

## REVIEWS

Glenn Pillsbury. *Damage Incorporated: Metallica and the Production of Musical Identity*. New York and London: Routledge, 2006.

Keith Kahn-Harris. *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007.

**Reviewed by Steve Waksman**

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The near simultaneous publication of Glenn Pillsbury's *Damage Incorporated: Metallica and the Production of Musical Identity*, and Keith Kahn-Harris' *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*, is something of a minor milestone in heavy metal scholarship. Not since the early 1990s have multiple scholarly books on metal seen the light of day in such proximity to one another. Indeed, the one-two punch of Pillsbury and Kahn-Harris recalls an earlier pairing that arguably changed the face not only of scholarship on metal but of popular music studies more broadly: Deena Weinstein's *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology* (later republished as *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*), and Robert Walser's *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. Methodologically, Kahn-Harris is Weinstein to Pillsbury's Walser, the former practicing empirical cultural sociology, the latter musicology strongly informed by interdisciplinary cultural studies. This is not to say that the two new works are merely derivative of their scholarly forebears. It is to say, though, that they represent an ongoing methodological gap that remains unresolved in the larger field.

Where Pillsbury and Kahn-Harris break new ground is in the subject matter of their respective works. Weinstein and Walser were both writing at a time—the late 1980s and early 1990s—when metal was still basking in the glow of its dramatic commercial ascent. From AC/DC's *Back in Black* to Def Leppard's *Pyromania* to Van Halen's *1984* to Poison's *Open up and Say . . . Ahh*, heavy metal was one of the dominant sounds of 1980s popular music in the United States and worldwide. As is so often the case in popular music, its very success bred something of a backlash. A faster, more aggressive style of metal began to arise, first in England, then in the United States. Initially stimulated by the coarse strains of punk, this new metal sound—codified as speed or thrash metal—became increasingly antagonistic towards the more melodic, pop-oriented strains of the genre. In the ensuing years,

further subgenres emerged such as death metal, black metal, and grindcore, all of which pushed metal further in the direction of extremity in both sound and lyrical content. Concurrently, mainstream metal gradually began to lose commercial ground. The turning point in these developments, at least in the United States, was the rise of grunge, itself a metal/punk hybrid, which signaled not so much the end of metal's commercial viability as the recasting of its principal elements. Melodic hooks and pop accessibility would no longer be dominant qualities of metal as a genre. From the early 1990s to the present, the darker, messier, more aggressive aspects of metal would rule.

Weinstein and Walser addressed these changes in metal's commercial and cultural standing, but in a partial and necessarily preliminary manner (although the revised version of Weinstein's book does include a new chapter on metal in the 1990s). Pillsbury and Kahn-Harris, by contrast, take these changes as their respective starting point, and as such are the first scholarly works to consider post-speed/thrash metal as their primary subject. Despite this commonality, the two books are markedly different in focus. As its subtitle would indicate, *Damage Incorporated* is a study of a single band, Metallica. Pillsbury examines various facets of the band's career, from their pivotal role in the early 1980s emergence of speed metal to their ultimate massive success and the subsequent charges of "selling out" that have been issued at the band from fans and critics alike since the early 1990s. *Extreme Metal* is far less artist-centered, and also dwells more on recent and contemporary developments. Speed metal is itself the historical background to the subgenres at the heart of Kahn-Harris' work, but more to the point, his book highlights those spheres of contemporary metal that have remained largely outside the purview of the mainstream music industry. One might observe that Pillsbury's book about Metallica also documents the changing terms of the heavy metal mainstream over a twenty-year period, while Kahn-Harris' book analyzes a rather different phenomenon, the rise of a self-sustaining heavy metal underground.

As a study of a single band, *Damage Incorporated* takes a cue from Susan Fast's recent book on Led Zeppelin, *In the Houses of the Holy*. Like Fast, Pillsbury is less interested in tracing a historical and biographical narrative than in pursuing a set of themes and issues that can be brought to bear upon the music and career of Metallica. Also like Fast and Walser, Pillsbury is quite good at showing that issues of musical form and structure are never removed from cultural matters. Although parts of *Damage Incorporated* are rigorously technical in their attention to musical detail, Pillsbury never

allows questions of power, meaning and identity to drift too far away, especially in chapters on the conjunction of musical complexity and white masculinity, and on the exotic/Orientalist underpinnings of the song, “Wherever I May Roam.”

Central to the book’s concerns is the concept of genre, which Pillsbury defines as “a wholesale attempt at categorization that distills elements of identity into a recognizable pattern of action and language” (x). Genre is the tool that allows Pillsbury to build a bridge between the formal/structural aspects of Metallica’s music and the realm of culture. Pursuing this line of analysis, *Damage Incorporated* makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing scholarly conversation about the importance of genre in popular music. Like the best work on the subject, Pillsbury does not merely observe the construction of genre rules. He also studies the processes through which those rules become challenged and extended. In the case of Metallica, that means looking at how the band served at once as one of the foremost architects of the genre (or subgenre) of thrash metal, and as a band that stretched the rules of thrash almost as soon as the genre assumed some sort of early definition.

Chapter one concentrates on Metallica’s role as thrash metal architects, and includes what I think is the single most compelling idea in *Damage Incorporated*: Pillsbury’s notion of “cycles of energy” and their role in organizing rhythm, tempo and the experience of bodily intensity. Thrash metal may be defined by its commitment to speed, Pillsbury explains, but that only gets us so far in understanding how it works either formally or phenomenologically. The speed of thrash metal is not an absolute value, nor is it an unvarying aspect of the genre. In a given song, speed is experienced as such through a range of effects, the most important of which is the energy cycle. Pillsbury defines the energy cycle most concisely in his introduction: “rhythmic intensities do not signify nearly as strongly by themselves. Rather, the *changes* in intensity provide the crucial context for their signification, and the various contexts then create the cycles of energy that make thrash metal songs so effective” (xx–xxi). Building on this insight, chapter one includes a detailed consideration of the song “Whiplash,” from Metallica’s debut *Kill ‘Em All*, in which Pillsbury skillfully demonstrates the multiple levels of rhythmic and timbral signification at work and how they are organized into sequences that gain power from shifts in tempo and articulation.

Subsequent chapters trace a roughly chronological path through which Metallica, using various strategies, calls into question the very genre rules they had a hand in composing. One such strategy is what

Pillsbury calls the “Fade to Black” paradigm, taken from the Metallica song of the same name. Appearing on Metallica’s second album, *Ride the Lightning*, “Fade to Black” sounded little like the thrash metal for which the band had become known. It featured undistorted guitar timbres through much of the song, slow-to-moderate tempo, and a highly personal lyric about alienation and ultimately—though somewhat ambiguously—suicide. This notable departure from Metallica’s established sound drew criticism from some fans who wanted their thrash to be pure in its visceral impact, but was generally received as a mark of the group’s growing artistic range and maturity, and gave rise to other, similarly arranged songs (“Welcome Home (Sanitarium),” “One”) on the albums that followed. Claiming that these songs represent a distinct “paradigm” within Metallica’s body of work, Pillsbury makes the larger point that genre categories are not always helpful when seeking to analyze the finer points of a single song or the varied output of a complex band like Metallica.

The final chapter of *Damage Incorporated* seeks to address the growing controversy surrounding Metallica during their 1990s career. Predictably, Metallica faced widespread accusations of “selling out” throughout the 1990s. Stimulated by the multiplatinum success of the band’s 1991 *Metallica* album (also called “The Black Album” for its stark cover), the accusations reached a peak with the release of *Load* (1996) and *Re-Load* (1997). At issue was the band’s music, which abandoned former complexity for a more basic rock sound with strong traces of blues and Southern rock. Even more troubling for many observers, though, was the wholesale image change enacted upon the release of *Load*, all four members shedding their trademark long hair and denim-clad fashion in favor of a highly stylized appearance that seemed a bricolage of the “alternative rock” fashion that had won popularity in the preceding half-decade. Pillsbury shows that the band was not uniformly rejected, but that what resulted from the image overhaul was a growing schism between fans and critics who celebrated the new look and sound as the final stage of Metallica’s artistic maturity, and those who viewed the band’s changes as an inauthentic capitulation to shifts in the market for hard rock. In good academic fashion, Pillsbury strives to stake out a middle ground in this polarized debate. He refrains from castigating Metallica too harshly, but at the same time argues that the preoccupation with authenticity evinced in charges of “selling out,” however ideologically fraught, should be taken seriously as an expression of value, a way that audiences make meaning out of the music they care about.

Pillsbury's balanced critical stance is admirable, but lacks teeth, and also lacks a certain measure of perspective that would have made this balanced outlook more enlightening. Pillsbury concludes the chapter with the observation: "Metallica's selling-out controversy . . . lies somewhere at the intersection of commerce . . . and the folds of musical genre that represent microcosms of unwelcome instability and ambiguity" (180). To fully understand these points of generic tension, though, would require a broader view of the genre in question and the larger context of 1990s rock than Pillsbury provides. In this final chapter the limitations of Pillsbury's decision to concentrate upon a single band come most to the foreground. There is no mention of the burgeoning metal underground that had taken root in the 1990s. More strikingly, Pillsbury makes no references to grunge, the phenomenon that many claim to have displaced metal from its position of commercial supremacy, and on whose bandwagon Metallica was widely seen to have jumped, especially after their headlining appearance on the 1996 Lollapalooza tour that also featured Seattle bands Soundgarden and Screaming Trees, among others. Leaving such details aside, Pillsbury's account of Metallica's "sell-out" controversy seems strangely insular, and misses an opportunity to more thoroughly explain why the commercial and artistic fate of Metallica carried such broad repercussions in the rock scene of the era.

At just the time that Metallica was rising to new heights of success—the late 1980s and early 1990s—other branches of what was then becoming known as "extreme metal" also seemed poised for broader commercial impact. Bands such as Morbid Angel, Slayer and Cannibal Corpse, whose sound had seemed thoroughly alien to mainstream tastes, began to garner wider publicity and growing record sales. Yet the breakthrough never fully happened, says Keith Kahn-Harris, because participants in the scenes surrounding these styles of metal were too strongly opposed to the metal mainstream and refused to relinquish their outcast status. Kahn-Harris explains further: "When the scene was on the cusp of a great surge in popularity, the divide from the heavy metal scene was reinforced so as to develop a distinct extreme metal scene" (95).

*Extreme Metal*, then, documents a scene that represents a self-defined margin, at odds with more ordinary generic pleasures. The methodological difference between this book and *Damage Incorporated* comes through in Kahn-Harris' preference for the theoretical term "scene" over "genre." Both scene and genre allow for a "holistic" approach to a particular topic—one that takes into account a variety of musical and extra-musical processes—but

to Kahn-Harris, scene has the advantage of being a more socially grounded term, and also one with a crucial spatial dimension. Taking as his subject the extreme metal scene, Kahn-Harris ranges widely across the factors that make the scene cohere: a set of shared values revolving around the pursuit of transgression; the development of scene-specific institutions such as record labels, magazines, and tape-trading networks; and the nature of scenic participation at different levels, with a particular focus upon fans, with whom he conducted a number of interviews.

That Kahn-Harris' interviewees come from Israel, Sweden, and the United Kingdom says something about the uniqueness of *Extreme Metal*. Kahn-Harris does not define the extreme metal "scene" in a geographically bounded way. Instead, the scene is something of a virtual space held together by shared devotion to extreme metal. Crucially, the scene was established as such before the internet and e-communication became dominant media forms; print media, tape trading and the exchange of letters were the principal means through which the scene was created. Emphasizing the global dimensions of this network of extreme metal participants and institutions, *Extreme Metal* represents perhaps the first English-language book-length study of metal to step significantly outside the typical US/UK axis. Chapter five is especially notable in this regard. There, Kahn-Harris takes an openly comparative approach, briefly surveying scenes in the United States, Europe, Israel, Latin America, and parts of Asia, and observing that extreme metal scenes tend to flourish not in the "strongest cores of the global capitalist system" but in "places that are close to, but slightly removed from concentrations of global power" (98).

When he turns his attention more closely to what happens within the extreme metal scene, Kahn-Harris pursues more familiar sociological ground. *Extreme Metal* joins the growing number of popular music studies works inspired by the theories of Pierre Bourdieu and his various interpreters. The book draws particularly upon Bourdieu's ideas concerning cultural capital and Sarah Thornton's expansion of Bourdieu's thesis with her term, subcultural capital. What Kahn-Harris adds to this literature is a further distinction between what he calls "mundane" and "transgressive" subcultural capital. If the extreme metal scene as a whole is one oriented towards transgression in its different capacities—musically, lyrically, in dress and in discourse—within the boundaries of the scene itself there remain rules, norms and conventions that are to be observed for the scene to retain its integrity. Mundane subcultural capital, by Kahn-Harris' definition, is "accrued through a sustained investment in the myriad practices through

which the scene is reproduced” (122). Knowledge of canonic extreme metal bands is one such form of mundane capital, but perhaps more important are various sorts of scene-oriented work, such as managing a club, editing a fanzine, running a label or overseeing a listserv. Transgressive subcultural capital, in turn, has a more innovative quality, and is also more individualist than collectivist in character. It is mainly the province of the “artists” within the scene, who assume the role of expanding and recreating established boundaries and conventions. Kahn-Harris characterizes the relationship between these different forms of subcultural capital as something of a dialectic: both are always in existence at any given point in the scene, though one or the other is typically more privileged, and some branches of extreme metal like black metal have been especially important in promoting the value of scenic transgression (133).

What Kahn-Harris does not manage to address properly in *Extreme Metal* is the particular intensity of metal as an expressive form, and how that intensity is communicated to its audiences. Chapter two makes a game effort to assess the aesthetics of extreme metal, and offers some choice observations concerning the complex relationship between the frenetic energy at work in the music and the range of bodily responses such energy might engender; Kahn-Harris notes at one point, “It is virtually impossible to find a middle ground between frantic movement and no movement” (45). Yet his sociological methods do not allow him to get inside the workings of extreme metal music in the way that Pillsbury is able to do with the music of Metallica; and lacking that richer explanation of extreme metal as aural experience, his attempt to probe the nature of scenic experience in chapter three comes across as rather superficial. While Pillsbury’s book suffers at times from a lack of broader context, Kahn-Harris’ book demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses of a predominantly empirical approach in which interviews with scene participants carry the burden of providing evidence.

Limitations aside, *Damage Incorporated* and *Extreme Metal* are valuable additions to the scholarly literature on heavy metal that also make larger contributions to the field of popular music studies. Pillsbury shows how much can be done examining the work of a single band, and his musicological method has much to offer in the way of culturally informed musical analysis. Kahn-Harris importantly extends current discussions of popular music scenes and subcultures, and details elements of recent and contemporary metal that have received little attention in previous scholarly works. Together, the two books provide a richer understanding of the paths

that metal has taken since its 1980s commercial heyday, and should open the way for further study of the diversity and complexity of heavy metal as genre and scene.

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### Reviewed by Justin D. Burton

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Adam Krims' *Music and Urban Geography* accomplishes much in a relatively small space.

For those unfamiliar with urban geography, the book—especially the material in the introduction and first chapter—functions as an effective primer. Krims's explanation of urban geography hinges on two basic observations: (1) "[T]he dramatic changes in world metropolises over the past few decades" enjoy a relationship with the changes in music of the past few decades; and (2) that relationship does not require that one will cause the other "so much as [the two] will participate in each other as different moments in a larger unity" (xix). Krims creates a delicate but useful balance here, insisting that a rigid base/superstructure dichotomy incorrectly separates culture from economy, instead preferring a methodology that allows us to understand culture and economy as "develop[ing] in tandem" (xvi).

The avoidance of a predetermined base/superstructure causality proves quite freeing, as we are able, on the one hand, to notice that the changing city in the 1980s produced a severe backlash against disco (77–78), and, on the other, to consider the notion that the growing presence of women in popular culture required a feminized imagining of the city in the 1990s and 2000s, as evident in a television series such as HBO's *Sex and the City* (20–25). Whether culture pushes economy or economy culture is much less important than realizing that the two move together, and Krims illustrates this point by allowing a constant negotiation between them.

Within the concept of urban geography, Krims also introduces the urban ethos, which he defines “as a set of representations of who can do what in the city and with what degree of autonomy from the effects of space” (20). In cultural studies terms, the urban ethos can provide something of a reception history, as we see the city as it is understood, experienced, or imagined, not necessarily as it actually is.

We can better understand this aspect of the urban ethos by combining and expounding on three of Krims's own examples. Returning to *Sex and the City*, Krims's description of it as “one of the most sanitized urban environments ever seen on television” alerts us to an urban ethos that is free from violence and male domination (20). In 1999, at the same time *Sex* was airing, Mobb Deep and Nas starred in the video “It's Mine,” which functions as an homage to material wealth and “movin' on up,” and includes silent and indulgent women captured in an unproblematized gaze, providing a clear counterpoint to the HBO show (115). Black Star (Talib Kweli and Mos Def), in the same year, defied both urban ethoi in “Respiration.” Mos Def and Kweli depict a city that is violent, dangerous, and, in places, impoverished: “Hard knuckles on the second hands of / Workin class watches / Skyscrapers is / Colossus / The cost of living is / Preposterous . . . Nightly news repeat / Who got shot down and / Locked down” (117). The concept of the urban ethos allows us to consider each of these three contemporaneous reports of New York and fold them into the reception history of the city's geography.

Krims's book is as much manifesto as it is methodological study. Part of his motivation for emphasizing urban geography is to encourage musicological pursuits that diverge from the resistance trope that currently dominates (especially popular) music studies. Krims reveals his frustration with the resistance trope nowhere more obviously than in Chapter 4, where

he attempts to reclaim Marxist musicology from the “looming presence” of Theodor Adorno (90).

Taking Adorno to task in print is much less risky now than it was a decade ago, as Adorno has received an assumedly deserved comeuppance even in the *New Yorker*, where Alex Ross describes him as “the dark prince of intellectual life” and, at times, “hilariously bitchy.” Ross, in calling Adorno a “bogeyman” and characterizing his sentences as “twist[ing] . . . scorpions” and his writings as “thunderings,” is guilty of using physiological grotesqueness to emphasize his critique of Adorno, and Krims falls prey to the same rhetoric (Ross 2003). Adorno becomes a gargantuan presence whose shadow covers “work[s] with an apparently vast disciplinary distance from Frankfurt critical theory,” who “seems to loom ever larger, as the reader watches opinions flee his central contentions, like so many planets fleeing a great, ordinary cosmic explosion,” and “the weight of [whose] critiques” must be “exorcized” from musicology (91). One is reminded of the gusto with which early twentieth century writers turned another Modernist German Jew, Max Reger, into a monster in order to undermine his musicality (Bittmann 2001, 136–47).

Beneath these fantastical characterizations of Adorno, however, is an astute and instructive critique of Adornan musicology. Krims notes that the conflation of “Adorno” with “Marxism” in (especially popular) music studies results from fundamental misunderstandings of both Adorno and Marxism. On the one hand, Adorno is often received, in part, as a champion of a certain kind of German Modernism, a proof text for “connecting musical form and social structure,” or a paper tiger that seeks to devour popular musicians and their troglodyte fandom (89–90). On the other hand, this partial Adorno then becomes “one of the single greatest obstacles to developing a Marxist analysis of music” because his resistance to mass production and cultural imperialism are often not properly historicized in music studies, as any proper Marxist approach should be (90).

Krims’s objective, then, is to relegate Adorno to the pages of history, not by showing that Adorno’s analysis was appropriate for his time—that can be someone else’s undertaking—but by illustrating the inappropriateness of the Adornan worldview for contemporary musicology. In short, resistance to the general by the particular unsatisfactorily explains economic or social relationships in (especially popular) music. Rather, the big, bad bureaucracies against which Adorno railed because of their stamping out of individuality now welcome and encourage the cultivation of particularized products. Krims prepares the reader for this point in his second chapter, where he

details the intricate interplay between the localized genre of *tumba* (specifically the song “Much’i Otrabanda”) and its feeding of the tourist industry that allows Curaçao to function in a global economy. He turns to reality rap to crystallize his Adornian critique.

Krims displays the sort of keen musical analysis that readers of his hip hop book, *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity*, would expect from him. His central point is that reality rap shifted its urban ethos from a depiction of the impacted ghetto to a celebration of material wealth in the late 1990s. Krims admirably avoids an easy resistance trope that would decry such a shift as the triumph of mass culture over local resistance or, as Todd Boyd has argued, that celebrates such a shift as the triumph of a resistant culture within a society that has long repressed it (Boyd 2003). Krims notes that the depiction of the impacted ghetto migrated to knowledge rap, but here one wonders whether his resistance of resistance negatively affects the text. Why did knowledge rap turn its attention to inner city life in the late 1990s? Krims offers no answer, implying that resistance may have its place in music studies after all.

This, ultimately, is Krims’s point. Cultural studies needs urban geography, and urban geography needs cultural studies. Musicology, whether popular or classical, must continue to press forward in its analysis of the relationship between culture and economy, traversing a path from “one of the later disciplines even to embrace postmodern thought and cultural studies” to a more diverse field of discourse concerning “the musical world through which one passes, and perhaps even [to] a better understanding of how to change it” (90, xli).

Krims’s book proves a useful stop along that path.

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**Reviewed by Debra Rae Cohen**

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A recent cartoon in the *New Yorker* depicts (like so many cartoons in the *New Yorker*) two well-dressed men bellied up to a bar. “I keep trying for authenticity,” says one, “but all I can manage is verisimilitude.” In the gap between those concepts—and even more, in the very notion that “authenticity” is attainable as well as intrinsic—lies much of the history of popular music. It’s both that history and, necessarily, its historiography that Hugh Barker and Yuval Taylor set out to explore in *Faking It*; they wind up effectively and often rivetingly demonstrating the extent to which the valorization of authenticity—variously defined—has shaped and misshaped the way popular music has been made and received. Less happily, their volume underscores how hard it is even in sophisticated discussions of the rhetoric of authenticity to escape recapitulating its terms.

Indeed, the initial few pages of the book’s introduction register the theoretical slipperiness of the project; an opening distinction between “authentic” versus “faking it” (already unsettlingly simple) morphs by the second page into a “quest” for authenticity on the part of the performer. “Every performance is to some degree ‘faked,’” say the authors, reasonably; “authenticity is . . . a goal that can never be attained” (x). But can listeners’ perceptions themselves, then, be binary and absolute? Is reception so much less problematic than composition? These are questions with which Barker and Taylor don’t grapple, and their argument slides into platitude-nousness whenever they recur, as in their concluding exhortations, to the listening “we”—as if audiences were any less historically determined than performers, or cultural products. Luckily most of their volume displays less self-consciousness about its erudition. The authors muster meticulous historical research, educated insight, and a remarkable range of referents in the service of parsing the contradictions involved in the promotion of the authentic: the creation of the “singer-songwriter,” the appropriation of racially coded integrity, the crafting of “authentic” personae.

Although the book’s early chapters, centering around ideas of “cultural authenticity,” cover what is largely familiar ground—the racial compartmentalization of the recording industry, the myth of a “pure” folk music, the essentialism that dictated the terms of the 1960s blues revival—the

authors' emphasis on particularities keeps the stories fresh. In perhaps their strongest chapter, they grippingly chronicle the way that the career of Mississippi John Hurt was shaped by his classification according to successive folkloric definitions of authenticity, first stalled by his embrace of an "old-time" music designated by record catalogs as "white," then touted as the exemplar of an "authentic" black blues tradition with which he had little in common.

Similarly, the authors intelligently historicize the demands of "personal authenticity." Chapter 5 traces the rise of confessional songwriting, pointing to the growth of "therapy music" (192) as a mode of marketing "authentic" torment, while an intriguing (and all-too-short) chapter on Neil Young's *Tonight's the Night* suggests the compositional constraints involved in producing "raw" recordings. The authors' concentration on these differing modes of authenticity produces some provokingly brilliant insights—among them Taylor's identification of Jimmie Rodgers as a key figure in the formation of expectations for "personal" songwriting, Barker's unsettling juxtaposition of Mike Nesmith and John Lennon, and his expert dissection of the codes of disco culture—but they are less assured in tracing the connections between these modes. While their opening chapter, for instance, clearly evokes both the primitivism involved in the marketing of Leadbelly and Kurt Cobain's quest to "keep it real," the connection between the two, summed up in Cobain's version of "In the Pines," is posited mainly through projection and "must have" locutions. Indeed, tracing the play of social pressures on the individual often tempts them into pop psychologizing: "Artists searching for authenticity tend to look back to a mythical golden age of innocence, when music was less self-conscious and was created in a simpler, purer way. This attitude often masks their feelings of inadequacy or frustration: they are deeply conscious of the gap between who they feel they are and how they are perceived by others" (193).

Also, Barker and Taylor's emphasis on personalities, though it enables them to zero in on particularly piquant cultural moments, often means that key variables in the authenticity debates get introduced late, in sidelong fashion: it's not until Chapter 7, for example, in the chapter on disco, that the authors raise important questions of recording technology and mediation. This bespeaks a broader problem; the music history with which the authors are concerned seems to exist, in this volume, largely in a cultural vacuum, its figures dancing in front of a backdrop sketched in only simplistically: "Meanwhile, Germany had its own problems in the 1970s. . . ." (240). While there are occasional references to the work of scholars like Miles Orvell,

for the most part the broader cultural determinants and ramifications of the “quest for authenticity” are left largely unexplored.

Despite these flaws, the real triumph of this book is how well it sustains interest in a topic one would have thought had long since been exhausted or reasoned away (all music is, after all, fundamentally a cultural product; as David Shumway has recently put it, “one could claim that it is only within the realm of the artificial that the category of the authentic has any meaning”<sup>1</sup>). One can disagree with particular observations, note designedly controversial reversals of conventional wisdom, even get annoyed at overly convenient generalizations (e.g., it’s necessary for the authors’ purposes to posit a continuing valorization of authenticity that ill-reflects the complexities of the contemporary scene)—but one never gets bored. And the book prompts one to compile a running wish list of topics and personalities about whom one would like to hear the authors opine. As for me, I found myself wishing they had been able to comment on Bryan Ferry’s recent *Dylan-esque*, the very title of which alerts us anew to the uneasy primacy of the original and the salience of the “as-if.”

### Note

1. “Authenticity: Modernity, Stardom, and Rock & Roll.” *Modernism/modernity* 14.3 (2007): 532.