

DEAD CHANNEL SURFING:

Cyberpunk and industrial music

In the early 1980s from out of Vancouver, home of cyberpunk writer William Gibson and science fiction film-maker David Cronenberg, came a series of pioneering bands with a similar style and outlook. The popular synth-pop band Images in Vogue, after touring with Duran Duran and Roxy Music, split into several influential factions. Don Gordon went on to found Numb, Kevin Crompton to found Skinny Puppy, and Ric Arboit to form Nettwerk Records, which would later release Skinny Puppy, Severed Heads, Moev, Delerium and more. Controversial band Numb ended up receiving less attention than the seminal Skinny Puppy. Kevin Crompton (now called Cevin Key) joined forces with Kevin Ogilvie (Nivek Ogre) and began their career by playing in art galleries. After their friend Bill Leeb quit citing 'creative freedom' disputes, they embarked on a new style along with the help of newly recruited Dwayne Goettel. Leeb would go on to found Front Line Assembly with Rhys Fulber in 1986. The style of music created by these bands, as well as many similar others, has since been dubbed 'cyberpunk' by some journalists.

Cyberpunk represents an interesting coupling of concepts. It can be dissected, as Istvan Csiscery-Ronay has shown, into its two distinct parts, 'cyber' and 'punk'. Cyber refers to cybernetics, the study of information and control in man and machine, which was created by U.S. American mathematician Norbert Wiener fifty years ago. Wiener fabricated the word from the Greek *kybernetes*, meaning 'governor', 'steersman' or 'pilot' (Leary, 1994: 66). The second concept, punk, in the sense commonly used since 1976, is a style of music incorporating do-it-yourself (d.i.y) techniques, centred on independence and touting anarchist attitudes. Csiscery-Ronay writes, '[c]yber/punk is the ideal post-modern couple: a machine philosophy that can create the world in its own image and a self-mutilating freedom, that is that image snarling back' (1988: 185-86).

Cyberpunk as a term is generally credited to Bruce Bethke's 1983 story *Cyberpunk*, but the word gained notoriety through its use a year later by journalist and editor Gardner Dozois to characterise the science fiction literary subgenre incorporating writers such as William Gibson¹, Bruce Sterling and John Shirley. According to Timothy Leary in his book (1994: 61) on cyberculture, '[c]yberpunk is the 'pop' term for cybernaut, [a] cybernetic person. Cyberpunks are the inventors, innovative writers, technofrontier artists, risk-taking film directors, icon-shifting composers, stand-up comedians, expressionist artists, free-agent scientists, technocreatives, computer visionaries, elegant hackers, special effectives, cognitive dissidents, video wizards, neurological test pilots, media explorers- all of those who boldly package and steer ideas...where no thoughts have gone before'. Moreover, cyberpunk author Bruce Sterling acknowledges the outside influences in the aesthetic of the genre, 'the work of cyberpunk is paralleled throughout 1980s pop culture: in rock video, in the hacker underground; in the street-jarring tech of hip-hop and scratch music; in the synthesizer rock of London and Tokyo' (Sterling, 1991: 345). Cyberpunk, then, at least according to those associated with it, is not so much either a musical genre or a literary style, but rather

1. I use William Gibson for most examples, due to his popularity, as is evidenced by his winning the Hugo, Nebula and Philip K. Dick Awards.

is a collective thought reflected in many different disciplines but sharing a similarity of attitudes and techniques.

Many sources have labelled the danceable EBM style of industrial music as 'cyberpunk'. *Omni Magazine's* 'Shocking Exposé: Inside Cyberpunk' from 1994, for example, described cyberpunk music as a 'seriously aggressive brand of razor-edged rock that jolts you with anti-George Jetson views of the future' and then listed several industrial bands. Mark Dery's *Keyboard Magazine* May 1989 cover story 'Cyberpunk: Riding the Toxic Shockwave with the Toxic Underground' similarly examined elements of industrial music (specifically, bands Skinny Puppy, Ministry and Manufacture), rather than the literature whose association with the word cyberpunk had been presupposed. After even limited investigation, it is clear that there is a link between the music and the literature.

Not only are references made directly in interviews (see Riley,*), but Skinny Puppy's Cevin Key, for example, is known to have attended cyber arts festivals and lived in Vancouver during the time the city also spawned cyberpunks William Gibson and David Cronenberg- and some authors have been quick to point out this connection (see Göransson, for example). Several industrial record label compilations make references to the genre, especially in the appropriation of the word 'cyber'-- Cyberpunk Fiction, California Cyber Crash, Cybernetic Biodread Transmission, Cybercore, The Cyberflesh Conspiracy, for example, as well as song titles- Cyberia (Cubanate), Cyberdome (Project X), Cyberpunks are Dead (Atari Teenage Riot) and band names- Cybertec (a.k.a. Cybertec Project or C-Tec), Cyberchrist, and the Skinny Puppy side-project, Cyberaktif. In addition, their affinities with the computer world are reflected in titles such as Clock DVA's *The Hacker*, or the bands Data-Bank A or Fat Hacker.

The first major influence chronologically is that of the Dada movement. In the work of the cyberpunks there are many references to Dada, as well as the incorporation of Dada techniques. William Gibson, for example, includes Marcel Duchamp's sculpture *The Large Glass* in the gallery of the Tessier-Aspool corporation (a faceless multi-national in the *Neuromancer* trilogy), and industrial musicians have named both their songs and their bands after Dada ideas, such as the Sheffield band Cabaret Voltaire (named after the original Zürich Dadas), and New York's The Bachelors, Even (taken from the alternate name for *The Large Glass*).

Dada is also paid tribute by Japanese industrial noise artist Merzbow, who took his name from Kurt Schwitters' *Merz* collages. Throbbing Gristle's early incarnation, the performance art group Coum Transmissions, even once orchestrated an avant-garde performance concert of Duchamp's 1913 *Bicycle Wheel* sculpture entitled *Duchamp's Next Work* which they performed at the Fourth International Festival of Electronic Music and Mixed Media at the Zwarte Zaal, Ghent, Belgium in 1974¹. That a performance artist such as Genesis P-Orridge would carry the radical techniques of avant-garde art into the realm of popular music is significant to the cyberpunk aesthetic.

In the works of the cyberpunk authors, there is also a stylistic correlation with Dada. Cyberpunk novelists like William Gibson use a collage style that was first employed by the early Dada poets like Tristan Tzara, although this influence may have also come somewhat indirectly through William Burroughs. Correspondingly, the cut-and-paste composition of much early indus-

1. See the description by Simon Ford in *Wreckers of Civilisation*, 1999: 4.5

trial music resembles that of the audio experiments of the Dada and Futurist musicians, including those of Erik Satie, Luigi Russolo and Marcel Duchamp.

Perhaps the most salient connection is with the assembled application of 'low-culture' (i.e. mass or popular) media items juxtaposed with ironic titles or other objects, in such a way that it is made possible to comment on society by using its own objects, such as Picabia's *Girl Born Without a Mother*- just a spark plug until one reads the title, when it becomes a critique of Henry Ford's rationalisation. Cyberpunk fiction, along with the work of William Burroughs and the new wave science fiction of writers like Thomas Pynchon, makes many references to popular culture. William Gibson said of one of his novels, '*Neuromancer* is filled with these bits and piece; it's very much an homage to something. I didn't really think of it as a book, I wanted it to be a pop artifact' (Dery, 1989). In cyberpunk fiction commodity culture is integrated throughout the novel as it is in our everyday life. Unavoidable allusions and references to products that exist in our present-day society be it a television show, an actor, an automobile, a beer or the UPS, infiltrate the texts throughout. This is similar to industrial music's use of everyday cultural icons in their songs- such as the sampling from popular movies, from advertising, or from political speeches. According to author Bruce Sterling, 'cyberpunk represents 'the overlapping of worlds that were formerly separate, the realm of high tech and the modern pop underground' (McCaffery, 1991: 288).

Cyberpunk is very much a representation of the same Coca-Cola consumer culture that was proliferated in Warhol's *Campbells Soup* paintings and *Brillo* boxes. A reflection in art of capitalism and industrialisation, of commodification and McDonaldisation¹. If, as McHale suggests in *Storming the Reality Studio* (1990: 308) this traffic between the 'cultural strata' of high and low culture, the appropriation of what was previously thought of as high culture into low culture imagery and vice versa is accelerating, nowhere is this reflected more than in the works of the cyberpunks. Not only do they directly reference other works of art (as previously noted), but also popular culture icons are treated with the same ambiguous, detached presentation as any other object or icon in the stories. Like the Dadas before them, the cyberpunks break down these barriers between everyday life and art, declaring common things to be valuable for contemplation in much the same way as Duchamp's ready-made, which turned a urinal into an object of much discourse.

Collage, as invented by Braque, Picasso, and developed in literary terms by the Futurists and Dadaists, has been modernised and expanded to the literary and aural realms in the work of the cyberpunks. Bricolage, defined by Peter Novotny (1990: 102) as 'the transgressive activity of individuals who are able to appropriate cultural styles and images for their own ends' is seen most in the sampling techniques applied by the industrial artists who use debris of political speeches, television, film, interviews with serial killers and victims of torture and intersperse them into music and lyrics which reflect the themes of the songs. Say U.S. industrial band Manufacture, 'We use government footage, propaganda films, news clips, politicians speaking...It's all a comment on how crazy [U.S.] American society is' (Dery, 1989). This juxtaposition of unlikely combinations of words, phrases and sounds reflects (post)modern life's 'disorienting and desensitizing effect of media bombardment' (Dery, 1989). According to McCaffery in *Storming the Reality Studio* (1991: 290), this technique as used by the cyberpunks is a '[p]resentation of idiomatic lingo, [which] serve to oppose the power and authority of public discourses and texts'. Much of the work is rather like channel surfing, in which small clips of film are absorbed by the brain and filtered by the press

1. See Ritzer, George. 1996. *The McDonaldisation of Society* California: Pine Forge Press for an excellent exploration of this rationalisation process, the systematisation of everything.

of the remote control, until only the vital images remain.

The Dadas were much dependant on a tongue-in-cheek irony. Works like Duchamp's defacing of the *Mona Lisa* (by the inclusion of a moustache) require an (albeit limited) understanding of previous art in order to understand the joke. Despite the bleakest overt sentiments in the work of the industrial musicians and the cyberpunk writers, there is also an underlying humour evident, in the irony, parody or in the tropes used. Bruce Sterling's protagonist in *The Artificial Kid's* depiction of being beaten "They turned me into a human drum that they beat in 4/4 time, chattering excitedly amongst themselves in the peculiar abbreviated vocabulary that they used with one another: "Pretty!" "Happy!" "Beat!" "Kick!" (Sterling, 1997: 70) for example, can't help but raise a smile, or Gibson's Pentecostal Metal take-off song, 'Me And Jesus'll Whup Your Heathen Ass' in *Virtual Light* similarly require a modest knowledge of pop music. Einstürzende Neubauten's poetic love song *Blume* in which the singer insists they would be various types of flowers for their lover, including a reference to that most spurned of paramours, Van Gogh, 'for you I (sic) even be a sunflower. Do you hear my enlightening laughter? Another reason to cut off an ear' also appeals for the general understanding of both Van Gogh's famous portraits of sunflowers as well as his unfortunate experiences with madness and rejection. While these references may escape a few readers or listeners, they, like Duchamp's painting, are general references to fairly simple imagery the audience is likely to be familiar with.

The Dadas were also keen to expose the dangers of the growing technologisation of society. Picabia's mechanomorphs for example, as shown, were obvious references to the increasing Taylorisation and Fordism (i.e. industrialisation) in U.S. America, and the fear of the encroachment of technology into the human realm. This is also echoed in the art of Mark Pauline, for example, head of California's mechano-performance group Survival Research Laboratories (SRL). As a performance group, Survival Research Laboratories builds mechanical robots which are set upon each other or blown up - an idea later taken up by Britain's televised *Robot Wars*. Pauline states that SRL's art is an attempt to comment on the desensitised nature of modern man, (Vale, Juno, 1983: 27-35) a point which seems to have been missed entirely by the television program. Despite being a performance artist and not a musician, Pauline has been interviewed in industrial music magazines and books like *Industrial Nation* and the *Industrial Culture Handbook*, and is therefore quite apparently thought of by most listeners of industrial to be part of that scene. Gibson is said to have based much of his book *Mona Lisa Overdrive* on SRL performances (Dery, 1989).

Author Bruce Sterling likewise acknowledged that with cyberpunk, there is 'a definite connection there. Pauline has described himself as a cyberpunk - in Vogue of all places' (McCaffery, 1990: 217-8). Closely liked with the industrial musicians, Pauline used the music of Factrix and Monte Cazzaza in his early performances in the 1970s as a backdrop to his work. Much of the work, which in early performances included the corpses of animals, references the growing imposition of machine into man. His performances are said to evoke sympathy for the machines, a sense of cruelty, which is felt by spectators who empathise with the mechanical robots.

William Gibson's opening line of *Neuromancer*, "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel", similarly "invokes a rhetoric of technology to express the natural world in a metaphor that blurs the distinctions between the organic and the artificial" (Holliger, 1990: 205). The integration of characters in the books with mechanical parts--the turn on, jack in, drop out technology of the pornographic or escapist soap-opera software or the taken for granted artificially generated prosthetic organs-- as well as the literary metaphors which reflect this same integration is analogous to industrial music.

The musicians and authors share a common sentiment of dismay that humankind is increasingly becoming absorbed with television and video games- as shown in Gibson's books and in songs such as Project Pitchfork's *Requiem* from *Alpha Omega*, or Index's *Blush Response* which references this 'download culture'. Voice distortion control devices such as the Vocoder are heavily employed¹ by industrial musicians. This desire to eliminate the human elements in the music and replace it with that of a cyborg-like sound, as well as the very instruments the musicians use- mainly the synthesiser- eliminate the need to learn notation or interact with other musicians. Some industrial music is written by only one person, or is sometimes a collaborative effort sent back and forth through the mail using DAT or computer technology in a way that the musicians never even need to meet up. As one musician put it, 'Drum Machines don't get drunk! They keep the beat' (Jennings et al., 1993: 66). For industrial many musicians, 'Are Friends Electric?' has evidently become 'Our Friends Electric'.

Many industrial concerts use pre-recorded material, the only live element prevailing being that of the voice- and this, having been electronically processed- means that what the audience hears is usually that of the human mind and body filtered entirely through the body of the machine. This is similar to cyberpunk fiction's depictions of the human body in the novels- as prostheticised, replaceable and re-assembled 'meat' that houses the privileged mind, and much of cyberpunk writing makes reference to the growing 'cyborgisation' of the human body. Industrial music makes considerable use of mechanical imagery, as nearly any album will show. Lyrics use mechanical metaphor in much the same way as the cyberpunks: 'Dead walls Protein manipulixure Hyperplex zero sect Raining inertia Corporate sovereign glow Translucid technology crosstalk, Elan vital Avant guardian angel Industrial cosmetics, Silver wintermute² drowning in mechanical waves' (Index Blush Response). The sounds that infiltrate the songs are also those of machines- from low-fi factory sounds to hi-fi electronic feedback to sci-fi space noises, they are often collaged in the same way as the samples and the lyrics. Sometimes these sounds are recognisable- a telephone busy signal, a machine used specifically in a film, for example, or sometimes manipulated and distorted. Frequently the sounds take on a life of their own, moving between familiarity and obscurity.

Musically speaking, the biggest influence on the cyberpunks is most likely Andy Warhol's protégés, the Velvet Underground. Well acknowledged by the cyberpunk authors, writer John Shirley's characters talk about the band in his novel *Eclipse*, Rudy Rucker named a novel *White Heat* after a song, and William Gibson's latest novel also takes its title from a Velvet Underground song, *All Tomorrow's Parties*. Gibson also used a character from Lou Reed's (of the Velvet Underground) song *Cool it Down*, Linda Lee, as the name for his character Case's girlfriend. Gibson even considered using a line Velvet Underground song *Sunday Morning*, 'Watch out for worlds behind you' as an epigraph to *Neuromancer* (Lupton, 1995: 113).

The influence of the Velvet Underground on early industrial bands has also been well documented³ especially on Throbbing Gristle's Genesis P-Orridge has recorded several covers of Vel-

1. In fact, it is so rare for industrial bands to not use distortion that Project X's Torny Gottberg once complained to me that many reviews of his album- which did not use a voice distortion device- demanded the electrification of his vocals. Private telephone conversation October 1999. The [55 Signs of Over-Industrialisation](#), a humorous web page also pokes fun at this idea- by writing, 'When you sing in the shower, you still use a fuzzbox'.
2. Wintermute is also a character in Gibson's series.

vet Underground and Lou Reed tracks, and the influence is obvious listening to P-Orridge's Psychic TV work. Coum Transmissions were even recommended by BBC Radio One's John Peel to the Velvet Underground as an opening act. Newer electro-industrial bands like Norway's Apoptygma Berzerk have recorded a cover version of *All Tomorrow's Parties* and cite the important influence of the band¹. Even Billy Idol in his (much sneered at² 1993 attempt to cash in on the cyberpunk market with the album *Cyberpunk* included a cover of the Velvet Underground's *Heroin*. Although scorned by and not generally considered to be 'industrial' or 'cyberpunk' by fans of the genre, there was a correlation between Idol's meshing of sci-fi samples with harsh repetitive synthesizers that could be said to relate to industrial. John Cale, with his avant-garde art music background brought to the Velvets seminal techniques of drone, feedback and repetition which combined with Lou Reed's seminal lyrics of drugs and sex to create the epitome of underground cult status. The Velvet Underground's image- that of the money-spurning independent cult idols, dressed in black and associated with the 1960s New York art scene, as well as their detached, flat singing style which generally lacked in emotional involvement reflected the ideal cool pre-cyberpunk image. And of course, Lou Reed's solo *Metal Machine Music* album of 1977, a bewildering assault of feedback and machine noises, has been described as 'massively influential' on industrial music (Thompson, 1994: 68).

The most obviously influential personality on both the work of cyberpunk fiction authors and the industrial musicians is that of U.S. American writer William S. Burroughs. For Burroughs, who was introduced to the concept of the cut-up by Dada artist Brion Gysin in the 1950s, the central dominating force of control in society was speech and language. Burroughs saw his automatic writing and cut-up methods as a way of 'dismantling' these machines of control. Cutting pages of text up and re-assembling them in a different order would, according to Burroughs, reveal the truth in the text. David Porush in his study on Burroughs, *The Soft Machine* (1985: 104) has termed this style 'cybernetic fiction' attesting that it 'clearly appeals to cybernetic notions of resisting the totalitarian order and its concomitant control through deliberate randomization, the introduction of noise or entropy'.

Burroughs' influence on the science fiction world has been unparalleled, having affected authors like William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Clive Barker and science fiction new wave authors like Michael Moorcock, J.G. Ballard and Norman Spinrad. Gibson has even said in an interview of his protagonist in the *Neuromancer* trilogy, 'Case [the protagonist] could be one of Burroughs' wild boys... in a way I'm deeply influenced by Burroughs.... He found fifties science fiction and used it like a rusty canopener on society's jugular. I had to teach myself not to write too much like Burroughs. He was that kind of influence... I told this guy that the difference between what Burroughs did and what I did is that Burroughs would just glue the stuff down on the page, but I airbrushed it' (cited in Leary 1994: 24). Taking a sample of Gibson's work from *Virtual Light*, the influence of Burroughs is made evident:

'The courier's dreams are made of hot metal, shadows that scream and run, mountains the color of concrete. They are burying the orphans on a hillside. Plastic coffins, pale blue. Clouds in the sky. The priests tall hat. They do not see the first shell coming in from the concrete mountains.

3. See the *Industrial Culture Handbook* or Simon Ford *Wreckers of Civilisation*

1. Personal interview with Stephen Grotesk, November 1998, Toronto, as published in *Effigy* Volume 3 issue 2, Winter 1999.

2. See just about any review of the abominable album. I'm particularly fond of 'Those with a cast-iron stomach for kitsch will regard this as the comedy album of the year' (Giles Smith, 1993, Music Central 1996, PC Software)

It punches a hole in everything: the hillside, the sky, a blue coffin, the woman's face' (*).

Burroughs was also an enormous influence on the early industrial musicians. As well as being a friend of Throbbing Gristle's Genesis P-Orridge, who once said that he was trying to put Burroughs' technique to music (Dwyer, in Vale, Juno (eds.), 1982: 65), Burroughs released a record of his cut-ups, *Nothing Here Now But The Recordings* on Throbbing Gristle's independent label, Industrial Records. The industrial band 23 Skidoo not only used Burroughs techniques- but also took their name from one of his stories (*23 Skidoo Eristic Elite*). Later industrial musicians also acknowledge the influence of Burroughs, like the band Ministry who recorded the song *Quick Fix* with Burroughs, and also sampled him on *Just One Fix*. Psychic TV's *Storm the Studio* also sampled Burroughs, and Delerium's *Shockwave* and Insight 23's *Digital Blood* both sample Cronenberg's production of *Naked Lunch*. In addition, the German underground film Decoder, which stars Einstürzende Neubauten's Mufti as well as Genesis P-orridge includes a dream sequence in which Burroughs appears.

Early industrial musicians like Throbbing Gristle as shown were directly aware of Burroughs and attempted to apply this concept to music: 'we apply a cut-up system that incorporates both strict musical discipline and incoherence/instinct to those sounds and melodies which we favour as musicians, to produce as much variety of texture, mood, rhythm and sound as possible' (Ford, 1999: 9.24). This cut-up pastiche method of writing is seen frequently in the lyrics of industrial music. Skinny Puppy's *Hexonxonx*, for example, issues forth a near stream of consciousness cut-up style: 'Miles cable claws driller killer ripping holes tattered cloth stained regaining the weather acid rains so sweet sweat streaks downpour on humidity colder time talking hints watching tests the heat mangled meat retaliate no blaming in future dreams could you have stopped it from happening'. Like the work of Burroughs, the odd juxtaposition of words and the elimination of common conjunctions and punctuation lead to a similar disorienting media-blitz effect.

Collage, like *détournement*, very much reflects the information overload, the semiotic saturation of our lives, and it is no surprise that this comes out in the unfiltered and interrupting noise like cultural static in the music. *Détournement*, defined as 'the appropriation of existing cultural fragments in such a way as to alter or invert their meaning' (Novotny 1990: 100), is often used as an effective way to parody, or use irony in what has been termed 'post-modern' art. This technique is used frequently by the cyberpunks and by the industrial artists. BiGod 20's *Steel Works!* with *America* is an excellent example of this ironic use of quotations. Juxtaposing quotes from a NASA Space Programme with those of John F. Kennedy and various evangelists, BiGod 20 sing over top of their promises 'You sit back... and I'll provide domination' with samples of bombs, crashes and factory noises. And it does not go without notice that they follow this song with the track *Breeders* which insists, 'We don't lie. We don't lie. We don't lie. They, they are the leaders and we, we are the breeders'. While the fact that samples used are by specifically John F. Kennedy, Jerry Falwell, or Margaret Thatcher may escape some, or even most listeners, the similar deployment of this technique by most other groups in using quotes of political leaders, be it Kennedy, Thatcher, Reagan (Skinny Puppy, :Wumpscut:) or George Bush (Ministry) with the juxtaposition of samples from the most bleak of dystopian films- *1984*, *Clockwork Orange*, etc. reminds us of the irony in many of the statements of our political leaders, and in much the same way as the cyberpunk fiction writers, sets the futuristic dystopian fictions in the scenery of our present day society. In the same way that Burroughs informed us of the ability of finding the truth in a political speech by cutting it up and re-assembling it, the industrial musicians do just that, and the truth, it appears, is equivalent to dystopian fiction.

Science fiction, especially that of dystopias, as mentioned, is an endless source of reference

material for the industrial musicians and cyberpunks. Films remain a source of inspiration for cyberpunk authors and musicians alike. The early industrial bands (Throbbing Gristle, Cabaret Voltaire, SPK and Rhythm & Noise for example) prior to cyberpunk fiction's 1984 inception all cite cyberpunk's literary precursors of Thomas Pynchon, J.G. Ballard and Philip K. Dick as influences (Vale, Juno, 1983: pp.19, 67, 80, 104). More recent bands also make references to these new wave science fiction authors- Covenant's *Dreams of a Cryotank* with its song *Replicant* bears suspicious similarities to concepts introduced in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, including replicants (androids, or cyborgs) which were the antagonists in the novel.

Although there are few cyberpunk fiction novels that have been made into films, in the *Cyberpunk Handbook*, essential viewing for cyberpunks includes blue-filter sci-fi movies *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*, *Reboot*, *Tron*, *Videodrome*, (Gibson's) *Johnny Mnemonic*, *Scanners*, and *Alien*. More recently, Gibson's novels inspired the sci-fi action flick *Matrix*. The *Industrial 101* web page lists essential viewing (and most sampled films) as *Tetsuo: The Iron Man*, *Twelve Monkeys* and *Blade Runner* (based on Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*). The similarities in the themes of these movies are fairly obvious-all are futuristic, dark, and technologically based, and a look at the soundtracks to these techtopians and similar movies like *Freejack* also indicates similarities between the themes of the films and the music. *Freejack* includes a Ministry song (*Thieves*), *Johnny Mnemonic* includes industrial bands KMFDM, Cop Shoot Cop, Stabbing Westward and God Lives Underwater and the *Matrix* soundtrack includes Ministry, Meat Beat Manifesto, Monster Magnet, Prodigy, Hive, Rammstein and Rage Against the Machine, all affiliated somewhat with the industrial scene. An examination of an extensive database¹ listing sources of movie samples used by many industrial bands reveals the same conclusion. Front Line Assembly, Skinny Puppy, Ministry, Front 242 and Clock DVA (to name but a few) are all enthusiasts of heavily sampling *Robocop*, *Aliens*, *Videodrome*, *Hellraiser*, *Twelve Monkeys*, *Blade Runner*, *THX 1138* and similar technological dystopias.

Genesis P-Orridge, in a 1976 concert press release for Throbbing Gristle wrote, '[i]magine walking down blurred streets of havoc, post-civilisation, stray dogs eating refuse, wind creeping across tendrils. It's 1984. The only reality is waiting. Mortal. It's the death factory society, hypnotic, mechanical grinding, music of hopelessness, Film music to cover the holocaust... The music of 1984 has arrived' (Ford, 1999: 6.17). The imagery invoked- that of a post-apocalyptic, post-industrial society is one that is closely related to cyberpunk fiction. Industrial bands as early as Kraftwerk identified with and used science fiction imagery. Ralf Hütter of Kraftwerk once said '[w]e were very much influenced by the futuristic silent films of Fritz Lang: *Metropolis* and *Dr. Mabuse*...we feel that we are the sons of that type of science fiction cinema. We are the band of *Metropolis*' (Hütter cited in Barr, 1998: 130). Increasingly, industrial music's lyrics focus on meshing science fiction with the growing capitalism in the West, and the control over society by the multi-national corporations- like Microsoft, Murdoch or IBM. This is most obvious in the work of Australian band Snog, whose 1998 album *Buy Me I'll Change Your Life* has songs based on Orwell's 1984--including *Big Brother*, and the *Prole Song*, and makes multiple references on that and previous albums to advertising slogans and the acquisitiveness of modern Western consumers, as well as including warning songs like *Capitalism* and *Corporate Slave*.

Cyberpunk authors also reflect this fear of global capitalist corporations- as the omnipotent companies like the Tessier-Aspools in the *Neuromancer* trilogy, or the IntenSecure company in

1. Hypertext: http://phobos.astro.uwo.ca/~etitley/top_samples/grouplist.html

Virtual Light, which has more power than the police, would suggest. The German industrial band Einstürzende Neubauten echo the same anti-consumer sentiment, when they suggest that the cure to violence and horror is a product named *Headcleaner*; 'Neue Wunder, neue Schrecken, Tornado für die Windungen im Schädel, Wirbelsturm als HEADCLEANER! Kratzbürstend das Modergewürm...Ein Lied zwo, drei: "All you need is HEADCLEANER!"'¹, while including samples of Adolf Hitler.

The punk aesthetic that comes through in both the music and the fiction is one of the independent maverick, what Gibson refers to as the cognitive dissident. Reflecting the hacker culture's ronin lifestyle, cyberpunk fiction authors like Gibson use the underdog as a protagonist, but always one with a good heart and with hope for something better, just as Case, the console cowboy is always struggling to escape the sprawl, the living space of the urban proletariat. The authors' use of everyday cultural products give the work a d.i.y. feeling- a friendly, mass-culture familiarity. Industrial music's use of samples is reciprocal, exemplified by the fact that most of us could purchase a cheap keyboard and a sampler and with the aid of a computer start to make music- and make it estimable- without the need for multi-track recorders or large studios, or the need to find other band members, providing musicians with a unique independence not easily achievable for non-electronic bands. In the same way, the collage and sampling techniques question the notions of ownership², and the sampling of everyday sounds questions the very nature of music, in such a Cage-ian way that it has often been joked that the closest thing one can find to an industrial concert is the local demolition site.

There can be little doubt of the connection between the work of the industrial musicians and cyberpunk fiction. It would appear to be part of a larger encompassing aesthetic has been a subject of much deliberation. For example, Swedish journalist Mattias Göransson writes, '[t]here are a few underground artists and media operators who can prove that cyberpunk is like much of the attitude of (in this case) a musical genre. In which blood, leather, metal and microchips mix and are recorded in a DAT player'³. The musicians themselves acknowledge a link, as Denver's Human Head Transplant explain, 'There's a movement afoot in underground music. It's about information warfare, about disseminating information through music. That's where control lies--in the control of information. If people believe what they're told to believe, then they're less apt to get in their own desires, and more likely to become good cogs in the works. We're becoming a very conformist, rigid society, even though Americans are fed this notion that they're free. I see evidence every day of the nearness of a lot of the situations that William Gibson has in his novels--things like the Japanese running the world financially, the high-tech explosion, computer-controlled lifestyles. The future is happening already' (Dery, 1989).

Terminal Power Company have talked about their connection to cyberpunk, '[Cyberpunk

1. The translation the band provides is: 'New wonders, new horrors, tornado for the obligations to convention for the convolutions in the skull, cyclone as HEADCLEANER! Wire brushes to the vermin trash!... A song, one, two, three, "all you need is HEADCLEANER!"'
2. See Tagg, P. 'From Refrain to Rave' hypertext: <http://www.taggs.freeseve.co.uk/pmusrave.html> 6/4/1999
3. My translation from Göransson's Swedish: 'Det var små undergroundartister och mediaoperatörer som kanske mer bevisar att cyberpunk like mycket är en attityd som (i det här fallet) en musikgenre. Ungefär som blod, läder, metall och microchips hopmixat och inspelat på en DAT-bandspelare.'

is] a big influence. Obviously we were into 'Bladerunner' and then we discovered Gibson...Gibson built himself today's world underneath a magnifying glass, blending ideas like [those of] the Japanese, and that's what we want to do with our music. We want to blend everything we've ever heard into one form and try to create something that is exciting to listen to and so you can almost feel it; almost on a visual level.... we've got a song called 'Burning Chrome' which is the title of an anthology by Gibson. On this new LP we've got 'The Sprawl' which is like a future city' (Neville, 1993: 35-36). Front 242 recorded their tribute to Gibson, *Neurodancer*, and have acknowledged their respect for the author. Seattle's Noxious Emotions have an album called *Count Zero*, and despite the fact that the name was a coincidence, they acknowledge being fans of Gibson too¹.

Cyberpunk authors also acknowledge a connection with many of those artists that walk the tightrope between the popular and the avant-garde, as Bruce Sterling writes, '[I]t's no accident, for instance, that seminal figures in postmodernism- William S. Burroughs, J.G. Ballard, Andy Warhol, Thomas Pynchon, the Velvet Underground and '70s punk musicians, filmmakers such as David Cronenberg and Ridley Scott, performance artists like Laurie Anderson and the Survival Research Laboratories- are all frequently cited by cyberpunk authors as having affinities with their own work' (McCaffery, 1990: 212). As the editor of *Mondo 2000*, the original cyberpunk fanzine, Rudy Rucker recorded a 1994 album, *IOU Babe* for (Nine Inch Nails) Trent Reznor's label, Nothing, under the moniker of 'MV Inc.'. *Mondo 2000* has interviewed industrial artists, such as Reznor and Skinny Puppy, and in the magazine's *User's Guide to the New Edge* include a chapter on industrial, which they describe as 'the cut-and-paste sounds of the videodrome' (Rucker et al, 1992:152). Whether the elements of the cyberpunk aesthetic can be summarised as just another example of the artistic reaction to the post-modern society, 'a symptom of the postmodern loss of historical consciousness' (Booker, 1994: 58), or as the 'supreme literary expression if not of post-modernism, then of late capitalism itself' (Clute et al: 1995) as Frederick Jameson would have us believe, or whether it is the reaction of a few artists to the technological saturation of our lives, cyberpunk is obviously still a growing phenomenon.

1. Personal correspondence. Email date:*