

Bushwick Bill, and Vic Chesnutt, among others—could be fruitfully analyzed using his framework. In addition, although McKay explains the absence of much material on blindness, it would nonetheless be interesting to see visually impaired artists and audiences receive their own treatment. McKay also pays less attention to the experiences of disabled people as pop audiences. This seems like an important aspect to the broader crip pop story, particularly related to the literal and figurative accessibility of pop spaces ranging from venues to fan communities.

These suggestions are by no means meant to suggest flaws in McKay's narrative or presentation. Indeed, perhaps the greatest strength of *Shakin' All Over* is that it demands further scholarship. It is a brash, brilliant, and fist-pumping book that will inspire and entertain audiences for years to come.

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Assimilate: A Critical History of Industrial Music

S. ALEXANDER REED

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376 pp., \$99.00 (hb)

Contrary to popular belief, industrial music did not begin when Nine Inch Nails released *Pretty Hate Machine*, nor did it begin with Wax Trax! Records. Industrial music has a long history reaching back at least to the 1970s with acts like Throbbing Gristle, Cabaret Voltaire, and Clock DVA. In this work S. Alexander Reed has set out on an ambitious quest: to provide an overarching critical history of industrial music. What constitutes “industrial” music is often contested, and the divergent origins and constantly evolving bloodlines make this project all the more difficult. But, as Reed observes, how one's music is defined has implications for the subculture that listens to it. Reed has a personal stake in this project; he is also a practitioner with his band ThouShaltNot. There have been previous forays into this territory, with works on individual bands such as *Einstürzende Neubauten* and volumes such as *Tape Delay* by Charles Neal, but this is likely to become one of the defining works concerning industrial music as a genre or as an idea.

There is much to commend in this book. First, Reed's historical treatment covers an immense amount of ground, touching on both major players and obscure artists. Indeed, the first third of the book finds Reed acting as cultural sleuth, seeking the origins of industrial music. His answer is twofold: geography and philosophy. He observes that the locations in which industrial music came to the forefront had a

strong influence on the kinds of music that these artists created. Of course the same could be said for most genres of music, but Reed provides compelling arguments concerning the factory landscape of northern England, the relative cultural isolationism of Berlin, and the countercultural scene of San Francisco to demonstrate not only differences but also similarities in the music that came from each of these places. Some of these similarities came about as like-minded individuals found each other through international art movements such as Fluxus and the mail art and tape-trading scene that flourished during the 1970s. In addition, there were technological components to this process, such as the accessibility of samplers, synthesizers, and drum machines that had a homogenizing effect on electronic music as a whole. From the philosophy angle, Reed examines industrial music through the lens of Antonin Artaud and his conception of a “theater of cruelty,” William S. Burroughs’s notion of the cut-up, and the Futurists and their technophilia, for our purposes most evident in Luigi Russolo’s manifesto *The Art of Noises*. This philosophical history provides a useful theoretical framework that remains throughout the book.

This text is heavy on history, but it still lives up to its subtitle, which declares this work a “critical history of industrial music.” As Reed traces the history of industrial music, he pauses at times to delve deeply into specific events and groups to explain certain elements of industrial music. One could view this as history with commentary, at times exposing some of the more problematic elements of industrial music. For example, Reed traces the legacy of blues, jazz, and dub elements in industrial music, explaining how certain chord structures and phrasings seem borrowed from these other genres. Yet Reed argues that “industrial music seldom acknowledges racial otherness” (212) and suggests that its overwhelmingly white, male nature promotes a kind of ethnocentrism and fetishizing of the other. In a similar fashion, Reed provides a thoughtful exploration of fascist imagery in industrial music drawing on the work of Slavoj Žižek and Susan Sontag. At other times he investigates specific moments in the evolution of industrial music, such as when bands like Test Dept. shifted from playing in railway stations and parking garages to releasing club-friendly singles.

This critical work is illuminating, and the longer explorations serve as illustrations of the larger historical narrative. Reed’s analysis of Skinny Puppy and Nine Inch Nails in particular demonstrates well how industrial music functions by revealing both the differences and similarities between the artists in question and the larger mainstream of industrial music. In his examination of Skinny Puppy, Reed suggests that what made them so compelling to both male and female fans was their androgyny and focus on the abject body. Skinny Puppy “took a music that had been (ironically or otherwise) militaristic and impenetrable and recast it as permeable, ectoplasm-drenched, and borderless It creates a metaphorical space that welcomes real, visceral bodies—not body armor” (180). In his discussion of Nine Inch Nails, Reed argues convincingly that Reznor’s use of language, specifically first-person pronouns, allowed people to relate to the music more easily. Rather than the martial standpoint found on other industrial albums, Reznor drew on themes of relationships coupled with male heterosexual masochism. In contrast to the “denial of individuality” found

in most industrial music, Reed suggests that “*Pretty Hate Machine* speaks—and sometimes whines—with the voice of a single suburban heartsick kid Probably a girl. Maybe you” (262).

If there is a criticism to be had about this book it is that Reed may have bitten off far more than he could chew in a little over 300 pages. There is a strong focus on the EBM (electronic body music) side of industrial and a heavy emphasis on old-guard musicians like Front 242, Ministry, and Skinny Puppy. This is important work, and Reed’s analysis of these bands is lucid and engaging. However, other strands of industrial music, such as power electronics and the music coming from labels such as Ant-Zen, barely get a nod. It is clear that Reed recognizes their influence, giving some mention to acts like Whitehouse and Noisex, but there is little discussion of how these artists and subgenres of industrial music fit within the larger scene. Of course, one cannot cover every aspect of such a broad topic in one book, so such omissions are inevitable and understandable.

On a related note, it may be difficult for those previously unfamiliar with industrial music to keep track of who the artists are, where they are from, how they are connected to others within the scene, and their differing ideological and musical leanings. In the quest to be comprehensive Reed seems at times to scratch only the surface of this history, moving at a breakneck pace and leaving the reader to fill in the blanks. He also makes comparisons between bands or albums with little discussion, as if the reader was already familiar with the music in question. This can become frustrating when the examples are obscure even for those familiar with industrial music.

Despite its scholarly sheen, Reed’s writing is engaging and accessible. One need not be a musicologist to enjoy this book or to find it useful, although it would help the reader to have some familiarity with industrial music. I have followed industrial music for over two decades, and this is by far the best work I have seen on it.

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Bhangra and Asian Underground: South Asian Music and the Politics of Belonging in Britain

FALU BAKRANIA

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Anyone who has visited London even briefly can sense the importance of the South Asian diaspora to the city’s contemporary identity. In *Bhangra and Asian*

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