both journalists and audiences. Even here, classist assumptions could be seen. The comparative receptions of the King of Siam's 'royal' band and an orchestra of Chinese musicians at exhibitions in 1884 and 1883 respectively, saw the former accorded a higher value because of its regal associations. At the same time, it was evident that such music could never aspire to the status of European art music. Non-Western music also featured informally in the 'ethnographic displays' at several exhibitions, including that in Calcutta in 1883, and at the Colonial and Indian, and Liverpool exhibitions, both in 1886. As Kirby states with appropriate disgust, 'These "living ethnological exhibits" – among the most horrific and exploitative anthropological exhibitionary practices of the nineteenth centuries – placed human beings "on display" in artificially constructed environments' (p.187). The message – explicit rather than subliminal – was that, not only did Britain and other 'civilised' nations have a right to rule over such 'inferior' races, but it was also their very duty to do so – while, of course, ensuring that social order and social hierarchy were maintained at home.

Kirby's success with *Exhibitions, Music and the British Empire* stems not only from the vast amount of detail she presents and the quality of her research but as much from the way she examines and explores the information she presents. She writes very well and tells the story of these exhibitions with real skill. She is more than willing to make judgements as above when needed, but she also avoids the temptation to poke fun at these funny Victorians and their odd little ways. After all, how will our quirks and fads look to later surviving generations – if any? But one does detect a wry humour lurking behind the printed word at times. As her comments about the International Fisheries Exhibition of 1883 suggest, 'Music was surprisingly prevalent here, although none of it was fish-related' (p. 17). It is a thoroughly readable and revealing study.

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***The Punk Rock Politics of Joe Strummer. Radicalism, Resistance and Rebellion.* By Gregor Gall. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022. 295 pp. ISBN 978-1-52614-898-8**

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This is an ambitious and unusual book that aims to comment on the politics of punk rock legend Joe Strummer (1952–2002), vocalist/guitarist of The Clash. Gregor Gall criticises the use of lyrics by past authors to form assessments about Strummer's political inclinations, preferring instead an incredibly detailed study of Strummer's media interviews. Past authors, such as me (see James 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2014), who described Strummer as a 'Third World Communist' or 'Marxist', are criticised here in fairly strong terms. However, one can still argue the contrary perspective: many artists put major time and effort into lyrics, whereas magazine interviews may be used for publicity or shock quotes. Gall's thesis that someone's 'real' politics can be better inferred from interview quotes than lyrics is far from proved here. In

fact, the reader is overwhelmed at times by the contradictory nature of various interview quotes, even from the same year or era, and many are juvenile and have not aged well at all.

The first half of the book reflects Gall's interest in working out which labels should and should not be assigned to Strummer. The author seems to be of the perspective that Marxism ended with (or before!) Lenin, both in theory and in practice, thus ignoring writers such as Althusser, Mao and the Western and Cultural Marxist traditions. The book comes across as ahistorical in the sense that these later authors, as well as the Frankfurt School and Foucault, escape mention in the book when they are highly relevant in terms of understanding the historical trajectory of Leftist ideas and their dialectical interplay with events. The Clash wrote at a peak time for the influence of Maoism and the Frankfurt School. Furthermore, Foucault's most influential writings were first published in English during The Clash's lifespan, 1976–86. Therefore, they were the theoretical backdrop for his era, just as much as Reagan, the Notting Hill Carnival riot, Thatcher and the Sandinista were the political backdrop.

Mao wrote that contradiction is in the essence of all things, and Gall would have done well to have made this, or similar, quotes the centrepiece for his book. By describing Strummer as Marxist, I was not calling him a 'dedicated Marxist' or an 'orthodox Marxist'. I understand Strummer as being a man defined by his contradictions, while 'Marxist' refers to his ideas being often Marxist-infused or Marxist-influenced.

However, if pressed, and from the perspective of today, and incorporating insights from Cultural Marxism, the Frankfurt School, Althusser and Mao, I would call a 'Marxist' *someone who believes in the idea that surplus-value is unpaid labour time, which is extracted from the proletariat by the capitalist business owner, through the capitalist production process, and wants to see the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement with a workers' state*. In definitional debates, Gall and I may disagree and I may allow the definition to widen to incorporate the insights and practice of Lenin and Mao, in particular.

This is not the place to endlessly debate lyrics and quotes, but I think we can go further than calling Strummer anticapitalist. In song lyrics, it is unrealistic to expect a full exposition of Marx's theory of surplus-value, but the 'belief' may still be there if we look at the full picture of what the person did or said. Being written in an era when the Soviet Union still existed and Really Existing Communism still existed in Eastern Europe and China (and this historical context was vital for the meaning and impact of The Clash), Strummer clearly holds on to at least romanticised ideas about communist revolution and the fighting of the fascists.

I will mention two areas where Gall takes me to task, quite unreasonably. I quote the song 'Bankrobber' where it centres on a man 'spending his life serving one machine' which is 'ten times worse than prison'. I describe the man as alienated, in the Marxist sense, drawing on Marx's (1932/1994) theory of alienation from the *1844 Manuscripts*. In terms of the lines from 'Bankrobber', Gall, disingenuously, claims that this could be a protest against advanced industrial society rather than capitalism (as I claimed). Since, in England at least, these things emerged historically at the same time and through the same historical processes, they appeared together. Hence, I doubt that Gall has proved me wrong.

The Sandinista clearly thought of themselves as Third World Communists and they fit in with the historical trajectory of those nation states and ideas that used that label, which included China and Vietnam. If Gall does not want to call them 'Marxist', I presume that this is because they were not a revolution initiated by the industrial urban proletariat, which was the classic Marxist scenario. However, neither was the

Chinese revolution and neither was the Russian revolution. Both relied on the alliance between the industrial working-class and the peasantry. Lenin, too, had the theory of the vanguard. In effect, Gall seems to want to take us back to a pre-Leninist position that would deny the validity of even the Russian revolution.

The problem with the book is the earnest and endless search for 'the truth' in terms of Strummer's political beliefs via a literal reading of countless texts. There is no poststructuralist awareness here, no concept that Strummer's understandings were fragmentary and contradictory. He was Marxist and not Marxist, at varying times and to varying degrees, and depending on which definitions one chooses. Gall doesn't consider that the definitions are themselves contested and change over time. And Strummer's views reflected the changing events of history (he was in confusion after the collapse of the Soviet Union), and hence also constrained him in terms of what he could conceivably think. These problems make the book duller than its title would suggest, although the second half is better.

In closing, it seems that here we have a work that is pre-Foucault, pre-postmodernism, pre-1968, pre-the Frankfurt School even, and which aims to locate (Marxist) truth by defining it rigidly, protecting and enforcing it upon those who use the definitions in a different way or more loosely. There is no awareness at all that many regard truth as being socially produced. Punk was a movement of individualism and identity politics, at least to some extent, so it presaged today's world. With this book and this author, there appears to be no understanding at all that the categorisation process, and the categories themselves, can be oppressive, and that is problematic.

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***Raving*. By McKenzie Wark. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2023, 136 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4780-1938-1**

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In *Raving*, McKenzie Wark offers a breezy but thought-provoking work that straddles a line between literary and academic writing on electronic music culture. On one level, it can be read as a follow-up to *Reverse Cowgirl*, her 2020 auto-ethnography about gender and sexuality. Where that work was a look in the