

'The Sky above the Port was the Colour of Television, Tuned to a Dead Channel': Music Press Discourses on Post-Punk Industrial Music and the Construction of a Dystopian Urban Space.

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Abstract: The British popular music press throughout the 1970s had a diverse and youthful readership in excess of 250 000. Thus, when avant-garde music such as post-punk industrial music is included within the popular music press some friction with its mainstream audience is almost inevitable. A range of discursive strategies and explanatory metaphors are encoded by journalists in order to bridge this gap. Therefore, contextualising the music and fulfilling the music press' role as 'gatekeepers'. Indeed, a dominant narrative emerged which argued that the deterministic power of place- specifically the powers of the industrial or post-industrial city- had 'tainted' its residents. As a result, it was argued that some people are simply compelled to reflect their surroundings. This paper uncovers the genealogy of the music press discourses on post-punk industrial music, finding a pervasive mythology of industrial place that is applied to post-punk industrial music as it was to previously noisy rock antecedents (such as the Stooges). In addition, attempts are made to reconstruct the metaphor of the city that emerges. It is evident that the city presented by the music press is a fundamentally literary and fictive construct and like 'the hood', as Foreman illustrates in reference to Hip Hop, transcends the limitations of a regionally specific explanation.

At the heart of the music press's coverage of new styles of post-punk industrial music in the late 1970s and early 1980s was the question of how sound was shaped by environment. The main strategy deployed by journalists was to use the city as a chimera to assign authenticity and a metaphor to explain the musicians' foibles. The metaphor of the city acted to create a common point of reference that enabled the readership to engage with the ideas of industrial music that transcended a specific regional base. The non-specific context of the myth and commonplace experience of urban squalor at the time (that Black illustrates), intensifies the image and validates its use as an explanatory cliché.¹ Some journalists argued the dystopian industrial city was either sought as inspiration (Paul Morley) or seen as inherent in the psychopathology of industrial musicians (John Savage); Andy Gill on the other hand rejected the determinism of the city and restored actors as self-consciously constructing their music free of influence. Few writers had any credentials as musicologists or cultural theorists and are, as Atton argues, fans that are prone to romanticising.² However, the various nodes of discourse, and explanations offered by music journalists fulfil the 'gatekeeper' role of the music press that Toynbee and McLeod outline.³ Albeit a role tempered by the literary New Journalism leanings of the music press that Forde explains.⁴ Thus, the journalists encode- to use Hall's term- a contextualising and explanatory mythology of post-punk industrial musicians for their audience. The *New Musical Express* (NME) estimated circulation of 250 000 in Britain during the 1970s illustrates the extent and thus broadness of the readership; an audience that is likely to have been disproportionately youthful. Nevertheless, the urban space/industrial music mythology that is presented differs from academic notions of the link which following from

¹ Black, J., *Britain Since the Seventies: Politics and Society in the Consumer Age* (London, 2004), p. 68.

² Atton, C., 'Writing About Listening: Alternative Discourses in Rock Journalism,' *Popular Music* (2009, 28:1), p. 53.

³ McLeod, K., 'a Critique of Rock Criticism in North America,' *Popular Music* (2001, 20:1), p. 47.

Toynbee, J., 'Policing Bohemia, Pinning Up Grunge: the Music Press and Generic Change in British Pop and Rock,' *Popular Music* (1993, 12:3), p. 290.

⁴ Forde, E., 'From Polyglottalism to Branding: On the Decline of Personality Journalism in the British Music Press,' *Journalism* (2001, 2:1), p. 24.

Appendurai, Connell and Gibson, and Sara Cohen argue for.⁵ Connell and Gibson uses the examples of Motown being intrinsically Detroit focused, Seattle and grunge and West Coast Psychadelia.⁶ Instead, the industrial city is similar to 'the hood' that Foreman notes within Hip Hop.⁷ It is a non-geographically fixed construct; the spectre of a city emerges rather than cities. Thus, it seems that the music press construct of the city is fundamentally literary and non-geographically fixed, even when it is applied to a specific city; creating an explanatory metaphor for its readership in the face of post-punk industrial music's stark otherness.

The mediating role of the music press takes on extra importance when an aggressively avant-garde musical genre is presented to a youthful and disparate readership; it would be fair to assume that many readers would in many cases be alienated by music so different to conventional pop and rock music. Post-punk industrial music could be subsumed in Bill Martin and Robert Fripp's canon of avant-rock, it is often abrasive, noisy and lacking conventional musical form.⁸ As Gendron explains, 'It is noise that connects that most primitive rock with most contemporary avant-garde practises'.⁹ Industrial music is by most barometers noisy and often seen as the child of nineteenth century rough music, Russollo's *Art of Noise*, John Cage's Deuchampian 'artistic indifference' and punk's 'virtuosic amateurism'.¹⁰ Vale and Juno add science fiction and dystopian literature as dimensions that form a modern grotesque industrial lexicon.¹¹ Thus, to a pop focused audience, even at the height of punk, it is a bizarre other. Yet, the material gains of the post-war era were tempered by the various problems of the late 1970s, such as recession, unemployment, violent extremism and the disrepair of many industrial cities. Thus, the mythology of the unruly declining sprawl was a useful tool in explaining a relatively strange collection of musicians to a mainstream audience.

Discourses surrounding industrial music and the genealogy of the industrial music mythology.

Antecedents of the discourses surrounding industrial music and concerning the deterministic powers of industrial urban areas are apparent in November and December 1972 in the often overlooked US music magazine *Phonograph Record*. British band Slade was interviewed by Greg Shaw in Detroit. In a sense Noddy Holder supports Appandurai and Bennett's notion of a mythscape; the local characteristics of 'the industrial midlands' informed Slade's distinct style of loud good-times rock. Holder explained, 'that's where our sort of music's built up (the industrial midlands)...cuz [sic] our music based on 'eavy boot stompin'.¹² However, a more explicit and developed notion of a city informing the musical characteristics of its residents was offered a month later by the ever excitable Lester Bangs. Bangs is at first critical of the soporific elements of industrial life, '[industry] choked off art and created a population of slaving zombies, good only for production of precision parts and reproduction of future generations to produce the camshafts and generators of Tomorrow.¹³ The he castigates the inauthentic Motown records as working, 'within the framework of Capitalist honko society, and it didn't amount to a hill of afterbirths in the end.¹⁴ Yet, Connell's conception of Motown being an intrinsically of Detroit and thus deriving some part of its perceived authenticity from its

5 Cohen, S., 'Sounding out the City: Music and the Sensuous Production of Place', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (1995, 20:4), p. 445.

Connell, J., and Gibson, C., *Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity, and Place* (London, 2003), pp. 90-116.

⁶ Ibid., p. 97.

⁷ Foreman, M., "'Represent": Race, Space and Place in Rap Music,' *Popular Music* (2000, 19:1), p. 66.

⁸ Martin, B., and Fripp, R., *Avant rock: experimental music from the Beatles to Björk* (London, 2002), p. 22.

⁹ Gendron, B., *Between Monmatre and the Mudd Clubb: Popular Music and the Avant Garde* (Chicago, 2002), p. 48.

¹⁰ Russo, M., and Warner, D., 'Rough Music, Futurism, and Post-punk Industrial Noise Bands', *Audio Culture* eds. Cox, C., and Warner, D., (New York, 2004), pp. 47-54.

¹¹ Vale, V., and Juno, A., *Re/search Industrial Culture Handbook*, (San Francisco, 1983), p. 2.

¹² Shaw, G., *Phonograph Record* (November 1972).

¹³ Bangs, L., *Phonograph Record* (December 1972).

¹⁴ Ibid.

Detroit-ness is not completely undermined. Instead Bangs argues that another musical genre is the real expression of Detroit's industrial condition. Bangs argues,

'the young white kids picked up this sheet-metal din, hearing how close it was to the rattly clankings of rock 'n' roll, and turned it into a *new* brand of rock 'n' roll which was more metallic, heavy, crazed and mechanical than anything heard on the face of the earth in 6,000 years of Western history.'¹⁵

A narrative is forwarded by Bangs through the music press, arguing that the authentic industrial sound is derived from mimicking the roar of the factory. The link to working-class heavy industry becomes a rationale to contest and define authenticity. Yet, Bangs' view of the maniac roar of the Stooges or MC5 is appropriation of industrial sounds by 'young white kids,' rather than the tenet of psychological compulsion that John Savage would later argue. Nonetheless, Bangs' mythologizing was pervasive as even by 1977 Ted Nugent was compelled to state, 'I'd say Detroit, then they'd go into this rap about how the industrial atmosphere created my music. Industrial hell!'¹⁶

The idea that declining industrial landscapes were the seedbeds of abrasive music became an explanatory cliché during the rise of British punk music. As Reynolds argues, this would only increase as recession amongst other factors made the British inner cities suffer from reduced investment and employment and punk fragmented into post-punk and industrial variants.¹⁷ Indeed, the spectre of post-industry skewed the discursive geography. Savage, the most vehement proponent of the industrial dysfunction mythology, gives a typically understated music press perspective of this situation,

'In the *superheated* atmosphere in London 1977, where 1984 (if not Armageddon) appeared around every crumbling corner; when the fabric of English society appeared to be unravelled, by punk rock, into vicious threats of sectarian in-fighting, fascist and leftist violence on the streets, and financial crises: anything seemed possible, indeed necessary.'¹⁸

Thus, a discursive link between the bleak narrative of the 1970s and describing new abrasive music is evident. Furthermore, Nick Kent would describe the Clash in the *NME*, 'there was a tension to their sound then which set them apart from all the other bands simply because it was really was tainted with all the desperate industrial rhythms of their native environment.'¹⁹ Thus, now the bands are not appropriating the hum of industry, rather the sounds have become inherent in their mind and inescapable. Which makes one want to question whether there were folk bands in late 1970s London? Of course, there were. This discourse can also be found applied to Siouxsie & the Banshees, '[they] sound like a 21st century industrial power plant,' and the Sex Pistols who were, 'imitating the roar of the Industrial Age', albeit this phrase is less deterministic in terms of place.²⁰ Nevertheless, the Clash's authenticity specifically in Kent's article is derived from being 'tainted' by industrial surroundings, differing from Bangs' conception of musicians using industrial noise as a sort of bricolage.

Industrial music began to gain music press coverage, arguably after the November 26th 1977 copy of *Sounds* covering Brian Eno, Devo, the Residents, Kraftwerk, Throbbing Gristle, Giorgio

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Whitall, S., *Creem* (September 1977).

¹⁷ Reynolds, S., *Rip It Up and Start Again* (London, 2006), p. 12.

¹⁸ Savage, J., *Re/search Industrial Culture Handbook*, eds. Vale, V., and Juno, A (San Francisco, 1983), p. 4.

¹⁹ Kent, N., *NME* (19th March 1977).

²⁰ Goldman, J., *Sounds* (3rd December 1977).

Moroder.²¹ John Savage later argued that this issue was where he and Jane Suck linked precociously avant-garde industrial musicians with punk, thus, explaining the bands' authenticity and fundamental existence. However, this is a restatement and obfuscation of the *Sounds* issue, by Savage in the *Industrial Culture Handbook* in 1983 where he argues that industrial music was included in *Sounds* to spite the editors who wanted 'punk' features.²² Although industrial post-punk music is included the articles are on 'New Musick' and a real investigation of industrial music is negligible. Eno and Moroder may even be outside the canon of industrial music. Savage would however consolidate a myth by 1978, arguing that the sound of Sheffield's factories had infiltrated the minds of Cabaret Voltaire and influenced their music, 'Sometimes the factories work at night- the noise can be heard in the night, *flittering into dreams*: dull percussive, hypnotic.'²³ Indeed also applying it to Pere Ubu, 'To imagine Ubu through this review, without hearing them, you *could* say that these two elements [inherited from Cleveland] — rock tradition/bleakness — are at Ubu's core', producing, 'Harsh urban noise, industrial drones'.²⁴ Thus, if John Savage is taken into account, Collins, Appandurai and Bennet are somewhat validated in their link between place and musical idiosyncrasies. What is more, a variety of other writers from a range of music publications followed a similar and, arguably dominant, myth to Savage. A textured geography of explanations that surrounded place and industrial music would emerge. Some like Van Gosse in the *Village Voice* would link British industrial bands to 'the most ancient bowels of ancient decayed capitalism' in an unproblematic manner.²⁵ Van Gosse like Savage both grants authenticity and explains the musicians' relative eccentricities, in this case to an American audience, with the use of this metaphor.

Yet, to argue that John Savage had created a fully accepted mythology of industrial music would be false; there would of course be slight variants and repudiations. Paul Morley in *Sounds* would be more sober (not exactly what you would expect from someone extolling a similar conceptualisation to Lester Bangs) and imply that Cabaret Voltaire were instead sympathetically representing Sheffield and their historical context,

'Imagine a musical soundtrack for November Sheffield, for a decaying symbol of crumbling capitalism, for the lonely hearts and lost souls of city dwellers, for reason ... imagine the turbulent, tense, obsessive Cabaret Voltaire sound. An integration and aggregation of stern rhythm, rigid sound, unexpected noises, ghostly bumps, news reels, snatches of conversation, screams, wails, unspecified signals ... a sound of our times.'²⁶

Thus, Bangs' conception of appropriation and representation was restated for Sheffield. A similar discourse would be furthered by Jeff Walker in *Waxpaper* in reference to Kraftwerk, they are the industrial extension of art incarnate, finding music everywhere and widening its definition by applying the laws of harmonics to the sound of technology.²⁷ Thus, to Morley and Walker the musicians are not drones controlled by their industrial surroundings, but artists aesthetically constructing music and deciding to use the city as inspiration.

Nevertheless a counter argument that negated the idea of urban setting being a primary influence on musicians may have come from a degree of embarrassment surrounding the pervasiveness of an industrial myth. As Kris Needs argued in *Zig Zag*, 'You can't compare [Throbbing Gristle] to anything going on at the moment, group-wise although similarities

²¹ *Sounds* (27th November 1977).

²² Savage, J., *Re/search Industrial Culture Handbook*, p. 4.

²³ Savage, J., *Sounds* (11th February 1978).

²⁴ Savage, J., *Sounds* (15th April 1978).

²⁵ Gosse, V., *Village Voice* (25th February 1981).

²⁶ Morley, P., *NME* (29th November 1980).

²⁷ Walker, J., *Waxpaper* (15th September 1978).

between their sound and the hum of a giant generator about to overload and explode, or a 20 foot long vacuum cleaner would be sometimes not far off but obviously a bit silly and superficial.²⁸ Needs is aware that the novelty of Throbbing Gristle, along with the problems surrounding describing avant-garde music in a popular music magazine, contribute to an often 'silly and superficial' myth. Andy Gill was even more vehement arguing in the *NME*, 'Cabaret Voltaire could have been spawned in any city, and quite possibly in a non-urban area, too.'²⁹ Gill argues that the genealogy of Cabaret Voltaire is 'traceable' through Roxy Music, arts in general (they were students at Sheffield's resolutely leafy, if a tad Le Corbusian, Psalter Lane Arts College) and an urge to create music. What Gill could have also noted is the declining price of synthesisers. In 1972 synthesisers were on the front page of *Melody Maker* behind Emerson, Lake and Palmer or Pete Waterman.³⁰ They were exorbitantly expensive, huge and often built by Bob Moog himself.³¹ Yet, by November 1977 the synthesiser has reached the back pages and a build your own synthesiser booklet could be bought for as little as £1.50 (as Throbbing Gristle did) or a small and practical mini Korg for £235, just less than a Fender Stratocaster (even if the extremely sought after Mini Moog still cost £915).³² This allowed the tools of industrial music to become available anywhere. Thus, whilst there is evidence for a pervasive discourse that supports the notions of authenticity and influence being derived from surrounding geography it is not unchallenged. This reflects the rabble of music journalist pop theorising and the urban metaphors used as a literary and explanatory device to the readership of the music press rather than as a discrete theory linking place and the nature of affective musical compulsion.

Reconstructing the Music Press' Industrial City

Industrial Music's peripheral music press construct of the decrepit cityscape is not far removed from a similar construct found in Hip Hop culture. Foreman argues in reference to Hip Hop, 'the particularities of urban space themselves are subjected to the deconstructive and reconstructive practices of rap artists.'³³ However, Foreman expands the regional specificity of the city and its negotiation into an unspecified and non-geographically fixed 'hood'.³⁴ The themes of territorial dominance, which respect and authenticity were derived, have been reapplied to other urban settings; at first, the city of Compton, Los Angeles. Thus, the discursive construct of the hood can be applied across urban contexts. This is applicable to industrial music. Discourses surrounding industrial music evade a specific regionally based authenticity or narrative other than an explanation or authenticity derived from a dystopian reading of the characteristics of the industrial or post-industrial city. Krims argues that an 'urban ethos (is) a determinative and interpretive tool for a symptomatic reading of expressive culture,' along with capital.³⁵ In this case Krims is correct as it is apparent that the characteristics of the music press constructed industrial or post-industrial city relates to a notion of urban space rather than a distinct locality.

A description of a radical and urban space surrounding industrial music can be found in Savage's 1978 article on Pere Ubu, in *Sounds*.³⁶ The article contains a clue that his conception of the city is possibly a little warped or hyperbolic. Absolute accuracy and journalistic ethics are not so rigidly enforced in the often literary music press, as Forde argues. Savage is, naturally, bound to his metaphor of deterministic urban power and sets about describing Pere Ubu's home Cleveland, '[Cleveland is], from descriptions, very bleak and industrial: blank

²⁸ Needs, K., *Zig Zag* (March 1978).

²⁹ Gill, A., *NME* (9th September 1978).

³⁰ *Melody Maker* (1st January 1972).

³¹ *Moog* (2004), Dir. Fjellestad, H.

³² *Melody Maker* (12th February 1977).

³³ Foreman, M., "'Represent": Race, Space and Place in Rap Music,' p. 66.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Krims, A., *Music and Urban Geography* (New York, 2007), p. 24.

³⁶ Savage, J., *Sounds* (11th February 1978).

spaces and empty places, scarred planes stretching as far as the eyes can see. (*No it isn't-Ed.*)³⁷ The interjection of the editor makes it seem that Savage's description may be an inadmissible stretch of artistic licence. Yet, as Savage's description of seeing a Devo concert in Manchester the previous year a metaphor of crumbling industrial cities emerges,

'Well now [the sun] set/ and everything is devolving/ leaving miles and miles of vacant lots like broken teeth...Location chance – could be *any* major city: suggests limits of expansion under present system/attitudes have occurred...'³⁸

The imagery of 'miles and miles of vacant lots' and 'scarred planes as far as the eyes can see' amount to a metaphor of desolate Seventies cities, rather than an actual description of Manchester or Cleveland at the time. By 1979 Savage is still labouring under the metaphor, describing Joy Divisions' *Unknown Pleasures* (not usually subsumed into the industrial cannon), reflecting, 'Manchester's dark spaces and empty places, endless sodium lights and hidden semis seen from a speeding car, vacant industrial sites – the endless detritus of the 19th century – seen like gaping rotten flesh from an orange bus.'³⁹ However, here Savage states the city in a particularly Ballardian vein to readers.

This Ballardian vein is fitting as the non-specific city construct becomes a sprawling cityscape. This image is so powerful it is later used in music and cyberpunk fiction (as Collins and Novotny argue); combining with the hallmarks of science fiction description, with the music press and their subcultural, New Journalism fixations.⁴⁰ The amalgam of 'the sprawl', in the sense that William Gibson or Sonic Youth would later appropriate it, appears most explicitly in the *NME* in reference to Pere Ubu with Paul Rambali describing Ohio's Cuyahoga river delta as, 'the dark sprawl of heavy industry... the steam burst[s] from the safety valves of a gleaming tangle of pipes that run for square miles, between the stockyards and diesels and giant foundries that smelt the raw materials.'⁴¹ Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth would later sing 'I grew up in a shotgun row/ Sliding down the hill/ Out front were the big machines/ Steel and rusty now I guess/ Outback was the river/ And that big sign down the road/ That's where it all started.'⁴² Albeit, the lyrics are actually from a Denis Johnson book. Gordon refers to the mythology of the declining city and within the remit of Gibson's 'the Sprawl' in *Neuromancer* (the city with the sky 'the Colour of Television, Tuned to a Dead Channel ') and Rambali's literary music journalism. Rambali would even have his surname used for a character in *Neuromancer*.⁴³ Thus, illustrating the strength of the sprawling dystopian urban city as an image in popular mythology, which is partially thanks to the myth of industrial music that transmitted by a widely read music press.

However, until around 1974 the word sprawl was usually reserved for a relaxing musician; Uriah Heap sprawled on 'burnt ochre bedspreads (what else?)'.⁴⁴ Yet, the introduction of 'sprawl' in the music press as a term describing the built environment appeared in Chris Welch's *Melody Maker* article on Yes in 1975,

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Savage, J., *Sounds* (26th November 1977).

³⁹ Savage, J., *Melody Maker* (21st July 1979).

⁴⁰ Collins, K., 'Dead Channel Surfing: the Commonalities between Cyberpunk Literature and Industrial Music,' *Popular Music* (2005, 24:2).

Novotny, P., 'No Future! Cyberpunk, Industrial Music, and the Aesthetics of Postmodern Disintegration', *Political Science Fiction* (Columbia, 1997).

⁴¹ Rambali, P., *NME* (18th November 1978).

⁴² Sonic Youth, 'The Sprawl' *Daydream Nation* (1988).

⁴³ Gibson, W., *Neuromancer* (New York, 1984), p. 58.

⁴⁴ Salewicz, C., *NME* (8th June 1976).

'The lane led to a sprawl of old redbrick farm buildings and outhouses, the home of ex-Peddlers' drummer, Trevor Morais, who has converted the premises into a rehearsal and recording studio.

With plenty of overgrown grounds, including a murky pond, it would be idyllic, but for the hideous factory crouched like a warthog about to spring over the stout dividing fence.⁴⁵

The intensification of the use of 'sprawl' to convey an immense and unruly urban space can be seen in 1976, as Mick Farren refers to, 'ugly sprawl of North London suburbia.'⁴⁶ Here the shock of punk and industrial made the decrepit and post-modern gothic city a cogent explanatory device. Yet, much of it is featureless in the sense it can be applied across multiple urban context.

However, the view of the city that had inspired or influenced musicians is not as static as it would seem, even if the idea of a homogenous urban space is implied when the metaphor itself reaches its most widespread around 1977-1981. Narratives veer between science fiction industrial mire to Dickensian squalor (with a touch of *Coronation Street*). Savage even references the Dickensian Coketown and comments, '*Industrialism*, the main creative force of the nineteenth century, produced the most degraded urban environment the world had yet see', actively attempting to historicise and explain the surroundings of industrial music.⁴⁷ *Sounds'* Peter Silverton also favours the more Dickensian notion of the city describing, 'dark brown brick, heavily streaked by a hundred years of factory chimneys, children playing ball in the street.'⁴⁸ Yet, Silverton introduces a British television soap institution saying the particular city street (in this case in Manchester) could be an 'alternative set for *Coronation Street*.'⁴⁹ Silverton is not alone as Sandy Robertson uses Britain's most famous popular culture street in reference to Throbbing Gristle's Hackney home, 'looks like a set from *Coronation Street* only they have it full of ravenous cats that scurry around wildly at the first scent of potato crisps.'⁵⁰ Needs uses the homely image of, 'a street which looks like one of those Hovis ads', to describe the same street.⁵¹ Both settle on an image of urban normality and the cliché of the grimness of Northern England. Thus, again the explanatory construction of the city (and by that industrial music) is mediated by the press encoding of an understandable popular image; tailored to the youthful target audience of the music press. In this case there is a somewhat amusing muddle of Ena Sharples and Mr. Gradgrind.

Yet, there is still a pole of hyper-modern science fiction conceptions of urban space, applied to a range of cities with a seemingly rhythmic similarity and also rich with reconstructions of literary and cultural discourses. Ian Birch references the 'free zones' of Cleveland, again somewhat in the vein of Ballard, Phillip K. Dick or even William Burroughs.⁵² For example, Ballard's predilection for automobiles seeps through, 'you pray that your car doesn't break down on any of the town's labyrinthine highways, if for no other reason than the metropolis averages two murders a day.'⁵³ The word 'metropolis' evokes Fritz Lang's cinematic dystopia no less imposing than the threat of a violent urban anomie. However, importantly the actual representation of Cleveland is arguably subservient to urban myth making and the authenticity-scape of a squalid, unruly and under-populated wasteland. Cleveland again

⁴⁵ Welch, C., *Melody Maker* (20th Spetember 1975).

⁴⁶ Farren, M., *NME* (24th April 1976).

⁴⁷ Savage, J., *Re/search Industrial Culture Handbook*, p. 4.

⁴⁸ Silverton, P., *Sounds* (7th April 1979).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Robertson, S., *Sounds* (26th November 1977).

⁵¹ Needs, K., *Zig Zag* (March 1978).

⁵² Birch, I., *Melody Maker* (11th November 1978).

⁵³ *Ibid.*

features juxtaposed with a great science fiction interest, the human body changed by industry or technology as the 'Dirty City, where sulphur dioxide permeates human pores.'⁵⁴ Thus, the city is actually physically affecting its residents and by proxy their music. Ian Penman is also a proponent of this image of the city. He refers to Sheffield as, 'successive grey zones of mechanical, ponderous aggression; aggression which is detached, drifting, resolute.'⁵⁵ Paul Morley also plays up the concrete greyness, 'the colour of The City, the colour of depression.'⁵⁶ Thus, it seems there is little difference between either urban dystopia.

Although Cleveland and Sheffield would most definitely have been hit by late seventies recessions and manufacturing losses, the cities are unlikely to offer as similar an experience as implied by the likeness of the images stated in the music press. Nevertheless, it is stated in order to attempt to bring together a mass readership and the intrusion of avant-garde music into the mainstream music press. The images of urban decay are cloaked in hyper-real rhetoric that is closer to literature than conventional journalism that would be found in a newspaper. Each city is imbued with generic sparse derelict lots, the clang of metal on metal, spoiled, ugly and imposing. Working within the late 1970s mythologies and lived experience some journalists saw reason to ascribe a climate that engendered psychological compulsions leading to urban mimicry by musicians. They were 'tainted'. Others would argue that musicians were authentically representing their surroundings. Indeed, some would reject the idea of the city as a deterministic creature. As a result, what emerges is a textured and occasionally chaotic geography of statements. From, this it can be gauged how post-punk industrial music caused a degree of consternation in the music press. As an abrasive and resolutely non-popular and avant-garde musical form the music press required a range of strategies in order to explain industrial music's existence and make readers relate to and consume both the music and its related journalism. That a transcendent restatement of the 1970s urban mythology became the dominant metaphor to relate to industrial music suggests the burden of explanation was vast.

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