

This is the way, Step inside: Understanding *Joy Division*

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Joy Division

On the 30th of July 1980, three musicians - Peter Hook, Steven Morris and Bernard Sumner - took to the small stage of The Beach Club at Oozits Bar in Shudehill, Manchester. With what might be best described as ‘gallows humour’, Sumner introduced the band as being the last surviving members of Crawling Chaos (New Order Net 2018).¹ Their short set consisted of five songs. It must have been a particularly difficult gig for the musicians to play, as just eleven weeks earlier their close friend and Joy Division band-mate Ian Curtis had committed suicide on the eve of their first tour of the United States. Curtis’s unexpected death marked the premature end of one of the most important and most influential post-punk bands. Joy Division was no more.

Strictly speaking, Joy Division existed for only two and a half years. Formed in Salford, over twenty-nine months the band wrote and recorded forty-three songs and played one hundred and twenty gigs (see Joy Division Official 2018). The 1976 punk explosion served as an initial catalyst for Sumner and Hook to form a band - temporarily called Stiff Kittens. This was soon followed by the adoption of the name Warsaw, inspired by David Bowie’s ‘Warszawa’ and further changes in membership. The final line up of Curtis (vocals); Hook (bass); Sumner (guitar, keys) and Morris (drums) performed and recorded as Warsaw in the second half of 1977. However, the existence of a punk band called Warsaw Pakt convinced them to change their name to avoid any confusion and in January 1978 they played their first ever gig under the name Joy Division. Momentum quickly grew around the band and it began to attract music press and record company interest. They signed an album deal with RCA but were unhappy with the recordings and asked to be released from their

contract. In line with DIY punk practice, Joy Division's first record was a self-released four track EP called 'An Ideal For Living' (1978). The EP's cover, as well as the band's chosen name, proved problematic for the band and controversy would follow them through their short career.

While the punk explosion may have convinced the members of Joy Division to take up a musical instrument and teach themselves how to play, the band's recorded sound drew from a much wider palette of influences many of which pre-date punk and have Continental European and US roots; thus, sonically, Joy Division carry echoes of Kraftwerk, Neu!, Can, David Bowie, Lou Reed, The Velvet Underground and Iggy Pop. All of the band's lyrics were provided by Ian Curtis who was an avid reader of writers such as Gogol; Ballard; Doestevsky and Sartre. Curtis's bass-baritone voice combined with frenetic drumming by Morris, rapid guitar playing by Sumner and Hook's signature high bass notes were all part and parcel of the Joy Division alchemy.

In addition to the four band members, the Joy Division story has also to be understood in terms of their interactions with their manager Rob Gretton, Factory Records founder Tony Wilson, designer Peter Saville and producer Martin Hannett. Gretton contributed to the development of the band's anti-image strategy. They rarely gave interviews or spoke to their audiences. Wilson gave them their first break on television, signed them to Factory Records and would help construct the Joy Division narrative and mythology.

Joy Division released two studio albums, *Unknown Pleasures* (1979) and *Closer* (1980). A further compilation of unreleased studio tracks, and a recording of their final gig with Ian Curtis at the University of Birmingham, were issued as *Still* (1981). All were released on the Factory label and feature distinctive minimalist artwork by Peter Saville. Martin Hannett's production work added a further set of crucial ingredients. Widely acknowledged as the prime architect in the creation of the 'Manchester Sound', Hannett's

clever use of delay, echo, reverb and loops in recording Joy Division resulted in two classic albums. Apart from some unorthodox recording methods, Hannett's use of space within individual Joy Division songs evidences how in sonic terms, the art is sometimes found in the absence. Indeed, some have argued that Hannett's production underscores what mental torment, isolation, alienation and loneliness feel like (see NME Blog, 2012).

In addition to their studio albums, Joy Division is best remembered for their single 'Love Will Tear Us Apart' (1980). Released in June following the untimely death of Ian Curtis, the single gave Joy Division its first ever chart hit. By then however, Joy Division had lived up to their commitment of disbanding should anything happen to any member of the band (Morley and Thrills 1980, in Morley 2016, 150-158).

'Crawling Chaos' soon became New Order. Gillian Gilbert joined the band playing keys and guitar. Bernard Sumner became the band's main vocalist. While New Order would go on to develop a distinct sound of its own featuring greater use of sequencers, techno and dance rhythms, its first single release 'Ceremony/In A Lonely Place' (1981) was previously written as Joy Division. New Order's use of Peter Saville's minimalist designs in their artwork was a further sign of overlap and continuity between the two bands. New Order went on to achieve significant commercial and critical success with albums like *Power, Corruption and Lies* (1983), *Technique* (1989) and *Get Ready* (2001). The bands' electro-pop single 'Blue Monday' (1983) remains the best-selling 12" single of all time. While the spectre of Joy Division and the absence of Ian Curtis are ever-present in New Order, there was a noticeable change in the band's overall sound after the release of *Technique* (1989).

New Order went on hiatus a number of times over their long history and the band's members became involved in numerous side projects. Bernard Sumner formed Electronic with Johnny Marr, and he was also a member of Bad Lieutenant with Stephen Morris. Morris and Gillian Gilbert formed The Other Two, while Peter Hook recorded albums with

Revenge, Monaco and Freebase. After leaving New Order, Hook formed Peter Hook and The Light in 2010. Since that time Peter Hook and his band, have been touring the Joy Division material to great acclaim globally. Indeed, on the 35th anniversary of Ian Curtis's passing (May 18, 2015), Hook performed the complete works of Joy Division at a gig in Christ Church, Macclesfield, later releasing a recording of the event (Peter Hook and The Light 2015) with proceeds going to the Epilepsy Society.

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Here are the Young Men! A Legacy.

The roots of this collection of essays on Joy Division lie in the two-day “Atrocity Exhibition” symposium, organised by the Popular Music and Popular Culture and Research Cluster at the University of Limerick, Ireland, in November 2015. In conjunction with the conference, Peter Hook and The Light were to perform both *Unknown Pleasures* and *Closer* at a sold out local music venue, Dolans Warehouse².

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Over fifty academics from fifteen different countries, and working across a range of disciplines and approaches such as cultural studies, ethnomusicology, musicology, media studies, popular music studies, urban studies, fan studies and sociology, came together to interrogate Joy Division and the creation of a distinct Manchester Soundscape; styling and iconography; the lyrical / musicological / performance analysis of specific songs; fandom

and the ‘cult’ of Ian Curtis, and influences on and of the band. The cross-cultural and multidisciplinary character of their collective contributions underscored that Joy Division has left us a lasting cultural / musical legacy.

That legacy was made explicitly clear during the summer of 2017 when, as part of the Manchester International Festival (*MIF2017*), an exhibition, *True Faith*, opened at Manchester Art Gallery. It examined the continuing significance and legacy of Joy Division and New Order (who are themselves a legacy of Joy Division) through visual art inspired by their music (Manchester International Festival 2017). *True Faith* wasn’t “a nostalgic exhibition looking backwards”; it was really an attempt to highlight that “Joy Division and New Orders’ work remains vital, remains current, and it remains an influence on subsequent generations of artist” (Higgs 2017). The quality of artists contributing to the exhibition (Julian Schnabel, Jeremy Deller, Kathryn Bigelow, Jonathan Demme etc.) offered proof (if it was needed) of the high regard in which these bands are held in various “creative circles” (Potton 2017). Indeed, Deller’s film (2009) which shows a steel band playing the Joy Division (1979) song *Transmission*, illustrates just how engrained into popular culture the band has become (Potton 2017).

The music of Joy Division and New Order has always exhibited “a tension between looking backwards to the past and then looking forward to a future” (Higgs 2017). Joy Division’s “dark, sonic gloom and echoing aural spaces” directed the first half of the exhibition with “New Order’s brighter, danceable synthpop and clever lyrics” providing the focus for the second half (Searle 2017).

The absent presence of Ian Curtis saturated the exhibition. Huge photographs of him and the other members of Joy Division adorned several walls. We also ‘saw’ Ian in several paintings and through his handwritten lyrics, framed on the wall. But it is perhaps in the grainy bootleg video footage that this absent presence was most tangible.

Unearthly and ghostly, Curtis coalesces in a blizzard of static. The videotape fizzles with degraded information... The singer is only a trace: pinwheeling arms, a jerky back-and-forth shuffle, a looming face that comes and goes, that sonorous baritone voice, a thing more solid and permanent than this fleeting figure. He's anchored by the song... Except, in this video from Slater B Bradley's 2001-04 Doppelganger Series, it is not Ian Curtis on stage at all. The harder you look, the more difficult it is to grasp the image (Searle 2017).

Furthermore, as part of *MIF 2017*, New Order played five sold out gigs at the old Granada studios building on Quay Street; a location which of course has enormous significance in the Joy Division story. It was after all, where they made their debut TV appearance (theguardian MIF17, 7). “So many of their oldest fans first found them here too, via a box lit up in the corner of their living rooms, a box containing four young men playing in its shadows. A beam of electrons from a cathode is where all of this began. A legacy in sound, and in life, began there” (Rodgers 2017).

So It Goes \sum (No,12k,Lg,17Mif), saw New Order perform with a 12-piece synthesizer orchestra from the Royal Northern College Of Music on a ‘responsive’ set, which was designed by the visual artist Liam Gillick (Simpson 2017). These gigs were “a flaunting, a re-emphasising, of their original spirit, their *original modern* presentation of the idea of *movement* – moving away from tragedy, away from the age they once were, from place and genre... from the group they had become” (Morley 2017, 1). And yet there was a nod to the past in the choice of venue. In returning to these studios, “after all that had happened – the friends and colleagues lost, the music made, the time spent, the clubs built, the mistakes

made, the arguments had, the detours taken, the love shared, the shows completed, the songs written, and remade – completes one sort of circle” (Morley 2017, 5).

Over the five nights, New Order completed another circle by repeatedly playing three Joy Division tracks in their sets: *Disorder*, *Heart and Soul*, and *Decades*. Of the latter, Simpson (2017) remarked that the synthesizers misbehaved while Ian Curtis sang *Decades* at Joy Division’s final show at Birmingham University in 1980 “but surely the spectrally serene electronic-symphonic rendition that closes this concert sounds exactly as he would have wanted”. Having attended the *True Faith* exhibition, *So It Goes* $\Sigma(\text{No}, 12k, \text{Lg}, 17\text{Mif})$, and numerous New Order and Peter Hook and The Light gigs over the years, it is abundantly clear that both the absent presence of Ian Curtis and the significance of Joy Division remain strong for Hook, Sumner and Morris, and for the bands’ legions of fans, both new and old.

Structure, Content, and Themes

There are a considerable number of books (see Joy Division Central 2018, for an exhaustive list) which have been written about this influential band, though significantly there is a scarcity of academic texts on the subject. For example, *Joy Division: Piece By Piece* (2016) is a collection of Paul Morley's classic works about the band from the late 1970s/early 1980s, together with newer material focusing on the significance of the group; *Unknown Pleasures: Inside Joy Division* (Hook 2012) discusses the bands evolution, rehearsals and recording sessions; the suicide of Ian Curtis, and the contribution of figures such as Tony Wilson, Rob Gretton, and Martin Hannett. Mark Johnsons’ *An Ideal For Living (An History Of Joy Division)* provides detailed information about Joy Division’s live gigs and record releases from the band’s beginnings as Warsaw in 1977 up until to the establishment of New Order in 1983. In one of the few academic offerings, *Joy Devotion: The Importance of Ian Curtis and Fan Culture* (Otter Bickerdike 2016) explores the lasting

legacy in the fan, post-punk and dot.com economy of Joy Division lead singer Ian Curtis, and interrogating what such fan dedication says about larger issues facing us in the modern world.

While we are keenly aware that this volume of essays on Joy Division is far from exhaustive, the collection does bring together a variety of new perspectives that are informed by different theoretical and interpretative approaches, and feature previously under-interrogated sites of cultural production and exchange. As in previous collections we have edited (see Devereux, Dillane and Power 2011; 2015; Dillane et al. 2018), featured authors come from different backgrounds and disciplines but all share a passion for and commitment to the music and overall continued legacy of the band. As we have argued elsewhere (Devereux et al, 2011) and continue to assert here, any perceived line between objective, critical engagement and fandom is not clear-cut, and far from compromising objectivity, a keen relationship with the band, borne from disparate yet in each case deeply personal encounters on behalf of our authors, underpins a commitment to creative interrogation and a willingness to unpack challenging aspects of the band's reception history. Moreover, where this continued critical and creative fandom is articulated – something that arguably informs much writing on creative arts topics (it is rare that we write about the things we dislike in a sustained manner) – it proves reflexive and self-conscious, whether celebratory or critical (or both) in approach.

In terms of the organisation of the materials within, rather than focusing on specific topics or taking a strictly chronological approach, we have decided on a thematic framework, for reasons we hope become apparent. The first section deals with the concept of hauntology, spectres, presence and absence in relation to Joy Division's output. Section two focuses on reading Joy Division from a literary theory (and, to a lesser extent, visual arts) perspective, drawing on canonical authors and texts with which band members, and

especially Ian Curtis, engaged. Section three turns its attention on the idea of the suffering artist in relation to mental health challenges, interrogating the often-times misinformed conflation of creativity and illness, while concurrently registering and interrogating an aesthetics of pain. Section four deals with the idea of interzones and the interfacing of disparate media and forms in the wholesale, aesthetic (re)production of Joy Division, by acknowledging the intrinsic linkages between different materials in the creation of the band's sound, vision and meaning. Section five engages with cultural legacies from a musical, artistic and economic perspective, paying particular attention to concepts of authenticity and to what happens when subcultural expressions become leveraged for economic purposes outside of their original iterations. Finally, section six brings legacy and place together once more by returning to the opening theme of hauntology, as it looks forward to the music emerging beyond Joy Division. A summary of each of the chapters featured in these six thematic sections is provided in the following pages.

In the first section, *Dead Souls: Hauntology and Faustian Contracts*, the context of deadened landscapes and various kinds of spectres looms large. In Chapter 1: *Missions of Dead Souls: A Hauntology of the Industrial, Modernism, and Esotericism in the Music Of Joy Division*, Michael Goddard argues that Joy Division may be usefully interpreted and understood in proximity to industrial music, a popular perception reinforced by Genesis P-Orridge's claims that Ian Curtis was a Throbbing Gristle fan. Moving beyond the evidence of a purported personal connection between the two bands (Curtis sang 'Weeping' to P-Orridge shortly before his death, while P-Orridge referred to Curtis in "I.C. Water" and in other contexts), Goddard explores the ways in which Joy Division and industrial music were both haunted by post-industrial cityscapes – the architectural and symbolic ruins of modernity – while also illustrating their shared interest in the occult and Esotericism, within this hauntological framework. In Chapter 2: *Tony Wilson's Bloody Contract: A Re-*

enactment of the Faustian Bargain, by Dan Jacobson and Ian Jeffrey, the dramatic signing of Joy Division to Factory Records (most famously portrayed in a pivotal scene in Michael Winterbottom's 2001 film, *24 Hour Party People*) is framed here as a Faustian contract. Tony Wilson's grandiose gesture of signing the contract with his own blood is understood as being representative of postpunk's ethos, as the authors interrogate the relationship between the artist, the operations of capitalism, and the manner in which authenticity may or may not be bought and sold, and at what price, in this ruined landscape.

Section Two, **Ballard, Burroughs, Dostoevsky, Gogol: Literary (and Visual) Influences on Joy Division** explores ways in which Joy Division's oeuvre might be understood from literary perspectives, not just in terms of key literary (and visual) influences on lyrics and concepts for songs, but also *as* (visually informed) literature in and of itself. In Chapter 3: *Trying to find a clue, trying to find a way to get out! The European Imaginary of Joy Division*, rather than reproduce the story of Joy Division from a regional British perspective, Giacomo Bottà projects Joy Division's production aesthetics onto a European cultural and historical landscape, asserting that Joy Division used European culture as an antidote to British nationalism, as a deliberate attempt to overcome an insular punk attitude, and as an escape from 'grim-north' provincialism. Curtis, in particular, is revealed to have paid considerable attention to German and French film directors, authors and cultural producers, including Werner Herzog, Kraftwerk and Neu!. The influence of French and German photography and design is evidenced in photo-shoots and LP covers, while a fascination with 20th century German history is illustrated in song titles, clothes, haircuts and song topics, all of which serve as inspirational devices in this deliberate rejection of regionalism.

In relation to literary influences specifically, Chapter 4: *Literary Influences on Joy Division: J.G. Ballard, Franz Kafka, Dostoevski* by Sara Martínez performs a close

examination of styles and genres of writing that have manifest in Joy Division's output or that may be understood as influencing the band's broader aesthetic. Martínez traces how Curtis uses particular modes of fiction as a way to indirectly express important themes, ideas and concerns that recur in his writing, which include pain, trauma, suffering and desire. Drawing upon the critical ideas of Michael Foucault, Roger Luckhurst, and Cathy Caruth, the key writers interrogated here include Dostoevski, J.G. Ballard and Franz Kafka, whose influences she traces in specific Joy Division song lyrics.

Chapter 5: '*Possessed by a fury that burns from inside.*' *On Ian Curtis' Lyrics* by Uwe Schütte posits that it is useful to view Curtis's lyrics against the backdrop of the modern European literary canon, and does so by highlighting many direct allusions in the band's lyrics to significant works of European literature. Adopting a comparative approach, the author looks at a variety of influences from dystopian novels to contemporary poetry, including Rimbaud, Eliot, Sebald and Butor. Creative and influential literary techniques such as montage and cut-up (Burroughs) are also discussed and evidenced in specific Joy Division lyrical examples, while the performative nature of lyrical poetry reading is also addressed in relation to Curtis's unique, epilepsy-informed, presentational style as a lyrical singer. Schütte overarching aim is to underscore the aesthetic and performative importance of Curtis's lyrics which he feels are generally treated to more sociological and political readings.

Moving to section three, **Joy Division and Mental Health**, the challenging topics of suicide and the artist as fragile human being are addressed. In Chapter 6, *In a Lonely Place: Illness and the Temporal Exile of Ian Curtis*, Tiffany Naiman draws upon the works of Edward Said and Theodor Adorno to posit that young artists who are sick or disabled can perform in a 'late' style. Viewing his body as a battle site, tortured by his illness, medications, home life, and the shame brought on by his increased seizures, Naiman traces

how Curtis' path towards finitude affected his vocality in terms of sound and production. Performing close readings of his vocal output on specific recordings, she contends that the sound produced was from an artist already oriented towards death, subject to the same conditions that produce late style in older artists. By connecting Curtis' epilepsy, depression, and his shift in vocal expression in this way, Naiman exposes a late style which came all too soon for an artist forced to exist outside of his own corporeal temporality due to his physical and mental health struggles.

Chapter 7: "*Communication Breakdown: Inarticulacy and the Significance of 'Transmission'*" by J. Rubén Valdés Miyares examines the failure of the upbeat single "Transmission" to become a hit by setting out an argument that it was not a sunnier *jouissance* but rather a darkness and distance that became the defining features of the band. Drawing upon Barthes' notion of *significance*, the author shows the complex ways in which Joy Division signified and made meaning through a kind of "hiddenness: that was manifest in the music, in the lyrics, on record sleeves, in the lack of communication between band members, and even in the inarticulate and jagged performance physicality of Curtis. The result was and remains, according to Miyares, that any "understanding" of the band and its members, is always going to be highly mediated, subjective, and incomplete, representing what he sees as a kind of "touching from a distance."

The section concludes with Chapter 8, *This Is The Crisis I Knew Had To Come: Revisiting Ian Curtis's suicide* by Eoin Devereux, David Meagher and Walter Cullen. The multi-disciplinary trio argue that while Curtis's suicide enshrined him as an 'authentic' and enduring voice for subsequent generations of distressed music fans, the dynamics that prevailed around his death have not been fully and comprehensively interrogated. Combining medical, psychological and sociological understandings of mental illness, and performing a psychological autopsy on Curtis, the authors explore the

circumstances of Curtis' death and how these relate to known risk factors for suicide. They reflect on the lack of supports available to Curtis at the time and on the welcome changes in attitudes towards mental illness in recent years, cautioning on the danger of conflating suicide and artistry.

Section Four, '**Interzone: Sounds, Images and Style**' is concerned with multimedia-informed approaches to interpreting and understanding Joy Division in its totality. Chapter 9, *Joy Division in space: The aesthetics of Estrangement*, from Robin Parmar, examines three elements in Joy Division's presentation from 1979: the lyrics of Ian Curtis, Peter Saville's sleeve designs, and Martin Hannett's studio production. Performing a close reading of three Factory releases in that year, Parmar examines the lyrics for their creation of claustrophobic physical and emotional spaces, along with the imagery used to create narratives of urban malaise and emotional turmoil (as well as more abstract, distancing, astronomical imagery). The author also details Hannett's studio approach of separating instruments, amongst a host of other techniques employed during the recording process (including using artificial reverb), to create an aesthetic of estrangement. Ultimately, Parmar argues that the lyrics, artwork, and production are congruent in how they define space by emphasising containment, frames, distance, and absence. Such elements, he concludes, provide spaces, both literal and figurative, in which the music and the listener can meet.

Chapter 10, *Manchester, Martin Hannett and Joy Division's Pungent Architecture* by John Greenwood and Paul Tarpey interrogates the manner in which place manifests and is represented in Joy Division's sound and imaginary. Drawing on the idea on the visceral quality of architecture, the authors assert that Manchester, especially the post-industrial areas of the city, has been critical in the formation of the band's aesthetic. Equally important was the partnership with Hannett, one the authors understand in terms of

psycho geography and psychoacoustics, arguing that the lived experience of Manchester in the seventies was central to Hannett's studio approach and the resultant soundscape. In *Unknown Pleasures* and *Closer*, the "caustic" quality of Joy Division is viewed as entwined with the environment of Manchester, embodying what the authors term "the pungent architecture of sound".

Chapter 11, *Nothing here now but the recordings: The moving image record of Joy Division and the Factory Video Unit*, by Nick Cope, examines the sparse output of moving image material relating to Joy Division. The author provides a detailed overview of the various instances that Joy Division were recorded onto film and video while they performed, and locates these recordings in relation to both the mainstream broadcast television sector at the time and emerging alternative 'independent' media practices (using low-budget VHS and Super 8). Cope asks critical questions about how to interpret these materials, and ruminates on whether this output evidences a unique aesthetic quality or is simply a manifestation of technological deficiencies. Cope concludes that in many ways the DIY music culture recordings offer a particular, authenticating perspective on live performance contexts. He further illustrates how the band became key content for the first outputs of Ikon FCL (established by Factory Records as 'the Factory video unit'), thereby proving essential in the commercial success of the venture, while simultaneously resonating with other visual media cultures of the time.

Section Five, **Cultural Legacies** explores the ways in which Joy Division continues to exert considerable influence within a popular music world populated by fans and consumers from near and further afield, sometimes purely in commercial contexts but also in situations that are more politically and socially fraught. Chapter 12, *Mining For Counterculture*, by Colin Malcolm is an ethnographic study of the author's emic subcultural experience of Joy Division, in which he aligns himself with music writer Simon Frith.

Malcolm argues that the influence of the ageing subculturist should not be ignored in favour of the more visible, reflexive identities so often created in the fashion parades of consumer culture. Such manifestations, according to the author, are too often mistaken for 'real' counterculture. The chapter raises critical points relating to ageing devotees and in terms of the longevity of particular counter-cultural movements and how an awareness of history is critical in the study of the reception history of any band, particularly as that 'history' is recast and reframed by new generations.

Chapter 13, "*I hung around in your soundtrack*": *Affinities with Joy Division among contemporary Iranian musicians* by Gay Jennifer Breyley traces Joy Division's legacy in a small, but musically significant, section of Iran's post-revolutionary generation. Breyley details how the legacy of Joy Division is most evident among members of a generation of Iranians born in the 1980s, just after the revolution. Outlining the effects of war and post-revolutionary disillusionment, Breyley explains how, in response to personal and social isolation in teenage years, many musicians turned to post-punk, indie rock and electronic music, with Joy Division featuring as a leading influence. The author offers specific examples of Iranian singers such as King Raam, formerly of Hypernova, and Obaash and Sina who have been compared with Curtis, while also suggesting that Curtis's legacy is just as apparent in the electronic work of artists such as Idlefon and Siavash Amini. The chapter also reminds us the importance of accommodating perspectives on Joy Division's reception history and influences outside of Western contexts.

Chapter 14, *As If It Never Happened: The Post-Economy of Joy Division and Ian Curtis* sees Jennifer Otter Bickerdike examine not who/what Joy Division was, but what the band has become within the "2.0 economy", contrasting the often romanticized and accepted attributes of the group with the reality of the current marketplace where consumption rules. Otter Bickerdike outlines how Joy Division has been so transformed by mass production and

replication that the original, carefully crafted aesthetics the band embodied, e.g. being symbols of outsidership, have nowadays become little more than fashion statements for posing hipsters. Otter Bickerdike supports her argument by highlighting examples from mainstream stores stocking Joy Division products and memes to prefabricated boy bands wearing Joy Division artwork. It leads the author to muse whether this phenomenon is simply a “new”, and not just strange fascination with Joy Division and post-punk aesthetic, whether it represents a particular kind of demise of the band’s integrity, or if Joy Division should be viewed as only now truly fulfilling its potential artistically, socially and financially, in this current economic context.

In the final thematic section, **Temptation, Transmission and Transitions** the idea of cultural legacy is extended and recursively linked to the opening section dealing with the hauntological. *THINGS THAT AREN'T THERE. Spectral Presences in Musical Absences: The Transition from Joy Division to New Order*, by Kieran Cashell, visits the “seam” of where Joy Division and New Order intersect and diverge. Cashell argues that in this context, New Order may be understood as a gnomon: a geometric shape from which a reflexively informing structural element has been removed. As a literary device, featuring in particular in the writings of James Joyce, the gnomonic trope signifies the intentional elision of content that, in its paradoxical absence, continues to haunt the text. For Cashell, the empty space or absence in New Order is inherent (structurally) in their sound, and therefore their songs are articulated around a central absence. Drawing on the Derridean category of hauntology, the two terminal tracks written and performed by Joy Division and subsequently released by New Order are unpacked. Cashell concludes that in listening to these songs, audible expressions of the hauntological – of Ian Curtis departing, New Order arriving, even as something remains behind – are evident.

Joy Division's legacy is assured. Both academic and fan interest in Joy Division continues to gain in momentum. We are arguably only "touching from a distance".

¹ In reference, presumably, to either the Factory band of the same name or the short story by H. P. Lovecraft and Winifred V. Jackson first published in 1921.

² The November 26th gig was deferred when guitarist David Potts broke his hand. The sold out rescheduled gig took place in Dolans Warehouse in Limerick on April 1st 2016.