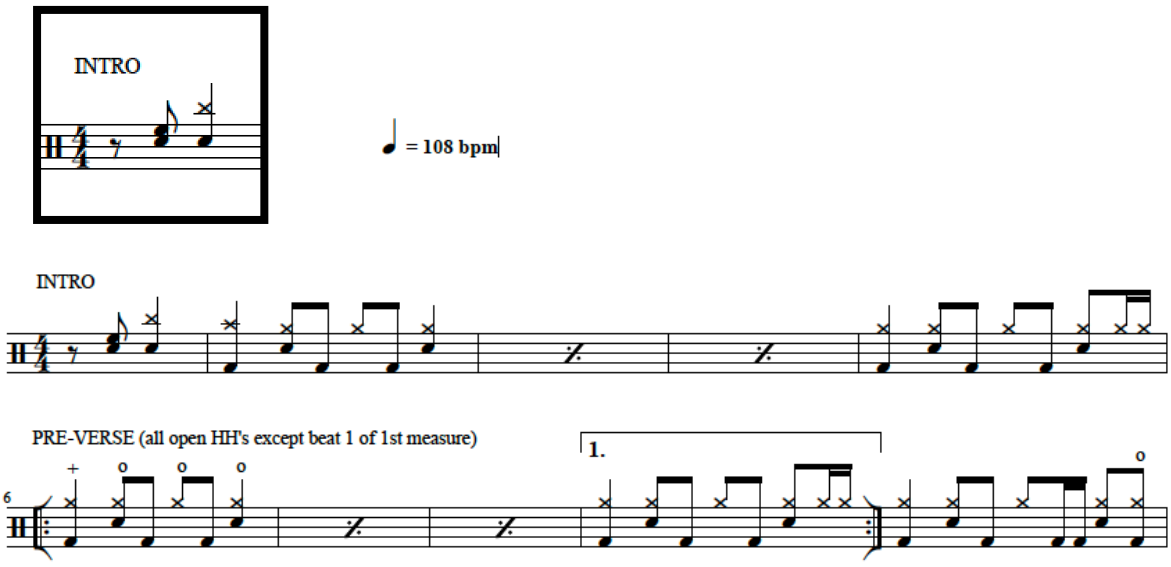


Figure 2. “Man in the Box”, Drum Music. Drum Tab by 7DrumLessons, “Man In the Box”, written by Alice in Chains, 1990. Drummer Sean Kinney. Man in the Box Alice in Chains, "Facelift" 1990 Columbia Records. Drum Tab by 7DrumLessons.

In addition to stairways, Seattle has places called Areaways. In Pioneer Square, the solution to restore streets and structures after the great fire, was to build over what remained. In a sense they buried what had been lost, planning to move on and start over. Their process at the time was to use "un-engineered fill that was placed over estuarine mud, which produced a serious hazard”.[190] These buildings, streets, and other structures are an underground urban geography that is now a part of Seattle's geological layout. Today in Pioneer Square you can embark on an underground tour of three-to-four blocks and explore the underground passages that remain from the rebuilding period after the Great Seattle Fire of 1889. These streets beneath the surface

[190] Ralph A. Haugerud, Kathy Goetz Troost, William T. Laprade. “Geology of Seattle, a field trip” in *Geological Society of the America Field Guides*; 49 (2017), 1.

of Seattle remain and have been restored along with the rest of Pioneer Square which was rebuilt in the span of two years after the fire, in the Romanesque style popularized in Chicago.[191]

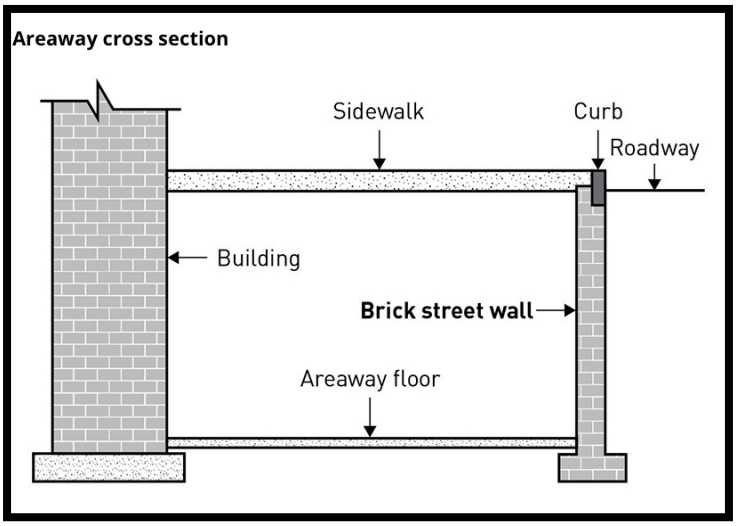


Figure 3. Areaway Cross Section of Pioneer Square, courtesy of the Seattle Department of Transportation from a structural analysis conducted in 2018.

[191] Pioneer Square Historical Society, Seattle. https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/historic-preservation/historic-districts/pioneer-square-preservation-district#history

cultural geography of grunge

> *"Nirvana needed gas money to drive down to L.A. to record Nevermind, so they played a last-minute show at the OK Hotel, which my partner Robin booked. The band walked away with a few hundred bucks, drove down to L.A., and the rest is history."*[192]
>
> *-Steve Moriarty (drummer, The Gits)*

Stretching from the University District to the East and Queen Anne and Capitol Hill to the West, grunge in the early 1980s to the early 1990s was made up of cultural spaces. When we are talking about Seattle for the sake of the genre of grunge (both punk and metal) as well as *The Seattle Sound*, we are narrowing the cultural geographic region to the neighborhoods of Ballard, Belltown, Capitol Hill, Denny Triangle, First Hill, Pioneer Square (Pioneer Ghost Town), West Queen Anne, and the University District.

This map displays key spaces of community practice such as the Black Dog Forge & Galleria Potatohead on 2nd Ave which was an active smithy as well as spaces for artists to work in other mediums. The Vogue and The Showbox in East Queen Anne and both on 1st Avenue served as regular spots for the bands to play on a regular basis. These were small local establishments featuring live music every night of the week. To the south in Pioneer Square was the Central Saloon.

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[192] Mark, Yarm. *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge* (Crown. Kindle Edition), 278.

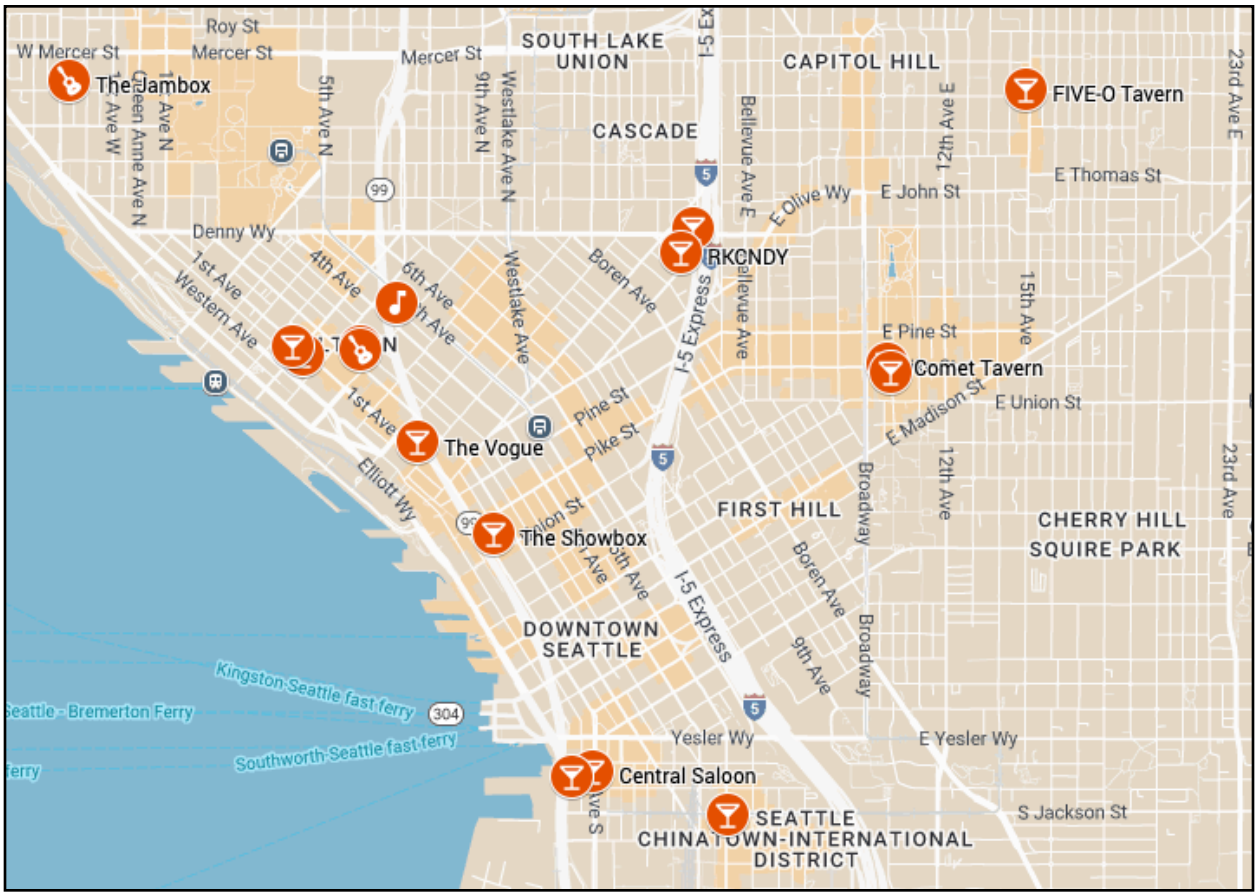


Figure 4. Close-Up Map; grunge spaces of community practice, Seattle WA. Created by Linnea Zeiner © 2025.

grunge as a community

He came from an island
Then he died from the street
And he hurt so bad like a soul breakin'
But he never said nothin' to me, yeah

"Say Hello To Heaven"Temple of the Dog (1990)[193]
-lyrics by Chris Cornell

[193] "Say Hello to Heaven", *Temple of the Dog*, Temple of the Dog, ℗ 1990 UMG Recordings, Inc.

Andy Wood, the lead singer of Malfunkshun and Motherlovebone was Chris Cornell's roommate and good friend. Cornell wrote these lyrics while they lived together and when Wood was still alive before his untimely death on March 19, 1990. Temple of the Dog, a collaboration of Soundgarden members and the newly formed Pearl Jam collaborated on this album in tribute to their friend. The artistic community that began to be formed with Malfunkshun and Mudhoney in 1980 and continued through 1997 was close knit and interconnected through romantic relationships, friendships, mentorships, and artistic kinships. Their specific larger formation as a community of practice that branched off into other projects is considered here to be rhizomic in that it produces lines into new musical formations and artistic kinships.

> "*Music has always sent out lines of flight, like so many 'transformational multiplicities', even overturning the very codes that structure or arborify it; that is why musical form, right down to its ruptures and proliferations is comparable to a weed, a rhizome.*"[194]
>
> *-Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari*

Grunge's rhizomic structure within the urban geography and *soundscape* of Seattle is the foundation of its unique sound and is the most important in determining *The Seattle Sound*. The particular texture of grunge was formed from as urban ethos of dislocation and *drift* producing a unique style that was in tension with the *economies of noise* surrounding their spaces of living, practice, and performance. The familiar tone of grunge is *synesthetic* to its embodiment of the abject and *grotesque* that are special aspects of grunge as a *signifying practice* of refusal.

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[194] Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari. A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Brian Massumi, trans. (Minneapolis; University of Minneapolis Press, 1987).

Grunge, like other music genres that are founded out of communities of practice was influenced by legible methods of control and systematic state organization of legibility. The State of Washington and Seattle Census data from 1980 and 1990 demonstrates racial dynamics are uneven and overwhelmingly white. Of the bands highlighted in this dissertation such as Malfunkshun, Nirvana, and Screaming Trees, band members lived in the same neighborhoods and attended the same schools. This stretched across the state from Aberdeen where Nirvana's Krist Noveselic and Kurt Cobain went to high-school together, to Ellensburg where the Screaming Trees members all went to the same high-school. Below is a diagram of the musicians of the subculture community of grunge demonstrating their rhizomic relationships.

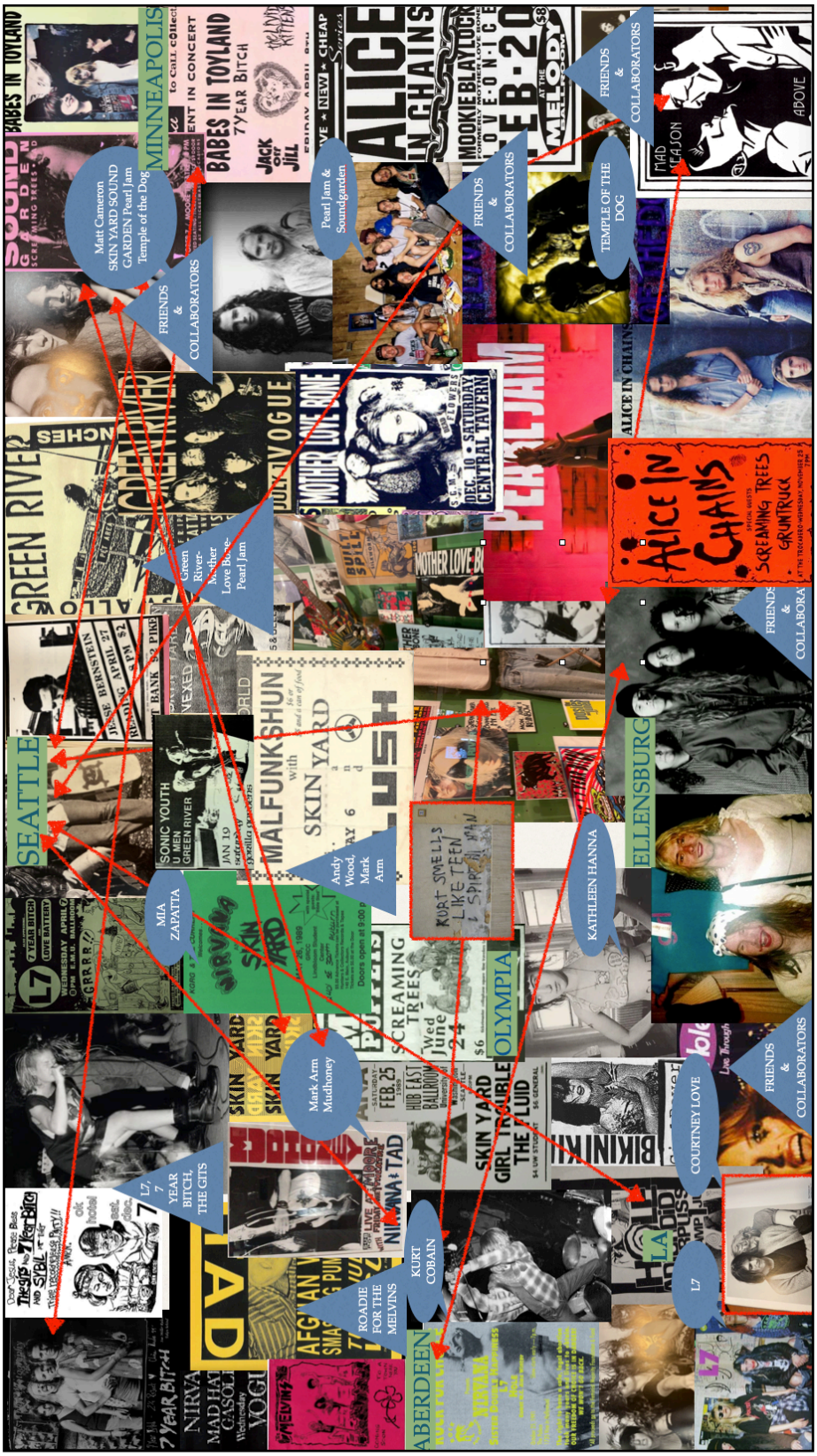


Figure 5. grunge rhizome by Linnea Zeiner

"*I knew Cobain from junior high. When we were 14,15 we were on the same baseball team in Babe Ruth. Sat on the bench. He was a quiet, skinny guy. We talked about our favorite rock bands. Didn't pay attention to baseball. At the time, we were really into Cheap Trick.*"[195]

-Matt Lukin (Melvins)

The grunge rhizome above includes a wider scope when assembling artists' interconnectivity. When possible, the map demonstrates some of the important geographic locations that influenced grunge including Olympia (Bikini Kill), Aberdeen (Nirvana and Melvins), Ellensburg (Screaming Trees), and Bainbridge (Malfunkshun). The town of Olympia applies to grunge because this where Courtney Love (Kurt Cobain's wife) had lived for a time before moving to L.A. and forming HOLE. It is also the town where Cobain's friend Kathleen Hanna, one of the founders of Riot Grrrl, went to school. Incidentally her Bikini Kill bandmate, Tobi Vail had dated Cobain before he met Courtney Love.

Other key women that had an influence on grunge's formation were Susan Silver and Ann and Nancy Wilson of Heart. Susan Silver was the long-time manager for Alice in Chains and Soundgarden as well as Screaming Trees beginning in 1990. Silver's husband, Chris Cornell is mapped throughout the grunge landscape as the lead singer of Soundgarden, a collaborator for Temple of the Dog, roommate of Andy Wood (Malfunkshun, Mother Love Bone), producer of Screaming Tree's album Uncle Anesthesia[196], and guest artist on Alice and Chains' SAP[197] album. Ann and Nancy

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[195] Matt Lukin from the Melvins, in Mark, Yarm. *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge* Crown Publishing. Kindle Edition.), 29.

[196] Screaming Trees, *Uncle Anesthesia*, ℗ 1991 Sony Music Entertainment.

[197] Alice in Chains, *Sap* , ℗ 1992 Columbia.

Wilson acquired the recording studio Bad Animals ® located in Belltown in 1990, where Alice in Chains and Soundgarden both recorded albums. Ann Wilson is located as a key structure in the rhizomic relationships as her vocal coach, David Kyle, also taught Chris Cornell and Layne Staley. She also collaborated with Alice in Chains on their SAP album and Layne Staley sang with Heart on their album Desire Walks in 1993-he sings the cover of Dylan's "Ring them Bells".[198]

This extended rhizome of grunge demonstrates key relationships at all levels from production and sales at Sub Pop, to friends, mentors, collaborators, and lovers. With a couple exceptions, each artist has at least two points of connections with someone else, multiplying their interconnections extensively. As a community of practice, these connections show a network from the level of the individual, to social group formation, to other subcultures like Riot Grrrl and other regions such as L.A. and Minneapolis, extending all the way into music production and sales with SubPop.

The communal musicianship of grunge artists in Seattle in the mid-1980s and early 1990s was an alternative formation of mentorship that was unique within rock and punk scenes in the United States because of its close kinship ties and non-competitive ethos. Some other historical examples of this kind of kinship are the Laurel Canyon Community of Los Angeles, The Chelsea Hotel, and the Haight Ashbury District of San Francisco. The other major geographical locations for rock and punk musicianship and production, namely the various neighborhoods in New York, exemplified cut-throat

[198] Heart, "Desire Walks On", ℗ 1993 Capitol Records.

tactics[199], that did not cultivate musical mentorship or collaborative performances. Because of this communal practice, Seattle emerges as a very specific formation of alternative culture of music.

As a community of practice Seattle musicians intentionally refused homogenous cultural commodification. While grunge's roots belong to the Pacific Northwest, its style of resistance and volume of protest was shared through the DIY networks first established in the punk subcultures of Washington D.C. that spread to Los Angeles in the mid 1980s. These communities that produced their own records, zines, and all-ages shows connected their ideas through physical spaces such as record stores and coffee shops, using the networks of the U.S. mail to send zines. The community aspect of zine creation and participation further connected multiple contributors to be supporters of punks across the U.S. (essentially pen pals) who hosted visiting bands on their living-room floors and basements, meeting, creating music, and sharing ideas.

Therefore grunge, like punk, was never in a vacuum with regards to communication and shared beliefs and lived experiences; however, the cultural geography of their respective locations remained steadfast in their subcultures, so while sharing ideas, they remained unique to their lived experience *affected* by socio-economic status, political praxis, and access to creative spaces.

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[199] Chris Cornell spoke to Dave Grohl remembering a conversation with his friend and rock idol, Johnny Ramone in which they compared the cut-throat tactics of the New York punk scene with the communal ethos of Seattle.“Pearl Jam Twenty”. Directed by Cameron Crowe. Tremolo Productions, Vinyl Films, et al., 2011.

dislocation and drift

> *"I have a distrust of humanity. I lost my faith in all those kinds of things a long time ago, probably as a teenager. But that's okay. I understand I'm not normal. I'm just a weirdo walking around like Bozo the Clown."*[200]
>
> *-Buzz Osbourne (Fecal Matter, Melvin's singer and guitarist) talking about his grandfather leaving because he couldn't feed his family and becoming a hobo.*

As an artist underclass in Seattle, members of the grunge community existed in liminality between labor and artistic practice. Buzz Osbourne shared his lived-experience with Everett True about his situation as a subject without stability in the quote above. Mark Lanegan of Screaming Trees also had an uncle who was a self proclaimed “hobo"[201] as he talks about in his memoir. This status, or label of hobo as someone cast adrift by economic circumstance that Osbourne and Lanegan share in their family is part of a longer social history beginning before the 20th-century. As Jeff Ferrel elaborates, the social history of the "hobo" coincides with particular economic conditions and geographic frontiers in which he includes them as a proletariate class with subculture formation and politics.[202]

Ferrel cites "the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1905 which organized in order to democratize labor opportunities in opposition to elitism of craft unionism with the goal of over-throwing capitalism and establishing an industrial democracy.”[203] On the West Coast, the IWW held their meetings on street corners,

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[200] Mark, Yarm. *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge* Crown Publishing. Kindle Edition.), 20.

[201] Mark Lanegan, Sing Backwards and Weep; A Memoir, Mishka Shubaly, ed. (New York; Hatchette Books 2020), 7.

[202] Jeff, Ferrell. Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018) 84-88.

[203] Ibid.

competing with the Salvation Army for the hearts and minds of the workers."[204] The “Soapboxing” of the IWW "caused local municipalities such as Spokane, Washington to issue prohibitions on public meetings on streets, sidewalks, or alleys (except for the Salvation Army). In San Diego, California the ban on 'street-speaking' was supplemented by a second 'move on' ordinance" created to remove the IWW from the street and in Aberdeen, Washington, Kurt Cobain's hometown they allowed any organization *except* the IWW to assemble and speak in public."[205]

The politics of dislocation, of selecting alternative means of work and mobility or perhaps being forced into dislocation through layoffs is a marker of advanced capitalism and the loss of fordism as Frederick Jameson has argued.[206] We can also see this as downward mobility as Katherine S. Newman[207] has described; The exact opposite of the American Dream that promotes the reward of upward mobility through hard work. Yet in fact, in the time of grunge subculture, downward mobility was a shared experience not just in Washington but throughout the country in the 1980s. Newman's study covers the mass layoffs of air traffic controllers by President Reagan, the instability of the white collar work-force, and divorced women who struggled during this time as an overall indicator of a different type of socio-economic movement.

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[204] Jeff, Ferrell. *Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge*. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018) , 97-98.

[205] Ibid., 98.

[206] Frederick Jameson. Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. (Durham; Duke University Press, 1991.),xx

[207] Katherine S. Newman. Falling from Grace; Downward Mobility in the Age of Affluence. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1999).

Table 1. grunge community performance and practice venues list

The Crocodile	2505 1st Ave, Seattle, WA 98121	Belltown
Blue Moon Tavern	712 NE 45th St, Seattle, WA 9810	Belltown
Cyclops	2421 1st Ave, Seattle, WA 98121	Belltown
Central Saloon	207 1st Ave S, Seattle, WA 98104	Pioneer Square
The Comet	922 E Pike St, Seattle, WA 98122	First Hill
The Music Bank	1454 NW 45th St, Seattle, WA 98107	Ballard
The Kit Kat Club (cabaret)/ Paradise Loft	3603 Woodland Park Ave N, Seattle, WA 98103	Freemont
FIVE-O Tavern	507 15th Ave E, Seattle, WA 98112	Capitol Hill
The Jambox	516 3rd Ave W, Seattle, WA 98119	S. Queen Anne
The Ditto	5th & Bell	Belltown
RKCNDY	1812 Yale Ave, Seattle, WA 98101	Capitol Hill
The Off Ramp Cafe	109 Eastlake Ave E, Seattle, WA 98109	Capitol Hill
Moe's Mo Roc'n Cafe	925 E Pike St, Seattle, WA 98122	First Hill
The Black Dog Forge & Galleria Potato Head	Alley between 2nd & 3rd Ave. South of Battery, North of Bell St.	Belltown
The Vogue	2018 1st Ave, Seattle, WA 98121	Belltown
The Showbox	1426 1st Ave, Seattle, WA 98134	Downtown
Gorilla Gardens/Omni Room	5th Ave S, Seattle, WA	Pioneer Square
The OK Hotel	212 Alaskan Way S, Seattle, WA 98104	Pioneer Square

The example of 'The Boeing Bust' of the '80s followed by other downturns in the Washington economy such as the national recession of 1990-1991 as well as the loss

of federal timber is a significant factor of downward mobility in Washington. In 1989 when the Spotted Owl was listed as an endangered species, logging decreased significantly, adding to the closure of sawmills. Production decreased by 23.5% with 1,400 jobs lost.[208] This time period also marked a significant change from a fordist economy to the service sector in Washington, particularly Seattle. This seemed to read as an overall positive change in Washington's own interpretation of the 1980 and 1990 data. They touted an increase in population of 4.5% with strong participation in managerial, sales, and service sector jobs,[209] but ignored the growth of the poverty rate from 11.2% in 1980 to 12.4% in 1990 with Seattle having the highest poverty rate in the state, especially for people in the age range of 18-24.

The signifier of the logging industry well associated with Washington is the flannel shirt. Produced en masse and readily available in thrift and department stores alike, the style of grunge is still associated with this particular clothing item and touted in fashion street-style shots of celebrities. In reality, the flannel shirt was serviceable, warm, and cheap for an underclass that didn't have a lot of money. The flannel in grunge subculture represented just that-an item of second-hand clothing. However, when taken in concert with the economic instability in Washington, and the indeterminate status of employment of artists in Seattle, the flannel style represents the group's dislocation from post-fordism and a visible status of 'working class', if not an underemployed or unemployed class.

Aisha D. Durham has argued, "culture, behavior, and mobility (spatial,

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[208] Economic Contribution of the Forestry & Wood Processing Sectors in the State of Washington, Working Paper 116. October 2009.

[209] City of Seattle. Seattle Planning Department. "Census 90: Seattle 1990 Who We Are", December 1st 1992.

professional, and economic) mark class belonging."[210] Class is an important consideration in understanding the subculture of grunge. They do not belong to the same social class stratus that Dick Hebdige proclaimed for London punks in the 1970s. Dress as refusal for the punks appropriated social class standing with looks like the Teddy Boy, ripping off the upper-class boarding school lot.[211] In grunge, their style evolved from utilitarian purposes, from availability...it designated their social dislocation from class, at least from a class that was losing its standing by losing jobs. The flannel for grunge equates to a different spatiality associated with the impacts of late capitalism. It's layering with long underwear with shorts on top, such as Jerry Cantrell and Jeff Ament wore a lot, indicate more of someone in *drift* who has the clothes on their back and that's it. This style of purpose was so unique that for the movie, Singles,[212] Matt Dillon's character wore Jeff Ament's own clothes-there was no stylist for costuming "grunge".

"*We're all outcasts*"[213]
-Jerry Cantrell (vocals, guitarist, Alice in Chains)

In an interview with *The Seattle Times* at the end of 1990, Jerry Cantrell explained in very simple terms why Alice in Chains' music seemed to deal with 'doom and depression'.[214] Cantrell's personal expression of his lived experience as well as his

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[210] Aisha S. Durham. *Home with Hip Hop Feminism: Performances in Communication and Culture.* (New York; Peter Lang Academic Publishing2014), 27.

[211] Dick, Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. (London; Routledge, 1979.), 82-84

[212] Singles, directed by Cameron Crowe (1992; Los Angeles, California: Warner Brothers), Streaming.

[213] Patrick MacDonald, "Word", Seattle Times, December 7, 1990.

[214] Ibid.

bandmates draws a line between grunge as a subculture and the public transcript of mainstream society. Looking to Kandinsky, who sees music as a dictionary and index of life temporally marked,[215] being an "outcast" situates the artist's beginning of practice, the starting point of their mentality and inspiration. Doom and depression for Alice in Chains was their lived-experience that became part of their art. Just as Black Sabbath has commented on their different approach to music in stark contrast to other genres like Psychedelic Rock that were going one at the same time,[216] so too grunge separated its genre-making from popularized heavy-metal and rock.

On a larger scale there were lingering economic conditions at play in Seattle leading up to 1990 and continuing through 1991 to cast a darker impression and possibly add to the doom and depression of *place*. Coinciding with the economic situation, the mass commodification of culture and conspicuous consumption were highly visible during the 1980s and popular heavy-metal and rock was subsumed into that mix. The ethos of the Seattle subculture critiqued this situation and was in direct opposition to mass cultural production. Grunge was an outcast genre created by outliers, as Cantrell stated in his interview, that was never meant to be commodified.

Artists such as Woody Guthrie, the Beats, and Hank Williams had previously called into question socio-political structures through performative means, and in turn documented a historical soundtrack of political, economic, and ecological

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[215] "Even music has its grammar which, like all living things, changes with the passing of time and, yet, on the other hand, can be continuously used as a valuable aid, more or less as one uses a dictionary." Wassily, Kandinsky. *On the Spiritual in Art*. (New York; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, Hill Rebay, ed. 1946), 80.

[216] Leigh Michael, Harrison. “Factory Music: How The Industrial Geography and Working-Class Environment of Post-War Birmingham Fostered The Birth of Heavy Metal.” Journal of Social History, Vol. 44, Issue 1 (Fall 2010), 148.

calamities.[217] One of the most iconic Beats, William Burroughs, would become a singular influence on the Seattle grunge subculture. One of his friends was Jesse Bernstein "the poet of the people".[218] Bernstein was a local Seattle writer, performer, and poet who was also an occasional contributor to *The Rocket*. Steven "Jesse" Bernstein would even release an album on Sub Pop in 1992 entitled "Prison". Two years later, the movie Natural Born Killers[219] would feature his single, "Me and Her Outside"; a spoken word track with sixties swing-jazz in the background. Bernstein and Burroughs performed together at the Moore in 1989 and although Burroughs didn't live in Seattle, they kept up a regular written correspondence until Bernstein's death in 1991.

> *"I think that about half of life is destruction and decay and that's about what you get when you read my writing. It's about fifty percent destruction and decay and I go at that half of it whole hog."*[220]
>
> *-Jesse Bernstein*

William Burroughs would also collaborate with Kurt Cobain on "'The Priest' They Called Him".[221] Through a long distance correspondence of cassette tapes they exchanged ideas until finally meeting in person in 1993 when Cobain went to Lawrence, Kansas. The single was spoken word performed by Burroughs with Cobain on guitar. The plot centered on a junkie priest who sought out his final fix on Christmas

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[217] Jeff, Ferrell. *Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge*. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018),13.

[218] Jesse Bernstein was called "The poet of the people" in his obituary as a 'cultural icon" on October 30, 1991 in *The Seattle Weekly*.

[219] Oliver, Stone, dir., *Natural Born Killers*. 1994; Los Angeles, California; Warner Brothers, Streaming.

[220] Charles Kraft. "Interview with Jesse Bernstein" in *The Northwest Review of Books* Vol. 2. No. 1 Special 1986 Calendar Issue) 14-15.

[221] Kurt Cobain and William Burroughs, "'The Priest They Called Him'", Single. 1993. (Portland: Tim Kerr Records) by Burroughs, Wm., circa 1993.

Eve and dies alone. The haunting guitar in the background begins with a deconstructed phrase of the Christmas carol "Silent Night" and then descends into frantic vamping like thousands of fluttering flies wings intermittently, then back to "Silent Night"....and back again pitching high and low.

"Fight tuberculous folks"
On Christmas Eve an old junkie selling Christmas Seals on North Clark Street
The Priest they called him
"Fight tuberculosis folks"
People hurried by, gray shadows on a distant wall..
It was getting late and no money to score
He turned into a side street and the lake wind hit him like a knife
cab stop just a head under a street light..."[222]

touch me i'm sick

"sick, violent, depressing, destructive, and dangerous"[223]
-Mark Lanegan describing his band Screaming Trees

In Susan Sontag's reflection on the historical fascination with Tuberculosis in the midst of her intimate grip with cancer, she explores the economic, moral, and fashionable aspects of illness in their temporally situated stages of capitalism.[224] Illness as metaphor, argued by Sontag, is a state of defiance with societal expectations rendering a body unfit to participate in a regulated obedience to labor and that evokes the abnormal.[225] The metaphor of illness in grunge as a temporally situated genre, needs to be read in a dialectical relationship between the subculture and the

[222] William, Burroughs. "The Priest They Called Him", lyrics. circa 1993.

[223] Mark, Lanegan. *Sing Backwards and Weep*. Mishka Shubaly, ed. (New York; Hatchette Books 2020), 32.

[224] Susan, Sontag. Illness as Metaphor. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux), 1978.

[225] Ibid., 23.

commercial, main-stream culture. There is slippage in this metaphor however as personal *affect* goes up against a larger social and economic context and agency is considered. However, it is the visibility of illness in lyrics and in visual aesthetics that directly align with Sontag's ideas.

Illness, is pregnant with preconceived opinions as to whether an individual willing induced their status of health, contracted a communicable infection through illicit means, or perhaps was diagnosed in opaque conditions. Attached to these representations of the social status of illness is judgement; whether we should be sorry for someone or condemn them for actions deemed avoidable.

As Sontag has argued,

> "*advanced capitalism requires expansion, speculation, the creation of new needs (the problem of satisfaction and dissatisfaction)...an economy that depends on the irrational indulgence of desire."Cancer in this economical viewpoint represents negative behavior and abnormal growth...TB, in contrast, in early capitalism was a squandering of regulated spending, literally a squandering of vitality in consumption.*"[226]

The visibility of the perception of illness, or many times in the case of grunge, heroin use, is captured in media representations of celebrity instilling a 'folk devil' identity within the status of perceived health and wealth. Both Stanley Cohen and James Middleton have recognized this visibility of heroin and particularly the temporal precarity of the 'heroin chic' body, attached to both men and women in rock cultures.[227] Middleton argues that the representations of heroin use in the 1990s implore us to ask meaningful questions as to the aesthetic appeal of heroin and the

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[226] Susan, Sontag. Illness as Metaphor. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1978), 23.

[227] See Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers.* (London; Routledge, 1987). James Middleton “Heroin Use, Gender, and Affect in Rock Subcultures” Echo Vol. 1.1 (Fall 1999); online

bodily aesthetics that are produced; what the body on heroin does and how that inverts the concept of the "classical gendered body", and how the situated body that is transformed by heroin can reveal a specific negation to late 20th-century interpellation.[228] The visual culture of drug-use described by Middleton is an excellent starting point to further explore heroin in terms of oppositionality and oblique refusals as Sontag has done in critiquing the restrictions and expectations of illness within capitalism.

Before heroin use was a cultural anxiety surrounding grunge in the 1990s, it was closely associated to Jazz musicians in the 1950s. Artists like Charlie 'Bird' Parker and Lady Day (Billie Holiday) used heroin and their practice "was filtered down to the street", influencing musicians and others who wanted to be 'hip' to use it[229]. In fact, as ...has outlined in his book Dark Paradise, the 'hip" who reclined on their side to smoke Opium, the 'hipster', and eventually the 'hippie' form a lineage from the practice of heroin in the Jazz community[230] in the 1930s through to the ontology of LSD in psychedelic rock in the 1960s.

Illness as a cultural marker of the 20th-century ultimately represents a body that is unstable, unpredictable, and uncontrollable to the extent of the perception of the presence of 'disease'. The metaphor of illness in grunge can be seen as a social critique of capitalistic structures and expectations in the framework of Sontag. Yet grunge goes further into the organs, side effects, and experiences of illness, rendering

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[228] James, Middleton. “Heroin Use, Gender, and Affect in Rock Subcultures” *Echo* Vol. 1.1 (Fall 1999); online.

[229] David, Courtwright. *Dark Paradise: Opiate Addiction in America*. (Harvard University Press 2001),153.

[230] Ibid.

pain, blood, drowning, and killing as repeating visuals. Alice in Chains' "Confusion"[231] from Facelift (1990) is one example from an anthology of illness, pain, and death in all of their albums.

There's no time to give at all
I cause you grief and blow my hatred
There's no time to give at all
I cause you grief and blow my hatred
Further in your mind
You reach, I run, you fall
On skinned knees you crawl
I want to set you free!
Yeaaaah!
Recognize my disease!
Love, sex, pain, confusion, suffering
You're there crying, I feel not a thing
Drilling my way deeper in your head
Sinking, draining, drowning, bleeding, dead[232]

When Staley writes about his relationship with heroin, most notably on the album Dirt (1992), the lyrics are directly related to his own experience with addiction, his physical recovery, his mental state, and possible death in the process. Such as in "Sickman" which he wrote in rehab,

[231] Alice in Chains, Facelift , ℗ 1990 Columbia.

[232] Layne, Staley and Jerry Cantrell. "Confusion" Lyrics, Alice in Chains, Facelift , ℗ 1990 Columbia.

“Sickman, sickman, sickman, sickman
I can see the end is getting near
I won't rest until my head is clear
Ah, what's the difference, I'll die
In this sick world of mine
Yeah, though I walk through the valley of rape and despair
Can you see the end?
Choke on me my friend
Must to drown these thoughts
Purity over rot” [233]

Alice in Chains, Screaming Trees, Soundgarden, and Pearl Jam are all reflexive in their contemplations of illness, even when observed in other subject's circumstances. Illness is ultimately layered with signification. As a style of subculture, Hebdige would call this polysemic in a Sausseran semiotical autopsy.

The song "Touch Me I'm Sick"[234] by Mudhoney is more sarcastic through the cut-up writing style and punk production. Mark Arm screams and demands that you love him and fuck him, sick and twisted as he is. Other artists like Kurt Cobain and Layne Staley kept close to the metaphor of illness, relating it directly to their own bodies. In the case of Cobain, his references to illness would be hidden in his cut up lyrical style..such as in “Smells Like Teen Spirit”[235] when he screams "Here we are now, entertain us, "I feel stupid and contagious", "Here we are now, entertain us"[236]. He would also perform illness again when he opened Nirvana's performance at the Reading Festival in 1993 in a hospital gown being wheeled out and then collapsing on the ground.

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[233] Layne, Staley. “Sickman” lyrics. Alice in Chains, Dirt. ℗ 1992 Columbia.

[234] Mudhoney, *Superfuzz Bigmuff*, ℗ 1988 SubPop .

[235] Nirvana, *Nevermind*, ℗ 1991 Geffen Records

[236] Kurt Cobain, “Smells Like Teen Spirit”, lyrics on Nirvana, *Nevermind*, ℗ 1991 Geffen Records

Reference to sickness and disease were themes in Screaming Trees and Soundgarden where certain words would emphasize "wounds", "blood" and “bleeding”, punctuating their songs with darkness. Others like Pearl Jam, observed illness as demonstrations of someone needing help; someone society had ignored such as in "Evenflow"[237] ,"Jeremy"[238], or “Deep".[239]

Touch Me I’m Sick
I won't live long
And I'm full of rot
I'm gonna give you, girl
Everything I got
Touch me I'm sick!
Touch me I'm sick!
I'm diseased
And I don't mind
And I'm gonna make you love me
'Til the day you die
Come on
Touch me I'm sick!
Fuck me I'm sick![240]
-Mudhoney

Robert Walsner argues that "in the discourse of metal, strength, resilience, and power are continually reproduced in lyrics and performance. Within this, hegemonic strategies of repression and control of women that are part of Western culture are glorified”.[241] While there are cautionary allusions to drug use and loving the wrong

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[237] Pearl Jam, *Ten*, August 27, ℗ 1991, Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

[238] Pearl Jam, *Ten*, August 27, ℗ 1991, Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

[239] Pearl Jam, *Ten*, August 27, ℗ 1991, Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

[240] Touch Me I'm Sick, Mudhoney; Written by Dan Peters, Matt Lukin, Steve Turner & Mark Arm. Mudhoney, Superfuzz Bigmuff, ℗ 1988 SubPop

[241] Robert, Walser. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. (Hanover; Wesleyan University Press, 1993) 118.

woman, the popular rock preceding grunge's notoriety was continuously situated in hegemonic masculinity. The references made by Guns N Roses, "Mr. Brownstone"[242] (cocaine) and Motley Crue's "Dr. Feelgood"[243] (speedballs and referencing their dealer) or "Shout at the Devil",[244] do not emasculate or weaken the male performer into a state of subjection like in grunge. There are no emotions included that would gender the language more female or queer, rather the concept of drugs, drug use, and even addiction is treated in the masculine transcript of hair metal as a necessary consequence of the "rock-and-roll" lifestyle.

Grunge, oppositely, invokes self affliction, reflects on physical and mental anguish, bodily pain, addiction, and demonstrates slow deterioration of the individual. Instead of songs that invoke courage, strength, resilience, and aggression, grunge seeks to critique these items instead, calling into question their existence. Grunge performs the very indignities of weakness, specifically that feminizes traditional white masculinity.

Pearl Jam "Indifference"

I will light the match this morning, so I won't be alone
Watch as she lies silent, for soon night will be gone
Oh I will stand arms outstretched, pretend I'm free to roam
Oh I will make my way, through, one more day in...hell

How much difference does it make
How much difference does it make...

I will hold the candle, till it burns up my arm
I'll keep takin' punches, until their will grows tired

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[242] Guns N' Roses, Appetite for Destruction ℗ 1987 Geffen.

[243] Mötley Crüe, Dr. Feelgood ℗ 1989 BMG.

[244] Mötley Crüe, Shout at the Devil ℗ 1983 BMG,

Oh I will stare the sun down, until my eyes go blind
Hey I won't change direction, and I won't change my mind

how much difference does it make
how much difference does it make..
how much difference...

I'll swallow poison, until I grow immune
I will scream my lungs out till it fills this room

How much difference
How much difference
How much difference does it make
How much difference does it make...[245]

the abject

"If the essential theater is like the plague, it is not because it is contagious, but because like the plague it is the revelation, the bringing forth, the exteriorization of a depth of latent cruelty by means of which all the perverse possibilities of the mind, whether of an individual or a people, are localized."[246]
-Antonin, Artaud. The Theater and Its Double.

Ever-present in grunge is the intellectual and aesthetic fixation to the abject. At every level from lyrics, song titles, record titles and album art, to band names. It is a spectacle of the explicit that dissects body parts, embraces decay and death, utilizes blood, disease and illness, waste, vomit, and pieces of flesh. It is a marked territory of horror and the *grotesque* is intentionally performed as a further ontological dislocation from society by the active deterioration of the self as a subject. In lyrics, visual narratives in music videos, stage props in live and mediated performances, and themes of music albums all contribute to grunge's recognizable audible and visual timbre that

[245] Pearl Jam, Vs., ℗ 1993 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

[246] Antonin, Artaud. The Theater and Its Double, Mary Caroline Richards, trans. New York; Grove Press Inc.,1958), 30.

signify a refusal of relation to a hegemonic stratified society and instead embraces a fragmented existence.

The use of the abject as part of a subculture's style, can be considered as Hebdige describes; the subculture's expression of forbidden contents by transgressing behavioral and even legal codes acknowledging socio-economic and political exclusion.[247] To that point, a lot of LA punk bands in the 1980s invoked gothic sentiments with names like 45 Grave (with their fans labeled "grave diggers"), Necropolis of Love, and Dead Skin. These punks also used military references of diminished capacity or physical damage to name their bands such as Agent Orange, Smog Marines, The Explosions, Seditionarys, and Infidels. Differing from grunge, adolescent masculinity, nazi imagery, and sexist references were prevalent, following the style of London punk culture. The material culture of these bands, while in the spirit of bricolage , created a light-hearted and sarcastic comedic effect while invoking sci-fi themes with layouts that could be considered 'pulp'.

The names of grunge bands alone represent a close relationship with the *grotesque*. There is an over-arching theme of curiosity with horror and death whether that is appropriated from serial killers, like Green River,[248] or intensionally committing subterfuge against heterosexuality and female gender expectations like Mother Love Bone. Other bands like Mad Season invoked the psychedelic along with the psychiatric by co-opting the time of year in England when people would go mushroom hunting and

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[247] Dick Hebdige begins his argument with the examination of “The Thief’s Journal” by Jean Genet, claiming that style maneuvers crime as a distinct refusal to the natural order. Dick Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. (London; Routledge, 1979), 1-4.

[248] Gary Ridgeway was convicted of killing several Women in Washington State. He dumped their bodies in the Green/Duwamish River Watershed approximately 35 miles from Seattle to the east.

get so high that it became known as the "Mad Season".

Several examples of the abject nature of grunge ranging from addiction, blood, illness, decay, death, rape, drugs, anatomy parts, and reclaimed language are given in Table 2.

Table 2. grunge bands, albums & songs. Linnea Zeiner © 2025.

Band Name	ALBUM	Song	
7 Year Bitch	Sick'em	"Dead Men Don't Rape"	℗ 1992 C/Z Records
Alice in Chains	Dirt	"Junkhead"	℗ 1992 Columbia
Babes in Toyland	Spanking Machine	"Vomit Heart"	℗ 1990 Twin/Tone
Blood Circus	Dead Beats	"Six Foot Under"	℗ 2020 Sub Pop compilation
Bundle of Hiss	Sessions 1986-1988	"Drown"	℗ 2000 Loveless Records
Calamity Jane	Martha Jane Cannary	"My Spit"	℗ 1991 Sympathy for the Record Industry
The Gits	Frenching the Bully	"Cut My Skin it Makes Me Human""	℗ 1992 Sub Pop
Green River	Rehab Doll	"Smilin' and Dyin'	℗ 1988 Sub Pop
Gruntruck	Inside Yours	"Flesh Fever"	℗ 1992 Roadrunner
Hammerbox	Numb	"Hole"	℗ A&M 1993
HOLE	Pretty on the Inside	"Teenage Whore"	℗ 1991 Caroline Records
Honeymoon Killers	Single Release	"Dolly With a Dick"	℗ 1988 Sub Pop
L7	Hungry for Stink	"Freak Magnet"	℗ 1994 Slash Records
Love Battery	Far Gone	"Head of Ringo"	℗ 1993 Sub Pop
Mad Season,	Above	"Lifeless Dead"	℗ 1995 Hollywood Records
Mother Love Bone	Shine	"Half Ass Monkey Boy"	℗ 1989 Mercury Records
Mudhoney	Superfuzz Bigmuff	"Touch Me I'm Sick"	℗ 1988 Sub Pop
Nirvana	In Utero	"Rape Me"	℗ 1993 Geffen Records
Pearl Jam	Vs.	"Blood"	℗ 1993 Sony
Screaming Trees	Dust	"Dying Days"	℗ 1996 Sony
Skin Yard	Fist Sized Chunks	"Hungry and Hanging"	℗ 1990 Cruz Records
Soundgarden,	Badmotorfinger	"Drawing Flies"	℗ 1991 A&M
TAD,	8 Way Santa	"Plague Years"	℗ 1991 Sub Pop
Temple of the Dog,	Temple of the Dog,	"Call Me a Dog"	℗ 1990 UMG
Thrown Ups,	Seven Years Golden,	"Fleshy Web Pit"	℗ 1997 Amphetamine Records

"*The lyrical narrative of the individual songs was rooted in my day to day experience: pain, loss, the inner world and trials of someone strung out and struggling. Without comfort or love, searching for what, who knew?"*[249]

-Mark Lanegan reflecting on making Whiskey for the Holy Ghost.

texture

Grunge possess a particular texture that extends musically, vocally, lyrically, geographically, and visually. This is an embodied texture that can be heard in the dark timbre and dropped tuning; a physicality to vocal performance that is raw and painful, with dark aesthetics in lyrical themes that color the presentation of grunge into abject spaces. Grunge's texture reflects its lived experience in Seattle as an artistic underclass *affected* by an urban geography that is overrun with noise and construction. Musically it is a reflection of the ethos of the artistic community of practice and its sonic geography as well as the seismic influences surrounding their association of *place*.

If we think of grunge as a physical formation much like the sludge of the lahars from neighboring volcanos, or the silt and threat of liquefaction of earth surrounding the underground of the city, its sound, then, embodies a different kind of genre of rock. This is a residual life that has drifted from a 9 to 5 existence where we can hear the dirt, the rust, and the hang-over of something broken in the voices. The tonalities, and the timbre of grunge are experiences that hold intense meaning for the artists. Additionally we can feel the excessive vamping, low octaves, reverberation, distortion, and feedback as noise in tension with its situated socio-economic existence.

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[249] Mark, Lanegan. *Sing Backwards and Weep*. Mishka Shubaly, ed. (New York; Hatchette Book Group, 2020), 158.

The texture that is physically performed is most evident in the vocal chords of Kurt Cobain and Mark Lanegan. They are vocalists with an incredible sense of pitch and range that can fluctuate their intensity into soft and adagio songs like Cobain's "Something in the Way"[250] and Lanegan's "Kingdoms of Rain".[251] They can also shred their throats, diving brutally into anger, pain and anguish such as "Negative Creep"[252] and "Julie Paradise".[253]

It is Barthes who helps us listen to the voice's capabilities; the singing voice representing the body in the 'grain'.[254] Both Cobain and Lanegan seem to be able to simultaneously scratch their larynx and feel their pain as if we are hearing someone cut into their own flesh, puncture a vein, or have their heart ripped from their rib cage. It is a raw double posture, a double production. As Cobain has commented numerous times about his stomach pain, notably in the recent documentary, Montage of Heck[255]," his anguish, inability to eat, and writhing on the floor, flood uncontrollably into this voice. He commented at one time, "I don't know if I would sing this way if I didn't have this pain."[256]

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[250] Nirvana, *Nevermind,* ℗ 1991 Geffen Records.

[251] Mark, Lanegan. *Whiskey for the Holy Ghost* ℗ 1994 Sub Pop.

[252] Nirvana, *Bleach,* ℗ 1989 Sub Pop.

[253] Screaming Trees, *Sweet Oblivion*, ℗ 1992 Sony Music Entertainment

[254] Barthes claims; "the 'grain' of the voice is not [ ] only its timbre, the signifying it affords cannot be better defined than by the friction between music and something else,…" Roland, Barthes. *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980.* (Chicago; Northwestern University Press, 2009), 273.

[255] Brett, Morgen director, Montage of Heck. 2015. New York, New York. HBO Documentary Films. Streaming (HBO) Streaming.

[256] Kurt Cobain, in Brett, Morgen director, Montage of Heck. 2015. New York, New York. HBO Documentary Films. Streaming (HBO) Streaming.

Kim Gordon reflected on Cobain's voice in her memoir stating,

> "*Onstage it was amazing to see how much emotional power came from the depths of his body-a gravelly stream of vocal sound. It wasn't screaming, or shrieking, or even punk vitriol, although that's what it sounded like to most. There were also quiet parts, low, moan-ish, when you'd half believe Kurt's voice was hoarse, and then he'd throw himself on the drum set, which in his anger and frustration he seemed to want to annihilate. He seemed always to be working against himself."*[257]

George McKay, from a disability framework, sees the body as the primary source of what is sung. He claims "...the voice tells the autopathography and its sung words are the support act [to the body]."[258] McKay's claim is Cobain's claim; that you cannot disembody the voice...the disabled body sounds the corporeal and cognitive experience and embraces the knowledge of its own disability through its strained, damaged or disfluent voice..."[259]

Down in a Hole-the grotesque as a method of social description

Bury me softly in this womb
I give this part of me for you
Sand rains down and here I sit
Holding rare flowers
In a tomb, in bloom
Down in a hole and I don't know if I can be saved
See my heart I decorate it like a grave
You don't understand who they thought
I was supposed to be
Look at me now a man
Who won't let himself be -Alice in Chains, Down in a Hole[260]

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[257] Kim, Gordon. *Girl in a Band: A Memoir*. (New York; Harper Collins, 2015), 179.

[258] George McKay. *Shakin' All Over: Popular Music and Disability.* (Lansing; University of Michigan Press 2013), 85-86.

[259] Ibid.

[260] Song written by Jerry Cantrell. Down in a Hole lyrics © Round Hill Carlin, LLC

> "*The Grotesque embodies both a promise of freedom and threatening clouds, foreshadowing chaos. There is also the way in which the very structure of grotesque calls attention to itself-as ornaments they are both too noticeable and too expressive. They upset the organization of the figurative system and the hierarchy on which it is based.*"[261]

Historically the *grotesque* has been used as a performative social critique, offering subversive, defiant, and at times, hilarious refusals to stratuses of public power. The upper classes, the church, and royalty have not been able to escape the grating of the lower classes to visually usurp the hierarchy of culture produced by stratified societies. Mikhail Bakhtin's coverage of Rabelais and the wild spectacle of the carnival,[262] Baudelaire's meditation on the *grotesque*'s expressive essence located in the eyes and mouth,[263] even Sigmund Freud's fascination with the uncanny[264] have added to the exquisite corpse of the *grotesque*'*s* sublime.

The theoretical perspective of the *grotesque*'*s* potency as an aesthetic category can and has, become at times merely an adjective describing deviation in some way shape or form. However, it is the ability of the *grotesque* to dissect itself; a self-subjectivation of decay of a subject into a new form that inherits its most precious attribute. The process of decay and the snapshots of the stages of becoming something other than

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[261] Elisheva Rosen. "Innovation and Its Reception: The Grotesque in Aesthetic Thought", *Substance*, Vol. 19 No. 2/3 (1990): 127.

[262] Mikhail, Bakhtin. *Rabelais and His World*, Helene Iswolsky, trans. (Cambridge; The MIT Press), 1965

[263] Charles, Baudelaire. “On the essence of laughter and the comic in visual arts”, Peter Quennell, ed. (New York; Meridian 1956)

[264] Sigmund Freud, "On the Uncanny, in *The Standard Works of Sigmund Freud vol 17*, ed and trans James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psychoanalysis 1953-1974), 233-238.

has given art its expressive interrogation. Consider the video of "Down in a Hole",[265] where the band is seen first in a barren landscape that was once an oil field, gradually into dirty beds lined up in hospital fashion, brief shot of a toilet, and a funny skeleton with top hat and cigarette; then psychedelic images of internal organs, pumping and gurgling. Or, the visual transmogrification of eyes alone in grunge videos, from the bulging eyes of the bloated consumers in Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun" video[266], the eyes sewn shut in Alice in Chains' “Man in the Box”[267] as they interrogate the treatment of animals or Kurt Cobain glaring with crazed eyes into the lens in “Heart Shaped Box”[268]. All depict the *grotesque* unexpectedly for previous rock videos, situating the performers away from any sort of opulence, and, instead, deliberately disfigure their identities as "rock stars”, placing themselves instead in subjectivation.

In American history, economic upheaval and social instability have inspired the critiques of artists to utilize the *grotesque*. This is evident in a survey of 1930s paintings where artists developed an expressionism that was imbued with the unsettling political advancements in Europe by Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Francisco Franco.[269] For grunge, economic and social dislocation, particularly culturally, becomes expressed in their depressed visual settings that often invite a lot of empty space; much like Edward

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[265] Dick, Nigel., dir. Alice in Chains, “Down in a Hole”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1993. Streaming. Official HD Video via VEVO.

[266] Howard, Greenhaigh., dir. Soundgarden. “Black Hole Sun”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. June 1994. Streaming

[267] Rachman, Paul., dir. Alice in Chains, “Man in the Box”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1991. Streaming.

[268] Corbijn, Anton., dir. Nirvana, “Heart Shaped Box”; Kurt Cobain, Dave Grohl, and Krist Noveselic. 1993. Streaming.

[269] Sarah L. Burns, “Death, Decay, and Dystopia: Paintings in the American Wasteland in the 1930s” in *America After The Fall: Paintings in the 1930s*, Judith A. Barter, ed. (New Haven; Yale University Press, 2016), 139-146.

Hopper's Nighthawks (1942)[270] or Gas (1940)[271]. Those landscapes also display the decay; the barrenness of what is left, often rusted, broken down structures, old household items strewn like garbage, or the location being set in a hospital or burning building-an illness with no escape.

The *grotesque* itself is not new or unique historically in male performances of rock and metal. Artists like Alice Cooper and Ozzy Osbourne have reveled in *grotesque* displays of shock, while invoking forms of disability. Their displays of *grotesque* as indifference to culturally acceptable modes of heterosexual male sexual attractiveness and potency, echo the hunchback of Johnny Rotten where a performance has a continuing narrative that is understood by the fans. Whether it is fake blood and dark make-up insinuating evil, the performance to ignite collective punk participation, or truly a disability-these instruments of live performance art reinscribe masculine values of hegemonic authority, bravado, and at times, law breaking...which rock fans continually worship as a tenant in the genre.

What makes grunge's deployment of the *grotesque* unique is its critique of hyper-masculinity and masculine displays of shock and violence that are intended to invoke heterosexual hierarchies. Instead, grunge, foments an intimate relationship to the *female grotesque*, embodying its practices and performances of subtle horror that strive to center the abject in-situ, succumbing the artist to subjectivation in order to refuse injustices created by hegemonic systems within late capitalist society. With the *female grotesque* there are different stakes to be undermined in which an alchemy of

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[270] Edward, Hopper. “Nighthawks” Oil on Canvas. 1942.

[271] Edward, Hopper. “Gas”. Oil on Canvas. 1940.

abjections is taken on individually with unscripted results. This language is what will be examined here with its intersections of the metaphysical and phenomenological marked by lived-experiences and punctuated with pain.

Grunge plays with tragedy. The tragic in grunge is consumed psychologically and physically into the brutality of a pain which is demonstrated in existential burdens of awareness relayed in the heaviness of dropped chords, dragging tempos, and abject vocal chords that scratch and burn into splintering jolts of breaths gasping beyond the obstacle of sound; instead, reaching sustained brutality that penetrates ear drums and rib cages simultaneously. Grunge is a poetic construction of the subculture's lived experiences and their dislocation from the late capitalistic terrain of hegemonic harmony, and, instead, opts to subvert the hail of existence into a unbearable nightmare of penetrating and intoxicated reality.

"*Seattle isn't a glamorous town at all. It was pretty pathetic. Very depressing. That's where this music came out of. I've made this comment before: Grunge isn't a music style. it's complaining set to a drop D tuning.*" [272]

-Jeff Gilbert (journalist KZOK DJ and concert organizer)

"I might think you love me
But I know damn well you don't
Oh no, oh no, you don't
Bring all your lies leave them deep in the dirt
Oh no, you don't
Oh no, you don't
Pull down my eyes
Lay me deep in the earth
Oh no, you don't
Nothing left within, I've been mined
Hell and back again, subterranean
I've been diggin' in down inside
I will start again, subterranean"
-"Subterranean", Foo Fighters[273]

Dave Grohl, the young drummer who joined Nirvana at seventeen, recorded this song and filmed it for his ethnomusicology project, Sonic Highways.[274] The episode, aptly named 'Subterranean' emphasizes the depths of Seattle as spaces of creativity. The song itself was recorded at Robert Lang Studios in Shoreline, Washington a few minutes north of Seattle and featured in the episode. The studio is a feat of defiance against the hill it is situated on-instead of building higher, Lang has gone deeper. He

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[272] Mark, Yarm. *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge* (Crown Publishing. Kindle Edition.), 27.

[273] Foo Fighters, Sonic Highways. ℗ Roswell Records.

[274] Dave, Grohl., dir.. "Sonic Highways". Television Series. 2014. New York. Roswell Films and Therapy Content (Producers), Home Box Office (HBO).

boasts he has been digging for " years".[275] The studio now rests 30ft below the surface of the earth and has attracted a breadth of artists and producers extended beyond grunge. This song has an immediate connection to the grotto, the spaces that lie beneath which not only leads us to think about the hidden nature of subculture existence and symbols, but the geospatial considerations of urban geography in Seattle during the formation of the genre, grunge. The song "subterranean" indicates that Grohl, while no longer living in Seattle has remained connected to the overall sense of *place*, shaped by its layers of urban geography.

Subterranean, was the theme of this chapter; subterranean sonics and seismic events, underground areaways, and a subculture formed in the shadowy alleys. Subterranean defined the geography of Seattle and grunge subculture. The theme was the ongoing identifier for a nascent music scene, as demonstrated by Jack Endino's zine that envisioned creating and fostering unique ideas to be paramount. Subterranean also led us to look at grunge through the depths of the *grotesque* and discover its unique style and texture.

Most uniquely, grunge was shown to be an interconnected community stretching across different locations in Washington and hovering in and around Seattle. This rhizomic formation fostered important relationships like Mark Lanegan and Kurt Cobain. Both fans of Leadbelly's work, they had been working on a formal collaboration of blues before Cobain's death. Before that, Kurt Cobain was featured on Lanegan's Winding Sheet, with the song "Down In the Dark"[276]. Krist also plays bass

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[275] Dave, Grohl., dir.. "Sonic Highways". Television Series. 2014. New York. Roswell Films and Therapy Content (Producers), Home Box Office (HBO).

[276] Mark, Lanegan. *The Winding Sheet*, ℗ 1990 Sub Pop.

on the song. In his memoir, Mark Lanegan writes how much he respected Cobain's work as an artist and looked up to him as a friend, as well as a mentor.[277] He expressed deep regret for his friend's death not only because he was looking for him and on the property of Cobain's residence, but that Cobain had been listening to his album, Whiskey for the Holy Ghost.[278] He worried that the darkness of the album had contributed to Cobain's death, and noted that he did not forgive himself.

In the next chapter, grunge as a subculture is viewed in the terms of feminist praxis, not within the public transcript. Even though commonalities emerge in occasional organizing, as in the case of Home Alive, Rock Against Rape, or Rock for Choice in which men and woman of the subculture participated in, it does not orientate its spectrum of praxis to be litigated in a linear way. The orientation of a subculture feminism is turned to the stage of performance; and with the case of grunge, which is composed of punk, rock, and metal lineages, it intervenes in the hypermasculinity associated with those genres through invoking different cadences, tuning, or even introducing different mediums is in itself a defining characteristic of oblique gestures of refusal.

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[277] Mark, Lanegan. *Sing Backwards and Weep*. Mishka Shubaly, ed. New York; Hatchette Books 2020), 166-170.

[278] Mark,Lanegan. *Whiskey for the Holy Ghost* ℗ 1994 Sub Pop.

2. GRUNGE AS A SIGNIFYING PRACTICE

This chapter explores grunge as a *signifying practice* marked by specific feminist gestures of *refusal.* Through language and lyrics, as well as the linguistic orientation of horror as informed by Julia Kristeva, grunge is displayed as a critical practice that is *infrapolitical* in its pathological experiments. In its linguistic orientation, grunge creates an alternative gender terminology which is represented materially and hypertextually.

There are three sites of feminist resistance that are explored here as technologies of *refraction*; language, vocal performance, and the body. First language and its *hypertexuality* are covered, examining alternative gender terminology, reclaimed slurs, as well as violent and explicit lyrics. Then specific music technologies such as queered speech and *sapphonics* will be discussed utilizing the work of Elizabeth Wood[279], and Jack Halberstam.[280] Finally, as one of the shared practices of refusal, the *female grotesque* will be closely examined in themes, lyrics, and aesthetics.

In conclusion the *female grotesque* is examined in performances of corporal dissection. The work of Cindy Sherman, Courtney Love (HOLE) and Kat Bjelland (Babes in Toyland) as well as Kurt Cobain are examined in a sculptural, performative, and photographic context. As an object reduced to an image, performers like Courtney Love and Kat Bjelland played with their audiences, creating a frightening depiction of youth thrown in the trash. For artists like Cindy Sherman, the camera, the lens itself

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[279] Elizabeth Wood, "Sapphonics" in Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology. Phillip, Brett Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[280] Judith, Halberstam. "What's That Smell?: Queer Temporalities and Subcultural Lives", The Scholar and Feminist Online Vol. 1 No. 2 (2003) and Female Masculinity (Durham; Duke University Press, 1998).

becomes foregrounded in the discourse of female-hood and ageism, class and status, in which she dissects her own body down slowly. Sherman's body of work in its stages, slowly deteriorate and decay through the stills, centerfolds, historical notes and finally into doll parts in the 1990s. Kurt Cobain in his assemblages, echoing Goya, depicted female body parts, babies, umbilical cords, and organs. His most well-known collage becoming the back photo for In Utero[281], his sculpture becoming part of the In Utero tours and on the cover of the album.

language and lyrics
"DADA is a brutal intervention into life, language,[282]**"**
-Tristan Tzara
"El Anglo con cata de innocent nos arranco la lengua"
Wild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out. -Gloria Anzaldúa [283]

As a *signifying practice* grunge is a language*: a representational system which creates a shared understanding and meaning.*[284] For women participants in this language, communication is within and across the *subcultures* of Riot grrrl, grunge, and alternative rock performers. Their vocalization of language is textually recognizable through its *bricolage* in material items such as zines; a timbre that is *turned toward* sexist displays of women, their appearance, and their bodies and *turns out* the symbolically violent verbiage with reclaimed misogynistic language such as "bitch", "whore", and "slut". It even goes so far as to accuse or taunt rapists and abusers

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[281] Nirvana. *In Utero*. ℗ 1993. Geffen Records.

[282] Tzara, Tristan (2009-12-22). *The Dada Manifestos & Lampisteries*. MacMay. Kindle Edition. (Kindle Locations 41-43)

[283] Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands: La frontera: The New Mestiza.* (San Francisco; Aunt Lute Books 1987), 53.

[284] Stuart, Hall, ed. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. (London; Sage Publications, 1997), 5.

through different forms of music such as the Murder Ballad. These symbolic refusals whether cut, pasted, and xeroxed in zines or gig fliers, or scrawled and painted on bodies are distinctive *directionalities of consciousness*[285]*;* situated and sensitive.

Uncovering Alternative Gender Terminology in grunge

To begin to understand grunge'*s* refusal to binary-heterosexual constructions of gender, it is necessary to begin with the subversive speech acts and the shared language practiced by Riot Grrrl subculture and grunge subculture. Transgressive language of this kind is private in that it is created within the subculture community as a linguistic practice identifying their location away from the socially dominant group. The concept of the subversive acts performed as *refusals* outlined within Dick Hebdige's understanding of *style*, allows fluctuation in the reading of a s*ubculture* text to be *oblique* as it challenges hegemony[286]; in the case of 1970s British *punks* these are visual disruptions that induce shock to understood signifiers, but produce meaning to those members of the subculture.

To switch from Hebdige and turn to Vivian Westwood, who crafted disruptions from fabric with her store, SEX, and formed the *Sex Pistols* with partner Malcolm McLaren, dressing for confrontation was the essence of the disruption. Wearing the *refusal,* was a performance; utilizing the corporal sanctity of the individual in order to reclaim something that has been lost, appropriated, or wronged. Fashioned as art and displayed on the body for the explicit purpose of being viewed by the passerby, the

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[285] Sara, Ahmed. *Queer Phenomenology; Orientations, Objects, and Others*. Durham; Duke University Press, 2006.

[286] Dick, Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style.* (London; Routledge, 1979), 17.

gaze is refracted. The bricolage moves itself as an object uncatchable, swerving into new spaces of gender sovereignty in the midst of its subjectivity.

Symbolic meaning is embedded in the style that is comprised of cloth, leather, paint, and found objects. For grunge as a *signifying practice* with symbolic meaning, language expands to encompass new ideas associated with heterosexual terminology in material culture. The written words of 'womyn', 'wimmin', and 'grrrl/grrrls' acknowledge a shared rebellion of gender representation and negotiations of differentiation. *Wimmin*, along with *grrrl* regularly appeared in grunge and Riot Grrrl material culture from the 1990s. Below is an excerpt from the Zine, *Not Your Bitch* in which Wimmin, Womynhood, and Womyn are displayed. When the word "Women" is used it is tied to the patriarchy and connected to commercial materialism that promotes "thinness" to the male gaze. The zine further connects the practice of weight control to being under hegemonic control. Wimmin reside outside the boundaries of the gaze because they refuse and reject the beauty standards projected onto them and instead reclaim individual power and autonomy over themselves, their ideas, and their bodies.

The written language mobilized by these artists has a volume because of the utilization of RANSOM text, capitalized letterings usually cut out from different fonts, sources and colors to promote a sense of desperation. As Mary Celeste Kearney has argued, *the artistic expression of punk practices in the lineage of the Dadaists and Situationists celebrated amateurism and subverted professionalism.*[287] The separation that text provides in spelling out wimmin and grrrl is a fault line for binary gender

[287] Mary Celeste, Kearney. *Girls Make Media.* (New York; Routledge 2006), 159.

expectations and privileging youth culture over linear progressions of age and heterosexual milestones. Hebdige has cited this practice as well among *punks*, citing the example of the *Sex Pistol's* album sleeve for "God Save the Queen.[288] Clearly this language of Riot Grrrl and grunge while forging new divergent semantics is also part of the *détourne* lineage of Letterists, the Situationists, DADA, and *punks*.



Figure 6. Sleeve art by Jamie Reid, 'Sex Pistols, God Save the Queen', 1977.

Language can do as much, or more to the construction of the oblique visual performance. Imagine the visual oblique encounter; both the meaning between subculture members and linguistically attacking the hegemonic phonics interwoven into gendered descriptors. Reading the cultural text becomes a mixed medium of sound and *graphesis*[289]-a signpost of "keep out". Style, then, becomes an open signifier of rebellion to more than one *refusal.*

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[288] Dick, Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style.* (London; Routledge, 1979), 112.

[289] Johanna, Drucker. *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*. (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2014), 19.

As Gloria Anzaldúa[290] and Catherine Ramirez[291] have claimed in their work, the deconstruction of situated semantics brings questions of gender, class, and race to the surface. In performing a subversive style of language such as in a gig flyer or body graffiti, political praxis of the subculture becomes public and readable by their communities. For Anzaldúa and Ramirez the rebellion against "fitting in" to American society through subversive style, displaces the subculture from their ethnic communities, creating a sonic and visual disruption that has political meaning.

In referring to London punks' oblique refusals, Dick Hebdige noted that there was a private and public language at play. This simple depiction of subculture's primacy for language that was created out of the strict class structure of England rounds out the understanding of the male-centered subculture of punk at that time and place. More helpful to understanding the material culture of Riot grrrl and grunge is to approach the translation from a dialectic of dislocation that is formed from gender, place, class, as situated by the heterosexual matrix. James C. Scott helps us map subcultural language in opposition to the state's concepts. Scott's framework of language is the dialectic of the *hidden transcript* - operating in the public as coded messages that are oppositional to the *public transcript*. This same practice of public and private oppositional language can be recognized in the symbolic practice of grunge in material culture.

Within social and racial structures of gender, age is particularly important in understanding the deviant language of subcultures. In *Pachuca* culture as with the language of grunge and Riot Grrrl, there is a generational construction to the

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[290] Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands: La frontera: The New Mestiza.* (San Francisco; Aunt Lute Books 1987)

[291] Catherine Ramirez, "Crimes of Fashion: The Pachuca and Chicana Style Politics", *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism,* Vol. 2, No. 2, 2002

connection of this subculture style, representing a cultural refusal to traditional values that are stationary and centralized in social compliance. For Catherine Ramirez the *Pachuca* tongue expresses their unique dialect of "style, agency, and representation"[292] A mechanism of resistance that is part of the socio-political refusal in fashion, aesthetics of make-up and hairstyle. In this subculture, the *Pachuca* word for, "woman" is *ruca.* It is a word somewhere between English and Spanish, but nowhere near Castilian nor English. The Pachuca tongue is forked, an aberration, argues Anzaldúa...a wild tongue of Chicano heritage that displaces itself from belonging to a lineage that is Anglo or Spanish, just as its speakers wanted to distinguish themselves apart, to not fall in line, to not be ashamed of not speaking "proper" Spanish.[293]

The implied representation of *ruca* instead of mujer and womyn instead of woman is a symbolic refusal to the established linguistic formations that outline gendered bodies compelled to align with a linear understanding of the bourgeois family centered within the Heterosexual Matrix.[294] This is a language of marginality, one that is voicing its discontent with the structural circumstances of femininity. The interruptions of ruca and womyn represent new understandings of temporal and spatial designation of gender that offer different understandings of the present and new interpretations of a future outside of a linear expectation of heterosexuality.

Jack Halberstam's contemplation on *queer time and space* offers a framework for understanding new spatial dimensions of gender identity for individuals and groups

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[292] Catherine Ramirez, "Crimes of Fashion: The Pachuca and Chicana Style Politics", Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2002 ,4.

[293] Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands: La frontera: The New Mestiza.* (San Francisco; Aunt Lute Books 1987), 55-58.

[294] Judith, Butler. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* New York; Routledge, 1990.

that exist outside of modernism's heterosexual restrictions of 'normality' infused in life expectations.[295] By outlining this framework, Halberstam expands the postmodern geographical critique of Frederick Jameson and David Harvey where the body has been absent to include "queer counterpublics" in which place-making practices take place.[296]

Historian Carol Smith-Rosenberg is another scholar contemplating gender identity by studying the private writings of women in Victorian America examines the behavioral boundaries of the sphere of womanhood and those women who broke the rules. The trespasses in that time-period were intellectual (pursuing professions endowed only to men, like medicine) or romantic (engaging in passionate and intimate relationships with other women), as well conducting sexual friendships with other women. Their writing defined an intentional linguistic fluctuation, what she calls a *symbolic dialect.*[297] This dialect was defiant of the socially dominant group, and therefore was deemed, deviant. Her argument is that *symbolic dialects* are historically situated, offering insight into specific social struggles.

In observing the symbolic dialect created in Zines and gig fliers of Riot Grrrl and grunge artists, binary gender contained within the heterosexual matrix is being subverted, along with sexist and hegemonic conditions of beauty. For the grunge grrrls and Riot grrrls who grew up in the 1970s during the pinnacle of the Women's Liberation movement, they were keenly aware how "behavior" could be criticized through the

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[295] See Judith Halberstam. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York University Press, New York. 2005),(pgs 10-12) pdf copy.

[296] Ibid., 13.

[297] Carol, Smith-Rosenberg. *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 44.

mechanism of the *male gaze*. "Any behavior that refused prevailing notions of prettiness and demureness was branded into the 'bizarre carnival' that media representation categorized feminist protest" as Susan Douglas has demonstrated so well in her book, *Where the Girls Are.*[298] Douglas accurately points out that attractiveness to straight cis-men is not only a benchmark of acceptable western beauty by which women and girls can be comparatively ranked visually, but effectively sorts out those are who are not attractive. Those who are not deemed attractive are immediately excluded and in Douglas's words, "deemed grotesque".[299]

Giving attention to symbolic dialects within subcultures expands the ability to view the "tensions between mainstream culture and the subculture expressed in terms of white masculinity especially for queer *punk, dyke punk,* and its lineages as Halberstam has critiqued.[300] Beyond the white masculinity frameworks, "queer subcultures produce alternative temporalities by allowing their participants to believe their futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of the conventional forward-moving narratives of birth, marriage, reproduction, and death....instead, they allow new claims about agency, style, liminality, community, and history."[301]

Unpacking the temporally-situated alternative nomenclatures of womyn, wimmin, and grrrl from the historically limited understanding of white heterosexual cis-female gender identity in feminist scholarship is to embrace a destabilized category of

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[298] Susan J. Douglas. *Where The Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*. (New York; Three Rivers Press, 1994), 230.

[299]Ibid., 230.

[300] What's That Smell?: Queer Temporalities and Subcultural Lives", *The Scholar and Feminist Online* Vol. 1 No. 2 (2003).

[301] Ibid.

late 20th-century femininity in Riot Grrrl and grunge. This is a re-orientation of these terms back to their origin within subculture scenes, which represented a subversive spectrum of gender and sexual identities. This re-orientation, is a turning away from surface-level understandings of subcultures that have not situated their research in lived-experience frameworks or considered the intentionality of artistic practice or embodied speech as alternative political performances that engage primarily within their own community through in-situ consciousness.

The *indeterminate* taxonomy of womyn, wimmin, and grrrl intensionally violates social order through disruptions of semantics. This elision signals new definitions that were being written in collective interchange by a subcultures, not within the designs of hegemonic social expectations. In effect, it is helpful to view and read this linguistic subversion of “woman” as an alternative practice of subcultural community that sought to recognize each other differently from heteronormative expectations and categories of women following a gender-sex imperative, and instead, to read this as a queered linguistic practice of alternative gender and sexual identities.

It is impossible to separate these subversive semantics from the cultural context of heterosexuality in the mid-1980s through the end of 1990s. The reorientation of consonants and substitution of vowels purposely subverted historical English nomenclature into indiscernible conjunctions. They flaunted an irreverent illiteracy to the sacred spheres of female-hood and presented a legible deference to the social structures that had continually pronounced “wom/man" into the specified roles of wife, mother, and daughter. These same slippery signs interrogated the "female" body itself and its sexual availability as well as its "appearance" for acceptable femaleness-

meaning the context of a visual hegemonic standard well established to promote attractiveness and punish the 'deviant'.[302]

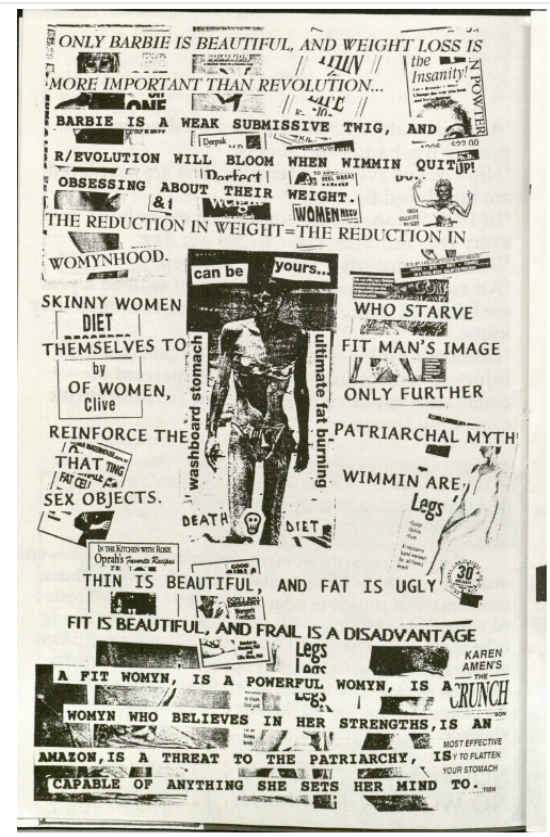


Figure 7. Not Your Bitch, Issue 2. October 2, 1994. © Peg Keil

Centering wimmin and grrrls

The broader work of semantic disruption in grunge is diverging from a male-centered, homosocial soliloquy and inserting the experiences of female and grrrl identity. This is important to recognize because gender constructions in heavy metal reproduce and inflect patriarchal assumptions and ideologies and in doing so *affect*

[302] See Susan J. Douglas. *Where The Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*. (New York; Three Rivers Press, 1994)189-191.

ideas of masculinity.[303] Other genre formations of metal such as hair metal and glam reinscribe those same values and assert masculinity as a competing force to secure their status as sexually dominating. Within that stance femininity is situated as a fetish, to be performed as androgynous sexuality with the goal of stripping off any semblance of power that might be determined as instigated by women, while securing their own armor of hegemony. Robert Walser has mentioned this as a politics of gender within heavy metal, however this is a low political gesture intensionally demeaning women and grrrls and not engaging in any form of gender interrogative, beyond trivial romances such as Poison's (Every Rose Has its Thorn)[304] and the game of pursuit and sexual conquest from Mötley Crüe (Grrrls Grrrls Grrrls).[305]

Grunge, instead, turns the male gaze so frequent in rock, inward upon itself and performs reflexive compositions such as Soundgarden's "The Day I Tried to Live"[306] or Pearl Jam's "Daughter"[307] that fully takes on the lived experience of women and grrrls speaking from a variating mind style[308] that not just emulates but walks with the female voice in the shoes of experience. There is an intension to empower or at the very least

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[303] Robert, Walser. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. (Hanover; Wesleyan University Press, 1993), 111.

[304] Poison, "Every Rose Has its Thorn", *Open Up and Say…Ahh!* , 1988, Capitol Records.

[305] Mötley Crüe, "Girls, Girls, Girls", *Girls, Girls, Girls*, 1987 BMG Management.

[306] Soundgarden, *Superunknown*, March 8, ℗ 1994, A&M.

[307] Pearl Jam, *Vs.*, ℗ 1993 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

[308] I use the terminology of 'mind style' as explored by Zsófia Demjén in Ineke Bockting's work; mind style is concerned with the construction and expression in language of the conceptualizations of reality in a particular mind . This individual structuring is unique in all its details , even though it is built up of elements that are also found in the realities of others. Zsófia Demjén. *Sylvia Plath and the Language of Affective States : Written Discourse and the Experience of Depression*, (Bloomsbury; Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 19. See also Ineke Bockting, "Mind Style as an Interdisciplinary Approach to Characterisation in Faulkner", *Journal of Stylistics*. Vol. 3 No.3. (1994): 157-174.

understand female-hood, instead of dismiss it. The lyrics of Pearl Jam's "Daughter" demonstrate a young girl's perspective in situ, capturing a single moment that replays and replays in her head and plays out in her life-a situation of violence and resilience by the young girl, sung and written by a cis-man.

Alone...listless...breakfast table in an otherwise empty room
Young girl...violins(ence)...center of her own attention
Mother reads aloud, child tries to understand it
Tries to make her proud
The shades go down, it's in her head
Painted room...can't deny there's something wrong...
Don't call me daughter, not fit to
The picture kept will remind me
Don't call me daughter, not fit to
The picture kept will remind me
Don't call me…
She holds the hand that holds her down
She will...rise above...[309]

Kim Thayil of Soundgarden when interviewed by *SPIN* in 1993 reflected on masculinity and what it meant for the band, their sound, and how they wanted to use it. He said, ”Maleness is something we, as Soundgarden, wrestled with for a long time.”[310] His comment situates a critical perspective of masculinity and its place the type of rock being created in Seattle at the time. He further stated,

> "*We are a male band, and there's no way round it, ...We're also incredibly fair and intelligent. We're not criminals. We're not abusive. We don't exploit women or people we come in contact with. Maleness is no more an obnoxious quality than being effeminate. We're not pick-up driving, beer guzzling, "Hey look at the pussy on her!, guys. Our maleness comes from our creativity, our aggression and our intelligence.*"[311]

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[309] Pearl Jam, *Vs.*, ℗ 1993 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

[310] Everett, True. *Live Through This. American Rock Music in the Nineties*. (London; Virgin Publishing, 2000), 128-129.

[311] Ibid., 128-129

Thayil, while not explicitly describing masculinity in itself as a performance of gender, opens the field of masculine identity in rock not as a misogynist identity, but rather as a particular expression within a genre tied to lived experience. Grunge indeed creates a territory where masculinity is performed both by cis-women and cis-men, along with a critical vulnerability. This draws a geography of gender in rock that is drastically different in its immediate context and intentionality; a geography in which masculinity finds more than one site for becoming and being as Jack Halberstam has argued.[312] While the members of Soundgarden present masculine identities, noticeably absent is the hyper-sexualized female to reaffirm sexual and gender superiority. Instead, un-styled, flailing and passionate they ram hard-hitting songs about social injustice, betrayal, and suicide lead by Chris Cornell in a high-chest voice powerfully rising into falsetto that queers the possibility of toxic masculinity-even when he performs shirtless. It is rather those moments when we see him half clothed that he is stripped of his power and trying to comprehend the circumstances that have befallen him. There is certainly passion and anger, and even pain...leading to the realization that nothing is left.

The complication that was produced in Soundgarden performances, as other cis-male artists of grunge such as Nirvana and Alice in Chains, is that the familiar textual reading of metal limits the possible commercial interpretations. Philip Auslander refers to these audience receptions as [social] frames that constitute agreed understandings. It is the availability of common frames of reference that makes mutual understanding

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[312] Jack J. Halberstam. *Female Masculinity.* (Durham; Duke University Press, 1996), 21.

and, hence, dialogue among human beings possible."[313] However, in the case of grunge, there is a language barrier between the subculture and the mass commercial culture interfering with the formation of new ideas of masculinity in rock by men. The reading of grunge, therefore, by cis-heterosexual men is limited to the established agreement of how rock is gendered male, infallible, and straining for dominance, sexual and otherwise. This is the very opposite of what grunge was performing and the very reason that Kurt Cobain, Chris Cornell, and Layne Staley remarked on their disconnect from their male audiences and specifically in the case of Cobain and Staley, even expressed disgust, sometimes physically.[314]

While opening up new gendered possibilities in rock, grunge in doing so dislocates its practice from that familiar notion of rock and its reception. Grunge's phenomenological backlash against commodified culture and its hold on musical production, remained situated in a masculine textual experience, shading grunge a deeper and darker alternative to Glam and Hair Metal bands of the 1980s and early 1990s. This decent into unfamiliar territories of grief, loss, and vulnerability expressed by both men and women practicing grunge was marked not only by language but by its linguistic orientation.

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[313] Philip, Auslander, "Musical Personae", *The Drama Review*, (Vol. 50, No. 1 Spring (2006), 105), 1.

[314] Layne Staley famously brought a Nazi up on stage while performing in Sweden and beat him up. Security took the Nazi out of the venue and Staley grabbed the mike yelling, "Die, Nazi, Die!". Kurt Cobain and Krist Noveselic interrupted their set on the In Utero tour to point out a male fan sexually assaulting a female fan close to the stage. They both verbally berate the male and angrily turn the tables on the misogynistic atmosphere perpetuated in rock.

linguistic orientation of horror

"*[feminism]...is a practice, not an identity*"[315]
-Valerie Agnew (Drums, 7 Year Bitch)

The orientation of lyrics and their performance construct, and at the same time, tear down refusals by engaging in subjection that embraces the lingering horror of lived-experience. Within grunge lyrics from Alice in Chains, Babes in Toyland, HOLE, Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Seven Year Bitch, and Soundgarden, there are personal expressions of subjectivation. Connected to this, is phrasing that invokes melancholia, disorientation, romantic agony, rage, and sometimes...humor. Consider the lyrics from "House"[316], written and performed by *Babes in Toyland.*

"Stubbed my toe running to your house
Broke my leg running to your house
Lost my head running to your house
Broke my crown running to your house
Oh my God
Is this what it feels like to be in love?
Is this what it feels like?
Oh my love
It feels like God
Just you shut my mouth
Just try and shut my mouth"

The body is broken as well as wounded and decapitated. Heart, emotion, sense of identity and self are in motion, *drifting* at a fast pace. The logic of love, of stability, of being whole, of having a home, even religion are displaced. The vocabulary of that original logic, no longer makes sense. It has gone into Hebdige's 'nowhere', which we can now define with a postmodern response-that the *affect* itself is what has taken

[315] Interview from Mimi Schippers Mimi, Schippers. *Rockin' Out of the Box: Gender Maneuvering in Alternative Hard Rock*), 182.

[316] "House", *House*, Babes in Toyland. 1990 ℗ Sub Pop

shape, not the person in this part of their life. This is the situation as Judith Butler describes of "...a subject created through foreclosure and the current condition"[317]; a literal separation of the body into subjection and silence.

"*The body of a woman in her mid-20s was found dumped on a deserted street early on the morning of July 7, the victim of murder. That body once housed the spirit of an extraordinary woman named Mia Zapata*"[318]

After the rape and murder of *The Gits*' lead singer Mia Zapata on the way home from The Comet on July 7, 1993, the community of practice was in agony. *7 Year Bitch* dedicated their 1994 album to Mia's memory. Selene Vigil's sinister voice twists into whines and slurred yelling. Their song "Derailed" epitomizes their confrontation of the brutality that happened to their friend, and they spit that right back out.

For *7 Year Bitch*, this album and this song, "Derailed", marked two deaths, Zapata in 1993 and a year earlier the death of Stephanie Sergeant their guitarist. The song is raw, as is the album and their work as a whole, displaying heavy emotion along with incredible vulnerability along with an extremely hard sound-something that defies the traditional masculine mold of hard rock and metal from the 1980s and early 1990s.

Horrible memories are back again
My horrible memories, they haven't a friend
Sayin' it before, now do it again
Memories of tragedies, memories, you scare me
I'm gonna inebriate them, I'm gonna inebriate them
I will get it and I will use it to my advantage
Right up to the brink of damage
I will suck from it every juice
Every drop put to use

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[317] Judith, Butler. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection.* Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1997), 9.

[318] Excerpt from "Mia Zapata: 1965-1993. *The Rocket,* August 1993 by Peter Sheeny.

You don't know shit, so leave me be
I wanna wallow in self-pity
-7 Year Bitch, Derailed[319]*, Viva Zapata!*

The brutality of Zapata's death and the open case file with no persons of interest[320] brought the subculture to collaborate musically with their immediate community and other artists as well. They created the *Home Alive*[321] CD with The Gits, Nirvana, Pearl Jam, 7 Year Bitch, Jesse Bernstein, Soundgarden, The Presidents of the United States, The Posies, and Love Battery performing. The Home Alive anti-violence organization was founded in concert with the organizing of the subculture. Still in existence, its goal is to teach life-saving self-defense classes that are empowering and accessible.[322]

There was feminist organizing within the subculture community of Seattle and grunge was the wail that called to action dramatic and violent refusals for Home Alive. L7 formally collaborated with the Feminist Majority Fund to organize *Rock for Choice* Concerts. The first concert was in L.A. in 1991 and continued through 2004. These Pro-Choice benefits were supported by Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Hammerbox, HOLE, L7, 7 Year Bitch, Screaming Trees, Mudhoney, and Bikini Kill who performed. Below is the shirt that Krist Noveselic wore for the first Rock for Choice (now on display at the Museum of Pop Culture). This continued with events at the Cow Palace in San Francisco on April 9, 1993 raising money and awareness about the mass rape and genocide occurring in Bosnia where Nirvana headlined.

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[319] 7 Year Bitch, *Viva Zapata!* ℗ C/Z Records 1994.

[320] Zapata's killer was discovered through DNA in 2003 and convicted.

[321] Home Alive: The Art of Self Defense. Compilation. ℗ 1996 Epic Records. Featured on Pearl Jam's website: https://pearljam.com/music/album/home-alive-the-art-of-self-defense.

[322] Home Alive. https://www.teachhomealive.org

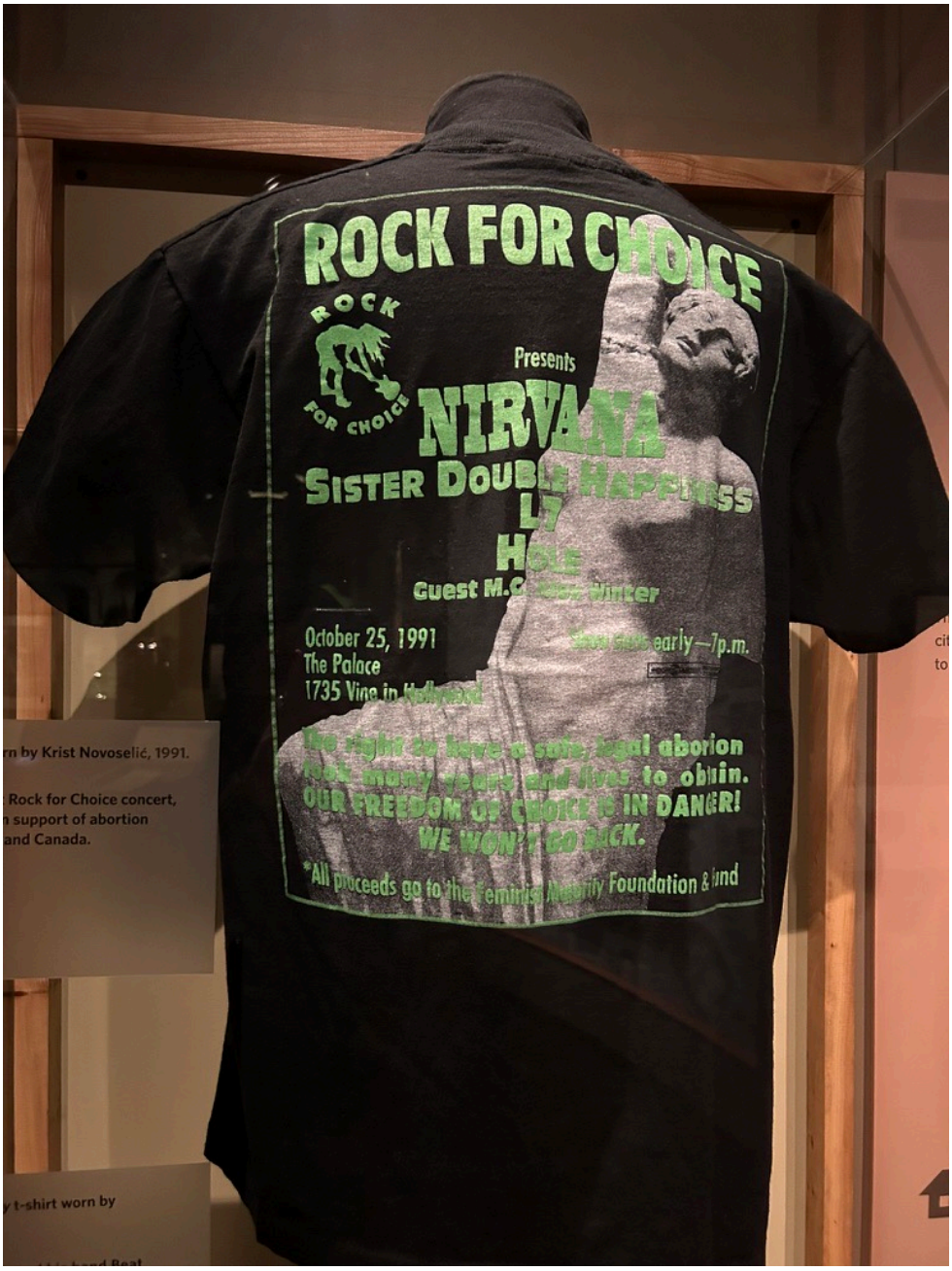


Figure 8. Rock for Choice T-Shirt worn by Krist Noveselic. Museum of Pop Culture; Taking Punk to the Masses. Seattle, WA. Photo by Linnea Zeiner © 2024.

enter the subversive murder ballad

The Murder Ballad has traditionally been used as a patriarchal mechanism of subversive control over the behavior or women and girls as Christina Ruth Hastie has argued.[323] Nirvana's radical performance of the *grotesque* and *female grotesque* on *MTV's Unplugged*[324] on November 18, 1993 was a visual rupture of what had become "Grunge" to the public. From Kurt Cobain's selection of the White Star-gazer lilies and black taper candles, his audience-deprecating humor in between songs, the invitation to the Meat Puppets to perform, and a setlist that was absent of any of Nirvana's hits; this spectacle was anything but anticipated. The absence of electric guitars and amplifiers and the addition of the cellist Laurie Goldstein made the performance of *Polly,*[325] even more haunting. The song, written by Cobain, was based on a real-life case in which serial rapist Gerald Friend tortured and sexually assaulted a 14 year-old girl in 1987. The victim outsmarted Friend and escaped him by convincing him that she "enjoyed" him sexually assaulting her. But instead of a narrative, the lyrics are the words of the rapist taunting "Polly"; an inverse of the traditional Murder Ballad, where Cobain himself takes on the role of the sexual violator.

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[323] Hastie, Christina Ruth. "This Murder Done": Misogyny, Femicide, and Modernity in the 19th-Century Appalachian Murder Ballads. M.A. Music Thesis, University of Tennessee, 2011

[324] Beth, McCarthy., dir. “MTV Unplugged” December 16, 1993. [series] Nirvana; Kurt Cobain, Dave Grohl, Krist Noveselic, Pat Smear, and Lori Goldston.

[325] Nirvana, “Polly”, MTV Unplugged, November 18, 1993. 1994 ℗ UMG Recordings, Inc.

Polly wants a cracker
I think I should get off her first
I think she wants some water
To put out the blow torch
Isn't me, have a seed
Let me clip your dirty wings
Let me take a ride, cut yourself
Want some help, please myself
Got some rope, haven't told
Promise you, have been true
Let me take a ride, cut yourself
Want some help, please myself
-"Polly", Nevermind, lyrics by Kurt Cobain[326]

The gruesomely intimate portrait of the rape sung by the offender is intended to shock, but sung slowly in a quiet monotone; the real shock is that it is not upsetting to listen to or watch. This is not dramatic horror for the sake of spectacle of personal persona, rather, "*Polly*" slips under the radar as a "popular song" being performed in the highly mediated and sanitized MTV set. By choosing to sing this song, Cobain is forcing the studio audience to applaud this *grotesque* situation, a situation that they are now participants in by appreciating his performance.

[326] Nirvana, *Nevermind*, ℗ 1991 Geffen.

hypertexts

"It was the DIY scene in Olympia as well as Evergreen [Evergreen State College] that made me believe I could do it"-Allison Wolfe, *Bratmobile*[327]



Figure 9. Presentation Collage of Gig Fliers, Zine Pages, and other Riot Grrrl Ephemera created by Linnea Zeiner © 2014

hypertexts & hypertextuality

One of the most *oblique* elements of the style of grunge subculture is its *hypertextuality.* These are expressions not digitally inscribed, but performed through textual production via material means that transpose the *public transcript* into embodied messaging that represent a *hidden transcript* of unique subculture values. The *hypertexts* of grunge are a layered language of resistance deploying material, corporal, and visual dimensions. It is an active performance of the symbolic inducing subjectivation of a sign, creating meaning within the kinship of subculture community.

The modern referent of the hypertext may seem to be separated as coded from the

[327] Allison Wolfe interview from MoPop Panel on punk, August 11, 2020. Recorded via ZOOM.

meaning making process of speech-acts being performed and yet considering the processes enacted, connected, directed, and referenced, the *hypertext* can be helpful to understand the embodied experience and the associated negotiations that subculture language can offer. As N. Katherine Hayles' has described the hypertext as *a process of symbolic dialect created from semantic disorder*[328] within the field of electronic interactive engagement, so, here, the *hypertext* found in grunge's *signifying practice* induces interactive engagement on the material and corporal level. It is heightened by the screen, unfolding opportunities to capture a compact utterance in a chemical and physical relationship. This is ultimately housed in the postmodern digital screen, marking the absence that once occupied a historical performance.

Perhaps an excellent place to start between the subversive written language of grunge and its *hypertextuality* is with Sue William's work "It's A New Age" (1992)[329] Constructed in acrylic and oil on canvas, Williams questions the expectations of gendered verbiage by drawing, writing, and printing a cut-up montage of soliloquy. Utilizing many of the same language practices of the zine in phrasing, typeset, word selection, and sketching, Williams sarcastically displays a broken and tearful female body to display an identity with experiences-the movement of the piece is choppy, an unedited stream of consciousness that almost begs you to walk by and ignore it by mindfully piecing parts of female body, thoughts, and experiences that create spectacle. A spectacle of signs; of failure, dispossession, abuse, and perhaps even madness.

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[328] N. Katherine, Hayles. "Print Is Flat, Code Is Deep: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis." *Poetics Today*. Vol. 25. No. 1 (2004): 79.

[329] Sue Williams. "It's A New Age" (1992). Acrylic and oil on canvas. The Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 10. Sue Williams. "It's A New Age" (1992). Acrylic and oil on canvas. The Art Institute of Chicago.

body graffiti

Dick Hebdige has categorized *punk* as the *subculture* with the most grim determination to detach from the taken-for-granted landscape of normalized forms and to bring down upon itself vehement disapproval.[330]*.* For *hypertexts* of grunge this belongs to a lineage of *deformance* practices in which DADA, the Letterists, The Situationists, The Surrealists and eventually London and New York *punks* began to use. The important distinction of the *hypertext* is the jump that is made back and forth from the sign to the signified and back to the referent. This visual link that physically moves and materially smears with sweat fluctuates the sign that women and their allies collectively experience and individually contemplate.

The *hypertext* is an in-your-face confrontation of the unspeakable; an immanent refusal to "the political shaping of 'women' and the sexed body which is culturally inscripted".[331] The immediate introduction of the *hypertext* relates to the heterosexualized shaping of women, drawing familiar lines of gender demarcation attached to hyper-heterosexualized identities of women in popular vernacular. The second act, if you will, forces that ideal to turn in a different direction through *deformance*. This is the interruption of a female gendered identity with the *hidden transcript* of the subculture's refractive gaze back. This is indeed the performative power of gender, as explained initially by Butler in *Gender Trouble*, to drag itself into a territory of political abjection, which demonstrates at its core, "an allegory of

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[330] Dick, Hebdige. Subculture: the meaning of style. (London; Routledge, 1979), 19.

[331] Judith,Butler. Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. (New York; Routledge, 1990.), 175.

heterosexual melancholy"[332] [author's emphasis] as she elaborates in *The Psychic Life of Power.* The result of this confrontational performance is a Camped persona emerges from the material, intertwined with the corporal; one understood as an exaggerated identity that basks in its unnatural existence.[333]

One example of an embodiment of this disapproval is the practice of body graffiti. Female and female-identifying punks reclaim derogatory terminology (such as Bitch, Whore, Cunt) through zine *deformance* practices hand-drawn in conspicuous places. Linguistically it is staccatoed and sharp like the phrasing of the work of William Burroughs as well as his friend Jesse Bernstein. You might mull over the possibility of the sign and referent being unified into a "whore", but to draw out the reading of the signified on the corporal canvas, dashes any insult that may be formed in this semiotic engagement; rather it demands a direct interruption, a further consequence attached to the signified that begs to be uttered, but once it is, every other hypertext offers the possibility of reinscribing and affirming the subversive idea, rendering the floating signified, drowned.

The compact utterances of "Bitch", "Whore", and "Incest" have been marked as reclaimed language marking new identities for females, particularly in Riot Grrrl culture[334]. While singularly they can act in moments of defiance, these compact utterances act to reclaim derogatory terminology such as "Bitch" and "Whore" by self

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[332] Judith, Butler. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 1997), 146.

[333] Susan Sontag. Against Interpretation: And Other Essays. (New York: The Noonday Press, 1961), 275. For more on Camp see also Ester Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*, (Chicago; The University of Chicago Press, 1979).

[334] See Feona Attwood. "Sluts and Riot Grrrl: Female Identity and Sexual Agency", *Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 16. no 3; pgs 233-247. and Mary Celeste Kearney, *Girls Make Media.*

subjectivation, scrawled in lipstick or marker on the bodies of the grunge artist. They also practice a corporal form of *détournement*, displaying bricolage found most often in the pages of zine or gig flier and posted on the body instead to imply an explicit meaning, but carries symptomatic suggestions of a complex situated practice; one by which the sign scratches the signifier, literally.

Subjectivation, in the frameworks of Butler and Foucault follows an ending of being in process, a self-realization of a path determined by interpellation, a deterioration of the self identity and an realization of the self as subject, no more. And so the *hypertexts* in following *subjectivation* hallow their meaning as destructible, or perhaps already tossed away and disregarded. In this manner one could argue that this language of the subjugated in hypertexts contrasts "myth" and in denigrating itself, also defies the willingness of myth to survive. Barthes has noted that "myth does not want to die: it wrests from the meanings which give it its sustenance an insidious, degraded survival, it provokes in them an artificial reprieve in which it settles comfortably, it turns them into speaking corpses." [335] In order to combat myth, then, the *hypertext* must turn out the myth upon itself, a process that Sara Ahmed defines as queer phenomenology, especially when one is challenging the very framework of existence by radically utilizing the format against itself. The *hypertext* in this way performs a commodified message on a commodified body to be consumed and digested as culture. It is a force-feeding of violent experience.

More than simply reclaiming, the *hypertext* represents what Herbert Blau describes *as a subjunctive moment in performance...a moment when whatever was there before*

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[335] Roland, Barthes. *Mythologies*, Annette Lavers, trans. (New York; The Noonday Press, 1991), 132.

becomes a performance.[336] When Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill scrawled "Incest" on her chest she is not reclaiming anything, but rather sharing lived-experience by performing her past through writing in uneven black marker on her chest. She is engaging in what Carol Smith Rosenberg describes as "mythic systems of language that cloak real meanings of shared experience behind symbolic masks built within an interplay of social experiences and emotional realities."[337] As spectators of the *oblique* we are brought back into a moment of realization with Hanna that *subjectivation* has occurred and it lingers. Therein the *hypertext* positions itself as a protracted state between audience receiving the play before them and a historical reality made present for a moment, entombed in the image.

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[336] Herbert Blau. "Universals of Performance: Or, Amortizing Play, *SubStance*, Vol.11/12, Vol.11 No4 Issue 37-38. 1982/1983), 155.

[337] Carol Smith-Rosenberg. *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 45.

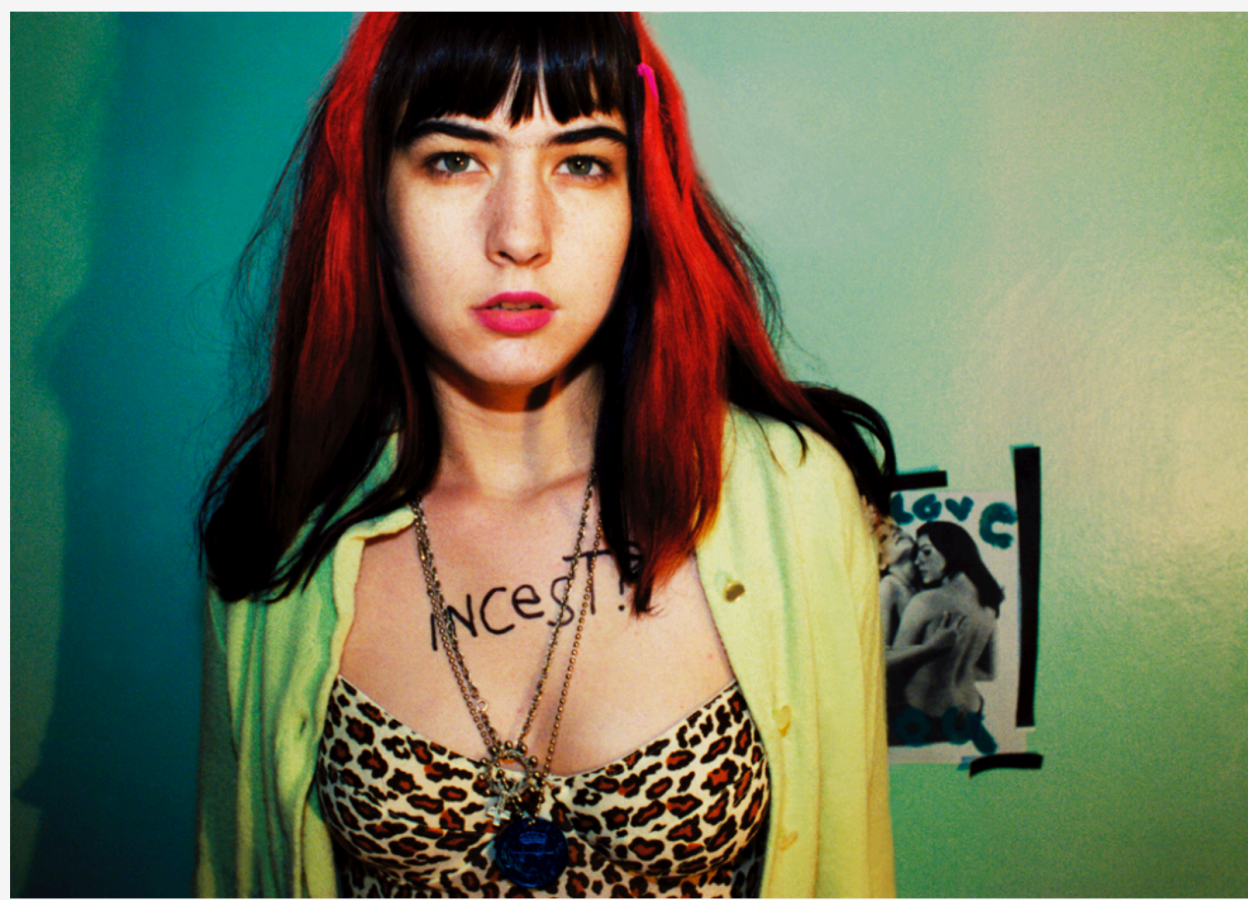


Figure 11. Kathleen Hanna, photograph by Alice Wheeler, November 1992 [338]

Consider the black and white photograph of Kurt Cobain, Krist N, and Dave Grohl in front of a marquee that reads "Men Don't Protect You Anymore". Shot by Steven Sweet for *Melody Maker* in New York on July 22, 1993. The photo's location selected by Cobain, highlights the work of Jenny Holzer's *Survival Series* (1989). The words are *hypertextual* in themselves, broadcasting in bold typeface the shared reality of a hegemonic society no longer camouflaging the many avenues of subjectivation for

[338] Alice, Wheeler. *Outcasts and Innocents*, (Seattle; Minor Matters Books, 2015). ©Alice Wheeler/Minor Matters Books and Greg Kucera Gallery.

the female gender. The piece brings more volume as it is strategically located on the marquee of a shuttered XXX theater on 42nd street in Times Square. Nirvana*,* unposed and disheveled in the photo calmly reveal this truth, situated briefly in the *hypertext and confronted with an uneven status of being.* Confusion, play, and serious contemplation mark their sharing the social and emotional moment, *obliquely,* since they are not holding up the sign and did not create the sig

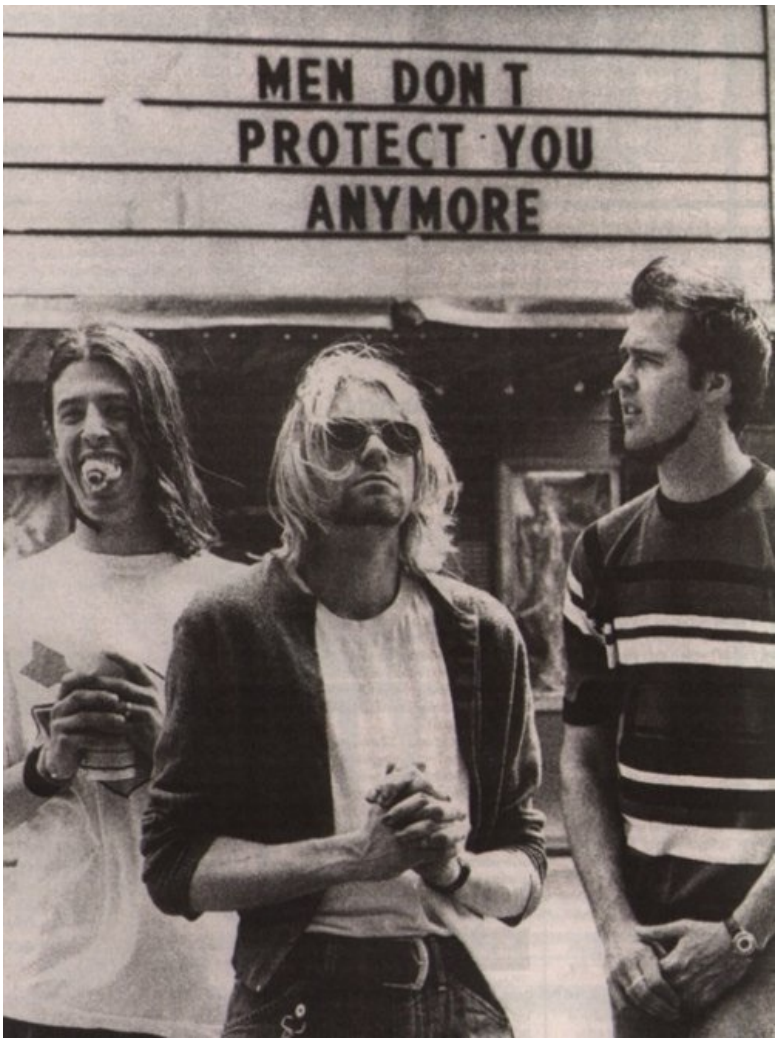


Figure 12. Nirvana standing in front of a selection of Jenny Holzer's, Survival Series (1989); photographed by Steven Sweet, New York, July 22, 1993.

This is the hypertextual nature of grunge; layered processes of secret language connect and combine through the voice, through gesture, body graffiti, zines, gig fliers, and photography. Therefore reading grunge, or rereading, requires acknowledgement of these moving moments and their embodied meanings. Reading in *hypertext* is an audial-visual activity in grunge where sound, aesthetics, lyrics, and performances intersect as representations of *ambivalent refusals.* For the person outside of the subculture, who is deeply conversed in myth, the intentional *refusal* is unacknowledged as such; this is the embodiment of a *hidden transcript*.

BECAUSE doing/reading/seeing/hearing cool things that validate and challenge us can help us gain the strength and sense of community that we need in order to figure out how bullshit like racism, able-bodyism, ageism, speciesism, classism, thinism, sexism, anti-semitism and heterosexism figures in our own lives.

BECAUSE we are angry at a society that tells us
Girl = Dumb, Girl = Bad, Girl = Weak.-Riot Grrrl Manifesto[339]

musical technologies* of *grunge

The *signifying practice* of grunge is shared amongst artists from different genres and mediums as an epistemology of resistance. As noted above in an excerpt from *The Riot Grrrl Manifesto*, the practice is a multi-level engagement of creative work that situates its *subjectivation* as a primary point of contact. "Doing, reading, seeing, and hearing" is the work of grunge and its *hypertextuality*. From exploring that level and examining grunge's language, I now look to draw the points of contact within its *musical technologies*. This term, described by Judith Peraino defines intentional

[339] Riot Grrrl Manifesto. onewarart.org/riot_grrrl_manifesto.htm

performances that "question identity, subjectivity, and sexuality, specifically compulsory heterosexuality."[340]

In grunge these *musical technologies* become embodied practices that indulge in *grotesque* expressions; through the voice, through the gesture, and through aesthetic performances. In considering the voice, this is noted as the vocal performance, but also the throat itself, its raw, physicality and ability to cut. For the voice, the musical technologies explored here are queered speech and *sapphonics.* Elizabeth Wood describes *sapphonics* in the framework of 'Sappho' which subverts the expectation of heterosexuality in the voice of the performer, diving in to lower vocal ranges where the expectation would be male and masculine and inserting an orthogonal relationship of queer intimacy. The listener is then made to digest this unexpected performance without certainty of gender and gender identity.

Joining the *sapphonic* technology of the voice in grunge performance is the corporal *refusal* of the gaze through acts of spectacle, such as *hysteria* and s*elf-subjection through the female grotesque*. *Hysteria* is displayed by both cis-men and cis-women in grunge music and is identified here through vocal displays of the pain, anguish and soliloquy of Romantic Agony. The visual production of *hysteria* releases a dark and cowering aesthetic to the audience, lowering the gaze into the grotto where the clarity of gendered lyrics in rock is clouded and distorted. Finally, the technology of the *female grotesque* is examined as a musical technology diverging the female body away from sexual availability and instead presenting the decay and horror of gender violence as well as misogyinist frameworks of love as obedient and recognizable

[340] Judith A, Peraino. *Listening to the Sirens: Musical Technologies of Queer Identity from Homer to Hedwig*. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2006).Ibid., 5.

structures of attractive femininity.

the voice

> *"the voice is a flexible negotiation and integration of an exceptional range of registers that cross boundaries-among different voice types and their representations to challenge polarities of both gender and sexuality…"*[341] -Elizabeth Wood

Musicologist Phillip Brett calls this "the straight world's tendency to project itself onto everything it encounters and assimilate it into its own ideas and values without attempting to value, explore or try to understand difficult things…"[342] In grunge, not only should we expect that the straight, heterosexual and masculine framework in rock and metal be played with by both cis-straight men and cis-straight women, but that their performances take on different dimensions of gender and age to confuse the meaning of the music they are performing. Three different vocal technologies that embody the *signifying practice* of grunge are explored here from Riot Grrrl, grunge, and alternative 'female' artists.

"The Valley Girl"-Kathleen Hanna (Bikini Kill)

"The Valley Girl" deployed by Hanna is meant to sound in her words "cool"; someone who is culturally connected and perhaps not necessarily politically focused. It is a direct imitation of 'valley' accent in California, intimating a loose association with cis-female attractiveness. When utilized by Hanna in performances, perhaps in her underwear briefs and a t-shirt ,"The Valley Girl" as a narrator is someone you shut-up

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[341] Elizabeth Wood, "Sapphonics" in *Queering the Pitch : The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*. Phillip, Brett,, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 28.

[342] Phillip, Brett. "Musicality, Essentialism, and the Closet" in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*. Brett, Phillip, Elizabeth Wood, and Gary C. Thomas, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

and listen to. When the voice of "The Valley Girl" transitions into an undeterminable scream, such as in the song "Rebel Girl"[343], 'The Valley Girl" is someone no longer that you admire, perhaps want to look like...instead this is someone to be afraid of.

Before forming her band *Bikini Kill* and establishing the *Riot Grrrl* movement on a national scale, Hanna's original spectacle of resistance was spoken word, inspired by the *punk* poet Kath Acker. In the 2013 documentary *The Punk Singer,*[344] there is a video clip of Hanna in 1991 performing a spoken word piece entitled, *In the Middle of the Night in My House*. Hanna wrote this in reaction to her roommate being raped in their house they shared while she was away one evening. The spectacle she performs details the lived experience of her roommate and her own vehement *refusal* to the events simultaneously in rhythmic poetry. She stomps on the ground as if marching, but also her legs and feet perform an orderly tantrum that steadily grows with the volume of her voice. Her loud protests as the victim, are high-pitched in what would become her "Valley Girl" accent, demanding that the bystanders experience the increasing urgency of the situation and she also demands that they share her outrage.

"The Girlie Sound"-Liz Phair

The iTunes Original album that Liz Phair had created in 2005[345] had Phair reflecting on her voice; particularly her vocal range and how she used it to subvert hypermasculinity in the rock scene in Chicago in 1985. The album contains songs previously released on several albums and in between songs, Phair gives her commentary on her work. In one of her reflections, she comments on "the vengeance

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[343] "Rebel Girl". Bikini Kill, *The Singles*. ℗ 1998 Dischord Records.

[344] "The Punk Singer". Directed by Sini Anderson. IFC and Sundance Selects, 2013.

[345] iTunes Originals: Liz Phair. Nov. 25, 2005. ℗ Capitol Records.

that inspired a political fielding of her voice into "The Girlie Sound" in that it allowed her to say really intense things in very non threatening ways since a 'little girl's' voice was the least authoritative in all society."[346]

From Phair's own description the performance of the 'girlie sound' is a subversive tactic against sexism, specifically in the music industry on a larger scale. On a more intimate scale, her own relationships with male musicians as platonic or romantic inferred an inferior status of "girl or girlfriend', not fellow artist. In this way, her vocal manipulation is "talking back' to any presumed authority in rock, whether that is in close proximity or within the larger audience of listeners and consumers of rock. It becomes a force-feeding of the would-be cannibal to eat her words along with her sound-and in so doing, they are imbibing a poisonous vitriol; unassuming to the ear, but definitely meant to choke the consumer and critic of the female voice.

Her album, *Exile in Guyville* (1993)[347] was a direct subversion the hyper-masculinity in the rock industry, created in her bedroom with a tape-deck in Chicago. The title, was created to confront the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main Street* (1972)[348]*.* Its sexually explicit lyrics, primal vocal sounds, avant-garde performance styles, and even the chords and rhythms of their music, transgressed across gendered norms of behavior while reclaiming and redefining rock for women in lyrical themes of gender violence, rape, reproductive rights, and love, from a place of both strength and vulnerability.

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[346] Liz Phair, “The Catalyst for the Girlysound Tapes” in iTunes Originals: Liz Phair 2005 released Nov. 22, 2005. ℗ 2005 Capitol Records. https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/catalyst-for-girlysound-tapes/id715759982?i=715760176

[347] Liz Phair, *Exile in Guyville* ℗ 1993 Matador Records.

[348] The Rolling Stones. *Exile on Main Street*. ℗ 1972. EMI.

"Flower"[349]

Every time I see your face
I get all wet between my legs
Every time you pass me by
I heave a sigh of pain
Every time I see your face
I think of things unpure unchaste
I want to fuck you like a dog
I'll take you home and make you like it
Everything you ever wanted
Everything you ever thought of
Is everything I'll do to you
I'll fuck you and your minions, too[350]

Liz Phair's "Flower" dissects the female vagina in order to refract imposed female-gender behaviors and in so doing practices the *abject* style of grunge*.* Utilizing her "girly sound', singing in a high D and quickly descending to A then E and back up to D again in a pitch and gracefully and carefully hitting each and every note like a little child in music class, the words of the song are masked. The time signature of 4/4 creates this extremely stable flow-there are no interruptions, no dramatic shifts in tone, no bridges, and most notably, no obvious chorus. She twice sings,

"*Everything you ever wanted*
Everything you ever thought of
Is everything I'll do to you"

Her voice is so engrained in the *musical technology it* reduces the fervent and radical *hysteria* found in the lyrics and buffers them into something almost pretty; yet, the subculture audience is in on this communication, the audience is unaware of her

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[349] "Flower", *Exile in Guyville* ℗ 1993 Matador Records.

[350] Liz Phair, "Flower", *Exile in Guyville* ℗ 1993 Matador Records.

lyrics and direct confrontation. The album received critical and popular acclaim, listed #20 on *Rolling Stone's* Top 100 Albums of the 1990s with 425,000 Copies sold.

"*Napalm*" -*Courtney Love*

"I would like to think in my heart of hearts that I'm changing some psychosexual aspect of rock music."-Courtney Love[351]

Courtney Love is a vocal transgressor. She drags her voice into registers reserved for males-complete with downward-spiraling-pitches and guttural screams. As Elizabeth Wood states, "the voice is a flexible negotiation and integration of an exceptional range of registers that cross boundaries-among different voice types and their representations to challenge polarities of both gender and sexuality…" Love dives into this state at every opportunity, never performing vocally the same way twice.

On HOLE's first album, *Pretty on the Inside*[352]*,* produced by Kim Gordon of *Sonic Youth,* Love introduced her hard-core *punk style* and a vocal ability that reached into the depths of the material and drug out the experience from its socket and threw it at the audience. Described by Gordon, Love "...put her all into her singing, and when she felt the band wasn't up to her level...she would throw a glass bottle or shatter something against the drum set...she had a great *punk rock* voice."[353]

As a vocal transgressor, Courtney Love drags her voice into male-registers, Playing upon the audience as an audial confusion, while mimicking male-rocker's with downward-spiraling-pitches and guttural screams. She vocally juxtaposes herself

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[351] Mark Seleger, "Life After Death," *RollingStone*, December 15, 1994.

[352] HOLE, *Pretty on the Inside*, ℗ 1991 Caroline Records

[353] Kim, Gordon. *Girl in a Band: A Memoir*. (New York; Harper Collins, 2015), 190.

against other male grunge vocalists, such as Kurt Cobain of Nirvana and Layne Staley of Alice in Chains. All three vocalists depict deep gritty vocals in low registers. What is significant about this shared register of these three individuals, is that gender becomes muddled and thickened, and heavy. Additionally within the driving bass-lines and the howling screeches it is difficult to determine the exact gender of the voice.

A rare performance of Courtney Love and Kurt Cobain singing together at the *Rock Against Rape* benefit in Los Angeles demonstrates the ability of Love and Cobain to queer their vocal performances, with Cobain reaching higher registers and Courtney Love dipping below him. The performance at Club Lingerie on September 8, 1993 was not taped. The sole audio recording[354] of their performance captured by a concert goer is the only recording from the show. In their performance of Leadbelly's "Where did you sleep last night" (In the Pines)[355], their voices weave into each other as they work their way up and down the melody. At times, it is impossible to distinguish whether a male voice (Cobain) or a female voice (Love) is singing-their intonation and their power behind their guttural cries depict a duo performance on a queered scale of vocal and corporal tension.

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[354] Youtube Video, http://youtu.be/3_5mTTEF0qQ?t=4m43s, Sept. 8, 1993

[355] Leadbelly, The Smithsonian Folkways Collection (originally 1930s and 1940s)

A 2014 musicology analysis of Courtney Love and Liz Phair conducted by Pandora's ® algorithm classified their performances:

"Angry-Romantic Lyrics
Political Satire Lyrics
Angry Lyrics
Political Lyrics
Offensive Lyrics
Punk Influences
Emotional Female Vocal Performance
Aggressive Female Vocalist
Gravelly Female Vocalist"

The common denominator is 'anger' with 'political', 'offensive', and 'punk' descriptors stacked on top of that. These are of course commercialized adjectives, even though they were created from musicologists' musical analysis. The original intent of Pandora was to open up emerging artists to listeners. By merging musical attributes and similarities, such as "heavy vamping" and "aggressive vocals" and by gendering those descriptions, listeners could be led to similar performances and sonics by different artists. If a listener "liked" a song or book marked Courtney Love and made a station, artists like Liz Phair (with certain songs) would be played along in sequence to form a cohesive distinction between artists, essentially knitting together songs. This type of mechanical reproduction was acutely alert to specific genre attributes, looking for new alternatives to add as musical relatives to the collector's anthology of music.

A final example of vocal technology in the *signifying practice* of grunge is an intersectional performance of refusal. In 2016 Inuit throat singer, Tanya Tagaq performed Nirvana's song "Rape Me", from her album Retribution[356]. Tagaq practices

[356] Tagaq, Tanya. *Retribution* ℗ 2016 Six Shooter Records.

in the tradition of *katajjaq,* which traditionally has two female singers. As a soloist Tagaq invokes her own *musical technology*, fusing english language and turning the tradition of Inuit throat singing to confront the atrocities of colonialism and to advocate for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Her approach has been called avant-garde and hailed by critics and popular music publications such as *Rolling Stone*[357].

Kurt Cobain wrote "Rape Me"[358] in protest against sexual violence and composed the lyrics as a masochistic invitation to be violated by a male rapist in order for that individual to find equivalent violation in jail. Tagaq adapted Cobain's grunge song with traditional Inuit drum rhythms and performed a radical resistance giving a lethal invitation to the nation of Canada who violated sovereign lands and destroyed traditions through gendered and sexual violence "to do it again" (and see what happens). Tagaq's performance read in the work of Leanne Simpson[359], is a reclaiming of sovereignty by rejecting tools of dispossession, in this case, genocidal sexual and gendered violence.

Simpson argues that in the process of creation, there is always conversation that can form resistance from the state of subjection and subjectivity. Following this logic reveals the core significance embedded into the performance; a resurgence, refusal and recognition. For First Nations, this holds particular value in disassociating from a colonial history and instead embraces a revolutionary turn away from empire. [360] On

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[357] "10 New Artists You Need To Know: January 2015: George Ezra, Tanya Tagaq, Marmozets and more artists shaping your tomorrow. By *RollingStone.* January 21, 2015. https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/10-new-artists-you-need-to-know-january-2015-152290/marmozets-168461/

[358] Nirvana, *In Utero*, ℗ 1993 Geffen Records.

[359] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 2018). 212

[360] Ibid., 213.

the scale of shared revolution stemming from the technologies of oppression on women's bodies deployed with racial precision and sexual exploitation, there is a recognizable congruence. Cobain's riot grrrl and grunge feminism is able to ally with Tagaq's because of the very nature of its own subjection and its unassuming stature, lacking strict political organization of white-main stream feminism.

hysteria

> *"In the true theater a play disturbs the senses' repose, frees the repressed unconscious, incites a kind of virtual revolt (which moreover can have its full effect only if it remains virtual", and imposes on the assembled collectively an attitude that is both difficult and heroic."*[361]
>
> *-Antonin Artaud*

The concept of hysteria invokes a heavy-laden consequence of independence-a panoptic barbed-wire, entrapping individuals from affirming their feelings in a way they see fit. It is something to be shut away and hidden from the public, for safety and for preventing embarrassment, not of the person afflicted, but the friends, family, and other responsible parties for the person's public persona within a stratified social context of appropriate and gendered behavior. For women it has historically been a projected diagnosis of behavior by men in both a clinical and social context, carrying with it a burden of being controlled. This punitive perspective of the 'misbehaving' woman creates an expectation of potential spectacle at any time, something that must be controlled, shut away from disturbing others. On the other side is the creative side of hysteria-the breaking through from social expectations of gender identity and the evolving into something 'other' than acceptable in sophisticated company or for

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[361] Antonin, Artaud. *The Theater and Its Double*, Mary Caroline Richards, trans. (New York; Grove Press Inc.,1958), 28.

onlookers on the street. It is the "embrace of a dormant, latent disorder that suddenly extends into extreme gestures."[362]

Hysteria is highly visible. In the visual study of hysteria that George Didi-Huberman[363] carefully lays out, the deep desire to understand and yet to not look away compels a performative analysis that situates the spectacle in a radical reverse gaze, rendering a performance so full of segmented horror and invasive curiosity that the whole order as such much be rendered into its own landscape. The melding of psychological disease with unpredictable physical actions lure the unsuspecting gawper into a punishing subversion, utilizing the very incitement of the "Other" to be extended to the fullest abject possibilities.

In grunge's *signifying practice*, *hysteria* is paramount to distinguish disgust in a socio-sexual context. Comparable to 'rape revenge' in the genre of horror, the recounting of violence, the raw retelling and honest confrontation in grunge brings forth new possibilities for the victims of violence and the dislocated. Grunge depicts subjectivation in its performance of *hysteria*. It is a self-dissection of circumstances as well as a corporal inspection of damage; akin to a wounded soldier laying on the battleground triaging their wounds and determining their life expectancy. In the geography of the theater, this is Artaud's "Extending this spiritual image of the plague, into deep disorder, conflicts, struggles, and cataclysms."[364]

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[362] Antonin, Artaud. *The Theater and Its Double*, Mary Caroline Richards, trans. (New York; Grove Press Inc.,1958), 27.

[363] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, Alisa Hartz (trans) (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1982).

[364] Antonin, Artaud. *The Theater and Its Double*, Mary Caroline Richards, trans. (New York; Grove Press Inc.,1958), 25.

The Frenzied Woman

Hysteria in grunge creates a spectacle of extreme visibility. It is not beautiful, instead it is messy, unpredictable, uncontrollable by others. One thinks of L7 on stage in when Donita Sparks removed her tampon on stage at threw it at the audience. *Hysteria* also invokes the sick and institutionalized, as Kurt Cobain got wheeled out in a wheel chair at the reading festival by Everett True in 1993, with a female blond wig and a hospital gown over his jeans and shirt (which he wore all night). It is this 'moving play' of Barthes' signification where the 'informational' and the 'symbolic' cause a slippage in the reading. A going against the grain in the most simplest terms of Hebdige' channeling Julia Kristeva and Barthes.[365]

Hysteria goes in direct opposition to the invitation of the gaze performed by female pop artists, connecting their personae to the stage through sexual availability and a traditional aesthetic of beauty. Instead, it is an invitation for criticism and rejection by the male gaze. In a white-western feminist context, restricted by the wave mentality, the spectacle of hysteria is a cautionary visual for 20th-century females' bodies and behavior. The representational backlash against organized feminism with visual presence carries with it a negative connotation against any woman who would not fill a particular aspect of beauty or attractiveness. For feminism in the 1970s as Susan Douglas has noted, the demonization of women associated with unattractiveness was pervasive in the media. She writes, "the media representation of feminism reinforced the division between the *acceptable* and the *deviant,* [my emphasis], between the refined and the *grotesque*, between deserving ladies and

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[365] Dick, Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style.* (London; Routledge, 1979).101-102; 126

disorderly dogs."[366] In a musical framework, the risk of the frenzied female is exponential, particularly in hard rock and metal. As Robert Walsner comments" one of the most important items on the heavy metal agenda has long been to deal with what patriarchy perennially perceives as the 'threat' of women."[367]

Hysteria in grunge self-subjugates the female body and the implied psyche invoking simultaneous anger and lament. Musically there is a monotone soliloquy from the narrator reflecting sarcastic reprimand and intense distaste for the experiences of love, hate, abuse, rejection, murder, and rape. The criminality that is addressed displays the *uncanny grotesque* in *lyrics* and in aesthetics of album covers or mediated performances. There is an underlying scream that is repressed into whispering (such as with PJ Harvey's “Down By The Water”[368]). An understanding of the futility of the self as anything other subject. The muted disdain of Fiona Apple's "Criminal"[369], the rage of Courtney Love in "Pretty on the Inside"[370] that is only felt with visual performance; the melancholy of Garbage's "I'm Only Happy When it Rains"[371]. Even Kurt Cobain screaming without music 'Stay Away' with indistinguishable lyrics at the end of the song[372], seeming to be in a frantic trance of despair. Georges Didi-Huberman claims "that hysteria is not only a sentimental event, but in its *affects* become bodily disasters,

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[366] Susan J. Douglas. *Where The Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*. (New York; Three Rivers Press, 1994),191.

[367] Robert, Walser. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. (Hanover, NH. Wesleyan University Press, 1993),109.

[368] P.J. Harvey, *To Bring You My Love*. ℗ 1995 Universal-Island Records.

[369] Fiona Apple, *Tidal*. ℗ 1996 Epic Records.

[370] HOLE, *Pretty on the Inside*, ℗ 1991 Caroline Records.

[371] Garbage, *Garbage,* ℗ 1995 Almo Sounds, Inc.

[372] Nirvana, *Nevermind*, ℗ 1991 Geffen.

enigmatic and violent spatiality."[373] Those corporal disasters and violence are demonstrated vocally through screams and tactics to implore less pain. When Layne Staley screams "Ahh" "Ahhh" in the opening phrases of "Them Bones"[374]. This improvised and unwritten addition by Staley to the song catches the listener by surprise as it interrupts an expected progression of vamping and guitar features from Jerry Cantrell and Mike Inez.

Other examples of alternative artists' performances of hysteria are Tracy Bonham's "Mother Mother"[375], Alanis Morissette's "You Outta Know"[376], and PJ Harvey "Down by the Water".[377] All of these performances invoke hysteria in pitch, tone, gesture, and confrontation. Bonham's radical change in time signature literally cuts her song back and forth in between soliloquy and violent screams. Morissette's "You Outta Know"[378], famously shocked male listeners as her soliloquy is in rehearsal to be performed any moment on the doorstep. She is a scorned lover, displaced and wandering in the desert depicted in her video[379]. The tone of her voice, her lyrics, and her stance are dangerous and unpredictable-the very elements of *hysteria*. Harvey, uniquely, instead of yelling and screaming, whispers, her singing barely audible, her words shakily delivered to herself and to the unknown element that has taken

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[373] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, Alisa Hartz (trans) (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1982), 73.

[374] Alice in Chains, *Dirt*, ℗ 1992 Sony Music Entertainment.

[375] Tracy Bonham, *The Burdens of Being Upright*, ℗ 1996 The Island Def Jam Music Group

[376] Alanis Morissette, *Jagged Little Pill*, ℗ 1995 Maverick Recording Company

[377] P.J. Harvey, *To Bring You My Love*. ℗ 1995 Universal-Island Records.

[378] Alanis Morissette, *Jagged Little Pill*, ℗ 1995 Maverick Recording Company.

[379] Nick, Egan., dir. Alanis Morissette. "You Oghta Know"; Alanis Morissette, Taylor Hawkins. 1995. Streaming.

something dear away from her.

Hell & Wish-romantic agony

Everette True once called Babes in Toyland's lyrics "love-hate lyrics" [380], but love and hate are two sides of one coin, hopelessly interconnected. When we listen to Babes in Toyland or HOLE there is no connection to these concepts from an orthogonal perspective. What is bonded is the brokenness that emerges from the wish of love, some lofty idea that has dissolved into spit on the ground. Babes In Toyland as well as L7 and 7 Year Bitch write from the intimacies of hell; from experiences of hope, dashed with pain and deep melancholy, and then rage. Albums like HOLE's *Pretty on the Inside*[381] and *Live Through This*[382]; as well as, Mad Season's *Mad Season*[383], and Alice in Chains[384] and Soundgarden's[385] anthologies bring the nightmare to the forefront and then develop its decay before your ears and eyes.

Hole's *Live Through This*[386], album cover photographed by Ellen Von Eerth personifies the horrific ending associated with romantic agony. It is Steven King's Carrie, beautifully made up, blond hair curled, make-up adorned, dress clinging to

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[380] Everett, True *Live Through This. American Rock Music in the Nineties.* (Virgin Publishing, London. 2000), 159.

[381] HOLE, *Pretty on the Inside*, Ⓟ 1991 Caroline Records.

[382] HOLE, *Live Through This*, Ⓟ 1994 DGC Records.

[383] Mad Season, *Above,* Ⓟ 1995 Hollywood Records.

[384] Alice in Chains; *Facelift*, Ⓟ 1990, *Sap* Ⓟ 1992, *Dirt* Ⓟ 1992, *Jar of Flies* Ⓟ 1994, *Alice in Chains* Ⓟ 1995…all Columbia Records.

[385] Soundgarden; *Ultramega OK* Ⓟ 1988 SubPop, *Louder than Love* Ⓟ 1989 A&M, *Screaming Life* Ⓟ 1990 SubPop, *Badmotorfinger* Ⓟ 1991 A&M, *SuperUnknown* Ⓟ 1994 A&M, *Down on the Upside* Ⓟ 1995, A&M.

[386] HOLE, *Live Through This*, Ⓟ 1994 DGC Records.

feminine curves, and the face of the victim is covered in dripping mascara from crying, yet still trying to exclaim joy-trapped in the moment between the wish of being Prom Queen, and the hell that has befallen her. The backstory is well known, that Carrie has powers that she is just discovering. It is in this moment of hell that she is the strongest, because there is nothing left to wish for, all there is…is what has befallen her.

doll parts

"Women, you know, they wane by candle-light, they spoil, melt, twist, and ooze!… The end of tapers is a horrible sight, the end of ladies too…" [387]
-L.F. Celine in Julia Kristeva's *Power of Horrors*

"*A woman's face is the canvas upon which she paints a revised, corrected portrait of herself...How she arranges her hair, the type of make-up she uses, the quality of her complexion-all these are signs...They establish her status as an object*"[388]
-Susan Sontag

In grunge, the *female grotesque* is an embodied practice that is materially expressed in the writings, paintings, and lyrics of the artists. The centrality of its focus is the abject subject which is vivisected into socio-pathological pieces in order to reveal queered identities as well as alienated subjects. Grunge style uniquely utilizes the *female grotesque* to demonstrate subjectivation as *infrapolitical gestures* of the body and sonic interruptions of the *economies of noise.*

The prominence of the *abject* and the theme of pain in grunge's lyrics is unmistakable. The details of this theme are so very acute that it leads to understanding

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[387] Julia, Kristeva. T*he Powers of Horror: An essay on abjection*. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982).

[388] Susan Sontag, 'The double standard of aging', *Saturday Review of The Society* [San Francisco], 23 September 1972), 35.

the process of subjectivation in which the spatiality of the *grotesque* is opened visually by dissection and decay. This process of deconstruction, beginning with subverting the dominant culture's gendered expectation of 'beauty' through the deployment of the *female grotesque* is indeed a *signifying practice*. In this practice, grunge defiles the clean and obedient female object, replacing it with a deteriorated version, such as *The Kinder Whore* performed by Courtney Love and Kat Bjelland, dissecting the female organs from the body like Kurt Cobain's sculptures for *In Utero*[389], or opening up the contents of the stomach to reveal pieces and chunks of vomit like Cindy Sherman's Untitled #175;[390] noting that the object has been even more consumed and its rotten contents and can not be digested.

An initial observation of Love, Bjelland, Cobain, and Sherman is their use of dolls and mannequins to figure pieces into narrative; physical *détournement* to sculpt semblances of "female" childhood, such as tiny ballerina fixtures in music boxes as well as to craft and piece the female form as the object(s) of the gaze. The anatomy and textures of their creations are often uneven, disproportionate, and broken such as in *Babes in Toyland's* "He's My Thing"[391] video where certain dolls seem to have mismatched bodies, or heads too large. This disproportionate and unwashed doll in fact cuts the leg off of another doll in a seemingly cataleptic state, who has been toying with the tiny ballerina figure.

When we observe the *female grotesque* in grunge, it is not just the presence of

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[389] Nirvana, *In Utero*, ℗ 1993 Geffen Records.

[390] Cindy Sherman. Untitled #175.1987. Chromogenic color print, 46 7/8 x 71 1/2" (119.1 x 181.6 cm).

[391] Babes in Toyland, “He’s My Thing”; Directed by Michael Etoll, Minneapolis, MN. Lori Barbero, Kat Bjelland, and Michelle Leon, 1989.

blood, female organs, and dissection; it is a *derangement of identity*. Mary Russo reflecting on Julia Kristeva's coding of abjection as a social and political crisis, notes the linguistic transgressions in the structure of language utilized."[392] "There is a subject and a victim simultaneously present in the language of abjection" as Julia Kristeva has noted, this style witnesses and experiences together all the possibilities within the range of interpretation, covering mania, threat, or hope and drowns with it into radical nihilism."[393] The possibilities presented in the *signifying practice* of grunge completely derange the expected and instead invite the traumatic through gesture and through imagery. The intensity of the *grotesque*, and particularly the *female grotesque,* ranges from the shock of the initial visual representation that magnifies decay and disruption, dislocating the signifier of the expected image, to being nameless-perhaps formless in its fluctuating circumstances that it presents.

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[392] Mary, Russo. *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess, and Modernity. (*New York; Routledge. Kindle Edition, 1994), 9.

[393] Julia, Kristeva. T*he Powers of Horror: An essay on abjection.* Leon S. Roudiez, trans. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1982), 206.

Cindy Sherman

"...I'm disgusted with how people get themselves to look beautiful; I'm much more interested in the other side."[394]



Figure 13. Cindy Sherman, Untitled #175, 1987

In Untitled #175, Sherman is noticeably absent. In her previous chapter of work, constructed and poised representations of women were captured by the lens-the joke being that Sherman herself as object, subject, and photographer *refracted* the gaze in her methodology. As Laura Mulvey has described, "Sherman dissects the phantasmagoric space conjured up by the female body, from the exteriority to its

[394] Interview with Cindy Sherman. Cindy Sherman's Tales of Terror. Larry Frascella and Cindy Sherman, *Aperture* (summer 1986, No. 103),49.

interiority."[395] In #175 the dissection has not been digested, but thrown out and thrown up. The objects of sunglasses and a bottle perhaps that once held shampoo are *grotesque* artifacts of the accessories of "classical beauty". It is not the absence of the body that is disturbing in this piece or even the partially digested spew; it is the revealing of the empty cavern of the female body. Considering the cavern to be externally hidden with appropriate camouflage (accessories, clothing, and make-up), the body's objectification has lost shape and form and therefore any kind of gendered meaning.



Figure 14. Cindy Sherman, Untitled #153 (1985)

[395] Laura, Mulvey. "A Phantasmagoria of the Female Body: The Work of Cindy Sherman" in *Cindy Sherman, 1975-1993* Rosalind Krauss, ed. (New York; Rizzoli, 1993), 137.

Untitled #153 (1985) Brings the female body back, as a corpse to be glanced upon and then to be forgotten. It is a subtle visual disturbance that embellishes the imperfections of the dead woman's skin, the dirt on her face, and her unattractive hair. This seems to be more annoying than the fact that she is lying there, discarded in the dirt. This is a prime example of grunge's ability to utilize the *grotesque* to enjoy its own subjectivation by engaging with its own pain and destruction-thereby reclaiming sovereignty.

The Kinder-Whore, Courtney Love (HOLE) and Kat Bjelland (Babes in Toyland)

Like Cindy Sherman, Courtney Love and Kat Bjelland invoke the horror at the site of the female body by dissecting the subject. In confronting sexism and ageism Love has previously described her creation of the Kinder Whore to *RollingStone*[396], where she noted that this *style* was inspired by Bette Davis in *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane.*[397] The aged child actress, too old to be considered beautiful, still adorns herself as a "child", using layers of make-up and overdone curls to mask what she is, a haunted version of her younger self. The context of sexual availability, youth and femininity is destroyed…what is left is only the rags and pieces of an attractive image. The *grotesque,* then, is revealing the shell beneath; the future of growing older, and the implication of illness and death.

The Kinder Whore style of Courtney Love comes to life in HOLE's song "Doll Parts"[398]. In the song, 'the 'gaze' is narrated for the potential consumer, giving the

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[396] Mark, Seleger. "Life After Death,", *RollingStone*, December 15, 1994.

[397] Robert, Aldrich.dir., What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? 1962. Los Angeles; Warner Brothers, Streaming.

[398] HOLE. *Live Through This*. ℗ 1994. DGC Records.

image of the doll (womyn or grrrl) a voice. This is destruction of the fetish of the image[399], created by the close-up; illuminating the broken and ugly instead of "feminine beauty". Womanhood is infantilized into the object of the doll as the soliloquy juxtaposes a daring display of self-loathing describing her "parts"; eyes, legs, arms, and big veins. The female form is dismembered while exhibiting latent rage at the credibility that is only achieved through the recognized beauty of the parts; not the whole person. It is implied that physical beauty is the only thing that would entice anyone to pick up and play with the doll. Even then, this is not a satisfactory outcome as the doll is reduced to an inanimate relationship, where the doll is 'toyed with'.

Doll Parts
I am doll eyes, doll mouth, doll legs
I am doll arms, big veins, dog beg
Yeah they really want you, they really want you, they really do
Yeah they really want you, they really want you, but I do too

-"Doll Parts",[400] *Lyrics by Courtney Love*

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[399] See Laura Mulvey. *Fetishism and Curiosity.* (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 1996), 41- 42.

[400] HOLE, Live Through This, ℗ 1994 DGC Records.

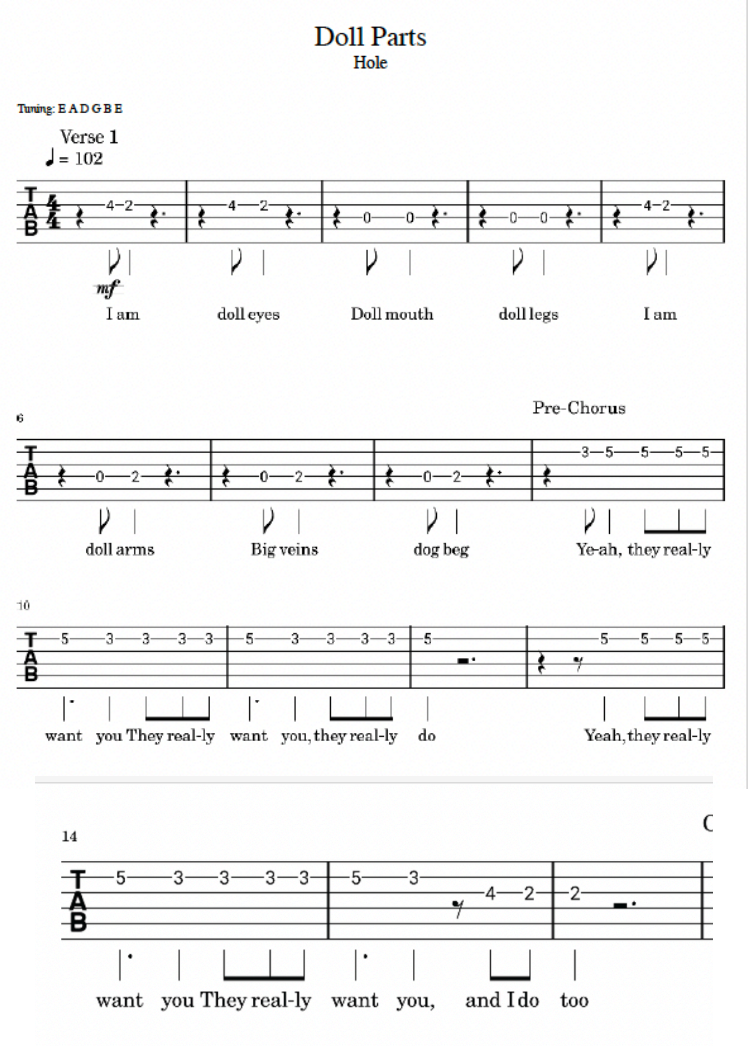


Figure 15. Hole, Doll Parts Sheet Music courtesy of Ultimate Guitar.com

The lyrics vacillate between solemn vows and psychotic internal dialogue, at times outlasting the rhythm and the melody altogether. It is this fascinating mixture that makes this song a sad, whirling, angry mess that you can't stop feeling. It is a sense of being "out of control" that is both enticing and manipulating.

In Utero

"I definitely feel closer to the feminine side of the human being than I do the male, or the American idea of what a male is supposed to be."[401]
-Kurt Cobain



Figure 16. collage by Kurt Cobain; Courtney Love and Frances Bean Cobain in the family dining room. Photographed by Charles Peterson.

[401] Michael Azerrad "Inside the Heart and Mind of Kurt Cobain", *Rolling Stone,* April 16, 1992.



Figure 17: Collage by Kurt Cobain, Photographed by Charles Peterson and printed for the In Utero Album back over to CD.

Above are the collages that Kurt Cobain made and Charles Peterson photographed for the back of the "In Utero" album. These were not Cobain's only paintings focused on fetuses, female organs, and other body parts. The winged Angel that travelled as a stage prop with Nirvana had an exposed torso with organs revealed. The wings, often a symbol of hope, were colored blood-red with big veins , indicating that they had been recently and the angel was in the process of being dissected.

The importance of recognizing grunge as a *signifying practice* in itself is to distinguish a subcultural feministic *refusal* of *refraction.* Subculture strategies are not given recognition historically for their critical, yet oblique style. Grunge's *style*, embedded in alternative gender language, linguistic orientations of horror, vocal *sapphonics*, and *grotesque* performances of the body has been examined here to clarify its style in contrast to its defused fashion legacy and appropriated music.

In recognizing grunge as a feminist *refusal,* this chapter put in tension

s*ubcultural* feminism against the public transcript of Third-wave Feminism. It also drew lines of connection from other subcultural groups such as Riot grrrl and other Alternative Rock Artists such as PJ Harvey. Additionally, these connections expanded into Indigenous performances of refusal, exemplifying Tanya Tagaq's performance of Nirvana's "Rape Me"[402]. As a practice, this chapter also demonstrated that artists like Sue Williams and Cindy Sherman share practices of *hypertextuality* and *grotesque refraction* within grunge.

Grunge's *musical technologies* subverted heterosexual and binary gender identities in tone, range, and performance inducing noise instead of harmony, emblematic of punk style, but darker and stronger. The *signifying practice* of grunge*,* encompassing these musical technologies, particularly elements of hysteria, by female identifying artists as well as cis-men defy the logic instilled in heavy metal and *punk* which had previously promoted masculinity, projected through insecurities.

Popular music, before grunge, had not embraced female performers that subverted sexual availability and queered their speech-acts in order to exclude heterosexual men. The kinder-whore, fox core, and romantic agony performed by grunge artists depicted a broken, dirty, and *grotesque* spatiality in its style, going against gendered standards of beauty for women. That was not the standard of beauty established in the music industry as a performance that would sell records, sell out concerts, and become a fashion trend. Grunge is un-commodifiable in its truest form and it rejects commodification of the female body in popular music.

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[402] Tanya, Tagag. *Retribution*. ℗ 2016. Six Shooter Records.

3. THE SEATTLE SOUND

Thus far, this dissertation has given a reconstruction of the identity of grunge by outlining it as a subculture, a *signifying practice,* and has delved deep into its utilization of the *female grotesque.* In this chapter I embark on a phenomenological mapping of the *soundscape* of "The Seattle Sound". This is a sonic cartography, focusing on three Seattle grunge bands that embody *The Seattle Sound* from the metal lineage; Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam, and Soundgarden*.* I also include their interconnected projects that demonstrate their unique kinship, Mad Season and Temple of the Dog*.*

My contention is that *The Seattle Sound* has a specific temporal and geographical location that is created from a combination of artistic kinship, compounded sonic topography of Seattle and dynamic meteorology. In looking at the sonic topography, I extract the *economies of noise* present in Seattle and demonstrate the consistency of different vibrational and acoustic influences that induced *affects* on the artists. There are several prominent *economies of noise* in Seattle during the time frame of band formations and the creation of *The Seattle Sound*. This chapter will demonstrate that specific locations of Seattle were impacted in their locations of practice, performance, and living, by heavy dBA and Hz vibrations from these *economies of noise*. These extremely noisy places created the unique soundscape of grunge and specifically *The Seattle Sound* sub genre. It is here that the timbre, key, tone, and rhythm of some of the most popular grunge songs can be heard as a dialectic between the artists and their conditions of *place*.

First, I explore the *soundscape* of Seattle itself, defining the important *keynotes* and *signals* present in the acoustical landscape. I then narrow the focus to specific geographic regions of Seattle that were sites of grunge subculture, situating their lived-experience within an acoustical topography. From there, *noise* and the *economies of noise* are interrogated through the lens of Political Economy of Vincent Mosco[403] and David Harvey[404] with particular framework from Frederick Jameson[405]. Next, I draw the connections of the grunge community of artists that are participants in creating the grunge genre and explore their unique artistic formations. Finally I display the impact of meteorology on the grunge genre and through the work of Cliff Mass[406], demonstrate how its dynamic behavior in this particular region of the Pacific Northwest, compounds weather patters and creates unique psychedelic conditions that can be seen in the lyrics of grunge.

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[403] Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication.* (Sage, 2009).

[404] David, Harvey. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* (Oxford; University Press, 2005).*The Condition of PostModernity: An Enquiry into the Origin of Cultural Change*. (Blackwell Publishers Cambridge, 1989)

[405] Frederick, Jameson. *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.* (Durham; Duke University Press, 1991).

[406] Cliff, Mass. *The Weather of the Pacific Northwest*. (Seattle; University of Washington Press, 2001).

Earwitnessing Seattle

> "*You gotta understand Seattle…it's grungy. People are into rock and roll and into noise, and they are building airplanes all the time, and there's a lot of noise, and there's rain and musty garages. Musty garages create a certain noise."*[407]
>
> *-Duff McKagen (The Vains, Guns N Roses, Velvet Revolver)*

> "*[Music] is a mirror of life itself with a reflection that cannot be selective against disharmony and noise, but rather has no choice but to incorporate those aspects alongside harmony and pitch*. [408]"-Luigi Russolo.

soundmarks, signals, and keynotes

The texture of *sonic geography* is its specific connection between the aural and the visual, induced with *affects.* This connection is an integral part of *place* creating a multi-layered memory. In the first chapter, the sonic geography of Seattle explored stretched into seismic dimensions with vibrational *affects* that surround the city to Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Rainier, Glacier Peak and Mt. Baker. It also included the layered geography of the geological terrain that stretches within and beneath Seattle, creating steep hills, and hidden areaways below the streets. Seattle's mixed topography of bridges, roads, stairs, ports, and lochs along with its housing, office spaces, and historic landmarks are all components of the city's sonic texture, giving its unique feel and ethos.

We look now to *sonic geography* as the embodied gestures, the brush-strokes' , that are emblematic waves of memory and experience. This is a canvas on which

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[407] Michael, Azerrad. "Guitar Grunge" *Rolling Stone*, April 18, 1991.

[408] Luigi Russolo. "The Art of Noises", trans. Barclay Brown. *Monographs in Musicology Series* No. 6. (New York; Pendragon Press, 1986). , 23-25.

artistic kinship is drawn together and *affected* by specific *soundmarks; causal points of inspiration* that fomented the grunge genre. Official and unofficial neighborhoods, designated public and private spaces, and micro-environments all together represent a relational spectrum of *place* and *space* that is comprised of unique *keynotes*, *signals*, and *soundmarks* that define the timbre of a community.

A *keynote* sound has two functional definitions; one resounds in music and one lives in sound studies. *A keynote in music provides the fundamental tone around which a composition may modulate but from which other tonalities take on a special relationship.*[409] *It also in sound studies forms a background against which other sounds are perceived, like the sound of the sea for a maritime community*."[410] In It's duality, the *keynote* is a complex composition in that it is part of a community but provides the background, the expected or anticipated sounds. There is a commonality to its structure, an expectation of *place* in that it may be unconsciously registered and yet distinguish the particular *place* from another.

A *signal* is a sound that is consciously heard and processed. Schaefer defines *signals* as sounds "that must be listened to because they constitute meaning, such as a warning device"[411] like the siren of an ambulance. *Signals* in this example are not necessarily stationary *signals* as the example of the ambulance would travel through city streets; however one would expect that the sirens would be more concentrated around the emergency rooms of Harbor View or Swedish Hospital in First Hill. Another

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[409] R. Murray, Schaefer. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Turning of the World*, (Rochester; Destiny Books, 1977), 272.

[410] Ibid.

[411] Ibid.,10.

prominent *signal* unique to Seattle is the fog horn. The West Point Lighthouse in Discovery Park sounds its foghorn, seven miles northeast of downtown Seattle. Ships traveling through the Puget Sound and Elliot Bay also have foghorns. All ships are required to utilize these *signals* in fog conditions.[412] The longer the ship, the farther the fog horn *signal* must be audible. For example a vessel that is 200 meters in length must send a *signal* that carries at least 2 nautical miles.[413] They are moving *signals*, *affected* by the reverberation and echo of water. In a congested nautical area such as Elliot Bay in foggy conditions one would anticipate that multiple vessels would be sounding *signals* almost simultaneously.

Fog, while not thoroughly covered by Sound Studies in its phenomenological impact on sound, is a contextual experience argues Jennifer Lucy Allan, depending on culture, place, and time.[414] If Reddit threads from Seattle and Tacoma are any indication of the confusion of *signals*' sound capacities at all hours of the day, the *signal* requirements of ships in fog create permeating sonics that are experienced long distances to inland residents. Since fog horns are protected under the Seattle Noise Ordnance they are a continuous participant in Seattle communities sounding perpetually under the meteorological conditions and required to be used at all times

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[412] SOURCE: CGD 72–74R, 37 FR 13512, July 8, 1972, unless otherwise noted. **§ 67.10–1 Apparatus requirements.** The fog signal required by §§67.20–10, 67.25–10, and 67.30–10 must:
(a) Have its maximum intensity at a frequency between 100 and 1,100 Hertz;
(b) Sound a 2-second blast every 20 seconds (2 seconds sound, 18 seconds silence) unless otherwise authorized by the District Commander;
https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2001-title33-vol1/pdf/CFR-2001-title33-vol1-sec67-10-1.pdf

[413] U.S. Coast Guard source https://www.portoftacoma.com/news/foghorns-sound-ancient-mariner-important-ever

[414] Jennifer Lucy Allen. "Foggy notion; Sound and weather, and the intermingled senses", *SoundEffects* vol. 8, no.1 (2019) pp 51-67.

without restrictions.[415]

As mentioned in the subterranean section, *soundmark*s are monolithic acoustic identifiers that reflect the character of a community."[416] It is important to note Schaefer's reflection in that "not every *soundmark* will be beautiful".[417] Even though the *soundmark* could establish ones' cultural connection to *place*, the sound itself, produces an *affect*, capable of instigating a jarring condition of circumstance that one adjusts to that lives within that particular community. It is these conditions of circumstance, individual embodiment and community interpretation along with the legal protection of the *soundmark* that can have the most potent *affect* in *earwitnessing.*

The *soundmark* is tethered to *place* and in experiencing its *affect*, the physical and emotional conditions of *place* shape the contours of the community. Within Schaefer's explanation the *soundmark* is almost a monument; an unmovable landmark with sonic capabilities that transcend alternative conceptions of lived experience. The *soundmark* is in this understanding the grid of existence on which everyday life is practiced and negotiated. The *soundmark's* district is distinguished by its sonic and vibrational *affects* and within the district lies the intensity and temperature of its imprint on the artists' ears as citizens.

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[415] 25.08.485 D. The following exemptions apply to sounds created by watercraft or watercraft operations: 1. Normal docking, undocking, and water skier pick-up and drop-off operations of all watercraft are exempt from the provisions in subsection 25.08.485.B; 2. Sounds created by the operation of commercial, non-recreational watercraft are exempt at all times from provisions of this chapter. These commercial activities include, but are not limited to, tugboats, fishing boats, ferries, and vessels engaged in intrastate, interstate, or international commerce;

[416] R. Murray Schaefer. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Turning of the World,* (Rochester; Destiny Books, 1977), 239.

[417] Ibid.

The community in which the *soundmark* thrives may participate in its indelible impressions through labor. Through work at the docks of Seattle like Alice in Chains did or necessary adjustments to adapt to the *soundmark's* conditions such as amplifying the volume of guitar or deepening the beat of percussion through the use of extensive toms and bass drums, the *soundmark* bleeds into those lived experiences, shaping the intensity of relation to *place* and in turn having spaces, produce back performances that engage the *soundmark*, directly or indirectly.

This can be a visceral exchange as evidenced by guitarist Tommi Iommi's finger tips being crushed-off by the machine he was operating. The literal heaviness of the metal machine wounding the worker imbedded its *soundmark* within flesh and in turn altering the ability of the fingers to play certain tuning. Or the experience of drummer Bill Ward, living next to a stamp factory which pounded vibrational acoustics so definitive and constant that he adopted its rhythm, mixing with it and altering it, creating a heavy and unique percussive rhythm not before heard in rock.[418]

Leigh Michael Harrison in his article “Factory Music: How The Industrial Geography and Working-Class Environment of Post-War Birmingham Fostered The Birth of Heavy Metal”,[419] has demonstrated how the the members of Black Sabbath and Judas Priest were *affected* physically and sonically by the poor socio-economic conditions and congested industrial landscape of post World War II Birmingham. While not selecting certain sounds as *signals, soundmarks*, or *keynotes*, Harrison does demonstrate through artist testimony and historical research that the sounds produced by these two

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[418] Leigh Michael Harrison. “Factory Music: How The Industrial Geography and Working-Class Environment of Post-War Birmingham Fostered The Birth of Heavy Metal.” *Journal of Social History,* Vol. 44, Issue 1. (Fall 2010), 145-158.

[419] Ibid.

bands created unique sonics reflecting their lived-experiences in a bombed-out city in disrepair. It was these very physical and social surroundings that are place-specific that form new genres of music.[420]

Tommi Iommi's wounding dramatically impacted the way he was able to play the guitar. When he returned to the instrument, the E tuning that he was used to was too painful for him to play, so he had to lower it to C#. This new tuning produced a very dark and heavy sound-something new in rock at the time, giving birth to a new genre which would later influence *Seattle* grunge*.* Heavy metal we discover, through Harrison's geomusicology directly and *affectively* mirrors the embodied experience of Iommi. It is also is literally grounded in heavy machinery, therefore the term "heavy metal' for the genre is most appropriate.

Earwitnessing

The process that Harrison demonstrates, but does not identity is *Earwitnessing.* As Schaefer outlines, *this process is a key aspect to artists' connection to place through acoustic markers. Earwitnessing* is the process by which the musician relays sounds from direct experience.[421] In a simplistic definition, this is a process of taking the significant sounds of a geographic *place, soundmarks, signals,* and *keynotes* and reproducing them. In Jason James Hanley's dissertation[422] on the formation of the Industrial genre, he cites the example of Throbbing Gristle's production of their song

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[420] Leigh Michael Harrison. "Factory Music: How The Industrial Geography and Working-Class Environment of Post-War Birmingham Fostered The Birth of Heavy Metal." *Journal of Social History,* Vol. 44, Issue 1. (Fall 2010), 153.

[421] R. Murray, Schaefer. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Turning of the World*, (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1977), 8-9.

[422] Jason James Hanley "Industrial Music for Industrial People: The History and Development of an Underground Genre". Ph.D. Music Dissertation. (Florida State University 2007).

"Industrial Introduction" [423] through the testimony of Genesis P. Orridge.

> *"When we finished that second record, we went outside and we suddenly heard trains going past, and little workshops under the railway arches, and the lathes going, and electric saw, and we suddenly thought, 'We haven't actually created anything at all, we've just taken it in subconsciously and re-created."*[424]

Orridge describes their experience making music as a *re-creation* of their environment in Sheffield, England. While Hanley does not describe it as such, Orridge's detailed reflection measures into the practice of *earwitnessing* in R. Murray Schaefer's framework.

Hanley's main argument is that in its inception, "Industrial Music was a critical reflection of the economic status of the United Kingdom in the 1970s, not a celebration of the success of the Industrial Revolution or modernism-rather the opposite."[425] The presence of disharmony and *noise* being present daily factors, whether in the background or foreground; directly reflected the sonic lived-experiences of the artists who created Industrial Music.

Affect

The potency of *soundmarks, keynotes*, and *signals*; the trains, lathes, and saws that Orridge mentions is an unavoidable experience dominating a physical domain. Expression is created from encounter, and for the machinery previously mentioned, those are repetitive noises with high decibels. These types of noises become indelible through the physical and aural encounters creating a specialized understanding and

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[423] Throbbing Gristle, *The Second Annual Report*. Released November ℗ 1977 Industrial Records.

[424] Jason James Hanley. *Industrial Music for Industrial People: The History and Development of an Underground Genre*. Ph.D. Music Dissertation (Florida State University 2007), 31.

[425] Ibid., 11-12.

expression. As Kathleen Stewart describes this process of *affect*, “this is an embodied shock to the system in which a reaction is created and a new direction of movement and negotiation is formed…”[426] The new direction created from the shock within the circumstance of musical practice, ends up embedding the *affect* within the score of Throbbing Gristle's album; in fact imbuing the fuel of their practice with the sonics and tempo of the *affects* produced around them.

Affect is not only relegated to *soundmarks, signals*, and *keynotes* within the community, but the physical impact of the sound in addition to the sonic. This is what Steve Goodman would determine as the vibrational acoustics-seismic *affects* that are produced by noises. Drummer Bill Ward of Black Sabbath recounted that he would lay in bed as a child at night hearing the sound of stamp-forges. Ward, in an interview with Vh1 and BBC, stated; “You could hear the drop of the stamp-forges, and I’d be laying in bed at night, just kinda tapping on the headboard, putting the extra rhythm into the stamp.”[427] The unique heavy rhythm that was created percussively by Ward was a re-creation, in Orridge’s terminology, and a mirror effect of Russolo[428] and Attali’s[429] inescapable *affect* of *economies of noise*. Ward embodied the heavy stamp forge sound he heard and improvised that *noise* into his own rhythm. His *earwitnessing* of the sonic *geography* of Birmingham created the heavy rhythms that reproduced a (new)

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[426] Kathleen, Stewart. *Ordinary Affects*. (Durham; Duke University Press. Kindle Edition, 2007), 2.

[427] Leigh Michael Harrison. “Factory Music: How The Industrial Geography and Working-Class Environment of Post War Birmingham Fostered The Birth of Heavy Metal.” *Journal of Social History,* Vol. 44, Issue 1. (Fall 2010), 149.

[428] Luigi Russolo. “The Art of Noises”, trans. Barclay Brown. *Monographs in Musicology Series* No. 6. (New York; Pendragon Press, 1986). 23-25.

[429] Referenced in Jonathan Sterne. *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne, (New York; Routledge 2012), 31.

heavy metal sound, which now embodies the heavy metal genre.

To demonstrate an example of the powerful influence of the Seattle *soundscape* on *The Seattle Sound*, I highlight two songs "*Once "*and "*Porch"* from Pearl Jam's first album"Ten*"*[430]*,* that reflect the unique *soundscape* of Black Dog Forge and demonstrate the practice of *earwitnessing* creating music. In these two songs, there are elements present of the forging process, the melding of iron, and the sawing and shaping of wood. The volume of the instruments is elevated and echoed in varying degrees as is Eddie Vedder's voice in different intervals. The instruments are transformed into tools, both competing with the sounds around them in the smithy and outside from the surrounding *sonic geography.*

The Black Dog Forge & Galleria Potatohead, Belltown

"It was nice to walk in that room and smell raw materials, you smell paint, there's this whole feeling of creativity going on."-Eddie Vedder[431]

Both Pearl Jam and Soundgarden, connected by communal mentorship and practice chose the Black Dog Forge as their rehearsal *space* on Second Avenue in Belltown. Pearl Jam was working on their first album, "Ten" and Soundgarden was working on their fourth, "Badmotorfinger"[432]. The Black Dog Forge was a working forge with a rehearsal *space* called Galleria Potatohead in the basement for musicians. The Forge also had an artist's exhibit area so on any given day, blacksmiths were

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430 Pearl Jam, Ten, August 27, ℗ 1991, Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

431 Eddie Vedder in "Pearl Jam Twenty". Directed by Cameron Crowe. Tremolo Productions, Vinyl Films, et al., 2011.

432 Soundgarden, *Badmotorfinger*. September 24, 1991 ℗ A&M Records.

hammering and musicians and artists were working all in a very close environment. For the Black Dog Forge, this indicates multiple sounds competing against each other in a very small space. The exchange between guitar amplifiers and drums against power hammers, hydraulic presses, grinders, and propane forgers would have created a significant chorus with varying sonic conditions, resulting in the blending some of these sonics and vibrations and together producing a distinctive distortion to anyone working in close proximity or even passing by outside.

According to a CDC Publication evaluating the impact of continuous exposure and body vibration in forges, hammers, trim presses and grinders measured above 100 decibels with peak sound pressure levels during hammer strikes reaching 148 decibels.[433] Interestingly, the CDC and OSHA do not have exposure limits for whole body vibration, although the negative impacts to the spine were documented from studying hand-arm vibration syndrome. This study was focused on the impacts of forge work on individuals employees who performed the work, not employees working *near* these machines or on site. While informative in providing basic guidelines for employee health, the report did not address proximity to vibrational forces, which certainly should be considered. My experience on packed ground outside for forging observation allowed me to feel vibrations from nearby hammering on anvils and power hammers, therefore in a closed environment, with floors and walls, this vibratory noise must surely be magnified several fold.

In the Spring of 2019, I conducted a micro-ethnomusicology project on Blacksmith' practices where I interviewed an expert blacksmith and observed the Old

[433] Scott E. Brueck, Judith, Eisenberg, Edward Zechmann, William Murphy, Thais Morata, and Edward Krieg. "Evaluation of Impact and Continuous Noise Exposure, Hearing Loss, Heat Stress, and Whole Body Vibration at a Hammer Forge Company", NIOSHE HHE Report 2007-0075-3251 (May, 2016) , 13.

Town Blacksmith Shop and the Vista Forge in the greater San Diego area of California. I witnessed and recorded forging work being done by professional and amateur blacksmiths with both traditional and modern tools. I wanted to investigate the possible connection between the *soundmarks* and *keynotes* associated with a forge and the sounds produced on Pearl Jam's *Ten*[434]. There were several sonics and acoustic vibrations on the album that sounded different to me, not usual for a rock record and I wanted to examine any connections between the tools of the forge and the possible *earwitnessing* that created the songs on *Ten*, mirroring the experience of creating music in a forge.

The primary tools that I listened to were: hammers, anvils, chained anvils, sledge-hammers, Farrier's Rasps, electric drill presses and Dragon's Breath.[435] The anvils produced a shrill, stinging, metal sound when struck. They resonated around a C from what I could tell by ear, but they also echoed and bended slightly so the original key was not sustained evenly. The combined chorus of multiple anvils being struck by several blacksmiths at uneven, but close intervals, was extremely loud. This was all conducted in outdoor smithy environments that were constructed like barns; lots of open doors and spaces, high ceilings, and sparse rafters. Both forges didn't have floors but had packed dirt.

During my observation sessions where I recorded sound and video, my interlocutor brought to my attention that each Black Smith has their own rhythm in their

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[434] Pearl Jam. *Ten.* ℗ 1991. Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

[435] The Farrier's Rasp is like a giant metal file with ridges. About two feet in length they are used to finish edges of metal and file off particles. The Dragon's Breath is a burner with a hand-crank-operated ventilator that brings more air into the fire to stoke it. As you crank it a whirring noise is created that increases in volume that interrupts every other sound. This is only used in hot forges.

work. They had worked with some of these artists for so long that they could tell who was making what sound, by the rhythm that was produced. My recordings indicate an off-beat chorus of pounding hammers on anvils. Some with consistent patterns marking a steady 4/4, others obviously taking some time with their swing, slowing down to a 2/4. Altogether the results are beats that you cannot anticipate; even if the rhythm is steady, the volume couldn't suddenly get louder or softer. The interruption of the blast of the Dragon's Breath adding a droning roar. Modern forging is quite different from older techniques utilized in hot forges. My interlocutor described the modern forge with equipment ranging from power hammers, hydraulic presses, band saws and welders in addition to anvils. They also indicated the different sources of heat that would be used ranging from electric, to propane, and even coal. They specifically mentioned how much noise propane can make, which was a continuous sound.

I shared the Pearl Jam's song, "Once"[436] with my interlocutor to have them listen to it and interpret any sounds of smithy that might be present. Without sharing my projections, they heard sounds of a cold forge, hammer hitting cold metal and other sounds that would be prevalent in a modern forge, not a hot-forge. They also determined a grinder sound being produced by guitars and cymbals. Most interestingly they noted long gaps between "blows" which would be too slow in reality. Their conjecture was that it was emulating a black smith's attempt to "fix" an earlier problem in their work; in a sense struggling with a piece of metal trying to get it into form.

[436] Pearl Jam. *Ten.* ℗ 1991. Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Once

The first few seconds of the track are barely audible…you're unaware that there is a very soft drone being produced, until at 5 seconds you hear a tap that sounds ambient…a mistake. by 10 seconds a hit, and a whirr enter in uneven rhythms. at 12 seconds you hear a hammer drive down on cold iron where an undercurrent of guitar has quietly appeared and a blur of psychedelic distortion joins in. At 20 seconds Vedder's voice has entered but the words or phrases are inaudible-expressions, not formed ideas. He is off in the distance. The voice seems to be a distant echo. A slow forging bass becomes interspersed with the steady falling of the hammer which seems to be out of sync with the bass and the vocals-like another Black Smith is working. At 26 seconds a high pitch guitar starts buzzing as if it is reverberation or feedback. While clear in pitch, its sound is muffled, like it's coming through the wall. At 40 seconds the grinding lead guitar comes in, introducing a quickened tempo immediately followed by cymbals, the hammer, the voice, the bass, the guitar, and the new guitar take a few seconds to blend their sounds in more distortion before taking off into a furious buzz.

Vedder's angry voice enters dragging the "I" almost in an open AHHH sound, insinuating anguish "I [aaaaaaaaaaaaahh] admit it [break] what's to sayyyyy," "I'll [aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhl] re [space] live it" [break] without pain and his voice, while sustained in one pitch is staccato/or broken up much like in the spoken word tradition.
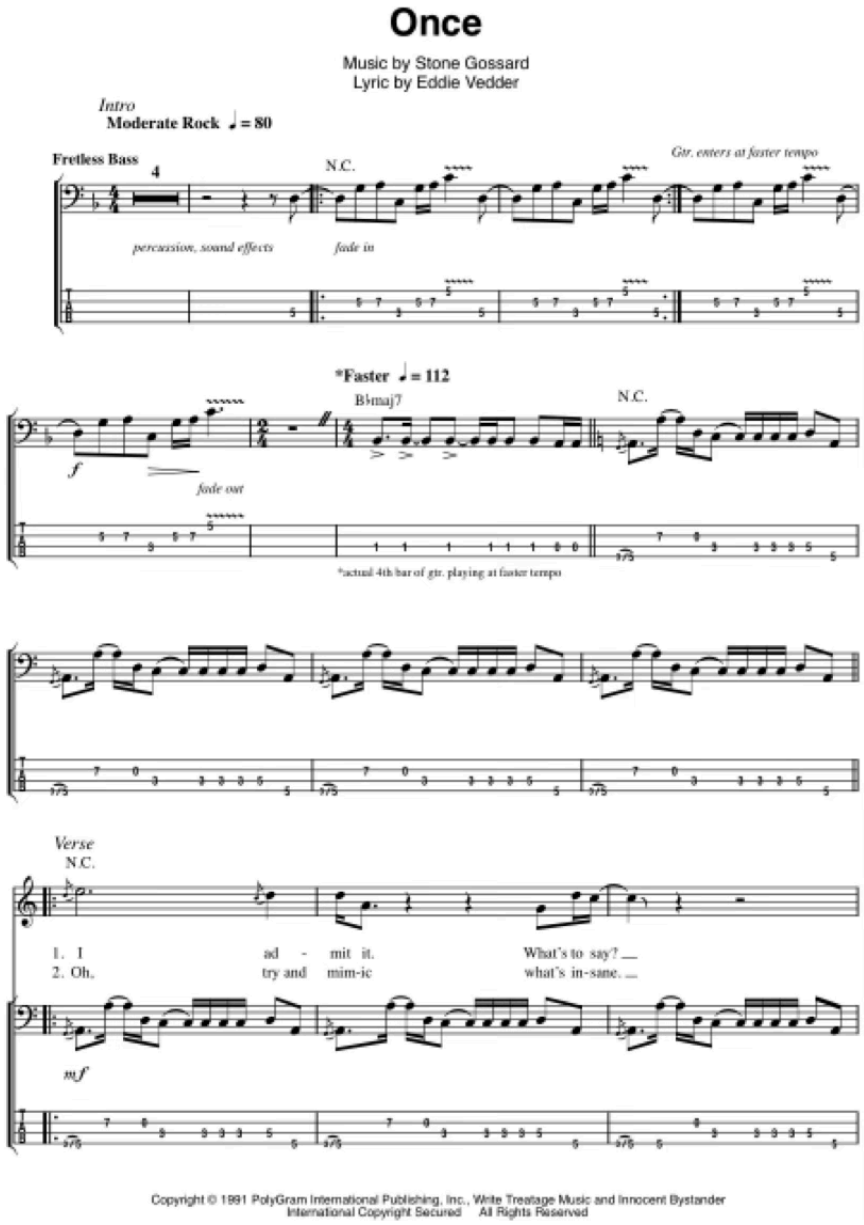


Figure 18. “Once” Sheet Music from *Ten*. ℗ 1991 Sony Music Entertainment, Inc. Music by Stone Gossard. Lyrics by Eddie Vedder. Sheet music courtesy of Hal Leonard © Publications and PRI Publications ©1991.

Porch

In contrast to "Once", "Porch", initiates an aggressive tempo that first is dominated by guitar. Then, at eight seconds in, a distorted sawing sound by another guitar is added-this is the buzz saw. The tempos of the guitars and vocals are racing each other in tandem, but the drums often go in and out of a backbeat and on-time rhythm, The second guitar sounds like it might be in the next room, a competing sound and another material project that is in process. The slowed-down tempo, reminiscent of psychedelic rock, gives us a strong melodic line of the guitars, while Eddie Vedder's voice becomes like a distant echo, without words, he's a bit subsumed…then re-emerges.

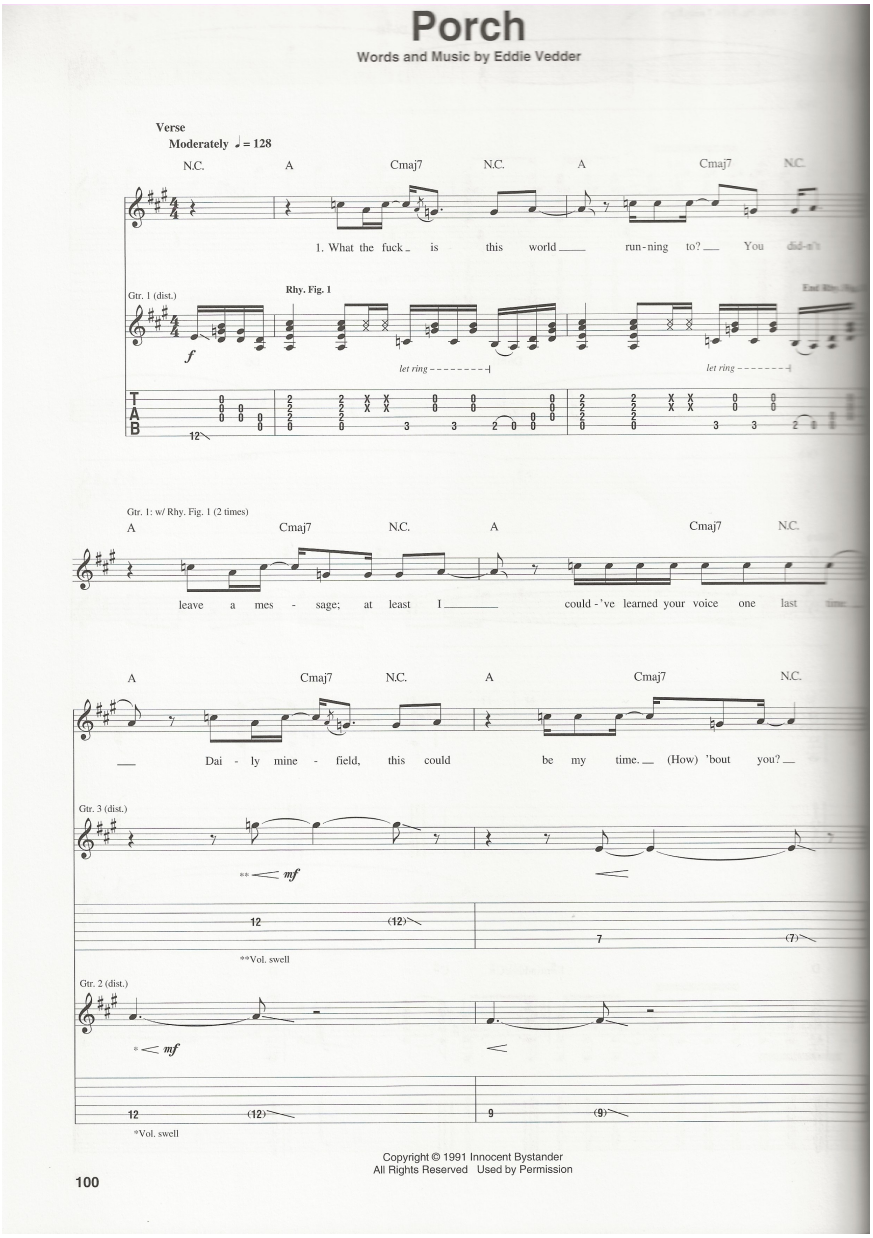


Figure 19. “Porch” Sheet Music from Ten. Ten. ℗ 1991 Sony Music Entertainment Inc. Music and Lyrics by Eddie Vedder. Sheet music courtesy of Hal Leonard © Publications Copyright © 1991 by Innocent Bystander.

Economies of Noise

"Noise" means the intensity, duration and character of sounds from any and all sources." Seattle Municipal code 25.08.220 (Ord. 106360 § 217, 1977.)

"More Noise, Please!"

"*I live on a street where there are many many cars and trucks and factories that pump and bag and grind all night and day. It is a miracle that I can write poetry or sleep or talk on the telephone or that my love will visit me here. There is so much noise. Every few minutes a jet comes in low or a prop job swings down like a kamikaze. There is an airport at the end of my street. The new age people say that you choose all these things-choose the cars and trucks and airplanes-me and all my neighbours [sik].*

by S.J. Bernstein[437] (December 14, 1950-October 22, 1991)

What Jesse Bernstein describes in this piece is the plethora of *economies of noise* present in Seattle at any given time of the day or night. There are no illusions or metaphors just straight to the point, brutally frank and cut-up, much like his friend William Burroughs' writing. The poem 'More Noise, Please!' is a tongue and cheek condemnation of the precarious position that acoustics have plagued. It condemns a conjunction of sounds and their dominance over simple life and is biting in its sarcasm. What Bernstein is describing is the dominance of sonic *affects* and implicates that there are several players to blame. The references are city traffic, manufacturing, and airplanes. Ironically these are the same main concerns of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan drafted in response to a review of the previous Growth Policies from 1977[438], and released September 30, 1991, except the plan instead of being concerned about noise,

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[437] Steven Jesse Bernstein, "More Noise, Please!" (Seattle; Left Bank Books, 1991).

[438] The 1977 Growth Policies adopted by the City Council were entitled, "Goals for Seattle 2000". After review in 1989, the State Growth Management Act of 1990 required a new comprehensive plan from Seattle.

is concentrated on improvements to the city that boost the economy. This comprehensive plan was released a little less than one month before Bernstein's suicide.

The city of Seattle is a benefactor of both the economy of the city and the larger King County; granting permissions, funding, and planning, for projects that are intended to expand the interests of Capital and diversify their portfolio by transmogrification of nature. So, without the corporate endeavors of the city, the *economies of noise* do not and cannot exist in *dynamic capitalistic operations.*[439] Their functionality and life span are co-dependent. The producers of *noise* in the name of expansion and improvement, are complicit in their own pursuit of economic income without incurring expense. Indeed the environment, both natural and urban are forced to endure the activities of this expansion; pile driving, grading, mining, and other endeavors to increase prosperity and attract the continuing interest of new capitalistic enterprises for increasing the ability of the geography to align with the interests of capital and its municipal caretakers.

Noise is a product of capitalism, an unavoidable and inescapable *affect* of urban improvement. As such *noise* is a framework in which to interrogate the expansiveness and pervasiveness of Capital on geography and on bodies. Defined by Steve Goodman, *Noise is a juncture between body and power, into and through social*

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[439] Referencing the argument of Graham Murdoch and Peter Golding that Karl Marx's image of economic relations under capitalism is a dynamic system which is in process as opposed to historical understandings of a static economic base. Graham Murdock and Peter Goldin, “Capitalism, Communication and Class Relations” in *Mass Communication and Society*, James Curran, Michael Gurevitch,, and Janet Woollacott, eds. (Beverly Hills; Sage Publishing , 1977), 16-17.

structure and eventually to the individual.[440] Power being understood in this context as the ability to deploy *noise* to take over silence, invade private and public spaces in the name of efforts such as urban renewal. Goodman delineates this circumstance as the *politics of noise* and the *politics of silence*[441] within acoustic ecology where commercial ventures are conducted through political means of manipulating the acoustic ecology of *place*. Just as in Jesse Bernstein's poem-his very daily routine of sleeping, writing, talking, etc. are all interrupted from occurring because of unguarded *noise*. The ability to function privately in one's own home as one wishes is prevented because of commercial, or public interest.

Noise, evolves with the engineering of the mechanisms that forcefully make the way for Capital to expand. New updates, models, and adjustments to mechanical structures and digital dynamics alter the specifics of *noise's affects*. As new updates are introduced, the old mechanisms are retired or repurposed, pointing to a linear evolution of the *noise* of tools. This can be demonstrated in the previous example of the *earwitnessing* associated with the Smithy's tools. The hot forge, using wood and coal as the main component in order to meld iron and steel, sounds different because the foundation is different and the tools used are not mechanical as by a machine, but instead their *noise* and vibration is *affected* by the humans stoking the fire, pounding the hammer, and the Hz of the anvil. The cold forge, utilizing not only human power but relying heavily on electronic/mechatronic controls, sounds different and has a different purpose in the 20th-century as opposed to the previous centuries. For Pearl Jam at the

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[440] Key, MacFarlane. “The “Noisy Sphere”: Sonic Geographies in the Era of Globalization”. (Master of Arts Thesis. University of Washington, Seattle, 2015), 24.

[441] Steve Goodman. *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear* (Cambridge; The MIT Press 2009). xvii.

Black Dog, there was a mix of these mechatronic conditions, influencing sonic vibrations in which *earwitnessing* could capture.

Jacques Attali has argued that music is a *mark of its time*; mirroring the dynamics of power in a Marxian sense as it is dominated by its temporal conditions that have historical dynamics of economy that reflect the ordering, or control of *noise*.[442] So, in order to define the *soundscape* of grunge the *noise* of Seattle itself must be mapped, marking the boundaries of silence and *noise.* Within that is the possibility of interrogating the intensity of *noise* as it is compounded within and upon communities of practice. If anything it is the *affect* of *noise* from Duff McKagen's description of grunge[443] that gives signposts on where to listen for influences on the genre formation. In this way, when we hear Pearl Jam's album *Ten*[444] and Soundgarden's *Badmotorfinger*[445] practiced in the same location, we are earwitnesses as well, to that time, *place*, and space.

The *affect* of *noise* previously described by Duff McKagen establishes vibrational acoustics within an identification of *place*. The musty garages of Seattle he lists as a *soundmark* of the city at large, which are also a particular socio-economic and geographic locators of the subculture's community and their *spaces*. Unoccupied buildings and undesignated areas are spaces of *earwitnessing* for McKagen, and other musicians who digested that sound and brought it into their own category of *place*. For Bernstein, it seems that *noise* invaded and demanded pieces of his life from him;

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[442] Jonathan Sterne. *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne, (New York; Routledge 2012), 31.

[443] Michael, Azerrad. “Guitar Grunge” Rolling Stone Magazine, April 18, 1991.

[444] Pearl Jam, *Ten,* August 27, ℗ 1991, Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

[445] Soundgarden, *Badmotorfinger.* September 24, 1991 ℗ A&M Records

pieces that he deemed to be inherent parts of everyday existence. For McKagen, his collective identity with 'rock and roll' is built into the association of *noise* and his reflection of how a city is saturated in *noise*. Both of these descriptions are what Jacques Attali and Steve Goodman draw as *affects* of *noise* that become channeled into music through economic conditions of an aural landscape.[446]

1987-1990 'unprecedented levels of construction'

In a letter dated June 20, 1986 from the Seattle Department of Engineering, it was announced that the city would be focusing on a massive construction initiative *affecting* downtown Seattle explicitly.

"*Dear Members of the Downtown Community:*
During the next four years, construction in downtown Seattle will reach unprecedented levels. Construction of Metro's transit tunnel, the Convention Center, private developments, numerous utility jobs, and routine street repairs will combine to make public Right-of-Way (R.O.W. a scarce and precious commodity."[447]

In the 132 pages of the letter, the concern for the *noise* impact on city occupants is severely lacking; insinuated to be a necessary result of creating a "safe, convenient, rapid, reliable, and efficient transportation to, from, and within downtown Seattle, that is economically viable…".[448] During 1987-1990 The Seattle Department of Transportation had several renovation projects going on both underground and on street level in the neighborhoods where the grunge subculture lived, practiced, and performed. The construction project at the Pioneer Square Station near the Central

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[446] See Jacques Attali and Steve Goodman. *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear* (Cambridge; The MIT Press 2009). xvii.

[447] Eugene V. Avery, Director of Engineering; Seattle Engineering Department of the Office for Planning. June 20 1986. pg 1. Retrieved from the Seattle Municipal Archives. seattle.gov.

[448] Eugene V. Avery, Director of Engineering; Seattle Engineering Department of the Office for Planning. June 20 1986. pg 74. Retrieved from the Seattle Municipal Archives. seattle.gov.

Tavern and The OK Hotel was in progress from 1988-1989. The Westlake Station project 528 yards from The Moore and a quarter of mile evenly from The Vogue and The Showbox was a massive undertaking. This involved building a shopping center along with the extensive renovations of the underground metro. Work was conducted underground and above ground involving demolition, regrading, and building on the site. The University Street Station work that was conducted during 1990 was 800ft from the Showbox, a quarter mile from the Vogue, and .6 of a mile from the Black Dog Forge where Soundgarden and Pearl Jam were creating their albums.

Below are a series of maps, demonstrating the proximity to places of practice and performance for grunge artists during the 1987-1990 construction projects conducted by the city of Seattle. By observing the dates of shows from *The Rocket*, grunge artists can be placed at all of these venues performing. Performing live, was a main practice strategy of the bands. They would start creating their songs and then end up making changes after the show. Through this method of practice, songs were heavily influenced through performance at local venues. Therefore if the venues were exposed to excessive construction *noise* with permission to work outside of normal hours of operation because of special circumstances, then grunge was being seismically and acoustically influenced by the type of construction projects and the very machinery used at those locations.

OK HOTEL & THE CENTRAL TAVERN & Pioneer Square Station Construction

The construction project at the Pioneer Square Station was only 1000ft from The Central. Jesse Bernstein, Alice in Chains and Mother Love Bone all performed at the Central during 1989-1990. Alice in Chain's first album Facelift was released on August 21, 1990 and Apple, Mother Love Bone's singular album had been released July 19 of that same year (after Wood's death).



Figure 20: Map detail of the OK Hotel and The Central Tavern's location to construction 1988-1989. Linnea Zeiner

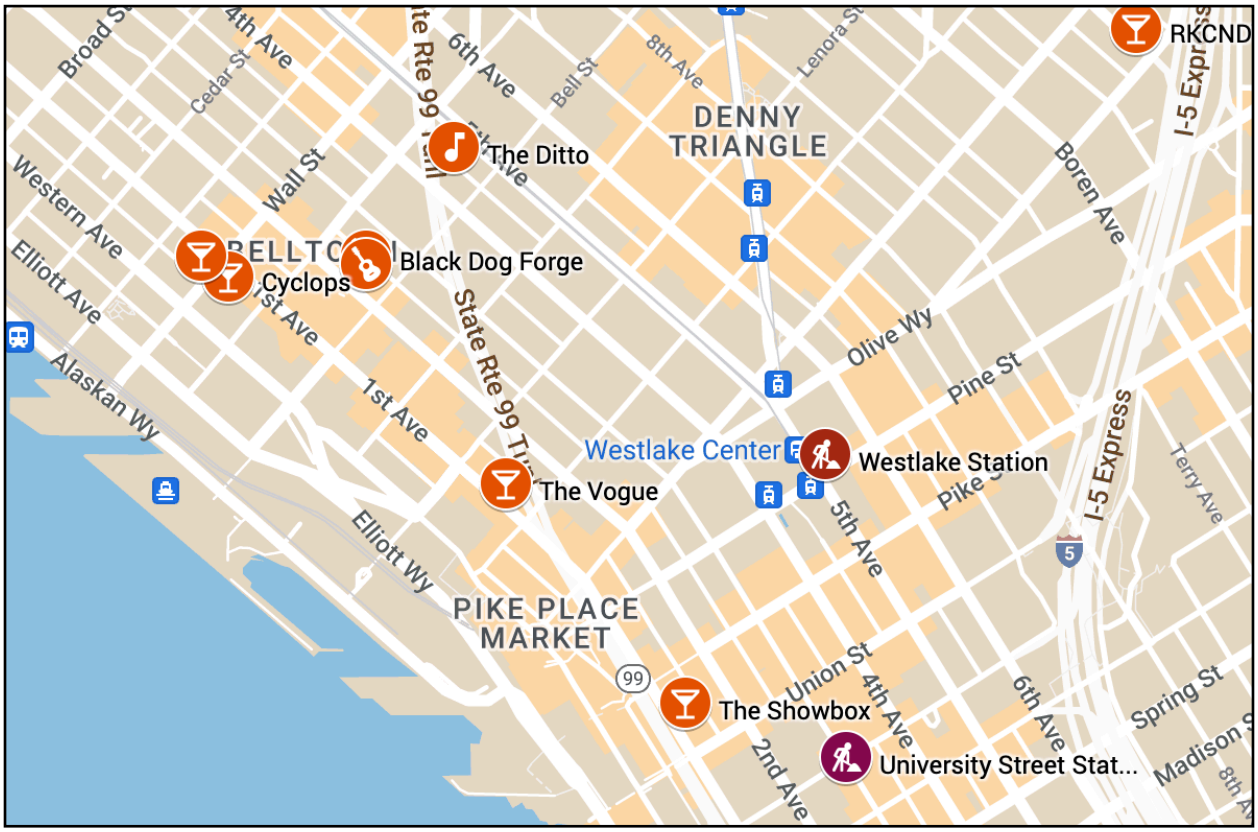


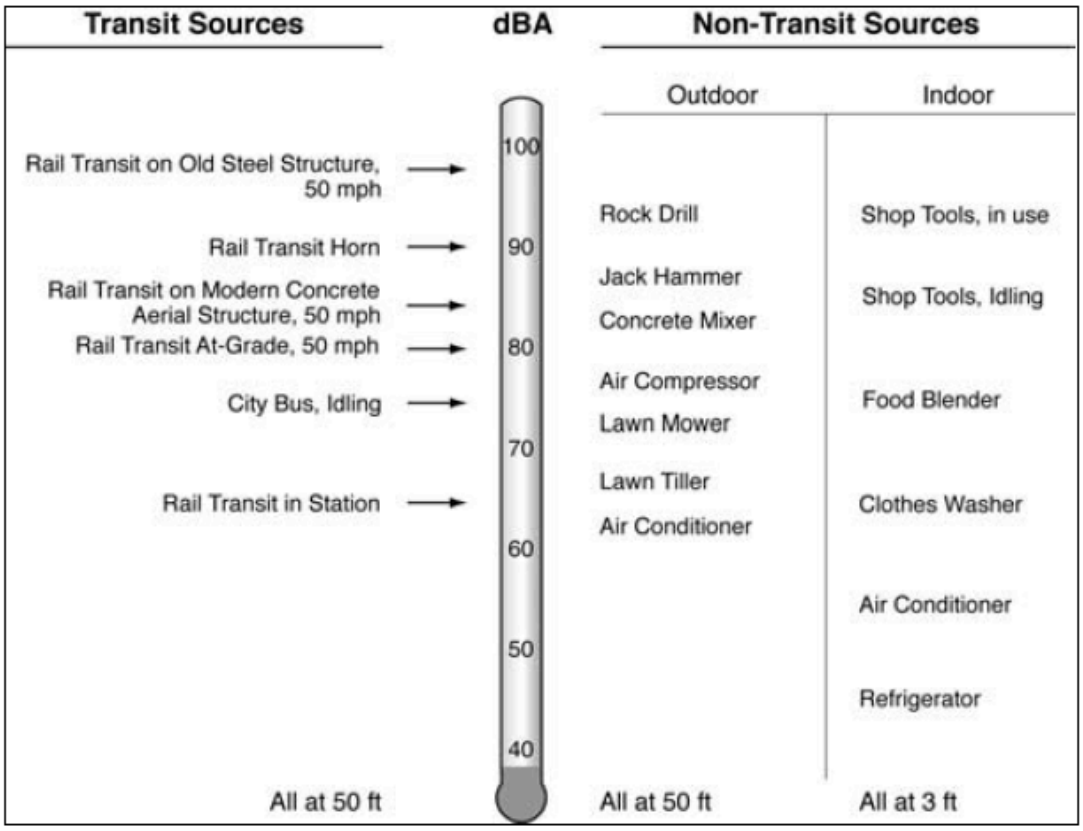
Figure 21. Mapped locations of the Cyclops Cafe, The Crocodile Cafe, The Ditto, The Vogue, the Showbox, Black Dog Forge, in relation to the Westlake Station Construction Project Location, 1988. Linnea Zeiner



Figure 22. Photo of the Westlake Center Demolition Site,
courtesy of The Seattle Archives

The following graph demonstrates the range of vibrational impact to humans and structures from transit routes in urban areas to blasting from construction projects. The graph, while generalized, demonstrates the acute vibrational forces that are at play in urban settings with traffic, transit, and from construction. The collective impact of such projects, rerouted traffic should be understood as oppositional conditions of *acoustic affects* that Goodman has described.

Figure 3 Typical A-weighted Sound Levels



Source: FTA 2006

Figure 23. Typical A-weighted Sound Levels, courtesy of the Federal Transportation Association, dated 2006

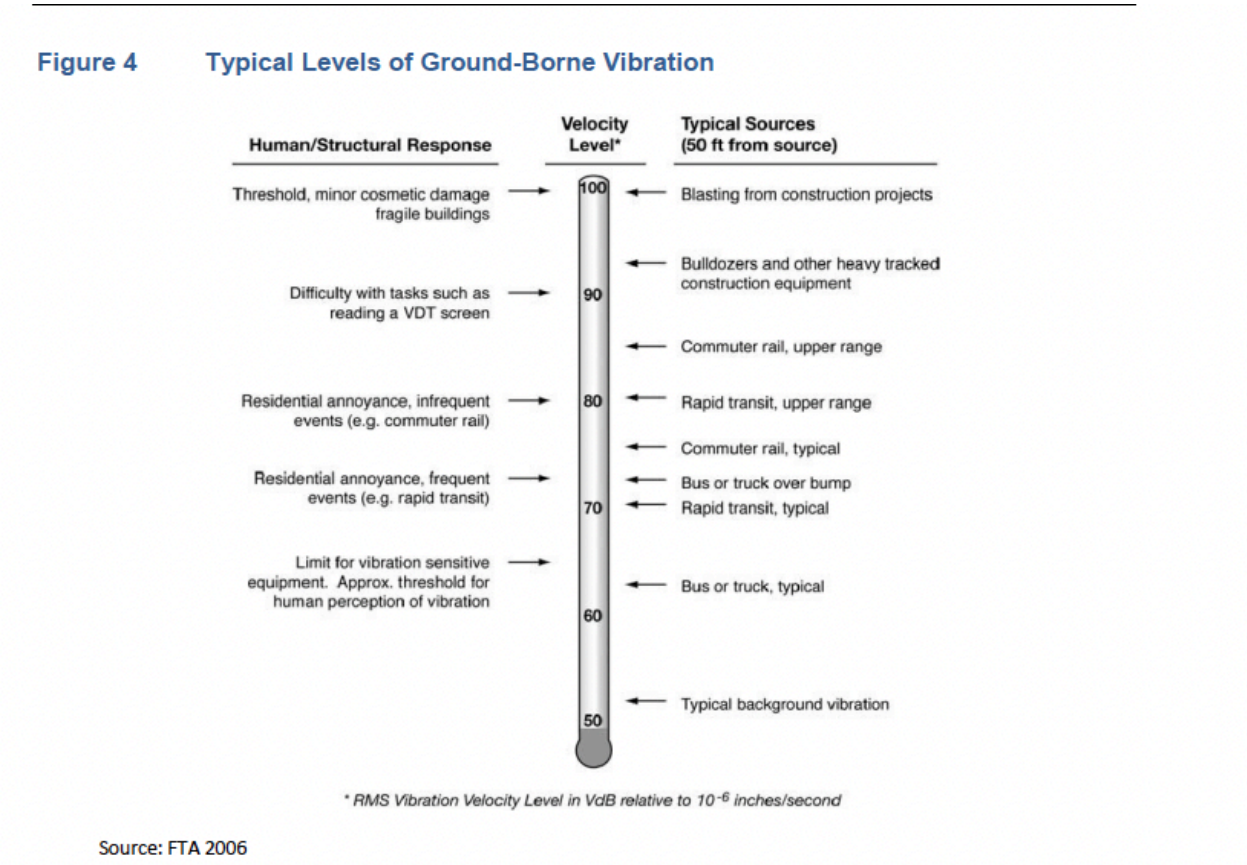


Figure 24. Ground-Bourne Vibrational Impact with Velocity Level courtesy of the Federal Transit Administration, 2006

Both of these figures from the FTA demonstrate data measured at 50ft, which is roughly .2 of a City Block. The locations of grunge mentioned previously are 1000ft away, which is about 3.8 blocks, almost 4 city blocks away from the noise sources. The ground-borne velocity and dBA levels are concentrated in close proximity to sources in their measurements in these particular examples from the Seattle construction going on at the time. In consideration of the seemingly short distance of data at 50ft compared to 1000ft, this is noted as significant as people going to and from these spaces would pass by in closer proximity to this massive construction project.

Drawing from these measurements provided by the FTA and reviewing the graded and uneven surfaces of Seattle, it can be concluded that vibrational acoustics were present and according to the municipal code,[449] free to conduct construction. The audial impact within range on a consistent basis presents an interesting case to consider the possibility of Temporary Threshold Shifts (TTS) in hearing. Amplify this possibility with considerable rock music noise from a club from musicians who not only have been exposed to vibrational impacts outside, but are possibly *affected* into amplifying their music in volume. Schaefer notes that after being subjected to a very noisy experience, all sounds afterward seem fainter than usual (referring to Boiler-Maker disease)."[450] Envision a compounded area of noise *affecting* the earwitnessing of musicians in the area and the possibility for *affected* volume, but also stronger rhythms to drown out the rhythms of pile drivers.

Emily Thompson would argue historically beginning in the early 20th-century that musicians composed a more radical language in reaction to the evolving noise in the city[451] ; a dialectic of the metropolis' expansion that infused inspiration to take different directions with the new noise now present. The measurements in Figure 24 display vibrations on the human body in RMS-which is the average of the squared

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[449] 25.08.425 Sounds created by construction and maintenance equipment; Section A:1 Within Lowrise, Midrise, Highrise, Residential-Commercial, and Neighborhood Commercial zones, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays and between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. on weekends and legal holidays, except that for parking lot maintenance or if the equipment is being used for a public project, then between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. on weekdays and between the hours of 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. on weekends and legal holidays.

[450] R. Murray Schaefer. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, (Rochester; Destiny Books, 1977), 183-184.

[451] Thompson argues this point utilizing the work of several studies of music and urban life including David Harold Cox and Michael Naslas, "The Metropolis in Music", in Metropolis 1890-1940. Anthony Sutcliffe, ed. (London; Mansell, 1984), 184. in Emily Thompson. *Sound, Modernity, and History; Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America 1900-1933*. (Cambridge; The MIT Press, 2002), 134.

amplitude of the *signal* is specifically used to describe the effect of vibration on the body[452]. When we examine that the Moore Theater was 528 yards away from the Westlake Station project it is not hard to imagine vibrational acoustics not only impacting the structure of the building, but *affecting* the performers inside.

It is important to note that the FTA did not publish a Noise and Vibrational Impact Report or any corresponding Guidelines until 1995; years after these projects in Seattle were completed and after the community of practice had already been impacted. Because of the lack of data, this project relies on the expressions of individuals and groups relaying their experience with the noise levels in Seattle. Jesse Bernstein's poem from October 1991, McKagen's interview with RollingStone the same year in August, pinpoint a distinct identification of *place* and its noise. The report referenced above in the two graphs also stated in 2006 that research into vibrational acoustic impact on humans has been extremely limited. [453] While the report specifically is focused on transit vibrational impacts, it helps define how ground-borne vibration and ground-borne noise can be felt and experienced at higher levels due to geological conditions as well as how buildings (the Receiving buildings of the noise) can potentially amplify the human experience of the noise produced.[454]

Of the four physical parameters that the FTA names as influencers of ground-borne vibration and noise, geological makeup stands out as an unique conduit in terms

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[452] Ten times the common logarithm of the ratio of the square of the amplitude of the RMS vibration velocity to the square of the amplitude of the reference RMS vibration velocity. The reference velocity in the United States is one micro-inch per second. Also written as VdB as defined by Carl E. Hanson, David A. Towers, and Lance D. Meister. *The Department of Transportation Transit Noise and Vibration Assessment* (May 2006), 235.

[453] Carl E. Hanson, David A. Towers, and Lance D. Meister, authors. Section 7.2.2 of "Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment", The Federal Transit Administration, May 2006.

[454] Ibid., See Section 7.4.

of Seattle's situation of mixed terrain that has been subject to unstable conditions for construction projects of many different types. The FTA report states, "Soil and subsurface condition are known to have a strong influence on the levels of ground-borne vibration…factors such as layering of the soil and depth to water table can have significant effect on the propagation of ground-borne vibration."[455]

Noise as part of the modern world as defined by R. Murray Schaefer has four components: Unwanted sound, unmusical sound, any loud sound, and disturbance in any signaling system.[456] It can be easily assessed by reviewing the proximity of grunge artists to the extensive construction projects that were creating acoustic and vibrational *affects* that *earwitnessing t*hese events would've been unavoidable. Noise has no boundaries. It cannot be contained by a fence or restrained to a particular space-in fact noise can sonically rebound from any barriers attempting to silence it. "Noise" produced by a rock venue (typically 100-120 dBs) would have been in competition with the noise produced outside of the clubs to be heard, and also felt through the amplifiers.

"Noise Ordinance meets loud protest from RCP" [457]

The Seattle Noise Ordinance of 1977 had prohibited 'public nuisance noise' defined as any unreasonable sound which either annoys, injures, interferes with or endangers the comfort, repose, health or safety of an entire community or

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[455] Carl E. Hanson, David A. Towers, and Lance D. Meister, authors. Section 7.2.2 of "Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment", The Federal Transit Administration, May 2006.. See Section 7.4

[456] Schaefer, R. Murray. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Turning of the World*, (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1977), 182.

[457] Hatch, Walter. "Noise Ordinance Meets Loud Protest from RCP", the Seattle Sun. May 21, 1980.

neighborhood, although the extent of damage may be unequal. Ord. 106360 § 223, 1977.

Schaefer elaborates that the designation of 'unwanted sound' (noise) is subjective and indicates disturbance on a more collective scale when considering the public.[458] This is evident in the wording of the Seattle Noise Ordinance. In the legislation, there is a collective definition of noise that in turn allows subjectivity within the expanse of commerce to be turned against noise that would interfere with the profitability of the city. An example of Seattle's subjectivity comes from 1980 when the members of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) protested against the Noise Ordinance as it "directly aims to smother free speech".[459] The RCP would frequently protest at First and Pike in the Pike Place Market using Bull Horns. Their protest against the Ordinance and citations from the city of Seattle was met with an economic measure of response from the Public Relations Director Virginia Felton of the Pike Place Preservation Society, "No one wants to get rid of' the RCP." However, '"their [ ] noise creates tension [for] [sik] the kind of customers we're trying to attract."[460]

While The Seattle Noise Ordinance of 1977 prohibited "Public nuisance noise", defined as variances are allowed in certain cases, including construction projects. As Section § 25.08.655 reads,

"*The Administrator may grant a major public project construction variance to provide relief from the exterior sound level limits established by this Chapter 25.08 during the construction periods of major public projects. A major public project construction variance shall provide relief from the exterior sound level limits during the*

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458 Hatch, Walter. "Noise Ordinance Meets Loud Protest from RCP", the Seattle Sun. May 21, 1980.

459 Ibid.

460 Ibid.

construction or reconstruction of a major public project..."[461]*Interestingly, the established noise levels for public health and safety may be altered in order for the "project to be economically reasonable"*[462]

The Seattle Noise Ordinance clearly designates economic benefit as a worthy *affect* of creating noise.

"*building airplanes all the time*"

The Seattle Noise Ordinance (SNO) of 1977 established a glaring disparity in the privileging of the noise of commerce over the health and safety of individuals. “Secs 25.08.530 and 545 of the Seattle Noise Ordinance, *exempted the sounds of aircraft flight at all times, and their testing and maintenance during daytime hours.*[463] In addition to aircraft, the fishing, logging, and Terraforming industries were included in the ordinance, making sirens, fog horns, and the seismic vibrations from Tunnel Boring Machines part of the overarching sonic landscape that produced constant, yet uneven vibrational frequencies.[464]

The growth of the commercial aviation industry was a priority for Seattle and for Boeing. The published priorities were to have local job growth and bring more visitors to the area which in turn would benefit those citizens working in the industry. The Washington State Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division; Federal Aviation Administration made their case in 1990, utilizing data from 1987, that listed total civilian

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[461] § 25.08.655 Major Public Project Construction Variance. (Ord. 124843, § 82, 2015; Ord. 122923, § 43, 2009)

[462] Ordinance. § 25.08.655 A.2.

[463] Key, MacFarlane. “The “Noisy Sphere”: Sonic Geographies in the Era of Globalization”. (Master of Arts Thesis. University of Washington, Seattle, 2015), 76.

[464] Tera, Hatfield and Jenny Kempson and Natalie Ross, *Seattleness: A Cultural Atlas (*Seattle;Sasquatch Books 2018), 18.

income as $9 million dollars, with "air carrier visitors reaching over 1.5 million directly relating to local sales of $30 million.[465] This report was generated by Majorie Hanley & Associates (from Reid Middleton, Civil & Structural Engineering & Surveying). This private firm had acquired contracts with the city of Seattle as well the U.S. Post Office since the late 1970s. Its relationship with the city, the Department of General Administration, would become what is today the Washington Department of Enterprise Services. This is the same municipal department that oversees construction and public works projects.

Sea-Tac during the timeframe of grunge operated with two runways with thousands of flights per day. *Noise* from the departing and arriving planes had been at issue for sometime, prompting Sea-Tac and the Port Authority to undertake efforts to mitigate the *noise* produced near the airport. Their initial plan began with land acquisition around the airport and sound proofing existing residential structures. In 1985 this included a Noise Abatement Program in addition to more parcels of land being acquired.[466] Over the years, this tactic was unsuccessful in mitigating noise complaints. Now, the Port of Seattle has monitoring stations located throughout the city to measure noise from airplanes. The graph below shows several of these locations marked, surrounding the neighborhoods of West Queen Anne in Southeast Magnolia and to the East of the International District between Leschi and Judkins Park.

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[465] "Economic Benefits of Civil Aviation in Washington"-WSDOT Library Digital Collections.

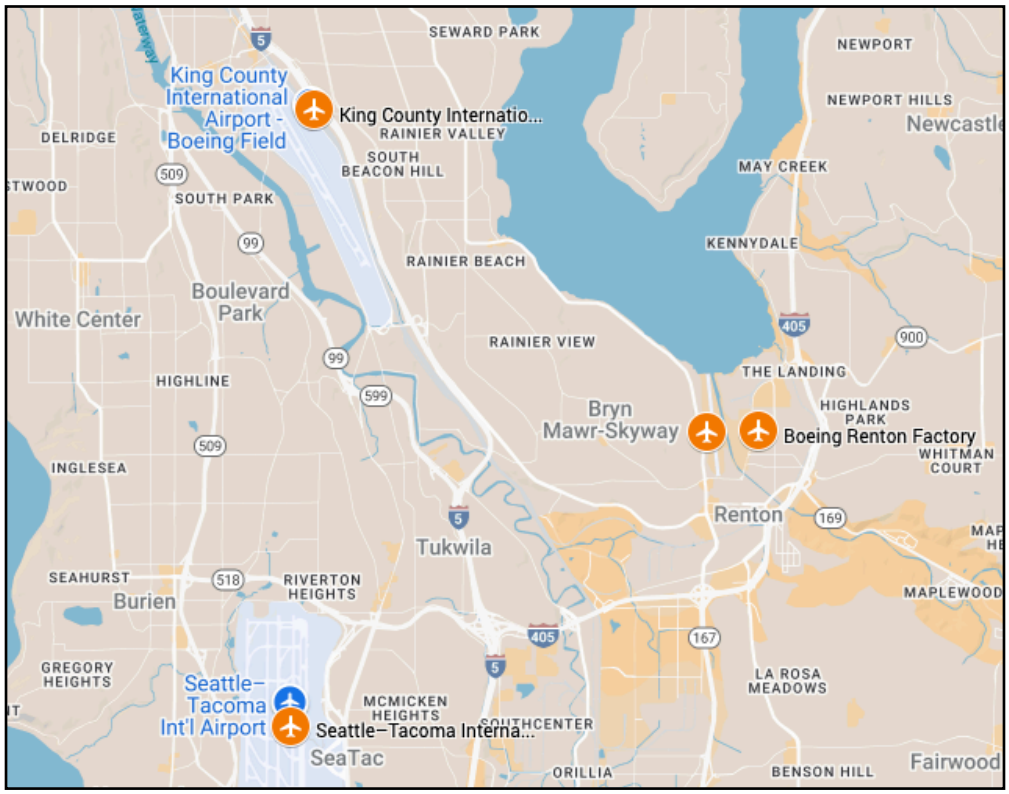
[466] "Graphical Method for Airport Noise Impact Analysis" Maresi Berry S.B. Aeronautics and Astronautics MIT, 1992. Master of Science in Aeronautics and Astronautics and Master of Science in Technology and Policy, 1998), 27.



Figure 25. Map of grunge venues, sound monitoring stations, and specific areas of noise with Map Key. Linnea Zeiner 2025

What this map attempts to demonstrate is the concentration of noisy locations surrounding the venues of practice and performance for grunge artists in the Seattle area. In blue are ten Coast Guard facilities, one Naval Air Station, Two Air-force Bases, as well as ports, lochs, and bridges. In red are twenty-one venues, including the HUB (in blue) where Nirvana and others have performed. Added to this map are the new SeaTac monitoring stations within Seattle's city limits which were located specifically to measure noise in areas that historically have had high noise complaints, but also that are near schools.

The next figure includes SEATAC International Airport, King County International Airport, and the Renton Municipal Airport. All of these locations had historically been used by Boeing for testing. Boeing production included commercial and military contracts at their Everett Facility roughly twenty-five miles north of Seattle and the Renton Factory. Their Advanced Developmental Composites Facility located on East Marginal Way had specifically worked on parts for the B-2 Stealth bomber in the early 1990s. The Everett facility produced the 747s (since 1967) and later the 767, 777, and 787. Building components became a bread and butter operation for Boeing in the 1980s. The 757-200 (1982), 737-300 (1984), and the 747-400 (1988) represented a new vector for the company, attempting to optimize production on certain components and utilizing Rolls-Royce turbine engines in their 757-200 and 300 classes, instead of building them onsite. Engines like the RB.211 that would be put into the 757 could produce 37,000-40,1000 pound thrusts.



King County International Airport-Boeing Field
7277 Perimeter Rd S, Seattle, WA 98108
Operations 24 hours
The Boeing Company-Primary Tenant
Manufacturing, Engineering, and Product Development
7 Miles North of SeaTAC/Six miles from Pike Place Market in Downtown Seattle/ 7 Miles Northwest of Renton Municipal Airport.

Renton Municipal Airport -
The Boeing Company Renton Production Facility
243 W Perimeter Rd, Renton, WA 98057
Operations 24 hours (The Boeing Company Only)
8.5 Miles Northeast of SeaTac

SeaTAC
17801 International Blvd, SeaTac, WA 98158
Operations 24 hours
Approximately 13 miles from Downtown Seattle.
6 miles Southwest of Renton.

Figure 26. Seattle's Three Main Airports. Linnea Zeiner 2025

The Seattle Noise Ordinances designated that testing and maintenance for any aircraft or component is required to be performed at an airport designated as such by the Federal Aviation Administration.[467] After maintenance procedures, aircraft engines were required to conduct run-ups, in which the engine is brought up to full speed[468] Major Airports in King County.

1990 marked new legislation for the flight paths of SEATAC. The Federal Aviation Administration changed the flight paths, making arriving and departing flights fly lower over densely populated areas of Seattle. That same year, the Federal Airport Noise & Capacity Act of 1990 prohibited airports from imposing restrictions on flight operations at federally-funded public facilities. This essentially indemnified any and all vibrational acoustics from the testing, maintenance, and operations of aircraft from being silenced. Considering the uneven terrain of Seattle with variated high points throughout the city, coupled with airspace congestion from not only SEATAC, but multiple Coast Guard Installations, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island as well as McChord and Fairchild Air Force Base. The *noise* from aircraft above would feel compounded from the ground-borne vibration and acoustic pressure from below within the small boundaries of Seattle proper.

This boundary map from the Seattle Municipal Code Title 23 Land Use Chapter 23.64[469] of the Airport Height Overlay District is perhaps the most helpful in visualizing

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[467] Ord. 122923, § 32, 2009; Ord. 108498 § 2, 1979; Ord. 106360 § 604, 1977.)

[468] "Maintenance procedures dictated that these were only to be conducted in 2 minute intervals with jet blasts pointed at the runway, not at adjacent communities." These requirements are monitored by the Port of Seattle and SeaTAC.

[469] Seattle Municipal Code Title 23 Land Use Chapter 23.64

the different vectors and actions that are involved in aerospace operations. Reviewing Inner and Outer Approach Areas, Turning Areas, Conical Areas, and Transitional Areas map usage of surfaces that incur vibrational acoustics from airplane engines outlines a framework of inquiry into condensed spaces that continually experience specific types of airplane noise. This allows us to ask questions of frequency, decibel reading, and power (Pascals) associated with the noise of this continually expanding economy.

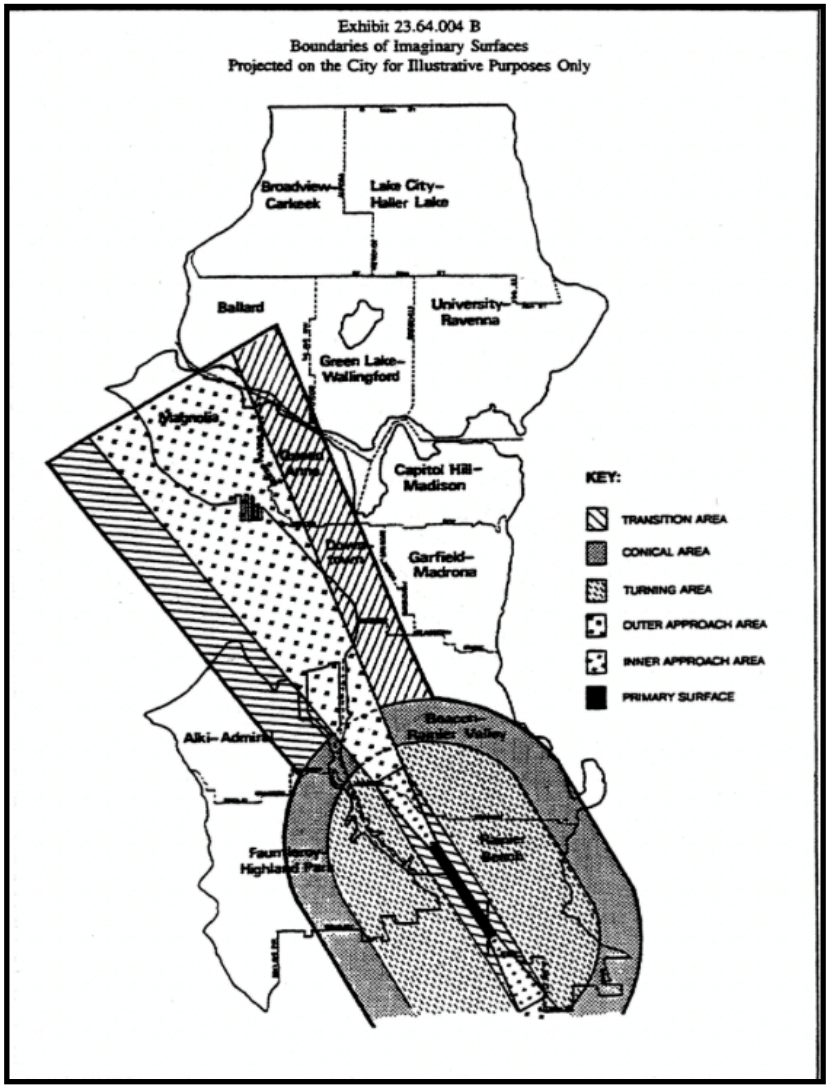


Figure 27. Boundary map from the Seattle Municipal Code Title 23 Land Use Chapter 23.64 of the Airport Height Overlay District

Maresi Berry's extensive thesis explored community perception of aircraft noise, measuring the effects through noise complaints while also investigating the actual noise produced by aircraft.[470] Her noise metrics found that sound levels greater than 60 DNL produced more complaints. She also concluded that "aircraft noise perception depends on factor [sic] such as weather, background noise, time of day and location of the listener.[471] Berry's conclusions draw noise perception for a city like Seattle to be extremely sensitive. Factoring in not only commercial flights, but turbine engine testing and run-ups, background noise from construction projects as well as *keynotes*, *soundmarks*, and *signals* with 24 hour access to make noise and weather all in a very densely populated and relatively small urban area. She notes the *attenuation to noise is dependent on the structure* from which the listener is experiencing sound; since older structures are less sound proof or perhaps even have loose windows and doors, the sensitivity to noise is elevated.[472] Musty garages provided less insulation from sound, and in fact, probably echoed it.

fog, clouds, and rain

The *affect* of fog for pilots, obviously impacts the direction of flight paths and sometimes prevents aircraft from flying on IFR. The Sea-Tac Noise Exposure Update published in 1982, paints a close correlation between "weather and noise" with "weather conditions *affect* the noise levels generated by airport operations in three

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[470] "Graphical Method for Airport Noise Impact Analysis" Maresi Berry S.B. Aeronautics and Astronautics MIT, 1992. Master of Science in Aeronautics and Astronautics and Master of Science in Technology and Policy, 1998), 52.

[471] Ibid., 50.

[472] Ibid., 50.

major areas: (1) the operating strategy of the airfield and airspace; (2) the performance of the aircraft; and (3) sound propagation."[473] "Sound propagation (i.e. the movement of sound waves) through the air is altered by weather conditions...as low frequency (pitch) sound is not strongly attenuated and carries a long distance."[474] Weather conditions are obviously impacted by changes in temperature, wind gusts, and storms. Seattle, while not experiencing extreme shifts in temperature as a moderate climate is impacted by fog and cloud cover. The Green River Valley to the East of Sea-Tac produces early morning fog as well as ground fog in the fall months decreases visibility[475] as it moves west.

For *earwitnessing*, fog is not absent, rather as Geographer Craig Martin writes, "fog forces a phenomenological engagement with embodied immersion: one's body enveloped and entwined with space."[476] He goes further to argue that, "...the air is given a physical presence, 'entangling us with space in a determinedly material sense', and that whilst fog challenges distanced perception, it intensifies the immersive qualities of the air."[477] It is possible to view this embodied feeling of immersion located in and within sound. As Allan concludes, the relationship between sound and fog depends upon the contexts of culture, *place*, and time...further arguing...that both sensory and social and cultural representations should be explored when considering

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[473] The SeaTac Noise Exposure Update (June 24 1982), 48. Resolution No. 2943 as Amended. https://www.portseattle.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/Resolution 2943.pdf

[474] The SeaTac Noise Exposure Update (June 24 1982), 48. Resolution No. 2943 as Amended. https://www.portseattle.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/Resolution 2943.pdf 49.

[475] Ibid, 47.

[476] Jennifer Lucy, Allan. "Foggy notion: Sound and weather, and the intermingled senses", *SoundEffects*. Vol. 8. No.1. (2019); 59.

[477] Ibid., 59.

the way sound is perceived and understood in fog."[478]

In a *place* such as Seattle where fog indeterminately resides alongs with clouds and scattered rain, meteorology clearly has an impact on the directionality of flight paths due to visibility, but also *affects* the perceptions of *noise* on residents; forming a relation to such a *place* includes incorporating the vibrational acoustics caused by the economies of noise and exaggerated through meteorological interpretation.



Figure 28. Soundgarden Album Cover and CFM58-78 Turbine Engine

On the left is Soundgarden's fourth studio album, *Badmotorfinger* [479], released on October 8, 1991. The famous artwork on the album cover was created by Mark Dancy of *Big Chief*. Both bands had been represented by *Sub Pop* and met in 1988 playing a gig together. A year later Big Chief and Soundgarden met up again and they asked Dancy to design the cover for their new album. Dancy has stated inspired by movement and appreciated the work of Jack Kirby who had done Marvel Comics and MAD Magazine illustrations. To hear him describe this piece for "Badmotorfinger" he will say that he was inspired by an 'electrical design aesthetic' and the individual blade-like shapes are 'bent fingers flipping everybody off'. There are twelve blades,

[478] Jennifer Lucy, Allan. “Foggy notion: Sound and weather, and the intermingled senses”, *SoundEffects*. Vol. 8. No.1. (2019); 64.

[479] Soundgarden. *Badmotorfinger*. ℗ 1991. A&M Records.

representing the twelve songs on the album.[480] The artwork evolved into the bands logo, but Dancy was only compensated for the album art.

On the right is the CFM56 turbine engine. In the mid-1980s Boeing was producing a series of 737's using this new engine with a *high-bypass ratio*[481]. The 737 was produced in the Renton location, thirteen miles southeast of Seattle, adjacent the Renton Municipal Airport. The CFM56-7B series has thrust ratings of 19,500 lbs. and 27,300 lbs.[482] Testing for turbine engines after installation into an aircraft is always standard procedure. Boeing does not disclose specific details about its testing time frames, what time of day these tests are conducted at, or how many run-ups or dry-runs they do.[483]

There is motion, blurred-white behind the turbine on Soundgarden's album[484], inducing a feeling of quick rotation. The artist has stated that the meaning of his piece that ended up on Soundgarden's album cover was a perfectly organized assembly of middle fingers.[485] However, if they are fingers, they have been transmogrified into a machine, or parts of one. The Helical Gear has angled teeth that look similar to this

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[480] Mark Dancey interviewed for *SPIN* Magazine. "Tomorrow Begat Tomorrow: An Oral History of Soundgarden's Badmotorfinger. Corbin Reiff, October 8, 2021. https://www.spin.com/2021/10/soundgarden-badmotorfinger-oral-history-30th-anniversary/.

[481] High-bypass ratios are more efficient and allow less air to be sucked through the chamber.During flight, the majority of air will bypass around, making it more efficient for civilian aircraft. For References see Skybrary, Monroeaerospace: https://monroeaerospace.com/blog/low-vs-high-bypass-turbofan-engines-whats-the-difference/?srsltid=AfmBOorTIae14Sfj41ZA6rIpjt96Y4duToftYAbw8SX19wyxu47tXP8I

[482] CFM56-6B Owners & Operator's Guide.

[483] Dry-runs refer to testing conducted without fuel.

[484] Soundgarden, *Badmotorfinger.* September 24, 1991 ℗ A&M Records. Album Art designed by Mark Dancy.

[485] Mark Dancy stated, "…The idea is…it's a flip off […] there are twelve of them for the twelve songs on the album. It is a jagged, electrical design". Interview with Mark Dancy. "Performance Anxiety". 2018. Podcast. Youtube.

drawing, which has nothing to do with aerospace, however its blades outnumber Soundgarden's by double the amount. While the image of machinery and gears are present occasionally in other bands outside of Seattle, such as the Gear Daddies from Minnesota below in this ad from *The Rocket* December 1990, Soundgarden's art bears an unmistakable resemblance to the CFM56 (and other jet turbines engines). We can view the logo as a sign of defiance against sonic and vibrational[486] forces in Seattle , caused by Boeing as well as the aerospace industry in general. With four airports encasing Seattle from the North, South, and Southeast with permissions to conduct testing anytime of day, the pervasive acoustic *noise* from airplanes has acoustic dominance for Soundgarden.

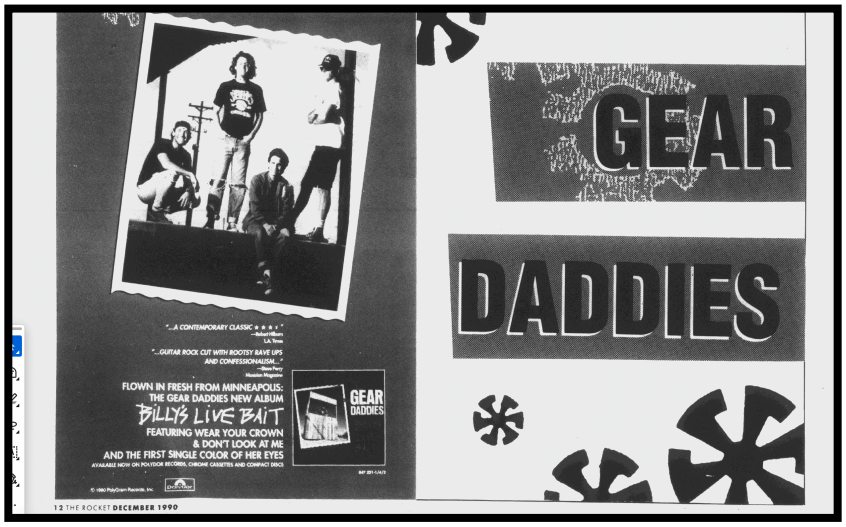


Figure 29. Ad for the band the Gear Daddies in The Rocket, December 1990

Soundgarden's argument is against the power of industry and demonstrates resistance down to the bone. The songs invoke containment and restriction, calling out the entrapment of industry. Rusty Cage, Slaves & Bulldozers, Face Pollution, Searching

[486] The work of M.S. Howe is focused on the sonic and vibrational effects produced by turbine engines of airplanes. One article that may be extremely useful is "ON THE SCATTERING OF SOUND BY A RECTILINEAR VORTEX", *Journal of Sound and Vibration* (1999) 227(5), 1003}1017.

with My Good Eye Closed, Mind Riot, and New Damage[487] all bring in the elements of sonic warfare; damage, poison, rape, ashes, sky, bruise, death, pollution, pain, slave, bleeding, shitting, and burnings; all terms used with prominence. The tuning is dropped to E, so its sounds much darker and heavier than *Screaming Life* (1990).[488] Thayil in an interview with Guitar World in 2021[489] commented that their process for writing and creating changed with the album *Badmotorfinger*. The video for “Rusty Cage”[490], while a hit on MTV, is emblematic of the themes of the album. Filmed in an old refinery and surrounded by chains, smelting containers encased in the dark it seems like they are in hell.

The eighth song on *Badmotorfinger* is "Room A Thousand Years Wide”[491]. It begins with a scream from Cornell, immediately followed by a sustained drone. This is present in the recorded version on the album, but improvised vocally at times by Cornell when it was a live performance, or not utilized at all. The D runs sharp and fades back again as it is sustained. It is not a musical sound at all-it is separate from the rest of the guitar parts and runs contrary to the drums. Its inflection is graded and unyielding, as a piece of machinery would do since it has the power to keep going and going without human interference. The first couple of times you may not hear this sound-it is background noise. But once you do hear it, it will not go away and it takes

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[487] All songs on Soundgarden, *Badmotorfinger.* September 24, 1991 ℗ A&M Records.

[488] Soundgarden, *Screaming Life*, ℗ 1990 Sub Pop.

[489] Joe Bosso. “Kim Thayil on 30 Years of Soundgarden’s Badmotorfinger: ‘Right before we released the album, you could feel things were ready to explode.’” December 14, 2021. https://www.guitarworld.com/features/kim-thayil-soundgarden-badmotorfinger-at-30.

[490] Zimmerman, Eric and Dale Peterson., dirs., Soundgarden, “Rusty Cage”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1992. Streaming.

[491] Soundgarden, *Badmotorfinger.* 1991 ℗ A&M Records.

over their entire song. Chris Cornell's vocal cords are in tension with the drone of an overpowering and very loud machine-like a turbine engine.

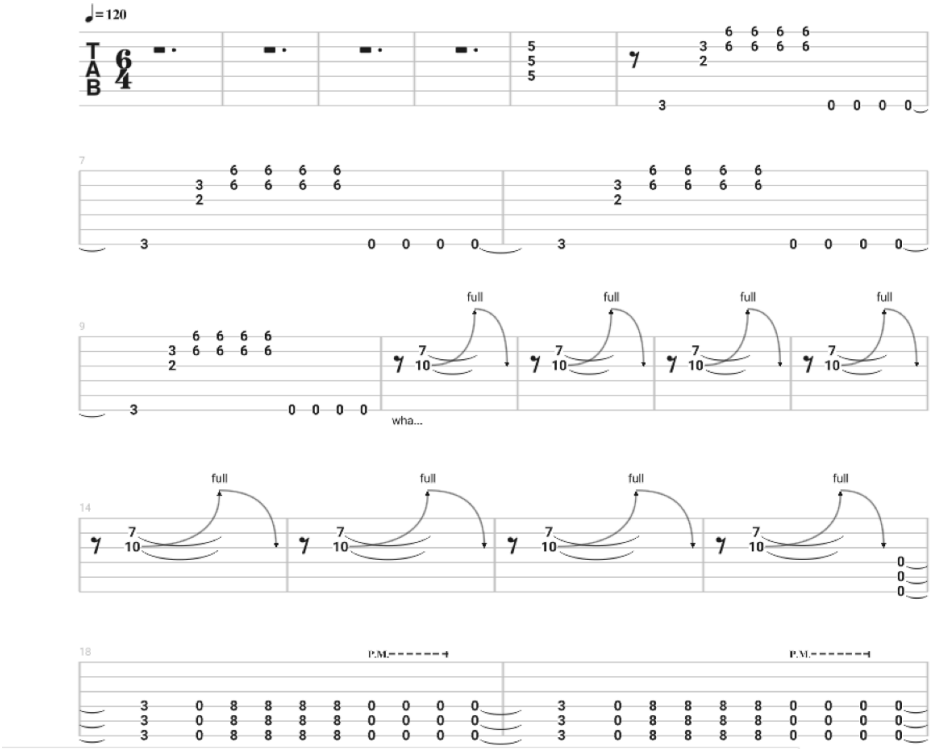


Figure 30. Sheet music for "Room a Thousand Years Wide" on Soundgarden, *Badmotorfinger* ℗ 1991 A&M Records. Written By Kim Thayil and Matt Cameron. Sheet music, Guitar Tab from Ultimate-Guitar.com.

"*Real grunge is about noise and chaos and psychedelia...*"
-Everett True[492] *(aka The Legend, the godfather of grunge)*

The Soundscape of The Seattle Sound

Goodman's framework provides a dynamic sonic understanding of a *soundscape* through interrogating *sound, noise, and music culture"* This can further assist in considering McKagen, Thayil, and Endino's sonic description of the Seattle grunge's *soundscape*. Distilling their reflections down centers Seattle and its sounds as the material and tonal DNA of grunge. Grunge's *soundscape is not just from* Seattle, but rather *it is of* Seattle. Grunge is what Seattle is; a torrid mix of urban geography, industry, meteorology, and physical nature, all slammed together.

Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam, and Soundgarden were deeply *affected* by their sense of *place* in Seattle and consequently created *spaces* of practice that reflected their embodied experiences. Their overlapping albums which all use *noise* in their music technologies: (Alice in Chains' *SAP* [EP] (February 4, 1992), Pearl Jam's *Ten* (August 27, 1991), and Soundgarden's *Badmotorfinger* (October 8, 1991) were created during the same period and in some cases in the very same spaces. The following pages will highlight their individual and shared connection to the places that inspired them and were a part of their lived experience. There are markers of Seattle that show up in these bands' albums and performances. Some similarities are present, but each defines their own epistemology differently. Alice in Chains defines their style in *grotesque* lyrics and heavy tonalities; Pearl Jam with refusals to both micro and macro conditions of *place*; absorbing their practice space through *earwitnessing;* Soundgarden focusing on

[492] Everett True. *Live Through This. American Rock Music in the Nineties.* (London; Virgin Publishing, 2000).

resistance to heavy industry directly through lyrics.

> *It's hard to describe really…the oppression of low black clouds and like pissing rain nine months out of the year [in Seattle]…it gets old…"*[493] -Chris Cornell

Chris Cornell's reflection of his experience in Seattle's weather seems to be in line with other writers who have endured Seattle's weather and melded it into their work. David Laskin in his book, *Rains all the Time: A Connoisseur's History of Weather in the Pacific Northwest*[494] claims that the "damp misery" of the Pacific Northwest was capitalized on by many writers, including the Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Honey in the Horn* (1935)[495]. In fact, this 'damp misery' he classifies as its own regional literary conceit, the meteorological gothic"[496] He makes this akin to the grotesqueries and madness in the South." [497]

Laskin's taxonomy seems to fit into the geographical and meteorological cartography of grunge as several elements of 'gothic' themes reside in the aesthetics of grunge songs and videos. The association with William Faulkner as the foremost representative of southern gothic literature as well as artists such as Grant Wood (*American Gothic*, 1930)[498], Charles Sheeler (*Suspended Power,* 1939)[499], and Edward

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[493] Chris Cornell interview. Dave, Grohl. (Director). (2014). Seattle: Subterranean [Television Series Episode 7]. Roswell Films and Therapy Content (Producers), *Sonic Highways*, Home Box Office (HBO)

[494] David, Laskin. *Rains All the Time: A Connoisseur's History of Weather in the Pacific Northwest.* (Seattle; Sasquatch Books, 1997).

[495] Harold, Lenoir Davis. *Honey in the Horn* (Moscow: University of Idaho Press), 2004.

[496] David, Laskin. *Rains All the Time: A Connoisseur's History of Weather in the Pacific Northwest.* (Seattle; Sasquatch Books, 1997),152.

[497] Ibid.,151.

[498] Grant, Wood. "American Gothic". Oil on Beaver Board. 1930.

[499] Charles, Sheeler. "Suspended Power". Oil on Canvas. 1939.

Hopper (*Nighthawks*, 1942[500] and *Gas*, 1940[501]). The emptiness and vastness of industrial modernism laid bare by the Great Depression is saturated in these works, with bodies of distorted proportions in regard to their 'place' in the scenes they find themselves-in the midwest rural farmland, the overpowering machinery diminishing men into slight smears of color ready to be crushed, the quietness of the abandoned city or the empty gas station....

Kurt Cobain in his *A New American Gothic*[502] continues the gothic tradition set forth by Wood, Sheeler, and Hopper, depicting the same emptiness of a similar vast, unknown future. Cobain acutely utilizing layers of yellow, orange, red, and pink, highlighting an androgynous older punk couple. Their faces lined with acceptance of their subjection are only defeated into circumstance more by the mauve altocumulus clouds behind them. Even though the colors are bright, the fate of the couple in shades of grey, highlighted by red lips on the person to the left, seems bleak. This peri-psychedelic placehood situates the punks still alive and still styled in their subcultural symbols. The sentiment presents a part of what we could call post-modern ‘gothic' in the late 20th-century sense where the environment is the foreground of illusions, whether that be in the modes of capital or modernist cultural values.

Both Soundgarden and Nirvana utilize this unstable placehood in music videos, creating not only imagined territories, but landscapes that are immersive and threatening. Nirvana's "Heart Shaped Box"[503] video is centered in its religious imagery

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[500] Edward, Hopper. “Nighthawks” Oil on Canvas. 1942.

[501] Edward, Hopper. “Gas”. Oil on Canvas. 1940.

[502] Kurt, Cobain. “A New American Gothic” Paper/Mixed Media. C 1984.

[503] Anton, Corbijn, dir. Nirvana, “Heart Shaped Box”; Kurt Cobain, Dave Grohl, and Krist Noveselic. 1993. Streaming.

surrounding death and consumption (whether we are to enjoy or blame the substance blooming around the christ-figure on the cross, is left aside). The sky is clear blue and then vividly red with cumulous clouds in shared of orange, red, and a little purple that are spread out and touch the top of the screen.

Indeed, lyrically, Laskin's category of "Damp Misery"[504] seems prevalent, not solely lamenting the lack of sun, but often equating rain, blood, and drowning into swirling and uncontrollable circumstances which involve the meteorological, the metaphysical, and psychedelic soliloquy. The gothic theme especially emerges in songs like "Long Gone Day" from *Mad Season* which written by Mark Lanegan and Layne Staley,

So much blood, I'm starting to drown
Runs from cold to colder
Time to time the sky's come down
To help me lose my way
Tears and lies for answers
You and open veins
God knows I'm gone

Girl, I just want you to come on down
Lord, it's a storm and I'm heading to fall
These sins are mine and I've done wrong
Oh babe, come on down
All of my past come down, down
Long gone day
Hmm-mmm

Who ever said we wash away with the rain?
See you all from time to time
Isn't it so strange how far away we all are now?
Am I the only one who remembers that summer?
Oh-oh, I remember
Every day, each time the place was saved
The music that we made

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[504] David, Laskin. *Rains All the Time: A Connoisseur's History of Weather in the Pacific Northwest.* (Seattle; Sasquatch Books, 1997),152.

The wind has carried all of that away
Long gone day
Hmm-mmm[505]

While this song like others, succumbs to the elements of nature such as the power of rain, the wind, the storm, and the seasons, "Long Gone Day" also brings in religious imagery. The directionality of the song leads the listener down to the feeling of drowning of sinking in which intersects the ritual of heroin in which *romantic agony* is associated.

While rain is the primary identifier of Seattle, the amount of rain that Seattle and even Portland receives is actually far less than other cities in the United States according to Cliff Mass. Miami, for example receives an average of 57.1 inches per year is a drastic contrast to Seattle which receives on average 38.4 inches.[506] Seattle does have more rainy days (157 days a year in contrast to the eastern states that receive 120). However, rain in Seattle can appear to be more pervasive because of the comprehensive climatology at play. Mass demonstrates "The distribution of precipitation in particular is impacted by *air parcels* that are forced to rise by mountains...air parcels descend on the leeward slopes of mountain barriers"[507] It is the Cascades to the east and the Olympics to the direct west of Seattle that induce dynamic conditions which include rain, but other weather anomalies as well that are unique to the Pacific Northwest.[508]

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[505] "Long, Gone Day", *Mad Season*, "Mad Season". Song by Mark Lanegan, Barrett Martin, Layne Staley, and Mike McCready. Lyrics © Ripplestick Music, Ripplestick Music Inc., Wrecking Ball Music.

[506] Cliff, Mass. *The Weather of the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle; University of Washington Press, 2001), 18.

[507] Ibid., 24.

[508] Ibid.,16.

According to Mass, "large changes in air temperature above Puget Sound can cause optical effects in which ferry boats and other marine vessels appear to be flying above the water, and shorelines seem thrust high into the sky.[509] More ominously, the combination of strong winds and arid conditions east of the Cascades often produces terrible dust storms that decrease visibility to near zero and cause multi-car accidents.[510]

Clouds

Cloud cover is pervasive in Seattle year round. Mass states, “clouds, cover 230 days in Seattle, compared to an average of 160 in Boston.”[511] Data from the Automated Surface Observing System/Automated Weather Observing system[512] shows a history of cloud cover of Seattle from 1973-2000, measuring their results in oktas. The intensity of the cloud cover, meaning the percentage of visibility of the sky ranged from 4.5 (partly cloudy) to a concentration of 6.7 (mostly cloudy on a scale of 8). The number of days out of a month that were determined to be cloudy on average ranged from 10.1 days out of the month of August and 22.7 days in January.

Utilizing data for the specific years 1984-1991 collected by the Washington State Climate Office, the table below demonstrates the average days per month of cloud cover. This specific data was taken from Boeing Field. The data reveals that more than half the days of the month from 1984-1991 were Cloudy Days.

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[509] Weather apparitions...flying ferries, looking cliffs above water bodies, dry roads that look wet...all described by Cliff Mass. The Weather of the Pacific Northwest. Seattle; University of Washington Press, 2001),187.

[510] Cliff, Mass. *The Weather of the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle; University of Washington Press, 2001), 5-6.

[511] Ibid.,18.

[512] The ASOS/AWOS systems, measure cloud cover in oktas (8th’s) using a ceilometer which is accurate to 12,000 ft.

[Table 3: Seattle Cloud Cover 1984-1991]

	Ave. Cloud Cover	Days Clear	Days Partly Cloudy	Days Cloudy
1984	5.924	4.273	8.659	16.825
1985	5.444	5.266	9.182	15.051
1986	6.003	4.303	6.783	18.663
1987	5.652	5.947	6.930	17.53
1988	5.960	4.614	7.184	18.70
1989	5.744	5.311	7.304	17.800
1990	6.048	4.201	7.473	18.741
1991	5.842	5.484	6.850	18.081
TOTAL	5.82	4.92	7.54	17.87

Mass defines Seattle's unique weather more dynamically in that cloud cover by itself is not just an indicator of that particular formation, an indicator of precipitation, or darkened sky, but can be amplified by other factors such as the Olympic Mountains and the Cascades' weather systems. As Mass describes in his book *The Weather of the Pacific Northwest*, the mountain ranges to the East and West of Seattle experience large changes in air pressure which impact cloud cover to the point of inducing optical effects-so we are no longer considering visibility that could impact VFR conditions for aerospace, but illusions on the surface of the waterways of Seattle. Optical effects are created from these pressure systems causing ferry boats and other marine vessels to appear to be flying above the water, and shorelines thrust skyward far above land level.

One such example is "the *superior mirage* in which objects appear above their actual locations.[513] He describes phenomena as a result of downward-moving light that bends when it moves at an angle from an upper less dense to a lower dense medium.[514]

Mountain wave[515] clouds are produced by the winds at or near the ridge-tops blowing perpendicular to the mountain chain. For example, a wind from the west blowing across the north-south oriented Cascade Mountains will at times produce mountain wave clouds east of the mountains. Combined with the myriad of weather phenomena that Seattle experiences, rain itself perhaps is the last thing you can take. It perpetuates the never-ending experience. Looking out over Elliot Bay to Bainbridge from Pier 56 down from Pike's Market in downtown Seattle gives you the landscape to experience all of what Mass has described. Massive landforms in the background, still dark water and heavy unyielding cloud cover-this is a constant backdrop juxtaposed next to a busy city.

The wave clouds can have various forms. Some of the more impressive forms are known as Altocumulus Standing Lenticular, or ACSL. These often take the form of pancakes, or even stacks of pancakes, and at times have been mistaken for unusual aircraft. The Lenticular clouds, or Mountain Waves as they are called, resemble flying saucers. On the 20th of April, the weather pattern was rather unusual, with strong

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[513] Cliff, Mass. *The Weather of the Pacific Northwest*. (Seattle; University of Washington Press, 2001), 198.

[514] Ibid., 198.

[515] Technically referred to as Altocumulus Standing Lenticular Clouds (ASCL)-defined by the National Weather Service of NOAA.gov. Atmospheric history is now cataloged online by region and city noted cloud formation, day, month, year. See example: https://www.weather.gov/otx/April-WeatherHistory#apr 20.

easterly winds blowing over the Bitterroot Mountains of north Idaho. The resulting ACSL clouds were a rare site for the Spokane area.[516] More ominously, the combination of strong winds and arid conditions east of the Cascades often produces terrible dust storms that decrease visibility to near zero and cause multi-car accidents.[517]

Soundgarden's song "My Wave" seems to capture the psychedelic euphoria and confusion when faced with the unknown, consistently. The album, aptly named *Superunknown* can lend credence to Mass's thorough evaluation of Seattle's meteorology and the *affects* it can have visually and physically. Weather apparitions...flying ferries, looking cliffs above water bodies, dry roads that look wet.[518] The example of the *superior mirage*[519] in which objects appear above their actual locations is one of the most interesting apparitions caused by meteorologic conditions. He describes phenomena as a result of downward-moving light that bends when it moves at an angle from an upper less dense to a “lower dense medium”[520]. Weather apparitions...flying ferries, looking cliffs above water bodies, dry roads that look wet.[521]

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[516] Altocumulus Lenticular Clouds. Weather.gov. https://www.weather.gov/otx/Altocumulus_Standing_Lenticular_Clouds-April202005.

[517] Cliff, Mass. *The Weather of the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle; University of Washington Press, 2001), 5-6.

[518] Ibid.,187.

[519] Ibid.,198.

[520] Ibid., 198.

[521] Ibid.,187.

My Wave
Cry, if you want to cry
If it helps you see
If it clears your eyes
Hate, if you want to hate
If it keeps you safe
If it makes you brave
Pray, if you want to pray
If you like to kneel
If you like to lay
Don't come over here
Piss on my gate
Save it just keep it off my wave
Keep it off my wave
Keep it off my wave, my wave
Keep it off my wave, my wave
-written by Chris Cornell and Kim A. Thayil, *Superunknown* (1994)[522]

Soundgarden

The band Soundgarden took their name from the sound sculpture entitled *A Sound Garden*[523]. The piece was created by artist and physicist Douglas Hollis, who specifically works with wind and water as mediums to create sculpture. The sculpture is still located in Magnuson Park next to Lake Washington ten miles northeast of downtown Seattle and about 3 miles from the University District. Its home is on the property of the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration Western Regional Center and the sculpture's access is controlled by the NOAA.[524] The specific piece that Soundgarden adopted as their namesake is constructed of several tall steel structures spaced apart that have weather vanes on top that are joined with organ pipes.

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[522] "My Wave", Soundgarden, *Superunknown,* March 8, ℗ 1994, A&M Records.

[523] Douglas Hollis, *A Sound Garden*, 1982-1983, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Campus, Seattle Washington.

[524] Unfortunately, A Soundgarden has been off-limits to the public since the pandemic. At the time of this dissertation's publication (2025), access was still not available.



Figure 31. by Doug Hollis. 1982-1983 Magnuson Park, Seattle, Washington. Picture courtesy of Shutterbug Fotos.

As wind rotates the weather vanes, each pipe is *affected* and produces a lingering humming and droning sound. The artist, Doug Hollis, now features sound recording of *A Sound Garden* on his website , doughollis.org. The curator of the piece noted, "The artist specifically sited this piece to take advantage of the natural wind tunnel…which picks up around two and three o'clock everyday…that's when it really sings."[525] From the amateur footage available prior to the pandemic, the sound entering the pipes is not forceful as it would be with playing an organ where an organ-stop would be regulating the pressurized air to create sound, rather the sound produced is akin to the

[525] Curator Shawn Lani; https://douglashollis.org/seattle-sound-garden-at-noaa/.

wind naturally creating an *embouchure*[526] technique which allows the organ pipe to be played much like a clarinet. However, the sound footage from the artist's website strongly features the haunting wail of an aeolian harp effect.[527] The piece being constructed of metal seems to magnify and bend the embouchure, humming the breaths of sound into quiet vibrations which take up again with a fresh burst of wind.

Soundgarden utilized another Seattle public work of art, Black Sun, in entitling their song, "Black Hole Sun"[528]. The sculpture *Black Sun*[529] is fifth in a series of sculpture work by the late artist Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988). Noguchi, created five *Black Suns* in total; the black granite sculpture, *Black Sun* (1968), is the largest in the series with material sourced from Brazil. It was commissioned for Seattle and is located in Capitol Hill's Volunteer Park three miles from downtown Seattle is owned and administered by the Seattle Art Museum and The City of Seattle Parks and Recreation. It is constructed out of a single piece of Brazilian black granite and has a hole in the middle of the sculpture-almost like a looking glass into something beyond the darkness of the stone.

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[526] Embouchure is a French Term that refers to the proper technique in which to blow a wind instrument; Parti d'un instrument à vent qu'on porte à la bouche afin de produire un son. From the French Oxford-Hachette French Dictionary

[527] The Aeolian Harp dating back thousands of years to the ancient greek empire is so named for Aeolus, the god of the winds. The instrument in its original production was constructed so that the wind itself would create sound. See Organology.net. https://organology.net/instrument/aeolian-harp/ . Its connection to romanticism and nature has been explored widely in scholarship.

[528] Soundgarden, *Superunknown*, March 8, ℗ 1994, A&M Records.

[529] Isamu Noguchi. *Black Sun,* Black Granite.1968, Seattle, Washington.



Figure 32. Isamu Noguchi., 1968, Seattle, Washington; Photograph by Sunrisesoup (2007)

"Black Hole Sun", written by Chris Cornell, lyrically connects Seattle's weather in a personal plea for escape. There are some interpretations that the line, *Times are gone for honest men*, suggests the difficulty that Cornell and Soundgarden were encountering at the time with their label as they resisted the record industry's demands for enhanced promotion.

"*Hang my head*
Drown my fear
Till you all just disappear
Black hole sun
Won't you come
And wash away the rain?
Black hole sun
Won't you come
Won't you come

“Stuttering,
cold and damp
Steal the warm wind, tired friend
Times are gone
for honest men
And sometimes far too long for snakes
In my shoes,
walking sleep
In my youth, I pray to keep
Heaven send
hell away
No one sings like you anymore

Black hole sun
Won't you come
And wash away the rain?
Black hole sun
Won't you come
Won't you come“[530]

Black Hole Sun's video,[531] utilizes Seattle's dynamic meteorology in the most dramatic psychedelic fashion. The *cumulous* clouds moving fast in the blue sky behind the band diverge into *stratocumulus* clouds, then dense *cirrus* clouds which take the shape of an anvil. As the frustration with the lack of honesty and pervasive cruelty grows so does the sky, producing a powerful *dust devil,* native to the Pacific Northwest. The *dust devil* implodes with magma, yet another geological reference to Mt. St. Helen's and Mt. Rainier, finally whirling into *lahars* (rapidly flowing slurries of rock and mud”. The lahars here, though, appear as white like chunks of snow into the edges of the shape of the Black Sun; representing a Black Hole, which cannot be seen.

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[530] “Black Hole Sun”, Soundgarden, *Superunknown*, March 8, ℗ 1994, A&M Records. Lyrics by Chris Cornell. © You Make Me Sick I Make Music, Hipgnosis Songs Cc, Susan Silver Publishers.

[531] Howard, Greenhaugh., dir. Soundgarden. “Black Hole Sun”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. June 1994. Streaming.

It is only the boundary of the black hole that is a visible component. This is called the "event horizon".[532]

The Music Bank-Ballard

> *The Music Bank—a hideous place. Underneath the Ballard Bridge. You'd constantly hear those damn Alaskan fishing boats coming through there, and you'd hear the winches and the cranks of the drawbridge just grinding all the time. Those guys could make as much noise as they wanted, and it was just a monstrous party pad.*
>
> -Jeff Gilbert,[533] journalist for *THE ROCKET* and KZOKAM DJ.

In considering a sonic geography of competing acoustics from the *economies of noise* in Seattle, it is also important to understand the compression of sounds in close quarters. The Music Bank was a space of practice and living for musicians of all genres. Boasting only about fifty rooms, these were makeshift spaces that Alice in Chains utilized as their "home". The Music Bank boasted that they were a 24/hr rehearsal space in *The Rocket* in September 1984, indicating that multiple musicians could be playing at the same time around the clock. King5[534] the local NBC affiliate in Seattle filmed a feature of Alice in Chains in The Music Bank in 1988, where Layne Staley and Jerry Cantrell proudly display their accommodations, with sarcasm and beer, before a local show. The room they have looks like an extended kitchenette you

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[532] See Black Holes, Even Horizon Telescope Collaboration. Center for Astrophysics. Harvard and the Smithsonian. web source:https://www.cfa.harvard.edu/research/topic/black-holes

[533] Mark, Yarm. *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge* (New York; Crown Publishing. Kindle Edition), 171.

[534] "Alice in Chains: Beginnings: King 5 (the NBC Affiliate) filmed Alice in Chains hanging out at their House and the Music Bank. Produced by Jack Hamann, George Stark, and Diana Wilmar. Reporter/producer Jack Hamann/Photographer George Star. It aired October 14, 1988….Stark won the National Press Photographers Association National Award for Editing for the piece. It also received an Emmy for editing. https://youtu.be/fXe8WecFvBk?si=Ww9fGOMnpvM5fzLU

might see in an old office building, except with dirty brown carpet on the floor.

Artistic mentorship & rhizomic relationships

My house was a place where they could go and they could just hang out."[535]
-Ann Wilson (Heart)

In the previous sections, I have proposed a model for analyzing *The Seattle Sound* that relies upon two complementary frames of reference within *sonic geography* and the *economies of noise*. I now turn to the lived existence of the human scale to consider how *The Seattle Sound* had been produced and lived within those contexts as a mode of social life. I utilize Deleuze's and Guattari's concept of the rhizome here to demonstrate the unique relationships that formed in the small Seattle music community in the mid 1980s and that continued into mainstream popularity in the 1990s. These rhizomic configurations as demonstrated by the graphic, demonstrates a level of interconnectivity that is relational through friendships, living arrangements, and romantic relationships. These were extremely close and bonded formations that directly influenced each other's music through formal collaborations and performances as well as informal jam sessions.

The rhizome is a root. Its network lies beneath the ground, where sprigs spread out through the dirt, coming into formation along the way to create a new base from which new sprigs continue. From above, all this work goes undetected. Its particular directionality can be determined by its species in botany, whether it stretches horizontally or ceases its growth at the end of a season, laying dormant until the

[535] Seattle Times. https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/music/hearts-ann-wilson-on-leaving-seattle-bubble-reconciling-with-sister-and-carrie-brownstein-led-biopic/

conditions soften, making it possible to sprout again. This simplistic and generalized definition of botany's more intricate taxonomy is a functional understanding of the organic processes of creativity and emergence. Like the rhizomic plant designated to survive in a particular network of possibilities, so music as an organic interplay of training and situation finds its way through *the lines of flight*.

In the forming of the subculture of grunge demonstrated in the rhizome figure in the first chapter, artists shared multiple interconnections with each other from going to school together, being roommates, romantic relationships, and professional associations, as well as bandmates supporting other bands from the community. Kinship is an important marker here for the complex webs of belonging that the practitioners of grunge forged and maintained the *soundscape* of *The Seattle Sound*.

Early formations of the Seattle Rhizome: Malfunkshun, Green River, Mother Love Bone, Soundgarden, Pearl Jam, and Temple of the Dog

> "*Chris and Andy had a very deep relationship. I know that they each had four-tracks in their bedrooms and they would each try to play a song a day and would write songs for each other…at the end of the day they would share their compositions with the other guy."* [536]
>
> -Matt Cameron

When Andy Wood and Chris Cornell became roommates both were already established grunge musicians in Seattle. Wood had already been in Malfunkshun with his brother Kevin Wood beginning in 1980 and then formed Mother Love Bone in 1986 with former Malfunkshun bandmate Blain Cook. Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard of

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[536] Matt Cameron in Crowe, Cameron, dir, *Pearl Jam Twenty.* 2011. Los Angeles, California: Tremolo Productions, Vinyl Films, 2011. Streaming.

Green River, fronted by Mark Arm (later Mudhoney) joined Andy and Blain producing two records together; *Shine*[537] in 1988 and *Apple*[538] in 1990. Chris Cornell, Kim Thayil, and Hiro Yamamoto (both from Chicago) became Soundgarden in 1984. The major change was Cornell's move from singing behind the drum-set to being the frontman. Matt Cameron joined as their drummer in 1986, two years before their first album, Ultramega OK in 1988 on Sub Pop.

Cornell had remarked to Cameron Crowe while being interviewed for the documentary *Pearl Jam 20* that he admired Andy Wood's creative process. [Andy] He just had a freedom…he didn't edit anything that he did…he would just charge through the creative process… and I was the opposite, overanalyzing everything it was a really exciting, creative time."[539] At the end of the day, Cornell commented that they would share with each other what they had written during the day in their respective rooms of the apartment.

Their artistic kinship and their practice fostered their friendship and it can also be said it fomented their creativity. Through their lyrics there is a commonality with the psychedelic, perhaps at times even mystical with songs like, Capricorn Sister[540] (Mother Love Bone) and "Searching With My Good Eye Closed"[541] (Soundgarden). Yet , musically, Soundgarden's performance is more turned toward hard rock, performing a critical masculinity where Mother Love Bone basks in the dark possibilities of glam,

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[537] Mother Love Bone, "Shine", ℗ 1990 Mercury Records.

[538] Mother Love Bone, "Apple", ℗ 1990 The Island Def Jam Music Group.

[539] Chris Cornell in "Pearl Jam Twenty". Directed by Cameron Crowe. Tremolo Productions, Vinyl Films, et al., 2011.

[540] Mother Love Bone, *Apple*, ℗ 1990 The Island Def Jam Music Group.

[541] Soundgarden, *Badmotorfinger*. ℗ 1991 A&M Records.

tuning it toward a line of flight emblematic of the Seattle street scene, the murky subterranean. There is no ignoring the shared artistic mentorship that was a part of their friendship. Within that relationship of creative feedback and inspiration are opportunities to seek out creative directions that wouldn't necessarily be initially inspired by one artist alone.

Temple of the Dog embodied Cornell's friendship with Andy Wood inspired songs of care and concern about his friend. Many of the songs written on the *Temple of the Dog* album[542] were in progress before Wood's death. With or without the context of Cornell and Wood's friendship, the lyrics of the songs on the album are oblique.

"Say Hello To Heaven"[543]

“Please, mother mercy
Take me from this place
And the long-winded curses
I hear in my head
The words never listen
And teachers, oh, they never learn
My warmth from the candle
Though I feel too cold to burn”

Cornell’s opening plea is one of anguish, loss, and a longing to escape.

Next, Cornell situates this song to his friend Andy, who was from Bainbridge Island and who ended up passing away after overdosing on heroin.

“He came from an island
Then he died from the street
And he hurt so bad like a soul breakin'
But he never said nothin' to me, yeah”

---

[542] Temple of the Dog, *Temple of the Dog*, ℗ 1990 UMG Recordings, Inc.

[543] “Say Hello to Heaven.” Songwriter Christopher J Cornell. © Hipgnosis Side G.

Other lyrics bow their head to the accomplishments of Mother Love Bone, in referencing the song "Stargazer"[544] while also recognizing the pain embedded in that song that Andy Wood wrote about his girlfriend, Xana who is now grieving (or will grieve) for Andy's loss.

“Oo, I said, poor Stargazer
She's got no tears in her eyes
But fool like a whisper
She knows that love heals all wounds with time
Now it seem like too much love
Is never enough, yeah, you better seek out
Another road 'cause this one has ended abrupt, oh”

Even the name of the band, *Temple of the Dog*, honors Andy by referencing the song "Star Dog Champion”.[545] That particular song finds a wanderer trying to find his way, out of his past, into the new, and above the clouds the fame.

"san francisco, where the flowers bloom in spring
fade to winter, and see what disease brings
augustiono, with his eyes once a shining sea
he's half a shadow, god don't let that be me
i'm a stardog champion
west virginia, thats where my father lies
wartime hero, the kind that money buys
a diamond bracelet, for my mommy memory
thats all she wrote, all she wrote for me...
i'm a stardog champion
i'm a stardog champion
and the children used sing of love
with grace from the lord above
and the children used sing out loud”

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[544] Songwriters: Stone C. Gossard / Jeffrey Allen Ament / Andrew Wood / Bruce Ian Fairweather / Greg A. Gilmore. Stargazer lyrics © Star Dog Music, Polygram Int. Publishing, Inc.

[545] Songwriters: Andrew Wood / Bruce Ian Fairweather / Greg A. Gilmore / Jeffrey Allen Ament / Stone C. Gossard. Stardog Champion lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group

The formation of the band would be a tribute to Andy Wood with lyrics and music written by Cornell with the remaining members of *Mother Love Bone,* Stone Gossard and Jeff Ament, joining Cornell and Cameron from Soundgarden. It was in this artistic formation that Cornell took *Mookie Blaylock's* new lead singer, Eddie Vedder under his wing.

"The best thing about it [is] you learn from each other….you are inspired by each other…for me Temple of the Dog grew out of that"
—Chris Cornell[546]

The album was not intended to be a commercial venture, but would receive wide-spread distribution first in 1991 and then in 1992 after the mainstream success of Pearl Jam's freshman album, *Ten*. Matt Cameron observed to Cameron Crowe in 2009 that Chris Cornell took Eddie Vedder under his wing with this project, and helped the "shy" new lead singer who had just newly arrived in Seattle from Ocean Beach, San Diego. Cameron, who was the drummer for Temple of the Dog simultaneously with Soundgarden, would eventually become a fill-in drummer for Pearl Jam during the 1990s and joined Pearl Jam formally in 1998. He is able to comment with certainty on this mentorship with a very intimate perspective of the creative styles brought together in these communal projects.

Mike McCready, also interviewed by Cameron Crowe, observed the same close mentorship of Vedder by Cornell. "Eddie was very shy in the beginning and kind of self-conscious… and wasn't fully comfortable I think…, until him and Cornell went out one

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[546] Chris Cornell in "Pearl Jam Twenty". Directed by Cameron Crowe. Tremolo Productions, Vinyl Films, et al., 2011

night."[547] The dramatic difference in Vedder's performance after being mentored by Cornell is astounding; from the first performances where he barely moves on stage and his hair hides his eyes with a muffled voice, to an explosive resonating bass. This change, demonstrated in the documentary, marks a key turning point in Vedder's vocal performance style and a close bonding with Chris Cornell. Pacific Northwest Magazine captured a live performance with Pearl Jam, Chris Cornell , and Matt Cameron at RKCNDY on August 3, 1991. Chris Cornell is center stage, with Eddie Vedder directly stage-left. Lance Mercer, who took this photograph, became Pearl Jam's photography on tour, but also photographed other bands in the grunge community.



Figure 33. Temple of the Dog perform at RKCNDY, August 3, 1991. Original Photograph by Lance Mercer.[548]

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[547] Mike McCready in "Pearl Jam Twenty". Directed by Cameron Crowe. Tremolo Productions, Vinyl Films, et al., 2011.

[548] Reader, Bill. "10 Stops on Pearl Jam's road to success", *The Seattle Times*, published for Pacific NW Magazine online. https://www.seattletimes.com/pacific-nw-magazine/pearl-jams-early-road-to-success/ Originally published April 4, 2017 at 6:00 am. Lance Mercer's work can be found at https://blendergallery.com/collections/lance-mercer.

Nexus of The Seattle Sound; 1990-1991

> "*When Nirvana toured with us in 1991 before Nevermind broke, no one in Europe knew who they were.They were often the first band onstage at festivals, playing amazing shows filmed by Dave Markey [he] came along with us to document the tour that later became the film 1991: The Year Punk Broke...it was basically a spoof of rockumentaries.*"
>
> *-Kim Gordon (bass, Sonic Youth)*[549]

The years beginning with 1990 and culminating in 1991 represent a nexus of artistic production, performance, and popularity for grunge. In this short expanse of time, the music of the grunge community of practice would expand beyond critical notoriety and be plunged into sudden popularity. Andrew Wood, the lead singer of Mother Love Bone, died of an overdose in March of 1990 days before the release of Mother Love Bone's *Apple*[550] on Polygram leaving the remaining members of the band, Jeff Ament and Stone Gossard to contemplate whether they would reform their band. Ultimately, they left Mother Love Bone behind and would come together with a new lead singer from San Diego, Eddie Vedder, along with guitarist Mike McCready and drummer Dave Krusen to form Mookie Blaylock (later known as Pearl Jam). The culmination of years of work for Alice in Chains and Soundgarden created albums representative of their training and practice, that would become signature sounds to a popular listening audience, and Nirvana would swerve, formulating a heavier and slower punk sound, instigating a wild frenzy on 120 minutes[551] and then on prime-time viewing hours on MTV.

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[549] Kim, Gordon. *Girl in a Band: A Memoir*. (New York; Harper Collins, 2015), 179.

[550] Mother Love Bone. *Apple.* ℗ 1990. The Island Def Jam Music Group.

[551] Kendall, Dave. dir. “MTV 120 Minutes” [series] September 29, 1991. Nirvana, “Smells Like Teen Spirit”.

In the background of 1991, Cameron Crowe had begun filming his new romantic endeavor set in Seattle. The movie *Singles*[552], centered around a local music scene running in a parallel world to the characters he created, Stone Gossard, Jeff Ament and Eddie Vedder played fictionalized members of the band "Citizen Dick" led by Matt Damon with Alice in Chains and Soundgarden performing as local Seattle acts, featured in the film. The timing of the film and its release in August 1992, contributed to the overall popularity of *The Seattle Sound* and the discourse surrounding grunge at the time. Crowe acted as the director, but ultimately as a music producer, giving money to Alice in Chains to create music for the film. With money left over, they created their album SAP (1992), with vocal contributions from Chris Cornell and Anne Wilson of Heart (Crowe's sister-in-law).

[grunge] "*On one hand, that word was ridiculous, horrible, completely straight-up dumb, and on the other hand, just beautiful: a smart and amusing shrug within the American scream-dream.*" *-Thurston Moore* [553] *(Sonic Youth)*

This chapter has mapped the s*oundscape* of *The Seattle Sound* through the texture of *keynotes*, *signals,* and *sound marks* present in Seattle that were *earwitnessed* by grunge artists. The acoustic and vibrational *affects* within the *soundscape* of Seattle, established a strong sense of *place* that *affected* the tonalities, volume, and heavy rhythm created by Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam, and Soundgarden.

From the framework of sonic geography, investigating *soundmarks, key notes,* and *signals* in defining a sense of *place* for communities of individuals, reflects a larger aspiration by those who control the mechanisms of sound or in many cases, noise, and

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[552] Crowe, Cameron, dir. Singles.1992; Los Angeles, California: Warner Brothers, Streaming.

[553] Michael, Lavine and Moore, Thurston. *Grunge* (New York; Harry N. Abrams 2009), 2-3.

how those economies impact the communities that experience them. The method of inquiry outlined by *sonic geography* investigates how sonic environments are "*defined, valued, experienced, and communicated*".[554] For Seattle, in pointing out these key sonic pieces to the *soundscape*, the direction of inquiry is focused on the priorities of city government in contrast to census data that reflect shifts of unemployment in different sectors, incomes and standards of living, as well as the overall economy of a city. In this case, noise ordinances, census data, and city project planning outlines a picture of the *economies of noise* that were operating and where they were active, most likely to impact the artists in the grunge community.

The interconnected artistic kinship of the grunge community of practice was a significant factor in the sounds created and performed. Their lived experiences, their communal mentorship and artistic practice cultivated close collaborations between the three bands. Sharing the same spaces of Seattle such as bars like The Comet and rehearsal spaces like the Music Bank, melded practice and performance of grunge due to sonic proximity and vibration as well as collaboration. This unique factor combined with the *economies of noise* contributed to similar tonalities, aesthetics, themes, and dropped tuning of grunge. Therefore *the Seattle Sound* is a reading of the temporal, geographical, and sonic environment of Seattle that is connected to the community of practice living and working together during the mid 1980s to the early 1990s.

The example of the Black Dog Forge was given to demonstrate Pearl Jam's

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[554] Alasdair Pinkerton and Klaus Dodds referencing citing M. Bull's Automobility and the Power of Sound in "Radio geopolitics: broadcasting, listening and the struggle for acoustic spaces", Progress in Human Geography Vol. 33 No. 1 (2009): 10-27

earwitnessing and experience creating their first album *Ten* in the close quarters of an active smithy in the middle of Belltown, Seattle. The unique tempos present represent particular rhythms present in the forge. This chapter also argued that the expansive *economies of noise*, protected by noise ordinances that favored industry over health, helped create *The Seattle Sound* through the *earwitnessing* of the artists. The massive construction projects within close proximity to grunge spaces of practice and performance produced a tension between artist and economy with the artist answering back with *noise* as *oblique refusal*. SEATac as well as the Boeing Corporation's testing of turbine engines produced extensive vibrational acoustics and the flight path of incoming and outgoing aircraft from SEATac created a constant drone in which grunge emulates in its dropped tuning, droning sounds, distortion, and reverberation.

Finally, the dynamic meteorology of Seattle was added as another contributing factor to *The Seattle Sound*, also influencing grunge themes related to weather, drowning, psychedelic creative language and aesthetics, particularly with *Soundgarden*. While rain is definitely a contributing factor, and noted by the artists as a key description of *place*, rain through the work of Clifford Mass was actually proven to be only a small contributing factor overall. The overall feeling of rain and gloom was actually contributed through the wide variety of cloud formations and the cloud coverage of Seattle that was graphed during the years of grunge formation.

These multi-faceted *affects* of *noise*, meteorology, socio-economic *drift,* and layered geography make up *The Seattle Sound* which is a temporal reflection of lived experience created through genre. *The Seattle Sound* as argued here was a combination of all these factors plus artistic mentorship in a community of practice. By

1991, Pearl Jam, Alice in Chains, Screaming Trees, Soundgarden, and Nirvana were touring and no longer playing locally on a regular basis. By 1992, there is no mention of these bands playing the local scene anymore, which disconnected the community into a new evolution of the genre. While relationships remained, the sounds of the community were disconnected and the city itself sounded different with certain projects completed and others planned.

Creating an exact time frame of genre formation and sub-genre evolution is extremely difficult. However, it is possible to draw artistic connections through their shared lived experiences and the albums that were produced while the artists were part of the interconnected community. Through artist's reflections and historical markers it is possible to map particular sounds that were present due to economic and meteorological circumstances, contributing to a similar tonality. By noting the performances of artists, particularly sharing the same stages and living quarters and then their departure from the close-knit scene, it is possible to draw a period of time where artistic exchange was heavily involved and producing music in concert. This is more effective and pertinent than relying on vague generational observations or reducing grunge back into the popular music vortex to determine its life or death.

4. CONCLUSION

> *"[success] is nothing to strive for…Hype can destroy everything what's real..It can make it a commodity…at whose cost, at yours, your life, and your music…they'll take it all away from you and you're supposed to be happy about it because you're successful"*
>
> *-Eddie Vedder*[555]

> *"I hope to destroy my career before it's too late"*
>
> *-Kurt Cobain*[556]

This project has been a departure from traditional cultural studies and sociological examinations of subcultures with a musical practice. The turn to vibrational acoustics and the impact of sonic geography was intensional in order to map grunge, not to further appropriate it through the lens of popular culture. This dissertation set out to draw a community of practice from a unique urban and natural geography, marking its sound, aesthetics, and symbolic work as a reflection of a specific temporal period in Seattle. Through that mapping, a rhizomic structure of artistic kinship and mentorship was argued to be an integral part of the genre formation of grunge. This kinship along with the dynamic meteorology, the *economies of noise*, and the socio-cultural dislocation of a creative underclass produced the *signifying practice* of grunge and its *Seattle Sound*.

The first chapter uncovered grunge as a socio-geographic condition of shifting and displacement-a spatiality of *drift.* From its urban ethos, before its inception as a musical practice, the subculture of grunge that existed in Seattle in the early 1980s embraced a contraction between legible spaces of profit and the unmarked alleys and

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[555] Doug Pray, dir. *Hype!* Helvey-Pray Productions (1996).

[556] Cobain performing in San Francisco; Jan 10, 1992 BAM 22-24

boarded up buildings of institutional oversight. This was a celebrated condition, creating a sense of *place* that was banished from the dynamic conditions of economic prosperity and instead was connected to informal cultural connections; marked by the dark humor embedded in graffiti such as a smiley-face with 'xx'd out eyes.

Grunge was enveloped with shifting geological statuses, layered urban geography, and social downward mobility which was performed in its style. The development of it style was argued as the compounded *affects* that this artistic community was situated in vacillating between a natural environment dependent upon the land, sea, and trees for its livelihood and an emerging urban economy committed to recruiting trade, tourism, and service-sector jobs for a fast-developing post-fordist cityscape. Two identities simultaneously at odds; with the decay of one providing the landscape for the potential decadence of the other.

This precarious symbiosis of the economic geography of Seattle encapsulated its uneven social statuses, demonstrating the dramatic decay of modernist sensibilities, particularly for the young generation that populated the city. This localized deterioration carried more than a decline of socio-economic possibilities, exposing the structural deficiencies of hegemony such as abandoned lifestyles defined by class in the capitalist system. Instead, new ways of living were proposed, underneath the visible notions of ‘productive’ life. Other branches of those structural deficiencies such as gender inequality took on the vulnerable moments involved in conditions of *drift*. It is was there in the unstable areaways between the highly visible notion of accumulation and the critically lived and artistically performed resistance that grunge’s texture developed. Part of this style was experienced through the gravel-laden vocal cords of

Kurt Cobain, and Kurt Lanegan, but also was found in its deep emotion. That unique texture was defined by the *grotesque* where it was argued that the hollowness and darkness of the grotto met the abject horror, outlining a specific critique of economic upheaval as well as a critical anguish surrounding gender and subjectivation.

The second chapter examined grunge as a *signifying practice*. Beginning with the linguistic orientation of grunge language, moving from the written, the spoken, and the *graphesis*[557] of grunge into *hypertexuality* from zines, speech, lyrics, and body graffiti. For grunge as in other deconstructed or interrupted visuals, such as the Situationists, the 'language of form' is rendered oblique, meaning that the graphic expression which assists visual epistemology is confused, creating a subversive test with a graphical impact. The *signifying practice* of grunge was demonstrated as containing a linguistic orientation of horror as well as self-subjectivation. In this way grunge performed to reclaim bodily sovereignty and cultural independence away from binary gendered expectations within mainstream feminism and in rock music. Musical technologies, focusing on the voice, revealed gender subversive practices across Riot Grrrl, grunge, and Alternative Rock. As a result of musical technologies, the voice in grunge represented unstable gender identities, often engaging in both masculine and feminine attributes, ultimately queering registers, vibratos, and screams.

The spectacle of hysteria was connected across grunge, Riot Grrrl, and alternative rock, forming a subcultural feminist refusal. Romantic Agony was also examined within the *signifying practice* utilizing hysteria as a method of reclaiming the

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[557] Drucker claims, "Graphics make and construct knowledge in a direct and primary way" (9-10) and in that is contained a Visual epistemology in which ways of knowing are presented and processed (8-9). Johanna, Drucker. *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*. (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2014).

body. Finally, the *female grotesque* was examined in visual aesthetics of refusal and new territories of female representation within the Kinder Whore. Within that practice other mediums were connected to grunge by analyzing the work of Cindy Sherman, arguing that the *female grotesque* of this time period in the 1990s represented the *signifying practice* of grunge in refusal to hegemonic coordinates of control over the female body.

The third chapter defined *The Seattle Sound* as created from *earwitnessing* Sonic Geography. The *affects* of the *economies of noise*, such as from turbine engines of airplanes and heavy construction projects surrounding community spaces of practice influenced the tension in grunge against the loud production of industry. The reaction of grunge was to produce *noise* in response; *noise* that reflected a specific *soundscape* that was temporally and geographically situated in Seattle. Meteorology and its unique influence was examined as an amplifier to *earwitnessing* and the overall *affects* of *place* and visuals in mediated videos as well as in lyrics were examined. Finally, intimate creative spaces and artistic mentorships were explored as a key component in creating a sound that produced similarities in timbre, tempo, and themes.

The work begun in chapter three is a starting point in drawing the lines of the grunge rhizome together to define an artistic lineage through geomusicology. Artistic mentorship, shared *places* of practice, and communal earwitnessing of the *economies of noise* are markers of the unique *Seattle Sound*. This was emphasized over recording and production techniques to purposely foreground the influence of environment on *earwitnessing*. What is brought into the studio is the concentrated elements of the

emotional quotient and critical vulnerability to the *affects* of daily life. While many grunge bands shared production space, such as London Bridge Studios in Seattle or utilized the same producers such as Jack Endino, these connections do not outweigh how genre is formed in its lived-experience.

The concluding pages of this final chapter will extend the examination of *The Seattle Sound*, considering specific practices and junctures of sounds that brought grunge together as a recognizable *soundscape* in its own right. Part of this examination will follow lines of lived-experimentation and reflection, focusing on the *synesthetic* conditions of sound, color, and micro-practices in grunge. Grunge engrossed many lines of decay and illness in its style with the *grotesque* being a prominent identification of a community of practice in situ. In exploring its *signifying practice* grunge's style embodied a transgressive politics as a genre of heavy rock in that they did not pronounce the gendered anxieties of other heavy metal and *punk* genres, but instead performed critical vulnerability. Those particular qualities of the *abject* in grunge style are unwound to examine the possibility of the grunge sound being influenced by the body's micropractices; offering a brief meditation of the *narcosonic* as a method of engaging with grunge's subterranean sound.

This final chapter also considers the economic conditions of *place* that allow for emerging musical practices and from those practices, new genres and new performances. We must ask questions surrounding the importance of *place* in genre formation and whether the loss of environment, living and practice *space*, as well as changes in our climate *affecting* our ecological status, are to blame for the fading of a genre. I conclude this project with remaining questions regarding dislocation due to the

dynamics of capitalistic ventures rooted in 'urban improvement projects'. As cities continually endure aesthetic design practices that organize linear readings of profit centers, the spaces in-between the shifting of dynamic capitalism must be considered. These undefined and illegible *places* of cultural production gradually infuse rhythms, aesthetics, sonics, and vibrations all their own-whether always acoustic or not. They demarcate the organization of urban renewal with their own distinct flavor, creating unique *places* where alternative neighborhoods can evolve. What happens to genre formation and subcultural production is the *soundscape's* identity is too sanitized to allow for divergent faculties that *drift* in the background of earshot or rumble beneath the street.

Finally, a call is made for more subculture work to be included in historical studies of urban life as the organization of aesthetics and economic purpose disintegrates cultural diversity. And to that end, further inquiry into the changing *soundscapes* of cities and its direct impact on the housed and unhoused residents, as well as the ports or commerce and the runways filled with jet-fueled turbines. Additionally, the ever-present climate crisis adding to changes in the hues of the sky, the breathability of the air, the ferocity and frequency of fires, and the threat of deadly flooding. These challenges and their aftermaths leave behind changed physical and sonic landscapes, indenturing the status of the Anthropocene into casual acceptance of ecological destruction. Geomusicology can provide a sonic and historical foundation for critical examinations of various scales to occur, sounding out a range of comparison that encompasses lived-experience and the overarching motivations of socio-political experiments that seek to embellish neoliberal idealism.

Colour is the keyboard

"Colour is the keyboard. The eye is the hammer, while the soul is a piano of many strings. The artist is the hand through which the medium of different keys causes the human soul to vibrate."-Wassily Kandinsky [558]

"When Nirvana played, the place was packed and sweltering. Even the concrete walls were sweating. Their music was all different shades of blue and purple with a jagged yellow line through it. It was sad and angry and sexy but never mean."
-Kathleen, Hanna (Bikini Kill, The Julie Ruin, Le Tigre)[559]

For Wassily Kandinsky, color possesses a sincere quotient of the musical soul; embedded emotions empowered with the distinctive movements caused by shape and direction. His descriptions of color and their effects are personal expressions that have their own existence, changeable by the properties of neighboring pallets of light and dark spirits, imbued with vibrant potency. Rhythm, harmony, and tonality in his framework were designs of the inner workings of the soul intertwined with the composition of form inducing both psychic and emotional vibrations to the witness. [560]

The material and the spiritual in this *synesthetic* architecture are representations which can possess an interpretation beyond the monophonic, transmitting the configurations of sound into a textual expression to be visually communicated.

The meaning of specific colors holds semiotical space in *synesthesia* which in turn can be visually and sonically interpreted. The pallet of expression for grunge is

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[558] Wassily, Kandinsky. *On the Spiritual in Art.* (New York; Guggenheim Foundation, Hill Rebay, ed. 1946), 43.

[559] Kathleen Hanna recounting playing with Nirvana at the Reko Muse Opening in Olympia, WA April 1, 1989. see Kathleen Hanna. *Rebel Girl: My Life as a Feminist Punk.* (New York; Ecco, 2024),90.

[560] Wassily, Kandinsky *On the Spiritual in Art.* (New York; Guggenheim Foundation, Hill Rebay, ed. 1946), 41.

dark as has been explored in its tuning and its lyrics. Colors are smudged in the dissonance of amplified bass and guitars. When they are brought to the canvas of video performance, the overall aesthetic favors grey, bloodreds and rusts, smeared shadows of brown and green, and of course, black. In the framework of Kandinsky, "the site of these colors is seeded from deep emotion. As an observer, a psychic effect is experienced, where color causes an emotional vibration."[561]

The dark kaleidoscope of grunge infused with romantic agony, critical vulnerability, illness, and pain, sounds extremely heavy as a thematic marker of the genre. The visual interpretation of the colors created is dependent on the observer's focus. In the darkness, all colors may seemingly bleed together forming a canvas with little apparent variation. Or, when related too directly by an individual, a closer relationship could be formed-a recognition. The sense of red, for example, in *synesthesia* could produce excitement according to Kandinsky, but also associate with blood, invoking disgust, pain, or other visceral responses.[562] Michel Henry interpreted the internal response of the emotional expanse of color as a radical subjectivity,[563] which for grunge reveals the language behind the color.

Henry emphasizes that the radical subjectivity of the artist, the painter in the case presented is enmeshed in this creative process driven by color and internalized in emotional capacity[564]. For grunge, the *grotesque* aesthetics are sounds that linger and

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[561] Wassily, Kandinsky *On the Spiritual in Art.* (New York; Guggenheim Foundation, Hill Rebay, ed. 1946), 41.

[562] Ibid.

[563] Michel, Henry."Art and the Phenomenology of Life", Michael Tweed, trans. excerpt from an interview with Jean-Marie Brohm, *Prétentaine* (December 1996) : 5-6.

[564] Ibid.

strike visual cues in flannel and in uneven styles of clothing brought together such as the combat boots and dresses of Kat Bjelland and Courtney Love's. To spend time with these material *affects*, is to hear dropped tuning and experience the reverberation of noise created by opposite objects, engaging with an interruption to a gendered discourse promoting sexually appealing aesthetics.

The dynamic homology of this aesthetic style, created in conversation with the emotional subject and the audial-visual object is indeed notable in grunge. Imagine a haunted state of sonic being, which becomes visualized in lyrics, and relayed through the body. Between Barthes' rhetoric of the image and Hebdige's oblique meaning[565] is the vacillating space where *synesthetic* feeling can take place, shading the gaps more prominently than is quite comfortable under ordinary circumstances.

These particular aesthetics are intrinsic to the *signifying practice* of grunge, signaling the surfacing of specific emotions being shared and performed. When this groundswell of semiotical space is shaped by the practice of grunge, there is an alchemy of conditions influencing the performance. Antonin Artaud calls this the *magic and sorcery* of the *mise en sèine*.[566] Artaud in further considering the double sees the revelation of performance apart from the written text or script as "a burning projection of all the objective consequences of gesture, word, sound, music and their combination."[567] His gallant ideal of the stage and the power of emotional sovereignty to set itself as a sacrifice to a sublime meaning draw out the experiential intention to

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[565] Dick, Hebdige. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. (London; Routledge, 1979), 100.

[566] Antonin, Artaud. *The Theater and Its Double*, Mary Caroline Richards, trans. (New York; Grove Press Inc.,1958), 73.

[567] Ibid.

the audience. For grunge, the revelation is the purpose, as the gesture induces self-subjectivation, particularly in its mediated visual form of musical performance. Chris Cornell demonstrates this in his reflection on Soundgarden's video for "Hands All Over".[568]

> "*making this video was fun because we were in a steel foundry. And there was like a black cancer dust all over everything. We're all get cancer from it and die, so I hope you enjoy it. This will be the video that killed Soundgarden.*"-Chris Cornell[569]

The song confronts the violence committed by industry against mother earth weaving love and death together specifically noting the responsibility on the hands of all in the killing of trees and polluting the water. The female-centered lyrics paint a picture of destruction which is played out visually in the outline of a female form whose form is dancing in spite of nuclear war, deforestation, and other environmental disasters. The men of Soundgarden are themselves caught up in this, performing in the pit of a dark factory, with wheels of industry caging them in. They hold up their hands to show them dirty and black to the camera as a sorcery of their own experience of culpability and subjection in making the video itself.

Hands all over western culture
Ruffling feathers and turning eagles into vultures
Into vultures
Got my arms around baby brother
Put your hands away
Your gonna kill your mother, gonna kill your mother
Kill your mother
And I love her, yeah
I love her
Hands all over the coastal waters

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[568] Kerslake, Kevin., dir. Soundgarden, "Hands All Over"; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Hiro Yamamoto, and Matt Cameron. 1990. Streaming.

[569] Chris Cornell interview *The Rocket*, March, 1990, 22.

The crew men thank her
Then lay down their oily blanket
Hands all over the inland forest
In a striking motion trees fall down like dying soldiers
Yeah like dying soldiers
Got my arms around baby brother
Put your hands away
Your gonna kill your mother, gonna kill your mother
Kill your mother
And I love her, yeah [570]

Grunge exacts the opposite of control, while utilizing similar extremes of vocals, distortion, power chords, bass and drums that Walser points to as the mechanism's of metal's objective.[571] In the case of Soundgarden's video, as well as their other work, lies the crucial difference of a critical vulnerability expressed in masculinity as opposed to a hyper-masculinity so prominent in heavy metal. Additionally, Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and Alice in Chains all join in this practice, exposing the weaknesses of western society and individualized expressions of pain. Grunge embraced weakness, class insecurity, embodied abjection, political dislocation, as well as romantic and intellectual defeat without blaming femininity. They continued to do this in the height of their popularity and their continued success into the late 1990s.

This alchemy of powerful performance combined with the sorcery of wielding weakness in a *synesthetic* architecture is what made grunge sound and look the way it did. The bands in this dissertation took in their lived-experiences as well as the situation of their surroundings, including the sonic, cultural, socio-economic, gendered, and capitalistic environment and embodied that in their performances. Robert Hilburn

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[570] "Hands All Over" written by Chris Cornell and Kim Thayil. Soundgarden, Louder Than Love, ℗ 1989 A&M Records. Lyrics courtesy of © Hipgnosis Songs Group, Peermusic Publishing.

[571] Ibid.,108-111.

who interviewed Kurt Cobain in 1992, wrote that the lyrics for “Heart Shaped Box” particularly the phrase “I wish I could eat your cancer” were written after watching a documentary that Cobain had seen about a child with a terminal illness.[572]

This dissertation has discussed the theme of illness in-depth, connecting Susan Sontag's metaphor[573] to depict separation from capitalistic expectations of consumption; in which for grunge, illness can be deployed against commercialized culture, excessive consumption, or depict the harm induced from sexual violence. The metaphor of illness, the taking on of someone else’s pain from illness or violence, and reflecting on one’s own lived-experience with illness as Cobain, Staley, Cornell, and others did becomes a physical gesture of Artaud’s *spiritual image of the plague*[574]; indeed a performance of struggle beyond the metaphorical.

Grunge created a visibility around the 'idea' and the embodiment of illness that was radical resistance. This was expanded beyond the performers body to include a consciousness of the *affects* of place-the physical surroundings as *affected* by a *soundscape*, but also a broader tragic consciousness of the precarity of the environment. This was a vacillating performance of the subject of the artist’s depiction and the artist as subject. In this way, grunge was unstable and unpredictable, while still embracing *synesthetic* themes of its core practice that sounded and looked continuous. The recognizability of the dark and deep chords communicating the subject matter as well as the performance infused with the hues of subjectivation

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[572] Robert Hilburn. LA Times. 1992. Nirvana Collection Box 1 VHS and 1 Folder…1992-1994.

[573] Susan, Sontag. *Illness as Metaphor*. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1978).

[574] Antonin, Artaud. *The Theater and Its Double*, Mary Caroline Richards, trans. (New York; Grove Press Inc.,1958), 25

steadied the identifying characteristics of the grunge genre.

Art and literature are defining influences in the lineage of grunge's own *signifying practice*. The relationship of illness to the wavering and unpredictable plane of experimentation conjunct with varied modes of addiction, leads us to consider the process of turning, becoming, and returning; the body itself rewriting its texture, gesturing different ways of performing lived-experience, or simply refusing to accept the point of political overture individualized into a hegemonic morality. It is possible to follow Deleuze and Guattari's "power of continuous variation in the "sound' of the voice when experimenting with language to find a privileged axis of experimentation".[575] An axis that by itself does not condone or inhibit the prospect of deconstruction whether afflicted or induced or combined.

To scrape the edges of the axis is to turn Deleuze and Guattari's *voice in music*[576] into an *affect* and in so doing, the axis of sound absorbs the experimentation into a reflexive tool that is imbued with the many possibilities of political dissonance. The *affect* of the voice in the music is now recognizable as grunge, generating audial-visual influences steeped into the axis, formed through a communal comprehension of shared language in a lineage artistic and literary influences.[577]

Previously discussed in this dissertation was the influence of Charles Baudelaire as well as Arthur Rimbaud, and William Burroughs. Also to be included is Charles

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[575] Giles, Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus; Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 96.

[576] Ibid.

[577] George, McKay. *Shakin' All Over: Popular Music and Disability.* Ann Arbor; University of Michigan Press, 2013), 93. Illness in grunge should not be confused with a privileging of men's disabled bodies in rock as George McKay has argued in his crip-framework of popular music,

Bukowski, particularly for Mark Lanegan, and Frances Goya for Kurt Cobain. All of these men embodied imperfections and ailments as well as predilections for substances with which to experiment with. Baudelaire was afflicted with aphasia after suffering a stroke, limiting his verbal capability to the phrase “Cré nom!”.[578] Along with his radical diversion in his health status, Baudelaire like Rimbaud imbibed Absinthe, often combining other elements such as Laudanum, opium, and even hashish.[579] Francisco Goya, too, experienced illness, one that sharply divided his body of work; "The first characterized by joy and light, the second by horror and ghosts.”[580] Plagued by headaches, dizziness, tinnitus, hearing loss, problems with this sight, paresis in the right arm, followed by depression and hallucinations.[581]

This dissertation has shown grunge’s propensity to dive deep into dark emotions and rank conditions of the human experience. To ingest cancer and bask in its pain like Kurt Cobain and Chris Cornell; to swallow water into the lungs and drown as Cornell and Layne Staley expressed; to explore rape from the inside in “Deep”[582] that Eddie Vedder screams; is to be rendered helpless. The visceral pain and anger present in grunge demonstrates this taking-in of anguish. A consciousness of a dire outcome that is sustained throughout the songs and has colored the physical experience into a sonic and visual one. A space is created here, but not as other cultural spaces may be

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[578] Sebastian, Dieguez and Julien Bogousslavsky. “Baudelaire’s aphasia: from poetry to cursing”, *Front Neurol Neurosci*. (2007) Vol. 22; 121-149)

[579] See Jane Ciabattari’s article for the BBC; “Absinthe: How the Green Fairy Became Literature’s Drink”, January 6, 2014.

[580] D. Felisati and G. Sperati. “Francisco Goya and his illness" in *Acta Otorhinolaryngol Italy*. Oct 2010 Vol 30 Issue 5: 264-270. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3040580/

[581] Ibid.

[582] Pearl Jam, *Ten*, August 27, ℗ 1991, Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

stylized to *affect* the boundaries of containment set by legal and economic conditions. This is a *place* that is carved out of the individual body, marking the definitions of compiled *affects*; a placemaking of volatile trespass and insurrection beyond the acceptable cultural codes of conduct.

a meditation on the narcosonic

"I did my first shot…by candlelight and all the anxiety that had plagued me…drifted away with the familiar blanketlike warmth of my true love."[583]
-Mark Lanegan (Screaming Trees)

"As this relaxing wave spread through my tissues, I experienced a strong feeling of fear…that some horrible image was just beyond the field of vision…A series of pictures past; streets, traffic, and street repairs were included in it; a waitress carrying a skull on a tray…"[584]
-William Burroughs, Junky

Steve Goodman in his book *Sonic Warfare*, uses the term *narcosonic* to refer to *the nexus of drugs and sonic sensation".*[585] As a DJ and a sound scholar, his perspective of sonic sensation has a deepened physical understanding of vibrational production of music and audience participation in that sensation. Goodman's brief description, while poignant and straightforward, nudges us in the direction of audience engagement in relation to BPM. In this fashion, club culture and by extension festival culture studies are introduced as examples of communal expression in relation to music and the corresponding sensations that enhance those individual and collective

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[583] Mark, Lanegan. *Sing Backwards and Weep*. Mishka Shubaly, ed. (New York; Hatchette Book Group, 2020), 223.

[584] William, Burroughs. *Junky*. (London; Penguin Books. 1953), 19.

[585] Steve, Goodman. *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear.* Cambridge; The MIT Press, 2009), XVI.

experiences.

Goodman sources this term from Inigo Wilkins' "narco-sonic *affect*: Becoming Intense"[586]; a paper devoted to looking at an historical thread of institutional restrictions running in contrast to other lines of existence that embrace different movements and speeds. Wilkins invites us to complicate the status of intoxication, interrogating the Platonic idealism connecting music with the stability of the state and the modes of appropriate conduct. He opens questions of musical genres and their complex relationship with narcotics.[587] Like Ferrell[588], who sees music as a measure of society being reflected back, so to, Williams engages the possibility of new frequencies of consciousness being uncovered within the juncture of music and narcotics.

Wilkins expounds on the *affective* nature of music within a transformative state of intoxication. He details the ritualistic nature of music and narcotics within a historical lineage, and leans on Deleuze and Guattari[589] to understand the tempos induced in different states of becoming within the *influence of drugs*.[590] Merrill Singer and Greg Mirhej would add to this, claiming a centrality of genre is tied to the very types of drugs utilized in the particular cultural scene.[591] Taken together, what aesthetically emerges is

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[586] Inigo Williams. "Narco-sonic Affect-Becoming Intense. December 17, 2004. http://transcendentalempiricism.blogspot.com

[587] Ibid., 4.

[588] Jeff, Ferrell. *Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge.* (Berkeley; University of California Press), 2018.

[589] Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Brian Massumi, trans. (Minneapolis; University of Minneapolis Press, 1987).

[590] Inigo Wilkins. "Narco-sonic Affect-Becoming Intense. December 17, 2004. http://transcendentalempiricism.blogspot.com), 6.

[591] Merrill Singer and Greg Mirhej. "High Notes: The Role of Drugs in the Making of Jazz" in Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abuse, Vol 5, Issue 4, 2006.

a specific geography conditioned by the corporal response to a specific *affect* to the individual; a singular epistemology that is shaped by ritual.

The humors of the human body were once explained by the presence of blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. These are significant *synesthetic* signs to grunge and the darkness connected to its mind-style and linguistic orientation. These humors assembled in a type of order made up a constitution of health or illness, a situation of pain or suffering and death. Pain particularly demonstrated an inexact proportion of the humors and pointed to deficiencies or excesses[592]. The narcosonic invites these humors into a sonic condition; in particular the tempo, the tuning, the timbre, and reverb.

The etiology of heroin, drawn to mythological and romantic expansions by some grunge artists' testimony and micropractice should be turned so that intoxication becomes the geography in which a dynamic and corporal earwitnessing as well as inspiration can be explored. If bodies become configured differently through the practice of narcotics, and we know that they do, then the influence of the body without organs and its transformation into its new self, becomes a new embodied relationship; a relationship that has significant influence.

[592] See The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy; Philosophy of Medicine. June 6, 2016. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/medicine/.

"Wine robs a man of his self-possession; opium greatly invigorates it. Wine unsettles and clouds the judgement, and gives a preternatural brightness and a vivid exaltation to the contempts and admirations, the loves and the hatreds of the drinker; opium, on the contrary, communicates serenity and equipoise to all the faculties, active and passive, and with respect to the temper and moral feelings in general it gives simply that sort of vital warmth which is approved by the judgment, and which would probably always accompany a bodily constitution or primeval or antediluvian health."[593]

-Thomas De Quincey, Confessions of an English Opium Eater

grunge is punk on heroin

"*The music [was] in the drugs and the drugs [were] in the music*"[594]

-Moby

"*[grunge is] hard music played to a slow tempo.*"[595]

-Kurt Cobain (*Fecal Matter, Nirvana*)

"*When I got ahold of Williams Burroughs book Junkie, I knew then that I would also be a heroin addict someday.*"[596]

-Mark Lanegan, Screaming Trees

This particular phrase, "grunge is punk on heroin" while perhaps crass and too simplified for musicology, does succinctly sum up a particular lineage specifically referring to tempo that does not leave any space to consider grunge in an opposite fashion. There in fact is a narcotic lineage of influence that can be drawn from the psychedelic use of Lewis Carrol and his writings coupled with the experiments of

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[593] Thomas De Quincy. "Confessions of an English Opium Eater" , *London Magazine* for October 1821, 31.

[594] Moby. *Porcelain: A Memoir (New York; Penguin Books 2017)*-Audiobook.

[595] Kurt Cobain interviewed by Everett True. Everett True. *Live Through This. American Rock Music in the Nineties.* (London; Virgin Publishing, 2000, 205.

[596] Mark, Lanegan. *Sing Backwards and Weep*. Mishka Shubaly, ed. New York; Hatchette Books 2020), 23.

Albert Huxley on LSD.[597] The imagined territories depicted by Jimi Hendrix in songs like 'Purple Haze'[598] or the band naming themselves the 13th Floor Elevator are lived-experiences that create, perform, and produce alternative communities of practice that question capitalistic restrictions of ideas of work and labor trapped in monetary exchange of temporal makings. So too perhaps it is time to uncover grunge's micropractices, viewing the incorporation of the alchemy of lived experience and seeking inspiration through transgressive means, allows us to define a *narcosonic* dimension to genre formation.

Undeniably, one of the most controversial identifying characteristics of grunge for the public in the 1990s was heroin. The representations of its use in rock subcultures during this time, as James Middleton has argued, implore us to ask meaningful questions as to whether there is an actual aesthetic appeal of heroin and what happens to the body itself.[599] This popular fascination with the transgressive behavior of grunge rock-stars inundated the western press, simultaneously denouncing heroin and its perceived influence on the fashion industry while craving the subculture's aesthetics off the rack, on the screen, and on the radio. One of Middleton's arguments was that the representation of heroin in particular subculture formations is a way of transforming the body and its *affects*...setting it in process to disengage from

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[597] See Robert J. Campbell. Haight-Ashbury, Psychedelics & The Birth of Acid Rock, David P. Szatmary, ed. Albany, State University of New York Press) 2023. Jim DeRogatis. Kaleidoscope Eyes: Psychedelic Rock from the '60s to the '90s. Citadel Press, 1996. Bill Graham and Robert Greenfield. Bill Graham Presents: My Life Inside Rock and Out. De Capo Press.

[598] The Jimmy Hendrix Experience. *Experience Hendrix: The Best of Jimi Hendrix*. ℗ 1997 Song Music Entertainment.

[599] James, Middleton. "Heroin Use, Gender, and Affect in Rock Subcultures" *Echo* Vol. 1.1 (Fall 1999); online.

normative social imperatives such as work and bourgeois family life."[600] Jennifer Friedman and Marisa Alicea agreed with Middleton, citing their ethnographic study of female heroin users as indicating gender refusal through the use of heroin. Both in class and gender expectations, the practice of heroin for their subjects was a way out of the restrictive social framework and their identities.[601]

In this sense, meaning associated with narcotics, and specifically Barthes' Third-Meaning which Stewart utilizes to draw the social boundary that ideologies form around cultural practices and social status[602]...in this way the Folk Devil in its existence in legal statuses, labeling outcasts simultaneously as celebrity. Narcotics represent intimate *affects* that are both individualized and communal. In truth, meanings are fluid; the ontological belonging, the phenomenological aspect of ritual, and the propensity to sway/swim into existence that is embodied differently given the moment, the hour, the day, the week, the month, the year...in suspicion that these all can be combined into an experience.

"*The drug is a series of moments: the moment you put the needle in and draw back the plunger. The moment you see your blood in the chamber. The moment you plunge the drug back in, there's that momentary rush of pleasure. The moment you nod into unconsciousness. The first anxious moment you're aware you're not high anymore. The moment you realize you feel sick. The rage that comes and will only intensify, until you do it all again.*[603]

-Patty Schemel (Drummer, HOLE)

The spectrum of emotion from anticipation, to pleasure, to pain, to anguish, and

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[600] James, Middleton. “Heroin Use, Gender, and Affect in Rock Subcultures” *Echo* Vol. 1.1 (Fall 1999); online.

[601] Jennifer Friedman and Marisa Alicea. "Women and Heroin: The Path of Resistance and Its Consequences", Gender & Society, Vol. 9, No.4. (August 1995) 432-433.

[602] Kathleen, Stewart. *Ordinary Affects*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

[603] Patty, Schemel. *Hit So Hard.* (New York; Hatchet Book Group. 2017),104.

back depicts a series of physical and psychological experiences that embody a transformative and mobile existence. The narcosonic looks to the subject and how they express physical, emotional, and mental conditions such as illness, but also how they will go deeper down to the bone in describing dissected human anatomy, hopelessness, drugs and references to intoxication and drug rituals and practices, psychotropic events and feelings as well as psychedelic observations. Words such as death and even suicide are extremely important to track in grunge as well as methods and tools inflicting pain and death such as guns and knives. This is a haunted state of sonic being, which becomes visualized in lyrics, and relayed through the body. Fluctuations of agency and agony that are audible in vocal performances of Layne Staley and Kurt Cobain, in lived-experiences such as Mark Lanegan. This is present in proximal and distal adverbs, indicating temporal and spatial relations from the artist to their relationship with their urban, or meteorological environment. The narcosonic adds to this the psychotropic ecology; an expansive condition of influence on the body as well as the emotional quotient of engagement in the state of composing genre.

dislocation and the stakes for grunge work

At first glance or first encounter, the person who seems out of place, who exists and creates within non-traditional spaces is that fearful representation of the 'anomie'[604]. As Jeff Ferrel reminds us, the emergence of this individual is not from

[604] Emile Durkheim's concept of a breakdown of social order discussed by Jeff Ferrell in *Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge*. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018), 27-28.

outside, but in.[605] The images captured by Michael Lavine and described by Thurston Moore[606] helped define an “urban ethos” of grunge that preceded the genre. Moore referred to the subjects of their visual appreciation for Seattle as ”wandering souls”;[607] likening Kurt Cobain as just another one of the wandering souls in his town, who wore thrift-store hand-me-downs, worn out parkas, beat-up sneakers, flannel shirts, and jeans.”[608] The breakdown of social order is shaped by a society's own institutions and institutional failures. Her dislocation is not so much spatial as it is normative, a jarring disconnection from the moral stability on which she once relied…"[609]

Subcultures themselves in *drift* brace against society or rebel by ignoring the rules in which social functions are strictly articulated in divisions of labor. When artistic praxis is called in, this is not traditional labor in the sense of Capital, but rather an anomaly to organized effort within a particular time frame that requires responsive obedience and is rewarded with a paycheck. Perhaps this is why they are the best suited to communicate other stations of *drift* and dislocation, as cultural others *affected* internally. The community of the displaced was a key defining element of the visual caught on camera for Lavine and Moore.

To define grunge sonically and visually as possessing the distressed drifting away from a shared reality is to understand the fissures and gaps in the *soundscape* of

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[605] Jeff, Ferrell. Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018), 27.

[606] Michael, Lavine and Thurston, Moore. *Grunge*. (New York; Harry N. Abrams, 2009)

[607] Ibid.,3.

[608] ibid.

[609] Jeff, Ferrell. *Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge*. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018), 27.

Seattle. These spaces in between the geological, the urban landscape, the weather, and the economic construction are the invisible communities of the unhoused as well as those that emerge from within and wander.

In the census data from 1989, The City of Seattle noted, “The highest poverty rate is for people ages 18-24.”[610] They accounted for this number by linking “the number of students in Seattle or those with little or no work experience”.[611] The 26.8% of 18-24 year olds experiencing poverty along with the 16% of youth ages 6-17 provides a glaring statistic, without examining those particular individuals experiencing homelessness. In fact, the word never appears in the entire 75 pages of the report. The category of “homeless” does not exist in the 1980 census data either.

We know there were homeless youth in Seattle during the years that the grunge genre was fomenting. According to Dawn H. Smart who published “Homeless Youth in Seattle: Planning and Policy-Making at the Local Government Level”, there were 180,535 youths between the ages of 10 and 19 in 1985 in King County, in which Seattle is located.[612] Her article which pointedly addressed the significant gaps in Human Services, Child Welfare Services, and modifications to the Juvenile Code, called for significant change to Seattle’s approach to homeless youth. She argued that recognition of the breath of the problems facing youth who have run away and funding intervention and resources was necessary by the City of Seattle in order to fully address the problem.

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[610] Census 90. Seattle 1990 Who We Are. December 1, 1992. Current Planning Research Bulletin Number 52. pg 22.

[611] Ibid.

[612] Dawn H. Smart. “Homeless Youth in Seattle: Planing and Policy-Making at the Local Government Level”, *Journal of Adolescent Health* Vol 12 (1991):519.

For all the notoriety of grunge associated with youth culture on a mainstream level, it was not directly connected to teenagers in Seattle because of restrictions on access to music. Jonathan Zwickel, one of the authors of the Podcast, "Let the Kids Dance"[613] covers a condensed history of Seattle's Teen Dance Ordinance[614] and marks the bifurcation of Seattle's youth population from grunge. The back-story of his podcast rests on homeless youth and those that experienced different housing situations that fluctuated. Without consistent shelter, safe spaces, or places to enjoy music, his underlying argument promoted youth being able to attend "All-Ages Shows" at bars and clubs. But, beginning in 1985, those under 18 were forbidden to attend venues like the Crocodile Cafe or Gorilla Gardens because of the Teen Dance Ordinance.

> *"The City Council hereby find and declares that the pervasive problems of runaway children, drug abuse and abuse of children are problems of such magnitude that they are a matter of City concern and are contributed to by unregulated dance halls; as such this chapter shall regulate dance halls that admit persons under the age of eighteen."*[615]

The reaction of the City Council to the problem of large numbers of youth experiencing homelessness was to further dislocate them from sites of community and creativity.

The Seattle City Council's measures to assist residents with "homelessness" as well as Census data from this time lacks detailed attention to unhoused youth,

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[613] Jonathan, Zwickel, Matt Martin, and Jim Gates. "Let the Kids Dance!". 2024. Podcast. KUOW/NPR Network Production.

[614] Ordinance § 112373 signed July 29, 1985. Passed with a unanimous vote of 8-0, documented by the City of Seattle-Legislative Department's Report of Committee.

[615] Section 6.294.010 stating the purpose of a (new) Chapter to the Seattle Municipal Code.

underrepresenting the dynamics and conditions experienced by dislocated youth while practicing a wide-spread dissuasion about the actual causes and conditions faced by young people in Seattle at the time. These measures by the city coincide with Jeff Ferrel's argument that "consumerist economics and aggressive urban policing enforce a certain invisibility to the homeless."[616] We should view the TDO in retrospect as a removal tactic to promote a broadening of the emerging night life economy to encompass commercial reorganization of music and make it more accessible to consumers, not subculture neighbors and participants.

More study is necessary on the youth experiencing homelessness during the 1970s and 1980s in Seattle which resides outside the immediate bounds of inquiry for this project. Krist Noveselic (Nirvana) in 1995 formed the Joint Artists and Music Promotions Political Action Committee (JAMPAC) partly in response to repeal the TDO of 1985. Noveselic assisted in the proposal of a revision to the TDO known as the All Ages Dance Ordinance (AADO) and pursued this with testimony from Chris Walla (Death Cab for Cutie) before the City Council on May 28, 2002 leading to the AADO being instilled as Ordinance 120889. This rectification occurred seventeen years after grunge had formed as a genre.

Seattle grunge musicians belonged to this poverty group of young people documented the census. In 1989, Kurt Cobain, and Layne Staley were 22. Andy Wood was 23, Mia Zapatta was 24, while Chris Cornell, Mark Lanegan and Eddy Vedder were 25. From a merely numeric and statistical approach, the grunge musicians, had a lot of mobility surrounding housing, and were in a different census age group than youth.

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[616]Jeff, Ferrell. *Drift; Illicit Mobility and Uncertain Knowledge*. (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2018), 186.

Poverty rates for 25-34 year olds was only 10.9%, but again a portion of the 18-24 years olds also belonged to the grunge community directly during this time. They were also keenly aware of their precarious security as an underclass that survived on food when they could. Dave Grohl recounts surviving on hotdogs from the gas station in his memoir.[617]

Pearl Jam's song, "Evenflow"[618] depicts a state of homelessness from the observer walking by,

"Freezin', rests his head on a pillow made of concrete, again
Oh, feelin' maybe he'll see a little better, set a days, ooh yeah
Oh, hand out, faces that he sees time again ain't that familiar,
oh yeah
Oh, dark grin, he can't help, when he's happy looks insane, oh yeah

Even flow, thoughts arrive like butterflies
Oh, he don't know, so he chases them away
Someday yet, he'll begin his life again
Life again, life again."

At the end of the song from the Rearviewmirror album, Eddie Vedder speaks as the homeless person quietly pouring the words out of his mouth in a resignation.

"I died. I died…
I died and you watched.
I died and you walked by..
I'm dead."[619]

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[617] Dave, Grohl. *The Storyteller: Tales of Life and Music*. (New York: Dey Street Books, 2021), 135 .

[618] "Evenflow", Pearl Jam, *Ten*. ℗ 1991. Sony Music Entertainment Inc. Music by Stone Gossard. Lyrics by Eddie Vedder.

[619] Pearl Jam *Reviewmirror: Greatest Hits* 1991-2003. ℗ 2004 Sony Music.

The man does not begin his life again, but instead loses it while bystanders ignore him.

genre survival & creative communities of practice

The Vogue was once the crucible of the "Seattle sound[sic]"
-Jeri Francs (1992)[620]

"In the late '80s, we played at the OK Hotel with someone from Sub Pop, and I remember clearly the poster said BABES IN TOYLAND: PREMENSTRUAL Grunge FROM MINNEAPOLIS. I was like, "Holy shit!" I thought that was so fucking badass."[621]
-Lori Barbero (drummer, Babes in Toyland)

In December 1990, *THE ROCKET*, already displayed concern over spaces of practice, mainly underage venues where new music is fostered. "...any place that provides a gathering place for underagers becomes immediately suspect, and if police surveillance reveals the consumption of illegal substances by the tykes, its the *club* [their emphasis] that's seen as the corrupting force, so its the club that gets closed down…"[622] One year later, the OK Hotel where Nirvana had played for their gas money to get to Sound City and Babes in Toyland relished their promotion was closed. It served as the coffee shop in the movie Singles (1992) and now is the O.K. Hotel Apartments.

On October 31, 1999, RKCNDY, the all-ages club, closed in Seattle and was sold to a developer[623]. Some spaces still exist and promote local music like the Off

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[620] Jeri Francs in *The Rocket,* October 1992.

[621] Mark, Yarm. *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge* (New York; Crown Publishing. Kindle Edition), 192.

[622] Interview with Damon Stewart. Grant Alden, Gillian G. Garr, and Jeff Gilbert. "Who's Killing Seattle Music?" *The Rocket*, December 1990.

[623] See "All-Ages Rkcndy Club To Close Its Doors" Oct. 31, Sep 15, 1999 by Tom Scanlon Seattle Times.

Ramp, the Comet Tavern and The Crocodile Cafe. The Moore and The Paramount remain cultural fixtures in Seattle, featuring a wide range of artists. The closure of the early venues of rock and metal performances can be seen as part of a larger scale of gentrification in Seattle that has had a negative impact on the communities of Capitol Hill, Belltown, Uptown, Queen Anne, and Downtown. The Central District once represented the largest population of African Americans in the Pacific Northwest, but because of historical Restrictive Covenants and Redlining, the Improvements of Community agreed upon by the Seattle Planning Commission, communities have diminished beyond the point of recognition impacting residential housing and businesses[624].

In a 2020 interview at the onset of the pandemic, Seattle photographer Karen MasonBlair, whose grunge-era photos adorn the Central's walls, discussed the importance of maintaining spaces intertwined with Seattle's musical past. "You can't replace these things," she said. "You can have a new club and you can start a new heritage, but our heritage is there. … If you lose your historical places for people to go to, then what does that say about you as a city?"[625] Mason Blair's interview inspires us to ask, what if The Showbox, The Music Bank, The OffRamp, The Ok Hotel, The Black Dog Forge, and other *places* of practice for grunge, were not there? Would grunge as we know it come into fruition? Would the genre have been able to form? If it did come together with the same people, would it sound the same?

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[624] For more information, see "On the Brink". Directed by Jeff Shulman and Steve Fong. November 13, 2019. PBS Films.

[625] "Central Saloon, storied grunge-era club, secures long-term future in Seattle". Seattle Times. June 8, 2022. https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/music/central-saloon-storied-grunge-era-club-secures-long-term-future-in-seattle/ By Michael Rietmulder.

Grunge as a genre of downward mobility pinpoints a foundation to start uncovering the political work of subcultures in American Studies and Musicology. Following the genre of grunge as a refusal against an intense period of conspicuous consumption in the commercial marketplace that produced and cannibalized culture en masse, begs its sound to be a critical tool of inquiry into the economic and consequential environmental conditions of *place*. From there we can ask, what are the potential historical critiques that *place* offers; while beginning in one geographical area, a larger scale of influence is possible to observe, since the performance driven from *place* travels audibly and visually in a comprehensive way across main-stream cultural avenues through mechanical reproduction. A genre that resonates as grunge did speaks to the potential to uncover other refusals to commodification as well as observe the far reaching *affects* of late capitalism.

A primary consideration of genre disintegration, or rather the lack of unique rhizomic formations in music is the lack of *space* that is available and financially accessible to creative work. Having affordable *spaces* for artists to work on their craft is essential to a thriving community of practice. The Haight Ashbury, Laurel Canyon, The Bowery, and the Chelsea Hotel all were *places* that afforded artistic practice to be privileged over profit providing space for artistic creativity just like the informal spaces available in Seattle at the time.

San Francisco in the 1960s had affordable large housing units in its Haight district, accommodating *The Grateful Dead,* Janis Joplin, *Jefferson Airplane, The Family Dog,* and others the opportunity to work on their craft and not be concerned with rent. Once known as “Politicians Row” in the 1920s, by 1965 the neighborhood’s

Victorian mansions were no longer home to the elite, but run down on all accounts and open to a diverse group of people of lower income including students studying at San Francisco State University.[626] “The Dead House” and “The Dog House” as examples were owned and managed by like-minded benefactors who kept rents low or even offered free rent.[627] Part of that community also included *The Diggers* who founded new ways of community through providing food and trading clothes and other wares, avoiding the capitalistic work requirements to 'make a living'-instead they made their living with art. The community formed in Haight supported and provided patronage to each other, living alternatively to profit-driven rents and strict urban organization.

New York in the late 1960s also provided unregulated neighborhoods where artists could gather and afford to practice more than work a 9-5 job. Patti Smith has noted in her memoir, *Just Kids,* she was able to rent room 1017 in the Chelsea Hotel at 222 W. 23rd Street in Chelsea for $55 a week in 1969-she needed only some of her drawings and some pictures that Robert had done as their security deposit.[628] This translates to roughly $470 per week in 2024 and $1920 per month.[629] A steal in the current New York real-estate market. In 1980, Kim Gordon and Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth rented an apartment on the Lower East Side (84 Eldridge St) for $150 per month, living mostly on his earnings as a dishwasher at a Co-op restaurant in SOHO called Food, owned by artist Gordon Matta-Clark because of rent control they were

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[626] See Campbell, Robert J. Campbell. Haight Ashbury, *Psychedelics and the Birth of Acid Rock*., David P. Szatmary, ed. (Albany; State University of New York Press, 2023), 111.

[627] Ibid., 111.

[628] Patti, Smith. *Just Kids.* (New York; Harper Collins. 2010), 93-94.

[629] Figures provided by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis; Consumer Price Index (CPI) calculator for inflation. The Bank maintains historical records of tables of inflation rates dating back to 1913. https://www.minneapolisfed.org/about-us/monetary-policy/inflation-calculator.

able to live there for 10 years.[630] Their rent now would be equivalent to $600.

The $55 per week rent that Smith and Mapplethorpe paid to live at the Chelsea, amounts to roughly $6 in 2024 (less than a crafted Starbucks drink in 2024). This demonstrated an exponential rate of inflation in the 55 years of comparison...almost 760%. Gordon and Moore's loft would cost around $40 by the same comparison. A slightly less steep cumulative rate of inflation at around 282% still depicts a steep hike in rental property given the current market conditions in New York today.

The Chelsea Hotel, has now been completely renovated, kicking out its long time tenants,[631] and now charges upwards of $500 per night for a "Petite Chelsea Room". The listings for 84 Eldridge Street are Off-Market, but near-by rentals of similar size start at $3,000 per month. As of 2024, Patti Smith, Robert Mapplethorpe, Thurston Moore, and Kim Gordon would not have been able to live, work, and practice in their communities of New York. Sadly two very important spaces of artistic performance and mentorship connected to these artists are also gone. CBGB closed in 2006 and Max's Kansas City closed in 1981. The unmistakable awning of CBGBs & OMFUG now resides in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; an artifact of a temporal and geographic place devoted to music, not profit.

If the ability to form spaces of artistic mentorship and inspiration is integral to genre formation, at least in the late 20th-century, what happens to the potential of new genres to be created when those spaces are no longer there. Without the Haight Ashbury, Laurel Canyon, the Bowery, the Chelsea Hotel, and Seattle-would

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[630] Kim, Gordon. *Girl in a Band: A Memoir*. (New York; Harper Collins), 2015.

[631] See Maya Duverdier and Amelie Van Elmbt (Directors) “Dreaming Walls: Inside The Chelsea Hotel”. Aug 12, 2022 Clin d'oeil Films, Basalt Film, Hard Working Movies, Les Films de l'oeil sauvage. Also, Victoria Cohen, HOTEL CHELSEA (New York: Pointed Leaf Press, 2013).

Psychedelic Rock, California Surf, Rock, punk, and New Wave sound radically different, or exist in some form at all? Additionally, would the romantic and musical relationships that created these sounds, have evolved into different rhizomic conditions further splintering collective place-making and in turn the soundtrack to particular historical temporal moments? The stakes for studying grunge, then, becomes a simultaneous environmental and economic endeavor to define the turning landscapes of American cities and the *affects* of structural changes that impose restrictive acoustic, vibrational, and economic *affects* on individuals from lower classes and underrepresented groups. This begs a larger question of the impact on urban design and its *affective* displacement of these groups, essentially drawing boundaries on belonging and negating the ability to establish spaces of praxis and thereby diminishing creative and cultural diversity. This is a *de-tuning* or perhaps a reorientation of the sounds of one's environment that R. Murray Schaefer noted when the relationship between people and the sounds of their environment change.[632]

"Music and the musician essentially become either objects of consumption like everything else, recuperators or subversion, or meaningless noise."- Jaques Atali [633]

"*It's freaking me out. People treat me like an object. I'm not a person anymore. I'm just a commodity to be sold. People don't really know who I am. People grab things from me.*"[634]

-Layne Staley when asked by his producer, "How does it feel to be famous?"

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[632] R. Murray, Schaefer. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, (Rochester; Destiny Books, 1977), 3-4.

[633] Jaques Atali , *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*; trans Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press,1989), 34.

[*634*] David, De Sola. *Alice in Chains: The Untold Story*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books St. Martins Press. 2015), 155.

In the songs touched upon in this dissertation, grunge has demonstrated its capacity to pose questions to a wide array of socio-economic, biopolitical, and gendered issues present in the late 20th-century. Its particular linguistic orientation of horror raises questions through subjection, taking on the critical vulnerability of a myriad of situations and performing them according to the grunge urban ethos. Additionally, through its practice of hypertextuality, grunge has been shown to critically dissect post-modern celebrity making, the commodification of art and culture as well as directly take on the negative impact of industry on the environment. Woven through each subject is the *signifying practice* of grunge, marking these topics through the viewpoint of the subjugated.

Further study of grunge from its displacement within the neoliberal organization of urban advancement juxtaposed with fordist notions of capitalism, opens up creative possibilities to engage with historical topics and offers comparative analysis through a radical framework of bricolage. The discipline of History, despite advancements in Digital Humanities as a method of engaging with Primary Sources, has negated the importance of Cultural Studies in its rigidity. The ramifications for historical methods and teaching History in the classroom re-establishes historical narratives that overlook white-colonial settlership, the economies of racism. It further nationalizes late-capitalism into geopolitical configurations surrounding institutional barriers to educational and occupational opportunities, centralizing the expansion of profit above the humanitarian approach of caring for community and country.

Grunge in this dissertation has also been deeply connected to Sound Studies and its critical work. Further study of grunge as a comparative praxis of political protest

opens up subculture studies to be used more critically in a wider range of Communication studies and to meaningful contribute to Sound Studies' interrogation of noise. *Economies of noise* are an *affective* technology. Steve Goodman's framework of 'Sonic Warfare' interrogates the politics of frequency with form a complex and invisible battlefield in which commercial, military, scientific, artistic, and popular musical interests are increasingly invested."[635] Just as Black Sabbath interrogated the politics of War[636] blatantly through lyrics and through the *hidden transcript* of tuning, so too, grunge artists provide a framework for dissecting the *affects* of sound.

This dissertation sees grunge as closely connected to the sociological work of Jeff Ferrel and the framework of *drift*. Urban organizing projects to centralize profits, raise rents, and create visibility in the name of preventing crime are effective in "cleaning up" neglected neighborhoods within cities. Design functionalities deployed made to make park benches uncomfortable for stretching to deter loitering or those who have no where else to sleep create inhospitable environments. The lasting outcome is the raising of rents that make neighborhoods unaffordable for those who called these areas their home. This also makes *places* that focused on the city citizens, like the Black Dog Forge, not as profitable, as other commercial projects built with the intention of bringing in tourism and profit from visitors, not the citizens of the county.

The deployment of urban organizing around economic growth that requires legible spaces devoted to Capital, destroys the inventive possibilities of unregulated space. While Seattle has certainly maintained a system of community parks as well as

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[635] Steve, Goodman. *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear.* Cambridge; The MIT Press, 2009), xvii.

[636] One prominent example of Sabbath's interrogation of war and its ravages is Black Sabbath, "War Pigs" *Paranoid*. ℗ Warner Records, Inc. 1970.

accessible art instillations around the city, the urban development that has evolved into a more productive landscape for the city, consequently has created more dislocation marked by a chronic conditions of large numbers of unhoused people. Additionally, the health of the inhabitants of the urban areas has become precarious as they occupy spaces of risk and abandonment in open drug practices. Nowhere is this more evident than at the Seattle Waterfront Project which is a couple of streets away from 3rd Avenue.

The displacement of Urban Studies and Cultural Studies from the discipline of History is the most serious evolution of *affective* technology. The project of Neoliberalism permeating education is at a critical juncture at the time of this publication. The erasure of the ramifications of colonialism and the negation of race and gender endanger critical inquiry promote subjugation of thought, effectively rebuilding a westernized narrative of progress. Subcultures reside in the spaces below and between. The historical significance of studying *subcultural* practices is to give voice to those who have been overlooked by society and disparaged to the margins. The actions of settlership, enslavement, Restrictive Covenants, and other bio-political apparatuses of power are responsible for the shaming and silencing of individuals and groups who would transgress against institutionalized mechanisms of control. The oblique actions of *refusal* of subcultures*;* unnoticed or overlooked by scholarship, leaves a serious gap for understanding the histories of those whose sovereignty has been compromised.

Music is its own call. Michael J. Kramer has argued that the music of the 1960s

was an organizer of citizenship in a new counterculture.[637] Music, even popularized music, can protest and perform critical work. Examples such as Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit"[638] Additionally, the artists themselves, even if commodified and reduced to the state of object, can still puncture oppression and voice dissent because of the large platform they are given to perform, such as Jimi Hendrix's performance of "The Star-Bangled Banner" at Woodstock. Grunge offers essential questions directly relating to social displacement, feminism, gender rights, gender violence, social displacement, the dynamics of the unhoused as well as questioning the stereo types of illness or orientation of illicit practices. These are questions that need to be continually posed in critical historical work, critical socio-economic research, but can travel into the territories of celebrity culture and commodified mass culture due to their sonic avenue.

[637] See Michael J. Kramer. *The Republic of Rock: Music and Citizenship in the Sixties Counterculture*. (Oxford; Oxford University Press), 2013.

[638] Billie Holiday, "Billie Holiday" ℗ UMG Recordings 1947.

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Bratmobile. *Pottymouth*. ℗ 1993. Kill Rock Stars.

Calamity Jane. Martha Jane Cannary. ℗ 1991. Calamity Jane.

Class of '99. *The Faculty (Music form the Motion Picture)*. ℗ 1998. Sony Music Entertainment.

Foo Fighters. *Foo Fighters*. ℗ 1995. Roswell Records, Inc.

Foo Fighters. *Sonic Highways.* ℗ 2014. Roswell Records, Inc.

The Gits. *Frenching the Bully.* ℗ 1992. Sub Pop.

The Gits. *Enter: The Conquering Chicken.* ℗ 1994 Sub Pop.

Green River. *Come On Down.* ℗ 1985. Homestead Records.

Green River. *Dry as a Bone.* ℗ 1986. Sub Pop.

Green River. *Rehab Doll.* ℗ 1988. Sub Pop.

Gruntruck. *Inside Yours.* ℗ 1992. Roadrunner.

Hammerbox. *Hammerbox.* ℗ 1988. C/Z Records.

Harvey, P.J. *Rid of Me*. ℗ 1993. Island Records.

Harvey, P.J. *To Bring You My Love.* ℗ 1995. Universal-Island Records.

Heavens to Betsy. *Calculated*. ℗ 1994. Kill Rock Stars.

HOLE. *Pretty on the Inside.* ℗ 1991. Caroline Records.

HOLE. *Live Through This.* ℗ 1994. DGC Records.

HOLE. *Celebrity Skin.* ℗ 1998. UMG Recordings.

L7. *L7.* ℗ 1989. Epitaph.

L7. *Smell the Magic.* ℗ 1990. Sub Pop.

L7. *Bricks Are Heavy.* ℗ 1992. Slash Records.

L7. *Hungry for Stink.* ℗ 1994. Slash Records.

L7. *The Beauty Process.* ℗ 1997. Slash Records.

Lanegan, Mark. *The Winding Sheet.* ℗ 1990. Sub Pop.

Lanegan, Mark. *Whiskey for the Holy Ghost.* ℗ 1994. Sub Pop.

Mad Season. *Above.* ℗ 1995. Hollywood Records.

Malfunkshun. *Return to Olympus.* ℗ 1995. Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Meat Puppets. *Forbidden Places.* ℗ 1991. UMG Recordings.

Meat Puppets. *Huevos.* ℗ 1987. Megaforce Records.

Meat Puppets. *Mirage.* ℗ 1987. Meat Puppets.

Meat Puppets. *Monsters.* ℗ 1989. Meat Puppets.

Meat Puppets. *Out My Way.* ℗ 1986. Meat Puppets.

Meat Puppets. *Too High to Die.* ℗ 1994. The Island Def Jam Music Group.

Melvins. *Gluey Porch Treatments.* ℗ 1987. Ipecac Recordings.

Melvins. *Ozma.* ℗ 1989. Boner.

Mother Love Bone. *Shine.* ℗ 1990. Mercury Records.

Mother Love Bone. *Apple.* ℗ 1990. The Island Def Jam Music Group.

Mudhoney. Piece of Cake. ℗ 1992. Warner Bros.

Mudhoney. *Superfuzz Bigmuff.* ℗ 1988. Sub Pop.

Nirvana. *Bleach.* ℗ 1989. Sub Pop.

Nirvana. *Nevermind.* ℗ 1991. Geffen Records.

Nirvana. *Incesticide.* ℗ 1992. Geffen Records.

Nirvana. *In Utero.* ℗ 1993. Geffen Records.

Nirvana. *MTV Unplugged (November 18, 1993)*. ℗ 1994. UMG Recordings, Inc.

Pearl Jam. *Ten.* ℗ 1991. Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Pearl Jam. *Vs.* ℗ 1993. Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Pearl Jam. *Vitology.* ℗ 1994. Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Pearl Jam. *No Code.* ℗ 1996. Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Pearl Jam. *Yield*. ℗ 1998. Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Phair, Liz. *Exile in Guyville*. ℗ 1993. Matador Records.

Phair, Liz. *Whip-Smart.* ℗ 1994. Capitol Records.

Phair, Liz. *Whitechocolatespaceegg.* ℗ 1998. Capitol Records.

Screaming Trees. *Clairvoyance.* ℗ 1986. Hall of Records.

Screaming Trees. *Even If and Especially When.* ℗ 1987. SST Records.

Screaming Trees. *Invisible Lantern.* ℗ 1988. SST Records.

Screaming Trees. *Buzz Factory.* ℗ 1989. SST Records.

Screaming Trees. *Uncle Anesthesia.* ℗ 1991. Sony Music Entertainment.

Screaming Trees. *Sweet Oblivion.* ℗ 1992. Sony Music Entertainment.

Screaming Trees. *Dust.* ℗ 1996. Sony Music Entertainment.

Skin Yard. *1000 Smiling Knuckles*. ℗ 1991. Skin Yard.

Skin Yard. *Hallowed Ground.* ℗ 1988. Skin Yard.

Skin Yard. *Inside the Eye.* ℗ 1993. Skin Yard.

Skin Yard. *Skin Yard.* ℗ 1986. C/Z.

Sonic Youth. *Bad Moon Rising.* ℗ 1985. Squeaky Squawk.

Sonic Youth. *Confusion Is Sex/Kill Yr. Idols.* ℗ 1995. Squeaky Squawk.

Sonic Youth. *Dirty.* ℗ 1992. Geffen Records.

Sonic Youth. *Dirty Boots-EP.* ℗ 1991. UMG Recordings, Inc.

Sonic Youth. *Evol.* ℗ 1986. Squeaky Squawk.

Sonic Youth. *Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star*. ℗ 1994. Geffen Records.

Sonic Youth. *goo.* ℗ 1990. Geffen Records.

Sonic Youth. *Master-Dik.* ℗ 1987. Squeaky Squawk.

Sonic Youth. *Sister.* ℗ 1987. Squeaky Squawk.

Sonic Youth. *Sonic Youth.* ℗ 1981. Squeaky Squawk.

Sonic Youth. *Daydream Nation.* ℗ 1988. Squeaky Squawk.

Sonic Youth. *Walls Have Ears.* ℗ 1986. Goofin' Records.

Soundgarden. *Ultramega OK.* Ⓟ 1988. Sub Pop.

Soundgarden. *Louder Than Love.*Ⓟ 1989. A&M Records.

Soundgarden. *Screaming Life.* Ⓟ 1990. Sub Pop.

Soundgarden. *Badmotorfinger*. Ⓟ 1991. A&M Records.

Soundgarden. *Superunknown.* Ⓟ 1994. A&M Records.

Soundgarden. *Down on the Upside.* Ⓟ 1995. A&M Records.

TAD. *8 Way Santa.* Ⓟ 199. Sub Pop.

TAD. *God's Balls.* Ⓟ 1989. Sub Pop.

TAD. *Inhaler.* Ⓟ 1993. Giant Records.

TAD. *Infrared Riding Hood.* Ⓟ 1995. Elektra Entertainment Group.

TAD. *Salt Lick.* Ⓟ 1990. Sub Pop.

Temple of the Dog. *Temple of the Dog.* Ⓟ 1990. UMG Recordings, Inc.

Appendix B Music Videos

Atkins, Martyn., dir. Alice in Chains, “Sea of Sorrow, Version 2”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1991. Steaming.

Bayer, Samuel., dir. HOLE, “Doll Parts”, Courtney Love, Eric Erlandson, Jennifer Finch, Patty Schemel.1994. Streaming.

Bayer, Samuel., dir. Nirvana, “Smells Like Teen Spirit”; Kurt Cobain, Dave Grohl, and Krist Noveselic. 1991. Streaming.

Casale, Gerald., dir., Soundgarden, “Blow Up the Outside World”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1996. Streaming.

Corbijn, Anton., dir. Nirvana, “Heart Shaped Box”; Kurt Cobain, Dave Grohl, and Krist Noveselic. 1993. Streaming.

Crowe, Cameron and Josh Taft., dirs. Alice in Chains, “Would?”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1992. Streaming.

Crowe, Cameron., dir. Alice in Chains, “Would?” Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1992. in *Singles*. Streaming.

Crowe, Cameron., dir. Alice in Chains, “It Ain’t Like That” Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1992. in *Singles* (1992). Streaming.

Crowe, Cameron., dir. Alice in Chains, “It Ain’t Like That” Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1992. *Singles* Blu-ray 2015.

Crowe, Cameron., dir. Soundgarden, “Birth Ritual”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Hiro Yamamoto, Matt Cameron. 1992. in *Singles* (1992). Streaming.

Cuffaro, Chris., dir. Screaming Trees, “Dollar Bill”; Mark Lanegan, Gary Lee Conner, and Van Conner. 1992. Streaming.

Cuffaro, Chris., dir. Screaming Trees, “Shadow of the Season”; Mark Lanegan, Gary Lee Conner, and Van Conner. 1992. Streaming.

Dick, Nigel., dir. Alice in Chains, “Down in a Hole”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1993. Streaming.

Donkin, Nick., dir. Alice in Chains. “I Stay Away”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, and Layne Staley. 1994. Streaming.

Egan, Nick., dir. Alanis Morissette. “You Oghta Know”; Alanis Morissette, Taylor Hawkins. 1995. Streaming.

Etoll, Michael., dir. Babes in Toyland, “He’s My Thing”; Lori Barbero, Kat Bjelland, and Michelle Leon. 1989. Streaming.

Fedor, Paul., dir. Alice in Chains, “Get Born Again”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Inez, and Layne Staley. 1999. Streaming.

Greenhaigh, Howard., dir. Soundgarden. “Black Hole Sun”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. June 1994. Streaming.

Kerslake, Kevin., dir. Nirvana. “Come as You Are”; Kurt Cobain, Dave Grohl, and Krist Noveselic. 1992. Streaming.

Kerslake, Kevin., dir. Soundgarden, “Hands All Over”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Hiro Yamamoto, and Matt Cameron. 1990. Streaming.

Kerslake, Kevin., dir. Nirvana. “In Bloom”; Kurt Cobain, Dave Grohl, and Krist Noveselic. 1992. Streaming.

Kerslake, Kevin., dir. Nirvana. “Lithium”; Kurt Cobain, Dave Grohl, and Krist Noveselic. 1992. Streaming.

Kerslake, Kevin., dir. Soundgarden. “Outshined Version 2”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1991. Streaming.

Kohr, Mark., dir. Screaming Trees. “All I Know”; Mark Lanegan, Gary Lee Conner, and Van Conner. 1996. Streaming.

Kozik, Frank., dir. Soundgarden. “Pretty Noose (Version 1)”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1996. Streaming.

Mahurin, Matt., dir. Alice in Chains, “Angry Chair”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1992. Streaming.

Mahurin, Matt., dir. Alice in Chains, “No Excuses”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, and Layne Staley. 1994. Streaming.

Mahurin, Matt.,dir. Soundgarden, “The Day I Tried to Live”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1994. Streaming.

Mahurin, Matt.,dir. Soundgarden, “Outshined”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1991. Streaming.

Mochnacz, Maria., dir. PJ Harvey, “Down by the Water” P.J. Harvey. 1995. Streaming.

Ockenfels, Frank., dir. Alice in Chains, “Heaven Beside You”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Inez and Layne Staley. 1996. Streaming.

Pellington, Mark., dir. Alice in Chains, “Rooster”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1993. Streaming.

Pellington, Mar., dir. Pearl Jam, “Jeremy”; Eddie Vedder, Jeff Ament, Mike McCready, Stone Gossard, and Dave Krusen. 1991. Streaming.

Plansker, Jeffrey., dir. Soundgarden, “Spoonman”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1994. Streaming.

Pray, Doug., dir. Soundgarden, “My Wave” Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1994. Streaming.

Rachman, Paul., dir. Alice in Chains, “Man in the Box”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1991. Streaming.

Rachman, Paul., dir. Alice in Chains, “Sea of Sorrow, Version 1 [Color]”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1991. Streaming.

Schenck, Rocky.,dir. Alice in Chains, “Grind”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1995. Streaming.

Schenck, Rocky.,dir. Alice in Chains. “Them Bones”.; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1990. Streaming.

Schenck, Rocky.,dir. Alice in Chains. “We Die Young”.; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1990. Streaming.

Schenck, Rocky., dir. Alice in Chains. “What the Hell Have I?”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Inez, and Layne Staley. 1993. Streaming.

Scott, Jake., dir. Soundgarden, “Burden in My Hand”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1996. Streaming.

Scott, Jake., dir. Soundgarden. “Fell on Black Days”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1994. Streaming.

Scott, Jake., dir. Tracy Bonham. “Mother, Mother”; Tracy Bonham. 1996. Streaming.
Seliger, Mark and Fred Woodward. HOLE. “Violet”, Courtney Love, Melissa Auf der Maur, Eric Erlandson, Patty Schemel. 1995. Streaming.

Shepherd, Henry., dir. Soundgarden. “Pretty Noose (Version 2)”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1996. Streaming.

Staley, Layne and George Vale., dirs. Alice in Chains. “Again”, Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Inez, and Layne Staley. 1996. Streaming.

Taft, Josh., dir. Pearl Jam. “Alive”; Eddie Vedder, Jeff Ament, Mike McCready, Stone Gossard, and Dave Krusen. 1991. Streaming.

Taft, Josh., dir. Pearl Jam. “Evenflow”; Eddie Vedder, Jeff Ament, Mike McCready, Stone Gossard, and Dave Krusen. 1992. Streaming.

Taft, Josh., dir. Pearl Jam. “Oceans; Eddie Vedder, Jeff Ament, Mike McCready, Stone Gossard, and Dave Krusen. 1992. Streaming.

Taft, Josh., dir. Alice in Chains. “Would?”; Jerry Cantrell, Sean Kinney, Mike Starr, and Layne Staley. 1992. Streaming.

Zimmerman, Eric and Dale Peterson., dirs., Soundgarden, “Jesus Christ Pose”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1991. Streaming.

Zimmerman, Eric., dir. Screaming Trees, “Nearly Lost You”; Mark Lanegan, Gary Lee Conner, and Van Conner. 1993. Streaming.

Zimmerman, Eric and Dale Peterson., dirs., Soundgarden, “Rusty Cage”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1992. Streaming.

[Unnamed Director], Soundgarden. “Superunknown”; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. 1995. Streaming.

[Unnamed Director], Soundgarden. “Get on the Snake” [unreleased video]; Chris Cornel, Kim Thayil, Ben Shepherd, and Matt Cameron. c [.]. Streaming.

[Unnamed Director], Screaming Trees. “Butterfly”; Mark Lanegan, Gary Lee Conner, and Van Conner 1993. Streaming.

[Unnamed Director], Screaming Trees. “Sworn and Broken”; Mark Lanegan, Gary Lee Conner, and Van Conner. 1996.

Appendix C Further Listening

Amos, Tori. *Little Earthquakes*. ℗ 1992. Atlantic Recording Corporation.

Bad Brains. *Bad Brains.* ℗ 1982. Bad Brains Records.

The Beatles. *Abbey Road.* ℗ 1969. Calderstone Productions Limited.

The Beatles. *The Beatles (The White Album).* ℗ 1968. Calderstone Productions Limited.

The Beatles. *Magical Mystery Tour*. ℗ 1967. Calderstone Productions Limited.

The Beatles. *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.* ℗ 1967. Calderstone Productions Limited.

Black Sabbath. *Black Sabbath*. ℗ 1970. Warner Records, Inc.

Black Sabbath. *Black Sabbath, Vol. 4*. ℗ 1972. Warner Records, Inc.

Black Sabbath. *Master of Reality.* ℗ 1971. Warner Records, Inc.

Black Sabbath. *Never Say Die!.* ℗ 1978. Warner Records, Inc.

Black Sabbath. *Paranoid*. ℗ 1970. Warner Records, Inc.

Black Sabbath. *Sabbath Bloody Sabbath*. ℗ 1973. Warner Records, Inc.

Black Sabbath. *Sabotage*. ℗ 1975. Warner Records, Inc.

Black Sabbath. *Technical Ecstasy.* ℗ 1976. Warner Records, Inc.

Candlebox. *Candlebox*. ℗ 1993. Maverick Recording Company.

Candlebox. *Lucy.* ℗ 1995. Maverick Recording Company.

Foo Fighters. *The Colour And The Shape.* ℗ 1997. Roswell Records.

Garbage. *Garbage*. ℗ 1995. Almo Sounds, Inc.

Heart. *Heart.* ℗ 1985. Capitol Records.

Heart. *Bebe Le Strange.* ℗ 1980. Sony Music Entertainment.

Heart. *Dog & Butterfly,* ℗ 1978. Sony Music Entertainment.

Heart. *Dreamboat Annie.* ℗ 1976. Capitol Records.

Heart. *Little Queen*. ℗ 1977. Sony Music Entertainment.

Heart. *Magazine*. ℗ 1978. Capitol Records.

Jett, Joan. *I Love Rock 'N' Roll* (Expanded Edition). ℗ 1981. Blackheart Records Group.

Leadbelly. *The Smithsonian Folkways Collection* (originally 1930s and 1940s). ℗ 2015. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

Led Zeppelin. *II.* ℗ 1969. Atlantic Recording Corporation.

Led Zeppelin. *III.* ℗ 1970. Atlantic Recording Corporation.

Led Zeppelin. *IV.* ℗ 1971. Atlantic Recording Corporation.

Led Zeppelin. *Houses of the Holy.* ℗ 1973. Atlantic Recording Corporation.

Led Zeppelin. *In Through the Out Door.* ℗ 1979. Atlantic Recording Corporation.

Led Zeppelin. *Led Zeppelin.* ℗ 1969. Atlantic Recording Corporation.

Led Zeppelin. *Physical Graffiti.* ℗ 1975. Atlantic Recording Corporation.

Led Zeppelin. *Presence.* ℗ 1976. Atlantic Recording Corporation.

Moby. *Animal Rights.* ℗ 1996. Little Idiot.

Moby. *Ambient.* ℗ 1993. Little Idiot.

Moby. *Everything is Wrong.* ℗ 1995. Little Idiot.

Osbourne, Ozzy. *Bark at the Moon*. ℗ 1983. Epic Records.

Osbourne, Ozzy. *Blizzard of Ozz*. ℗ 1980. Epic Records.

Osbourne, Ozzy. *Diary of a Madman*. ℗ 1981. Epic Records.

The Posies. *Dear 23*. ℗ 1990. UMG Records.

The Posies. *Frosting on the Beater*. ℗ 1993. Geffen Records.

Scream. *Banging the Drum.* ℗ 1988. Dischord Records.

Scream. *This Side Up.* ℗ 1985. Dischord Records.

Sex Pistols. *Never Mind the Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols.* ℗ 1977. Warner Records, Inc.

Smith, Patti. *Horses.* ℗ 1975. Arista Records.

Smith, Patti. *Wave.* ℗ 1979. Arista Records.

Ramones. *Road to Ruin.* ℗ 1978. Sire Records.

Ramones. *Ramones*, ℗ 1976. Sire Records.

Ramones. *Rocket to Russia.* ℗ 1977. Sire Records.

The Rolling Stones. *Exile On Main Street.* ℗ 1972. EMI.

Tagag, Tanya. *Retribution.* ℗ 2016. Six Shooter Records.

Throbbing Gristle. *20 Jazz Funk Greats*. ℗ 1979. Industrial Records.

Throbbing Gristle. *D.O.A. The Third and Final Report of Throbbing Gristle*. ℗ 1978. Industrial Records.

Throbbing Gristle. *The Second Annual Report*. ℗ 1977. Industrial Records.