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There is a Light that Never Goes Out: Neil Finn, Johnny Marr and the Flickering of Popular Music

“Living in the past can be a mistake. Move on.” – Tony Wilson¹

Some pop concerts arch beyond a single night or list of yearly favorites. Remember The Beatles at the top of the Apple Building, with John Lennon’s wild fur coat, squalling hair and flying fingers. The Band’s *Last Waltz* was transposed, via Martin Scorsese’s incisive editing, camera work and direction, beyond a great final gig for Dylan’s backing group and into the eulogy of a generation. The *Last Waltz* danced between mockumentary and documentary, generational envy and generational angst.

Two other landmark concerts hold a Pacific inflection. Crowded House recorded their final concert on the steps of the Sydney Opera House on November 24, 1996. It was a free event and confirmed that when the dream is finally over, a reality can be shared. Ten years of Crowded House built new traditions for the simple pop concert. The customary sing-along between band and crowd was part football chant and part Antipodean hymn.

The other great concert enfolds passionate and complex musical trajectories from Manchester and Melbourne, London and Auckland. In late March 2001, Neil Finn assembled

musicians he respected. They rehearsed for four days at Kare Kare above a gothic beachfront, best known as the setting for the film *The Piano*, and then performed five concerts at St James Theatre in Auckland. The band was formed to break up. It was a super-group for an accelerated media age. Neil Finn confirms that,

the idea was to put on a special event, in Auckland, a series of shows out of the ordinary in my hometown. I thought it might be possible to bring together an unusual lineup of musicians from different bands, all people I've got to know over the years and whose music I admire. I thought we could rehearse a set, put on some shows and break up before anything went wrong. It would be a chance to step outside our regular lives and have a busman's holiday if you like, a good laugh and an intense musical experience. I made some phone calls, people seemed to like the idea of a Pacific adventure, the timing worked for everyone and one by one all these good people came on board. And along with family and friends and a whole bunch of support crew we gathered in late March 2001 for rehearsals in a barn outside of Kare Kare beach. We had to discover what we could become, given only a few days and just the combined will to make it sound good.²

This performance captured not only musical pluralism and mobility, but different ways of thinking about melody, harmony and rhythm. It was the reimagining of place through popular music that is of most interest. Colonial histories and sonic legacies jutted from the stage. The resultant concert survives on compact disc, video and DVD under the title *7 Worlds Collide*. Finn described it as “a Pacific adventure,” with the aim of gathering great talent to sing important songs. Besides contacting his brother Tim, Neil Finn telephoned Eddie Vedder and Radiohead's Ed O'Brien and Philip Selway, who all decided to appear on stage with a songwriter they admire. One more notable performer also journeyed into the Pacific to join the super-group ensemble.

The Smiths were an English pop phenomenon who had a scale of success always promised to Split Enz. Steven Morrissey and Johnny Marr were the iconographic songwriting partnership of the 1980s, foreshadowing the explosion of sounds and visions from Manchester in the subsequent decade. The guitar riffs from “This Charming Man,” “How

Soon is Now” and “Panic” established a new standard for innovative popular music. Without Marr, Morrissey has never again reached the level of The Smiths’ credibility or musical influence.

Marr’s solo career has been of a distinct and selective order, leaving his mark on a suite of singles, albums and bands. From The The’s “The Beat(en) Generation,” to Electronic’s “Getting away with it,” Billy Bragg’s “Sexuality” and the Pet Shop Boys’ “My October Symphony,” Marr is a guitarist who has transformed songs through a disruption and reinterpretation of rhythm. There is a clear parallel between Johnny Marr and David Crosby. After leaving the Byrds, Crosby recorded with friends and played an array of gigs without the anchoring commitment of a band. Significantly, after leaving The Smiths, Marr visited Crosby and transformed himself in the “super sessioner”³ through The The, The Pretenders and Electronic. However the few days he spent in Auckland, performing in a group that would rehearse only to break up, provides a postmodern twist on the Crosby narrative. This article takes Johnny Marr’s presence and performance at the *7 Worlds Collide* concert as a motif and metaphor, investigating how both music and memory travel from the first industrial city to the Antipodean edge of Empire.

If you don’t tell anyone

Neil Finn: Would you sing us a song, Johnny?
Johnny Marr: Oh, I don’t know. If you don’t tell anyone.⁴

Popular cultural studies is at its most effective when it slices away an evocative textual shard and allows historical and political forces to corrode, contaminate and weather the aura and integrity of the original. It is twenty years since “There is light that never goes out” was recorded by The Smiths, becoming the penultimate album track for *The Queen is Dead* one

year later. Simon Goddard reported that this song remains a favorite among those he termed “scholarly fans.”⁵ It is a living pop paradox, being both morbid and romantic. Not released as a single until December 1992 because a song glamorizing suicide was not seen by record executives to be conducive to radio programming, it still topped John Peel’s *Festive 50* poll in 1986. Johnny Marr recognised this scale of influence. He stated that “I didn’t realize that [it] was going to be an anthem ... but when we first played it I thought it was the best song I’d ever heard.”⁶ In this year of its twentieth anniversary, the translations are more interesting than the song itself. It is evocative to watch the notes and rhythm move from the mid-1980s to the mid-2000s, and from a darkened Manchester underpass to a Kare Kare beach outside Auckland in Aotearoa, New Zealand. This odd detour in The Smiths’ history has received only two sentences of attention in all the burgeoning industry of books.⁷ In this remaking of one song, a subtle reimaging of The Smiths’ Englishness is activated. Mark Simpson, in *Saint Morrissey*, stated that “Steven was a dreamer and Johnny was a man of the world.”⁸ Marr’s passage to Aotearoa, New Zealand, provides evidence for his maxim, particularly when compared with Morrissey’s troubling statements about the British Asian community. Popular cultural movement is difficult to track, and even more complex to understand. A version of 1980s Manchester, gutted by Thatcherism, was re-placed in Auckland to create new media belongings.

Split Enz and Crowded House are a pivot on which much post-war Antipodean music turns. Only now—when we don’t have to dream that it’s over—can we grasp what the Finn brothers gave to popular cultural history. Rarely considered is how they transformed popular cultural geography. During their moment of success, Mat Smith, writer for *Melody Maker*, said of Crowded House that they were “the wrong side of hip, the wrong side of 30 and come

from the wrong side of the world—yet they’re one of the best bands I’ve seen all year.”⁹

Although everything was wrong, upside down, inverted, and untrendy, they were being Antipodean and charting a new popular cultural space that was open to difference, knowing of the past and concerned with the future. Their atonal piano chords, rapid shifts in time signature and odd guitar tunings only increased the strangeness and unfamiliarity. By making connections between Australia and New Zealand, the Finns have provided the soundtrack for those living on the “wrong” side of the world. Occasionally, popular culture reveals a text, a moment of feeling, that is so saturated with the space and time from which it was derived that it provides a commentary more incisive and immediate than that of journalists, theorists and writers. The song titles, lyrics and melody enter the language. Split Enz constructed an Aotearoa for Australian consumption. Crowded House performed an Antipodes for the world.

Popular cultural studies, at its best, aligns discursive formations and texts that dissent, conflict and struggle. This textual dissonance is particularly potent when exploring how immigration narratives fit into the nation state. At its most effective, an analysis of *7 Worlds Collide* provides a case study to assess and answer some of the questions about sonic topography that Nabeel Zuberi raises in *Sounds English*:

I’m concerned less with music as a reflection of national history and geography than how the practices of popular music culture themselves construct the spaces of the local, national, and transnational. How does the music imagine the past and place? How does it function as a memory-machine, a technology for the production of subjective and collective versions of location and identity?¹⁰

The contradictory nature of pop music, being mashed between creativity, consumerism and capitalism, offers a dense and wide-ranging negation and critique of insular nationalism that is white, male and (too often) based in global cities like London or Sydney. Picking up

Zuberi's challenge, the trajectory of this article tracks a song that has moved through time and space, accessing a wider popular cultural history of what happens when Englishness migrates and travels between cities, not nations.

Some of the most fascinating writing about popular music focuses on the limits and potential of one city, rather than a nation. C. P. Lee's *Shake, Rattle and Rain*,¹¹ Dave Haslam's *Manchester England*¹² and Barry Shank's *Dissonant Rhythms*¹³ are fine examples. The Popular Culture Collective in Perth, Western Australia, has recently added to this series of city music books with *Liverpool of the South Seas*.¹⁴ The focus of these books is on boundaries and difference, and there is a justification for these imperatives. Yet there is much research to be conducted connecting up these histories into a theory of trans-localism, exploring how popular culture is the channel and conduit for creating horizontal relationships between cities, not vertical hierarchies that rank and separate nations. The Auckland concert is significant because the Empire was singing back. Englishness was translated and transformed by creating relationships between Manchester and Auckland. This was an important colonial dialogue, and a necessary corrective. Still in May 2005, four years after the Auckland concert, *Q Magazine*'s free compact disc glowed with the title *Rule Britannia!* The exclamation mark was not meant to be ironic, but underlined that the "rule" of Britannia was not as secure as the gleaming Union Jack cover suggested.

Musical topographies summon a landscape of memory, recycling lyrics, melodies, samples and remixes. The concert in Auckland was a collision of The Smiths, Split Enz, Crowded House, Radiohead and Pearl Jam, repackaging history and leaving spaces for counter-memories and resistance, but also consumerism and capitalism. To study popular music and its relationship to place requires a mapping of metageographies and the cultural

frameworks in which people live. All cities share particular characteristics, with differences instigated through immigration, landscape and economic concerns.¹⁵ Constructions and mediations of locality are formed around and through cultural sites such as music. Increasingly, as governmental policies aim to develop entrepreneurial rather than social welfare initiatives, cities are sites of marketing and consumption, not collectivised political struggle. It is important to remember that Manchester, the fount of the Smith's music, was also the source and base for Friedrich Engels' writings about the scars of industrialisation. Sarah Champion was even more evocative in her city imaging: "Built in an industrial revolution; painted grey by Joy Division, red by Mick Hucknall and blue by Man City. Morrissey opened up a misery dictionary, while Happy Mondays nick-named it *Madchester*."¹⁶ The imaging of places—the use of marketing and government policies to render places unique—utilises the creative industries, tourism and sport to forge specificity and restructure an urban economy.¹⁷ Such attention not only sells the city but aims to promote local economic development. These policy initiatives resonated in (post)industrial England, where it has been necessary to re-inscribe the landscape and permit new economic initiatives to develop.¹⁸ The relationship between music and cities is important, conscious and promotable. Andrew Blake realised that "we associate music with places, often enough we quite deliberately make music to fit them."¹⁹ Cities are not only stopovers in a trade route: a musical route can also be tracked. A cartography of music—or a mapping of a beat—offers insight into urban and media studies. Architects, urban planners, politicians, local governments and engineers all organise space, but an attention to music facilitates an

awareness of how cities are lived in, and living. There are fine analyses of city music. The Auckland concert serves as a model for linking these investigations.

Probably the finest book written on city music is Barry Shank's *Dissonant identities: the rock 'n' roll scene in Austin, Texas*.²⁰ It is comprehensive, ethnographic and sensitive to changing urban and rural relationships. Austin's music is characterised by a desire to work through the ambivalent meanings of Texas and being Texan. As Shank realised,

the rock 'n' roll scene in Austin, Texas, is characterised by the productive contestation between these two forces: the fierce desire to remake oneself through musical practice, and the equally powerful struggle to affirm the value of that practice in the complexly structured late-capitalist marketplace.²¹

What makes this study so important is that Shank adds new meanings and sites to research into a music scene, including record stores, nightclubs, rehearsal rooms and streets. He also recognises the crucial role that student consumers play in the music industry.

Similarly, Manchester's—and particularly Salford's—immigrant cultures initiated diverse musical and stylistic influences. Distanced from the media domination of London, Manchester's reimagining is rewriting its social and economic fabric and future. As Dave Haslam realised,

Manchester, like England, is now re-creating itself, looking for a new role, a life without manufacturing industry. Like a middle-aged man made redundant after a lifetime in a factory, Manchester is either facing years drawing charity, welfare and government handouts, or it's going to retrain, reorganise, and find something to keep it occupied.²²

When leisure becomes a business, the new jobs in entertainment, tourism and the service industries are pivotal to economic survival. Manchester is known for its music and football, but these successes allow a suite of other industries to thrive in design, fashion and hospitality. Disconnectedness is a trigger for creativity. Moving beyond England and the

United States and on to the sheer cliff face of Kare Kare activates a postcolonial intervention in this urban popular culture.

Pretty surreal, really

“This is not really what musicians are used to. Speaking personally, I’m used to situations where normally you have a purpose built sort of rehearsal room. You get in a taxi and drive across London or you go straight into a venue. But to be on a mountain top overlooking the ocean was pretty surreal, really.” – Johnny Marr²³

Split Enz created a different England from The Smiths, beyond 1960s guitar bands and late 1970s punk. Working through the influences of Roxy Music and early Genesis, diverse musical trajectories were summoned. When the Enz toured Britain, they not only appeared out of place but out of time, and never aligned their music with the contemporary trends gaining success in the charts. Crowded House was more successful than the Enz as, through the late 1980s and 1990s, popular music fragmented through the rhythmic revelations of Acid House and Grunge. Neil Finn offered safe pop music while house and techno cannibalised the charts, summoning songs of love, loss and isolation. Strong music videos allowed the band’s visuality to travel beyond the Asian and Pacific region to gain an audience before touring commenced.

Popular culture transforms and translates the icons and imaginings of a time, remaking it into the fodder of popular memory. The concert in Auckland disconnected and realigned the history of The Smiths, Split Enz and Crowded House. Slicing Morrissey from The Smiths, moving Marr from Manchester, meant that 1980s popular music tethered a new Antipodean soundscape to an old industrial landscape. Using Johnny Marr as a conduit, it is possible to track what happens when both Manchester and the 1980s move to Auckland and

the 2000s. Australia and New Zealand are unwritten in The Smiths' history. They never toured the region and because the band rarely made videos, televisual exposure was limited.

When Neil Finn gathered his postmodern super group at Kare Kare, Johnny Marr became the fulcrum of the band. Through his presence and influence, The Smiths' visual history was pushed outward, beyond Europe. His impact was potent: Finn reported that Marr came straight off the flight and into the rehearsal studio, without changing his clothes, having a shower or visiting his accommodation in Auckland. Finn's response to this commitment was, "that's somebody who loves music."²⁴ Marr performed flawlessly on songs he had never played in his career: the warm, subtle fills on "Take a Walk" plaited with the jutting, incisor-sharp lead break on "Weather with You" and the blues-inflected harmonica on "Four Seasons in One Day." The latter was an extraordinary re-sounding of a pop song. Marr remade this song through counter melodies on his harmonica, adding a moody blues-edge not present on the original. On the Auckland stage, Johnny Marr showed why he remains the Keith Richards of Generation X. He combines a great riff with a great haircut, and knows—intrinsically it seems—that both are required to sustain a pop icon.

The most evocative of popular music freeze-dries feelings, capturing a crying scrag, murmured whimper, or passionate embrace. Frequently, the lyrics are understated and in a minor key. Arguably The Smiths most effectively mobilised this combination and while occasionally they overplayed the emotional suit through the try-hard humour of "Girlfriend in a coma," they managed to balance pathos and revelation. Their greatest song "There is a light" claims gritty urbanity as its palette: double-decker buses, darkened underpasses and familiar strangers. It is a Manchester of Antipodean imagining.

Of all The Smiths' songs for Neil Finn to include in *7 Worlds Collide*, and it is the only one, "There is a light" was a dangerous choice. It could have gone badly askew. Morrissey's performance—seemingly—could not be bettered. The fusion between Marr's resonant strumming and Morrissey's grain of voice created a new pop language. Neil Finn is a fine singer, but no one can cover a myth. The only caveat to this truth is if another myth can be moulded from memory. Colonial spaces summon liminality, ambiguity and ambivalence. Sonic rules morph and change. As Neil Finn stated in the opening of the concert, "we can do anything we want tonight. We just decided that."²⁵ In such a context, the popular cultural pieces do not quite align, and are transposed and reframed within a transported context. Finn and Marr slowed "There is a light," and lifted it into the key of G. Interestingly, they did this by capo as there was little time in rehearsal to transpose the chords and bass line. The song gained new meanings when sung by older voices and faces, revealing countermelodies of vanished hopes and expectations. The disappointments of forty-somethings will always be greater than those teetering out of their teens. "There is a light that never goes out" means more to those who have seen the light go out of relationships, without cause, explanation or hope. The resultant track found new melodies and meanings. At the conclusion of the three-minute track, Johnny Marr released a hand from his guitar and pointed to the singer, acknowledging Neil Finn's remarkable vocal performance. The camera throughout the song searched Marr's face for reaction and insight. Marr looked at a band and an Auckland crowd that had rendered new and fresh a tired—but mythic—twenty-year-old song.

Movement is intricate and important to any understanding of contemporary music. Too often studies of a national music, or even a local sound, can spill from celebrating specificity to validating xenophobia. Such insularity is avoided when seeking out the

alternative voices and views of immigrants which subvert simple labellings of centre and periphery. For example, Roy Shuker argued that

Despite its small scale, the NZ music industry is a useful example of the tensions that exist between the centre and the periphery in the global music industry. It also provides a test case of the validity of the cultural imperialism thesis, and illustrates debates over the nature of local and cultural identity vis-à-vis trends towards globalization in the culture industries.²⁶

The convergent relationships between place and music are always more complex than a centre and periphery model can allow. Johnny Rogan stated that “pop music has always been about ‘cultural imperialism.’”²⁷ While a discussion of sexuality triggered this statement, it is significant to ponder his point in a postcolonial environment. Cultural imperialism theses do not cleanly enfold into an analysis of “There is a light.” The passage of this song through DVD release after the initial performance in 2001 has been concurrent with a War on Terror, xenophobic immigration policies and a resurgence of insular nationalism. The mobility of music through space and time is tempered by social insularity and political closure. While Judith Pickering rightly argued that “for the last century white Australian musicians have articulated a deep desire to find a viable sense of Australian identity,”²⁸ this search in the twenty-first century has resulted in a fear of outsiders and the unfamiliar. While perched at the edge of the world, New Zealand policy has embraced its regionality far more effectively than has the current Australian government. Particularly in Auckland, where this concert was staged, a vibrant Pacific Island community lives and circulates. A Labour government headed by Helen Clarke is more expansively regional than any immigration policies within contemporary Australia. Clarke has remade New Zealand into a Pacific nation from the ashes of a British colony. Concurrently, John Howard restructured Australian national policy through the Tampa “Crisis,”²⁹ a “Pacific Solution”³⁰ and “asylum seekers.”³¹ White

Australians are liminally positioned through colonisation, being both colonised by British masters and themselves colonising indigenous populations. This ambivalent social location has triggered many of the racial traumas within Australian history.

One of the reasons that Australian racism and xenophobia is so virulent is that the word “Australian” needed to be translated from a nineteenth-century application to indigenous communities, and changed into a noun to describe a white national citizenry. In one century, the word “Australian” was transformed from signifying blackness to connoting whiteness. The semiotic violence required to change the racial ideologies of national vocabularies is of a breath-taking scale. As Jock Collins, Greg Noble, Schott Poynting and Paul Tabar have argued, “this country has many times previously turned to racism and xenophobia at times of economic, social and political trouble.”³² The selective forgetting of white Australian history creates ambiguous and damaging relationships with indigenous peoples, but also a convoluted affiliation with immigrants, particularly from the United Kingdom. English immigrants live in an ambivalent ideological zone. With so much pressure and attention placed on the limits and “exclusion zones” of Australia and Australians, those migrants who are a reminder of prior belongings are uncomfortably situated. The music industry is no exception. When assembling his trans-local supergroup in the Pacific, it was strangely appropriate to excise Australia from this map.

The absences of popular culture are always more interesting than the presence. It is significant when musicians were assembled by Neil Finn, Australia was an unmentionable place. American and English musicians made the journey, but Australian music and musicians left little trace on the concert. Jim Moginie did play on a few tracks but was not introduced in the credits or by Neil Finn at the conclusion of the performance. While, from

the perspective of Marr's Manchester, Australia and New Zealand may appear to have much in common, there are disparate histories to summon. Aotearoa, New Zealand, was colonised later than Australia, avoiding the genocidal ruthlessness that still punctuates race relations on the continent. In Aotearoa, New Zealand, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 between the indigenous peoples, the Maori, and the British colonisers, who would later be labelled with the term Pakeha. No such treaty was signed in Australia. The land was appropriated by the British colonisers and declared vacant, ignoring the intricate communities, languages and structures that not only survived but thrived on this volatile landscape. These movements in popular culture, particularly popular music, are important because they are not circumscribed by the nation state. Placing the concert in bicultural Auckland, with Australia and Australians seethingly unmentionable, is a confirmation of this principle.

The Other Side of Paradise

“We’ll take a vote on it at the end of the night. Does this band have a future?” - Neil Finn³³

All cultural formations, including popular music, are determined by the context of their emergence. Precise determinations of centre and periphery, coloniser and colonised, do not operate in a predictable or trackable fashion in the Auckland concert. The colonial environment of Aotearoa, New Zealand, summons a national imagining that operates against easy theories of globalisation. The 1980s was a time of growth in Maori and Polynesian music, with the overseas sales of New Zealand music, particularly the Flying Nun catalogue, booming.³⁴ In the *7 Worlds Collide* concert, Tangata Pacifica was summoned by Neil Finn in his introduction to “Paradise,” not by indigenous or Pacific Island performers: “We’re in the South Pacific, and it sure feels good.”³⁵ In a bicultural environment, the mobilisation of Pacific identities by Pakeha is not—cleanly or intrinsically—appropriative or exploitative. As

John Hutnyk has argued so convincingly, it is difficult to determine the point when appropriation becomes a transformation.

With all musical histories being personal and collective, political and historical, we are complicit in these appropriations. Traces of mobility and population shifts, through immigration and colonization, create, in Hutnyk's phrase, "Magical Mystical Tourism."³⁶ Johnny Marr brought Northern England to this space. Manchester generally, but Madchester in particular, is a touristic musical space that is able to market its past. As Jeremy Gilbert and Ewan Pearson confirmed, "almost all of the most important British indie bands had come from Manchester for almost a decade."³⁷ From the Buzzcocks and Joy Division, from The Fall to The Smiths and New Order, it is difficult to write a history of independent music without a sizeable chapter being located in Manchester. When added to The Stone Roses, The Happy Mondays and Inspiral Carpets, and the house stable of A Guy Called Gerald, 808 State and M People, innovative sounds were mapped and complex generic differences were created in the movement from the first industrial to the first postindustrial city.³⁸

All popular cultural landscapes are plural. Music reconnects listeners with an affective world. Music history is too often dominated by big events, important songs and great bands, but the competing spatialities and splintered histories between Auckland and Manchester form the node of fascination at the *7 Worlds Collide* concert. Actually, it was not a clash of worlds, but cities. While all cities are unique, they share characteristics. How the local is studied and recognised in mobile social and economic environments is best evaluated through precise slices of texts, such as the concert in Auckland. Different localities are constructed, fused, dissociated and rebuilt. By 1986, and through The Smiths, the musical centre of England had moved North. For Madchester to be born, The Smiths had to die, which they did

in 1987. Like all pop deaths, it would not last. Oasis not only resurrected the three-minute pop song that Acid House decentred, but also constructed a “post-Manchester Manchester.”³⁹ Noel Gallagher brought forward Johnny Marr’s influence that has been decentred by both The Happy Mondays and The Stone Roses. When Gallagher saw The Smiths perform “This Charming Man” on *Top of the Pops* in November 1983, he stated that “from that day on I was ... I wouldn’t say ... Yes, I probably would say, I wanted to be Johnny Marr.”⁴⁰ John Robb confirmed that, by 1986, “everyone was looking for the new Smiths.”⁴¹ They would not be disappointed, with multiple Manchesters continuing the divergent legacy of both Morrissey’s memory of punk⁴² and Marr’s experimentation with electronica.

After the Smiths split, Morrissey and Marr followed the musical paths that in many ways ruptured the group. Dave Haslam described Morrissey’s solo work as “blighted by the narrow, insular Englishness he advocated—anti-American and anti-change—and a further retreat into myth, to the past, to music.”⁴³ Marr, having seen the future at the Hacienda’s house nights,⁴⁴ formed Electronic. Music changed after Joy Division and The Smiths. Marr would continue to change. Morrissey would not. Their pop-cultural clocks were set to different rhythms and histories. While Morrissey moved punk to pop, it was Marr who continued the movement from pop to proto-electronica and back into pop. John Harris stated that “what came to be known as Acid House had begun to seep into the UK in the autumn of 1987—fortuitously at around exactly the time that The Smiths broke up.”⁴⁵ Marr’s appearance in *7 Worlds Collide* denies the complexity of this movement and history. His pop clock bends and loops. Neil Finn permanently and comfortably resides in Adult Oriented Rock. Throughout Split Enz, Crowded House and his solo work, it is as if acid house never happened, that dance music did not translate the rhythms, melodies and structure of music.

Marr, on stage in Auckland, dipped back to a pop-rock past that he shared with The Smiths. As he moved through space, he also moved back in time. There was also a context for this selective forgetting of electronica.

After the 1997 election, Britpop provided the soundtrack to a supposedly New Britain. This was a soundtrack from the past, a yearning for colonial simplicity. Britpop was a misnaming and it was not simple oversight. Englishness requires Britishness to prop up a sense of empire and greatness, justifying the contradictions and excess. This yearning for colonial simplicities, when the pink bits on the map were securely part of the empire, was frayed through the late 1990s, with the rise and expansion of neo-conservatism. In this environment, moving Ed O'Brien, Philip Selway and Johnny Marr from England to the Pacific was an important cultural shift. Post-Cool Britannia,⁴⁶ a new musical and political fusion, was being mapped.⁴⁷

Simon Gikandi argues that "I could sense some of the significant ways in which the central moments of English cultural identity were driven by doubts and disputes about the perimeters of the values that defined Englishness."⁴⁸ Through recent crises with Michael Howard's immigration policies and the Underground bombing, the stability of British borders and identity is in flux. With the Anglo-American military alliance marching through popular culture and the ideologies of freedom, prosperity and peace carried through the American dollar, the relationship between us and them, freedom-loving people and terrorists, is neither appropriative nor a dialogue between equals. In such an environment, re-performing "There is a light" is not only a nostalgic nod to a simple time, but a complex reworking of Manchester's nineteenth-century industrial power in the Pacific form of empire.

If national models for cultural production are decentred, then the opportunities for trans-local creative alliances emerge. The social and economic restructuring of cities may be more volatile and dynamic, but also more diverse and complex. It is always easy to argue for the specialness and difference of a city's sound or music. In a parochially-sodden haze, we can all "hear" Detroit in the mechanical precision of the pulses of early-1990s techno. The swirls and screeches of acid house spiral out of a Manchester mix. Seattle's dark, brooding weather marinates the gristle of grunge. While such connections provide the basis of outstanding journalistic hyperbole, the histories and geographies of music are inevitably more complex to reveal. Postcolonial movements in music flatten geographical hierarchies, where British and American tracks are valued over Australian and New Zealand-derived material. Such judgments are increased through the globalisation of i-tunes.

In such a semiotic environment, "There is a light" is more than a song or a metaphor. It is a method to track and trace popular memory. It is also the song that propelled Marr beyond the Englishness of The Smiths. It is appropriate that a Pakeha New Zealander took over Morrissey's vocals, and performed the lyrics better than the original. Colonial appropriation became postcolonial translation. Too often, such pivotal pop moments are destructively ephemeral. A probing voice slices through consciousness, speaking of insecurities, disappointments and dark fears. This flash of insight subsides and with it the light of realization. The best of pop clings to a moment—just a moment—where we can understand our experiences outside the truths peddled by the powerful. We may—for an instant—trust a feeling of joy, empathy and agency. There is, indeed, a light that never goes out. That light may flicker, but like the best of pop music, it returns to remind us to trust memories and guard emotional soundscapes from the past.

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- ¹ T. Wilson, "Advice/Wilson's Wisdom" (*City Life* 579, March 31-April 6, 2005), 16.
- ² Neil Finn on *7 Worlds Collide: Neil Finn and Friends Live at the St. James* (Parlophone, 2001).
- ³ Johnny Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr: The Severed Alliance* (London: Omnibus, 1993), 12.
- ⁴ Neil Finn and Johnny Marr, *7 Worlds Collide*.
- ⁵ Simon Goddard, *The Smiths: Songs that Saved your Life* (London: Reynolds and Hearn, 2002), 161.
- ⁶ Johnny Marr in Goddard, 163.
- ⁷ The two sentences are in Goddard: "Johnny Marr has since accompanied ex-Crowded House singer Neil Finn covering 'There is a light that never goes out' in concert. A recording of this collaboration is available on Finn's *Seven Worlds Collide* live CD/DVD," 164.
- ⁸ Mark Simpson, *Saint Morrissey* (London: SAF Publishing, 2004), 91.
- ⁹ Mat Smith, cited in Chris Bourke, *Crowded House: Something So Strong* (Sydney: Macmillan, 1997), 201.
- ¹⁰ Nabeel Zuberi, *Sounds English: Transnational popular music* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 3.
- ¹¹ C. P. Lee, *Shake Rattle and Rain: Popular Music Making in Manchester 1955-1995* (Devon: Hardinge Simpole Publishing, Devon, 2002).
- ¹² Dave Haslam, *Manchester England: The Story of the Pop Cult City* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999).
- ¹³ Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities: The Rock 'n' Roll Scene in Austin, Texas* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).
- ¹⁴ Tara Brabazon, ed., *Liverpool of the South Seas: Perth and its Popular Music* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2005).
- ¹⁵ To monitor how these similarities and differences are studied, please refer to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada-funded project, "Culture of Cities," <http://www.yorku.ca/culture_of_cities>, November 10, 2004. In particular, they are interested in researching the links and distinctions between Montreal, Toronto, Berlin and Dublin.
- ¹⁶ Sarah Champion, *And God Created Manchester* (Manchester: Wordsmith, 1990), 9.
- ¹⁷ For example, the Sydney Olympics utilised sport and tourism to restructure the city and its marketing. Gordon Waitt realised that such "place promotion is inextricably bound up with the presentation and promotion of ideology;" from "Playing games with Sydney: marketing Sydney for the 2000 Olympics" (*Urban Studies*, 36.7, 1999), 1073.
- ¹⁸ Phil Hubbard researched this process for the city of Birmingham. See his "Urban Design and City Regeneration: Social Representations of Entrepreneurial Landscapes" (*Urban Studies* 33.8, 1996), 1441-1461.
- ¹⁹ Andrew Blake, "The echoing corridor" (*Soundings* 1, 1995), 175.
- ²⁰ Shank, *Dissonant Identities*.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, x.
- ²² Haslam, *Manchester England*, xi.
- ²³ Marr, *7 Worlds Collide*.
- ²⁴ Finn, *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ Roy Shuker, "Climbing the Rock: The New Zealand Music Industry" in Philip Hayward, Tony Mitchell and Roy Shuker, *North Meets South: Popular Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Sydney: Perfect Beat Publications, 1994), 17.
- ²⁷ Johnny Rogan, *Morrissey and Marr: The Severed Alliance* (London: Omnibus, 1993), 5.
- ²⁸ J. Pickering, "Spirit of Place: The Relationship between the Australian Landscape and Music in Aboriginal and White Culture" (*Australian Studies* 12.1, 1997), 31.
- ²⁹ Phillip Adams argued that "At the time of the Tampa, I asked this simple question: If the refugees on the Norwegian freighter—or on the SIEV X—had been white Christians fleeing, for example, Robert Mugabe's tyranny in Zimbabwe, do we doubt for a minute that our prime minister would have been at the wharf to welcome them with open arms? Instead of having troops round them up for frogmarching into concentration camps in the desert—or behind the wire of human junk heaps on Pacific islands, hastily built after the bullying and bribing of local officials? Welcome home White Australia" (*The Weekend Australian Magazine*, March 19-20, 2005), 54.

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- ³⁰ The Tampa was a small boat carrying 400 asylum seekers in August 200. It became the trigger for a radical reassessment of Australia's immigration policy. Refugees would be placed in detention centres and processed on Pacific Islands. This was called the Pacific Solution.
- ³¹ Katharine Betts has presented an analysis of "Immigration policy under the Howard government," in the *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 38.2, (2003), 169-192. She focuses on the Howard policy to make immigration policy more based on economic priorities and reducing the family reunion scheme. Border control also became more important.
- ³² Jock Collins, Greg Noble, Scott Poynting, Paul Tabar, *Kebabs, Kids, Cops and Crime* (Sydney: Pluto Press, 2000), 36.
- ³³ Finn, *7 Worlds Collide*.
- ³⁴ For an excellent analysis of New Zealand music at this time, see the collection of essays edited by Philip Hayward, Tony Mitchell and Roy Shuker, *North Meets South: Popular Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Sydney: Perfect Beat Publications, 1994).
- ³⁵ Finn, *7 Worlds Collide*.
- ³⁶ John Hutnyk, *Critique of Exotica: Music, Politics and the Culture Industry* (London: Pluto, 2000), 87.
- ³⁷ Jeremy Gilbert and Ewan Pearson, *Discographies: Dance Music, Culture and the Politics of Sound* (London: Routledge, 1999).
- ³⁸ For example the cover of *Manchester: A Place in the City* asked "Why Manchester is back on the style map as one of the world's most exciting cities," Issue 19, April 2005.
- ³⁹ Mick Middles, *Oasis: Round Their Way* (London: Independent Music Press, 1996), 24.
- ⁴⁰ Neil Gallagher in John Harris, *The Last Party* (London: Fourth Estate, 2003), 120.
- ⁴¹ John Robb, *The Stone Roses and the Resurrection of British Pop* (London: Ebury Press, 1997), 8.
- ⁴² Victoria Segal states in her review of Morrissey's *Live at Earls Court* that "Some might say that Morrissey has been held a prisoner by his own success for the past decade, trapped by the constraints of his increasingly quaint public image. He was rock's own peat-bog man, perfectly preserved in the mulch of his past successes, fascinating, yet unlikely to do anything dynamic" ("Second Coming," *Q Magazine*, May 2005), 105.
- ⁴³ Haslam, *Manchester England*, 132.
- ⁴⁴ Marr states that "towards the end of the Smiths, I realized that the records I was listening to with my friends were more exciting than the records I was listening to with the group. Eventually we'd got ourselves down a musical and political cul-de-sac," in Haslam, *Manchester England*, 176.
- ⁴⁵ John Harris, *The Last Party* (London: Fourth Estate, 2003), 11.
- ⁴⁶ *Vanity Fair* declared London "the nerve centre of pop's most cohesive scene since the Pacific Northwest grunge explosion of 1991." See David Kamp, "London Swings! Again!" (*Vanity Fair*, March 1997), 102.
- ⁴⁷ Michael Bracewell states that "pop provides an unofficial cartography of its host culture, charting the national mood, marking the crossroads between the major social trends and the tunnels of the zeitgeist." See Michael Bracewell, "Britpop's coming home, it's coming home" (*New Statesman*, February 21, 1997), 36.
- ⁴⁸ Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), x.