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"I Want to Conquer the World": Chasing the Wild Goose, Tracing the Noise

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Abstract This study explores the transnational influences and inspirations of Bad Religion within Türkiye underground punk scene. Using document and content analysis methodologies, the research focuses on fanzines in Türkiye that center around Bad Religion. The research universe consists of fanzines published in Türkiye about Bad Religion, with Backroads fanzine serving as the sample for analysis. The study is grounded in subculture theory to understand the relationship between punk culture and fanzines. To interpret the fanzine content, the critical hermeneutic approach proposed by Habermas is applied. This approach delves into the textual content of fanzines and aims to uncover the ideological structures shaping their creation and reception. The study examines Bad Religion's role in shaping punk identity in Türkiye, while emphasizing the significance of fanzines in spreading these ideologies. It investigates how fanzines contribute to the ideological resistance of punk culture and the dissemination of alternative narratives. Ultimately, the study highlights the essential role of fanzines in the evolution of punk culture and the transmission of its ideologies. The findings demonstrate Bad Religion's deep impact on Turkish punk music and its role in driving cultural transformation.

Keywords Punk · Fanzines · Bad Religion · Subculture Theory · Do-It-Yourself Media

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"I Want to Conquer the World": Chasing the Wild Goose, Tracing the Noise

'Let's Talk About Nothing'

"Millions and millions chase the wild goose tonight
To conquer loneliness, they'll chase it all their lives"
—Bad Religion, *Chasing the Wild Goose*

This study explores the transnational inspirations and traces the influence of Bad Religion within the underground punk scene in Türkiye. Transnational history "is the study of the ways in which past lives and events have been shaped by processes and relationships that have transcended the borders of nation states" and seeks to understand "ideas, things, people, and practices which have crossed national boundaries" (Curthoys and Lake, 2005, p. 5). In this context, the study examines how youth subcultures have been represented through both mainstream and alternative media, focusing on how the impact of a music band extends beyond national frameworks.

By situating Bad Religion within a broader transnational and sociological context, this research delves into the dynamic evolution of national borders through cultural exchange and various forms of communication (Bridge, 2020, p. 123). As one of the most influential bands in punk subculture, Bad Religion serves as a compelling case study for examining the intersections between underground movements and mainstream cultural production. This analysis centers on two key aspects: the experiences of punks themselves and the role of fanzines as both a medium of representation and resistance. The study draws from fieldwork conducted within Istanbul's underground youth scene, one of the largest and most vibrant cultural hubs in Türkiye.

The socio-political climate in Türkiye, particularly following the 1980 military coup, mirrors the conditions that led to the rise of punk in the United Kingdom. As Moran (2010, p. 64) argues, the British class system, institutionalized poverty, and widespread unemployment played a significant role in the emergence of bands like the Sex Pistols and The Clash, demonstrating how socio-economic struggles can give birth to punk movements. Punk emerged in Türkiye nearly a decade after its explosion in the United Kingdom, with early concerts in Istanbul marking the local adaptation of the genre. A key influence in this development was Bad Religion, whose impact, although indirect, was primarily mediated through fanzines. Since mainstream media often misrepresented or ignored punk culture, fanzines became essential spaces for self-representation and fostering a language of opposition (Guerra and Quintela, 2014, p. 221). These independent publications, often anonymous and created using collage and cut-and-paste techniques, acted as both creative outlets and political statements. The outbreak of punk, often depicted as 'savagery' by mainstream media, led to the exclusion of punks from venues like nightclubs and bars.[1] As Serbes, Güzel, Gönden, and Kabaş (2025) argue, this exclusion increased the significance of fanzines, which provided a vital platform for young punks to discover bands like Bad Religion and articulate their subcultural identities. Fanzines played a crucial role in these discursive negotiations among audiences, serving as important written exchanges among individuals who were vital parts of the fanzine scene of the time (Dale, 2018, p. 170).

This study examines how Bad Religion's influence shaped punk culture in Türkiye by analyzing their reception among local punks. Bad Religion's legacy—encompassing DIY ethics, the diffusion of punk ideol-

[1] The *Daily Mirror* of 12 June 1977 is one of the most striking examples of this. The title of the newspaper is 'Punk Rock Jubilee Shocker', and in this column there is a disturbing report about the surprising new cult. Accordingly, it launches a moral crusade against punk by calling for an editorial stance to punish punks.

ogy, and radical socio-political discourse—intertwines with their musical aesthetics and their portrayal in Türkiye's fanzine culture. The aim is to analyze how Bad Religion has contributed to the construction of punk identity in Türkiye and its role in shifting the dynamics from underground media to mainstream culture. By doing so, this study contributes to broader discussions on the transnational circulation of subcultures and the enduring role of DIY media in preserving alternative cultural narratives.

The central research question guiding this study is: *How has Bad Religion's influence shaped punk identity in Türkiye, particularly through the medium of fanzines?* This question is explored through the following sub-questions:

1. How has Bad Religion's ideological and musical influence been received and reinterpreted within Turkish punk scene, as reflected in fanzine content?
2. In what ways do the lyrics and musical style of Bad Religion interact with the socio-political realities in Türkiye, particularly in the context of punk's resistance to mainstream culture?
3. How do fanzines, as expressions of DIY culture, contribute to the representation and resistance of punk ideologies in Türkiye, and what role do they play in the transnational circulation of punk culture?

Crafting the Narrative: Artistic Influence, Scholarly Relevance, and Literature Review

This study investigates the transnational influence of Bad Religion, a pioneering punk band formed in 1980 in Woodland Hills, California. As one of the foundational groups of the Southern California punk scene, Bad Religion has transcended geographical boundaries, influencing punk music and culture across generations worldwide. The band's ability to produce music that resonates beyond its era, addressing universal themes, has solidified its status as a symbol of punk. As Kourakis (2020, p. 41) notes, Bad Religion's lyrical mastery is well-documented, with their songs reflecting an active, engaged stance toward life. This has had a significant impact on the punk scene in Türkiye.

Fanzines have played a critical role in transmitting punk ideologies, allowing fans to express themselves in ways that resist mainstream media representations (Serbes and Güzel, 2020, p. 695). This study focuses on the *Backroads* fanzine, using it as a case study to explore how punk's ideological, musical, and socio-political messages have been articulated by local fans. In environments where punk culture was often misrepresented or ignored by mainstream outlets, fanzines provided essential space for alternative expression, solidifying their role as grassroots media.

This research is informed by subculture theory, which defines a subculture as a social group—typically composed of youth—sharing specific beliefs, attitudes, and ideas (Nicu, 2020, p. 3). Punk's transnational spread, particularly beyond the United States and United Kingdom, is not a new phenomenon; however, the visibility of punk communities and their increased solidarity through message boards and the accessibility of music has reshaped the landscape (Lalama, 2013, p. 6). Additionally, the study situates punk within contemporary social, historical, and cultural shifts, particularly postmodernist deconstruction theories and the 'death of the author' (Bestley, 2017, p. 13). Punk rock emerged in the mid-1970s as a transnational phenomenon in response to social and cultural transformations affecting the West (Welizarowicz, 2022, p. 57). Punk's ability to serve as a form of resistance has allowed it to challenge mainstream culture, questioning societal norms and hierarchies. As O'Connor (2022, p. 233) notes, creating a punk scene requires local bands, places to live, practice spaces, and venues to perform—conditions that are often supported and documented through fanzines, which offer alternative spaces for expression.

The *Backroads* fanzine, in particular, serves as an essential case study for understanding how global punk ideologies are received and reinterpreted in a local context. Through the analysis of its content, the study explores how these ideas have been transmitted and reshaped by grassroots media in Türkiye. Additionally,

the research incorporates personal reflections from individuals involved in the creation and evolution of punk music in Türkiye. These firsthand accounts offer valuable insight into the complex relationship between global punk ideologies and the socio-political realities of Türkiye, demonstrating how fanzines act as a vital medium for preserving alternative cultural narratives.

In examining the arrival of punk in Türkiye, this study draws on Ventsel’s (2019, p. 104) assertion that punk, as an underground music genre, exists within the political geography, laws, and infrastructures of the state. Punk in Türkiye arrived nearly a decade after its explosion in the United Kingdom, with early punk concerts in Istanbul marking the genre’s local adaptation. Despite political repression, these events introduced punk to Turkish youth, and Bad Religion’s influence, though indirect, played a key role in shaping the local punk scene, particularly through fanzines. Shtreis (2022, p. 31) notes that punk’s DIY ethos allowed it to transcend traditional media and create alternative spaces for self-expression. In the case of Bad Religion’s influence, fanzines became vital for disseminating punk ideologies, allowing punks in Türkiye to resist mainstream representations and assert their own subcultural identities.

Methodological Path

This study is primarily based on the analysis of *Backroads Fanzine*, a single-issue publication focused on the reception of Bad Religion in Türkiye. Produced in A5 format and entirely through analog techniques, the fanzine exemplifies the DIY ethos central to punk culture. It merges punk aesthetics with political and philosophical elements, providing a rich cultural document for understanding the intersection between local punk subcultures and global influences. The fanzine’s content is analyzed using document analysis, with a focus on how punk ideologies and Bad Religion’s influence are interpreted within the Turkish context. The analysis is confined to the fanzine’s content, which offers an in-depth representation of punk culture in Türkiye, addressing both musical and socio-political themes.

The study draws on the insights of key figures within the Turkish punk scene, including Tolga Özbey (frontman of Rashit[2]), Kaan Karaöz (member of Necrosis[3]), Ege Sorkun (member of Die In Vain[4]), and Berk Kuş. These individuals provide first-hand accounts of their involvement in punk music and its ideological underpinnings. In addition, Lefle Sanasyan, Fulya Kara, and Leyla Yanmaz, independent artists and fanzine writers, contribute valuable perspectives on the role of fanzines in the transmission and representation of punk culture.

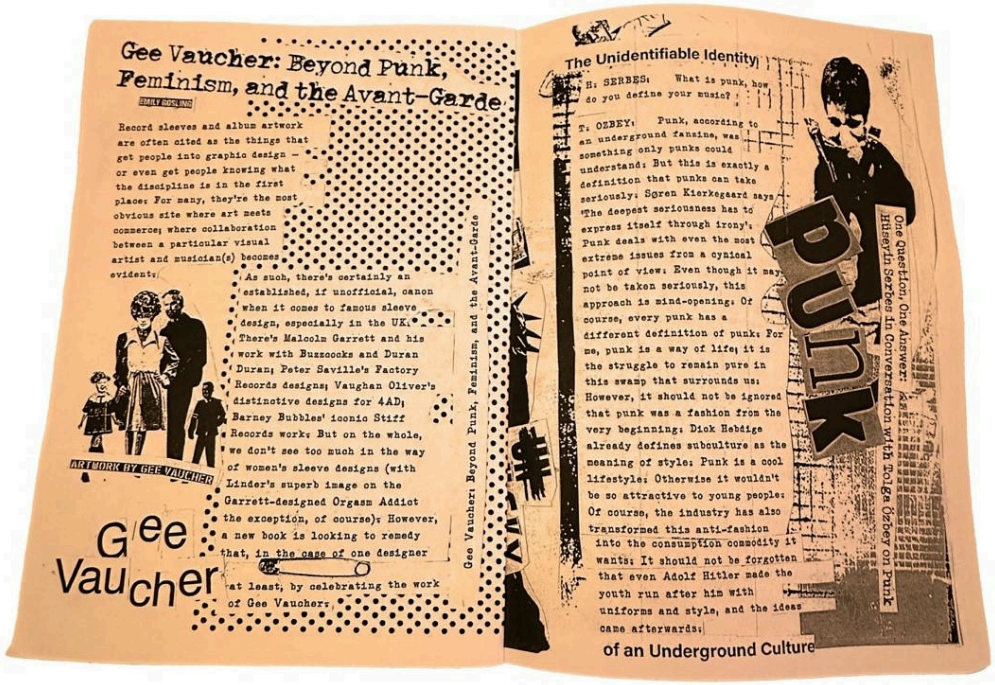
[2] Rashit was formed in 1993 by guitarist Tolga Özbey as a punk rock band. Reflecting their political attitude to their lyrics, the band attracted a great deal of attention in a short period of time in Türkiye and especially abroad. The lyrics describe the socio-political and economic situation Türkiye is in, touching on the media, capitalism, racism, the vicious circle of daily life, as well as globalization, which is a common problem. In addition to this, the lyrics, with their ironic and questioning expression, have created a style that is not often encountered in our country. The band reached a wide audience with ‘No Need to Worry’ [Telaşa Mahal Yok], Türkiye’s first ‘legal’ punk rock album released by Kod Müzik in 1999, and with 45 records released abroad.

[3] Necrosis, one of the first hardcore punk bands of Türkiye, were the pioneers of the underground music scene in Kadıköy Akmar Passage in the nineties.

[4] Die in Vain is a music band founded in Istanbul in 2020 to play UK82. Can, Güney and Murat, who were in search of a new line-up after the dissolution of their band Crudez, laid the foundations of Die in Vain by taking Ege on vocals towards the end of 2019. In 2021, their demo ‘Desperate to Piss’ was released in cassette format by General Speech Records. In 2023, their EP Savage New Times was released in vinyl format by La Vida Es Un Mus Records.

Figure 1

Images from the inner pages of Backroads fanzine, Issue 1, pp. 14-15.



The fanzine was circulated during a series of live performances in London and later in Istanbul, reflecting the performative essence of punk culture (Figure 1). Based on ethnographic observations, it is evident that *Backroads Fanzine* was not available in legal bookstores, reinforcing its position as an underground publication deeply connected to the punk ethos. The decision to distribute it outside mainstream outlets highlights the fanzine's resistance to institutional control and its commitment to maintaining the DIY spirit of punk. The study also incorporates personal and archival materials, including fanzines from various Turkish scenes, referred to as the 'Foucauldian toolbox' (Bert, 2016). These fanzines serve as crucial documents, reflecting both the social and political contexts of punk culture, functioning as repositories of ideological expression. The study adopts a retrospective ethnographic approach, treating fanzines as living documents that offer insights into the underground punk scene.

This study's theoretical framework is grounded in the understanding of fanzines as expressive mediums for subaltern voices—offering alternatives to dominant media narratives and institutional discourse within punk culture. Fanzines, created by individuals or collective subjects, crystallize the concerns of these voices, offering a space to challenge dominant societal structures. In this way, fanzines provide an avenue for resistance, allowing punk culture to flourish outside of traditional media and political institutions. Moreover, the intersection of punk, fanzines, and critical pedagogy offers a unique opportunity to rethink contemporary educational practices. Fanzines, through their DIY ethos and artisanal production methods, target specific fan communities, delivering ideas in ways that transcend the boundaries of conventional media. Shtreis's (2022, p. 5) concept of 'artisanal' production methods highlights how the creation of fanzines is not just about distributing music but about crafting an ideological and artistic message for a dedicated audience. This grassroots approach allows punk to be transmitted not only as music but also as a broader ideological statement, reinforcing the power of music in shaping alternative educational experiences and critical thinking.

For interpreting the fanzine content, the study applies a critical hermeneutic approach, as proposed by Habermas (Prasad, 2002, p. 12). This approach enhances the understanding of the fanzine's textual

content, focusing on both its explicit messages and the ideological structures that influence its creation and reception. Hermeneutics, as a method, emphasizes understanding texts within their social and historical context, while Habermas's critique of ideological structures offers a means of examining how global punk influences, such as the messages conveyed by Bad Religion, are received and contested in local contexts.

Results

Table 1

Visual Flowchart of Key Themes in the Findings

Early Encounters and the Philosophical Drive in Punk Culture ➔ From Sound to Creation: Exploring Musical Influence and Artistic Process ➔ Forms of Representation in Fanzines

Table 1 illustrates the key themes presented in this section, breaking them down into three main subheadings that encapsulate the core findings of the research. The first subheading, *Early Encounters and the Philosophical Drive in Punk Culture*, delves into the initial experiences of punk followers and how these early encounters shaped their philosophical views on resistance, autonomy, and identity. The second subheading, *From Sound to Creation: Exploring Musical Influence and Artistic Process*, examines the ways in which punk music, particularly through Bad Religion's influence, fostered a new artistic approach within punk, shifting from raw energy to more complex musical structures. The third subheading, *Forms of Representation in Fanzines*, highlights the role of fanzines as a crucial medium for transmitting punk ideologies, offering alternative narratives and a space for self-expression in opposition to mainstream representations.

Early Encounters and the Philosophical Drive in Punk Culture

Successfully navigating the path to a creative life often requires overcoming the monotony imposed by the human condition. In an industrial society that equates work with productivity, Raoul Vaneigem argues that "the necessity of producing has always been an enemy of the desire to create" (Vaneigem 1974, p. 49). Punk, however, does not simply reject the obligation to produce; it also challenges the dominant ideologies that shape societal norms. By responding to industrial techniques with a renewed enthusiasm for production, punk refuses to accept that creativity must be bound by market-driven demands. This attitude is central to punk's rebellion, as it creates space for self-expression and autonomy outside conventional artistic frameworks. Along the road to punk, various attitudes have persistently emerged as significant, particularly the rejection of conformity and the embrace of independent, often radical forms of creation.

On the other hand, the notion of fascination in relation to subcultural encounters also emerges as a recurring theme in the testimonies of individuals who were first exposed to punk culture. This fascination, which often operates as a gateway into the subculture, can be mediated through various personal experiences and settings. For instance, Sanasyan describes her initial encounter with the band Bad Religion in a record store located in Akmar Passage, Kadıköy, during her search for a fanzine that she was a fan of (*Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 15). Similarly, Yanmaz recounts how her exposure to the same band was mediated by a friend, who suggested the album to her, subsequently leading to a cultural exchange through trading music albums (*Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 15). This aligns with Clark's (2003) observation that it is common for young people to temporarily engage with subcultures, only to eventually reintegrate into mainstream culture. However, the accounts presented here suggest an alternative narrative, where the individuals persist in their engagement with the subculture, resisting the pull of mainstream assimilation. These reflections suggest a complex relationship with both the subculture and mainstream culture, which challenges the linear path often associated with youth subcultural experiences. The conversations held with these individuals paint a portrait of a more fragmented, and at times, contradictory landscape—a Dickensian vision marked by its inherent tension between resistance and the prevailing socio-cultural forces.

As Susan Sontag points out, “the basis of understanding is its functionality” (Sontag, 2008, p. 29). This functionality is realized over time, in contrast to an amorous relationship based purely on appearances. In this sense, pioneers in various movements, including punk, created space for the bands that followed them. For example, just as a group of young people from El Camino Real High School in California came together to form Bad Religion and practiced in a garage they called the ‘hell hole,’ young punks in Türkiye gathered in a basement in Istanbul. Tolga Özbey, who founded the band Rashit, first encountered punk while skateboarding in 1993. According to him, punk represents a lifestyle centered around the challenge of maintaining authenticity in a society marked by various societal pressures and contradictions:

“Punk, as described by an underground fanzine, was something only punks could understand—a definition that punks take seriously. Søren Kierkegaard argues that ‘the deepest seriousness must express itself through irony’ and punk addresses even extreme issues with a cynical lens. The harshness of 70s punk, driven by irony, resonated with me. However, I cannot deny Bad Religion's strength in songwriting, as they brought punk to the mainstream, blending punk philosophy with populism. They were key in shaping 90s punk with Epitaph Records, pushing American punk onto MTV while opening doors for bands like Green Day, Rancid, and The Offspring. Despite debates on the American left's relevance to the 'Middle East,' Bad Religion made music that tackled nearly every social issue in a society dominated by hedonistic capitalism” (Özbey, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 13).

Bad Religion’s songwriting addresses social issues with sharp irony and profound seriousness. As Tolga highlights, the band’s lyrics emphasize the individual’s struggle against societal pressures, while simultaneously conveying the rebellious and thought-provoking nature of punk to wider audiences. Bad Religion’s music has played a key role in bringing punk culture into the mainstream, addressing themes of belonging and resistance on both individual and societal levels. In this context, Smiers and Schijndel (2009, p. 7) state that “cultural expressions are fundamental elements in the formation of our personal and social identity”. Bad Religion's influence is so profound that fans in Türkiye have consistently found resonance in their music. Engaging with their work, in the words of Antonio Negri, means ‘opening parentheses to life’ (Negri, 2011, p. 22). Within these parentheses lies a youth dissatisfied with the status quo, navigating their way through life’s complexities. This process involves the rush of immersing oneself in the music and message of Bad Religion, which has become a historical and cultural icon. Negri’s metaphor of ‘opening parentheses’ suggests that by engaging with such cultural icons, individuals create a temporary yet significant space for reimagining life beyond the confines of everyday reality. Within this space, youth actively challenge societal norms, reject passive acceptance, and embrace a more engaged role in shaping their futures, fueled by the power of music, rebellion, and intellectual exploration.

“Bad Religion is a key icon in punk history. Their music and lyrics often respond to the political climate of the countries in which they are based, reflecting these contexts in their songs with a depth that resonates with listeners worldwide. For example, the track ‘Victory’ is a clear example of this thematic exploration. Each Bad Religion album offers more than just music; it often includes elements of philosophy and thought-provoking narratives. The band’s ability to weave complex ideas into accessible sound is a key feature of their approach. The music tells a story that leaves listeners contemplating their role as either the hero or the victim, depending on their perspective” (Kuş, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 17).

Bad Religion’s lyrics have always been central to their music, and the band’s engagement with philosophy and science has had a profound impact on the Turkish punk scene. Their intellectual approach, characterized by a critical examination of society and an emphasis on scientific thought, has inspired Turkish punks not only politically but also ideologically. The band’s unique ability to weave complex philosophical ideas into their music has made them a significant influence in shaping the intellectual landscape of the Turkish punk

community. In this context, Bad Religion has played a vital role in the Turkish punk scene, contributing both musically and ideologically: ‘Bad Religion’s thought structure is based on the philosophy of science, and their music requires an effort to perceive’ (Kara, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 8). This integration of philosophy and music creates a synergy that resonates deeply with listeners, who are challenged to engage with both the content and the form of the music.

As noted by Karaöz, “Defining Bad Religion’s philosophy is difficult, but their songs address complex issues in a rhythmic way, with ‘Entropy’ as a prime example” (Karaöz, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 9). This complexity in their songwriting reflects the intellectual rigor embedded in their work, which continues to serve as a source of inspiration for those who engage with their music. According to Ege Sorkun, Bad Religion represents scientific reason:

“Bad Religion can be described as an anti-fascist punk rock band, with their lyrics offering a comprehensive critique of capitalist American culture. While the band often displays anti-scientific and anti-religious tendencies, their name hints at their intellectual approach. Greg Graffin’s academic background and the analytical methods in their lyrics, album covers, and overall image suggest the band embodies a scientific mindset” (Sorkun, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 12).

The band’s intellectual influence is evident both in the content of their songs and in their ability to provoke critical thought among their listeners. This intellectual dimension of punk, embodied by Bad Religion, plays a key role in the development of a deeper, more reflective punk culture that encourages its followers to question dominant ideologies and engage with broader societal issues. Through their music, the band creates a space where punk culture and intellectual exploration intersect, providing both a soundtrack and a framework for resistance, rebellion, and reflection.

From Sound to Creation: Exploring Musical Influence and Artistic Process

Punk emerged in the 1970s as a response to the pressures of capitalist societies and industrial culture. Erving Goffman’s theory of the ‘total institution’ explains how individuals in such societies, whether facing too much work or too little, tend to become demoralized, ultimately seeking an escape (Goffman, 1961, p. 10). This search for escape is central to punk’s identity, which has always been about rejecting the dominant societal structures. Initially regarded as a musical genre, punk evolved into a social and political stance, reflecting a desire for freedom from the constraints imposed by mainstream culture. With the passage of time, punk transformed from a musical genre into a broader expression of resistance and alternative lifestyles, challenging mainstream norms. Bands like Bad Religion played a vital role in shaping punk’s evolution, introducing a melodic structure while simultaneously delivering strong political messages.

“In the late 1970s, punk shifted from rock'n'roll to a more political stance, exemplified by the Sex Pistols and God Save the Queen. This move separated punk from rock’n’roll, gaining social status, particularly in England with bands like Crass. However, the politicization led to more monotonous music, as seen with Germs. In the U.S., punk blended art and anarchy, with bands like Dead Kennedys incorporating surf punk into their political messages. Bad Religion, influenced by skate and surf culture, focused on melody and precise vocals, setting them apart from earlier punk bands. Their polished sound became a major influence on bands like Green Day, NOFX, and The Offspring” (Özbey, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 21).

The musical and vocal approach of Bad Religion, as highlighted in Özbey’s analysis, represents a pivotal moment in the evolution of punk music. Greg Graffin’s vocal technique, combined with his long-standing collaboration with guitarist Brett Gurewitz, facilitated a departure from punk’s traditional chaotic and atonal structure, introducing a more melodic form. Early punk music, with its raw and explosive vocals, reflected

class struggles and social discontent. In contrast, Bad Religion’s melodic and harmonious sound demonstrated that the anarchistic nature of punk could coexist with a more structured musical approach.

By blending socio-political messages with a melodic punk style, Bad Religion made their music more accessible, broadening its appeal while simultaneously expanding the aesthetic and ideological boundaries of the genre. Similarly, the punk scene in Türkiye began to gain wider visibility in the 1990s, with bands like Bad Religion exerting a significant influence. While punk in Türkiye initially developed through fanzine culture and independent music scenes, the ideological and musical influence of Bad Religion played a key role in shaping the sound and political discourse of Turkish punk bands. As Young (1989, p. 10) argues, “the early bands that pioneered a unique sound, along with their dedicated fan base, formed a powerful influence that eventually grew into a vibrant and distinct subculture”. The crystallization of this distinctive style, which began in 1976, became more apparent in Istanbul around a decade later. The punk rock expressions of Tünay Akdeniz and Çığrışımlar, alongside the first public punk concerts organized by Headbangers, marked key moments in the development of punk in Türkiye (Boynik and Güldallı, 2007, p. 349). These early concerts were marked by disorder, as band members often struggled to agree on setlists, but they were crucial in expanding punk’s influence. Kaan Karaöz from Necrosis recalls that elements of Bad Religion’s sound can be traced in their music. Similarly, Tolga Özbey reflects on the cassette tape exchanges with Kaan, observing that Bad Religion’s visibility in the mainstream significantly increased their appeal among youth in Türkiye.

“The punks who listened to Bad Religion were not into the fashion side of things, or they didn't have much interest in visuals. The music already contained an effective and powerful narrative. When I was doing my compulsory military service in Erzurum, we were both shocked when a friend who graduated from the German High School, who was doing short-term military service in my team, found out that I listened to Bad Religion. I had lent him the Bad Religion CD I had with me to listen to and he was very happy. We were impressed as Necrosis, the fast but effective lyrics and backing vocals in the music were inspiring. In addition, what they were trying to do with the rhythm guitar in the background was simple but complex music, which can be summarized as melodic hardcore punk. Therefore, one can find Bad Religion’s melodies in the music we make” (Karaöz, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 24).

“To be honest, Necrosis is one of the rare local bands in Türkiye that caught Bad Religion in its early period. I remember exchanging a few cassettes with their drummer Kaan. My favorite period was when they were very raw and hadn’t learnt how to make music yet. I had listened to Bad Religion until the album they released on Sony, strangely enough, when I stopped listening to them after this album, their songs started to be broadcast on MTV, and they became famous in Türkiye. At this point, we can think that they have been listened to more, especially since the beginning of the two thousand years when MTV punk was rising among young people in Türkiye” (Özbey, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 23).

Kaan’s influence on Bad Religion is evident in how Necrosis combines musical interaction with aesthetic evolution. Bad Religion’s fast yet impactful lyrics, backing vocals, and musical structure, which evolved into melodic hardcore punk, can be viewed as a strategy to introduce complexity through the repetition of simple forms in the development of punk music. This approach highlights the tension between punk’s minimalist aesthetic and its deeper contextual richness. Kaan’s assertion that Bad Religion’s melodies can be found in Necrosis’s music exemplifies how musical inspiration is reproduced within local scenes, drawing from the global punk movement.

Tolga’s preference for the raw and experimental period of Bad Religion emphasizes punk's ‘amateurism’ and ‘DIY’ ethos. Frith’s (1996) concept of authenticity in popular music is pertinent in this context, where punk is understood as a form of raw, unpolished expression that stands in contrast to conventional professional musical techniques. The shift of Bad Religion to working with a major record label like Sony and

their subsequent airplay on MTV marks a significant point of discussion regarding punk’s transition from an underground subculture to mainstream culture. As Hebdige (1979) argues in his work on subcultures, the absorption of subcultural expressions by the mainstream often results in a transformation of their ideological and aesthetic elements. With Bad Religion’s music being broadcast on MTV, punk gained traction among a broader audience in the Turkish scene.

The band’s melodic structure and intricate lyrics not only attract punk fans but also resonate with followers of other genres such as metal and rock. The tempo of Bad Religion’s music inspires a sense of dream-like reflection. This aligns with Bachelard’s notion of the dream as “always our own” (Bachelard, 1964, p. 176). Through careful attention to the band’s activities, one perceives a unique dialogue between the complex writing of a lyricist and the melodic focus of a musician. This convergence often allows listeners to find themselves within the resulting punk song.

The visibility of Bad Religion in Istanbul arcades, once an alternative refuge, increased: ‘Bad Religion was among the most popular bands, with their t-shirts and badges being sold widely in Taksim and Kadıköy’ (Sorkun, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 18). Their vibrant music draws in first-time punk listeners: “It has been a question for some: ‘How can punk be appreciated with out-of-tune guitars and vocals?’ I often encounter people who love it” (Sanasyan, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 14). As Tolga Özbey notes, listeners who were previously distanced from the harsh, chaotic, and often atonal nature of punk found the courage to embrace it through Bad Religion’s melodic structure and clear vocals. While punk’s radical style and ‘noisy’ music can be off-putting, especially for those accustomed to more structured genres like metal and rock, Bad Religion made punk more accessible through their melodic sound and Greg Graffin’s thoughtful, socio-political lyrics, all while retaining its raw power.

Forms of Representation in Fanzines

Fanzines, often distributed in now-extinct venues in Istanbul, provided access to radical and alternative perspectives, positioning themselves in opposition to mainstream media. *Dış Mihrak*[5], one such fanzine, integrates punk and hardcore subcultures with political elements, using issues focused on anarchistic ideals to challenge all forms of authority and power. The fanzine’s intricate design reflects its underground ethos, serving as a calling card for the subculture. According to Lefle, a reader and producer of fanzines who attributes her cultural stance to these publications, her first encounter with Bad Religion occurred through fanzines:

“My first relations with Bad Religion started with the fanzines I followed in Türkiye. *Dış Mihrak* was one of the fanzines with the harshest content back then. In the very first issue, a friend called Pilaw translated the band’s lyrics into Turkish, which attracted my attention, and the band never left my life afterwards” (Sanasyan, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 8).

Everyday life, as Henri Lefebvre (2023, p. 11) suggests, “appears on the stage in an epic appearance, in masks, costumes and props.” Fanzines serve as an integral part of this stage, offering a unique lens through which the political history of the personal can be understood. These publications reflect the daily practices

[5] *Dış Mihrak* (Foreign Force in English) is a shelter, but after a while, the self-destruction of this shelter in the neo-liberal ruins will not be alien to a fanzine reader: “Some fanzines I received gave me ideas and enthusiasm. It was like a kind of discharge during a troubled period. I locked myself at home and started to work. I first published Kerosene and then Occupy House. In a different style, more oppositional, *Dış Mihrak* fanzines came out. Some parts of Kerosene and Occupy House and new additions formed the first issue of *Dış Mihrak*. Then came the sequel. Especially Emre was very helpful. For a while he did almost half of the work. Murat (Pilav) also helped with internet, translation and writing. And the odd person who contributed articles, interviews and translations. Now everyone is busy with their work. When we finished being students, we all got jobs and started working somehow. We joined the army of salaried slaves. We have less energy and time” (Serbes, 2024, p. 227).

of their creators, and *Dog Juice*[6], another influential fanzine, uses personal narratives to communicate these experiences. According to its anonymous editor, Bad Religion represents a potent feeling of rage:

"While asking myself if there is anyone who would deny the fact that 'Bad Religion is a legend', I remembered their music. I buried the headphones in my ears... I took a deep breath and continued listening. With excitement... I will thank this man who allows me to enjoy my dreams and anger" (Editor, *Dog Juice Fanzine*, 2014, pp. 12-13).

Despite being a medium often overlooked in today's digitalized world, early fanzines played a crucial role in conveying subcultural knowledge. As Fulya Kara recalls, "The child of an age where identities can change so quickly has become a victim of the system" (Kara, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 8). Fanzines like *Manipulation*, released in January 2003, represent counterculture and integrate references to Bad Religion, such as the title "If I Could Fly High Above the World," a reference to *Stranger than Fiction* (1994). Fanzines also serve as important ideological and musical guides, as Leyla highlights:

"Fanzines are like a guide for me. The internet has become a pile of rubbish. I continue to be inspired by the topics and guests in the fanzines I can catch... The first place I met Bad Religion was fanzines. Their fast music had a collapsible noise tone. Fanzines are more efficient when they work like algorithms... My encounter with Graffin's literary power in fanzine pages is like the power of algorithms for me" (Yanmaz, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 8).

The most compelling moments in fanzines, especially those in literary form, inevitably point to the formation of a community. A community or scene merges musical forms with a specific philosophy of life and shared experiences. While various subcategories may exist within a community, it is essential to focus on the underground community in this context. This community resists all layers of alienation through various existential forms, from street vendors to students, from cassette sellers to taxi drivers, all while continuing its DIY productions. It generates its own local codes, which, at times, may not achieve success in transnational contexts. While Bad Religion critiques American society and its cultural values, the approach is contextualized within the specific socio-cultural reality of the U.S., which may not align with the local critiques of countries like Türkiye, where different socio-cultural dynamics prevail.

However, the power of music in fostering international interaction can transcend these limitations. The universal nature of music allows it to blend with local cultural codes and diverse experiences, leading to new expressions in various geographies. Fanzines, which reflect the DIY ethos, play a significant role in this interaction. They bridge the local and global, creating new communities and forms of expression. Although Fulya Kara observes that certain discourses may not resonate widely within local music scenes due to non-reciprocity, these local cultural codes have the potential to gain transnational resonance over time, as their global influence continues to unfold. In this context, Ege Sorkun highlights that the complexity of Bad Religion's lyric-writing, for example, provided an entry point for young listeners, sparking their interest in subculture music and offering a gateway for further exploration of alternative musical forms.

"Bad Religion critiques imperialist American culture, which affects the whole world, but they do so locally, within the codes of their own culture. Perhaps this is why their discourses do not resonate much within the independent music scene in Türkiye" (Kara, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 8).

"We can say that the band's complex lyric-writing technique, particularly, created an entry point for a child just beginning to learn English during adolescence. This doorway may have sparked the research motivation that later led me to explore subculture music" (Sorkun, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 7).

[6]The first issue of Dog Juice, which was published as a supplement to Dahke, the fanzine that carried the early punk attitude to photocopy pages in Istanbul, was seen in underground venues in August 2014, and five years later, it was visible again with its second issue in October 2019.

Bad Religion’s intellectual and political discourses have extended beyond punk music, creating a culture of resistance and a distinct way of thinking. These discourses, transmitted through fanzines in the underground scene, have left a lasting impact on various communities across different geographies. In Türkiye, fanzines have played an essential role in disseminating punk music and spreading these discourses among the youth. Berk Kuş’s contribution to *Backroads Fanzine* is crucial for understanding how this interaction unfolded in Türkiye and the profound influence Bad Religion had on the punk scene. Berk discusses the process by which punk music took root in Türkiye, highlighting the role of local punk bands that resisted systems of power. He underscores that pioneering bands such as Rashit demonstrated that punk could be created within the country. Independent music labels like Kod Müzik and free expression spaces like Karga in Kadıköy have also been instrumental in the survival and development of this genre. Berk notes that for young people in Türkiye to experience a radical transformation, they must first eliminate the censorship ingrained in their minds. He believes that the intellectual and artistic influence of Greg Graffin and Bad Religion can play a vital role in this process. Berk’s reflections, as expressed in his article for *Backroads Fanzine*, echo the sentiment of the band’s track ‘Change of Ideas’:

“There have been good punk bands in Türkiye that resisted power systems. Rashit was one of the first bands to show that punk could be performed here. There were independent music labels like Kod Music. Additionally, there are places like Karga in Kadıköy where we can feel free, and many good bands are still playing there. But the youth of this country will not be able to undergo a radical change without removing the censorship in their minds. Bad Religion’s influence is important in this sense. Greg Graffin is a good teacher, zoologist, and writer. Although it is unlikely that their work will resonate here in the current context, what they do will continue to affect someone” (Kuş, *Backroads Fanzine*, Issue 1, p. 12).

Closing Remarks

This study follows the transnational journey of Bad Religion, a band that transitioned from the underground to mainstream recognition, while consistently delivering impactful lyrics. The findings suggest that Bad Religion effectively combines the philosophy and populism of punk, creating space for the American punk sound in global music culture and opening doors for numerous pioneering bands. In doing so, Bad Religion not only popularized a genre but also introduced a subculture that emphasized a critical approach to society amidst the dominance of hegemonic capitalism.

The study highlights that punk music, particularly through Bad Religion, is more than an auditory experience—it conveys philosophical ideas that resonate beyond the music itself. As Sennett (1998, p. 52) suggests, the band’s music addresses “the smells and shadows of everyday life,” offering intellectual depth within the framework of punk. By doing so, it allowed the subculture to exist without being absorbed into the mainstream or reduced to a commodity.

The initial encounters with Bad Religion represent significant moments of fascination for many. These encounters, mediated by diverse experiences such as bookshops or underground venues, mark the beginning of a love affair with the band’s music. As Greg Graffin’s ‘hell hole’ transforms into an Istanbul basement, traces of Bad Religion emerge in the music of local youth. The band’s influence is evident in early Turkish punk bands like Rashit and Necrosis, where cassette tape exchanges and personal connections symbolize the cultural exchange. In the content analysis of *Backroads Fanzine*, Karaöz’s statement indicates that the exchange of a Bad Religion CD during compulsory military service illustrates how punk music can foster personal connections and evoke emotional responses.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Istanbul’s arcades, filled with alternative products, witnessed an increase in Bad Religion memorabilia—badges, t-shirts, and more—further introducing Turkish youth to

punk. This visibility became a critical point in punk's popularization in Türkiye. Bad Religion collages in fanzines, the underground communication organs of youth, symbolize the search for discovery within the subculture. These fanzines represented punk's consciousness of reality, guiding young people through the complexities of modern life.

This study proposes that a music group can remain within the subculture while popularizing its philosophical messages. Through the integration of philosophical inquiry and musical expression, Bad Religion rendered punk more accessible while retaining its foundational ethos of resistance. Punk's resistance to conformity and celebration of self-expression continue to shape everyday life, encouraging new generations to engage with these themes. The wild goose, as a symbol of relentless pursuit, serves as a powerful reminder of modern individuals' ongoing chase for dreams and desires.

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