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***To Alfred Wimmer, my first friend, steady companion and  
endless supporter of my academic career.***



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## **1. Introduction**

In the 1970s, as the result of a low economy, high unemployment rate and conservative governments, an underground movement formed both in Great Britain and the United States, which became renowned as Punk. The inconvenient economic situation was the ideal breeding ground for outcasts and rebels, who found home and inspiration in abandoned squatted houses in London, and in the poor neighbourhood of the Lower East Side in New York City. From early on, Punk implied shocking elements to emphasise a distance between the sub-cultural movement and what was regarded as established social rules, behaviour and expressions. However, both scenes, disconnected by the Atlantic and by differing preconditions, used similar language features in their songs for different purposes.

In this diploma thesis, the above-mentioned sub-cultural movements are contrasted in terms of language features, and the motifs of five of the most popular Punk acts both in the United States and Great Britain are compared, contributing to the conclusion that American Punk song writers created art mostly to position themselves as outcasts. They cultivated the idea of being socially and politically different to anyone else and emphasized that difference to highlight their ideas in opposition to the abandoned social values that were regarded as a norm in the mid-1970s. British Punk, however, always had politically driven intentions within their songs, using the same language and shocking elements as American Punks to reach a different result, walking a step further and trying to imply revolutionary, humanitarian ideas in their audiences' minds.

Moreover, this thesis aims to give an overview of the various figures of speech and rhetorical devices commonly used in songs during the early days of Punk. These devices exemplified both similarities and contrasts between the scenes in order to create a clear distinction between the representatives of both movements. However, as this study is only analysing five lyrics for each movement, additional quantitative studies have to be carried out to fully represent the whole Punk genre, a task impossible to fulfil within the length restrictions of this diploma thesis. Nevertheless, this paper provides the tools to gain an insight into lyric analysis, focusing on a cultural phenomenon which imploded as rapidly as it had exploded only years before.

In order to enable a critical examination of the analysis carried out, all the analysed lyrics as well as the analysis forms can be found in the appendix of this paper.

The main analysis of the songs is preceded by a short summary of Punk's history in London and New York in the 1970s aiming to give an overview of some of the most important and interesting individuals that defined the term Punk, as well as the whole era known under the same name. However, before delving deeper into the founding factors of Punk, the next chapter discusses "language theory", explores different language features that are frequently used to change a text to create abstract language, and introduces the tools and figures of speech used for the ensuing analysis.

## **2. Methods and Language Theory**

Language can be regarded as an infinite and constantly developing system, with its changes and significant features being very much dependent on the area in which it is spoken.

Changing the writing style of a passage will change the impact of a text significantly. As mentioned by Short (1996: 80), "poets can produce surprise effects by importing into a text a word belonging to another variety of language." He goes on by claiming the effect of style variation being essential to poetry, and distinguishes the various aspects of styles into subgroups such as dialect, medium and tenor.

This paper aims to exemplify how language production functions not only as a communication tool, but as a tool to reach a creative outcome. The origin of the writer is crucial for this thesis and, therefore, it is differentiated between British and American songwriters. Several differences can be found through text analysis, which is carried out in the second section of this paper, and contrasts both American and English song writing approaches and highlights its similarities. However, as the following analysis emphasises, the main difference between British and American songwriters lies in the conveyed message, rather than in the use of different language features.



Thus, popular culture evolves and develops differently in certain areas and also offers a broad variety of features, which are additionally dependent on the particular kind of mainstream or underground culture. As already indicated, this paper outlines the discrepancies between the Punk culture in North America and Great Britain, considering factors such as language use, figurativeness, symbolic language, language ambiguity, literary style and rhetorical devices. The main focus lies on the latter mentioned concept, while introducing the cultural context which the songs were written in. Therefore, this section of theory analysis introduces certain forms of language devices, such as metaphors, which make texts unique. The aim of this thesis is to draw conclusions on the use of certain devices in connection with regional varieties, and to identify certain schemes of language use that exemplify differences between the USA and Great Britain.

Although poems and lyrics can be comprehended as being entirely contrasting in terms of motifs, language use, etc., there is the possibility of extracting a certain system of rules from produced texts, which can be regarded as instruments to measure the literacy level of each song text. The rules mentioned do not concern the content of the lyrics as such, but the rules match the use of tropes, sound patterning, etc., in order to classify and characterise the text. These tropes are factors that shape the way how to express feelings and knowledge in an abstract or ambiguous way and encourage the critical reader to consider the comprehended words. Moreover, they help to reflect on whether the conveyed message was really grasped by the audience, and whether the message is appealing to the listeners' expectations and experiences, and therefore can be regarded as authentic.

The rhetorical devices and language features presented in the following chapters are major devices to shape a text in order to achieve a higher level of abstract language. Moreover, they are used to change a casual text into an abstract lyric with a clearly defined message. There are a high number of rhetorical devices known in language analysis, however, considering the preferred figures of speech within the analysed lyrics, this paper only introduces and focuses on specific tropes and language possibilities used to create figurative speech and abstract language. Tropes are based on different language production realisations, with one being the production of sound and the emphasis on certain sound clusters, consonants, vowels, etc. One of

the most common and familiar rhetorical devices includes features concerning sound patterning, which will be discussed in the following subcategory.

## 2.1) Sound Patterning

Sound patterning is a crucial factor when creating and analysing poetry. Two lines of Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" (1599: 18) found in Thornborrow & Wareing (1998: 31) feature perfect examples of sound patterning as a rhetorical device:

Come live with me and be my love  
And we will all the pleasures prove

In the next chapters, the preceding instance is used to exemplify different sound patterning.

### a) Rhyme

Possibly the best-known attribute of a poem for a broader audience is the sound pattern known as end rhyme. It implies a certain quality, which is the inclusion of at least two final sounds, and identifies the relationship between words, which are in that case connected with sound patterning. Thornborrow & Wareing (1998: 25) conclude that "(a) rhyme occurs when the two final sounds in a syllable are identical." The example "I rumble, tumble and stumble out of the train." shows the three rhymes "rumble", "tumble" and "stumble", three words that share a very similar form, only differing in the first consonant (cluster). The exemplified words are polysyllabic words. That is to say, they contain of at least two syllables, in contrast to monosyllabic words, which consist of only one syllable.

Furthermore, a distinction between a perfect rhyme and a half rhyme can be made: a half rhyme functions similar to the perfect rhyme, but does not consist of identical final sounds, but merely similar sounding syllables, such as "us" and "dust" in *the Clash's* later discussed "London Calling". In the example by Christopher Marlowe

which is mentioned above the ending sounds differ slightly and, therefore, can be regarded as half rhymes as well.

#### b) Alliteration

Another common trope is alliteration, which dates as far back as ancient Greek and Roman literature, and has survived the development of language as a crucial literary tool. This rhetorical device presents connected words (such as collocations) that feature the same initial consonant or consonant clusters, according to Thornborrow & Wareing (see 1998: 31). As an example, “bloody brutal bastards” would not entirely fit the requirements of alliteration, as the first consonant clusters differ (bl, br, b).

However, a more suitable instance can be shown within the example chosen by the author of this thesis: “Bookworms bowl busily.” In contrast to the first example, the first consonants are not part of a different consonant cluster and, therefore, can be regarded as pure alliteration.

Marlowe’s example also includes a pure alliteration (“me” and “my”) and one with varying consonant clusters (pleasures and prove). However, alliteration is not the only sound patterning form which is used in text production and analysis.

#### c) Assonance

Another important example is the use of assonance, which “describes syllables with a common vowel”. (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998: 31) In other words, assonance is similar to alliteration, even though alliteration only functions with equal first consonants and assonance does not implicitly require the same consonants, but a multiple occurrence of the same vowel in different words. In this particular example, assonance is indicated in the words “live”, “with” and “will”, as well as “come” and “love”.

#### d) Reverse Rhyme

Similar to assonance, consonance concerns the use of equal syllables (in contrast to similar vowels), which can be found at the end of a word. In the example, Marlowe similarly uses consonance, an analysis of the two-liner reveals the use of this trope in the words “live”, “love”, “prove”, as well as “will” and “all”. However, the use of sound patterning extends further, with the combination of alliteration and assonance, for instance, being known as reverse rhyme.

The definition of reverse rhyme as a trope can be summed up as follows: words which are connected through sound patterning and share certain attributes, such as a similar first consonant and vowel. In comparison to rhyme, which was introduced first in this chapter, reverse rhyme does not share the same ending sound. It is described as “syllables sharing the vowel and initial consonant (rather than the vowel and the final consonant” (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998: 31)).

#### e) Pararhyme

In contrast to reverse rhyme, pararhymes share both the initial and final consonant of a word. The example, ‘live’ and ‘love’ can be found in the presented two lines from Christopher Marlowe’s poem “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”. As illustrated in the two pararhymes, the vowel is not required to be the same to be regarded as pararhyme.

#### f) Repetition

The final sound patterning feature is repetition, which is not present in the given instance by Marlowe, but is a very prominent method to highlight a central line, to strengthen a statement, or to exemplify ambiguity.

### g) Anaphora

An anaphora is not entirely bound to rules concerning sounds, such as repeating first consonants, the same ending syllables, etc. However, it is a rhetorical device, which creates a rhythm by means of repetition, such as the device mentioned above. To go into more detail, an anaphora uses the reoccurrence of certain words or collocations in order to emphasize a particular meaning and establish the writer's priorities within the text. The repetition of the beginning of a sentence, such as the one taken from *Continental's* song "Into View" (2012), which is illustrated below, is a good example for the appropriate use of an anaphora, taking into consideration that the writer speaks of the chance of a bright future for him, highlighting that he is talking about the possibility rather than taking the used information as a fact:

It's looking like I am going back to school.  
It's looking like I combine with you.  
It's looking like a fairytale come true.  
It's looking like I never have to sing the blues.

One of the most widely recognised speeches in the English language, Martin Luther King's "I have a dream", also makes use of anaphora. Another, also widely and better known instance of anaphora is the Catholic rosary, which continually follows the same scheme and, thus, emphasises the speaker's faith.

### h) Inversion

The restructuring of a sentence, including a switch of the typical form of a simple statement (Subject – Verb – Object) to a different one, results not only in the already mentioned switch of form, but also in meaning. In inflected languages, inversion is used in everyday language production to formulate questions and orders. Within poetic text production, however, it additionally offers the possibility to emphasize a certain topic. Shakespeare's "How beauteous mankind is!" (Shakespeare, 2008: V, I), for instance, puts the emphasis of the sentence on the human beauty by switching the words of a casually stated "Mankind is beauteous." By switching the words and with the addition of "how", an outcry of joy is created, praising the beauty of mankind,

and beauty itself moves into the centre of the recipient's attention. Furthermore, inversion is not only a rhetorical way to create a poetic effect, but is similarly used by the next two devices introduced to stress an important topic within a text.

#### i) Rhetorical question

A rhetorical question is a typical feature ending a statement with emphasis. It is structured like a typical question, requiring the recipient to react according to the speech acts defined by Searle (1972). However, the rhetorical question can be regarded as a statement itself, underlining the line of argumentation stated beforehand. In contrast to a question commonly uttered in order to receive a response, or a reaction, it utters the answer to the question already, or does not even require one. In a discussion, the rhetorical question is also frequently used to emphasize what was already mentioned. In *Rancid's* "Who Would've Thought?" (1998), the rhetorical question is the song title itself. Additionally, it projects the positive light the singer perceives, by using anaphora:

Who would've thought that dreams come true?  
And who would've thought I ended up with you?  
And who would've thought what they said was true?  
But it was and you are, light and darkness coming through.

The singer is not expressing the need for the recipient to answer his question, as it is already answered: Nobody could have guessed his luck, according to the singer Tim Armstrong. The repetition of the question highlights the author's overwhelming feelings.

Overall, sound patterning is a crucial element to take language and modify it with the purpose of creating worthwhile art, which features abstract elements through modification and adaption. While the following chapters will introduce more tropes and rhetorical elements which present the content of poetry, sound patterning creates forms of poetry by external elements, such as the arrangement of words, phrases, and lines. It is putting emphasis on how an utterance sounds, rather than including the conveyed message in its attempt to shape language into an abstract structure for poetic purposes.

## **2.2) Metre and Sound**

In addition to the methods of language manipulation in poetry, various ways of presenting and structuring the text in lines are used to influence language perception. Within the next paragraphs, the most important and most frequently appearing metre forms are exemplified and discussed. Initially, various reasons for the use of metre and sound within poetry are presented, to illustrate the several aspects poets take into consideration while creating meaning through poetry.

Primarily, the rearrangement of a text is most likely to achieve a pattern, which is regarded as convenient to listen to. According to Thornborrow & Wareing (see 1998, 43), listeners are able to enjoy repetition, such as the various forms of sound patterning, which were already discussed in the last chapter, and therefore, are more likely to enjoy text production with certain metric features.

Moreover, it is claimed that language is always related to its social surroundings. The different use of certain forms is not only directly related to language rules, but also with the most popular way a text is presented in a certain era. The use of a Dadaistic style, for example, would never have been possible in the Shakespearean era, not only due to society's conventions at that time, but also because the period's writing tendencies moved in a very different direction. As a result, poetry is not only a certain way of viewing language abstractly, but a reflection of the society and time it is set and written in.

Taking the last argument into consideration, the justifiable claim may occur that language can only develop by trying out new styles and approaches of writing. Nevertheless, this claim does not necessarily disprove the aforementioned statement, but adds another facet to the options of creating language for differing purposes. In other words, language creation can be perceived as language innovation, as means of playing and experimenting with language as the result of curiosity, principles, or convictions.

A similar intention is the use of certain metric and sound features to demonstrate the linguistic competence of the writer. Thus, the demonstration of language skills can be

compared to exhibiting writing talent. According to Thornborrow & Wareing (see 1998: 44), for instance, the adeptness of Welsh writers in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, which was purposely reflected in their complicated text structures, was crucial to increase employment chances as a laureate of the Welsh aristocracy. Therefore, the structures were written to be intentionally detailed and complicated.

Unlike this “political” reason for the use of specific metre and sound patterns, language structure can be exploited to achieve a particular effect, to emphasize a feeling, for instance the phenomenon of falling in love, by altering rhyme patterns or line structures.

#### a) Couplets

Couplets are a form of language that represent two lines of metre which are normally bound to each other by rhyme. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2015), a couplet is “a pair of end-rhymed lines of verse that are self-contained in grammatical structure and meaning.” Thornborrow & Wareing (1998: 39) additionally describe the importance of couplets in English poetry, reaching its peak in popularity in the eighteenth century.

#### b) Quatrains

Couplets are composed of two lines of text, while quatrains, another common way to express poetic thoughts and reflections, consist of four lines. Looking at the best-known quatrains, a certain rhyme scheme is not obligatory; however, the most common rhyme schemes are ABAB, AAAA, or AABB, the last two examples consisting of two couplets. Nevertheless, nine more rhyme patterns are possible when using quatrains. The following example illustrates the first verse of a song, consisting of the typical structure of two stanzas, and is taken from *the King Blues'* song “Set The World On Fire”, released in 2011. The rhyme pattern is marked next to each line:



I wake up in the morning, take big pharma lozenges,	A
Swallowing the juice of Israeli blood oranges,	A
Then I sit down and read the newspaper,	B
It tells me the enemy and lets me know the saviour,	B
This week's flavour, Asylum seekers,	C
As I lace up my blood-stained sneakers,	C
I turn on the television, what have I got?	D
The war rages on and it's only 8 o'clock	D

As already mentioned, the verse consists of two stanzas, which are quatrains in this case. Rhyming couplets AA and CC can be regarded as true rhymes, while the words “newspaper” and “saviour” conclude as imperfect rhymes and the use of “got” and “clock” can be characterised as assonance.

### c) Blank Verse

Particularly in Shakespearian times, blank verse was a popular convention. It usually consists of an iambic pentameter which is a metrical line consisting of consistently switching stressed and unstressed syllables and lines that do not rhyme. A very well-known example is John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), a highly complex poem blank verse.

### d) Sonnet

Unlike smaller rhyming language units, such as the couplet, which consists only of two lines, the sonnet's basic form is created with fourteen lines and a rhyming pattern as indicated in the following *Sonnet 138* (qut. in Bate & Rasmussen, 2009), a particularly noted example of William Shakespeare:

When my love swears that she is made of truth,	A
I do believe her though I know she lies,	B
That she might think me some untutored youth,	A
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.	B
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,	C
Although she knows my days are past the best,	D
Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue,	C
On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed.	D
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?	E
And wherefore say not I that I am old?	F

O love's best habit is in seeming trust,	E
And age in love loves not to have years told.	F
Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,	G
And in our faults by lies we flattered be.	G

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11.2.2015), the first sonnets were written in Italy in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Several rhyme patterns are possible within its fourteen lines, and the most common English sonnet, which is also known as the Shakespearean sonnet, consists of three quatrains and a couplet, and is exemplified above. "Sonnets, which consist of three quatrains and a rhyming couplet usually end with a reversal or a challenge to the preceding ideas in the final two lines." (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998: 41) In the example presented, the first three quatrains present the overall motifs and theme, the idea of two lovers refusing to discuss their real age and lying about it. Also, an imperfect rhyme in the couplet B ("lies" - "subtleties") can be found. The final couplet offers a conclusion and an explanation of their lies.

Different rhyme schemes place sonnets within two subcategories, one being the already named Shakespearean sonnet, and the other one being the Italian, also known as Petrarchan sonnet, which typically follows the rhyme pattern ABBA ABBA CDE CDE.

#### e) Free Verse

A more radical version of the blank verse is free verse, also known as *vers libre*, which "uses little or no conventional rhyme or metre." (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998: 41) According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (12.2.2015), poetic texts employing free verse are "poetry organized to the cadences of speech and image patterns rather than according to a regular metrical scheme. It is free only in a relative sense." Moreover, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* addresses free verse as a modern way of expressing art, which

eliminates much of the artificiality and some of the aesthetic distance of poetic expression and substitutes a flexible formal organization suited to the modern idiom and more casual tonality of the language.

In other words, free verse is a way to use common and authentic language structure to express art in a modern context, taking aspects of everyday language and presenting an abstract idea with it. As a result, the verses are more closely related to simple language structures.

#### f) Limericks

While free verse, which was discussed in the last chapter, does not follow language conventions at all, besides the rule of not following any clearly defined rules, limericks consist of five lines. They follow the rhyme pattern AABBA and according to Thornborrow & Wareing (see 1998: 42), limericks are anapaestic, which means two unstressed syllables are followed by a stressed one and the first, third and fifth lines consist of three feet, while the second and fourth lines consist of two feet. As claimed by critics, limericks are more frequently found in newspapers, often conveying a humorous message.

In the previous subchapters, several conventional forms of poetry were introduced. The various possibilities of metre and form are considered in the survey of the analysis of lyrics, in order to categorise the texts analysed and define them according to the rules and conventions associated with certain forms. Through the clarification of the terms within this chapter, an unambiguous categorisation is possible. Moreover, taking the relevance of each described metre into consideration, it can be argued that popular culture prefers the metrical forms of free verse, blank verse, couplets and especially quatrains, an assumption proven to be correct not only in the ensuing analysis, but while attentively listening to any radio station airing pop music.

### **2.3.) Semantics**

Semantics is the study of word meaning, which discusses the connections and relations between words. As Thornborrow and Wareing (1998: 82) put it, “(s)emantics considers how the meanings of words in a language relate to each other: the system of meanings into which words fit and by taking their place in the system, acquire their meanings.” Therefore, this chapter focuses on the study of meaning and how it influences the creation of poetry and lyrics.

Meaning is always connected and limited by language. A very well-known aspect of semantics is the Sapir-Whorf-Hypothesis, a study written by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, which claimed that reality conceived individually is always dependent on the target language. As an example, both authors of the study mentioned the various names for snow in Inuit languages. However, the instance was unfounded and misinterpreted by the Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf. Over the last decades, the hypothesis has been critiqued frequently and does not represent the whole linguistic truth, nevertheless, it illustrates clearly the importance of meaning and how it is influenced by our language reality. While analysing or producing language, so-called lexical gaps can occur, which represent the empty space a language offers, when a word is used to describe something in one language, but lacks even a single synonym in another language. For example, the word *Kaiserschmarrn* is a culinary Austrian specialty, which is described as “shredded pancake-style mixture combined with sugar and dried fruit“ in the PONS dictionary (13.2.2015). There is no single word translating *Kaiserschmarrn* into English and therefore, a meaning gap occurs.

The field of semantics is very broad. However, for this thesis, only certain areas of the semantic ties between words apply to the songs and can be used for an analysis. One crucial aspect which can be taken into consideration for this thesis is the semantic field, which focuses on meaning overlaps. For instance, the terms *city* and *town* partially overlap in regards to their meaning, as they involve a large group of people, a high number of houses, streets, urban surroundings, etc. However, they cannot be regarded as equal, because while the term *city* is related to *town*, the latter term usually signifies a smaller community than the former word.

In case of a general meaning overlap, the relationship of such words is known as synonymy. For this thesis, the use of synonyms is very interesting. The frequent use of different words which carry the same meaning signifies a wide vocabulary range and language control and, in many cases, increases the “value” of a text. However, the frequent use of the same word can also have a very positive, highlighting effect, as already discussed in the chapter sound patterns, concerning repetition and anaphora.

While the analysis of the use and frequency of synonyms is of importance, their counterparts, so-called antonyms are similarly important. Synonyms are words with the same literal meaning, antonyms, however, are words with the exact opposite literal meaning and belong to the category of opposites. According to Thornborrow & Wareing (see 1998: 85), there is a distinction between comparative and absolute opposites. Absolute opposites are words that prevent their opposites to occur at the same time or context. As an example, the opposites *night* and *day* can be named. When it is night, there is no possibility that it is day at the same time (leaving geographical phenomena aside). Thus, absolute opposites exclude each other. Comparative opposites, however, do not imply this restriction. Looking at the two opposites *young* and *old* in order to exemplify the term, it is clear that the terms are not final and contradictory to each other. While a twenty-seven year old student, who had just given birth to her first child, can be a young mother, she could also be viewed as an old student. Comparative opposites are always dependent on the point of view from which they are presented, while absolute opposites cannot be changed through a switch of perspective.

Synonyms are a useful device when creating poetry, in order to describe or present a certain area of interest in great detail, without repeating oneself. A switch between words and their antonyms can, however, emphasize uncertainty, insecurity, or a volatile nature.

Categorisation is another central aspect of semantics, a system where certain words belong to particular categories or sub-categories. The term describing a category is defined superordinate, while subordinate terms are called hyponyms. For example, the word *plant* is the superordinate, which means it describes a category as a whole. Both *tree* and *vegetable* fit into the category *plant* as hyponyms, describing a certain form of the superordinate. Nevertheless, the two instances can be regarded as superordinate too, including hyponyms such as *oak*, *chestnut*, *spruce*, etc. for the category *tree*, as well as hyponyms such as *tomato*, *eggplant*, or *potato* for the superordinate *vegetable*.

Accumulation, a rhetorical device, which is closely related to the use of super- and subordinates, is especially interesting for the analysis of lyrics. Summed up, it is the

frequent use of certain subordinates within a certain text instead of using the superordinate repeatedly, which would put some emphasis on the repeated phrase, rather than using a great variety of words to express the same meaning. In the latter case, words associated with the superordinate are used and therefore bring on associations of the superordinate by naming certain hyponyms.

For the analysis of poetry, the distinction between subordinates and super-ordinates is of interest, as the analyst can distinguish whether the writer is using broader terms in order to generalise, or more concrete terms in order to specify.

## **2.4. Contextual Meaning**

Semantics, the study of meaning, helps the participants in a discourse to make sense of what is said word by word. However, in order to achieve full knowledge about a written or spoken utterance, contextual knowledge is crucial. Context may be described as known information about the addressed topic. Such knowledge is dependent on the individuals confronted with a text and varies due to differences in cultural background, experiences, etc. "Kontext bezieht sich auf mehrere Ebenen, die für die Interpretation einer kompletten Äußerung und ihrer Bestandteile relevant sind." (Löbner, 2003: 73) This implies that "experiencing" a text is different for each reader and listener and dependent on knowledge of the world. Thus, context is a matter of interpretation and related to the point of view of the person interpreting. The utterance "My car is parked around the corner," for instance, might be received differently by each person comprehending the statement. The next paragraph illustrates the various ways of contextually interpreting the term *car*.

First of all, the speaker assumes that the receiver of the message knows what a car is. Although it is highly likely in the present time that the recipient is familiar with the term "car" semantically, there is still the possibility for interpretation in this statement. What type and brand is the car? What colour? A recipient not familiar with the speaker is not able to answer this question, therefore, the knowledge of the speaker's car is only limited, and the perception of its characteristics is only guessed at and indefinite. However, a personal friend of the speaker may know more details about the car and its characteristics. Thus, the perception of the utterance is a

different one. Nevertheless, contextual knowledge does not stop here. There is the possibility that the speaker ironically refers to his/her bike as a car, or that he or she does not own a vehicle and only lying to the recipient of the message in order to avoid embarrassment (if not owning a car is embarrassing from the angle of the discourse participants).

The example discussed clarifies that context is always connected with the perception of the world and knowledge concerning information surrounding an utterance. “Ein zusammengesetzter Ausdruck wird auf der Ebene der Äußerungsbedeutung immer so interpretiert, dass seine Teile zueinander und er selbst in den Kontext passt.” (Löbner, 2003: 74) In other words, the human mind relates the parts of an utterance to contextual knowledge. Moreover, the mind compares the text’s internal meaning to the statement given, in order to make sense of a statement in constant selection and rearrangement of prior knowledge interacting with the perception of new utterances and its contribution to expand the contextual interpretation possibilities. In the case of this thesis and its analysis, contextual knowledge is not only crucial on a sentence-level, but on a text-level.

In produced language, words can be found which refer to a certain person, event, etc. and are commonly known as deictics, while the process of referring to someone or something is called deixis. Without context, the direction the references refer to is blank, but by adding personal knowledge to the reference, an interpretation is feasible and helps to connect an otherwise loosely knit language construct.

Deictics are a crucial feature of language, but only within a certain knowledge frame, which helps the recipient to make sense of a specific utterance. The sentence “We will be here until tomorrow,” can be used in a familiar environment, e.g. uttering the phrase during a family meeting, while the partner is also present. In this case, *we* refers to the person talking and his/her partner, *here* refers, for instance, to the parents' home and *tomorrow* obviously describes the following day. Thus, the instance shows perfectly, how deixis can be used without opening any new questions concerning comprehension. However, if the sentence is not spoken, but found written on a piece of paper on a street, the context is completely missing, which means the recipient has not enough information about the author of the text and, therefore,

cannot definitely know what people are meant by *we*, as there may be no persons in sight who are related to the creation of the text, what place is meant by *here*, as the piece of paper could have been blown to the destination by the wind, and what day is meant by *tomorrow*, because the date the text was written is not apparent.

However, leaving deictic expressions open, such as in the last example, can create a knowledge gap, which can be utilised in the interpretation of lyrics, which is something many writers aim at. Socio-critical texts in particular include the recipient by including the reader, or listener by creating a *we* group, which creates a certain *us* versus *them* distinction. The following example of *Jake & The Jellyfish's* song *Dotted Line* (2013) may illustrate the described identification process:

We ain't no dotted line, we ain't no "please cut here",  
no, we won't stand in line to let you drag on what we fear.

This instance perfectly sums up the intention of the writer to create a communal *we*, in order to identify with the creator of the text for a higher purpose. In the example, the author shows an awareness of people being used as workers rather than as creative individuals and criticizes the lack of consideration of their freedom in people's development. Being bound to surviving rather than losing themselves in a process solely for the purpose of creating something worthwhile. By addressing himself, but also the listener with a *we*, the author automatically creates an opposing side to the critiqued social and political processes. For the analysis of this thesis, it is crucial to be aware of the reasons for using deictic expressions.

Semantically, certain words do not only have one, but multiple meanings. The word *bank*, for instance, can refer to a financial institute, or to the outer limits of a river or lake. Without any given context, stating the introduced word would not allow the recipient to be sure what sort of *bank* is meant. In case words have two or more meanings, they are referred to as ambiguous, and are also often used in poetry to create ambiguity in order to create language with room for interpretation. Thus, a closer look at possible ambiguity is included in the analysis.



### a) Ellipsis

An ellipsis is a rhetorical device which plays with the contextual knowledge and presumptions the recipient carries with him/her, by leaving out certain parts of the text in order to stimulate interpretation. Glück (2000: 2568) claims: "Elliptische Auslassungen lassen sich mit Hilfe von sprachlichem oder situativem Kontext rekonstruieren." In other words, context can be guessed by the recipient when considering the situated environment as well as the linguistic environment. By leaving out certain words, phrases, or sentences, the recipient is required to analyse the text in more detail, a process which can occur consciously or unconsciously.

Moreover, ellipsis is used to highlight certain important parts of a text, which can make certain sentences appear ungrammatical, when taken from an everyday context. The simple question: "What?", for instance, can be an indicator that the discourse partner wants to know why his or her opposite wears a sad look on their faces. "What is the matter, my dear?" could be a possible utterance, which is simplified without causing any ambiguity for the speaker, resulting in a simple "What?" As there has to be a reason why the person asked looks sad, it can be assumed that he or she understands the question out of a specific context, considering the observer's attention and the discourse partner's own mood, which caused the sad expression to appear in the first place.

### b) Metonymy

Contextual knowledge can cause a speaker to switch certain clauses with different ones, which are also connoted and related to the same topic. Most likely, instead of using the conventional expression, the same expression is substituted with a superordinate, another hyponym, or an item, which is connected semantically to the original phrase, or word. One very substantial example is the utterance: "The White House has announced several changes." taken from Yule (2006: 245), who describes metonymy as followed: "a word used in place of another with which it is closely connected in everyday experience". Of course, a house, not even the White House, is able to make a call. However, the collocation is used to refer to the people

working in the White House. Thus, claiming that the headquarters of the President of the United States are calling is a reference to the president himself.

## **2.5. Literal and Figurative Meaning**

Poetry in general and song lyrics in particular are regarded as special forms of text which deviate from common spoken language, as language is used to express an idea in an abstract way. However, the language used by the writer can be categorized again, dividing the poetic output in literal and figurative meaning.

Firstly, literal meaning is basically the original meaning of a word. Thornborrow and Wareing (see 1998: 95) state that the first meaning of a word in the literal sense is the definition of the same word which can be found in a dictionary. For instance, the literal use of the word *pig*, can be found when referring to the mammal known as *pig*, a certain animal with specific behaviour. Pigs are connoted with particular negative attributes, for example, they are known to smell unpleasant and to make a mess. Nevertheless, these connotations are not part of the literal meaning, but the contextual knowledge about them can be used for figurative meaning, which is the representation of attributes conveyed by the figurative usage of words. The foregoing information about figurative meaning implies that a picture which has certain similarities to what is meant initially by the text author, can be used to mirror the intentional meaning of the message in an abstract way. This process is frequently used in everyday speech, but even more frequently in poetic texts as enabler of abstract language.

Considering the example *pig*, which was used to illustrate literal meaning, an abstract, figurative way to use the word would be the sentence “You eat like a pig.” The sentence does not necessarily refer to the addressed person as the animal which has snout, grunts and lives in a pigpen. Instead, it establishes similarities between the person and the pig’s way of eating, and is used to ascertain unappetizing dining habits of the same by comparing it to a mammal, which is known to eat especially disgustingly in our society. Therefore, the visual example of a pig is taken to put emphasis on what is implied. Moreover, the use of figurative language offers room for interpretation, as the meaning of the utterance always depends on the

contextual knowledge of the recipient. This interdependence can be exemplified by moving the example sentence into a different context.

When the same utterance is stated in a culture, where pigs are regarded as holy, or especially valuable, the statement can be made in order to compliment the recipient, rather than criticizing his/her eating behaviour. Overall, it can be concluded that literal language is used to explicitly express meaning without leaving room for interpretation by the listener. In contrast, the figurative usage of language, which is also known as trope, allows the recipient to interpret what has been said or written individually. As a result, tropes can be frequently found in poetry. Within the following passages, the most common tropes, otherwise known as rhetorical devices, are introduced and later implied into the analysis of lyrics.

#### a) Metaphor

The device “metaphor” can be regarded as the most common and crucial device within poetry and songs, as it enables a writer to illustrate an idea through picturing a symbolic image connected with the idea. A connection between the image drawn and the initial message has to be made by the recipient and leaves space for interpretation, which creates a certain scope of freedom in terms of reading and understanding a text. Unlike a simile, which compares an object with another to illustrate a connection, a metaphor is used to substitute for one object with the other, leaving more room for interpretation.

#### b) Antithesis

Antithesis can be regarded as “a figure of speech involving a seeming contradiction of ideas, words, clauses, or sentences within a balanced grammatical structure,” according to the *Columbia Encyclopaedia* (1993). In other words, two opposing ideas consisting of grammatically similar constructions are contrasted, whereby the elements of the opponents are already contradictory. For instance, in *the Clash*’s “London Calling”, which will be discussed in further detail in chapter 4, an antithesis is constructed in the line “The ice age is coming, the sun’s zooming in” (9). The main clauses are put in a row, with the first indicating that the world is going through a new

ice age, which will cause temperatures to fall. However, the second main clause introduces the idea of the world's temperature rising, which results in the presentation of two contradictory ideas with the same grammatical structure and tense. In this instance, *the Clash's* lyricist Joe Strummer conveys the message of mass hysteria publicly shared in different newspapers in the United Kingdom via antithesis.

### c) Hyperbole

Translated from Greek, hyperbole means exaggeration, which is basically already a very short definition of the trope. By stating an exaggerating utterance, emphasis is put on the state of a person or object. The sentence "I cannot live without you," for instance, is a very drastic example. By claiming that living is simply not possible without the addressed person, the language producer states his or her dependence on his/her counterpart. Of course, life does not end when a couple separates. However, a strong utterance highlights the importance of the recipient to the language producer.

### d) Irony

According to Fowler (2010), "Irony is a form of utterance that postulates a double audience, consisting of one party that hearing shall hear & shall not understand, & another party that, when more is meant than meets the ear, is aware both of that more & of the outsiders' incomprehension." In other words, something is said, while the complete opposite is meant. For example, when Aldous Huxley took Shakespeare's utterance "Oh brave new world, how beauteous mankind is!", which was already discussed when introducing inversion in the chapter 2.1, and puts it in a different context, namely the dystopian future of his work "Brave New World", he indicates irony by doing so. A fully automatized, genetically modified, drug-addicted society, unable to love or feel loved, is basically the opposite of what can be regarded as a "Brave New World". Therefore, irony is a perfect way to criticize certain conditions. However, without knowing the context of the utterance, it can be difficult to spot irony. Nevertheless, there are several signals which can indicate the trope, beginning with facial expressions and gestures.

For the example used in this case, a recipient without any background knowledge about Aldous Huxley's works might be unable to spot the irony of the book title from early on. However, by reading the plot summary at the back, the title's irony becomes obvious. Moreover, irony can be categorized as situational, dramatic, and verbal.

Situational irony, for instance,

is most broadly defined as a situation where the outcome is incongruous with what was expected, but it is also more generally understood as a situation that includes contradictions or sharp contrasts (Elleström, 2002: 51).

This identifies certain situations as ironic, mainly because of contradictory statements, rather than aiming at an ironic outcome. In contrast to situational irony, dramatic or tragic irony, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2010), is

a literary technique, originally used in Greek tragedy, by which the full significance of a character's words or actions is clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character.

Once again, an example out of Shakespeare's works seems especially fitting to illustrate tragic irony's full meaning. In his work *Romeo & Juliet*, the two lovers find themselves in an ironic situation at the very ending of the play. Juliet knowingly drinks poison to make everyone believe her to be dead in order to escape with Romeo from the family feud. However, her lover does not know anything about the plan and finds her lifeless body, a discovery which causes him to take his life. In the meantime, Juliet awakes from her deathlike sleep, finds her lover lying dead next to her and takes her life too.

## **2.6. Register**

As this thesis focuses on the comparison between British and American texts, the use of register can be regarded as one of the main analysis issues. By looking at the register, differentiations between the extent of the use of certain slang words, regional language features (such as dialect phrases), or typical British and American words should be made, including the reflection on the possible mixture between regionally known vocabulary, or the inclusion of loan words from other languages.

### **3. A Short History of Punk**

Punk is a social phenomenon whose birthdate and origin cannot be defined with certainty. However, experts consider two movements to have been the catalyst in forming a completely new approach to music, lifestyle, introducing a new way of living, opposing social behaviour in the late 60s and 70s, neglecting pop star attitude, and addressing issues which have not been discussed in popular culture before.

When the hippie movement reached its peak in 1968, slowly, but steadily a counter-movement evolved both in England and the United States. This movement presented a darker way of critically looking at political processes, rejecting the optimistic belief in peace and love as solution of the world's ongoing problems, finding its way into the mainstream media in the middle of the 1970s. All of a sudden, Punk exploded and was discussed all over the world, just to implode as suddenly as it had evolved.

Overall, it can be said that the rise of the punk movement is directly related to the society's processes at the time. People were disillusioned by the helplessness of the hippie movement opposing the American President at the time Richard Nixon and by the horrors of the Vietnam war. However, in contrast to concrete political aims of the British punk rock movement, which will be discussed later in this paper, the motivation of the creation of Punk Rock music in the USA was to create a minimalistic art form, shocking for the sake of raising awareness of themselves as artists, rather than changing the world for the better with music.

While the members of the American Punk movement presented themselves as anti-establishment artists who rejected the current system of values and tried to create shock moments to gain attention and to distance themselves from conventions, the British Punk movement used the same shock methods to advertise their own causes as well as political beliefs.

No matter which seed of Punk started to grow first, both cultures started forming in the urban jungle of New York City and of London and introduced the public to a new lifestyle, combining both literary and critical texts with aggressive and fast music, changing the musical landscape forever. This thesis focuses on the two strains of

Punk which evolved in the United States of America and England, and will outline their differences by giving an overview on the history of both subcultural trends and analysing and contrasting song lyrics which are regarded as typical for each of the competing movements. Furthermore, the thesis will illustrate and exemplify the applied rhetorical devices which result in a text's literacy. In the analytical part of the thesis, five song lyrics of each movement, featuring its most representative artists according to a critical consensus, will be analysed.

As a result, this thesis points out the range of possibilities of Punk in writing. Also, the thesis exemplifies motivation and dependence on Punk's original environment, illustrating differences in tropes, topics and prominent writing practices. First of all, however, the two Punk movements, namely the ones in the United Kingdom and the United States, are discussed in the next chapter, beginning in New York City of the 1960s.

### **3.1. The American Punk Movement**

In the mid-1960s, when the hippie movement was yet to reach its peak, a counter-movement without a name was slowly forming in New York City. At that time, parts of Manhattan were haunted by social problems including drug addiction, prostitution and homelessness. The surroundings of certain districts, such as the Lower East Side, or Greenwich Village, developed into the centre of attention in the regional art scene, as the cost of housing was very inexpensive there and the eye of the law not present at all times, allowing its residents and visitors to explore forbidden homosexuality and drug abuse.

These areas were suitable for those rejected by society, people who felt and dressed differently in order to distance themselves from other communities. Ronnie Cutrone, artist and assistant of Andy Warhol, for instance, claims: "Everybody was totally straight and then there was us – this pocketful of nuts. We had long hair, and we'd get chased down the block." (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 17) Certain attributes became significant in defining oneself as different, such as black clothing, a more negative attitude towards life, which was the result of a harder upbringing too. Violence played a crucial part in the developments to come, and people involved in the new

movement, both artists and fans, used this new form of music as an outlet for tension that had been building up for years. It took some time to develop this currently unknown genre of music to express the discontent with the social situation, with the political processes and the lack of perspectives. All of a sudden, a seemingly dangerous environment was created, where disillusion was not only addressed, but presented as a lifestyle tightly connected to music, and therefore it was outcasts who found themselves a new home within a newly created and exciting scene.

It was wall to fucking wall of people (...) and Townsend started smashing his twelve-string Rickenbacker. It was my first experience of total pandemonium. (...) The audience weren't cheering; it was more like animal noises, howling. (...) Never had I seen people driven so nuts – that music could drive people to such dangerous extremes. That's when I realized, This is definitely what I wanna do. (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 41ff)

All of a sudden, being different from the mainstream did not seem to be a disadvantage (even though the mainstream public did see the same matter quite differently), but it created an environment of cohesion, in which people tried to outdo others by presenting themselves as even more extraordinary, a development which later resulted in the invention of glam rock, as well as in the first attributes that defined Punks as such – being different.

It was in the surroundings of Andy Warhol's *Factory* in New York, where the development of a new subculture began, when Warhol's partners Paul Morrissey and Gerard Malanga discovered the group *Velvet Underground*, a group consisting of people dealing with real-life problems, such as struggling with drug addiction. John Cale, founding member of the same group, mentioned his first experience with the band's songwriter Lou Reed as follows "The first time Lou played 'Heroin' for me it totally knocked me out. The words and music were so raunchy and devastating." (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 5) Reed's lyrics were always dark and dealing with taboos, in opposition to love-spreading messages of bands connected with the hippie movement, such as *the Beatles*. "Lou had these songs where there was an element of character assassination going on." (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 5)

Warhol agreed to the idea of promoting the band *Velvet Underground*, and created a show called *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, in which the band was introduced to the



audience, while his films were played in the background and dancers moved in front of the audience. (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 6ff) Velvet Underground's emergence did not really mark the birth of Punk as such, but the motifs in their songs, the dark appearance of the band on stage, combined with the high volume of their shows, were certainly an inspiration for the movement. But it was to take about a decade longer until bands such as *the Patti Smith Group*, *Blondie*, *Television* and *the Ramones* introduced themselves and a new genre defined as Punk to the world.

Over the years mentioned, bands like *MC5*, *Velvet Underground*, *the Stooges* and *New York Dolls* took over the smaller stages of New York City and venues such as *Max's Kansas City* and the *Mercer Arts Center* in Manhattan. These venues became breeding places for a group of artists who defined themselves as different, who rejected society, because society rejected their ideals, and created rock music in a way they thought it was supposed to be, in contrast to the very popular stadium rock. Every band added a new flavour to the music style, which did not have a name at that time. While *MC5* from Detroit tried and eventually failed to combine their aggressive music with the message of the hippie communes as a result of their love for fast cars, *Velvet Underground* created an image tightly connoted with Warhol's *Factory*, and Iggy Pop, lead singer of *the Stooges*, combined both *MC5*'s aggression on stage with *Velvet Underground*'s dark lyrical positions.

One of the most influential persons of the Punk movement in the United States is the afore-mentioned Iggy Pop, who is still regarded as “the godfather of punk” (NPR Music; New York Rock; One Way Magazine) today. John Sinclair, manager of *MC5* described the live show of *the Stooges* as followed: “It was just so fucking real it was just unbelievable. Iggy was like nothing you ever saw. It wasn't like a band, (...) it wasn't like anything. It wasn't rock & roll.” (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 50)

Iggy Pop, whose civil name is Jim Osterberg, regularly shocked his audience with unpredictable live shows, where he rolled in splinters of glass, threw up into the audience, wore woman's dresses on stage and danced in a manner which had never been seen before, inspiring generations of singers to come. It was characters like Osterberg who gained attention and publicity through sheer wildness (surely also a

result of his struggle with heroin addiction at that time) and who were idolized by an upcoming generation of outcasts, who would later become known as punks.

*The Stooges*, *Velvet Underground* and *MC5* paved the way for bands like the *New York Dolls* to form a band, without having a record contract behind them and a business plan in their minds. While popular bands were playing songs which were over twenty minutes long, *the New York Dolls* opposed this development and started playing three-minute-songs again, in a musically straightforward manner. (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 144) “I mean, basically punk rock was just rock & roll. (...) So it wasn't that the music was new, it was a return to the three-minute song.” (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 323) states Eliot Kidd. However, *the New York Dolls* gathered a massive following in New York and created a scene which eventually caused John Holmstrom, George E. Dunn and Legs McNeil to create a fanzine that would define the name of the movement, which was titled “Punk Magazine”.

Locally, the most important venue for Punk was *CBGBs* on 315 Bowery, run by Hilly Kristal. It was the venue owner Kristal, who gave many upcoming bands, such as *the Ramones*, *Dead Boys*, or *Blondie* their first opportunity to play on a regular basis and to develop a fan base for their bands. Therefore, the venue rapidly gained cult status among punk fans.

*The Vibrators'* first release *Go Girl Crazy!* was the first record to include both lyrical and musical characteristics which are considered as features of Punk Rock today. As Eliot Kidd states, “The only thing that made the music different was that we were taking lyrics to places they had never been before.” (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 324)

### **3.2. The British Punk Movement**

In the middle 1970s, Malcolm McLaren, who had failed to manage the *New York Dolls* successfully, returned to England from New York with the complex idea of creating a destructive, offensive music group, inspired by the lifestyle and attitude he had found in Manhattan. Unlike the unpolitical punk movement in the United States, “Malcolm really wanted to get political, and get people excited on a political level.” (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 236) As his attempts had failed in his profession as New

York Dolls manager, he tried to create a political pendant in Great Britain which resulted in the forming of the *Sex Pistols*.

McLaren took elements of the new fashion he had observed in New York, and as manager of the band, he initiated a new style which rapidly spread across Great Britain, not only because of his own shop *SEX* in London, which sold his own creations. He saw a great possibility in the band, "They could possibly help me to keep dreaming, and make me refuse to ever return to what I was terrified of – normality." (McNeil & McCain, 1996: 303)

The scene slowly developed at first with bands like *the Ramones*, or *the Heartbreakers* touring the United Kingdom, but gained national attention after the *Sex Pistols* caused a scandal, when they consistently uttered profanities in the "Today Show", which was aired live on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1976. (Wolter, 2008: 256) The band, which had only attained little success in the underground music scene before, suddenly had the reputation of being uncontrollable punks, and were considered as a threat to British society. Only a few days after the show, the *Sex Pistols* were supposed to play a national tour with other early English punk bands, such as *the Damned* and *the Clash*. Through the increased public awareness of the punk movement as a whole, with the *Sex Pistols* being their most recognized band, the tour could not be carried out as scheduled, due to numerous show cancellations. According to Lee Childers and Malcom McLaren (see McNeil & McCain, 2014: 321ff), the band bus was even refused entry into certain towns, with the borders of cities blocked by an array of angry citizens and politicians.

Yet the *Sex Pistols* rapidly gained fame and notoriety in the United States, which allowed them to play a national tour throughout the country two years later in 1978. Consisting only of members evincing very destructive behaviour (see McNeil & McCain, 2014: 413ff) the band's last show of the tour in San Francisco was also the last in their early career. Still, they carried on playing with a different singer for some more months and would reform with the original line-up in the middle of the 1990s and 2000s to play reunion tours, but without being representatives of a whole youth movement.

While the *Sex Pistols* gained international attention as a punk band, they were still struggling to find a major label to release their album. It was other bands like *the Buzzcocks* and *the Clash*, who had already released records on major record labels and commercial success. Within only a few years, the hype surrounding the punk movement began to decline again, because the shocking elements of the scene were not as fresh and innovative anymore and were being used by a new music scene referred to as *New Wave*, which included the aesthetic of Punk, but not the political message. By developing their style, including other musical elements in their own music and addressing some political issues, *the Clash* managed to stay relevant for many more years to come, while others were not able to maintain the popularity they had enjoyed in Punk's best years.

Opinions about the birth of Punk vary. Certain witnesses' claim that it originated in New York City and, as already observed in this thesis, the counter-movement to the rise of the hippies certainly formed in the United States first. The style and attitude of Punk was born in the United States of America. However, what gained the whole scene access to the mainstream media was their much more violent, rowdy, aggressive and politically involved pendant in the United Kingdom, which caused an uproar in the national British.

The question of which country started Punk therefore cannot be answered without including a set of variables. If the introduction of the Punk style is regarded as its birthdate too, it most certainly is based in New York City and on the style Richard Hell and the groups surrounding *CBGBs* on the Bowery created. This style was directly copied by Malcolm McLaren, who claimed to be more than fascinated by Hell and his attitude, obviously copying Hell's style. (see McNeil & McCain, 2014: 248) Others claim that the above-mentioned TV appearance was the birth of Punk, while their opponents regard it as the beginning of Punk's end. When taking Habermas' (1982) idea of *critical theory* into consideration, the latter is certainly the case, as raising an awareness of an underground movement also allows a transfer of certain features into the mainstream, reversing the deliberate style differentiation, which was introduced in order to distance oneself from the masses. The introduction to a broader public transferred the rebellious Punk spirit into an accepted item of the mainstream. Habermas states that

when the forces of production enter into a baneful symbiosis with the relations of production that they were supposed to blow wide open, there is no longer any dynamism upon which critique could base its hope. (Habermas, 1982: 118)

As a result, what was originally regarded as revolutionary and a social re-definition of cultural history does not retain its explosiveness as soon as it is incorporated in the mainstream. The Punks, who were certainly opposing capitalist ideas, gradually turned into their own enemy, becoming corporate slaves, people whose values they disbanded in the first place, leaving nothing but a revolutionary idea.

I think that's what really created the anger – the anger was simply about money, that the culture had become corporate, that we no longer owned it and everybody was desperate to fucking get it back. This was a generation trying to do that. (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 304ff)

However, this urgent need to retrieve their culture failed the moment the eyes of the mainstream labels turned onto underground movements, trying to profit from its produced excitement all over the world. For Malcolm McLaren, the Punk movement was using anger and shock as a weapon to regain their identity as opponents of mainstream fashion – a weapon which was lost, when the underground scene was introduced to the broader public.

More important than the birthplace of Punk, especially for this thesis, is the difference of the writing intentions of its generation's lyricists. This thesis tries to divide the intention of the songwriters into a political category and a non-political category, claiming that the British writers were motivated to write on politics, while the Americans rather aimed at self-fulfilment in their songs. Eliot Kidd, (singer of *the Demons*) made a similar observation which can be regarded as a direct opinion reflecting the paper's thesis.

The thing that makes art interesting is when an artist has incredible pain or incredible rage. The New York bands were much more into their pain, while the English bands were much more into their rage. The Sex Pistols songs were written out of anger, whereas Johnny was writing songs because he was broken hearted over Sable... (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 323)

Interestingly, Eliot Kidd's differentiation of lyrical intentions by rage on pain can be directly mirrored in the above-mentioned categories, taking the adjective rage as the result of frustration with society, the urban environment and politics at that time, while pain is more regarded as a topic on a personal level, putting love as the stereotypical theme among others.

The Punk movement changed the attitude of a whole generation, introduced a whole new approach of making music and it changed the musical landscape for decades. In the next chapter, lyrics of the most relevant first generation Punk bands are analysed qualitatively to gain insight into the correctness of above-claimed statement concerning writing intention.

#### **4. Analysis**

In this chapter, ten Punk songs, five American and five British songs are analysed to exemplify the lyrical difference in terms of motif and language features. As stated in the introduction, it is the author's assumption that American Punk songs were written as a society rejecting gesture with the intent to introduce one's uniqueness to the audience, primarily driven by the wish of self-fulfilment. In comparison, British Punk songs, were based on the idea of changing society socially and politically through music, rather than focusing on individual preferences.

There are hundreds of songs to pick from relevant bands that were initially formed in the middle of the 1970s, which introduces a certain difficulty in choosing the most appropriate artists for this qualitative study. As a result, the groups with the biggest impact on the musical landscape which evolved from Punk's ashes were chosen, decisions which can be argued against when valuing the importance of certain bands differently. However, all the choices can be solidly defended as the most important and influential of their time, still appreciating the fact that not only five bands from each movement are of relevance for the further development of popular culture, but far more. As the compass of this paper is limited, only five examples of each underground movement were chosen as representatives for their sub-culture, with the most famous songs of these bands (which were written at the height of Punk's popularity) as lyrical proof of the thesis.

While the qualitative analysis of the songs mentioned can be found in the following subchapters discussing certain expressions, schemas and word choices, the lyrics and analysis forms of each song are attached in the Appendix in order to avoid confusion. Direct quotations of the lyrics within the analysis are referring to the same song texts which can be found in the last section of this thesis.

#### 4.1. American Punk Songs

##### a) Richard Hell & the Voidoids – Blank Generation<sup>1</sup>

While Punk was still an underground movement to be discovered by media stations all over the world, it was one particular artist who created the look and the attitude, which was copied by thousands only a few years later, namely Richard Hell.

Advertising Hell's outward appearance and world view was mainly Malcolm McLaren's credit or fault, who was fascinated by Hell's appearance from early on. McLaren, best known as the manager of the *Sex Pistols* and owner of the influential *SEX* shop in London, states: "Richard Hell was a definite, 100 percent inspiration" (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 248).

Hell, whose real surname is Meyers, moved from Kentucky to New York City with his companion Tom Verlaine with poetic ambitions, trying to escape the countryside's routine by moving from this setting and environment to the urban jungle of Manhattan. Before Hell realised his desire to play music and convey his message in his songs, he created poetry, which was released in prestigious magazines such as *Rolling Stone* and *New Direction Annual* (Sorensen, 2014).

However, the influence of New York's hippie intellectuals, such as Patti Smith, Jim Carroll, William Burroughs at that time and their involvement in the development of a new musical genre, soon to be known as Punk, helped in the formation of *Television*, a band which was the first to play at *CBGBs* and is still regarded as one of the first Punk bands. It was already in Hell's days in *Television* that he wrote "Blank

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<sup>1</sup>cf. Appendix p. 104

<sup>2</sup>cf. Appendix p. 106

<sup>3</sup>cf. Appendix p. 108

<sup>4</sup>cf. Appendix p. 110

<sup>5</sup> Pitchfork Media for example ranked the song on number 16 of the greatest songs in the 1960s.

Generation”, the song analysed as an example of Richard Meyer’s poetic proficiency, which enabled him to sum up the spirit of a whole youth movement.

Nevertheless, *Television* never released the song, as Hell had dropped out of the band in 1975, before the group was able to record any of their jointly written material. It is claimed that Richard Hell and his companion Tom Verlaine were not able to share the singing duties on stage in a brotherly fashion, which resulted in Hell’s leaving or being let go by the band. During the time of Hell’s departure from the band, the very influential *New York Dolls* disbanded as a result of the guitarist Johnny Thunders’ and drummer Jerry Nolan’s heroin addiction. Together with Hell, they reformed as the Punk super group *the Heartbreakers*, however, Richard Hell again left the band within only one year (Finney, 2012: 6), as he was struggling with heroin addiction himself and could not adapt to a more backseat role in the band.

Eventually, in 1976, the year which brought Punk its notorious fame, Richard Hell attempted again to form a new band, called *the Voidoids*, which finally resulted in a release in 1977 called *Blank Generation*, named after the song analysed in this chapter. The album brought the band and its star high acclaim, and was called “the Future of American rock” (Record World, 1977), “a primer of the intellectuality of the new Punk” (Creem Magazine, 1977) and “one of the greatest records ever cut” (Lanier, 1977).

It took five more years for Hell, who had chosen his artist name in reference to Arthur Rimbaud’s *A Season in Hell* (Finney, 2012: 15-16) to release another record, because of his deteriorating struggle with addiction. The second album, *Destiny Street*, which was released in 1982, never gained the same attention and relevancy that *Blank Generation* had achieved, and eventually led Hell to focus on his writing again.

Still, while Richard Hell never achieved outstanding success as a musician, he is still regarded as the prototypical Punk figure, who had the most influence on his peers to take the sub-culture further afield. As McLaren claims:



I came back to England determined. I had these images that I came back with, it was like Marco Polo, or Walter Raleigh. These are the things I brought back: the image of this distressed, strange thing called Richard Hell. And this phrase, 'the blank generation.' (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 248)

As McLaren's utterance makes quite clear, in his mind it was Hell's rebellious idea of being part of a new generation with a different world view which initiated the idea of Punk as a movement. The phrase has been tightly connected with Punk as a generation of people refusing accepted and conventional social and political standards, a generation that had the possibility to do whatever they wanted and in however fashion they wanted, inspired by representatives of the beat generation, such as Jack Kerouac, Allan Ginsberg, or William Burroughs, who shared a similar world view, as will be discussed in the analysis of the poem below.

The topic and motif of the song "Blank Generation" become clear within the first lines of the text. It is narrated in quatrains, which divide the song into four parts, namely three stanzas and the burden in between. Hell refers to his birth as an overdue "fact" through which he finally has the possibility to leave his mother's womb, used as a metaphor for separating himself from a society he wants nothing to do with. His intention is to draw a line between what has been here already, constituted within decades of cultivating a strict moral policy and family values in the United States. Rebellion is the major factor in the song, and Hell presents himself as the leader of the rebellion, someone who disagreed with ongoing conventions even before, stating "I was sayin let me out of here before I was even born" (1-2).

However, the presentation of the song's main protagonist, who is also the presenter and narrator of the idea of a "blank generation", indicates Hell's awareness of representing an anti-hero, a person being born not to fit into the acknowledged society of the 1970s, regarded as "God's consolation prize" (12) from the second he was born, being brutally treated by a cartoonish doctor, in an abstract scene filled with innuendo. The songwriter cultivates his status as outcast from birth onwards. It is a metaphor for Hell's distance from established society and all its values, resulting in an attempted murder by the same person who helped the narrator to be born. The writer uses irony to describe his disregard of what is known as a common social environment, attempting to show that he was not only born not to fit into established

society, but was also never accepted by it as a member. Irony is used to strengthen the borders that separate the main protagonist from established ways of living.

All three stanzas are a declaration of war on common life, a refusal to participate in the community, which is trying to conserve morals the writer cannot accept. Finney (2012: 32) goes as far as to say that the text is Hell's attempt to challenge and outbid god. In the first verse, he already describes being different from others and not feeling comfortable in the most intimate setting a human can be in, namely his mother's womb. His intention is to leave this environment of intimacy immediately. In the moment of his birth, the doctor, represented as a cartoon character, finds himself confronted with the birth of an ungodly child and identifies God's defeat in the birth of the same child. It is referenced to as "God's consolation prize" (12).

Finally, the third verse presents Hell's desire for chaos and describes a scenery, where a nihilistic narrator finds himself in a dreamlike situation, where he destroys in order to get rid of his thoughts, disgusted with a world regarding possession as the main purpose in life. The lyrics of the verse indicate Hell's nihilistic ideas and urgent desire to be let outside of a world with morals, which do not appear to be reasonable for him.

Of high importance is the burden of the song in which Hell offers his generation the prospect of being anything they want, leaving aside moral restrictions. In "I belong to the blank generation" (5) he declares himself as part of a bigger community, with the same essential problem of not being able to live up to society's expectations as a matter of self-fulfilment. The repetition of the same line within the burden strengthens his argument. Also, the ellipsis in the repetition of the burden has a crucial effect on the recipient, enabling him or her to fill in whatever they feel is appropriate for themselves. It is the peak of Hell's nihilistic desires, allowing the listener to be anything he or she wants, by filling in the empty space with anything that comes to mind, leaving morality aside as a disabling instrument.

Interestingly, the burden of the song is influenced both musically and lyrically by the song *Beat Generation*, which was released by Rod McKuen in 1959, in which the singer claims "I belong to the beat generation, I don't let anything trouble my mind."

In this song, the singer describes the attitude of the beat generation. As already mentioned above, Hell was heavily influenced by the writers of the beat generation, and while Rod McKuen sings about distancing himself from conventional family values in favour of the fast-paced party life of beatniks, Richard Hell even walks several steps further than his idols and rejects society's conventions as a whole, claiming in a conversation with Lester Bangs:

To me, blank was a line where you can fill in anything... It's the idea that you have the option of making yourself anything you want, filling in the blank. And that's something that provides a uniquely powerful sense to this generation. It's saying "I entirely reject your standards for judging my behavior." (Goldberg, 1982)

In terms of sound patterning, the author uses mostly rhymes such as "was – does" (1-4), "face-place" (2-4), etc., but also certain half-rhymes in the second and third stanzas, namely "eye – prize" (10-12) and "cash – tracks" (17-19). Moreover, a minimal use of alliteration can be observed, however only in word couples, never exceeding two words with the same first consonant within two lines. More importantly, assonance plays a crucial role in the writer's utterances and the occurrence of several words with similar sounds (e.g. "leave – each" (8) in the burden) indicating Richard Hell's awareness of these language effects within spoken or written texts. Also, a reverse rhyme can be found in the third line of the third stanza, where train and track are used for building a noticeable sound pattern, as well as making use of the language superordinate category *train* or *transportation*.

Moreover, in terms of sound patterning, anaphora is used as a figure of speech in the third stanza. It is especially noticeable that the writer does not use grammatically correct sentences, but refers to the action described in the sentence with infinitives, rather than using a lyrical "I", which has been used in the stanzas before.

Looking at the song from a literal and figurative perspective, certain metaphors can be found within the text. In the first stanza, the author makes use of a hyperbole in order to emphasize the lyrical "I"'s rejection of society's established values. By exaggerating and claiming that he already wanted to escape his well-known environment before his birth can be seen as an exclamation mark after the author's socio-critical and distinguishing statement.

Furthermore, the second stanza offers several interesting phrases in terms of figurative speech. The first line already introduces a bizarre scenery, claiming that “triangles were falling at the window” (9) during the birth of the lyrical “I”, which is conducted by a cartoon doctor. Most likely, the author of the song intends to create a remarkable birth setting by making it not rain or snow outside, but by letting triangles fall from the sky. As a result, he creates an unreal environment, implying the impression of his birth being a very special event, an event where the foundations of society are questioned by the birth of a character who disregards them from the outset. Also, Richard Hell’s fascination with triangles is well documented, particularly concerning his wardrobe, which he regularly consisted of shirts with triangle patterns. Therefore, the mentioning of triangles can be seen as a reference to the author’s preferences, a sign that accompanies his arrival on earth. Also, the mentioned adjustment of the nurse’s garters introduces sexuality to the scene.

Lastly, the third stanza exemplifies the author’s dislike of the ongoing developments in society. His aversion is expressed through destruction as he throws a TV into a parking lot to free himself from the chains the established values in society have put on him, which are represented in the stanza as a metaphor describing “the air so packed with cash”, an environment where money surrounds individuals as the most important feature of living, a way of living the lyrical “I” totally rejects. The second part of the stanza is a metaphorical reference to a train, which can be seen as a getaway vehicle that drives the songwriter away from society’s features he regards as wrong: “train of thought”, “arms’ tracks” (19) as well as “watch beneath the eyelids every passing dot” are potential references to the train on which he departs figuratively, while passing dots represent objects in the landscape which are passed by the train and have the shape of dots when observed through nearly closed eyes.

In conclusion, “Blank Generation” is a critical review of society’s morals, and moreover a statement rejecting participation in it as an obedient citizen. The song, as well as its title became a representation of an entire generation, whose members were also not interested in leading a life controlled by morals defined by the generations before. It could be argued that “Blank Generation” is the definition of what Punk was in New York City, when it developed in the 1970s, in not offering political positioning within the community, but cultivating the status of outsiders, and

featuring typical train of thoughts of New York City's underground scene, as the following analyses will show.

#### b) The Ramones – 53<sup>rd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>2

No other band has been so tightly related to the New York Punk scene surrounding the venue *CBGBs*, with the rise of a rebellious teen spirit and a return to Rock and Roll's basics, than *the Ramones* from Queens, New York. To this day, both mainstream and underground culture include certain features that were introduced to popular culture by these four individuals known as *the Ramones*, from their logo, which has been copied countless times over the decades, their clothing style, which included jeans, leather jackets and a beetle haircut, through to their very forceful, straight-forward and catchy songs that featured only three chords musically and a simple and easy-to-remember burden most of the time.

Similarly to other Punk bands in the United States in the 1970s, *the Ramones'* songs were directed against the establishment, with an attitude which was featured in their songs from early on. For instance, five of their first six song titles started with *I don't wanna*, with their first "positive song" being "Now I Wanna Sniff Some Glue", a song, as the title already suggests, about the illegal consumption of glue as a drug. (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 265) In many ways, *the Ramones* were the stereotypical Punk band. Their songs were short, their message negative and anti-society driven, their live shows very chaotic and the band itself acted as a very dissonant group.

In several aspects of their band life, *the Ramones* were always very chaotic and inexperienced concerning recording sessions; however, their lack of experience gave especially their first self-titled record the rawness which allowed it to be considered a classic in Rock and Roll history, being recorded in only three days and costing \$6400, only a small percentage of the typical price of recording in the 1970s. (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 285)

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<sup>2</sup> cf. Appendix p. 106

The band formed in Queens in 1974 and gained a reputation as a great live-band, when they started performing regularly at *CBGBs*. Their song repertoire consisted mainly of songs not much longer than two minutes and regularly repeating rhyme schemes. In contrast to the studio versions, they performed their songs significantly faster live than on their recordings. The band can be regarded as mainly a live band that was on tour constantly from their early and unrecognized days in New York City in the first half of the 1970s until their break-up in 1996, when they had already cultivated their status as rock legends. Overall, the band played over 2200 shows together. Numerous incidents did not result in the band's break-up, but communication between each single band member eventually ceased. Tragically, all the band's original members have now passed away, leaving the heritage of a great band that inspired countless other bands to focus on the basic structure of rock music.

The song "53<sup>rd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>" of the self-titled debut record, a full-length album, which is still regarded as one of the most important records in Punk and rock history, is particularly interesting, as it is an autobiographical text about the songwriter's struggle as a male prostitute. It features his self-doubt, his misinterpreted feelings and offers a tragic ending in an already tragic story. Even though lyricist and bass player Dee Dee Ramone never admitted that the song was autobiographical until his death, other band members stated its content to be based on Dee Dee's true life experiences. Mickey Leigh, *the Ramones'* singer's brother, for instance, claims:

I remember driving by Fifty-third Street and Third Avenue and seeing Dee Dee Ramone standing out there. (...) He was just standing there, so I knew what he was doing, because I knew that was the gay-boy hustler spot. (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 216)

Identical to the song's title, the setting of the text is Manhattan, on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, a place well-known for male prostitution in the 1970s and also the place where the main protagonist of the song is waiting to get picked up by a customer. Not unusual for a *Ramones* song, the first and the second verse are completely the same, only with the bridge, which is sung by the writer himself, offering a different content.

Firstly, the narrator talks about his toughness which he earned in Vietnam as Green Beret and quickly shifts the focus of his story on the struggle as a male street prostitute, mentioning his problems to pick up a customer. The telling about his past as a soldier in the beginning of both verses shows the listener the urgent need of the narrator to prove to be tough and the repetition of the first verse after the first burden also highlights his desire to be regarded as a tough person and to be taken seriously. Dee Dee Ramone, who was raised in Bad Tölz, Germany as the son of an American soldier, had not been a soldier himself, but one can assume that he got inspired by his father's profession as a soldier and the idea that a career in the military implies a certain degree of toughness.

Tragically, the song is also about the self-confidence of the prostitute, who seems to believe that his lack of attractiveness is standing in direct relation with his "business success", a characteristic feature which becomes obvious in the burden, where the writer states:

53<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, you're the one they never pick  
53<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, don't it make you feel sick? (7-8)

Even though he is unhappy with his current condition, a conclusion which can be made immediately by looking at the last line shown above, as well as at the fourth line of the verse ("Cause I got my other worries" (4)), the narrator puts great pride in his looks and his strength. He struggles, because no customer is choosing him and therefore, he concludes to be unattractive, which makes him even more dissatisfied with his life.

Finally, as the song progresses to the bridge, a person shows interest in the main protagonist and narrator as a prostitute, but instead of following the processes of male prostitution, an attack on the customer is vaguely hinted by Dee Dee Ramone, using the rhetorical figure "ellipsis" in order to create abstract meaning within the text. Once again, he mentions that even though he is a wanted man now, he has at least proved his power and strength. In terms of language use, the author uses mainly common everyday language and literal speech. Figurative language is not present in

the text, however, certain characteristic language features can be found in the song, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The song (see Appendix 7.2), which consists of six quatrains in the rhyme schema aabb, offers assonance in the first and (identical) third verse by including the words “can” – “man” (1) and “Vietnam” (2). Each verse and burden feature tail rhymes, nevertheless, one half rhyme (“street” – “trick” (5-6)) can be found in the burden. Moreover, alliteration can be found in the burden of the song, where “standing” and “street”, “tryin’”, “turn” and “trick” (6) as well as “they” and “the” (7) are arranged to create abstract language in line one, two and three of the first burden.

Furthermore, the narrator ends the burden with a rhetorical question, which deals with male prostitution as already mentioned above. The author is insecure about his desires and feels uncomfortable, because he does not get any customers. “53<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> don’t it make you feel sick?” (8) is a combination of an anaphoric trope, which is the most memorable feature of the song and repeats the location of the prostitute. The line is creating the centre of the speaker’s world on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Manhattan, making it not only the setting of the song, but also the place to earn money as well as to gain and lose confidence, and adding a rhetorical question to the song. Being forced into a life of prostitution, the author asks rhetorically, if this downward spiral does affect his well-being. Considering the lack of confidence, which causes the lyrical “I” to act violently and yet to hope for a customer, the ultimate condition of the writer can be described as negative. As a result, the question asked does not require an answer, but is rather stating the bad psychological state the narrator is in.

The narrative “I” implies a certain attitude towards the military and connotes it with violence, a physical state that he confuses with self-confidence. Moreover, the first verse, which is written as a monologue, he already feels the need to mention his former profession as a Green Beret in Vietnam, a reference to the Vietnam War. It becomes clear that the speaker regards fighting soldiers as very brave, a fact which causes him to define himself similarly, and that this toughness can only be outbid by the violence later mentioned in the song.



Overall, what makes “53<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>” specifically interesting in the context of this thesis is its topic, which focuses on the life of a person outside of society’s common conventions, as it offers an analysis of the main character and his struggles with himself. The language is very simple and repetitive. Taking the events narrated in the song into consideration, the straightforward language can be explained by the speaker’s tendency to act (“then I did what god forbade” (18)) rather than to talk.

In terms of length, structure and repetition, the song can be regarded as typical American Punk song, featuring lyrics that reflect the writer’s own experience and detaches the lyricist from society by describing himself as different from the rest, in this case as a male prostitute, who eventually commits a murder. As a result, the band narrates the story of an individual far away from common social conventions, forced to prostitute himself in order to finance his drug habit. His aim is to prove his strength and manhood, a way to maintain an image typical in 1970s American Punk, as the preceding and following song analyses exemplify.

### c) Dead Boys – Sonic Reducer<sup>3</sup>

In 1976, when the music scene surrounding the venue *CBGBs* and its house bands *the Ramones* and *Television* started to draw bigger audiences and publicity in and outside of New York City, four adolescents from Ohio decided to actively participate in this new and exciting scene. Their appearance was similar to *the Ramones* and their attitude even a little wilder, since they were considered criminals from Ohio, their place of origin (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 286ff), and had a particularly high interest in Nazi memorabilia. Widely recognised for their wildness, the band rapidly gained a reputation as a dangerous Punk band around the time when the term Punk was a more familiar term to the public. The truth of their reputation was proven more than once, for instance, when band member Johnny Blitz was stabbed 17 times in the stomach, or when singer Stiv Bators hung himself onstage and was pronounced clinically dead for several minutes. Both incidents were survived by the band members. (McNeil & McCain, 390ff) As Gyda Gash states:

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<sup>3</sup> cf. Appendix p. 108

Dead boys were getting popular and pretty well known as being this fierce band. The Dead Boys were all poor white trash, lower-middle-class kids from Youngstown, Ohio. They grew up very fierce. They grew up in gangs, they were the real thing. It was more than just an attitude with them, it was a lifestyle. (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 299ff)

As a result of their heavy drug use, violent and unpredictable behaviour and lack of mainstream success, the band only released two full-length albums before they broke up in 1979. After a disappointing second release, which did not achieve their label's or the band's own expectations both in terms of sales and musical achievement, and after the band had been advised to make a radical style change by Seymour Stein, founder and owner of their label *Sire Records* (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 416), the group broke up, just to reunite in 1986 for a few shows. Furthermore, after bandleader and singer Stiv Bators died after being hit by a taxi in Paris in 1990, the other band members played a few concerts together again in the middle of the 2000s. Interestingly, the band was managed by Hilly Kristal, who was also the owner of the legendary venue *CBGBs*, after he had seen them perform for the second time in his venue. (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 296)

The song "Sonic Reducer", the best-known song of the band, addresses the struggle of being a person who does not fit into the moral standards society offers and who is looking for a place to belong, defining himself or herself as somebody consciously opposed to society, rather than trying to adopt the common lifestyle of the 1970s. It is featured on the commercially unsuccessful debut album "Young, Loud and Snotty" of *Dead Boys*, which was released in 1977 via *Sire Records*. However, the song had been written for the band *Rocket From The Tombs*, which guitar player Cheetah Chrome had been part of before *Dead Boys* were founded.

Firstly, the lyrics of the opening verse are an anti-society declaration, refusing all conventional standards regarded as desirable in the average person's life, such as parents, good looks and friendship. Within the first few lines, it becomes clearer that singer Stiv Bators aims for something different in his life, away from conventions he cannot associate himself with. The negative attitude towards other people is typical for Punk in its initial period, declaring oneself as independent and free of society's restrictions, of all that is regarded as important. *Dead Boys* put themselves on a

pedestal, not for being better, but for being different. The last line of the first verse even declares the listener as replaceable, as not required, because the singer and the band favour their position of being not a part of a bigger community.

The burden of the song addresses the narrator as sonic reducer, which, in the opinion of the author of this thesis, is a Punk, a person that plays guitar in a simple way, exactly the way Punk music was played and associated with. “I got my devil machine” (7) is as much a reference to the guitar as “got my electronic dream” (8), defining the electric guitar both as a tool of the devil, cultivating the Punk attitude, and marking it as an evil instrument, but also describing it as a an instrument to fulfil his dreams, namely being of high prestige, not just a nobody. “Sonic Reducer” (9) can be regarded as a metaphor for a Punk, a person who plays music in a simple, reduced way, who spreads minimalistic airwaves. Combined with the first line of the burden, which identifies the guitar as an evil tool, the reference to a Punk as sonic reducer becomes clearer.

Furthermore, Batons narrates a scene where he is watching the casual processes of everyday life from an observer’s perspective, looking out of his room’s window. He declares himself an outcast to whom nobody pays attention in the lines 1,2 and 4. Within the verse, however, Batons still regards himself as an important subject by stating “But I’m not just anyone” (17), even though he is not recognized by people on the streets. The whole verse is basically the narrator’s defiance of his position in society, a statement uttering the awareness of his life as an outlaw which does not keep him from being important.

Finally, the last verse is a prediction, illustrating the narrator as a person people look up to, taking ancient Greek symbolism as a metaphorical way to present his greatness. In the verse, the second line highlights the confidence the singer has in his own actions, claiming that he will “rule from some golden tomb” (26), indicating that he will be known even after death and that his greatness will allow him to be buried in a place of worship.

Things will be different then  
The sun will rise from here

Then I'll be ten feet tall  
And you'll be nothing at all (27-30)

is a testimony of the writer and singer that in the future, things will change and his position in society will be a completely different one. Particularly typical for punk, the lines have an aggressive undertone, which not only praises the writer, but expresses a change in status of the addressed person, namely the people on the streets, who have not taken notice of Bators before. Now, in the future, they will have taken over his position as outcasts, while he compares himself to an adored person, whose worshipping followers have created a massive monument. "The sun will rise from here" (28) also uses imagery comparing him to a godlike creature, putting the sun as a resource of life in direct connection with the narrator.

As already stated, the song is divided into several parts, namely three verses and three refrains, which are performed one after the other, switching between verse and burden. Unlike the other songs analysed in this paper, the verse consists only of three couplets, while the burden also consists of three couplets. It might be argued that the first stanza is written in two quatrains and the burden in one quatrain, however, the context and the repetition of the first two lines of the burden indicate it's belonging to the repetitive part, which concluded with the results mentioned above in terms of metre. The songwriter used only one half rhyme ("reducer" (9) – "loser" (10)), the ends of the other lines either rhyme completely ("face" (3) – "race" (4), "you" (5) – "too" (6), "machine" (7) – "dream" (8), "soon" (25) – "tomb" (26), "tall" (29) – "all" (30)), or not at all.

Looking at the whole text, it does not include a significant number of figures of speech, nevertheless, the sound pattern alliteration ("need" – "no" (2); "my" – "machine" (7); "out" – "on" (13), "the" (28) – "then" (29), "ten" – "tall" (29), "and" – "at" – "all" (30)) is frequently used in order to create a text which stands out from others, still being formulated in everyday language. Moreover, assonance occurs frequently in the song. One of the most striking features of the text is the anaphora used as a rhetorical device in the first verse, indicating the lyrical "I"'s independence from any person imaginable by repeating "don't need..." (2) with every sentence after the song was introduced to the listener with the sentence: "I don't need anyone." (1) The result

of this anaphoric device is the emphasis on being in a different place than other people surrounding the songwriter. By repeating everything he does not need, he simultaneously shows that he is not craving for anyone, and that he is an independent individual ready to conquer the world.

However, the second verse is in stark contrast to the first stanza in terms of conveyed message. While Stiv Bators, as already mentioned, declares his lack of interest in society, its emotional standards and family conventions in the first stanza, the second verse is more a complaint about being forgotten from society than distancing oneself from the same. It is more a threat to the people not paying attention that they will see what they gain for their indifference.

Another striking feature of the song is its use of ellipsis to narrate both present and future. The first verse is about the songwriter's anti-establishment attitude from his birth onwards (claiming he "don't need no mum and dad"), the second verse is a situation statement, in which the lyricist observes the community he lives in, but is not taken notice of by his fellow community members. Finally, the third verse is a glimpse into the future, which can be regarded as a prophecy, claiming that Bators will be worshipped similar to a saint or ruler. Ellipsis is used to switch from his time as an unidentified nobody to one of the greatest people ever to walk the planet while leaving out the steps to his fame. One can only imagine how the character has gained his fame, but it is implied that his "devil machine" (7) and "electronic dream" (8), namely his guitar, has helped him.

Also, the author uses vocabulary from two different categories, which appear to be quite interesting. On the one hand, he uses technical words, such as "machine" (7), "electronic" (8), "sonic reducer" (9) and on the other hand, he includes vocabulary which could be categorized as ancient Egypt, as he mentions "pharaoh" (25), "golden tomb" (26) and also "sun" (28), which played a crucial godlike role at that time. The third stanza, which offers the addressed vocabulary about the lyrical "I" gaining a godlike status, can be regarded as hyperbole, a figure of speech which is characterised as exaggerating. However, the vocabulary generally used in the lyrics is very simple, and so is the sentence structure of the song, which asks the question

as to whether the artist has used the figures of speech intentionally or within a creative phase.

Overall, the song conveys an anti-establishment message, which is typical for American Punk in the 1970s and cultivates the image of an outsider, who is convinced that his abilities will lead him to greatness, despite his current place in society. It is the words of a frustrated and lonely individual sitting in his room, fed up with the world as it is, dreaming himself into the future, which is the counterpart to his current condition.

#### d) The Stooges – I Wanna Be Your Dog<sup>4</sup>

As already mentioned in the short overview on the rise of Punk in the United States, *the Stooges* were a major contributor to the music scene. The founding members James Osterberg (later known as Iggy Pop), Dave Alexander and the brothers Ron and Scott Asheton created a new form of music and movement, but not because of the original music they created, which was mainly songs created out of three chord progressions, but because of their appearance and the attitude they conveyed when playing live. Iggy Pop became notorious for his wild stage performances in which he cut himself with glass, vomited into the audience and destroyed parts of the stage. Moreover, he was mostly intoxicated when playing live, which resulted in some outrageous performances and gained him the reputation of being unpredictable and also dangerous.

Similar to other bands at that time, *the Stooges* struggled with addiction (all but Ron Asheton), which resulted in several well documented catastrophes during their early band career and eventually led to a break up (only to reunite much later in 2003). Despite not having a major breakthrough record or selling a large number of records, the band is regarded as one of the first real Punk bands and is seen as one of the most influential bands leading to upcoming developments in the 1960s and 1970s, eventually inspiring other bands to form Punk as an anti-establishment movement.

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<sup>4</sup> cf. Appendix p. 110

Similarly to bands such as *Velvet Underground*, *the Stooges* experimented with different instruments with the aim to create something outstanding and outrageous worth being remembered. Singer Iggy Pop claims his intentions of being the singer of a rock band started to get serious when seeing the Doors and their singer Jim Morrison perform in a horrible, but still impressive condition:

The gig lasted only fifteen or twenty minutes because they had to pull Morrison offstage and get him out of there fast, because the people were gonna attack him. It made a big impression on me. That's when I thought, Look how awful they are, and they've got the number-one single in the country! If this guy can do it, I can do it. (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 49)

The first self-titled record of the band was only a minor success in the United States, reaching the Billboard charts at number 106. (Reynolds, 2007: 82) However, especially lyrically, the record introduced the American music scene to a far darker side of humanity, which was not discussed or mentioned in rock music before and attracted a specific group of people, who felt addressed in the songs and identified with both the lyrics and the attitude of the band. This entourage of outcasts is regarded as the foundation of what would later become known as Punks and with the first single “I Wanna Be Your Dog” of *the Stooges* self-titled album, alongside with Velvet Underground’s self-titled debut record, they finally had their “anthem”.

However, the record had already been released in 1969, more than five years before Punk received international attention, which illustrates the long development the underground movement was going through, and also reflects that *the Stooges* were far ahead of their time. Interestingly, before going into the studio to record their debut album, *the Stooges* had only three songs written and arranged. Being confronted with not having enough material for a whole record by the record company, the band claimed to have more than their initially prepared output and wrote three more in the night before the recording sessions. (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 67ff)

“I Wanna Be Your Dog” by *the Stooges* is regarded as the Proto-punk song by many music critics.<sup>5</sup> The simple lyrics still manage to shock (or at least were able to cause

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<sup>5</sup> Pitchfork Media, for example, ranked the song on number 16 of the greatest songs in the 1960s: <http://pitchfork.com/features/staff-lists/6405-the-200-greatest-songs-of-the-1960s/1/>

uproar in the late 1960s) and its repetitive style indicates the urgent need of the singer to be degraded sexually, introducing a motif which was still a taboo at the time of the release. Even though the song itself was released several years before the punk movement gained international attention, singer Iggy Pop created the image of an anti-hero, which would later become the synonym for Punk. For instance, Danny Fields who discovered *the Doors* and managed bands such as *the Ramones* and *MC5* states that the song was “the greatest punk song ever written to this day. The one and only true punk song if there had to be one.” (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 405)

When considering the structure of the text, it can be divided into three parts or text clusters, namely the first verse, which consists of two quatrains that feature eight short lines, the burden consisting of one quatrain and the second verse being as long as the first, also followed by the repetitive burden. In terms of register, the songwriter does not use particularly specific vocabulary, leaving the recipient with simple language structure and a crucially interesting motif to sing about, especially when taking the release date of the song into consideration.

Moreover, the simple language mostly relinquishes rhymes or half rhymes, with the words “face” (3) – “place” (4) being the only representative rhymes, while “eyes” (9) – “mind (10)” and “hand” (11) – “sands” (12) are the half rhymes striking the eye of the attentive reader. However, as the anaphoric lines, which will be discussed in the paragraph below, occur in both the first and the second stanzas and create a repeating, but also rhyming pattern, the verses can be regarded as quatrains rather than simple free verse.

The first verse of the song already offers a glimpse into the mind of the songwriter, who claims to be “messed up” and waiting for the addressed person to arrive. It features parts, which can be seen as a reference to James Osterberg’s (Iggy Pop’s real name) struggle with heroin addiction. The protagonist in the song needs to get ready for whatever happens next and the readiness goes along with being under the influence of substances. Having achieved the required state of mind, the person is now ready and waiting in his or her room, ready for action. The repetitive “I want you here” (1, 2) is an order, which goes along with the interest of the song’s narrator to be both master and mastered, finally wanting to start action. In this case, the repetition



can be regarded as anaphoric, as the purpose is to emphasize the narrator's wishes and the rhetorical device of an anaphora helps to create a certain tension between the singer and the recipient, showing his dedication and his sexual desire, which seems to be the only thing that matters in the drug-driven environment of the protagonist.

Furthermore, the last four lines of the first verse show that the wait is over, and the two characters get ready for their sexual role play, with the narrator getting in position, which can be regarded as his or her role shift, transforming from human being to animal, acting as a dog and positioning himself or herself already as if he/she was a dog. The quick shift between the narrator's desire and the fulfilment of his wish can be seen as an ellipsis, leaving out why, when and how the protagonist's counterpart appeared, intending to focus only on the moments full of tension surrounding the lyrical "I"'s desires.

Also, the burden is the ultimate call for a transformation and the acceptance of the master, an order to change into the person giving orders in a role play. Similar to the verses, the burden uses repetition to underline the urgent need of the narrator to start the role play. In a way, the repetition can be regarded as the barking of the dog, with the "Well c'mon" (8) as the impatient outcry of the protagonist wanting to play, the animal in restless motion for something exciting to happen. It can be regarded as the ultimate call for sexual intercourse and the urgent need of the narrator to be used and treated as an animal.

Additionally, the main character has already achieved his or her main goal, the transformation, in the second verse. A description of the steps that follow is given, from gliding into another condition by closing eyes and mind, while focusing on the touch of the sexual counterpart only. Therefore, the second verse is not only a description of the focus on one sense, but also an explanation of the certain steps that lead to intercourse. The metaphor "lose my heart on the burning sands" (12) can be regarded as the ultimate sexual desire of the narrator, to be degraded by the dominating behaviour of the second character within the narration, a metaphor which not only stands for experiencing the desired pain, but also enjoying a passionate feeling, which is represented by burning sands, which hurt with each step of the

character, but also inflame his or her passion. Burning sands can be analysed both as a painful experience (which was obviously the narrator's desire), but also as an inflammation of the heart, a reference to the love the main protagonist feels while being in his transformed state as animal.

"I Wanna Be Your Dog" can be seen as a song explicitly discussing sexual desires, which were unusual and rarely spoken of in such a context in the late 1960s. Moreover, by shocking the audience, it is an open letter against the common lifestyle of the people in this period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, longing for sexual pleasure in a different, unusual way and abandoning the American way of life at that time. Even though the text is written in a very simple language, it did not fail to achieve its shocking purpose.

#### e) The Patti Smith Group – Gloria<sup>6</sup>

Among the Punks in New York City, Patti Smith was generally regarded as especially poetically talented, a reputation which eventually resulted in a great increase of public attention with every released record. Next to the widely recognized *Blondie*, Patti Smith was one of the most commercially successful Punk artists.

According to Bockris & Bayley (1999: 19), Patti Smith was born in Chicago on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1946. At the age of 21, she gave birth to her first child, but chose to give it away to adoption and moved to New York City shortly afterwards, where she met Robert Mapplethorpe, who had not yet fully discovered his homosexuality, and started a romantic relationship with him, resulting in them moving to the legendary Hotel Chelsea in 1969. (Smith, 2010: 20ff) Before gaining fame with *the Patti Smith Group*, Smith had already released poems, and also rock reviews in prestigious magazines such as *the Rolling Stone* and *Creem Magazine*.<sup>7</sup> Smith gave poetry readings in New York as part of the influential *St. Mark's Poetry Project*, painted, wrote a theatre play with Sam Shepard and eventually found guitar player Lenny Kaye to support her poetry with his guitar. This collaboration eventually resulted in a

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<sup>6</sup> cf. Appendix p. 111

<sup>7</sup> Khanna, Vish (May 2007). "[Patti Smith Fights the Good Fight - Timeline](#)". Canada: Exclaim!. Archived from [the original](#) on January 24, 2009. December 5, 2008.

cooperation lasting for several decades, with Smith and Kaye being the core of *the Patti Smith Group*.

Smith's band, which evolved from her spoken word project, and was initiated in the *St. Mark's Poetry Project*, started to perform regularly. After raising awareness about the band, they released their first full-length record "Horses" in 1975. The record is still regarded as a rock classic today, and was one of several milestones in her long-lasting career. However, the most commercially successful record was her third, called "Easter", a record which features the group's best known song "Because The Night", a collaboration between Patti Smith and Bruce Springsteen. In 1977, while *the Patti Smith Group* was touring the world following the success of their first two records, Patti Smith fell off the stage during a show in Florida, an accident which resulted in a seriously damaged neck vertebra and forced the band to take a long break, at a time when the popularity of Punk was reaching its peak.

While Patti Smith is still regarded as a highly influential musician and writer in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with pop stars such as Madonna or REM naming her as a clear inspiration and influence, she had a huge variety of poets that she idolized. Arthur Rimbaud, in particular, is regarded as one of her biggest influences by critics, a claim backed by her: "I had devoted so much of my girlish daydreams to Rimbaud. Rimbaud was like my boyfriend." (Moore, 1996) She further states, "I am shrouded in the lives of my heroes." (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 125) This claim exemplifies the obsession with which she analysed and idolised her poetic heroes.

From the onset of her career, Smith realized the importance of both word and performance on and offstage, which caused her to behave very self-confidently and, being extroverted in her artistic environment as well as on stage, with very well planned word use in specific situations in order to have the maximum impact on the majority of her potential audience. As Victor Bockris, bibliographer for Andy Warhol, Keith Richards, etc. narrates about one of her appearances in the poetry project:

I was sitting on the stage at St Mark's Church during the 1974 New Year's Day reading and Patti Smith came up and (...) spat on the ground right in front of me and said, 'You owe me money, motherfucker!' (...) I mean, I thought, She's an asshole, but she's really good. (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 199)

Smith had understood the importance of intense performance and reputation cultivation early on and her dramatic performances were a major contributor to her increase of popularity within Manhattan's art scene. But it was not only Bockris, who had found out about Smith's impressive appearance and performance talent. James Grauerholz, bibliographer of William Burroughs and also member of the New York art scene in the 1970s, recalls:

When she finished her piece at St Mark's, she stormed out of the building – marched through the crowds, right through the packed church and out the front door. (...) She blew the place away. I was sitting with William Burroughs – who always had a very strong sense of show biz – and he turned to me and said, 'She's really got it.' (McNeil & McCain, 2013: 199)

The song "Gloria" offers significant features on various levels. First of all, the song is a new interpretation of *Van Morrison's* song "Gloria", but includes a different text, the only similarities of the lyrics can be found in the burden. Smith added various religious references and vocabulary to the song, beginning the song with the well-known line "Jesus died for somebody's sins but not mine." (1) What follows is demanding her own sins, a statement indicating that she is not looking for salvation, but is fully aware of her actions, and proud of her mistakes too. Typically for the notorious Punk attitude, Smith breaks out of society's conventions and uses the first verse for a closer description of her. "Meltin' in a pot of thieves" (2) can be seen as a direct observation of her environment, metaphorically indicating her being accompanied by artists, drug addicts and con-men, all part of the New York scene, with Smith in the middle of this range of interesting personalities, referred to as thieves, both literary and literally. The line is followed by the statement "Wild card up my sleeve" (3), an indication that she feels comfortable in her environment, always aware of the fact that she is on top of her company. It is likely that the referred wild card is Smith's talent, her secret weapon to break out of her dangerous, but interesting environment which she chose to live in. Once again, her attitude as an outsider of society and as a part of the New York sub-culture is underlined by the statement "Thick heart of stone (4)", a metaphor which symbolizes her belief in being a cold person and opposed to conventions at that time.

Furthermore, Smith chooses to defend her views of morality in the last part of the first verse, having to deal with people who offer their doubts about her intentions of

remaining a sinner. Still, representing the Punk attitude of the 1970s, Smith rejects their views and discredits them as mental boundaries she is not willing to share. For her, “anything’s allowed” (12), the realization that she is the keeper of her own sins makes her also a person without restrictions, a human being responsible and aware of her own actions, positive or negative.

The first section of the song introduces Smith’s rejection of salvation in a biblical sense, as she does not feel any connection to religious beliefs, claiming her own sins to be her conscious decisions. In a way, the first verse emphasizes her Punk attitude by rejecting society’s standards. Overall, religiously connoted vocabulary can be found frequently within the text, beginning with the introduction. Moreover a tower (32), which is most likely a church tower with bells, is mentioned. Also, in the second stanza, two names are mentioned, one of them being Mary, the other, Ruth, both names with links to biblical history. However, it is not these saints Patti Smith is longing for, but for Gloria, which can be interpreted as her urgent aspiration to magnificence. The song is not divided into exactly noticeable quatrains, but into free verses and burdens, which do allow rhymes to appear at the end of certain lines (“stone” (4) – “own” (5), “beware” (7) – “care” (8), “proud” (11) – “allowed” (12), “fine” (16) – “mine” (17), “me” (44) – “see” (46), “Ruth” – “truth” (45), “here” – “atmosphere” (12), “chime” (58) – “mine” (59)). Nevertheless, a clear structure of the song cannot be observed, in contrast to the other songs analysed in this paper.

However, the song includes several other interesting elements apart from the unusual rhyme scheme and song structure. Firstly, Smith uses alliteration to create a text beyond everyday language. In the text, the alliterations mostly appear in pairs, such as “somebody’s sins” (1), or “anything’s allowed” (12). As Smith is not relying on the traditional rhyme schemes in song writing, especially quatrains, it is crucial to shape the written production in order to achieve poetic features within her text production.

In popular culture, poetry, which is written for musical accompaniment, sounds are crucially important to catch the listener’s attention. Therefore, repetition and anaphora are frequently used in order to create a catchy and comprehensible hook, which can make it the most memorable. As a result, the above-mentioned stylistic

devices are frequently used among popular songwriters. While repetition is mostly used in or for the burden, Patti Smith approaches her text differently and uses both rhetorical devices as substitutes for a repeating rhyme schema.

The first figure of speech of this sort is used in the first text cluster, when Patti Smith claims her sin to be her “property”, and after another four lines, words to be restrictions. By repeating the last word (e.g. “They belong to me, me” (6)), it becomes obvious that the song is focusing on the speaker, considering her desires, beliefs and life awareness. Repeating the last word indicates her self-absorption too, claiming every action carried out to be her own, refusing the belief that somebody else can lift some weight from the shoulders of the biographically influenced protagonist. However, Smith’s beliefs and attitude towards religion changed at the peak of her career, after she broke her back during a stadium show in Italy. (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 365)

Still, within the first text cluster, another repetition occurs, introducing the protagonist’s subject of desire, namely a woman “(h)umpin’ on the parking meter, leanin’ on the parking meter” (15). In this case, the repetition is meant to signal the sensuality of the described person, claiming that her appearance, leaning on a parking meter, is full of erotic appeal and makes the protagonist, most likely Patti Smith’s lyrical “I”, to fall in love with her and desire her so badly that she starts a plan to “put my spell on her” (18). This means that she is trying to make her counterpart fall in love with her too. Firstly, the speaker describes how she spots the girl while being at a party looking for adventure. Patti Smith conveys a certain sexual electricity through the song by combining her own image as an outcast, independent of god’s wrath, and her open attraction to a girl, which is analysed in the paragraphs below.

After the decision is made to make a conquest of the woman she fell in love with, which is also the end of the first text cluster, ellipsis is used in order to create a certain tension through leaving out a complete passage of the narration, in which the speaking person is carrying out the plan uttered beforehand. The attentive listener is taken directly to the passage where the subject of desire is entering the protagonist’s house. Her entrance is described very sensually, which is intensified respectively through anaphora. Looking at the second text cluster, it can be described as the way

of one lover to the other, right before they meet, while one is moving, the other one is observing her partner's beauty and eroticism. Consequently, the second text cluster can be regarded as a very interesting attempt of describing Smith's open attraction to a woman. The approach of the girl, which is highlighted by the phrase "Here she comes", is narrated as a dancelike and erotic scene, where the subject of desire's appearance is described with the verbs "walkin'", "comin'", "crawlin'" and "waltzin'" (20-26). Especially the last two verbs give the girl's physical appearance an erotic, and longing ("crawlin'" (3)) as well as elegant ("waltzin'" (26)) touch. By using accumulation, Smith avoids simply addressing the character's movement with the same vocabulary, but enables the listener to imagine the very captivating approach of the girl. Her dress, pretty and red, suggests lust, love and desire that the lyrical "I" is confronted with. Anaphorically using the phrase "Here she comes" (19, 21, 23, 25) also enables the listener to observe the character's arrival from different positions, always switching to another place she is moving to or from, and always well aware of her imminent entrance.

In contrast to the first text cluster, the second ends with a vague statement that sexual intercourse between the two characters has occurred, after which the lyrical "I" passionately describes how much she enjoyed it, the beauty of her companion and that she will brag about her conquest. However, the sexual interaction is not described directly, and ellipsis is used once more to create tension, and to stimulate the listener's fantasy and contextual assumptions. The ellipsis is followed by a text passage, which finally reveals the lyrical "I"'s counterpart's name, which is Gloria. Once again, the author uses repetition to create tension, while the listener is already more than ready to hear the name, she repeats "And her name is" four times, and she finally relieves the tension and the listener by calling out the name itself repeatedly, before moving on to the third and last text cluster.

In the third part of the text, the scenery changes to a stadium rock concert, most likely, considering the contextual knowledge about the singer and the song, a performance of Patti Smith herself, at which she is confronted with "twenty thousand girls (who) called their names out to me" (44). However, the protagonist is not interested in any of these girls and observes the tower clock, as a direct reference to the second cluster, where the lyrical "I" looks at a tower clock as her lover arrives.

Therefore, the tower clock can be regarded as direct reference to her lover, which she is waiting for instead of all the girls. Once more, repetition is used to create a dramatic atmosphere. In this case the sound of the clock is imitated acoustically. The tension rises through the described figure of speech, finally resulting in a melancholically retrospective view on the love act between the two characters.

Looking at the text, a clear self-absorption and certain egotism comes to the reader's mind, which intensifies in the third text cluster, when the singer has moved on from the memory of her lover to her obsession to own her. This obsession is highlighted through the continuous repetition of "make her mine" (55), which leads the listener or reader to the assumption that the described love might be more of a claim to ownership than a romantic feeling. After the lyrical "I"'s possession claim, the listener is taken back to the image of the tower bells, combined with the initial statement of the song, finally resulting in a continuing repetition of the lover's name Gloria. In a way, the listener is taken back to the beginning of the song, where Smith's opening sentence "Jesus died for somebody's sins but not mine." (1) is a repeated final enclosing dissociation from the church, claiming to be the performer and therefore the responsible person for her actions.

When considering all this self-absorption, the rejected religious motif of the song, the images illustrated in the text and the initial meaning of the word Gloria, which is meant to praise God's magnificence, it can be concluded that Patti Smith uses an erotic imagery to illustrate her decision to be in control of her own faith. From a different point of view, Smith plays with the religious context of the name "Gloria" ironically, which leads her to the a position where she discusses her sexual desire evoked by a name so important to Christians, establishing a violent contrast of conservative ideology with her sexuality.

It is apparent that the entire song evolves out of the introductory lines and leads the recipient back to it in the outro of the song, which shows that the overall meaning is about being the master of one's own faith, and aiming at magnificence with one's own actions.



## 4.2. British Punk songs

### a) The Clash – London Calling<sup>8</sup>

One of the most prominent bands during the early days of Punk were London-based *The Clash*. Between the years of 1976 to 1986 that the band lasted, they managed to survive the rapid rise, and even faster fall of the Punk movement by evolving the musical style of the band. They were able to reinvent themselves with almost every newly released record, with their third record and double album “London Calling” being their most seminal work, which was even voted number 8 of the 500 best albums of all time in the prestigious *Rolling Stone Magazine* (Levy, 2011: 24ff). The song, “London Calling”, is a perfect example of *The Clash*’s motifs and topics, and will therefore be analysed in more detail below.

*The Clash*’s core members were Joe Strummer, Mick Jones, Paul Simonon and Topper Headon. While Headon was a very experienced drummer and Strummer and Jones had played in bands previously, Simonon had no experience of performing on the bass guitar. However, he received a scholarship for an art school in London, and as a result, he was involved in designing the band’s stage outfits, artwork, and their backdrop banners. According to Bindas (1993: 70), the band members “all came from lower middle-class families in the restrictive British class structure.” Yet Strummer was born into the family of a British Labor foreign minister and was raised in several different nations. Following his brother’s tragic suicide in 1971, he started squatting in various abandoned houses in London, and eventually joined the pub-rock group *the 101ers*. Moreover, as further stated by Bindas (1993: 70), Simonon and Jones came from broken homes in London and Headon was raised in a more stable family environment in Dover. The topics of their songs were very political from early on, with references to their social environment considered in their songs.

As already stated in the short summary of the British and American Punk movement above, Punk evolved as a reaction against the established music business and its money-driven values. “The Clash and punks generally condemned the rockers’ adoption of capitalist business values.” (Bindas, 1993: 70) Punk groups in general,

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<sup>8</sup> cf. Appendix p. 114

but specifically *The Clash*, can be seen as a countermovement to the business values and society's world perception. However, through signing a major deal with *CBS*, the band members found themselves in a contradictory position, blaming the music industry for its elitist behaviour, on the one hand, whilst also putting themselves under contract to the same criticized industry. Nevertheless, despite being signed to a major music label, the band did not stop to criticize the industry. The song "Complete Control" is a fitting example of their antipathy against *CBS*, which clearly shows their stance against their record company with whom they signed a ten record contract.

Throughout the decade of their existence, *The Clash* always stood opposed to bourgeois values and cared about the struggle of the people in the working class. As a result, their records were critically acclaimed, receiving praise by having their music described as "music... worth fighting for" (Nelson, 1979: 115) or as "the greatest rock and roll record ever recorded." (*Village Voice*, 1979: 36) Robert Christgau, a writer for *Village Voice*, offers a very clear definition of *the Clash's* relevance in the 1970s, in comparison to other famous Rock bands:

(I)n 1965 we loved the Beatles' ebullience but found that we wanted (and needed) the cautionary, hard-edged, rather dangerous irony of the Stones, while in 1977 we get off on the Pistols' promise to tear it all down but find that the Clash help us imagine what it might be like to build it back up again. (Christgau, 1978: 29)

It was the band's positive attitude that anyone can change the world that made them unique even among other Punk bands. A critique of society, the government and the system was a major topic in their songs, still keeping the future open for the revolting classes to create a system more worthwhile.

While many of the Clash's songs describe a society with little autonomy and seemingly in the process of self-destruction, the band also believed that people had potential to create a more open and egalitarian society out of this chaos. (Bindas, 1993: 78)

Even when the interest in Punk had already reached its peak and former Punk bands had adapted to more mainstream and accessible music in order to reach bigger

crowds, *the Clash* were regarded as “the only punks left.” (Carson, 1980) At that time, their music had already begun to transform, but it was their message, their sympathy for and identification with the working class that preserved their Punk roots. The message of the band was critical through the years of their existence.

Nevertheless, *the Clash* eventually struggled to convey their ethos, while being signed to a major label, a fact conflicting with their beliefs. David Harker (1980, 211-218) sums up the contradiction perfectly, when he points out that radical ideas by songwriters and other artists cannot be conveyed accordingly, when being advertised as consumable goods. Any intentional radical idea is defused within the process of being advertised and presented as a commercial good and develops to just another part of the mainstream repertoire.

While trapped in a recording contract, the band had concerns regarding record prices, which they always attempted to keep low, regardless of the size. This attempt caused *The Clash* to fall into increased debt, which they could not afford to pay back at any time in their career. As a result, after Jones and Headon had been fired from the band after their commercially successful record *Combat Rock* (1982), Strummer and Simonon disbanded the group in 1986. Besides the last and disappointing record *Cut the Crap* (1985), they left a legacy of five highly influential records, both musically and lyrically. An instance of the high quality of their output is the first song of their most famous record “London Calling” with the same name, a song which deals with the decline of British society, painting a dark picture of the country’s future.

The name of the song itself can be regarded as a reference to *BBC*’s introductory announcement, which is heard immediately before the news to listeners abroad from the United Kingdom. In the song, each line of the verse begins with the same phrase, indicating that what the band is stating is also news. By using repetition in the verse, the attention of the listener is drawn to what is stated next, which is, looking more closely at the lyrics, dystopian predictions concerning the future of the world, and in particular the UK. As the lyricist Joe Strummer had been raised in various countries over the world, it is highly likely that he used the familiar slogan because it had been a constant memory of his childhood. Each line in the verse can be regarded as a headline concerning an upcoming Armageddon. According to Strummer, he

had read about 10 newspaper reports in one day calling down a variety of plagues upon us, like the Ice Age is coming and the sun's getting closer to the Earth, and London's gonna drown next time there's a heavy rain (Gray, 2011: 179).

The first line of the verse introduces the idea that there is going to be a war, while the following lines of the verse are addressing criminal children to get out of their hideaway as there will be no harm done to them, just to clarify in the last line that there is a truncheon, which obviously can harm them. However, it is not mentioned what happens with the children. Besides the repetition, alliteration is used in line four ("come out of the cupboard" (4)) and seven ("see we ain't got no swing" (7)). Furthermore, the song is organized in imperfectly rhyming couplets, however, only the last two lines of the first verse consist of real rhymes ("swing" - "thing" (7-8)), and the preceding lines only consist of half rhymes ("towns" - "down" (1-2), "underworld" - "girls" (3-4), "us" - "dust" (5-6)). In contrast to the first verse, verses two and three consist of rhyming couples, but the last stanza also includes alliteration ("while" - "we" - "where" (18)).

Moreover, the first verse is followed by the burden of the song, which is repeated after each new stanza. Interestingly, it is also filled with dystopian predictions, starting with the announcement of an ice age, followed by the introduction of the idea that the sun is coming closer and the results of this change, which contradicts the preceding statement as it cannot get cooler and hotter at the same time. Additionally, the singer Joe Strummer claims that machines will not work anymore, possibly as a result of the predicted drought, but within the same line he states not to be afraid of what may come next, as he "live(s) by the river" (12). This statement can be analysed as his prediction that he will be one of the first ones to die when London is drowning as he lives so close to the river Thames and, therefore, is prepared to face death. The second burden differs slightly from the first, leaving out the predicted meltdown, but including a nuclear error of which the protagonist of the song similarly has no fear of.

While the first stanza is more apocalyptic, the second deals with the rejection of society's conventions and drug abuse. First of all, Strummer sings about an "imitation zone" (13) to which he will not follow his brother. This "imitation zone" may be regarded as a general reference to mainstream movements, and can be seen as a statement against capitalist developments, which *the Clash* consistently critiqued.

However, there is a more personal explanation, which relates directly to *the Clash's* singer's personal life as his brother was a member of the right extremist party *National Front*. In that case, the first two lines of the verse can be seen as reference to the *National Front*, described as "imitation zone", an environment where people copy the ideas of the German Nationalist Socialists. In any case, the singer rejects the offer to join his brother. As the stanza progresses, the lyrics begin to deal with drug addiction and abuse. "(Z)ombies of death" (15) is a metaphor for drug addicts, whom he advises to stop resisting the addiction and to start inhaling drugs again. As this theme progresses, he indicates that he is talking with a drug addict, who falls asleep during the conversation. Eventually, the last two lines are likely to reference the singer himself, mentioning "the ones with the yellowy eyes" (20) being the only ones to be able to get high. Strummer, whose struggle with Hepatitis is well documented (Salewicz, 2008), refers to himself. As a result of this self-reference, it is not apparent whether Strummer criticizes drug abuse, or if he is just narrating a drug-related scene, as all members of *the Clash* were users and legalization supporters of Marijuana.

The stanza is most likely a differentiation between hard drug users, who were very common among Punks in the 1970s, and light drug users (i.e. Marijuana consumers), and criticizing the effects of hard drugs (e.g. nodding out, looking and behaving like zombies), while he is still getting high on Marijuana without the above-stated consequences. Unlike the first burden, the second includes the line about "a nuclear error" (23), a catastrophe happening in an atomic plant, which can be seen as another apocalyptic threat to humanity.

The last verse questions all the previously mentioned threats to the United Kingdom, when Strummer claims that he had been in London when all the apocalyptic news were broadcasted, and that some of them, but not all of them, are true. A critical analysis concerning these threats was already made in the burden, when two dystopian sceneries, a drought and an ice age are referred to, and therefore contradict each other and can be regarded as an antithesis, stating one extreme possibility and the exact opposite directly afterwards. Before the final stanza ends, the singer introduces the idea that London is "at the top of the dial", on the very top of the world economically, and then asks the rhetorical question: "After all this, won't

you give me a smile?” (33), meaning that worrying cannot be the solution to the world’s problem, especially when living in a secure country such as Great Britain. However, the same statement may also be seen as ironic when taking all the apocalyptic scenarios that are listed in the lyrics into consideration. The song closes with the single sentence “I never felt so much alike.” (34) with the last words being repeated over and over again and slowly fading out. This last utterance can be seen as a critique of society that it is the fear that unites the population of a country, stirred by the media, with the voice of the narrator fading into blankness and monotony, which can be filled with fear and shared by society.

Critically seen, the entire song is a hyperbole, an exaggeration of current events in order to criticize society’s thirst for negative headlines. The songwriter uses the name of the United Kingdom’s capital city in order to address English people as a whole, both living in the UK and abroad, while the anaphora “London Calling” (1, 3, 5, 7, 13, 15, 17, 19, 30, 33) offers both a reference to the BBC, but also used to indicate a new headline to appear, a newsworthy item, which will shock England’s population. Categorically, specific apocalyptic vocabulary is chosen in order to disquiet the listener, and words such as “ice age” (9), “meltdown” (10) or “nuclear error” (11) reflect the fear-invoking rhetoric found in England’s newspapers around that time.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, Joe Strummer uses metonymy both in “London Calling” (1, 3, 5, 7, 13, 15, 17, 19, 30, 33) and “London is drowning” (12, 28) to create a sense of community, which is doomed by several dystopian events, which, considering the third verse and the singer’s reaction to the headlines, however, are not to be taken seriously. The song satirically unites the population of Great Britain by summing up what connects the UK’s inhabitants: the fear of being thrown out of their comfort zone, which might be caused by any of the events mentioned. Lastly, assonance is used throughout the song, especially with the half-rhymes.<sup>10</sup>

To summarise, the song is *the Clash*’s critique of Great Britain’s fear of unexpected, harmful events, and is further a critique of the media and politics for presenting the

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<sup>9</sup> A writing strategy that has not been changed for the better by English journalists since the middle of the 1970s, at least in the subjective opinion of this paper’s author.

<sup>10</sup> e.g. “towns” – “down” (1-2), “underworld” – “girls” (3-4), “us” – “dust” (5-6), “high” – “eyes” (19-20)

world in such a pessimistic way. The critique is transported through exaggeration and a vision of a dystopian future is conveyed ironically. The final line of the song reflects on the British population as a frightened entity, united through fear. Unlike the American Punk songs analysed in this thesis, the song is not intentionally written to separate the writer and the band from society in order to illustrate their uniqueness, but it is a call for change of society as a whole, a plea to rethink society's thought structures, and to change it for the better by ironically exaggerating Great Britain's nervousness.

#### b) Sex Pistols – God Save The Queen<sup>11</sup>

When Malcolm McLaren came back from the United States after he had failed to manage *the New York Dolls* successfully, he had a very specific idea of what steps to take to create a UK version of what he had seen and observed in the United States. He used his boutique *SEX*, a shop selling anti-fashion and which they promoted as “specialists in rubberwear, glamourwear & stagewear” (Savage, 2005: 83), as headquarters for his plans to form and manage a band, after his management career had taken a knock through the *New York Dolls* breakup, which he had managed until then. Being a fan of Richard Hell's attitude and look (whom he tried to persuade to join the new band as a singer several times (Savage, 2005: 99)), he tried to transfer Hell's look onto his new group, which was called the *Sex Pistols*. The project gained clearer outlines, when John Lydon, later known as Johnny Rotten, joined the band in 1975.

Rapidly, the group gathered a loyal fan base around them (with later upcoming musicians such as Siouxsie Sioux or Billy Idol being among them, who were known as the “Bromley Contingent” (Lydon, 2003: 172ff), a group of superfans, back then) until they and the Punk movement gained overnight fame with their appearance on the *Bill Grundy Show* on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1976 (see Savage, 2005: 235) as substitutes for their label colleagues *Queen*, who had cancelled their performance. Beforehand, the band's attitude towards society and their beliefs was carried into the world in a professional manner, and they never made a secret of their low abilities concerning musicianship (even though the first line-up of the band was very professional in

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<sup>11</sup> cf. Appendix p. 116

handling their instruments). For example, Steve Jones claimed in an interview with the NME: "We're not into music. We're into chaos." (Robb, 2006: 148) However, in the interview, guitarist Steve Jones took their notorious reputation a step further and offended talk show host Bill Grundy, who even encouraged his guest to keep on going, with cursing words such as "dirty old man", "dirty sod", "dirty fucker" and "fucking rotter", all expressions which had never been said on live television before.

The interview gained them national attention as a group and their music style of Punk, even though it was mostly connoted negatively throughout the country and resulted in several show cancellations, as well as street chases by people disliking the new underground movement.

Unlike *the Clash*, who tried to convey a negative message in order to start a rethinking process, the *Sex Pistols'* aim was to create chaos and anarchy, to overthrow the British system, which, in the eyes of the band, had failed. While *the Clash* were offering constructive critique concerning various political topics, the *Sex Pistols'* attitude was by far more destructive, and not offering any solutions or starting points for change. The idea behind the band was destruction, a revolution leading to chaos, a fact which led the band to break up after only two years of existence with one released (and highly controversial) record, and indirectly resulted in the death of second bass player Sid Vicious, who died of an overdose, shortly after he was released on police bail, because of the murder of his girlfriend Nancy Spungen. (BBC, 1978)

When approaching the *Sex Pistols'* only record *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols* (1977), which reached the top of the UK's charts, every song is used as a similar outlet to distribute their anarchistic ideas. The second single of the record called "God Save The Queen" is of high interest, as it is basically a call to overthrow the British monarchy and Britain's beloved leader, Queen Elisabeth II. One cannot be sure if the message of the song is backed by serious revolutionary intentions, but the lyrics alone, which employ very strong connoted comparisons, imply a certain sincerity. Therefore, the song will be analysed below.



From a band, whose first single was called “Anarchy in the UK”, it can be expected that the praising phrase from the anthem “God Save The Queen” may be used ironically and it becomes clear within the first two lines of the first stanza that irony is used as a figure of speech throughout the song to wish the addressed royalty exactly the opposite of the utterance. The slogan is repeatedly used in the song at the beginning of every text cluster, except for the burden and the outro which can be identified as the last part of the song, where a repeating “No future” is slowly fading into silence. This anaphoric figure of speech is used to put emphasis on the addressed person, and to announce the antipathy to the Queen repeatedly by ironically using the British anthem. At first, the song was named “No Future”, but as the initial release date of the single was timed to be on the same day as the Queen’s silver jubilee, it was renamed and charted number 2 in the UK charts. (Savage, 2005: 364ff)

Structurally, the song is divided into six parts, namely, first verse, first burden, second verse, second burden, third verse and outro. Unlike other famous Punk songs, this song specifically does not consist of clearly structured quatrains, but can be more precisely seen as three free verses, the first and third one consisting of eight lines each, while the second verse consists of twelve lines. Moreover, the two burdens, which do not contain the same text, consist of four lines each. Still, perfect rhymes (“queen” – “regime” (1-2), “history” (22) – “mercy” (24), “parade” (23) – “paid” (25), “sin” (27) – “dustbin” (29)) and half rhymes (“moron” – “bomb” (3-4), “queen” – “being” (5-6)) appear irregularly, which does not allow the analyst to define the text clusters as quatrains or couplets. The register of the lyrics consists of common everyday language, leaving the anaphorically used anthem aside and including a very aggressive tone, explicitly negative connoted words and cursing words (“mad” (23), “dustbin” (29), “poison” (30), “fascist regime” (2), “moron” (3), etc.)

The first verse starts with the words of the British anthem, to imply a connection between the British monarchy and a fascist regime directly afterwards. Furthermore, the singer and lyricist Johnny Rotten keeps on criticizing the English leader, but includes her followers and ends the first text cluster with another comparison, namely defining Britain’s population as a “potential H bomb” (4). According to Umastuti, Sari & Wahyudi (2015: 12), the line “underlines the rage, fierce and frustration of

alienation towards them conducted by other upper classes.” After repeating the line which begins the British anthem, he continues to utter his anger by describing her as inhuman, and predicts that the British population and her leader have “no future” (42-45). The latter slogan was of high importance for the *Sex Pistols* throughout their career, as it exemplified their idea of chaos and predicted the decline of the system as they had known it. The phrase “no future” became the slogan for a whole generation of Punks, claiming that there was no positive outlook for them and the system they were raised in. It became the headline for the chaos the band caused and proposed, stating that society had developed in the wrong direction for too long and had reached a dead end. The slogan is referring both to the Queen, to her followers, and essentially the United Kingdom as a whole to have no future. According to Johnny Rotten. “England’s dreaming” (41) can be seen as a reference to the British population’s melancholic retrospective view of the British Empire, dreaming of the better, wealthy days the past had offered Britain’s inhabitants, rejecting the natural process of change.

The negative forecast on British lives continues in the first burden, which states that people should stop listening to the authority’s promises, and should also stop looking for hopeful prospects as all hope is gone. In the first verse, the slogan “no future” is repeated for the first time, a repetition which continues throughout the song, attempting to burn the message into the listener’s mind: “There is no future for you.” (11)

Moreover, the second verse opens with a text cluster which ironically praises the Queen and emphasises their praise. Taking the first verse and burden into consideration, the second verse can be clearly regarded as ironic, ending with the inversion “God saves” (17), while the singer of the band stretches the last word in the song and adds a threatening feeling to the religious phrase. Also, the second text cluster of the discussed stanza already implies a new idea about the Monarchy and conveys it to the attentive listener, claiming that the Queen is of high importance as a tourist attraction, but still not the leader people expect her to be. Johnny Rotten continues to criticize the monarchist system severely, by addressing the colonial crimes the British Empire has committed and legitimizing their duties towards the affected countries in compensation. Obviously, the heavy use of irony is very

prominent in the second section of the song, and Johnny Rotten uses it effectively to criticize what can be regarded as the general opinion of the British citizens, stating how much they love the queen, how important she is, and how all the crimes the country has committed have lost their horror, while the Queen and the Royal family are still of such high importance.

In the second burden, the songwriter takes the listener a step further and beyond the idea of monarchist criticism by introducing its opponents, the Punks. Two strong metaphors are used to exemplify with whom the addressed Monarchy has to deal, namely “flowers in the dustbin” (28-29) and “poison in your human machine” (30-31), two metaphors which can be seen as a definition of the Punks, whom he views as the unwanted, the thrown away, the revolutionaries, who do not obey anymore. The burden ends with the claim that the Punks are the future of the system and their followers, and the attentive listener can observe the contradiction of claiming “no future” at first and then finding another definition for the upcoming future. However, by using such destructive terms to describe Punks, it becomes clear that Rotten does not see the future and no future as antonyms, but as synonyms, the upcoming future can still be regarded as no future as a result of the *Sex Pistols*’ chaotic prognosis.

The third stanza of the song consists of two almost identical text clusters, the first four lines repeating the first four lines of the second verse, the last text cluster using the same two lines to start with and then repeating the last two lines of the first verse, before stepping into a monotonous repetition of the prediction “no future”, claiming that there is no future to be expected for the Monarchy, for the Queen, for the British and for the Punks. The statement defining Punk as the future of Britain is contradictory, as the same claim introduces the idea that there is no future for Britain at all. As a result, the statement can be regarded as an antithesis in terms of figurative speech.

Looking closely one realizes that the songwriter did not make use of more than two alliterations in the text (“made” – “moron” (3), “mean” – “man” (15)) and the use of assonance is also not present enough. However, what makes the song specifically interesting is the constant presence of irony as a figure of speech, which the singer of the band uses to convey his message to the audience. Also, the rhetorical question

“When there’s no future, how can there be sin?” (26-27) is a statement claiming that chaos is now legitimate, as there is no future for anyone anyway.

Overall, the song is a clear critique of England’s politics. In contrast to *the Clash’s London Calling*, it does introduce the opponents of the Monarchy, namely the Punks. However, this introduction is not used to cultivate an image, but to introduce the rising community, which had incorporated the slogan “no future” as their own and by which the Monarchy is doomed to fall and fail, even though history has taught us differently.

### c) Siouxsie & the Banshees – Hong Kong Garden<sup>12</sup>

The female fronted band *Siouxsie & the Banshees* were inspired by the Punk movement from early on, particularly by the *Sex Pistols*, who were still an unsigned band during *the Banshees’* formation. They formed in 1976, when they heard about a band cancelling their performance at the *100 Club Festival*, which was headlined by the *Sex Pistols* and organized as well as promoted by their manager Malcom McLaren, and they offered to play instead two days beforehand. The band was supposed to break up again right after the concert, but as the performance was received quite well, they were asked to play again, which eventually resulted in a long and successful career.

Musically, the band started as a Punk group, however, their musical style changed over the years, adapting a darker mood and resulting in *Siouxsie & the Banshees* being named frequently as the pioneers of Post-Punk and the Goth movement. Also, the band experimented with synthesizers, string sections, etc. and each of their albums released in their active time as a band from 1976 to 1996 gained high acclaim, and praise in reviews by music critics. Moreover, Siouxsie Sioux won international attention, when she was on air at the Bill Grundy show with the *Sex Pistols* and the already discussed scandal around Punk evolved. (Paytress, 2003: 47-48)

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<sup>12</sup> cf. Appendix p. 118

Singer Siouxsie Sioux was well known through her early career to have a controversial look, and her clothes were often covered with swastikas, which caused her to be beaten up at least once. (Paytress, 2003: 32) Nevertheless, Sioux was not a Nazi and definitely against the concept of white supremacy. Wearing the image of a swastika was seen as rebellious act in the early days of Punk, “expressing the failure of society, of the Symbolic, of fantasy, of everything that guaranteed “meaning” itself.” (Pope, 2009: 3) The idea of Punk was to distance oneself from established values through the attitude and the look, both being used to shock and tear down the general values, which were regarded as crucial in society in the 1970s. Punk, as Pope (2009: 3) states, “involved more radically, a drive to express – to press out – the parent culture’s meaninglessness.” Sioux herself defined her wardrobe choice including Nazi symbols as “very much an anti-mums and anti-dads thing” (Savage, 1991: 241), as essentially a sign of a rebellion lived by the generation that followed the summit of the hippie movement. It can be regarded as a counter development to the idea of peace and love, an uprising against the established and apparently failed idea of living together as one community spreading free love. Therefore, a symbol representing evil, destruction and death was used not in order to relate to the national socialist party’s ideas, but to separate oneself from common society’s values. Still, the idea of anti-racist Punks wearing swastikas seems confusing and strange.

However, it was claimed that while the *National Front*, a far right/ extremist party in the UK, was very popular at that time, Punks helped to confuse the sympathizers of the right extremist movement by employing the imagery, which would have been expected at the other end of the political spectrum. Pope (2009: 9) claims that “(o)ne could say they de-sacralised the swastika, rendering it a little less auratic for the vulnerable youth toying with its symbolism.”

The young generation of the 1970s wanted to rebel against the ideals and values of the older generations, and the swastika, one of the most notorious and highly negatively connoted symbols of not only their parents’ generation, but also of at least the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, seemed a perfect way to present the idea of society’s meaninglessness to the elder generations. By taking one of the most meaningful

symbols and emptying it of its former meaning, using it casually without the idea behind it, a true rebellious act was intentionally conveyed.

In this analysis, the very first song the band ever released is considered, highlighting the group's political position, on the one hand, and exemplifying the importance of politics within the British Underground Punk movement on the other.

The song "Hong Kong Garden" was released as a single before *Siouxsie and the Banshees* finished their first record, which was recorded in one week and mixed and mastered in the following three weeks. According to a statement made by Siouxsie Sioux, one of the band's songwriters and the singer of the group, in an interview with a medium called *Punk Top Ten*, it is a tribute to the owners of an Asian restaurant, where the band used to eat and which was also frequented by white supremacist skinheads, who discriminated against the owners of the restaurant.

I'll never forget, there was a Chinese restaurant in Chislehurst called the 'Hong Kong Garden'. Me and my friend were really upset that we used to go there and like, occasionally when the skinheads would turn up it would really turn really ugly. These gits would just go in en masse and just terrorise these Chinese people who were working there. We'd try and say 'Leave them alone', you know. It was a kind of tribute. (Sioux, 2001)

As stated by the bandleader herself, the lyrics include direct references to the observed incident and, therefore, can be regarded as political criticism, as a clear anti-racist statement of the band. The song is divided into three different parts, basically four quatrains, which are used as the first and second verse, with a burden consisting of the repeated phrase "Hong Kong Garden" in between. Moreover, the burden is repeated once more after the second verse. Looking closer at the rhyming endings of the quatrains, which are structured AABB, it becomes clear that the songwriter put some effort into using mostly perfect rhymes ("air" – "everywhere" (1-2), "reeds" – "feeds" (3-4), "water" – "daughter" (5-6), "face – grace" (11-12), "in" – "jasmine" (13-14), "sunrise" – "size" (15-16)), with the inclusion of only one half rhyme in the second quatrain of the first verse ("23" – "please" (7-8)).

Moreover, both alliteration (“reaps” – “rice” – “reeds” (3), “swarm” – “see” (11), “sunset” – “sunrise” (15), “small” – “size” (16), “Chicken Chow Mein” – “Chop Suey” (17)) and assonance (“reaps” – “fields” – “reeds” – “feeds” (3-4), “eyes” – “sunrise” – “size” (15-16)) are used frequently within the first and second verse. The repeated name of the restaurant in the burden acts as a threatening variable, reminding the attentive listener of the crime scene.

The first two lines of the verse already indicate that something bad is happening, as the phrases “harmful elements” and “symbols clashing” (1-2) show. Taking the name of the song into consideration and drawing connections between the scenery to symbolism that might harm the present people, it becomes quite clear that there is a threatening racist act going on, with Asian and white supremacist symbolism clashing with each other metaphorically, creating a dangerous environment of contrasted cultural and racist symbols.

However, the songwriter continues not with describing the conflict and discrimination itself, but carries on by describing certain cultural Asian aspects, which she obviously connotes with Chinese men and women. Putting the lyrics into its context, the stereotypical ideas and images of Asian people and their culture, which are illustrated in the song text, can be either regarded as a critique of the same stereotypes, a narration of the observed verbal discrimination against the owners of the restaurant by white supremacists, or, most likely, both.

Looking at the text more closely, it is filled with presumptions about people from Asia and results in a categorization, which expects the following statements to be true:

- Asian people eat and seed mainly rice.
- Water in Asia is dirty.
- Out of tradition, the female offspring of Asian families is sold.
- When on holiday, people in Asia appear in swarm-like groups.
- Confucius is graceful and wise and directly connoted with people from Asia
- Asian people are small.
- Asians smell like wild jasmine.
- Asians have small eyes.

Taking the four steps of racialization (naturalization, homogenization, hierarchization and polarization) defined by Rommelspacher (2011: 29) into consideration, it becomes clear that the presumptions and statements made are, be this aware or unaware, of a racist nature. Firstly, naturalization is the common racist belief that certain attributes (e.g. Asian people are small and that is how it is always going to be.) are hereditary. Secondly, the person accused of racialization is also guilty of homogenization, which means that he or she overgeneralizes and thinks of people from Asia not as individuals with individual strengths and weaknesses, but of a group sharing the exactly same attributes (e.g. All female offspring in Asia is sold.). Thirdly, polarization takes place, which uses certain attributes to distance oneself from the target group (e.g. Asians pollute the water, Europeans do not.). Finally, hierarchization takes place, which means that the individual shown to be racist puts himself or herself on a pedestal for being better and of more value than the target group. (Rommelspacher, 2011: 25ff) As outlined and exemplified, the presumptions and statements provided in the lyrics are racializing. Therefore, knowing the band's anti-racist attitude, it can be assumed that the statements given in the text are either a citation of utterances of white supremacists when visiting the restaurant, or used by the songwriter herself, using the figure of speech irony, having the opposite aim and trying to fulfil it with the use of this rhetorical figure.

Moreover, the vocabulary used in the text allows the creation of a category "Asia", which includes the following nouns directly connoted with the Asian continent: "rice", "reeds" (3), "Yen" (8), "Hong Kong" (9, 10, 18, 19), "Confucius" (12), "jasmine" (14), "Chicken Chow Mein", "Chop Suey" (17), "sunset eyes" (15), "polluted water" (5), and "tourists" (11). Furthermore, there are several references to the Asian restaurant made in the lyrics, which creates a direct connection between Asian people and culture, which is essentially presented stereotypically and in very narrow-minded fashion described in the text, and Asian food is served in a European context.

Also, using only the text provided by *Siouxsie & the Banshees* without any contextual background knowledge, one could assume to be presented a dull description of Asian culture, which would make the text similar (but still, of course, in a more artful fashion) to the presumptuous statements provided above. However, the two introductory lines of the song, which mention racist symbolism as an omnipresent



threat, are also an introduction, which can be regarded as a critical reflection and critique on the same stereotypes presented in the lyrics afterwards.

Within the song text, only a few metaphors are used, one of them describing characteristically typical Asian eyes as “sunset eyes” (15), comparing the shape of the eyes to the sun during sunset. In contrast to the negative connotations made through the word use in the text, this metaphor is a welcome change. Siouxsie Sioux’s comment on her motivation to write the song illustrates her political motivation behind the lyrics perfectly:

I remember wishing that I could be like Emma Peel from The Avengers and kick all the skinheads’ heads in, because they used to mercilessly torment these people for being foreigners. It made me feel so helpless, hopeless and ill. (Goddard, 2005)

Still, the anti-racist intention of a person who was notoriously known for wearing nazi symbolism as a shock element of her artist appearance, is very interesting and exemplifies the frequent use of political contradictions in the Punk movement. The contradictions were a mixture of the well-directed shocking elements and very clear anti-racist, anti-establishment, anti-Thatcher ideas. Therefore, the song can be regarded as a clear political statement against discrimination and overgeneralisation, even though it uses imagery directly adapted from a racist ideology.

#### d) Crass – Reject of Society<sup>13</sup>

The band *Crass* was formed in 1977 and conveyed their very strong anarchistic beliefs throughout the band’s history, rejecting all major label efforts to sign them and promoted their beliefs through expressive concepts, whereby they played a special role in British Punk history. (Berger, 2009: 77ff) While bands such as *the Clash* and *Sex Pistols* were signed by major labels and therefore contradicted their promoted ideals, *Crass* refused to work within their enemy’s system. “We believed that you could no more be a socialist and signed to CBS (The Clash) than you could be an anarchist and signed to EMI” (Rimbaud, 2004: XXIV) states their drummer,

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<sup>13</sup> cf. Appendix p. 120

songwriter and conceptualist Penny Rimbaud, referring to the above-mentioned bands, whose label deals caused a critical reflection on the band's philosophies among other Punks.

Throughout their career, *Crass* released mostly on their own label, worked with charity organizations and characterised the term DIY (do it yourself) Punk, as they were actively involved in all their releases. Moreover, they caused various scandals, with the most widely known being a fake telephone conversation between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald , in which they discuss the nuclear bombing of Europe as the result of the Russian and American conflict during the Falklands War.<sup>14</sup> Overall, the band experimented with various art forms in their projects, such as Graffiti spraying, and therefore *Crass* are known as Art Punks as well, as visual artists additionally influenced their live performances. The band also cites the *Dadaist* movement as a strong influence. (McKay, 1996: 88)

Moreover, out of line with Punk groups which evolved at that time, *Crass* do not mention any rock music as their influences, but rather highlight their love for classical music and free jazz as their biggest musical influence. Overall, their work can be regarded as highly intellectual with a reflected idea behind the projects they released, always focusing on creating something contemporary without betraying their ideals. As a result, the band's releases never gained as much attention as the works of *the Clash*, *Sex Pistols* and other pioneers of the Punk movement, however, the deliberate rejection of commercial possibilities put the band in the privileged status of a cult band among anarchists and Punks. Thus, their controversial band logo, which consists of a two-headed Ouroboros, parts of the swastika, the Union Jack and the Christian cross (Rimbaud, 1999: 90) can be seen on clothing throughout the world to this day.

After seven years, having released six full-length records and ten singles, some of them having caused high levels of controversy, the group broke up in 1984 and left their anarchistic ideas, work ethos and releases clearly visible for their musical and political offspring. The British and American anarchist movements were specially influenced by the band.

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<sup>14</sup> [http://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/read/penny-rambaud-on-how-crass-nearly-started](http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/penny-rambaud-on-how-crass-nearly-started)

The text "Reject of Society" of the Punk band *Crass* is an attempt to distance themselves from the values provided by society at the time the song was written. In the text, the writer clearly distinguishes between the lyrical "I" and the criticised opponents confronted with the text, most likely society as a whole, who are addressed as "them" by the writer. The song criticizes values conveyed by society and governments to gain a clearly structured living, including the idea of working in a casual day job. Moreover, in the burden, the songwriter switches from the addressed "them" to addressing someone personally by using the personal pronoun "you".

While having a closer look at the text, it becomes clear that firstly, the creator of the text criticizes society, complaining about its conventions to the listener. However, he switches to address the criticized people directly in the burden, addressing the criticized society with "you". In the case of the discussed lyrics, the personal pronoun can be regarded as a clear critique of the British government, as the comparison to Frankenstein's monster is widely seen as a reference to an institution that has provoked ideas and movements, which are finally fed up with the way they have been treated. Therefore, deictic expressions are of high importance in the song as they are used in order to emphasize an ideological gap between the parties.

First of all, the song text consists of three different sections, namely, first verse, burden and second verse. In contrast to the second verse, which is written in two quatrains, the first verse consists of twelve lines (i.e. three quatrains), while the burden is written as one quatrain. Throughout the text, the rhyme scheme is AABBC... The songwriter only used perfect rhymes ("floor" – "four" (1-2), "race" – "anycase" (3-4), "do" – "you" (5-6),...) except for three half rhymes ("in" – "anything" (9-10), "money" – "worry" (13-14), "say" – "society" (7-8)).

Looking at the text closely, it becomes clear that the register is based on simple language with barely any features that create an abstract text with the help of semantic, contextual or figurative meaning. However, the first stanza already includes certain rhetorical figures worth considering. Firstly, the burden is repeated in the song, which emphasizes the failure of the ruling class, of politicians and the system as a whole. As already mentioned the opponents are referred to as "you", the enemy, the people and structures who are responsible for the world's development towards a

society the writer of the song text despises. In lines one and three of the first stanza, an anaphora is used in order to express the negative attitude of the text creator towards work, a process he describes as a “silly rat race”, a never ending movement towards the required direction without getting any closer to the intended goal.

Additionally, the songwriter uses an inversion to emphasize his dislike by switching the sentence structure, placing the negated clause in front to highlight the statement’s meaning. Furthermore, the producer of the text asks a rhetorical question of his audience when confronted with his own behaviour by others, most likely people who represent society. The question does not require an answer, “Well wouldn’t you?” (6) is an ironic question the lyrical “I” asks, but it is implied that he already knows that the way of life and disobedience he has chosen is not suitable for a high percentage of the people addressed leading him to the position from where he is now, critiquing the world’s stereotypes and images throughout his song.

Furthermore, two interesting phrases strike the reader’s attentive eye, when reading the lyrics. On the one hand, the lyrical “I” defines himself as a reject of society. Nevertheless, by refusing to accept the established conventions, he creates regulations for himself already that require the lyrical “I” to clearly oppose what is regarded as the norm. “Reject of society” is not only the title of the song, it is what clearly defines the song writer, what makes him different from the people surrounding him, a decision made by both parties. On the other hand, in the line directly following the first phrase the writer mentions “conscience money” (25) which is handed to the lyrical “us”, including to the writer himself and the sympathizing recipient. By “conscience money”, the writer refers to the introduction of money itself and the expenses a government has for the general population. In the opinion of the message sending subject, money is used as a distraction, to avoid a rebellion against the established structures, which he regards as chains to the freedom he hopes to achieve. However, according to the songwriter, people have already changed too much towards a more reflected opinion on the structures they want to live in, resulting in the introduction of a “Frankenstein monster you created” (27, 31, 35), which can be described as the metaphorical use of a character from popular culture to exemplify the change of governed people to a community that cares and shows resistance against their leaders.

Furthermore, negatively connoted vocabulary and phrases are used throughout the text to convey the required distance to the addressed enemy. Word combinations such as “silly rat race” (3), “silly rules” (11), or “hypocritical fools” (12) communicate a negativity connected to the discussed matter. A good example of the writer’s intentions is found when considering lines three and four of the second stanza: “They fucking tricked me half the time Now they’ve got to stand in line” (19-20). The sentence represents the idea of a payback, that society’s leaders have played their tricks far too long and receive an appropriate response in return. Also, several terms from a working context such as “factory floor” (1), “sweeping up” (2), etc. are used in the text, to exemplify the environment the song writer rejects impulsively.

Overall, the song is a harsh critique of society, without presenting a sharply painted picture of the conventions which should be changed. It is rather a lyrical rebellion against established values, without giving a clear idea what and who the definite subjects of critique are. As a result, the attentive reader is able to imagine his or her own problems with society to be the core of the song. The predominant message of the song is that society’s current conventions are wrong and exploited by governments and corporations. Nevertheless, according to the songwriter, a change is close.

#### e) Stiff Little Fingers – Alternative Ulster<sup>15</sup>

The band *Stiff Little Fingers* played an unusual role in the early days of Punk music in Great Britain. Unlike the other bands discussed in this paper, the group originally formed in Belfast, Northern Ireland, a place where religious conflicts dominated the media, politics and the everyday life of its inhabitants. “(T)he Northern Ireland conflict, known locally as ‘the Troubles’, endured for three decades and claimed the lives of more than 3,500 people.” (McEvoy, 2008: 1) In 1977, during the conflict the band *Stiff Little Fingers* was formed under the name of *Highway Star* in Belfast. (Cranna, 1979: 6ff) The band was initially formed as a rock cover band, but discovered the Punk movement and decided to change their musical style and name.

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<sup>15</sup> cf. Appendix p. 122

It was the band's intention from early on to discuss and reflect on their experiences with "the Troubles" in their songs, with their first single, which was sent out to several radio stations and record labels, being designed in the style of a cassette bomb, as a reference to the paramilitary processes in their home country. Thus, particularly the band's early recordings deal with the religious conflict in Northern Ireland, presenting a motif appearing repeatedly in *Stiff Little Finger's* songs. The single, which received airplay by BBC's legendary DJ John Peel, sold 30000 units, while their first long player "Inflammable Material" sold over 100000 copies, being the first independent release in the UK to reach the charts. (Cranna, 1979: 6)

As a result of their independent success, the band moved from Belfast to London, which also resulted in the group escaping from the daily presence of "the Troubles" in their lives. As a consequence, the topics and motifs of the bands' songs changed, but remained political to this very day, analysing and presenting opinions about international conflicts and personal tragedies, such as the war in Iraq, domestic abuse or hooliganism. Overall, the band has released ten long players to this day, with a breakup in 1983 and a reunion in 1987. However, the band was never able to repeat the success they had with their first album, which is still regarded as one of the classics in Punk history. Nevertheless, their second record release allowed them to perform at Britain's Top of the Pops. Their first performance on the show gained them nationwide attention, as they were not taking the playback performance seriously and obviously did not mime the performance as requested, a fact that resulted in a lifelong ban from the show at first, but eventually led to a second performance, because of the positive reception of the first.

Preceding their first full-length release, they had released the single "Alternative Ulster", which is the best known song of the band and is discussed in the following paragraphs. The song is also featured on their first full length record "Inflammable Material" and is the signature song of the band, appearing in video games and securing the band's relevance after more than three decades.

Similarly to the group, the topic of the analysed song "Alternative Ulster" is also based in Northern Ireland and discusses the possibility of a change in society, which would ultimately lead to development into a different country, an "alternative ulster",

with the last word being a regional nickname for Northern Ireland. As a result, the theme of the song is the change of society and a critique of the same, introducing the boredom the British youth was confronted with in the 1970s, when progressive, popular music was banned and unwanted in this part of the United Kingdom. Consequently, venues were hosting mostly cover bands playing harmless songs, while the Punk movement remained unwanted and underground. As already mentioned above, the topic is typical for *Stiff Little Fingers*, because it deals with everyday life in Belfast, a city where many people died over three decades of terror and paramilitary fights and attacks.

The song “Alternative Ulster” can be divided into four parts, namely first stanza, burden, second stanza and third stanza, each of them consisting of two quatrains, except for the fourth part, which presents the text in free verse consisting of two quatrains, a couplet in between and a single line at the end of the song. As already indicated in the introduction, the song focuses on a required change in Northern Ireland, which the songwriter calls for on various levels. The first stanza is essentially a description of the processes and developments in Northern Ireland, including area specific information as well as a reference to the country’s political and social state. In the first quatrain, the songwriter narrates the boredom surrounding the country’s capital city Belfast, a status one can only live through when visiting *the Trident* in Bangor. The Trident was the only Punk venue in Northern Ireland at that time, situated in Bangor, a town about 15 miles away from Belfast. Following the first part of the initial stanza, the writer highlights the lack of interesting places in their town, claiming that “(w)e ain’t got nothin’ but they don’t really care” (5), which means that the government is not concerned about the desires its country’s youth has, but only about acquiring as much money as possible from each young citizen.

What follows is a call for change, for a political rebellion and civil disobedience. The burden is a statement reclaiming the country from the ruling class, asking for a change brought about by the inhabitants themselves rather than waiting for politicians to make a move towards the country’s younger population. Each of the eight lines in the burden can be regarded as a plea by the band to their audience, with each plea being introduced with a verb at the beginning of the sentence,

avoiding to directly address specific groups or people in order to reach out to anybody who may feel involved.

Continuing the analysis by moving to the second stanza, the content of the piece's third text cluster can be defined as another observation. While the first stanza was about boredom in the country, the second one discusses the threat caused by the excessive presence of authorities, namely of the army and the police. When looking closely at the first quatrain of the second verse, an expression occurs, which can be regarded as misleading for people not familiar with Northern Ireland and its vocabulary characteristics. The line "And the RUC dog of repression is barking at your feet" (20) is a metaphor for the police threatening the well-being of average Northern Ireland inhabitants. RUC is an abbreviation for the *Royal Ulster Constabulary*, which is the former name of the Northern Irish police. Drawing a connection to a barking dog representing the police, it becomes clear that the band is trying to depict a dangerous image of the police authorities, which can be regarded as a threat from the writer's point of view.

After the songwriter has introduced all the dangers and the bleakness of a life in Northern Ireland, the recipient is asked three questions, which can be easily identified as rhetorical questions as there is no other answer expected than "No.". The questions concern the life quality in Northern Ireland, asking the attentive listener if the boring and oppressed life one had to live in the Great Britain in the 1970s was positive, worthwhile and fulfilling. Given the facts presented earlier in the song, the answer to the questions can only be negative.

The second stanza of the song is succeeded by another burden, which eventually results in the fourth text cluster of the song, where, similarly to the second part of the first song, a distinction between the lyrical "I", the addressed person "you" and the criticized "they" is made. It illustrates the different positions of text producer, text receiver and criticized third party. Unlike the first stanza, which reflects on Northern Ireland's lack of interesting activities for a younger generation, and the second stanza, which criticizes the high frequency of repressive authority within the country, the bridge is a clear call for civil disobedience. It suggests that the people fed up with the system, which keeps telling them that they are a part of it themselves, should



revolt and alter the existing conventions and norms of society. Fittingly, the song ends with the line “Go and get it now” (45), implying that the band has introduced the idea of civil disobedience and now hands over the responsibility to anyone listening.

Looking at the figurative use of language in the lyrics, it becomes clear that very simple language is used with only four real rhymes and two half rhymes occurring in the text. Furthermore, apart from the discussed rhetorical questions and metaphors for specific authorities, no abstract language is used to create text ambiguity.

However, one can observe the category “Northern Ireland” clearly being represented in the text, including words such as “Ulster” (3), “the Trident”, “Bangor” (3), “Belfast” (10, 12, 14, 16,...), or “RUC” (20).

In conclusion, the song “Alternative Ulster” reports on the problems a new generation had to face in Northern Ireland in the 1970s. The language remains simple but still includes very insistent calls for change and appeals for a better future in Northern Ireland. Once again, the purpose of the song is clearly to utter a political statement and the dissatisfaction the band feels with their government and community, which was not interested in a development towards a modern and emancipated society.

## **5. Findings**

From what the analysed lyrics have shown, a clear distinction between American and British Punk can be made. Considering both birthplaces of the subculture closely, the apparent reasons can be defined in terms of economy and culture. This chapter highlights the idea of this thesis once more and attempts to give an overview of how and why the motifs and intentions for creating a similar subcultural movement with similar symbolism differed so strikingly.

### **5.1. American Punk and the desire to be an outsider**

Firstly, the American punk culture started as a clear dissociation with the dominant society in the 1970s. People in the suburbs started bands as a result of boredom, as they could not relate to the mainstream rock music scene, which was popular at that

time. The statement to be different was conveyed through both music and fashion. "The punks' fashion sensibilities where "no one gives a shit about you." (Bindas, 1993: 77) Considering themselves as outcasts, as the forgotten ones of society, people started gathering in groups in Manhattan, in clubs such as *Max' Kansas City*, which was also frequented regularly by the established art scene surrounding Andy Warhol. (see McNeil & McCain, 2014: 5ff) Nevertheless, it was Hilly Kristal's venue *CBGBs* which opened the door for semi-professional bands with the lack of musical experience (in the early days), and bands that developed into what would be known as Punk groups, spreading a special anarchy radiance and lawlessness.

As previously mentioned in the short summary of American and British punk, the scene's origins are not only varying in terms of the founding year, but mostly because of the group's different intentions concerning the conveyed message of the songs. American Punk was created as an anti-establishment art form, a way for people who regarded themselves as outcasts to draw a clear line between themselves and the everyday norm in the 1970s. All the songs analysed for this paper have a clear anti-establishment message or at least deal with unconventional topics, which have never been addressed in public before. Therefore, music was used to shock and irritate on the one side, and also to express the personal struggle and life in a discriminating society with certain conventions, which were rejected by the Punks.

Looking at the five motifs behind the songs of the American Punk groups in more detail, one can observe a clear accord concerning the ambition of rejecting the common values of society in the 1970s, but not without a certain narcissism and intention for cultivating one's image. *The Ramones*, for instance, portrayed themselves as members of the lower class, when singing the song "53<sup>rd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>", in which the protagonist is a male prostitute who becomes a murderer. It is a plot in which the character mixes up self-confidence with success as a prostitute and eventually ends up killing a customer as a result of mixed emotions and moral values. The story is clearly centred in an environment separate from the mainstream and is unusual as a topic in popular culture. Summed up, the lyrical "I" has to prove himself (for his own sake) and takes bad decisions, while the story progresses.

In the song “Blank Generation” by *Richard Hell & the Voidoids* “, the topic is also of separation of oneself from others. By following the character from birth, and observing his environment acting accordingly around him, the song establishes a disconnection between the main protagonist and the world he was born into, providing him with enough antipathy to position himself as a lonesome outsider, who feels it is his duty and destiny to be different. Unlike the analysed song of *the Ramones*, which focuses mainly on one character, Richard Hell regards himself as the spokesperson and addresses a whole generation with his song, exclaiming that one can be everything and nothing in his generation, offering an open disapproval against the mechanisms of society. However, it is also a statement clearly drawing a line between what is conventional and publicly accepted and what this new group of individuals with an unconventional style and attitude strives for.

Similar to “Blank Generation”, *Dead Boys’* “Sonic Reducer” indicates a dislike of the people in the character’s direct environment, which, of course, also implies a dislike of society. Nevertheless, the narrative voice of the character allows a deeper insight into his intentions and reflections and it becomes quite clear that the lyrical “I” is behaving awkwardly, as he is not getting the attention that he feels to have deserved. In that respect, publicly accepted guidelines are critiqued, as they do not fit the protagonist’s expectations, and the aim of his life is to transform himself into a “Sonic Reducer” (9, 21), a person, who is not regarded as a “loser” in the context of society’s conventions. In this particular case, the songwriter draws his own characteristic features, which separate him from the “common” people surrounding him. However, he does not truly reject the conventions society offers, but puts himself above them by highlighting the differences which make him, in his own opinion, unique. The song also utters his frustration that the characteristics which make him special are not noticed among those around him. Moreover, it is a song clearly identifying the discrepancy between the values society is fond of cultivating and the ideas and characteristics the underground movement Punk considers to be of highest importance and value.

Utilising far more demanding language, *the Patti Smith Group* also released songs centring on the idea of creating art in an anti-establishment environment with a message identifying themselves as different and outstanding. Patti Smith, who had

released two poetry collections prior to her rise to stardom, also worked hard to cultivate the image of her as an outcast. She manages to shock the audience with her song “Gloria”, in which she mixes up Christian symbolism with sexuality and her own autonomy as an artist and a sinner. By presenting herself as an opponent of Christian values, she aimed to unsettle the listeners in Christian America and to imply sexual interaction while playing with figurativeness known from religious texts. Her text is the narration of a love affair, but also clearly expresses her point of view on society and her place detached from it.

Furthermore, *the Stooges*’ song “I Wanna Be Your Dog” plays with sexual taboos even more explicitly, and for the time, more shockingly than Patti Smith. Smith’s narration is a playful approach to sexual desire, leading the recipient from the moment the two lovers have met to the moment sexual intercourse occurs. In *the Stooges*’ song, however, the receiver is confronted and directly thrown into a drug-infused scenery with degrading desires of the lyrical “I”. It is a glimpse into a room where sexual intercourse is about to occur, far away from what was regarded as acceptable at the time of the single release, introducing taboos to the general public via popular culture.

Comparing the analysed American songs with each other, the shared stance towards society and the rejection of the same seems most striking. However, when looking a more closely, the attempt to shock with ideas departing from norms intensifies. While most of the song texts include explicit sexual interactions or at least sexuality through images provided by the writer, it is also the protagonist’s unusual behaviour that alienated the music fans despite the target audience of American Punks (which was, prior to the style gaining international attention, only an elitist group of people in Manhattan). Motifs such as prostitution, rejection of religious beliefs, denial of society’s established conventions and especially unusual texts about sexual intercourse were very unusual for the time, and surely showed that groups experimented in their output, suggesting broader acceptance concerning certain taboo topics.

## 5.2. British Punk and political ambitions

The development of British Punk and its attached attitude does not only vary in terms of time frame, when being compared with American Punk. What united both movements was a frequently discussed rejection of society's values and ideas of a community, which inevitably caused the members of the British Punk scene to distance themselves from the American scene. Johnny Rotten, singer of the *Sex Pistols*, for example, claimed: "[the Ramones] were all long-haired and of no interest to me. I didn't like their image, what they stood for, or anything about them." (Lydon, 2003: 118) The most popular person and band was simultaneously the most different, the most outstanding and the most anti-everything, which forced the members of the scene to deny certain reoccurring characteristics in the first wave of Punk. For instance, it is widely believed that the first Ramones record, which was mentioned in the statement above, had an enormous impact on the British Punk scene, but in terms of defending the new, rejecting the idea of coolness, it was simply not appropriate to show respect or affection for influential fellow musicians and groups.

Moreover, as Britain was governed by the iron hand of Margaret Thatcher at that time, leaving the working class and younger generations very frustrated – it became the perfect breeding ground for the development of a new culture movement. As Johnny Rotten further describes:

Early Seventies Britain was a very depressing place. It was completely run-down with trash on the streets, and total unemployment—just about everybody was on strike. Everybody was brought up with an education system that told you point blank that if you came from the wrong side of the tracks...then you had no hope in hell and no career prospects at all. Out of that came pretentious *moi* and the Sex Pistols and then a whole bunch of copycat wankers after us. (Savage, 2010: 108-112)

Rotten's statement exemplifies the breeding ground of Punk quite perfectly. On the one hand, the unemployment rate and the lack of prospects created an atmosphere of helplessness, which slowly turned into the anger of a generation. Punks became the spokespersons of their generation, frustrated with the political and social

development. They showed their antipathy against the established norms within the British community by dressing, behaving and speaking differently. As a result, they had to cultivate a certain anti-stance towards everything and everybody, which implied the choice of their heroes in terms of music, but also similar groups and people within the same scene. Taking the last sentence of Rotten's statement above, for instance, he puts down other bands formed at the time, as cheap imitators, although bands such as *The Clash* clearly had other influences in terms of music and the *Sex Pistols'* look and attitude was drawn from Richard Hell by their manager Malcom McLaren. At that time, it was most crucial to look as individual and unique as possible and to be regarded as interesting, but dangerous (a mixture which turned out to be dangerous for the Punks themselves (see Savage, 2005: 426 & Strongman, 2008: 182).

When looking at the motifs and message of the British songs analysed closely, it is clear that British Punk always aimed to illustrate the difference between what was regarded as an unacceptable norm and acceptable variety. However, a political aspect is included too, presenting the intense displeasure with the government, Thatcher's actions and the connected (anti-)social processes. This critique is rooted in an urgent need of breaking the established conditions young Brits were forced to live in with no optimistic world view or change in near sight. As a result, British Punk evolved as a countermovement to the depressing future predictions, as an idea rejecting the common standards. Bernie Rhodes, manager of *The Clash*, sums up the spark that ignited Punk in Great Britain accurately:

I was listening to the radio in '75 and there was some expert blabbing about how if things go on as they are there'll be 800,000 people unemployed by 1979, while another guy was saying that if that happened there'd be chaos, there'd be actual – anarchy in the streets. That was the root of punk. (Greil, 2009: 13)

*The Clash's* "London Calling" is a perfect example of the apocalyptic mood that was presented by the mass media in England, and therefore also a major part of the average Britain's daily communication. Unlike analysed songs from the United States, they give expression to a clear critical statement against the pessimistic political processes at that time, including a lyrical "I" in the text, however, with the focus on the apocalyptic schemes. The song can be regarded as a critique of an

overly pessimistic world view, which was transported to the population by various mediums and caused a certain apathetic indifference among Britain's inhabitants, a state of mind the band regarded as unacceptable. Thus, *the Clash* did not only try to shock with lyrical images unusual for the time, but tried to convey direct a call to change for the better. Their idea of a better world and the courage to present constructive ideas separated them from other British Punk groups, who focused on criticism combined with shocking elements rather than presenting solutions.

For instance, the *Sex Pistols*' "God Save The Queen" certainly offers a large amount of criticism of the British monarchy and Queen Elisabeth II. However, the band mostly plays with taboos in order to shock their audience, using very strong and controversial ideas by comparing the monarchy with fascism and speaking disparagingly about the royal institution, which is a crucial constant in many Brits' national pride. As a result of their upbringing in a disillusioned environment, the *Sex Pistols* went so far and uttered their disagreement with the political routines, claiming the beginning of a new era, rejecting the established, criticizing the hegemonic concept of the British Empire, and predicting its decline.

On a more personal, but still political level, *Siouxsie & the Banshees*' "Hong Kong Gardens" is an anti-racist statement observing fascist behaviour in a restaurant and contrasting a foreign world with their own. The song is highlighting mostly stereotypes and thereby critically reflecting on a conflict caused by white supremacists, whose racist ideas got alarmingly positive feedback in the British public in the second half of the 1970s. As assumed by the author of this thesis, the contrast of the occident and the orient, which offers racializing features, was created intentionally in order to uncover racist tendencies among British citizens.

*Crass*'s "Reject of Society" is written on an even more personal level than "Hong Kong Gardens", nevertheless, it offers a far clearer rejection of the presented values than the latter. It mirrors society's processes and discusses why the lyrical "I" cannot participate in the established conventions as a reject of society. Furthermore, the subject indicates that he or she has been tricked by the government and longs for the system to change. However, as his or her values are hardly represented, the protagonist decides to live the life of an outlaw, whose ambitions caused the rejection

of society. Still, the lyrics present a turn in which the helplessness against the government changes into a counterattack by society's rejects, who do not accept the current conditions anymore and cause a revolution in thought and action.

Similarly, *Stiff Little Fingers'* "Alternative Ulster" is a call for revolution and animates the recipient to become active on his or her own, rejecting the restrictive laws and creating an autonomous Northern Ireland, which can be regarded as the idea of a better and more exciting life.

Summed up, British Punk mainly focuses on criticizing politics and society, stating their annoyance and displeasure with processes observed within their environment, caused by the government and other hegemonic and discriminating movements. As a result, British Punk lyrics can be regarded as very socio-critical and politically engaged, functioning as an anger valve for both recipients and musicians.

### **5.3. Differences and similarities in terms of attitude and lyrical motivation**

As assumed in this thesis, as well as identified in the analysed poems and their summary, there are different social and political motivations behind British and American Punk songs. Both movements are concerted in dissatisfaction with the social and political events at that time. However, while American Punk was the negative reflection of the Hippie movement and aimed to show the elder generations the irrelevance of their beliefs, moral standards and conventions, British Punk took the aim a step further and criticized not only society, but the political system and processes behind it.

American Punk, best exemplified by *the Ramones*, revolted against parenthood. The language, the categories and the slang were similar to British Punk, but the message different. For instance, when comparing *the Ramones* with the *Sex Pistols*, both regarded as the most prominent bands of that era, the different use of the same shocking elements is clear. For instance, in their song "Today Your Love, Tomorrow The World", *the Ramones* sing about being Nazis, using the taboo topic of "national socialism" as deliberate shock strategy in their lyrics to distance themselves from general society. However, they do not appear to take the topic seriously or deal with



it in a reflective manner, which means “when the Ramones sang that they were Nazis, they were really saying, ‘We refuse to be nice.’” (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 291). The negative connotations of the term are not regarded as being of high importance, it is rather crucial for them to use the term as a disconnecting tool.

In contrast to *the Ramones*, the *Sex Pistols* use fascism and link it to the British Monarchy in the analysed song “God Save the Queen”. In this case, they are fully aware of all the connotations brought to mind, then comparing the highest member of the British crown with a figure in a fascist regime. However, the band wants people to consider the possible similarities, to reflect on their rulers and the political system. Consciously, they draw connections where once there were none, both offending faithful followers of the British Monarchy and expressing their refusal to participate in the traditions brought to the British inhabitants by the Royal family.

Punk in the United States always had the urge to prove the generations before wrong and “saw no hope in the future as they reacted against the perceived failures of their elders and pessimistically viewed the future.” (Bindas, 1993: 69) The weapon of the new generation’s choice was emphasizing difference to the parent generation, disobedience on a personal level.

The British Punk movement, however, took the fight away from only a personal front and started thinking globally about the roots of their problems. In other words, as a result of the failed Hippie movement, the British Punks criticized the generations raised before them, claiming that their efforts to establish peace and love had led their country nowhere near the expected aims. In a way,

(w)hile vehemently opposed to “hippies,” and even self-defining in contrast to a “hippie” other, punks were yet ideologically allied in important respects, to this vision of opposition to bourgeois values.” (Bindas, 1993: 72)

Consequently, the rebellious spirit of a new generation resulted in a new approach to lifestyle not compatible with the social conventions of the 1970s. The idea of changing the world was adapted from the hippies, but the images used and the attitudes expressed were completely different. One can argue that the aim of changing society stayed the same, but the approach changed drastically, switching

from an optimistic world view to a pessimistic one, introducing a radically different idea of solution finding, which is probably best exemplified by *the Clash*'s slogan (and song name) "Hate & War" in direct contrast to the hippie movement's "Love & Peace".

In conclusion, American and British Punks used similar figures and ideas to draw the listener's attention to their different worldviews in contrast to the rest of the world. Nevertheless, one movement used it to cultivate their status as individuals, to emphasize their independence from norms and conventions of the United States in the 1970s. The other movement, namely the one in Great Britain, used similar elements to similarly shock, but to draw the listener's focus to the required change, to the other possibilities life offers, giving ideas on individual development for an open world. As Richard Pope (2009: 4) claims, "

(w)hile the UK scene existed as an expression of the demise of their society, the American version found itself more comfortably aligned with the American pseudo-nihilist, disaffected tradition of 'dropping out'.

The difference between the two movements is exemplified perfectly by Pope's statement. While the American scene certainly started the Punk movement years before the *Sex Pistols* went on air at the *Bill Grundy Show* in 1976, the message of the American songs was always focused on the individual, mostly on the songwriter himself or herself, detaching themselves from a society they did not agree with, reflecting on rules and regulations they were not willing to engage in. That is being said, the idea of cultivating a status as an outlaw is a very romantic one, mostly appealing to the adolescent years of a person, when breaking the parents' restrictions is especially tempting. "

While economic conditions contributed to the development of punk, American punks identified less consciously with (...) working-class ideology, and focused more on their music." (Bindas, 1993: 83)

As a result, American Punk found its way into mainstream music after years of decline in popularity, when *Nirvana* started a second Punk wave which enabled bands like *Green Day*, *the Offspring*, or *Blink-182* to get multi-million record selling artists and created a scene that has developed further, but also enabled the

movement to get rid of its underground status, positioning itself in the enduring sphere of rock music.

British Punk, however, did not fulfil the expectations to change the world as the music failed to convey their anti-capitalist, sustainable to a bigger audience. Especially in the United States, a country crucially important for media industry developments, political Punk music failed to establish a change of thought. According to David Harker<sup>16</sup>, the aim to reach a big audience via mainstream music and to convey radical ideas is simply not possible.

When a songwriter attempts to use the major record companies, (and the overall power structure of commercial music) to disseminate radical ideas, the drive to create a “consumable article” tends to erode the commitment in many performers (Bindas, 1993: 81)

For British Punk, David Harker’s prediction of 1980 fits perfectly. The first era of Punk can be regarded as commercially unsuccessful. Studies have shown that the average American audience prefers apolitical content and songs that “make them feel relaxed or happy.” (Lamy & Levin, 1985: 158ff) “Simply put, the political, working-class fear of the hegemonic state (...) did not fit into the mindset of its American audience.” (Bindas, 1993: 85) However, through the influence of the record industry, a new style developed, which is referred to as New Wave, a musical direction which copied the aesthetic of the Punk movement, but served the audience easier and lighter songs without the political content. Basically, the rebellious intentions of Punk were taken away by the record music industry in order to create a genre that could achieve more record sales, a business move that eventually paid off for the investors and ended the first era of Punk, making space for the socially undemanding New Wave.

In the end, (...) punk challenged social conventions, but their experiences also exemplify the ability of the dominant society to dilute and incorporate countercultural attitudes while ignoring the ideals. (Bindas, 1993: 85ff)

To summarise, the motifs of Punk were different in the United States and in Great Britain in terms of attitude and lyrical motivation. While Punk musicians and

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<sup>16</sup> Harker, David. 1980. *One for the money: Politics and popular song*. New York: Hutchinson.

songwriters in the USA focused on cultivating their image as outsiders and on building up a reputation as flamboyant individuals, English Punks tried to convey the struggle of the working class in order to reach a productive new outcome. What united them was not only the look, but also the language elements they used to achieve their goals, which will be discussed in the chapter below.

#### **5.4. Differences and similarities in terms of language**

Concerning certain rhetorical devices, there is an obvious discrepancy between American and British Punk. However, taking only the ten analysed lyrics in this thesis into consideration, there are mostly language features which are used similarly in both underground movements. Furthermore, the discussed language elements can be regarded as crucial and defining attributes of poetry, with rhyme, alliteration, etc. being some of them.

When analysing the sound patterning of the analysed song texts first, the most frequently occurring language feature is rhyme, which is regarded as one of the most crucial language patterns that defines poetry as such, representing “correspondence of sound between words or the ending of words, especially when these are used at the ends of lines of poetry” (Oxford English Dictionary, 10 October 2015). Every song that has been dissected during the analysis for this thesis offers at least four rhyme pairs (except for “I Wanna Be Your Dog”, which has only one rhyme pair). “Reject of Society” by *Crass* offers eleven rhyme pairs and, therefore, represents the song with the most rhymes in the analysed corpus.

Another sound pattern considered in the analysis, but by far more seldom are half rhymes. This figure of speech is, in the case of this study, mostly used as a substitute for real rhyme pairs; it appears in almost every song analysed, with “Sonic Reducer” being the only song without such a language feature and “London Calling” the one with the most pararhymes. Both rhymes and pararhymes are used to create line pairs, which enable the building of stanzas in quatrain form, the most prominent metre represented in the language analysis.

Alliteration, a figure of speech that is created by using words with the same consonants or vowels in the word-initial position, is the third language feature which is most frequently used in the analysed song texts. Some texts, such as “Blank Generation” by *Richard Hell & the Voidoids*, or “Gloria” by the *Patti Smith Group*, clearly use alliteration in a strategic manner to create abstract poetry. Other instances, such as *the Ramones*’ “53<sup>rd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>” do not feature alliteration unambiguously as an artistic way to express oneself, while *the Stooges*’ “I Wanna Be Your Dog” does not offer any alliteration at all.

Furthermore, assonance, a language feature that is characterized by the internal rhyming of its vowels, occurs in almost every song text, offering no clear distinction between American and British Punk songs. Nevertheless, in “53<sup>rd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>” and “I Wanna Be Your Dog” the songwriters do not make use of this specific figure of speech at all.

The use of repetition is especially striking when taking the lyrics of the analysed songs into consideration. Looking at the lyrics, the burden, a text cluster typically consisting of a quatrain, is repeated at least once throughout the songs in order to highlight the main message of the text, the idea, which is more closely defined in the text clusters known as stanzas. Through repetition, the motif of the text, which is most likely represented and identifiable in the burden as well, is brought closer to the listener’s attention and in most cases represents the most memorable aspect of the song. Moreover, the lines in the repeated text cluster are more simplistic than the ones in the stanza, creating a hook, which is defined as part of the song to “catch the ear of the listener” (Covach, 2005: 71). Repetition, at least in the analysed songs, is a crucial part of every song and not only important for conveying the main message, but also for making each song memorable.

In addition to repetition, many of the refrains also use anaphora as figures of speech to put emphasis on the message conveyed throughout the text. For instance, each line of “53<sup>rd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>”’s burden starts with the song title, bringing the listener to the location of the narrated story, which is especially crucial in this particular example, as the context allows the researcher to uncover the social environment the mentioned corner in New York City implies.

Also, categorization is frequently used in the analysis of lyrics in this thesis in order to narrow down the semantic field the lyricist is writing about, and to put the individual song's focus on certain features the song writer regards as crucial. For example, it is used to imply geographical vocabulary (for instance, in *Stiff Little Fingers*' "Alternative Ulster" or *Siouxsie & the Banshees*' "Hong Kong Gardens") or simply to strengthen the statement made in the text by using qualified vocabulary (for example, *The Clash* use vocabulary inspired by newspaper articles they have read for "London Calling").

Furthermore, the figure of speech "irony" is used by both English and American artists to convey their message cynically and to strengthen their statements. While British Punks *The Clash* continually name catastrophic future scenarios, just to ask the listener in the last part of the song why they do not want to smile in the face of future predictions like this, ironically weakening all the horrifying assumptions about the future to give it an even more dramatic effect, the American song writer and poet Patti Smith speaks about a romance with a woman called Gloria, describing the love affair very passionately, a description that can be regarded as motivated by the contrast between the religiously connoted name Gloria and a not accepted same gender relationship, in order to show her indifference to what is regarded as important in American society of the 1970s. The *Sex Pistols* are also widely known for their extensive use of irony, which can be observed throughout the lyrics of "God Save The Queen", a song title praising the highest member of the British Royal family, whereas in the song the Queen is severely criticized.

Another very interesting aspect about the songs analysed are the deictic expressions employed by the lyricists. In several cases, such as in *Crass*'s "Reject Of Society", or in "Alternative Ulster" by *Stiff Little Fingers*, the audience is directly addressed by the personal pronoun "you", mostly to create a psychological bond with the listener against the criticized third party. The deictic expressions are used to clearly show the border of what is accepted by the song writer, with "us" or "I" being the tolerated or praised party, while "you" is mostly used to describe the opposed party. However, in the song "Alternative Ulster", for instance, "you" is used to address the listener in order to achieve a change, to ignite the spark that will lead to the political resistance of the oppressed. Even more strikingly, *Dead Boys* use the deictic expression "they" to emphasize the positions all three involved parties have. "I" is representing the

lyrical “I”, the person narrating and guiding through the song. In the case of this example, the listener is not addressed by the lyrical “I”, as he is not giving advice or asking for participation, but he rather contrasts his own world with “them”, people who are part of the social system he dislikes and disagrees with. When considering all the songs, “they” is always connoted negatively and can be regarded as the counterpart of the lyrical “I”’s position, and “you” is predominately used to address the audience, with the exception of “Reject Of Society”, where the indirect “they”, the enemy from the position of the lyricist, is suddenly addressed as “you” in the burden, changing the passive complaint into a direct reproach.

However, there are not only language features that unify American and British Punk songs, as the analysis carried out shows. For instance, four out of five analysed British songs include rhetorical questions in contrast to the American songs, where only one out of five includes the same figure of speech. When looking more closely at these questions, it becomes apparent that the politically motivated British songs are making use of the rhetorical device to emphasize the urgency of a socio-political change of thought and action. The questions asked do not allow any answers, but highlight the importance of civil disobedience.

In opposition to British Punk songs, American Punk songs use ellipsis to create abstract meaning and tension within the lyrics. While ellipsis is present in four of five analysed American songs, it cannot be found in their British counterparts. The reason for the high frequency of this figure of speech in one movement and the lack thereof in the other once more can be explained with the personal and political motivation behind the songs. The American Punk movement was more focused on the narrated stories to express their own desires and wishes, stories without conveying a call for action. As a result, their story lines differ from the British ones, and follow a writing schema with the focus on the story, not the political message, even though analysed songs such as “Blank Generation” surely include a socio-critical statement. The British songs, however, focus more on the political message for a better world and therefore, do not require time shifts to create tension, as the tension is represented by the call for action already, which is embellished with more disturbing facts emphasizing the conveyed message.

Finally, a crucial difference between the two sub-cultural movements can be demonstrated by looking at the metaphors used in the lyrics. Again, the difference between both subcultures can be observed as a result of their writing intentions. While American Punks make use of metaphors with a more personal background, the British Punks focus on the political side of writing once more and only make use of metaphors with a negative connotation, suggesting a revolt against authoritarian ideas. *Stiff Little Fingers*, on the one hand, for instance, use the metaphor “RUC dog of repression” (20) to emphasize the pressure the police puts on a younger and more alternatively thinking generation. *Sex Pistols*, on the other hand, define themselves as “flowers in the dustbin” or as “poison in your human machine” (28-31), exemplifying their complete lack of understanding and tolerance for social conventions and political decisions made in the British Monarchy. Moreover, *Crass* indicate that society and corporate industry have created a “Frankenstein monster” (15, 27, 35), an unstoppable and frightening movement. All mentioned examples include a negative connotation and are used to criticize the addressed opponent. In contrast to the British tendency to use negatively connoted metaphors, American song writers are more flexible in the use of metaphorical language. Richard Hell, for instance, introduces the term “triangles were falling at the window”, in order to introduce his birth, being a triangle lover and marking his appearance through the metaphor. *Dead Boys*, to name another American example, use metaphors to introduce the lyrical “I” in an abstract fashion, describing him as a “Sonic reducer” (9, 21) with a “devil machine” (7, 19), a musician with a guitar as his weapon of choice.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

Overall, a clear distinction between American and British Punk lyrics can be made in terms of lyrical motivation. As exemplified, Punks in America wrote songs to distance themselves from society and what they regarded as the norm. However, the motivation behind it is was not of a political nature, but prompted by the wish to present oneself as a unique individual, rejecting values that were seen as essential in the life of the average American. Punk in North America was an escapism from the boring and everyday routine, a way to visibly and lyrically distinguish the individual from society's blandness.



In contrast, British Punk, as the analysis in this thesis has shown, aimed for a political and social change, conveying a message of political activism. Of course, the distance between society and its norms is emphasized in British Punk songs too, however, the distance is used to present the assumed good and bad side of political developments, creating an environment in which the change longed for is possible to happen.

As a result, the lyrical motivation in American and British Punk differs. Furthermore, there are certain language features that can be found in the songs of both underground movements regularly, such as rhyme, alliteration, assonance, repetition and anaphora. However, other figures of speech, such as rhetorical questions, occur infrequently in one movement (in this case in the American Punk scene), while others can be found regularly only in the other, and create a lyrical distance not only in terms of lyrical motivation, but also concerning the use of language. Additionally, ellipsis is more often used in the American songs in order to create tension.

Also, the different use of metaphors can be regarded as striking and it emphasizes the statement of this thesis, using more personally inspired metaphors in the American songs, while in the British examples, metaphors are used in order to identify the enemy and the contrast to the opposed party to the suggested values, which are not represented in the established society values in the 1970s.

However, by only looking at ten texts of two movements that dominated the music world for years, and thus a limited sample, only a narrow insight into the lyrical world of the Punk movements is provided with this paper. In order to confirm the tentative results, an additional quantitative study of the same matter is desirable, but would greatly exceed the permitted length of this paper. Therefore, it must be mentioned that this paper has only provided some evidence to prove its thesis, suggesting a quantitative analysis as the next reasonable step in the researched area. Still, the language differences between both movements are, as this paper shows in great detail, diverse and enable the attentive listener and reader to draw a distinctive line between American and British Punk songs in terms of language use and motivation.

Nevertheless, what unites both movements are the circumstances in which they evolved in Britain and the United States. It was a rebellious act and statement to be a Punk, to ignore and reject society's values as a result of years of political discontent. According to Legs McNeil, who was among those who gave Punk its name, "(P)unk wasn't about decay, punk was about the apocalypse. Punk was about annihilation. Nothing worked, so let's get right to Armageddon." (McNeil & McCain, 2014: 318) In other words, a new generation of people grew up watching the hippie movement fail, economic crises arise and conservative governments leading their countries deeper into war and depression. (see McNeil & McCain, 2014: 318) As a result, new cultural approaches of critique and self-fulfilment were developed, but did not find a persistent way into the corporate industry. Thus, the revolutionary ideas stayed theory and the Punk groups were not given a chance to restructure the system and the values conveyed by society. Eventually, the public interest in Punk declined again, and soon ended the first wave of Punk. What aspects remain today are outstanding songs, full of social and political criticism on the one hand, and narrations of public outsiders and poets on the other hand, who managed to capture the Zeitgeist of a whole generation, using shocking elements in their songs that have since then influenced generations of artists to come.

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## **7. Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Lyrics and Analysis forms**

#### **7.1. Richard Hell & The Voidoids – Blank Generation**

##### **a) Lyrics**

- 1 I was sayin let me out of here before I was even born  
it's such a gamble when you get a face  
It's fascinatin to observe what the mirror does  
But when I dine it's for the wall that I set a place
- 5 I belong to the blank generation and  
I can take it or leave it each time  
I belong to the \_\_\_\_\_ generation but  
I can take it or leave it each time
- 9 Triangles were fallin at the window as the doctor cursed  
He was a cartoon long forsaken by the public eye  
The nurse adjusted her garters as I breathed my first  
The doctor grabbed my throat and yelled, "God's consolation prize!"
- 13 I belong to the blank generation and  
I can take it or leave it each time  
I belong to the \_\_\_\_\_ generation but  
I can take it or leave it each time
- 17 To hold the T. V. To my lips, the air so packed with cash  
Then carry it up flights of stairs and drop it in the vacant lot  
To lose my train of thought and fall into your arms' tracks  
And watch beneath the eyelids every passing dot
- 21 I belong to the blank generation and  
I can take it or leave it each time  
I belong to the \_\_\_\_\_ generation but  
I can take it or leave it each time
- 25 I belong to the blank generation and  
I can take it or leave it each time  
I belong to the \_\_\_\_\_ generation but  
I can take it or leave it each time

## b) Analysis form

### ***Sound Patterning:***

<u>Rhyme:</u>	was – does, face – place, cursed – first, lot – dot,
<u>Half Rhyme:</u>	eye – prize, cash – tracks,
<u>Alliteration:</u>	<b>g</b> amble – <b>g</b> et, <b>f</b> ace – <b>f</b> ascinatin', <b>w</b> ere – <b>w</b> indow; <b>g</b> arters – <b>g</b> rabbed, <b>T</b> V – <b>t</b> o; <b>l</b> ot – <b>l</b> ose; <b>t</b> rain – <b>t</b> racks;
<u>Assonance:</u>	<b>b</b> efore – <b>b</b> orn; <b>g</b> amble – <b>g</b> et; <b>I</b> – <b>d</b> ine – <b>I</b> ; <b>l</b> ease – <b>e</b> ach; <b>G</b> od's – <b>c</b> onsolation;
<u>Repetition:</u>	I belong to the blank generation; I can take it and leave it each time.
<u>Anaphora:</u>	<b>To</b> hold... - <b>To</b> lose... <b>I</b> belong... - <b>I</b> can take...

### ***Metre and Sound:***

Couplets / Quatrains / Blank Verse / Sonnet / Free Verse / Limericks

### ***Contextual Meaning:***

<u>Ellipsis:</u>	3 <sup>rd</sup> line of each burden ("I belong to the _____ generation") Stanza 3 (grammatical ellipsis)
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### ***Literal vs Figurative Meaning:***

<u>Metaphor:</u>	"triangles were fallin at the window", Stanza 2 "the air so packed with cash", "And watch beneath the eyelids every passing dot" - leaving
<u>Antithesis:</u>	carry it up flights of stairs – drop it in the vacant lot
<u>Hyperbole:</u>	I was sayin' "Let me out of here", before I was...
<u>Irony:</u> throat	life vs death in stanza 2: breathed my first – grabbed me by the
<u>Register:</u>	casual American (sayin', fascinatin',...)

## 7. 2. The Ramones – 53<sup>rd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

### a) Lyrics

- 1      If you think you can, well come on man  
         I was a Green Beret in Vietnam  
         No more of your fairy stories  
         'Cause I got my other worries
- 5      53rd and 3rd standing on the street  
         53rd and 3rd I'm tryin' to turn a trick  
         53rd and 3rd you're the one they never pick  
         53rd and 3rd don't it make you feel sick?
- 9      If you think you can, well come on man  
         I was a Green Beret in Vietnam  
         No more of your fairy stories  
         'Cause I got my other worries
- 13     53rd and 3rd standing on the street  
         53rd and 3rd I'm tryin' to turn a trick  
         53rd and 3rd you're the one they never pick  
         53rd and 3rd don't it make you feel sick?
- 17     Then I took out my razor blade  
         Then I did what God forbade  
         Now the cops are after me  
         But I proved that I'm no sissy
- 21     53rd and 3rd standing on the street  
         53rd and 3rd I'm tryin' to turn a trick  
         53rd and 3rd you're the one they never pick  
         53rd and 3rd don't it make you feel sick?
- 25     53rd and 3rd  
         53rd and 3rd  
         53rd and 3rd  
         53rd and 3rd  
         53rd and 3rd  
         53rd and 3rd  
         53rd and 3rd  
         53rd and 3rd



## b) Analysis form

### ***Sound Patterning:***

Rhyme: can - man – Vietnam; stories – worries; trick – pick – sick; blade – forbade;

Alliteration: can – come; standing – street;

Half Rhyme: street – trick; me – sissy;

Repetition: chorus;

Anaphora: Then I took... Then I did...; 53<sup>rd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

Rhetoric Question: Don't it make you feel sick?

### ***Metre and Sound:***

Couplets / Quatrains / Blank Verse / Sonnet / Free Verse / Limericks

### ***Semantics:***

Synonyms: to turn a trick; what God forbade

Categorization: war (Green Beret, Vietnam, razor blade)

### ***Contextual Meaning:***

Ellipsis: between chorus and bridge (getting picked by a customer is left out)

### 7.3. Dead Boys – Sonic Reducer

#### a) Lyrics

- 1     I don't need anyone  
      Don't need no mom and dad  
      Don't need no pretty face  
      Don't need no human race  
      I got some news for you  
      Don't even need you too
- 7     I got my devil machine  
      Got my electronic dream  
      Sonic reducer  
      Ain't no loser  
      I'm a sonic reducer  
      Ain't no loser
- 13    People out on the streets  
      They don't know who I am  
      I watch them from my room  
      They all just pass me by  
      But I'm not just anyone  
      Said I'm not just anyone
- 19    I got my devil machine  
      Got my electronic dream  
      Sonic reducer  
      Ain't no loser  
      I'm a sonic reducer  
      Ain't no loser
- 25    I'll be a pharaoh soon  
      Rule from some golden tomb  
      Things will be different then  
      The sun will rise from here  
      Then I'll be ten feet tall  
      And you'll be nothing at all

## b) Analysis form

### ***Sound Patterning:***

<u>Rhyme:</u>	face – race, you – too, reducer – loser, soon – tomb, tall - all
<u>Alliteration:</u>	need – no; my – machine; out – on, then – the, ten – tall, and – at – all
<u>Half Rhyme:</u>	machine – dream
<u>Assonance:</u>	don't – no; even – need; people – streets; don't – know; things – will – be – different
<u>Repetition:</u>	chorus
<u>Anaphora:</u>	don't need

### ***Metre and Sound:***

Couplets (three per verse) / Quatrains / Blank Verse / Sonnet / Free Verse / Limericks

### ***Semantics:***

Categorization: machines, ancient Egypt

### ***Contextual Meaning:***

Ellipsis: the speaker's profession is not given in the text, but can be found out by contextual analysis

### ***Literal vs Figurative Meaning:***

Metaphors: electronic dream, sonic reducer, devil machine

Hyperbole: the whole 3<sup>rd</sup> stanza

## 7.4. The Stooges – I Wanna Be Your Dog

### a) Lyrics

- 1     So messed up I want you here  
      In my room I want you here  
      Now we're gonna be face-to-face  
      And I'll lay right down in my favorite place
- 5     And now I want to be your dog  
      Now I want to be your dog  
      Now I want to be your dog  
      Well c'mon
- 9     Now I'm ready to close my eyes  
      And now I'm ready to close my mind  
      And now I'm ready to feel your hand  
      And lose my heart on the burning sands
- 13    And now I want to be your dog  
      And now I wanna be your dog  
      Now I want to be your dog  
      Well c'mon

### b) Analysis form

#### **Sound Patterning:**

Rhyme:                face - place

Half Rhyme:        eyes – mind; hand - sands

Repetition:        chorus

Anaphora:         ...now I want you here; Now I'm ready...

#### **Metre and Sound:**

Couplets / Quatrains / Blank Verse / Sonnet / Free Verse / Limericks

#### **Literal vs Figurative Meaning:**

Metaphor:           burning sands

## 7.5. The Patti Smith Group – Gloria

### a) Lyrics

- 1 Jesus died for somebody's sins but not mine  
Meltin' in a pot of thieves  
Wild card up my sleeve  
Thick heart of stone  
My sins my own  
They belong to me, me
- 7 People say 'beware!'  
But I don't care  
The words are just  
Rules and regulations to me, me
- 11 I walk in a room, you know I look so proud  
I'm movin' in this here atmosphere, well, anything's allowed  
And I go to this here party and I just get bored  
Until I look out the window, see a sweet young thing  
Humpin' on the parking meter, leanin' on the parking meter  
Oh, she looks so good, oh, she looks so fine  
And I got this crazy feeling and then I'm gonna ah-ah make her mine  
Ooh I'll put my spell on her
- 19 Here she comes  
Walkin' down the street  
Here she comes  
Comin' through my door  
Here she comes  
Crawlin' up my stair  
Here she comes  
Waltzin' through the hall  
In a pretty red dress  
And oh, she looks so good, oh, she looks so fine  
And I got this crazy feeling that I'm gonna ah-ah make her mine
- 30 And then I hear this knock on my door  
Hear this knockin' on my door  
And I look up into the big tower clock  
And say, 'oh my God here's midnight!'  
And my baby is walkin' through the door  
Leanin' on my couch she whispers to me and I take the big plunge  
And oh, she was so good and oh, she was so fine  
And I'm gonna tell the world that I just ah-ah made her mine
- 38 And I said darling, tell me your name, she told me her name  
She whispered to me, she told me her name  
And her name is, and her name is, and her name is, and her name is G-I-o-  
are-i-a  
G-I-o-are-i-a, Gloria, G-I-o-are-i-a, Gloria  
G-I-o-are-i-a, Gloria, G-I-o-are-i-a, Gloria

- 43 I was at the stadium  
There were twenty thousand girls called their names out to me  
Marie and Ruth but to tell you the truth  
I didn't hear them I didn't see  
I let my eyes rise to the big tower clock  
And I heard those bells chimin' in my heart  
Going ding dong, ding dong, ding dong, ding dong.  
Ding dong, ding dong, ding dong, ding dong  
Counting the time, then you came to my room  
And you whispered to me and we took the big plunge  
And oh you were so good, oh, you were so fine  
And I gotta tell the world that I make her mine, make her mine  
Make her mine, make her mine, make her mine, make her mine
- 56 G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria, G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria, G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria,  
G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria
- 58 And the tower bells chime, 'ding dong' they chime  
They're singing, 'Jesus died for somebody's sins but not mine.'
- 60 Gloria, G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria, G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria, G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a,  
Gloria, g-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria, G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria  
G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria, G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria, G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria,  
G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria, G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria, G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, Gloria

## b) Analysis form

### ***Sound Patterning:***

Rhyme: stone – own, beware, care, proud – allowed, fine – mine, me – see, Ruth – truth, here – atmosphere, chime – mine, eyes – rise;

Alliteration: somebody's – sins, rules – regulations, anything's allowed, go – get, see – sweet, tell – truth, heard – heart, counting – came,

Reverse Rhyme: walkin' – comin' - crawlin' – waltzin'

Half Rhyme: thieves - sleeve

Repetition: me, me; make her mine; G-l-o-a-r-e-i-a, parking meter, ding dong,

Anaphora: Here she comes, she looks so..., her name is,

### ***Metre and Sound:***

Couplets / Quatrains / Blank Verse / Sonnet / Free Verse / Limericks

### ***Semantics:***

Categorization: religious motifs, time,

Accumulation: walkin' – comin' - crawlin' – waltzin'

### ***Contextual Meaning:***

Ellipsis: Between spotting Gloria and her visit; After Gloria's visit and the concert

### ***Literal vs Figurative Meaning:***

Metaphors: meltin' in a pot of thieves; wild card up my sleeve, thick heart of stone

Irony: religious name and religious practice as strong contrast to the song writer's sexual desires

## 7.6. The Clash – London Calling

### a) Lyrics

- 1 London calling to the faraway towns  
Now war is declared and battle come down  
London calling to the underworld  
Come out of the cupboard, you boys and girls  
London calling, now don't look to us  
Phony Beatlemania has bitten the dust  
London calling, see we ain't got no swing  
'Cept for the ring of that truncheon thing
- 9 The ice age is coming, the sun is zooming in  
Meltdown expected, the wheat is growin' thin  
Engines stop running, but I have no fear  
'Cause London is drowning, and I, I live by the river
- 13 London calling to the imitation zone  
Forget it, brother, you can go it alone  
London calling to the zombies of death  
Quit holding out and draw another breath  
London calling and I don't want to shout  
But while we were talking I saw you nodding out  
London calling, see we ain't got no high  
Except for that one with the yellowy eyes
- 21 The ice age is coming, the sun is zooming in  
Engines stop running, the wheat is growin' thin  
A nuclear error, but I have no fear  
'Cause London is drowning, and I, I live by the river
- 25 The ice age is coming, the sun is zooming in  
Engines stop running, the wheat is growin' thin  
A nuclear era, but I have no fear  
London is drowning, and I, I live by the river
- 29 Now get this
- 30 London calling, yes, I was there, too  
An' you know what they said? Well, some of it was true!  
London calling at the top of the dial  
And after all this, won't you give me a smile?
- 34 I never felt so much a' like a'like a'like



## b) Analysis form

### ***Sound Patterning:***

Rhyme: swing – thing, in – thin, zone – alone, death – breath, shout – out, too – true, dial – smile;

Alliteration: declared – down, come – cupboard, see – swing, truncheon – thing, while – we – where,

Assonance: towns – now – down, underworld – girls, us – dust, see – we,

Half Rhyme: towns – down, underworld – girls, us – dust, high – eyes

Repetition: London Calling chorus

Anaphora: “London Calling” phrase

Rhetoric Question: After all this, won’t you give me a smile?

### ***Metre and Sound:***

Couplets / Quatrains / Blank Verse / Sonnet / Free Verse / Limericks  
(each stanza consists of two quatrains and the burden of one quatrain)

### ***Semantics:***

Synonyms: zombies of death – drug addicts, top of the dial – the best

Categorization: Apocalyptic vocabulary (ice age, meltdown, zombies of death, nuclear error, drowning)

### ***Contextual Meaning:***

Metonymy: London Calling, London is drowning

### ***Literal vs Figurative Meaning:***

Antithesis: the ice age is coming, the sun’s zooming in

Hyperbole: the whole song is an exaggeration of apocalyptic scenarios threatening Great Britain

Irony: apocalyptic scenario - I have no fear; After all this, won’t you give me a smile?

Register: time specific vocabulary (Beatlemania) and spoken language features connoted with the working class (ain’t, ‘cept)

## 7.7. Sex Pistols – God Save The Queen

### a) Lyrics

- 1     God save the Queen  
      The fascist regime,  
      They made you a moron  
      A potential H-bomb
- 5     God save the Queen  
      She ain't no human being  
      There is no future  
      And England's dreaming
- 9     Don't be told what you want  
      Don't be told what you need  
      There's no future  
      No future  
      No future for you
- 14    God save the Queen  
      We mean it man  
      We love our Queen  
      God saves
- 18    God save the Queen  
      'Cause tourists are money  
      And our figurehead  
      Is not what she seems
- 22    Oh God save history  
      God save your mad parade  
      Oh Lord God have mercy  
      All crimes are paid
- 26    When there's no future  
      How can there be sin  
      We're the flowers  
      In the dustbin  
      We're the poison  
      In your human machine  
      We're the future  
      You're future
- 34    God save the Queen  
      We mean it man  
      We love our Queen  
      God saves
- 38    God save the Queen  
      We mean it man  
      There is no future

And England's dreaming

- 42    No future no future no future for you  
      No future no future no future for me  
      No future no future no future for you  
      No future no future for me

b) Analysis form

***Sound Patterning:***

Rhyme:                queen – regime, history – mercy, parade – paid, sin – dustbin,

Alliteration:        made – moron, mean – man,

Assonance:        don't – told, what – want,

Half Rhyme:        moron – bomb, queen – being,

Repetition:        no future

Anaphora:            God Save the Queen

Rhetoric Question: When there's no future, how can there be sin?

***Metre and Sound:***

Couplets / Quatrains / Blank Verse / Sonnet / Free Verse / Limericks

***Literal vs Figurative Meaning:***

Metaphor:            poison in your human machine; flowers in the dustbin

Antithesis:        We're the future – no future

Hyperbole:        no future

Irony:                God save the queen

Register:            mixture between aggressive vocabulary (H-bomb; mad parade, crimes, dustbin, poison) and references to the British anthem

## 7.8. Siouxsie & the Banshees – Hong Kong Garden

### a) Lyrics

- 1 Harmful elements in the air  
Symbols clashing everywhere  
Reaps the fields of rice and reeds  
While the population feeds
- 5 Junk floats on polluted water  
An old custom to sell your daughter  
Would you like number 23?  
Leave your Yens on the counter please
- 9 Hong Kong Garden  
Hong Kong Garden
- 11 Tourists swarm to see your face  
Confucius has a puzzling grace  
Disoriented you enter in  
Unleashing scent of wild jasmine
- 15 Sunset eyes meet a new sunrise  
A race of bodies small in size  
Chicken Chow Mein and Chop Suey
- 18 Hong Kong Garden take away  
Hong Kong Garden

## b) Analysis form

### ***Sound Patterning:***

Rhyme: air – everywhere, reeds – feeds, water – daughter, face – grace,  
in – jasmine, sunrise - size,

Alliteration: reaps - rice – reeds, sunset – sunrise, Chicken Chow Mein –  
Chop Suey,

Assonance: reaps – fields – reeds – feeds, Hong Kong, eyes – sunrise - size

Half Rhyme: 23 - please

Repetition: Hong Kong Garden

### ***Metre and Sound:***

Couplets / Quatrains / Blank Verse / Sonnet / Free Verse / Limericks

### ***Semantics:***

Categorization: Asian vocabulary (Yen, Confucius, Chicken Chow Mein, Chop  
Suey, Hong Kong)

## 7.9. Crass – Reject Of Society

### a) Lyrics

- 1 Not for me the factory floor,  
Sweeping up from nine to four.  
Not for me the silly rat race,  
I don't see the point in anycase.  
People ask me why I say what I do,  
I say to them, "Well wouldn't you?"  
If you were fucked up just like me,  
A reject of society.
- 9 They say I dig a hole and jump right in,  
Well I don't give a shit about anything,  
I don't comply to their silly rules,  
All they are is hypocritical fools.
- 13 You give us conscience money,  
Now you start to worry.  
The Frankenstein monster you created  
Has turned against you now you're hated.
- 17 They tell me I'm not what they'd like me to be,  
It's their fault, you can't blame me.  
They fucking tricked me half the time  
Now they've got to stand in line.  
They don't like it when they see me have fun,  
They turn around and then they run.  
They don't listen to what I say,  
I'm a reject of society.
- 25 You give us conscience money,  
Now you start to worry.  
The Frankenstein monster you created  
Has turned against you now you're hated.
- 29 You give us conscience money,  
Now you start to worry.  
The Frankenstein monster you created  
Has turned against you now you're hated.
- 33 You give us conscience money,  
Now you start to worry.  
The Frankenstein monster you created  
Has turned against you now you're hated.

## b) Analysis form

### ***Sound Patterning:***

Rhyme: floor – four; race – anyone; do – you; me – society; rules – fools;  
they – say; why – I; created – hated; be – me; time – line; fun -  
run out

Alliteration: factory floor; rat race; well wouldn't

Assonance: fucked up - just

Half Rhyme: in – anything; money – worry; say - society

Repetition: chorus

Anaphora: Not for me...

Inversion: Not for me the factory floor; not for me the silly rat race

Rhetoric Question: Well, wouldn't you

### ***Metre and Sound:***

Couplets / Quatrains / Blank Verse / Sonnet / Free Verse / Limericks

### ***Semantics:***

Synonyms: conscience money = bribery; reject of society = result of his  
detachment of the criticised values

### ***Literal vs Figurative Meaning:***

Metaphor: The Frankenstein monster you created

Register: deictic expressions – “they” as the enemy; work/manufacturing  
vocabulary (factory floor; sweeping; nine to four (work time);

## 7.10. Stiff Little Fingers – Alternative Ulster

### a) Lyrics

- 1      Seven more hours in Belfast  
The pound so old it's a pity  
Okay, there's the Trident in Bangor  
And then you walk back to the city
- 5      We ain't got nothin' but they don't really care  
They don't even know you know  
They just want money  
We can take it or leave it  
What we need
- 10     Is an alternative ulster  
Grab it, change it, it's yours  
Get an alternative ulster  
Ignore the bores and their laws
- 14     Get an alternative ulster  
Be an anti-security force  
Alter your native ulster  
Alter your native land
- 18     Take a look where you're livin'  
You got the army on the street  
And the R U C dog of repression  
Is barking at your feet
- 22     Is this the kind of place you wanna live?  
Is this where you wanna be?  
Is this the only life we're gonna have?  
What we need
- 26     Is an alternative ulster  
Grab it, change it, it's yours  
Get an alternative ulster  
Ignore the bores and their laws
- 30     Get an alternative ulster  
Be an anti-security force  
Alter your native ulster  
Alter your native land
- 34     And they say they're a part of you  
And that's not true you know  
They say they got control of you  
And that's a lie, you know
- 38     They say you will never be  
Free, free, free



40    Alternative ulster  
      Alternative ulster  
      Alternative ulster  
      Alternative ulster

45    Go and get it now!

#### b) Analysis form

##### ***Sound Patterning:***

Rhyme:                    pity – city; street – feet; be – free; you – true;

Alliteration:            pound – pity; look – livin’

Assonance:            we – need

Reverse Rhyme:      alternative – alter; an – anti;

Half Rhyme:            yours – laws; live -have

Repetition:            chorus and final quatrain

Rhetoric Question: Is this the kind of place you wanna live?  
                              Is this where you wanna be?  
                              Is this the only life we’re gonna have?

##### ***Metre and Sound:***

Couplets / Quatrains / Blank Verse / Sonnet / Free Verse / Limericks

##### ***Semantics:***

Synonyms:            RUC dog of repression - police

Categorization:      Northern Ireland vocabulary: Ulster, Trident, Bangor, Belfast,  
                              RUC

## Appendix 2: Abstract

In the middle of the 1970s, a new music genre evolved in both the United States and Great Britain called “Punk”. Even though both movements are generally referred to as “Punk”, there are significant differences between these subcultures lyrically. This thesis aims to analyse lyrics of five major contributors to the Punk scene of both countries and contrasts the texts by means of figurative language use and motifs, considering the era’s context, evaluating differences and similarities.

Overall, the thesis consists of four main parts. The first one introduces the language features that are part of the following text analysis and comprises of the categories sound patterning, metre and sound, semantics, contextual meaning, literal and figurative meaning and register. After giving a short overview on the cultural developments that led to the movement Punk, all language areas are looked at more closely in the third part, which consists of a brief history of each band and the analysis itself.

As the analysis shows in the fourth part, the main difference between both movements is the motif. While the analysed British songs aim to provoke a political change and criticise the dominant values of society at that time, the American songs are used as a symbolic detachment of the same, aiming to cultivate an outsider status.

### Appendix 3: Zusammenfassung

Das Musikgenre "Punk" entwickelte sich Mitte der 1970er in den beiden Großstädten New York City und London als Resultat der schlechten wirtschaftlichen Lage, der gesellschaftlichen Situation, politischer Unzufriedenheit und der von einer neuen Generation als gescheitert angesehenen Hippie-Bewegung. Obwohl beide Strömungen signifikante Unterschiede aufweisen, wird dennoch nur von einer Punk Bewegung gesprochen. Diese Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit den wesentlichen Unterschieden und Charakteristika der beiden Untergrundbewegungen und analysiert die Leitgedanken und sprachlichen Besonderheiten von Liedern von je fünf Musikgruppen aus Großbritannien und den Vereinigten Staaten, die eine besonders wichtige Rolle in der noch neuen Subkultur spielten.

Zusammengefasst besteht die Arbeit aus vier Hauptteilen. Der erste Teil der Diplomarbeit beinhaltet eine kurze Erläuterung verschiedener sprachlicher Merkmale, wie Sprachmuster, Klang und Versmaß, Semantik, kontextuelle Bedeutung, wörtlich und bildliche Bedeutung, und Register. Im zweiten Teil der Arbeit wird Fokus auf die Entstehungsgeschichte der Subkulturen gelegt ehe die erwähnten Sprachmerkmale im dritten Teil der Arbeit, der eigentlichen Textanalyse, untersucht werden.

Wie sich bei der Auswertung der Textanalyse im vierten Teil zeigt, gibt es besonders eindeutige Unterschiede zwischen den Subkulturen in New York City und London betreffend den Leitgedanken. Während in den analysierten Liedern der britischen Gruppen eine Systemkritik im Vordergrund steht, welche des Öfteren mit einem Weltverbesserungsgedanken einhergeht, besteht die lyrische Motivation der amerikanischen KünstlerInnen in der Abgrenzung zu demselben System, jedoch um einen Ruf als Außenseiter zu kultivieren.

#### Appendix 4: Acknowledgements

First of all, I want to thank my supervisor Dr. Waldemar Zacharasiewicz for accepting a thesis outside of his general research area. The feedback on my drafts was always provided within a few days and is, taking the fact that he is a very busy man of science into consideration, appreciated twice as much. Moreover, I want to thank him for his patience and for bringing some order into my mind's chaos, which eventually led to the completion of this paper.

Furthermore, I especially want to thank my lovely family for supporting me in every phase of my life, for being patient when I lost control, for being welcoming when I did not know where to go, for always comforting me when in doubt, for always lending an ear when needed and for always believing in me in any given situation. It is hard to describe the gratitude I feel to have such a loving family and the two little words "thank you" certainly cannot express how fortunate I feel to be part of the "Eisls".

Last but not least, I want to thank my Oriental princess, the love of my life and constant source of joy and confidence, Duygu for dealing with my different moods during the writing process and for comforting and believing in me at any given time. Every day I find myself lost for words when I think of how much luck I have to have such an encouraging, trusting and loving partner. Thank you.

## Appendix 5: Curriculum Vitae

### **Persönliche Daten:**

Name: Philipp Eisl  
Geburtsdatum: 15. November 1987  
Geburtsort: Vöcklabruck

### **Ausbildung:**

2008 – Lehramtsstudium UF Englisch / UF Deutsch an der Universität Wien  
2014 - MA Deutsch als Fremdsprache / Deutsch als Zweitsprache an der Universität Wien  
2012 BA Deutsche Philologie an der Universität Wien  
2002 – 2007 HTL für Wirtschaftsingenieurwesen in Vöcklabruck  
1998 – 2002 Hauptschule Strobl  
1994 – 1998 Volksschule Strobl

### **Sprachen:**

Deutsch (Muttersprache)  
Englisch C2  
Türkisch A1