

“METAL FOR THE MASSES”: OR, WILL METAL EVER BE MAINSTREAM AGAIN? (AND WHY WE SHOULD WANT IT TO BE...)

Andy R. Brown
Bath Spa University, UK

Abstract

Exploring the model of scene-based innovation and scarcity that characterised the 90s extreme metal underground, as eloquently outlined by Keith Kahn-Harris, this paper seeks to evaluate the extent to which its model of “eclipsed” symbolic capital accumulation is the key *not* to its success but relative failure to achieve innovation, development and change in metal music. Debating Lena and Peterson’s AgSIT model of genre trajectories, this paper argues such change in metal music have always been tied to the formation and demise of music “mainstreams.” The problem *from this perspective* is that NWOBHM, doom, power (including symphonic), thrash, grindcore, death and black metal did not mainstream *enough* (with the exception of some notable bands) to allow the next cycle of musical innovation to commence.

Introduction

In a striking series of recent posts, published on-line in the net.magazine *Sou-ciant* (2013; 2014), Keith Kahn-Harris has reflected on the question of Metal After Metal. Recalling the searching intelligence of a younger Lawrence Grossberg (1990) and his anxious ruminations on whether rock was dead, dying or “going somewhere else” – published over twenty years ago – Kahn-Harris echoes a similar set of fears, not about the break-up of the music-audience relations that sustained the Anglo-American “rock formation” but the scenic-relations that sustained the creative-economy of the extreme metal underground. Of course, the context in which these writers sought to articulate their fears and concerns is radically different. Yet both can be viewed as a response to (and a rumination on) shifts in the functioning of the music economy and the likely impact this may have on the role and meaning of music for audiences. For both, musical production is most valuable and “valued” when it is able to articulate a set of aesthetic affectivities linking artists with audiences. But while Grossberg claimed to find the “rock apparatus” of empowerment and pleasure in the wider generational “rock formation” prior to the aesthetic assault of punk, for Kahn-Harris the vitality of the extreme metal seen was that it existed beyond heavy metal, which by the mid-1980s could be said to constitute the mainstream of rock. Somewhat ironically, the decline of the rock formation in the wake of post-punk, post-rock, EDM and indie, that Grossberg narrated, was soon after re-narrated (even celebrated) as the decade of emergence of an economy of global music scenes that had no obvious economic/ national or musical centre (Straw 1991). For some writers, this signalled the demise of the “platinum-triangle” on which the economic and (counter) cultural hegemony of “rockism” had depended and heralded a shift towards Europe and the wider world (Laing 1997).

One of these global or translocal musical scenes, less noted by popular music writers, was extreme metal. Indeed, it was Kahn-Harris (Harris 2000) who first identified extreme metal as a global music scene, stressing its emergence as a result of “an interconnected musical and institutional rejection of Heavy Metal” (p.14). That is, the radical musical styles of thrash, death, black and doom metal that emerged in the mid-1980s rejected most of the defining musical elements of the commercially dominant heavy metal style of that decade, particularly melody and harmony, “in favour of speed, downtuned guitars and growled or screamed vocals” (ibid). They also recorded and distributed their music via tape trading of self-recorded demos or by releasing material on small independent labels unconnected to the major labels that housed the commercially successful heavy metal bands. Indeed, for Kahn-Harris, this global extreme metal scene or “underground” constituted “a decentralised, global and diffuse network of producers and consumers” with no privileged institutional centre or musically dominant local scene. Further, the anti-commercial or non-profit model of international tape trading or music distribution based on the exchange of equivalent values meant that capital accumulation was discouraged often because money was not central to the functioning of this symbolic or “gift” economy.

In many ways the extreme metal underground, at least in its early days, could be said to resemble or prefigure those that underpinned the models and practices of exchange and gift-giving which characterised the internet in *its* early days. Central to both, it could be argued, was the scenic practice of sub-cultural capital accumulation based on the peer recognition of levels of “selfless” commitment to the maintenance of the scene that were symbolically rewarded via markers of prestige or symbolic capital accumulation. It is therefore somewhat ironic that the development of peer-to-peer file sharing that did much to facilitate the “free” exchange of music via the net, and thereby undermine the copyright-property-relations that underpinned the dominance of the music industry, also impacted on the symbolic economy of the extreme metal underground. Not only was the extreme metal scene slow or cautious in its adoption of the new internet technologies, in a number of key ways the obvious advantages of the net – its speed of communication, ability to replicate and store music – threatened to undermine central features of the scenic economy (such as letter-writing, tape-trading and distributing fanzines and flyers) and how it had functioned hitherto.

Fast forward to the present, thanks to the unprecedented capacity of the internet to both distribute and archive, there is both an excess of new metal music circulating and an ease of access to metal’s back catalogue – so that even the most obscure early demos of legendary bands are obtainable “within seconds” on-line, leading to a crisis of abundance (Kahn-Harris 2013a). For Kahn-Harris, the paradox of this abundance of music is that its exchange value is low, a far cry from the halcyon days of the 90s Extreme metal underground, when the very scarcity of metal and the difficulty of accessing it, served to promote a musical economy – based on international tape-trading and eclipsed capital - that rewarded dedicated fandom with sub-cultural capital and discouraged casual consumption. The corollary that Kahn-Harris derives from this, and my point of departure here, is that the relative invisibility of metal music to “outsiders” and the heightened sense of community of “insiders”, produced a series of scene-based sub-genre innovations in metal music – from Florida Death metal to Bergen Black metal – that were distinctive because they had time to incubate (ibid).

As Wallach and Levine (2013) observe, the concept of scene lacks precision since it is been asked to describe “local, national and global entities” that constitute “vastly different scales of organization” (p. 118). Despite the theoretical sophistication of Kahn-Harris’ account of the origins, development and current diagnoses of the global extreme metal scene, the economic infrastructure of global scene relations and institutions seems somewhat obscured by the emphasis placed on the interplay between “mundane” and “transgressive” sub-cultural capital accumulation which, it is argued, provide the scene a degree of autonomy from the logic of dominant capital flows. In particular, although a number of North European countries (such as Sweden, Norway and Finland) are identified as powerful global producers of extreme metal and other countries (such as Germany) as important markets for the consumption of extreme metal *and* Europe, more widely, as the location for important small, medium-sized and multi-national labels (such as No Fashion, Dolores, Osmose, Noise, Massacre, Spinefarm, Earache, Peaceville, Candlelight, Steamhammer SPV, Roadrunner, Nuclear Blast, Century Media and Music for Nations) this obvious inequality of economic infrastructure does not automatically translate into a global patterning of core and periphery scenes, not only because there are multiple examples of exceptions to this pattern but, more importantly, because “standing” or prestige within the scene is not primarily determined by economic success. Indeed, significant commercial success is often controversial:

the institutions of the extreme metal scene [letter-writing and tape-trading, distros, record labels, bands and musicians, fanzines and niche magazines] provide the infrastructure through which members interact and through which capital flows and is accumulated. The key questions in assessing how the scene refracts power and capital are how far participation in the scene’s institutions requires resources from outside the scene and how far capital accrued within scenic institutions is convertible into forms of capital outside the scene (2007: 78).

There is a strong implication here that the extreme metal scene, at least in its early years, constituted a set of practices that were able to gain a significant degree of autonomy both from the general economic field of capital and the dominant commercial practices of the music industry; practices that, by implication, had determined the production of heavy metal music, hitherto. This model is clearly redolent of Bourdieu’s (1993) account of the cultural field of restricted (art) and large-scale (commercial) cultural production, in that mainstream or economically successful heavy metal is relegated to the commercial field (where accreditation is based on volume of unit sales) and extreme metal is located in an art-culture field (where accreditation is based on accumulation of symbolically specific capitals either through adherence to the aesthetic rules of the field (“mundane” sub-cultural capital) or by mounting an avant-garde challenge to those values (“transgressive” sub-cultural capital).

The problem with this model of the cultural field as it applies to heavy metal music culture is that it largely fails to acknowledge that similar forms of aesthetic distinction are also operating *within* the commercial field of heavy metal music production itself, as critics such as Hesmondhalgh (2006) have pointed out in respect of rock music. But also that such a polarized model largely fails to address the porous terrain between the heavy metal mainstream and the extreme metal underground and the sense in which this space is structured in terms of macro, micro and niche levels of aesthetic and commercial production (Thornton 2005). The current “crisis” of metal that Kahn-Harris points to – based on the impact of the net and net-technologies that are seen to undermi-

ne the “scarcity” model that underpinned the development of innovative genre developments despite some commercial “distorting” elements in the past – is based on the assumption that innovation and change was largely confined to the extreme metal underground and that these processes must occur *within* its logic or metal will cease to be a viable genre.

But what if this is not the case? Are there, for example, alternative models of genre formation, development and change that focus on musical aesthetics but offer a more dynamic account of the relationship between the commercial and the anti-commercial fields in which metal music making occurs? It is notable that Kahn-Harris’ model of the extreme metal scene is most challenged when he is dealing with “commercial” developments occurring on its borders, such as the breakthrough of the thrash bands, Slayer, Anthrax, Megadeth and Metallica “assisted by the institutions of the heavy metal scene” (p.95); the near “commercial breakthrough” (p.83) of death metal bands, Morbid Angel, Cannibal Corpse, Carcass, Deicide, Obituary and Sepultura (the latter, the only death metal band to break the UK Top 40 with *Arise* (1991) and the UK & US Top 20 with *Chaos AD* (1993) and *Roots* (1996), before imploding shortly thereafter), and, more recently, the “highly successful bands”, Slipknot and Machine Head “who might have gone on to develop careers in extreme metal” but instead were instrumental in the development of the overly-commercial nu metal style (p. 104).

Commenting on these examples, Kahn-Harris suggest that these were pivotal moments when the extreme metal scene could have “grown rapidly in popularity” were it not for the “antipathy that scene members showed towards the wider heavy metal scene” that, in part, reflected its “close relationship [...] with the punk scene” (p.94). So, at the moment when the scene was “on the cusp of a great surge in popularity”, the aesthetic and ideological divide from the heavy metal scene, was most strongly reinforced, leading to a greater insularity of the scene thereafter (*ibid*).

The question I now want to pose is whether this failure to mainstream constitutes an “interruption” in the cyclical pattern of mainstreaming and reformation that has driven the patterns of innovation and change that have underpinned the persistence of the heavy metal genre *hitherto*. I pursue this question via a critical analysis of what I see as the major alternative to Kahn-Harris’ scene model, Lena and Peterson’s (2008) AgSIT model of genre trajectories.

Living on borrowed time: The AgSIT and heavy metal

In outline, Lena and Peterson (2008) propose an ideal-typical model of genre trajectory, suggesting that music genres will pass through Avant-garde, Scene-based, Industry-based, and Traditionalist phases (hence AgSIT). Working with sixty “case study” American music genres, the authors expected all of them would develop from avant-garde beginnings but in fact only forty did so, while only sixteen experienced the full trajectory, one of them being heavy metal (p. 700). Also, surprising was that nine industry-based genres went on to develop scenes (six going on to a traditionalist phase)(p.710).

Avant-garde genres arise out of a dislike of existing music and the search for music that is different. Musicians interact informally in the pursuit of a genre ideal or through deliberate experimentation, learning new instruments or playing existing instruments in non-conventional ways, often producing loud and harsh sounds that maybe defined as non-music by outsiders. Or this “new”

music may combine genre features that were previously seen as distinct (pp. 701-2). Typically, avant-garde phases may be short-lived or collapse through internal disagreements. A scene-based genre is said to exist when conventions of performance and presentation become codified. A music scene will have members who cooperate, a distinctive location, an economic infrastructure and a core, dedicated and participatory audience. Social conventions, “including styles of clothes and adornment, body-type, argot, and “attitude” (p.704) are likely to serve as markers of a scenic core and allow distinctions between insiders and those on the periphery or “tourists”.

A rapid expansion in a scene and its volume of tourists may allow it to pass to an industry-phase. The organizational form of industry-based music genres is the multinational corporation, although sometimes “independent companies” can organize to compete directly with them (ibid). For genres to thrive in this context their audience must number in the hundreds of thousands. The logic of competition and market expansion lead to the simplification of genre styles and their industry naming, look and production sound, which may exaggerate a scene-based style or combine styles in ways that distort the meanings scene-participants hold. Mass mediation, publicity and marketing may also distort or exaggerate the meanings and life styles of genres, perhaps via a “moral panic” or other types of sensationalist expose that increase interest in the style. However, the rapid growth and aesthetic dilution required to increase the audience base will eventually produce a crisis for the genre, as casual fans lose interest and move on while core fans become disenchanted with the perceived adulteration of the original style. At such points of crisis, musicians may seek to revitalise the style, resulting in the formation of a new avant-garde. Or the resolution of the crisis may result in the formation of a traditionalist phase, were musicians and fans develop institutions that seek to preserve the “original” style through education, festivals and other revivalist means.

According to Lena and Peterson, heavy metal conforms to the full AgSIT trajectory, whereas thrash metal has experienced an avant-garde, scene-based, and industry-based phase but has not, to date, formed a traditionalist genre (p.708). Arguably, with the thrash revival and documentaries such as “Get Thrashed” (Ernst, 2008) as well as the success of the “Big 4” world tour, this has now occurred? Black metal, death metal and grindcore experienced an avant-garde and a scene-based phase but never became industry-based genres, mainly because “these communities purposively maintained their genre ideal, appealing to a narrow group” (p.709). In the case of death (black?) metal, “its often violent, sexist, racist, and homophobic lyrics, as well as devotees” antisocial behaviour, foreclosed any distribution by major music companies” (ibid). Nu metal, according to the authors, did not emerge from an avant-garde and developed a scene only after its industry success (p.711); a success achieved by the label Interscope (a semi-autonomous subsidiary of Universal Music), which housed Limp Bizkit, Puddle of Mud and other similar sounding nu metal acts, as well as rappers, like Eminem (Brown 2012: 11).

Table 1: Metal genre trajectories (adapted from Lena and Peterson 2008)

	Avant-garde	Scene-based	Industry-based	Traditionalist
Heavy Metal	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thrash	✓	✓	✓	
Death metal	✓	✓		
Black metal	✓	✓		
Grindcore	✓	✓		
Nu metal			✓	

But there are other interesting implications that can be drawn from the AgSIT model concerning the historical genre trajectory of heavy metal. The first is the extent to which the genre of heavy metal “most closely resembles” bebop, old-school rap, punk rock, and rockabilly “in the spectacular and contentious Industry-based phase of their trajectories”(2008:709). It could be plausibly argued that the billboard chart-topping success of “lite” or big-hair metal, in the 1980s, is evidence of this, to the extent to which a particular scene (LA glam metal) becomes defined, via industry production and promotion (especially via MTV exposure) as *the* heavy metal style, encouraging other hard-rock and metal bands to emulate it.

Lena and Peterson’s paradigmatic example here is Bebop jazz, as they comment:

Genres that experience the explosive growth and aesthetic dilution characteristic of an Industry-based genre tend to suffer a crisis as their many casual fans find a new focus of attention [...] In response, some musicians explore new ways to revitalize a genre ideal, and new Avant-garde genres emerge from these efforts. For example, Bebop artists helped to spawn Hard bop, Cool jazz, Free jazz, psychedelic jazz, and third stream genres (p. 707).

In many respects this account of Bebop lends itself to Kahn-Harris’ account of the many metal sub-genres that sprung up in reaction to the mainstreaming of heavy metal in the 1980s, including thrash, death, grindcore, black and doom. Indeed, heavy metal seems the closest example to Bebop in terms of the many sub-genres that it has spawned. However, one of the problems with Lena and Peterson’s account of heavy metal is that it is identified as an American genre. Given the focus of their study and also the fact that heavy metal, or variants of it, achieved their most sustained periods of success in the Billboard charts, particularly “classic” hard rock/metal 1969-1976, hard rock/glam metal, 1984-91 and nu metal/rap-rock, 1997-2001, this is not surprising. However, Lena and Peterson do not identify hard rock/heavy metal in the earlier period, presumably because they do not view it as an American music genre, being largely a British import (Brown 2015a). This creates problems for their account of heavy metal, since a number of the key influences on it are British glam rock and hard rock bands (Brown 2015b), as well as the New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM), 1979-1984. The role of NWOBHM and its relationship to the demise of classic hard rock/heavy metal in the UK, in the wake of punk rock, 1976-79, is also downplayed by Kahn-Harris in his account of extreme metal which, I will argue, makes it difficult to justify the inclusion of the ‘revivalist/traditionalist’ doom and power metal genres within the logic of the extreme metal scene.

Frontal assault: Evaluating the NWOBHM

In this section I want to apply Lena and Peterson’s AgSIT model to classic hard rock/heavy metal and the NWOBHM. I do so in order to explore the relationship between the two genre periods and, in particular, how the variety of sub-genre styles to be found within NWOBHM can be explained as either revivalist (that is a variant of what Lena and Peterson call “traditionalist”) or avant-garde responses to the controversial demise of heavy metal/hard rock in the UK. The results of this critical analysis not only problematizes Lena and Peterson’s account of heavy metal but also Kahn-Harris’ account of the extreme metal scene, in particular the role of commerce in the genre trajectories of

heavy metal as a genre field but also what Wallach, Berger and Greene (2011) describe as its: “complex, volatile relationship with the mainstream music industry” (p. 21).

Hard rock or heavy rock, which will be named heavy metal once it moves to an industry phase, is an avant-garde style that rejects or re-works key musical elements of the British blues and jazz scene of the mid to late 1960s; a scene that also has both an industry phase and a traditionalist or revivalist wing. Key features of the heavy rock style involve “extracting or arranging motivic figures or riffs from blues songs and using them repeatedly within a simplified and regularized harmonic and metric framework” (Headlam 1997: 59). Such riff-based compositions become distinctive because of the repeated use of “power chords” (the musical interval of the root, a perfect fifth and the octave) which owe their “presence” (sustain, overtones and residual tones) to the practice of “over-driving” (boosting signal compression via noise gates and filters) amplification equipment, such as the 100watt Marshall cabinet. Although genre pioneers, such as Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Deep Purple, are active in the blues, jazz and emergent progressive rock scene in Britain and Europe in the 1969-71 period, it is the signing to major labels, such as Atlantic, Harvest and Vertigo which rapidly accelerates the industry phase; a phase defined by the release of key genre-defining albums, such as Led Zeppelin I (March, 1969) and II (October, 1969), Black Sabbath (February, 1970), Paranoid (September, 1970) and Deep Purple In Rock (June, 1970), which achieve instant chart success, most crucially in the US Billboard Top 100. It is this stateside success coupled with industry recognition of a sizeable male, white-teen audience demographic, which leads to the development of lucrative major stadium touring, where the image of the headliner heavy metal group, cranking out ear-splitting decibels of guitar noise via a wall of Marshall amps, defines the genre in the public mind. Other genre pioneers, such as Leafhound, Judas Priest and Budgie, failed to capitalise on this market because they were signed to small or subsidiary labels (Decca Nova, Gull and MCA) that did not promote them effectively (in the case of Priest this was only rectified when they signed to CBS in 1977)!

There is some evidence to suggest that heavy metal formed a distinctive scene only after its industry phase (Straw 1993:381; Wallach and Levine 2013: 132-133). What is clear is that by 1975-76 the major genre pioneer bands were faltering and, in the case of Black Sabbath and Deep Purple, failing to make the Top 40 in the Billboard charts. In the UK, the rock press eagerly embraced the manifesto of the emergent punk rock movement, dismissing the older bands as “rock dinosaurs”. In this context, the NWOBHM (1979-84) was a revivalist movement that sought to reclaim the genre in the wake of punk. However, this act of revival led to the conscious distillation of the distinctive features of classic heavy metal style that would go on to inform the development of traditionalist genres, such as doom metal (Witchfinder General, Pagan Altar) and power metal (Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Chateaux, Cloven Hoof, Dark Star, Demon, Grim Reaper Toyko Blade, White Spirit), as well as the melodic hard rock /metal of bands such as Def Leppard, Saxon, Diamond Head, Praying Mantis and Shiva. Other avant-garde experimentations, broadly influenced by the quicker tempos of punk, were nascent examples of speed metal (Atomkraft, Jaguar, Tygers of Pan Tang, Sledgehammer and Motorhead), thrash (Avenger, Raven, Fist, Blitzkrieg, Bitches Sin, Satan, Angel Witch, Savage, Sweet Savage, Spartan Warrior, Holocaust, Venom, Vardis, and some Diamondhead tracks) and black metal (Venom, Satan, Demon and Witchfynde). Genre pioneers, acknowledged by the NWOBHM scene, such as Budgie and Judas Priest, went on to become a successful part of it.

The NWOBHM scene was very geographically dispersed, made up of hundreds of regionally located bands who self-released demos and one-off singles or were signed to very small labels, such as Neat (Newcastle), Heavy Metal (Sedgley), Ebony (Hull), Bullet, Guardian and Rondolet records (Sharpe-Young 2007:66), who focussed initially on releasing singles and then compilation albums, such as *Metal for Muthas* (1980), *New Electric Warriors*, *Lead Weight and Heavy Metal Heroes*, often through distribution deals with major labels. The scene was also supported by fanzines, notably *Metal Forces*, before being given a boost by exclusive coverage in *Sounds* national weekly rock paper, which also ran Neil Kay's alternative Soundhouse heavy metal chart. The BBC DJ Tommy Vance also gave exposure to bands via his Friday Rock show sessions; as did maverick DJ John Peel. The eventual scene-leaders self-released their own EPs, Iron Maiden's legendary Soundhouse Tapes, Def Leppard on their own label, Bludgeon Riffola, while Diamondhead recorded and sold their first (now legendary) "White album" (so-called because it came in a plain white sleeve with a signature from one member of the band on the first 1000 copies) by mail order before signing major label deals: Iron Maiden to EMI, Def Leppard to Vertigo, whereas Saxon were already signed to the French label, Carrere. Diamondhead did not secure a deal until 1983, going on to release two only moderately successful Top 40 albums. Other notable bands signed distribution deals, after some initial impact on Neat records: Tygers of Pan Tang, Fist and White Spirit for MCA, Demon to Carrere, Grim Reaper to RCA, Praying Mantis to Arista and Samson to RCA subsidiary, Gem. Venom remained with Neat with modest success and Raven, relocating to the United States at the behest of John Zazula (Combat records), signed a deal with Atlantic in 1984.

The industry-period of NWOBHM can be divide into two phases, the first 1979-83, focussing on single releases (many of which sold well but did not chart) leading to album-deals for a relatively small number of bands, most of which were unsuccessful and faded into obscurity thereafter. Notable examples of the "good but second tier" bands were Tygers of Pan Tang, Diamondhead, Tank and Samson; while legendary bands, Venom and Raven, never broke into the Top 60 (most probably because they were on Neat records (see Table.2). Yet during this period, Saxon, Iron Maiden and Def Leppard, achieved numerous Top 20 single and album successes, along with fellow-travellers, Judas Priest, Motorhead, Girlschool, Rainbow, Gillan, Whitesnake and German-imports, Scorpions.

Table 2: First Phase 1979-84 UK Chart Placings

Band	Album	UK	Label	US	Label	Year
Diamondhead	<i>Lightning to the Nations</i>	-	D.H.M.	-	Not. Iss.	1980
	<i>Borrowed Time</i>	24	MCA	-	MCA	Oct. 1982
	<i>Canterbury</i>	32	MCA	-	MCA	Sept. 1983
Raven	<i>Rock Until You Drop</i>	63	Neat	-	Discovery	Sept. 1981
	<i>Wiped Out</i>	-	Neat	-	Discovery	Sept. 1982
	<i>All For One</i>	-	Neat	-	Discovery	June 1983
	<i>Live at the Inferno</i>	-	Neat	-	Discovery	1984
Samson	<i>Head On</i>	34	Gem	-	Not. Iss.	Jun. 1980
	<i>Shock Tactics</i>	-	RCA	-	Not Iss.	May 1981
	<i>Before the Storm</i>	-	Polydor	-	Not Iss.	Nov.

						1982
	<i>Don't Get Mad – Get Even</i>	-	Polydor	-	Not Iss.	March 1984
Tank	<i>Filth Hound of Hades</i>	33	Kamaflage	-	Action	Mar. 1982
	<i>Power of the Hunter</i>	-	Kamaflage	-	This Record Co.	Oct. 1982
	<i>This Means War</i>	-	Music Nations	for	Attic	May 1983
	<i>Honour and Blood</i>	-	Music Nations	for	Attic	Dec 1984
Tygers of Pan Tang	<i>Wild Cat</i>	18	MCA	-	MCA	Jul. 1980
	<i>Spellbound</i>	33	MCA	-	MCA	April 1981
	<i>Crazy Nights</i>	51	MCA	-	MCA	Nov. 1981
	<i>The Cage</i>	13	MCA	-	MCA	Aug. 1982
Venom	<i>Welcome to Hell</i>	-	Neat	-	Combat	Jun. 1981
	<i>Black Metal</i>	-	Neat	-	Combat	Jan. 1982
	<i>At War with Satan</i>	64	Neat	-	Megaforce	1983

The second phase was translating this success to the US Billboard charts. Judas Priest first made the Top 40 and then the Top 20, as did Iron Maiden, with new singer Bruce Dickinson (from Samson)(see Table 3). Def Leppard made the Top 40 and then went on to make the no. 2 spot (preceded by a Top 20 single, Photograph). Saxon, despite having a string of Top 20 albums in the UK charts, between 1980 and 1984, were never able to translate this success to the American charts; the same was true of Motorhead. Rainbow were moderately successful, securing two Top 40 albums; however Gillan failed to chart, despite achieving four Top 20 albums in the UK (Table 3). Whitesnake gained a solitary Top 40 entry before re-emerging as a chart-topping hard rock/pop-metal band in 1987. Def Leppard, also from 1987 onwards, became a hugely successful singles and album band, as did The Scorpions, similarly combining ballads and hard rock numbers (Brown 2015b).

Table 3: Second Phase 1979-84 UK/US Chart Placings

Band	Album	UK	Label	US	Label	Year
Def Leppard	<i>On Through the Night</i>	15	Vertigo	51	Mercury	Mar. 1980
	<i>High 'N' Dry</i>	26	Vertigo	38	Mercury	Jul. 1981
	<i>Pyromania</i>	18	Vertigo	2	Mercury	March.1983
Gillan	<i>Mr. Universe</i>	11	Acrobat	-	Warners	Sept. 1979
	<i>Glory Road</i>	3	Virgin	-	Virgin RSO	Aug. 1980
	<i>Future Shock</i>	2	Virgin	-	Warners	April 1981
	<i>Double Trouble</i>	12	Virgin	-	Warners	Nov. 1981
	<i>Magic</i>	17	Virgin	-	Warners	Sept. 1982
Iron Maiden	<i>Iron Maiden</i>	4	E.M.I.	-	Harvest	April 1980
	<i>Killers</i>	12	E.M.I.	78	Harvest	Feb. 1981
	<i>Number of the Beast</i>	1	E.M.I.	33	Harvest	March 1982
	<i>Piece of Mind</i>	3	E.M.I.	14	Capitol	May 1983
	<i>Powerslave</i>	2	E.M.I.	21	Capitol	Sept. 1984
Judas Priest	<i>Unleashed in the East</i>	10	C.B.S	70	Columbia	Sept. 1979
	<i>British Steel</i>	4	C.B.S	34	Columbia	April 1980
	<i>Point of Entry</i>	14	C.B.S	39	Columbia	Feb. 1981
	<i>Screaming For Vengeance</i>	11	C.B.S	17	Columbia	Jul. 1982
	<i>Defenders of the Faith</i>	19	C.B.S	18	Columbia	Jan. 1984
Motorhead	<i>Overkill</i>	24	Bronze	-	Not. Iss.	March 1979
	<i>Bomber</i>	12	Bronze	-	Not. Iss.	Oct. 1979
	<i>Ace of Spades</i>	4	Bronze	-	Mercury	Oct. 1980
	<i>No Sleep 'til Hammer-smith</i>	1	Bronze	-	Mercury	Jun. 1981
	<i>Iron Fist</i>	6	Bronze	-	Mercury	April 1982
	<i>Another Perfect Day</i>	20	Bronze	-	Mercury	May 1983
	<i>No Remorse</i>	14	Bronze	-	Mercury	Sept. 1984

Saxon	<i>Wheels of Steel</i>	5	Carerre	-	Capitol	March 1980
	<i>Strong Arm of the Law</i>	11	Carerre	-	Capitol	Nov. 1980
	<i>Denim and Leather</i>	9	Carerre	-	Capitol	Sept. 1981
	<i>The Eagle Has Landed</i>	-	Polydor	-	Mercury	May 1982
	<i>Power and the Glory</i>	15	Polydor	-	Mercury	March 1983
	<i>Crusader</i>	18	Polydor	-	Mercury	Feb. 1984
Whitesnake	<i>Ready an' Willing</i>	6	United Artists	90	Mirage-Atlantic	June 1980
	<i>Live...In the Heart of the City</i>	5	United Artists	-	Mirage-Atlantic	Nov. 1980
	<i>Cone an' Get It</i>	2	United Artists	-	Mirage-Atlantic	April 1981
	<i>Saints an' Sinners</i>	9	Liberty	-	Geffen	Nov. 1982
	<i>Slide It In</i>	9	Liberty	40	Geffen	Feb. 1984

The success of these bands (along with Ozzy Osborne) was integral to the heavy metal genre that Lena and Peterson identify as undergoing the full AgSIT cycle. The identification of this commercial phase with “big hair” or glam metal bands, such as Motley Crue, Poison, Cinderella and Faster Pussycat, is misleading in not recognising the hard rock and heavy metal bands involved (Brown 2015 b). What is surprising is the lack of success in this market of bands such as Gillan, Motorhead, Raven and Saxon (even Whitesnake up until 1984). The common denominator is not style or dilution of style to gain success (as Lena and Peterson suggest) but whether bands are signed to a major (a distribution deal does not seem to be enough). The bands that succeed, Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Def Leppard and Whitesnake are signed to a major or a subsidiary. Only in the case of Whitesnake does this result in a dramatic adulteration of their style; Leppard had already gained early success with their ‘melodic-hard-rock’ (although this may have encouraged them further). What does seem to be a factor is the management and strategy of bands that secured major label deals, with the US managed bands, such as Metallica, Slayer and Megadeth, being successful in both US and UK markets, whereas UK bands, such as Raven and Saxon, ended up compromising their style and losing both their US and UK fan-base.

Conclusion

It maybe, as Kahn-Harris argues, that the long-term impact of the internet on the extreme metal scene will be a negative one in removing the conditions of scarcity that lead to innovation rising-up from the underground. However, the conditions of scarcity that allowed the thrash, death metal and grindcore scenes to develop new and innovative sounds was the lack of interest of major labels, allowing micro labels and entrepreneurs to develop scene-based rosters of bands that would eventually receive major label interest, as was the case with NWOBHM. All the scene leaders of thrash signed to major labels and experienced the dramatic growth and ‘aesthetic dilution’ that Lena and Peterson argue inevitably occurs. But this phase was also reached by leading death metal and grindcore bands. However, sales were not considered substantial enough and coupled with a lack of commercial compromise over production and vocal-styles, led to most bands being dropped. Black metal, with the partial exception of Cradle of Filth and Dimmu Borgir, never moved beyond a scene-based phase. So, in this respect, it is only really black metal that conforms to the scenic-characteristics identified by Kahn-Harris. Here my suggestion would be that rather than seek to generalise this model of restricted, symbolic capital accumulation from the black metal scene to metal as a whole, each phase of scene development and industry compromise should be examined in their specificity. Finally, internet and social media can lead to new kinds of innovation in metal sub-genre development, as the recent examples of

computer-tech bedroom-based genres, djent and deathcore, indicate where bands built up a net following before playing live and gaining record deals.

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