

I lost a lot of faith when Ian MacKaye said

“I HATE THE SOUND OF GUITARS.”

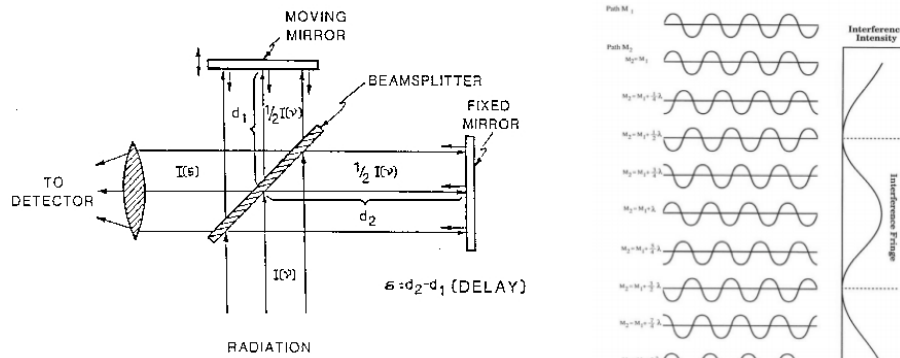


Figure 1. Simplified schematic of a Michelson interferometer (left); phase relationship between the two light paths of the interferometer and the resulting fringe pattern (right).

$$\Delta p_x \Delta x \geq \frac{\hbar}{2}$$

$$\Delta E \Delta t \geq \frac{\hbar}{2}$$

$$\sigma_A^2 \sigma_B^2 \geq -\frac{1}{4} \left(\int \psi^* [\hat{A}, \hat{B}] \psi dx \right)^2$$

Figure 2. The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle in terms of momentum and position (top), in terms of energy and time (middle), and expressed as a wavefunction (bottom).

The first punk show that I went to was in Santa Monica. I was in fifth grade, the band was Bad Religion; my mother drove me there from Arizona (6 hours) but was slightly worried and made my babysitter go into the show with me. My arm was broken and in a cast and I remember how foreign it felt to hold my other arm up and shout out the songs. I was horribly conscious of my actions and was convinced that everyone knew how transparent I felt.

It was a swift descent into punk culture. We had to create it, though, living in small-town Arizona. “We”—a couple of semi-privileged high school kids, full of angst like everyone else but channeling it differently. We went to shows in Phoenix bi-weekly. Our parents would take turns driving us the two hours there and back. As we aged we fell into it more fully, dressed the part, fucked around, stole cars. But those guitars were SO PURE.

I also started working on boats around that time. Something about it caught me. Heredity, I’m sure, had a lot to do with it. I kind of fell in love with it, or resonated with the work, or whatever.

But that was the shit that got me through. Punk rock, the sea, work.

The distinction between what I’ve lost to time and what I still possess continually becomes more clear. The fact that these same things still get me through, keep me getting through, hold my attention, hint at an unknown—well, that’s why I keep working, keep listening to punk. It was such an idiotic revelation when I recognized that punk rock and the sea meant the same big immutable thing to me.

I JUST HOPE HE WAS TALKING ABOUT ACOUSTIC GUITARS.