

Delusions of Grandeur?

Aria and the

Development of Soviet

Metal Music.

Dawn Hazle

4260063

Submission for the Award of Master of Arts
(by Research), Russian and Slavonic Studies

September 2017

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Introduction

A note on transliteration, translation and band names

This thesis uses the Library of Congress transliteration system except for nativised words such as glasnost. Russian bands' names are presented in transliteration except for that of the subject of the thesis, Aria, on the grounds that Aria has an established presence under its anglicised name. Band names are not routinely translated in this thesis; many names have, however, been translated in a few texts without mention of the Russian name, including in Troitsky's *Back in the USSR* and Ramet, Zamascikov and Bird's 'The Soviet Rock Scene'. Troitsky's works present further problems as he has written Russian and English-language texts under two different transliterations of his name: in the main body of the text I use only the anglicised name but in the footnotes when referring to his Russian-language output I retain the standard transliteration. Russian terms which are not names or nativised appear in italics. Translations, where necessary, are my own except where noted.

Background: the Soviet Union at the time of heavy metal

In March 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev succeeded Konstantin Chernenko as General Secretary of the Communist Part of the Soviet Union. The country was embroiled in a cold war that had begun in the years following the Second World War, in which the Soviet Union and its allies were pitched against the West, generally understood as the United States of America and its allies, and

which affected worldwide political, economic, social, and cultural developments.¹ This period of global tension, known simply as the Cold War, came about because both sides believed the other to be ‘inherently hostile and expansionist’ as well as economically unstable, fearful of the other side’s ‘huge military potential’ and politically disconnected, and the situation was founded on the profound economic and political differences of the two major powers.² The Cold War affected global populations so deeply that culture, including the early manifestations of heavy metal, was contaminated by its influence.

Heavy metal music appeared towards the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, coinciding with the period of the Cold War known as détente. Détente ran from 1969 to 1976 and was preceded by the US policymakers realising the Soviet Union was an enduring entity and altering its goals from victory over the Soviets to one of ““competitive coexistence”” as well as agreement on the suicidal nature of nuclear war.³ Détente itself was characterised by the USSR amassing much greater military assets, in order to bring the state level with the USA which ‘entered a period of relative decline, caused by the failure in Vietnam, mounting economic difficulties, the Watergate political crisis, and domestic constraints on the use of military power abroad’; the Soviet Union, too, had its own difficulties with an economic slowdown and increasing social conservatism.⁴ The USA saw détente as a kind of defeat, as it had lead the race

¹ Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde, ‘Introduction’ in Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) p. 1: there is some discussion as to the starting date of this cold war, but historians agree it is between 1945 and 1948.

² Vladimir O. Pechatnov, ‘Soviet-American Relations Through the Cold War’ in Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 107.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 107, p. 110.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

historically, while in the USSR the period was regarded as a sort of draw and, as the period went on, the Politburo became populated by people who wanted the Soviet Union to overtake the USA while it was weakened.⁵

During the 1970s the economy stagnated and in the early 1980s, under Leonid Brezhnev's successors Iurii Andropov and Chernenko, the economy grew by less than 2%.⁶ As well as the economic slowdown, this period of 'deepening systemic crisis' was characterised by 'a growing science-technological gap between Russia and the West, negative demographic trends, and [...] exacerbated by the extreme militarisation of the economy and growing "imperial overstretch"'.⁷ When Gorbachev succeeded Chernenko he began to introduce radical reforms of the Soviet political and economic systems, which became known, globally, as glasnost and perestroika. Glasnost incorporated the reforms of the political system which aimed to make the government more accountable and less corrupt and, therefore, to partly open up Soviet society; perestroika comprised economic reforms including a 'restructuring program' designed 'to make domestic industries more competitive with their counterparts in the West and preparing the Soviet economy for international trade and, [Gorbachev] hoped, export-led growth'.⁸

Gorbachev's reforms put the 'cultural powers' into 'a state of confusion and disorientation'.⁹ Melodiia, the record company of the Soviet Union and,

⁵ Ibid., p. 110.

⁶ Ian Jackson, 'Economics and the Cold War' in Richard H. Immerman and Petra Goedde (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) p. 60.

⁷ Pechatnov, 'Soviet-American', p. 114.

⁸ Jackson, 'Economics', p. 61.

⁹ Artemy Troitsky, *Back in the USSR* (London: Omnibus, 1987), p. 115.

therefore, a state-run enterprise, had previously been subsidised and so could fix its prices artificially low but as the environment became competitive, Melodiia began to take note of what was actually popular, having before only released officially approved music.¹⁰ Intense Western media interest in unofficial Soviet rock, coupled with the release by Joanna Stingray in the USA of the compilation album *Red Wave*, was the prompt to start Melodiia's production of rock music on to vinyl, beginning in 1986.¹¹

The unofficial status of rock music also caused problems for rock musicians with regard to Soviet social policy: it was mandatory to be employed.¹² Unemployment was effectively outlawed with those not in education or work branded as *tuneiadets*.¹³ All Soviet citizens carried a *trudovaia knizhka* which displayed their occupation and place of work, and failure to be employed was punishable by imprisonment.¹⁴ How many hours per week one was employed was not important, as long as work was undertaken to cover one's living costs. It was, in fact, possible to live on only a few roubles per week: the exceptional welfare state meant that taking a job as a night watchman or boiler room operative for a few nights each week would cover one's costs and leave the majority of one's time free for pursuing more meaningful activities.¹⁵

¹⁰ Harlow Robinson, 'Facing the music', *Soviet Union/Union Soviétique*, Vol. 15(2-3), 1988, p. 163.

¹¹ Polly McMichael, 'Prehistories and Afterlives', *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 32(3), 2009, p. 338, p. 340.

¹² Alexei Yurchak, *Everything was Forever, Until it Was No More* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 153.

¹³ Prezidium Verkhnogo Soveta RSFSR, *Ob usilenii bor'bi c litsami, ukloniaiushchimisia ot obshchestvenno poleznogo truda i vedushchimi antiobshchestvennyi paraziticheskii obraz zhizni*, http://uristu.com/library/sss/usr_5681/ [last accessed 16/09/2017].

¹⁴ Thomas Cushman, *Notes from Underground*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 57.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-8.

Metal music and culture in the Soviet Union

Heavy metal fans often feel part of a global metal culture, not just their local scene. Wallach says:

Metal does not transcend nationality so much as it dissolves the hegemonic ontological barrier that separates global (read Western) and national musics so that they can occupy the same space and, in so doing, acknowledge a shared history.¹⁶

Wallach is acknowledging here the Western-centric view of heavy metal scholarship: when authors talk about the global scene, they usually mean that which is popular or successful in the West and, even then, often in Anglo-American culture. In this thesis, I will situate heavy metal in Soviet Russia in the early to mid-1980s and, using a case study of the first album by Russian heavy metal band Aria, I will investigate how lyrics are used to represent attitudes of Russian metal musicians and youth generally in this period. I will also investigate the similarities and differences between Soviet and Western metal culture.

This research takes place in the context of existing scholarship of Soviet Russian youth and culture as well as the social and cultural norms of the Soviet Union in the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. Existing scholarship has tended to

¹⁶ 'Unleashed in the East' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene (eds.), *Metal Rules the Globe* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 102.

cover Russian rock music generally, in the sense of looking at music that was inspired by Western music and was usually unofficial or ‘underground’. There has been some refinement of rock into its constituent parts, including scholarship on Russian punks and the Leningrad Rock Club’s output and influence, but nothing has yet been published that focusses on Russian metal.¹⁷

I have used Aria’s *Maniia velichiia* as a case study because it was one of the last debut albums released before the watershed change in cultural policy of 1986, and also because it contains some lyrically interesting songs: it is therefore an opportunity to explore the musicians’ world in their ‘own words’. The history of the period has been written from the perspective of Russian rock musicians but not from that of Russian metal musicians. To rectify this I have undertaken a comprehensive literature review which has highlighted the disparities in coverage, in terms both of quantity and quality of discussion. As well as scholarly and other literary sources, fans have written about Aria online, adding to the history of Russian metal in the period, and such sources have been consulted alongside the scholarly works. In order to answer some questions not covered elsewhere, fan interviews and an interview with the main lyric writer were conducted: interviews with former and current band members were attempted but were unsuccessful.

¹⁷ Russian punk has been covered in Ivan Gololobov, Hilary Pilkington and Yngvar B. Steinholt, *Punk in Russia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014); Marta Dziewanska, Ekaterina Degot and Ilya Budratskis (eds), *Post-post-Soviet?* (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2013); Aleskei Rybin, Vladimir Tikhomorov et al, *Anarkhiia v RF* (Sankt-Peterburg: Amfora, 2007); Hilary Pilkington (guest ed.) ‘Special Issue: Punk in Post-Socialist Space’, *Punk and Post-Punk*, Volume 1(3), 2012. The Leningrad Rock Club has been covered in Cushman, *Notes*; Yngvar Bordewich Steinholt, *Rock in the Reservation* (New York: Mass Media Music Scholar’s Press, 2004); Paul Easton, ‘The Rock Music Community’ in Jim Riordan (ed.), *Soviet Youth Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 45-82.

I begin this thesis with an overview of metal music and culture from their roots in Western deindustrialised society to their expansion into very different areas of the globe. In chapter two, Russian rock and metal become the subjects of discussion and I introduce Aria. Chapter three concerns authenticity in its traditional form and specific distinctions associated with Soviet culture, before chapter four explores the case study of Aria's first album, *Maniia velichiia*.

CHAPTER ONE

Metal music and culture: roots, routes and concepts

On the subject of the subjective

Deena Weinstein, in what is the first scholarly book to be published in English on heavy metal, states that ‘heavy metal does not have a single meaning or even a single description’.¹⁸ Weinstein uses a ‘set of codes’ to identify a definition of metal, which includes not only the usual sonic code which is sufficient to define some genres, but also a visual and verbal code, all of which she describes as crystallising in the mid-late 1970s into the true heavy metal codes.¹⁹ Robert Walser, in what is the second such book, tells how “‘heavy metal’” now denotes a variety of musical discourses, social practices, and cultural meanings’ and ‘if there is one feature that underpins the coherence of heavy metal as a genre, it is the power chord’.²⁰ Walser also makes it clear that heavy metal, in all its guises, is socially significant, as it divides opinion, whether in terms of the genre itself or through controversies attached to an individual band or song.²¹ Such differences of opinion include the perception of heavy metal as nothing more than ‘simple and brutal’ by academics and journalists who are more discerning of qualities of other music genres, and so influence opinions: those without knowledge of the music become more

¹⁸ *Heavy Metal* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000), p. 5 (first edition published 1991).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

²⁰ *Running with the Devil* (Hanover, N.H.: Wesleyan University Press, 1993 [2014]), p. 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. xxii-xxiii.

intolerant toward it and those who enjoy it, i.e. fans, become more protective of the music and culture.²²

The key ingredients of metal for both Weinstein and Walser are the distorted electric guitar, without which the power chord is impossible, bass guitar electrified to a very high volume, and drums (either as a full drumkit or drum machine). Different subgenres of metal will add or exclude keyboards, clean (clear and sung) vocals, or growled vocals, as well as other instruments, and will play faster or slower tempos with more or less distorted guitars, or focus on a particular instrument.²³ Song themes are also important: anything dark and dreary is acceptably metal, as is anything about sex, violence and excess, but songs about romance, happiness and worldly optimism are not.²⁴ A feature probably most associated with metal music is the guitar solo, which provides the freedom part of a freedom/control dialectic, with the guitar solo a 'flight' of freedom in juxtaposition to the oppressive beat produced by the drums and bass. Vocals are not privileged in heavy metal: even in the styles where vocals are sung rather than screamed or growled, the vocals and lead guitar share the same sonic space.²⁵ Indeed, it is often the lead guitarist who leads the band, not the singer as in most rock groups.

The most widespread type of attempts at a single true definition of heavy metal music are those that classify it against what it is not: for example, 'that which is

²² Ibid., p. 20

²³ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, pp. 22-27.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 34-35.

²⁵ Walser, *Running*, p. 149.

not hard rock'.²⁶ But the fragmentation of metal which began in the 1980s led to some bands that were squarely in the hard rock camp being reclassified as so-called 'lite metal': bands such as Alice Cooper and Kiss.²⁷ There is a definite core of heavy metal bands and artists, and equally a definite point where a band is not heavy metal, but at the same time it is subjective, on a person-by-person basis, as to which bands in the 'grey area' qualify as metal and which do not. Across the output of one band or even among the tracks on one album, styles can change so radically as to be unrecognisable from each other.²⁸ One extreme example of this is Metallica, who went from being a thrash metal band well-respected by metal fans in the 1980s to being a band trying a variety of fusions of pop and rock in the mid-1990s, losing them fans among the metalheads but gaining them in the mainstream. This perceived selling-out has led Metallica to be one of the most controversial metal bands in metal fan circles.²⁹

In this thesis, I will take a broad view of what metal is. I started with Encyclopaedia Metallum, a user-editable but fully-moderated online database, which has written a strict set of criteria for all bands that are included on its site (bands are suggested by forum members, who are members of the public, and submissions are approved or rejected by a group of moderators), including requiring that bands have material which contains metal riffs, any metal elements in songs must outweigh the non-metal ones, one full-length wholly

²⁶ Idelber Avelar, 'Heavy Metal Music in Postdictatorial Brazil', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, Vol. 12(3), 2003, p. 331.

²⁷ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, p. 328.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

metal album, and actual material that can be listened to, or compelling evidence the band was metal if it is historical.³⁰ This definition, however, excludes bands which are arguably metal and regularly included in histories of metal, including AC/DC, Poison, Rammstein and Led Zeppelin, but does include similar artists such as Mötley Crüe, Rainbow, Deep Purple and Scorpions, citing their inclusion as ‘exceptions’.³¹ Ultimately, though, the site needs to have some cut-off point otherwise it would not be a metal archive, and its authors do point out that ‘none of us here think we’re a supreme authority on all things heavy metal’.³² The site moderators also exclude subgenres including glam metal (called ‘glam rock’ on the site) and nu-metal (mallcore). Given the prominent ‘exceptions’ from Encyclopaedia Metallum, I have based my definition of metal on an understanding closer to Walser’s power chord starting point with the addition of themes and some sort of guitar solo or instrumental. Thus, some bands which are arguably hard rock have enough metal to be considered here, for example Europe, whose ‘The Final Countdown’ and ‘Cherokee’ adhere to all the metal codes used by Walser and Weinstein and whose ‘Rock the Night’ falls well into the same stable as Twisted Sister’s conclusively metal output.

The genre-bending does not stop with bands that vary between rock and metal: definitive metal bands such as Iron Maiden and Judas Priest are sometimes placed in the rock genre. For example, when I was uploading some Iron Maiden albums to my computer, I noted the given genre on the album

³⁰ Moderators of Encyclopaedia Metallum, *Rules and Guidelines*, <https://www.metal-archives.com/content/rules> [last accessed 02/08/2017].

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

properties was ‘rock’ for some albums, including ‘The Number of the Beast’. This might well be a simple laziness in coding the metadata but it certainly does not help in defining a genre and contributes to a blurring of genre boundaries. Other sources of confusion include the labelling of the predominantly-metal music festivals at Donington Park and internationally as ‘Monsters of Rock’ and most student ‘rock’ societies in the UK being principally metal-oriented.³³

The roots of heavy metal: scholarship

Heavy metal music and its associated culture are generally recognised as emerging approximately simultaneously in the United Kingdom and USA in the late 1960s-early 1970s with groups from the UK such as Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple and American metal-influenced rock bands including Grand Funk Railroad, Iron Butterfly and Blue Cheer.³⁴ At that time, the industrial centres of England such as Black Sabbath’s native West Midlands were undergoing a period of deindustrialisation against a background of recession, in which the youth generation felt as if they had no certain future, since the factories their families had worked in and for were disappearing.³⁵ Weinstein describes how, in the USA, deindustrialisation was also underway

³³ Matt Wilkinson, *Plaque in Honour of Monsters of Rock Co-Founder Presented at Download*, <http://www.nme.com/news/music/download-festival-9-1291987> [last accessed 02/08/2017]; Amanda Barnett, ‘Rock-Soc-ing in the Youth World’ (conference paper, Boundaries and Ties: the Place of Metal Music in Communities, University of Victoria, June 9-11, 2017).

³⁴ See detailed histories in, for example: Walser, *Running*; Weinstein, *Heavy metal*; Donna Gaines, *Teenage Wasteland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Ian Christie, *Sound of the Beast* (New York: HarperEntertainment, 2003); Jon Wiederhorn and Katherine Turman, *Louder than Hell* (New York: It Books, 2014).

³⁵ Walser, *Running*, p. xx.

and post-war euphoria was fading, and thus heavy metal ‘was born amidst the ashes of the failed youth revolution’ at the end of the 1960s as a cultural backlash against a seemingly-hopeless future.³⁶ In particular, this feeling of hopelessness was taken up in its heavy metal form by male working-class youth rather than females or other classes and ages, since it was male working-class youth who were most affected by deindustrialisation. This vocalised depression was already to be found in blues music, as black people in the USA had looked at their poor status and depressed outlook in the late nineteenth century and sung about it: unable to physically or politically call attention to their plight, and unable to really do anything about it, they vocalised their sorrow in a shared experience.³⁷ Heavy metal music took the attitude of blues and added rock and roll’s sentimentality, creating a no-nonsense, emotive mix.³⁸ Black Sabbath, in particular, took the sorrow and pain of blues music and worked it against a heavy, industrial sound which gives the impression of the lost industry and, therefore, hopelessness for the future.

Hopelessness and even a lack of any future are frequent and shared themes in heavy metal. At the time of heavy metal’s emergence into the mainstream consciousness as a genre of its own (distinct from rock), the Cold War was waning into the *détente* period.³⁹ World events included the beginning and escalation of the Vietnam War, the Stonewall riots, the Charles Manson murders, the Prague Spring, intensification of problems in the British Empire states of Rhodesia, Ireland and Nigeria, the peak of the space race with the

³⁶ *Heavy Metal*, p. 13.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 12.

³⁸ *Ibid*.

³⁹ Robert Service, *A History of Twentieth-Century Russia* (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 399.

launch of the Venera programme, Soyuz docking trials and the Apollo moon landings, massive music festivals at Woodstock and Altamont (the latter a disaster) and attempts by nations to reduce arms, but while increasing nuclear testing.

Against the background of increasing unrest and mistrust created by Cold War tensions, Led Zeppelin released its first two eponymous albums in 1969 followed by *Led Zeppelin III* in 1970 and the untitled fourth album in 1971.⁴⁰ Black Sabbath released *Black Sabbath* and *Paranoid* in 1970 with *Master of Reality* following in 1971.⁴¹ The latter album includes the song 'Children of the Grave' which warns of a possible apocalyptic future if peace was not established in the world.⁴² This is one of the themes of chaos identified by Weinstein in opposition to the 'Dionysian' themes of power, alcohol (but specifically no other drugs) and ecstatic celebrations of vitality and sex.⁴³ These themes are common across the genre but are not always represented in each subgenre.

Chaos is a definitive marker of heavy metal, being uncommon in other genres of rock music (except punk) and includes 'disorder, conflict, opposition, and contradiction [...] images of monsters, the grotesque, mayhem, and disaster [...] injustice [...] resistance, rebellion, and death'.⁴⁴ As well as songs about nuclear apocalypse, anti-war songs set in all eras are common, including Iron

⁴⁰ Led Zeppelin, 'Events', <http://www.ledzeppelin.com/allevents> [last accessed 21/08/2017].

⁴¹ Black Sabbath, 'History', <http://www.blacksabbath.com/history.html> [last accessed 21/08/2017].

⁴² Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, p. 42.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

Maiden's Crimean War-based 'The Trooper' and Judas Priest's futuristic, robot-themed 'Metal Gods'. Entire anti-war albums occur frequently in the melodic, especially classic and power, metal subgenres: Iron Maiden released *A Matter of Life and Death* and Iced Earth *The Glorious Burden*, the former emphasising struggle and the latter the perceived glory of war, a myth the band goes on to dispel with songs including 'Devil to Pay' and 'High Water Mark', the latter especially including some gruesome imagery to complete the case for opposing war.

Tied in to the anti-war theme is death, an inevitable consequence of war.

Death is such a strong theme in heavy metal that it has even spawned its own subgenre, death metal, with its growled vocal line almost incomprehensible, especially against the ferocious, racing tempo.⁴⁵ Death metal bands sing about death, war and decay, and running through all these themes is the idea of hopelessness. Death metal music, like metal generally, spends its time pointing out the flaws in a system but does not actually create change; rather metal offers discussion opportunities within its culture to aid change to take place.⁴⁶ This makes heavy metal culture tied to context, either the context in which it was produced, or the context in which a reviewer was listening to it, or any context in which the music is experienced.⁴⁷ The meaning of music is always tied to a particular place and time, although these contexts are not necessarily

⁴⁵ Deena Weinstein, 'The Globalization of Metal' Overdrive' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene (eds.), *Metal Rules the Globe* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 42.

⁴⁶ Jeremy Wallach, Harris P. Berger and Paul D. Greene, 'Affective Overdrive' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene (eds.), *Metal Rules the Globe* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 26.

⁴⁷ Walser, *Running*, p. 34.

fixed and are dependent on the person creating the meaning, be it the listener, artist or critic.

This contextual reliance has led to heavy metal music being the subject of much scrutiny in the mid-1980s, especially by the PMRC (Parents' Music Resource Center), established in 1985 by the wives of prominent US government members, which sought to remove heavy metal from the reach of youth, accusing the musicians of promoting sex, violence and other threats to parental control.⁴⁸ An outcome from their campaigns and publications was the labelling of records which contained undesirable lyrics.⁴⁹ Much of this negativity from the PMRC and other critics was prompted by the Dionysian themes in heavy metal, notably lust, consumption of alcohol and ecstasy at the expense of all else.⁵⁰ Sometimes, as in W.A.S.P.'s 'Animal (Fuck like a Beast)', the complaint was due to the actual meaning of the lyrics but at other times, such as AC/DC's notably sexual 'Shoot to Thrill', the lyrics were read as violent or otherwise misinterpreted.⁵¹

Such public backlash has prompted metal fans to become what Weinstein terms 'proud pariahs [who] wear the grounds for their rejection as a badge of honour'.⁵² Rejection by the contemporary, often capitalist hegemony means the culture can open up to ideas of the 'other', explore alternative coping strategies and create communal bonds: the music allows the culture to

⁴⁸ Walser, *Running*, pp. 137-138.

⁴⁹ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, p. 265.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36, p. 253.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 271.

articulate and sustain their identities as well as reveal anxieties about the world.⁵³ Heavy metal has become a ‘viable mode of resistance, of identity, assertion, and of self-empowerment’ for young people across the globe, all facing problems of disempowerment, economic uncertainty and no positive future.⁵⁴

Heavy metal is no longer, however, the preserve of youth: I observed attendees of the Iron Maiden tour in 2011 who ranged from young teenagers to retirees using walking aids, with a significant proportion of females. The 30th Anniversary Concert of Aria I attended in November 2015 was similar, but with a much more relaxed age policy, since families with young children were in attendance.⁵⁵ Fan loyalty is something which keeps the best (or at least the most famous) bands in business, as Black Sabbath’s pre-reunion autograph tour in 1997 proved, with fans between fifteen and forty, some of the latter accompanied by their children, queuing for up to five hours at the Chicago venue.⁵⁶ Indeed, in 2017 it would not be unfounded for those forty-year-olds from 1997 to be accompanied by their grandchildren on such a tour now.

Black Sabbath is credited with inspiring the death and doom metal subgenres, doom metal being slow and melancholy which is quite the opposite to power metal which grew out of NWOBHM (New Wave of British Heavy Metal), with its heroic themes and fast tempos.⁵⁷ Judas Priest had a major influence on

⁵³ Walser, *Running*, pp. 159-164.

⁵⁴ Wallach, Berger and Greene, ‘Affective’, p. 3.

⁵⁵ This is also the case in Singapore, see Kai Khun Liew and Kelly Fu, ‘Conjuring the Tropical Spectres’, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7(1), 2006, p. 102.

⁵⁶ Walser, *Running*, p. 292.

⁵⁷ Weinstein, ‘Globalisation’, p. 40.

NWOBHM which crystallised in the late 1970s with bands including Iron Maiden and Saxon. There are now many subgenres of heavy metal, themselves split into subgenres: for example, doom developed into drone and stoner metal, and power metal into symphonic and progressive metal.⁵⁸ Encyclopaedia Metallum lists sixteen main subgenres, five of which are combinations of two or three similar genres.⁵⁹ Boundaries of subgenres, like the boundaries of heavy metal generally, are fluid or indistinct, and bands rarely produce songs from one subgenre, even if they are described as e.g. a power metal band. This proliferation of subgenres was predicted by music scholar Ronald Byrnside, and Weinstein builds on his formula to describe the three stages of metal as formation and eruption, crystallisation, and fragmentation: Byrnside's formula predicts decay after crystallisation but heavy metal has instead undergone distinct fragmentation in which the original progenitor, classic heavy metal, is still very much alive.⁶⁰

As well as diversifying into different subgenres with their own distinct subcategories and combining with other styles of rock music to produce crossover genres such as metalcore and symphonic metal, metal music and culture has spread across the globe, from its Anglophone origins in the USA and UK to Western nations of Europe, the Americas and Oceania and Japan, then further to socialist countries of East Germany and the Soviet Union and finally to the rest of the globe, including Arab nations, former colonies in

⁵⁸ Encyclopaedia Metallum, *Browse Bands - By Genre – Doom/Stoner/Sludge*, <https://www.metal-archives.com/lists/doom>, and *Browse Bands - By Genre - Power* <https://www.metal-archives.com/lists/power> [last accessed 23/08/2017].

⁵⁹ Encyclopaedia Metallum, *Browse Bands - By Genre*, <https://www.metal-archives.com/browse/genre> [last accessed 23/08/2017].

⁶⁰ *Heavy Metal*, pp. 7-8.

South-East Asia and even the tiny South Pacific island of Rapanui.⁶¹ Different cultures would be more receptive to different styles of metal, but the best-travelled are arguably death and black metal.⁶²

Globalisation and glocalisation

It is clear that heavy metal is a global-reaching culture, but different national and linguistic cultures have adopted, assimilated and adapted heavy metal differently depending on their own circumstances and situations. In this section, I explore a selection of different bands, nations and cultures outside of the Anglophone Western hegemony of heavy metal which have relevance to my study of Aria because the culture the local scene crystallised in has similarities to that of Aria's late Soviet Union conception.

Sepultura is a Brazilian thrash/death metal band formed in Belo Horizonte in 1984, whose members sing in English; it has achieved international success since release of their *Beneath the Remains* album in 1989.⁶³ It was formed a year before the end of a twenty-year dictatorship which was characterised by 'intense censorship and repression' and influenced the band's choice of music style, themes and agenda.⁶⁴ Sepultura's inception was similar to that of Aria: it took place towards the end of a repressive regime, in a large country with

⁶¹ Weinstein, 'Globalisation', pp. 43-44.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 40-41; Marco Ferrarese, 'Eastern Desekratorz and Nuclear Metal Lust', *Metal Music Studies*, Vol. 1(2), 2015, p. 216; Mark LeVine, *Heavy Metal Islam* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008), p. 10.

⁶³ Avelar, 'Heavy Metal', pp. 332-333.

⁶⁴ Avelar, 'Otherwise National' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene (eds.), *Metal Rules the Globe* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 135.

relatively few large population centres, and in the mid-1980s. The similarities end there, however. Sepultura had to struggle with becoming recognised as an appropriate musical act against the prejudice of Brazil's emerging cultural norms, and also present itself as relevant on the international stage despite coming from a 'Third World' country – and in both terms the band succeeded.⁶⁵

Regardless of the fact the members sing in English, Sepultura presents itself as a Brazilian band, even using Amazonian indigenous Xavante music in its 1996 album *Roots*.⁶⁶ This album was made partly in response to the expectation of the (Western) international market that Sepultura came from the jungle, to which the members responded 'it's easier to get to New York than to the Amazon'.⁶⁷ In explaining how this album is a 'politicised, electrified and polyrhythmic counterethnography' with 'authentic national coding', Avelar criticises Western artists including Peter Gabriel and Paul Simon for introducing 'ethnic authenticity' into their music by using ethnic African backing choirs to 'exoticise' their music, highlighting the lack of equality between the white Western singers and their ethnic supports.⁶⁸ He argues that Sepultura uses the melancholic Xavante chants in the same way as any other instrument in their band: they are mixed, distorted and occupy the same sonic space as Max Cavalera's vocal line and two distorted guitars, and the *maracatu* drum phrase sits in the same space as the drum and bass lines.⁶⁹ The Xavante,

⁶⁵ Avelar, 'Heavy Metal', p. 329, p. 336.

⁶⁶ Avelar, 'Otherwise', p. 147.

⁶⁷ Avelar, 'Heavy Metal', p. 343.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ 'Otherwise', pp. 147-8.

in Avelar's reading, are afforded the same treatment as the rest of the band and, as such, occupy the same level in the estimation of their receivers.

Brazilianness could not always be celebrated by Sepultura: it was initially constrained by the demands of the immediate postdictatorial cultural expectations, which saw heavy metal 'forced into a corner between the demand for moral or aesthetic positivity and the demand for cultural or political negativity'.⁷⁰ The band's feeling of constraint is clear in its early albums, which are asphyxiating and enclosing, lacking the drum solos and instrumental syncopation which highlight the freedom part of the freedom/control dialectic used by Walser to describe heavy metal's sound.⁷¹ In a search for identity, Sepultura looked to the West for its authenticity, choosing death metal sung in English as an escape from Brazil's suffocating cultural situation. Once it had achieved international success, however, Sepultura looked back to Brazil to explore its heritage and culture from an internationalised perspective 'to provide a critical distance for reading issues of power in Brazilian society and for developing a new kind of Brazilian identity'.⁷²

Much of the constraint placed on Sepultura was due to the limitations placed on culture by the repressive regime in place until 1985, which categorised Brazilian popular music according to its level of 'good taste'. The music that met these taste criteria did not include much rock and roll, and when it was included, rock was 'engulfed' and semi-homogenised in line with other

⁷⁰ Avelar, 'Heavy Metal', p. 330.

⁷¹ Avelar, 'Otherwise', p. 146.

⁷² Wallach, Berger and Greene, 'Affective', p. 26.

acceptable or similarly 'neutralised' forms of popular music, and this collectivising of rock into the acceptable mainstream, Avelar argues, left the youth of Brazil without any form of alternative music to identify with.⁷³ Heavy metal music became both a metaphor for the absence of a nation with which youth could identify, leaving them looking to the West for guidance, and an 'antidote' to the exclusion they felt by offering a community in which to participate.⁷⁴ Interestingly, this meant that Brazilian youth placed demands on heavy metal which it was not designed to fulfil: Brazilian youth wanted something to show them a positive morality while criticising existing culture and politics, but heavy metal suffered from simply being ignored by the state.⁷⁵ Even Sepultura itself, along with the rest of the Brazilian heavy metal pioneers, was criticised for being socially unaware.⁷⁶

With its international success, Sepultura has shown how music from such 'Third World' countries is not inferior, although it is not clear whether this success was intentional or whether it was simply a by-product of the borrowing of Western culture to replace that missing in Brazil. By returning to its Brazilian origins, Sepultura has also re-focussed attention on its national heritage, rather than simply being another global sensation.

Brazil is arguably not as far removed from Western culture compared to many of the later adopters of metal culture, because Brazil is predominantly Christian, was not a colony during the 20th century and, despite Avelar's use of

⁷³ 'Heavy Metal', p. 342.

⁷⁴ Avelar, 'Otherwise', p152.

⁷⁵ Avelar, 'Heavy Metal', p. 329.

⁷⁶ Avelar, 'Otherwise', p. 135.

the term 'Third World', has a relatively advanced economy. The South-East Asian nations of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia only became independent since the Second World War and are Islamic nations. They also have relatively advanced economies but, like Brazil, Malaysia and Indonesia especially suffer from poor wealth distribution. These three nations have been the subject of research into their metal cultures, especially that of black metal. In Liew and Fu's sociological account of moral panics in relation to black metal in Singapore and Malaysia, the authors highlighted the differences between the two states, which have opposite trajectories of development: Malaysia has become increasingly conservative and clamped down on popular culture in an effort to impose stricter Islamic laws, whereas Singapore's government was initially ultraconservative but later mellowed in its attitude towards popular music, and especially metal music, when it saw how little political influence it had had on the general populace.⁷⁷

It is often Malaysia, however, that is the initial focus of scholarship in South-East Asia, since it saw the emergence of heavy metal bands in the late 1980s, when the government had tried to censor the music but was unsuccessful.⁷⁸ Malaysian metal's emergence was unlike heavy metal's initial outbreak in the West since it developed in response to rapid industrialisation rather than deindustrialisation.⁷⁹ In Malaysia, young Malays who felt disenfranchised or socially alienated could turn to either Islam or heavy metal: those who turned to Islam tended to become more fundamental in their faith, whereas those who

⁷⁷ 'Conjuring', pp. 99-112.

⁷⁸ Wallach, 'Unleashed', pp. 86-105.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

turned to metal did not necessarily lose or ignore their faith.⁸⁰ Muslims are often less opposed to the inherently Christian symbolism of heavy metal, since while both religions share the notion of the embodiment of evil in Satan, anti-Christian metal (especially black metal) tends to remain just that due to its anti-Christian focussed counter-hegemonies.⁸¹ Especially in Malaysia, where black metal is viewed by the government as anti-Islamic, many band members prefer to keep their metal and family/career lives separate: in this way they can still feel authentic in their music without betraying their social responsibilities.⁸²

Family and religion are also very important in the small central Asian Hindu state of Nepal, but Nepali metal actively uses new symbols to subvert the dominant culture instead of borrowing from Christian, Western demographics, thus 'glocalising' metal into their culture.⁸³ In Nepal, responsibilities to family, especially through Hindu rituals, are seen by young people as 'frustrating' or old-fashioned.⁸⁴ Nepali metal has taken the standard dark themes of Western/Anglo-American heavy metal and added its own local themes. The music opposes religious norms but does not propose any replacement: like most 'anti-religious' metal, it is critical but not dogmatic. The lyrics are often also seemingly hypocritical when, for example, the vocalist sings about animal sacrifice but scene participants often disapprove of their religion's use of actual sacrifice in its rituals.⁸⁵ Like many metalheads

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 93.

⁸¹ Ferrarese, 'Eastern', p. 224.

⁸² Ibid., p. 227.

⁸³ Weinstein, 'Globalisation', pp. 54-55.

⁸⁴ Paul D. Greene, 'Electronic and Affective Overdrive' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene (eds), *Metal Rules the Globe* (London: Duke University Press, 2011) p. 125.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 135-158.

worldwide, the Nepali fans also speak of peace and unity in the face of Nepal's increasing corruption and violence, while their favourite songs are full of corruptive themes and violent elements. Greene explains that metal for Nepalis inspires 'experiences of intense, life-saturating, transgressive empowerment' which takes away their worries in the real world, at least for a moment.⁸⁶ In this way, they are also connected to other metal fans worldwide, as every metal fan may well share the same affective experience.⁸⁷

This global connectedness is also explored by Wallach, Bell and Varas-Díaz et al.⁸⁸ Wallach acknowledges the Western-centric view of heavy metal but states that fans from all parts of the globe feel part of it.⁸⁹ Greene also remarks that heavy metal should be viewed as an 'ultraculture' because, he believes, it cannot exist as a subculture because that implies boundaries, which heavy metal constantly seeks to undermine or overcome.⁹⁰

Different cultures have all had different reactions to aspects of heavy metal. In Nepal, for example, the loudness of heavy metal is not transgressive as in Western cultures, since traditional Nepali music incorporates high volumes. Nepali heavy metal takes two common forms: one that could be considered more like Western metal, and one with a focus on clear lyrics, sung in Nepali, as a nationalist music. This latter style is much more like traditional Nepali

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 153.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 135-158; see also Walser, *Running* for discussion on affectiveness in heavy metal.

⁸⁸ 'Unleashed', p. 102; 'Metal in a Micro Island State' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene (eds), *Metal Rules the Globe* (London: Duke University Press, 2011) pp. 271-293; 'Predictors of communal formation in a small heavy metal scene', *Metal Music Studies*, 2015, Vol. 1(1), pp. 87-103.

⁸⁹ 'Unleashed', p. 102.

⁹⁰ 'Affective Overdrive', p. 134; see Walser, *Running* for a discussion of boundarylessness in heavy metal.

music and as such is considered less transgressive.⁹¹ In a global movement, different elements will signify different things to different cultures.

Dan Bendrups takes this signification problem and applies it to Rapanui (Easter Island), a tiny Polynesian island with a population of approximately four thousand. There, themes such as (de)industrialisation are unsuitable, since Rapanui has no industry. Heavy metal came to Rapanui via tourists and Rapanui men returning from Chilean military service, and gave local young men an assertive, hyper-masculine image that they were keen to identify with.⁹² Heavy metal is used on Rapanui as a form of masculine power and to subvert close-mindedness: when it is used to promote power (as opposed to depression, as in black metal), heavy metal is recreated by ex-Chilean servicemen to recapture their youth and by younger men who have not been soldiers to achieve their traditional warrior status; as a subversive tool, it is used as a sign of 'otherness' as well as to expose conservative ideologies in the local populace.⁹³

Metal and socialism

Socialist regimes had metal music and cultures that grew in a distinct and unique way. Notably, China, East Germany and Slovenia have been the subject of scholarship specifically on their metal scenes.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 112.

⁹² Dan Bendrups, 'Nako' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene (eds), *Metal Rules the Globe* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 313-332.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 314.

Chinese males, like those on Rapanui, use heavy metal as an expression of masculinity but, unlike on Rapanui where it is used to enhance masculinity, in China it is used to empower males in response to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s which suppressed public discourse on sexuality and gender.⁹⁴ China's metal scene developed suddenly in the early 1980s, catalysed by foreign students and young Chinese artists and musicians who had converged on Beijing, where they were 'introduced to three decades of foreign rock music all at once'.⁹⁵ Chinese heavy metal is generally well-received because it is 'exalting China's glorious past' using sophisticated literary lyric-poetry.⁹⁶ Chinese heavy metal places honour, loyalty and heroism, all signifiers of authenticity, at the forefront of its style.⁹⁷

Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia during metal's emergence, but Yugoslavia was relatively open compared to the Soviet Union: since relations with the Soviet Union fell into conflict in the late 1940s, Yugoslavia had diverged from the Soviet Union in terms of cultural policy.⁹⁸ Beginning in the late 1950s, rock entered Yugoslavia and spread, partly via the film industry, into dance halls where bands began to play rock and subsequently became electrified: indeed, Kameleoni's soundtrack to the 1968 film *Sončni-krik* is regarded by Muršič as the first heavy metal sound in the whole of Yugoslavia.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Cynthia P. Wong, 'A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene (eds), *Metal Rules the Globe* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 65.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁹⁸ Yegor Gaidar (tr.), *Collapse of an Empire* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), p. 20.

⁹⁹ 'Noisy Crossroads' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene (eds), *Metal Rules the Globe* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 295.

Yugoslavia also benefitted from officially-organised concerts by Western metal and hard rock artists including Uriah Heep, Iron Maiden and Saxon as well as the latest records (recorded under license soon after release), which were usually less than a third of the price compared to Western Europe, meaning vast collections were possible.¹⁰⁰ Muršič names Gordi from Serbia as the first Yugoslav heavy metal band in 1977, with the first fully heavy metal Slovenian group to appear being Pomeranča in 1980; Pomeranča was deemed capable of enough success to be signed to a commercial label.¹⁰¹ It was also one of the few Slovenian heavy metal bands in general, as punk had become the dominant rock style since its arrival 1977.¹⁰² Heavy metal fans, however, outnumbered punk fans, and foreign metal bands played larger stadia and halls than their punk counterparts.¹⁰³ It can be reasoned that punk's apparent dominance in band numbers is because punk rock and its amateur nature meant that many more people could play the music, whereas the virtuosity expected by heavy metal is not easy to attain. Indeed, Muršič even references the problem of skill, stating that Slovenian audiences are very demanding and 'may demand much more than beginners – or not yet highly-skilled groups – can offer'.¹⁰⁴

East Germany (the German Democratic Republic, hereafter referred to as the GDR) had a much closer relationship with the Soviet Union, being formally established by Stalin in 1949 and remaining part of the Warsaw Pact from the treaty's inception in May 1955 until the state's withdrawal in 1990 after the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 296-7.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 296-298.

¹⁰² Peter Stanković, 'When Alternative ends up as Mainstream', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 20(3), 2014, p. 301.

¹⁰³ Muršič, *Noisy*, p. 298.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 310 n. 5.

end of Communist rule.¹⁰⁵ This impacted on its cultural production: ‘the state and party bureaucracy created conditions in which manifestations of modern cultural life could be found only in the margins and cracks of the social system’.¹⁰⁶ General Secretary Erich Honecker set up the state-run monopolies for radio, television and record production in the early 1970s and these policed cultural output in the GDR. It was the GDR’s proximity to West Germany (the Federal German Republic, hereafter FGR) which allowed more cultural innovation than the state monopolies would: radio broadcasts from the FGR could be received in the GDR, and a number of these played heavy metal.¹⁰⁷ In the various institutions of the GDR, heavy metal was ignored, excluded, redefined or integrated either subsequently or all at once, such was the heterogeneous nature of its politicisation.¹⁰⁸ The Staatspolizei (state police; hereafter Stasi), for example, viewed heavy metal music and culture as ‘seditious’ and, along with skinhead, punk and goth music and cultures, was declared an ‘extreme group’ throughout the 1980s.¹⁰⁹ During this time, however, the first official heavy metal band was granted its performing licence, in 1983.¹¹⁰ Bands could become professional because the officials in the local government structures that permitted them ‘had started to sympathise with the alienated members of the subculture’ of heavy metal, and having professional bands meant that officially organised live shows were possible, but were kept deliberately small and advertised at short notice due to the Stasi considering

¹⁰⁵ Service, *A History*, p. 311, p. 337, p. 483.

¹⁰⁶ Peter Wicke and John Shepherd, “‘The Cabaret is Dead’” in Tony Bennett et al., *Rock and Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 25.

¹⁰⁷ Nikolai Okunew, “‘Satan Demands Total Annihilation’”, *Metal Music Studies*, Vol. 2(2), 2016, pp. 200-201.

¹⁰⁸ Wolf-Georg Zaddach, ‘Metal Militia Behind the Iron Curtain’, *Metal Music Studies*, Vol. 2(3), 2016, p. 362.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

them a security risk.¹¹¹ No Western bands ever played in the GDR, so local bands were important for the live music scene, as well as for allowing the community side of the culture to occur and develop, and a band's official status meant it was less likely that a concert would be suddenly stopped, allowing a more natural sense of participation in the community.¹¹² The chairman of the Leipzig task force for 'Tanzmusik' (which included heavy metal) called for respect and tolerance of the genre in an interview conducted in 1987, emphasising the vital, activating and compensatory nature of heavy metal and how it fitted in with the socialist music culture which itself emphasised these points that music is a form of engagement.¹¹³ For an official to state this in a public forum is very important, and shows how the authoritative offices were not a united structure in the GDR, going some way to explaining the sympathetic views of some officials in local government.

Metal terminology

The nature of heavy metal's existence as a genre of rock and, therefore, often being included in studies related to the larger genre rather than as a distinct entity on its own has led me to review scholarship dealing not just with metal music, but also with rock, hard rock, heavy rock and a plethora of other genres that it identifies. In the same way that heavy metal does not have a set definition, there is no one term that encompasses the whole genre except 'metal'. For example, Weinstein refers to a subgenre of metal as 'lite metal'

¹¹¹ Okunew, "Satan", p. 207.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 208.

¹¹³ Zaddach, 'Metal Militia', p. 364.

which is also known as ‘glam metal’, ‘hair metal’ and ‘poseur metal’ but which Encyclopaedia Metallum calls ‘glam rock’ to highlight that it does not, in the opinion of the moderators, belong in the Encyclopaedia.¹¹⁴ Which bands and styles do and do not belong to the category of heavy metal or its various subgenres is not the subject of this thesis: I use the terms ‘metal’ and ‘heavy metal’ to describe music and culture that falls within broad category of metal music and culture but does not fit into a distinct subgenre, e.g. black, drone or thrash metal. In cases which correspond to a subgenre (in my opinion), I have used that term.

This lack of consistent terminology and firm boundaries has not just caused the obvious problems associated with reading about popular culture phenomena in a foreign language. Ramet, Zamascikov and Bird’s chapter tends to refer to heavy metal music as ‘heavy metal rock’: they use this term for Pantera, a thrash-inspired metal band.¹¹⁵ This term is rather confusing, and Brown’s article on heavy metal terminology tells us that this adjectival phrase is used to describe bands or songs which sound heavy metal, but may not be included in the genre.¹¹⁶ He also lists ‘hard rock’, ‘white blues’, ‘metallic’ and ‘heavy metal rock’ alongside ‘heavy metal’ in this study, focussing on terminology in *Rolling Stone* magazine 1967-2007.¹¹⁷ The ‘alternative’, ‘progressive’ and ‘underground’ labels can certainly be applied to heavy metal music, and its blues origin can mean some songs sound more bluesy than others, giving the

¹¹⁴ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, pp. 45-48; Moderators, *Rules and Guidelines*.

¹¹⁵ ‘The Soviet Rock Scene’ in Sabrina Petra Ramet (ed.), *Rocking the State*, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1994), p. 207.

¹¹⁶ ‘Explaining the Naming of Heavy Metal from Rock’s “Back Pages”’, *Metal Music Studies*, Vol. 1(2), 2015, p. 235.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 251 n.10.

white blues label some provenance, especially as it was more prevalent than the term ‘heavy metal’ in *Rolling Stone* during the period 1967-74.¹¹⁸ In his study of the Slovenian metal scene, Muršič uses the term ‘progressive’ to describe the classic heavy metal style.¹¹⁹

Far from being only a problem in English, there is a lot of terminology variation in Russian, which both replicates the existing ambiguities in Anglophone discussions of the genre and introduces new ones. The translation or transliteration into Russian simply of the term ‘heavy metal’ is exemplified in the self-penned short entry on the subject in Troitsky’s encyclopaedia of rock music. The entry itself is under *khevi-metal*, clearly a simple transliteration, which Troitsky immediately describes as ‘пресловутый тяжелый металл’ using the literal translation, and revealing that *metal* with a single ‘l’ is used for transliteration, whereas *metall* with double ‘l’s is reserved for translation.¹²⁰ He uses both translated and transliterated terms interchangeably and also uses *spid-metal* for speed metal, as well as *zapadnyi metall* for Western metal.¹²¹ The use of *spid-metal* opens the term to unsavoury comparisons, as rock was compared to AIDS for which the Russian term is *SPID*.¹²² The most fascinating phrase is Troitsky’s own abbreviated Soviet neologism, *tiazhmet*, a contraction of *tiazhelyi metall*, which I have not encountered elsewhere in any of the scholarship.¹²³ A term which I have

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 251.

¹¹⁹ ‘Noisy’, p. 308.

¹²⁰ Artemii Troitskii, ‘Khevi metal’ in Artemii Troitskii, (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR* (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), pp. 357.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 358.

¹²² Artemii Troitskii, ‘Ot sostavitelia’ in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 7.

¹²³ Ibid.

avoided but that is used extensively by Troitsky across his output is *novaia volna*, since it is not used in the Russian literature to describe heavy metal specifically and is, rather, more generally applied to alternative rock styles, although a Western fan uses the term ‘New Wave’ to describe 1980s heavy metal.¹²⁴

The term *khard-n-khevi* is used in Russian sources to refer to traditional, classic heavy metal of the type played by Iron Maiden, Judas Priest and Black Sabbath as well as to the more hard-rock styles of Rainbow, Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin on sites including Wikipedia and Metalrus.¹²⁵ The Aria offshoot group Kipelov describes its music as ‘hard-n-heavy’ (Facebook) and ‘hard‘n’heavy’ (Twitter and YouTube), implying it crosses over the boundaries.¹²⁶ Earlier versions of the term (*khard-end-khevi* and *khard i khevi*) are used to describe ‘тяжелый рок’ band Kruiz, guitar riffs in rock music generally, and Tiazhelyi Den’s style of music, which is ‘экспрессивна и в то же время мелодична’.¹²⁷ Bands such as AC/DC and Def Leppard do not wish to be associated with the term ‘metal’, due to its perceived negative connotations especially in America, and so the term ‘hard‘n’heavy’ would be appropriate without reverting to the wholly non-metal ‘hard rock’.¹²⁸ Steinholt

¹²⁴ Walser, *Running*, p. 6.

¹²⁵ On Wikipedia, for example, it appears on the Russian pages for ‘*metal*’, ‘*khevi-metal*’ and ‘*khard-rok*’ but not the English-language versions.

¹²⁶ Kipelov - official website, <http://www.kipelov.ru>; descriptions on their official channel pages: YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/user/Kipelov/about>; Twitter, <http://www.twitter.com/kipelov>; Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/pg/KipelovOfficial/about/> [last accessed 09/09/2017].

¹²⁷ Margarita Pushkina, ‘Kruiz’ in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 166; Artemii Troitskii, ‘Leksika rok-obshcheniia’ in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 177; Vladimir Marochkin, ‘Tiazhelyi den’ in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 332.

¹²⁸ Walser, *Running*, p. 6; Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, p. 20.

does mention that hard rock in Russia is usually softer than that in the West, so ‘hard-n-heavy’ could be used to signify a softer sound than metal in the Russian context as well as moving away from the metal ‘label’.¹²⁹ Under the entry for *khard-rok* in his encyclopaedia, Troitsky cites the above-mentioned likes of Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin as well as Slade as Western examples of the genre, and under *khevi-metal* describes Russian metal as compared to Western metal as ‘чуть мягче сценическая манера и слабее звук’.¹³⁰ With my broad definition of metal, I have looked at hard rock and its related terminology as some bands will not describe themselves as metal, whereas some authors will not use the term metal or will have different definitions of metal. Attempts have been made to distinguish metal from rock: Zapesotskii and Fain argue that metal is separated from heavy rock by its ‘культ насилия’ and ‘средневековая мистика’, and that volume and effects to create excitement are both important.¹³¹

Other terminological problems can be encountered in the language used to describe metal as it is also used to describe rock, especially Russian rock. Some of the terminology used to describe how rock music sounds, is played, and feels includes *moshchnost’*, *energiia*, *draiv* and *napor* and is common to descriptions of metal music and culture.¹³² *Moshchnost’* means ‘power’, especially in a technical sense as synonyms include ‘capacity’ and a store of power is certainly required to perform metal music, and also appears in its

¹²⁹ *Rock*, p. 19 n. 24

¹³⁰ Artemii Troitskii, ‘Khard-rok’ in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 355; Troitskii, ‘Khevi-metal’, p. 357.

¹³¹ *Eta neponiataia molodezh’...*, (Moscow: Profizdat, 1990), p. 179.

¹³² Cushman, *Notes*, p. 306; Aleksandr Ustinov, *Etot russkii rok-n-roll*, (Saint Petersburg: Amfora, 2009), p. 137.

adjectival form: *moshchnyi*. *Energiia* is ‘energy’ or ‘power’, as well as the figurative ‘vigour’ and ‘effort’ and both the figurative and literal terms are certainly applicable to performances in metal. *Draiv* is a transliteration from English and, according to Troitsky’s encyclopaedia, means ‘интенсивность, степень энергоотдачи в игре’.¹³³ *Napor* is ‘pressure’ as in the energy or force used to push against something, and is also found as *naporistost’*, which is energy in the form of one’s ‘go’, and so relates to the energy required to perform a challenging song. None of this terminology is alien to non-Russian descriptions of metal music but, certainly in interview-based literature, the terms are used to describe rock of various styles, and (for example) veteran rock musician and businessman Stas Namin’s use of the words *draiv* and *napor* to describe Led Zeppelin’s music does not make the distinction any clearer.¹³⁴ As well as incongruous examples of terminology including ‘тяжелый джаз-рок’ and ‘альтернативный хард-рок’, art-rock is described as ‘мощный’ and a lot of things are described as ‘жесткий’, including *ritm-end-bliuz*, *rok-n-roll*, and Trek’s style described as being full of ‘жесткий ритм, напряжение и энергия’.¹³⁵ Nate!’s self-styled *seks-end-roll* is itself an example of the sharing of rock and metal terminology:

Индивидуальный и узнаваемый мелодический язык, нешаблонные аранжировки, настоящий рок-н-рольный драйв, колоритные и

¹³³ Troitskii, ‘Leksika’, p. 176.

¹³⁴ Ustinov, *Etot russkii*, p. 137.

¹³⁵ A. Astrov, ‘Vremia’ in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 90; V. Ivanov, ‘Nova generatsiia’ in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 248; Andrei Burlaka, ‘Mify’ in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 214; T. Didenko, ‘Trek’ in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 327.

остроумные тексты, насыщенные словесными парадоксами, неожиданными метафорами и язвительной иронией в адрес апологетов охранительной морали и всевозможных проявлений ханжества[.]¹³⁶

Piknik's eclectic mix includes *rok-n-roll*, *khard-rok* and *progressiv*, as well as 'драматическо-балладные тяжелые номера с несложными и запоминающимися мелодиями'.¹³⁷ Zemliane's stage show, on the other hand, is described as 'форсированное звучание, героические стойки' which may describe hard rock or even punk, but not other Russian styles of rock including new wave.¹³⁸ Interestingly, new wave itself is another problematic term, as the Russian *novaia volna* is used to refer to the Western style as played in Russia as well as the 'local variant'.¹³⁹

A phenomenon unique to Soviet culture is the concept of 'philharmonic' rock and metal, in the sense that professional bands belonged to the local philharmonia. Most authors refer to *filharmonicheskii rok* (or metal) in this sense, but some use it to refer to the style of metal: melodic and classically inspired. Steinholt references Alekseev, Burlaka and Sidorov to describe philharmonic rock as 'the symphonically orchestrated rock form typical of many 1970s VIAs'.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Andrei Burlaka, 'NATE!' in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 235.

¹³⁷ Andrei Burlaka, 'Piknik' in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 271.

¹³⁸ Andrei Burlaka, 'Zemliane' in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 129.

¹³⁹ Yngvar B. Steinholt, 'You Can't Rid a Song of its Words', *Popular Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 93.

¹⁴⁰ *Rock*, p. 25 n. 33; VIA is *Vokal'no-instrumental'nyi ansambl'*, explained in chapter 2.

The problem of analysing lyrics

Lyric analysis has long been the main approach to understanding popular music but is now recognised as limited, because it ignores most of the song. While prose is easily analysed, poetry loses some of its substance when analysed simply by looking at the words and ignoring metre and sonic patterns, and so lyrics, which are simply part of the vocal line, itself set within a song to create holistic meaning, cannot convey the whole meaning of a song.¹⁴¹ In the Russian rock context especially, more weight has been attached to the lyrics (of Russian songs) than to other parts of the music, insofar as a whole subgenre of ‘rock poetry’ has been devised.¹⁴² In the context of heavy metal, lyrics are generally deemed unimportant.¹⁴³ That does not mean the vocal line is unimportant: vocals are just as important as the rhythm guitar for providing the melody, but the words might carry little weight.¹⁴⁴

This can be exemplified by the anti-metal campaigns of the 1980s against heavy metal music in the USA that were primarily based on the lyrics or, indeed, only on song titles without even looking at the remaining lyrics.¹⁴⁵ Weinstein recalls an interview with a student at an American Baptist-run school where record burnings took place one day: one of the condemned records was Pat Benatar’s ‘Hell is for Children’ in which, had any of the

¹⁴¹ Simon Frith, *Performing Rites* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996) p. 158.

¹⁴² Steinholt, *Rock*, p. 104.

¹⁴³ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, p. 123.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁴⁵ Walser, *Running*, pp. 137-152.

detractors bothered to read the lyrics, they would have seen the song is about child abuse rather than promoting devil-worship.¹⁴⁶ Another example of selective reading concerns Iron Maiden's 'The Number of the Beast', and Walser explains that the following lines are often quoted by critics:

The ritual has begun, Satan's work is done,
666 the number of the beast
Sacrifice is going on tonight

The next few lines, however, are usually left out of such criticism, as Walser says they 'complicate' the critic's opinion that Iron Maiden is an evil, satanic group:

This can't go on, I must inform the law
Can this still be real, or some crazy dream?
But I feel drawn towards the evil chanting hordes¹⁴⁷

Walser devotes a whole chapter to the problem of contemporary simple analysis of lyrics, or 'content analysis', and promoting a multivalent view of song analysis in metal.¹⁴⁸ He uses the example of Van Halen's 'Runnin' with the Devil' to show how simply analysing the lyrics could miss the point of the song, which concerns the juxtaposition of control and freedom, exemplified by the improvised guitar fills in opposition to the rigid drums and bass.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ *Heavy Metal*, p. 248.

¹⁴⁷ *Running*, p. 152.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-56; p. 21.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-54.

One of the greatest, and most successful, critics of heavy metal was the PMRC. They looked exclusively at lyrics, paying no attention to the music, which led to songs including Ozzy Osbourne's 'Suicide Solution' being read as promoting suicide instead of interpreted more accurately as the singer describing his struggle with alcohol: indeed, the alliterative title is a euphemism for alcohol, meaning a solution which dissolves, not a solution as an answer to a problem.¹⁵⁰

Another problem with conducting only lyric/content analysis is that lyrics often mean nothing to the fans: Weinstein relates an episode where she asks fans to explain the meaning of the lyrics of a Rush album but they cannot.¹⁵¹ Heavy metal fans are rarely interested in interpreting lyrics, even though they may know all the words to every song. More interesting to them is what the song as a whole means to them, and this is subjective: songs mean different things to different people, and symbols and phrases will have different significances, but within a genre the meanings will be relatively stable.¹⁵² In a heavy metal context, lyrically rich bands like Iron Maiden have songs which mean one thing to their fans and something very different to those outside or against heavy metal. Take, as an example, 'Can I Play with Madness?':

Gonna break down the walls

Break out of this bad place

¹⁵⁰ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, pp. 250-251.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹⁵² Walser, *Running*, p. 33.

Critics of heavy metal will claim this means either a literal act of violent destruction or a more figurative dismissal of society and becoming a dropout, whereas fans might claim it is about getting out of oppressive and stifling situations, a bad relationship, or taking a step back from hegemony and pointing out its flaws.

In the Russian rock context, lyrics are considered as important as words in poetry and, as Steinholt points out using Ulf Lindberg's definitions, tend to use 'focused lyrics' which 'dictate the meaning of the music'.¹⁵³ This is different from Anglo-American rock which uses freer lyrics where the music has more effect on the meaning, and proves that Russian rock is not just an imitation of English-language Western rock but a separate entity. This definition could well be applied to the lyrical strands of heavy metal, with bands including Iron Maiden and Rush certainly having a more focussed lyrical approach than Europe or AC/DC. Russian metal, as a branch of Russian rock during the period covered by this thesis, is often more melodic and more lyric-focussed, especially in bands which employed 'rock poets' as lyric writers. This does not mean that the lyrics should be treated like poetry, though, as they are still part of the music. In my analysis of the *Maniia Velichiia*, therefore, I have focussed on the lyrics but in conjunction with the sound of each song to achieve an inclusive interpretation.

Using fan reviews: problems of mythologisation

¹⁵³ Steinholt, 'You Can't', p. 96.

The band Mroia from Minsk describes its style of post-punk heavy metal as ‘стод-рок’, which translates as ‘idol-rock’.¹⁵⁴ Weinstein’s chapter on metal musicians is subtitled ‘Metal Gods’.¹⁵⁵ Heavy metal bands can inspire such adoration in their followers that the fans become ardent propagandists of the band’s image, which can lead to substantial mythologisation in fan settings. As such, fan reviews and interviews are used with caution. Fan resources such as these are important, as they provide a perspective which is often ignored or constrained in academic work.¹⁵⁶ Fans are naturally subjective, though, and even in an attempt to be objective their opinions will be influenced by which bands they do and do not like, which they consider metal and which not, which they think are authentic or not. This fan material has been consulted in conjunction with other sources, including academic and journalistic works, as using fan-generated sources alone could lead to unintended bias.

In respect of the research for this thesis, the reviews of the album are modern whereas the album is historical. The earliest review I have used is dated 2001, sixteen years after the album was released (although only eight years after its official release), and the latest review was written in 2017, although it can be assumed all reviewers had recently listened to the album. My fan interviews were conducted in 2015 at Aria’s 30th Anniversary Concert with fans who were broadly the same age as the album and had, therefore, most likely only heard the album or, indeed, become fans in a post-Soviet context. Quite apart from

¹⁵⁴ Andrei Burlaka, ‘Mroia’ in Artemii Troitskii (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR*, (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 229.

¹⁵⁵ *Heavy Metal*, pp. 59-91.

¹⁵⁶ Walser, *Running*, p. 21.

the distortion of memory over such a long period, especially given the political and regime changes that have occurred in Russia (and worldwide) between 1985 and now, the fans are comparing the band and album with knowledge of what has happened in the meantime: new bands, new songs, cultural policy changes, emergence of new metal styles and the rise, fall and rise again of heavy metal as a genre.¹⁵⁷

Conclusion to chapter one

Despite its roots in the Anglophone West, heavy metal music and culture has become a global phenomenon that cannot be defined as belonging to one particular culture: instead, this ‘ultraculture’ is broken down into local scenes that belong to identifiable localities, either simply because of the language they are sung in or more elaborately because of the contexts in which they exist. This glocalisation can be exemplified by Nepal, where volume is not transgressive in the same way as it is in Anglo-American culture. Taking only the relevant parts of heavy metal into the local culture relates to mythologisation, as fans wish only to praise their metal gods and so play down any activities or moments they see as undesirable. This subjectivity is as important as it is cautionary, as it contains valuable insights into effects of historical events as well as trends among fan groups. Using fan reviews also poses a problem with a case study of lyrics: metal music fans do not always pay attention to lyrics. Equally, isolating the lyrics from the music is meaningless and creates subjective significances, especially in a music style

¹⁵⁷ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, pp. 277-294.

which relies so heavily on metaphor and symbolism. It is important to conduct any lyrics analysis in conjunction with the music in order to avoid the pitfalls of conservative criticism such as that levelled at bands by the PMRC. Finally, the problem of terminology shared by both rock and metal, especially in their Russian contexts, highlighted the need for care when approaching scholarship since many of the terms were used interchangeably and for both rock and metal. The reasons for this terminology crossover will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Metal music and culture in Soviet Russia

Making and sharing Russian rock

In the Soviet Union, cultural policy restricted output and distribution of music and other cultural products, although the degree of restriction varied by state. In Estonia, for example, there was less intervention from state organs.¹⁵⁸ In Russia, Western radio broadcasts were blocked, albums smuggled in from the West were confiscated, and only sanctioned musicians were allowed to perform professionally.¹⁵⁹ To be an official musician, one had to be employed as a musician, play songs written by the Union of Composers and perform at official concerts organised by the state. In general, these were pop singers, classical artists and bands known as VIAs (*vokal'no-instrumen'tal'nyi ansambl'*) which, eventually, played every style from jazz to heavy metal. This was how rock reached the audience officially. For a VIA to receive official permission to perform, its lyrics had to be non-critical and as a result VIA lyrics were, therefore, generally dull, and sometimes completely ill-fitting, but the music styles themselves were varied enough to acquaint the Soviet public with the sounds of the unofficial bands. Unofficial bands would still play concerts, but in basements, private apartments, at school discos and local Komsomol clubs and cafes, where officials could be bribed if necessary.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Troitsky, *Back*, p. 45.

¹⁵⁹ Cushman, *Notes*, p. 18.

¹⁶⁰ Steinholt, *Rock*, pp. 20-1; for an in-depth study of the late Soviet amateur artistic economy, see Anna Kan, 'Living in the Material World' in Juliane Fürst and Josie McLellan, *Dropping Out of Socialism* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), pp. 255-276.

This was a common practice in the Soviet Union, and it was normal for amateur bands of all music styles to play in restaurants, at school discos and private apartments of friends.¹⁶¹ They could be paid a small and unofficial fee for these concerts, but these sessions were a useful medium to disseminate their sound, especially as they could also be used to trade *magnitizdat* tapes, both copied Western albums and the band's own music.¹⁶² Not being paid for their work (concerts or albums) was not so much of a monetary problem for socialist rockers: due to the exceptional welfare state it was possible to live on a few roubles a week.¹⁶³ Many amateur musicians took jobs as night watchmen or boiler stokers; others were students and so exempt from working.¹⁶⁴ Being a student also delayed military service, which saw the end of many bands.¹⁶⁵

In the same way that unofficial Soviet music was performed and distributed underground, Western music was also not unknown to Soviet ears. Music from the West entered sporadically via physical records and tapes carried by people entering the Soviet Union from abroad, such as tourists and returning diplomats, so some artists became very famous among Russian fans, whereas others were hardly known.¹⁶⁶ Cushman gives the example of T. Rex being very influential on the Leningrad rockers; it is assumed that T. Rex albums were simply in the right place at the right time, had the right sound for the time and reached the right people.¹⁶⁷ One album could, of course, reach many

¹⁶¹ Polly McMichael, ““After All, You’re a Rock and Roll Star (At Least, That’s What They Say)””, *Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 83(4), 2005, p. 665.

¹⁶² Dilan Troi, Viktor Troegubov and Margarita Pushkina, *Ariia*, (Moscow: LEAN, 2000), p. 35.

¹⁶³ Cushman, *Notes*, pp. 56-8.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Troitsky, *Back*, p. 22.

¹⁶⁶ Cushman, *Notes*, p. 44.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

people as it could be copied multiple times, so long as it was not confiscated before being copied. From the late 1950s until the mid-1960s, records were copied on to x-ray film in a process known as *rentgenizdat*, but from the mid-1960s onwards cassette recorders became more affordable and widely available, and so *rentgenizdat* was superseded by *magnitizdat*.¹⁶⁸ Reel-to-reel tapes and, from the mid-1980s, cassettes could be bought at recording kiosks and traded at concerts and among friends and family, as well as re-recorded for onward distribution.¹⁶⁹ Rock bands even released their own studio tapes: in the same way that authors self-published their works as *samizdat*, musical artists recorded their own *magnitizdat* albums. Informal distribution like this, of local or foreign, original or re-recorded music, added a further layer of transgression to underground music with the evasion of state censorship and ‘borderline illegality’.¹⁷⁰

Rock in the Soviet Union started with amateur bands performing covers of Anglophone songs, before they started writing their own Russophone songs. At first, bands were booed and garnered little respect, because they were seen as conforming to the Soviet system by singing in the regime’s language, ‘знак принадлежности к “вражеской”, не-роковая система ценностей’.¹⁷¹ They were also inferior to the Western bands they were covering, in the sense that their covers were very good, but their initial original songs were terrible because writing songs better than, for example, the Beatles or Creedence

¹⁶⁸ Troitsky, *Back*, p. 19.

¹⁶⁹ Kan, ‘Living’, p. 272; Steinholt, *Rock*, p. 18.

¹⁷⁰ McMichael, ‘Prehistories’, p. 335.

¹⁷¹ Artemii Troitskii, *Rok v Soiuzе* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1991). Available from <http://coollib.net/b/261980/read> [last accessed 06/04/2017], n.p.

Clearwater Revival was very difficult.¹⁷² Russian rockers initially believed that Russian could not be used because it was simply a method of covering up poor playing, or because the words ‘не уместаются в ритмический размер’ because they were longer than any English words.¹⁷³ The initial resistance to Russian lyrics can be tied in with the relative importance of lyrics in rock (and metal) music: a writer of rock songs describes the pleasure of listening to, and even singing, songs without understanding the lyrics.¹⁷⁴ Russian was, of course, used by bards, folk singers and the like, but it was avoided in rock until the mid-late 1970s when the native language became a serious consideration.¹⁷⁵

Once the transgressive novelty of English had been exhausted, and the audience was familiar with the sounds of rock, it was important for artists to create music that could be understood by their listeners, to communicate ‘complex thoughts and feelings about existence’ so Russian was added to the Western music structures.¹⁷⁶ By retaining the Western music structure but altering the language and focussing more on lyrics, they created a recognisable music form that distinguished itself from Western music. McMichael summarises:

The local version appropriated and adapted the imported genre, taking what was necessary in order to be authentic, and performing the

¹⁷² Ustinov, *Etot russkii*, p. 183.

¹⁷³ Troitskii, *Rok*, n.p.

¹⁷⁴ Polly McMichael, ‘Translation, Authorship and Authenticity in Soviet Rock Songwriting’, *The Translator*, Vol. 14(2), 2008, p. 213.

¹⁷⁵ Steinholt, *Rock*, p. 19.

¹⁷⁶ Cushman, *Notes*, p. 51.

requisite linguistic move in order to be intelligible and meaningful to its audiences within the local context.¹⁷⁷

The highlighting of lyrics in Russian rock music would influence the style of metal which would become prevalent in Soviet Russia: styles which favour a clear vocal line, with metaphorically rich lyrics.

Russian metal: emergence and crystallisation

Metal music and its associated culture has usually arrived in non-Anglo-American cultures via existing Anglophone metal: in Japan it was melodic forms of metal which caught the attention of the first metal artists, both the epic and lyric-driven NWOBHM and the show-oriented Los Angeles metal, because their powerful poetic lyrics and stunning stage rituals appealed to the Japanese tradition of poetry and ritual.¹⁷⁸ Thrash metal music from America travelled across Europe and morphed into a rawer sound, developing into the black metal style in Norway.¹⁷⁹ Literature on Russian rock music and culture rarely mentions heavy metal music and culture as a distinct entity separate from the rock scene; I will deal with Russian metal in literature in depth later in this chapter.

¹⁷⁷ 'Translation', p. 203.

¹⁷⁸ Kei Kawano and Shuhei Hosokawa, 'Thunder in the Far East' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene, *Metal Rules the Globe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 249-251.

¹⁷⁹ Ross Hagen, 'Musical Style, Ideology, and Mythology in Norwegian Black Metal' in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene, *Metal Rules the Globe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 182.

In Soviet Russia, the sporadic nature of Western music's entrance into the country meant that Russian metal, in a similar way to its antecedents in Britain and America, grew from local rock, but was inflected by the heavy metal music that did make it through the barriers of entry. Von Faust's article covers the Soviet response to Western heavy metal culture, describing how the monthly youth magazine *Rovesnik* went from publishing negative material about heavy metal to becoming its 'leading proponent' in the late 1980s.¹⁸⁰ Generally, however, the press remained staunchly against rock and metal, especially Western forms, and the conservative press used 'archaic' methods of discouragement well into 1986, making false connections between Western hard rock, punk and metal bands and fascism, citing AC/DC's 'Back in Black' as the anthem of the Nazi Party of America.¹⁸¹ Glasnost, however, meant that the public had increasing access to objective, less libellous information and therefore 'became increasingly distrustful of the indoctrination tactics of the old propaganda machine'.¹⁸² The Soviet press did not keep up with current trends either, and as bands including Witchfinder General and Metal Church recorded openly anti-Soviet songs, the media were concerned only with 'timeworn' propaganda which failed, as it was seen as irrelevant and implausible, and merely served to inspire fans to look for music of the bands mentioned.¹⁸³ Von Faust discusses visits of Western bands to the Soviet Union including the two-day Moscow Music Peace Festival in 1989 which he

¹⁸⁰ 'Let There Be Rock', *Metal Music Studies*, Vol. 2(3), 2016, p. 379.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

describes as ‘perhaps the most resolute official approval of the youth counter-culture’.¹⁸⁴

The first band known to play in a heavy metal style was Rossiiane in the mid-late 1970s, which not only used the sound but also the look of heavy metal bands.¹⁸⁵ Zemliane, Iurii Morozov and Vysokosnoe Leto had a harder sound than many of their contemporaries in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with the metal prerequisites of distorted guitars, and driving drum and bass lines but only in parts of songs. Piknik, Avtograf and Al’fa played some full-length hard rock songs, and Alisa have songs that sit very firmly in the heavy metal canon, but these bands’ metallic output appeared later than those of Rossiiane, emerging in the early-mid 1980s. Some of the first true heavy metal bands to emerge also started out playing different styles before crystallising into heavy metal after 1986: Kruiz especially started with more ‘acceptable’ styles, varying from hard rock to new wave, and kept to inoffensive lyrics that would be passed by the censors.¹⁸⁶ The Soviet Estonian Gunnar Grapsi Grupp started life as Magnetic Band, and reformed its style many times before settling into heavy metal and subsequently changing its name.¹⁸⁷

The first band in Soviet Russia to play heavy metal exclusively without changing style was Legion which, according to Encyclopaedia Metallum, was formed in 1979, although its first *magnitizdat* demo album did not appear until the style’s official legalisation in 1986 (see below), and its first official album

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 389.

¹⁸⁵ Troitsky, *Back*, p. 73.

¹⁸⁶ Il’ia Smirnov, *Vremia kolokol’chikov* (Moscow: INTO, 1994), p. 75.

¹⁸⁷ Troitsky, *Back*, p. 56, p. 88 and p. 143.

was released much later in 1994.¹⁸⁸ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina note that Legion started to play heavy metal at around the same time as Aria, although whether the authors mean before the band Aria or before the members of Aria (who started to play covers in the late 1970s) is unclear.¹⁸⁹ Legion is not referred to in any other sources, except a mention under the ‘Рок-периферия’ entry in Troitsky’s encyclopaedia of Soviet rock music.¹⁹⁰ Aria’s biographers state that Legion has always been a club band, and that if it had had the same luck as Aria in finding a manager like Vekshtein it could have been at least as popular.¹⁹¹

Bands which have mentions across multiple sources include Kruiz and Chernyi Kofe which, together with Aria itself, receive the most coverage.¹⁹² Master, Tiazhelyi Den’, Avgust, Korroziia Metalla, Oblachnyi Krai, and Chernyi Obelisk are also relatively well-covered.¹⁹³ Mentioned only twice are Skoraia Pomoshch’, EVM and Shah, the latter being an English-language band with a Latin name.¹⁹⁴ Bands which appeared post-1986 were Tiazhelyi Den’, Chernyi Obelisk and Master, the latter established by former members of Aria: EVM

¹⁸⁸ Encyclopaedia Metallum, *Legion*, <https://www.metal-archives.com/bands/Легион/316> [last accessed 25/08/2017]; Chernyi Kofe may have formed at the same time but did not play heavy metal until at least 1981; Kruiz formed in 1978 but did not play metal until at least 1980 when Valerii Gaina joined.

¹⁸⁹ *Ariia*, p. 205.

¹⁹⁰ E. Kolbashev, ‘Rok-periferiia’ in Artemii Troitskii, (ed.), *Rok-muzyka v SSSR* (Moscow: Kniga, 1990), p. 284.

¹⁹¹ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 359, p. 205.

¹⁹² Aria, Kruiz and Chernyi Kofe receive mentions in eight of the ten books and chapters which mention Russian metal bands. These books are: Troitskii (ed.), *Rok v SSSR*; Troitskii, *Rok*; Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*; Smirnov, *Vremia*; Troitsky, *Back*; Zapesotskii and Fain, *Eta neponiatnaia.*; Ryback, *Rock*; Ramet, Zamascikov and Bird, *Soviet*; Steinholt, *Rock*; and Hilary Pilkington (with Elena Starkova), “Progressives” and “Normals” in Hilary Pilkington (ed.), *Looking West?* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

¹⁹³ Master receives six mentions, Tiazhelyi Den’ five, Avgust, Korroziia Metalla and Oblachnyi Krai four each, and Chernyi Obelisk three.

¹⁹⁴ All mentioned in Troitskii (ed), *Rok v SSSR* and Troitskii, *Rok v Soiuze*.

was started by former Kruiz members. Non-classic metal bands playing thrash or speed metal included Shah, Master, Chernyi Obelisk and Korroziia Metalla. Of the first-wave bands which appeared pre-1986, Kruiz and Chernyi Kofe did not strictly play metal music until 1986 and the remainder released *magnitizdat* demos and albums but none had an official Melodiia release until Avgust's 1987 album *Demon*. Of the bands mentioned in this paragraph, only Oblachnyi Krai, Shah and EVM have permanently split up.¹⁹⁵

Like in the GDR, a policy of ignorance was more or less prevalent in regard to all music that was not officially supported music, but unlike in the GDR it was more difficult to become an official musician without making compromises and, even then, official status was not guaranteed. As explained earlier, in the USSR unofficial, amateur musicians were not allowed to perform or record music but did perform in underground settings and release *magnitizdat* albums. Even official bands did not exist completely trouble-free, and had to have their repertoire inspected before every performance: only lyrics were required to be submitted for inspection, so careful use of metaphor and imagery could avoid unwanted rejection. Heavy metal artists were not more actively persecuted than those performing other unofficial music styles but were treated with extreme caution by the authorities: heavy metal was not formally allowed by any official decree, and was only referred to negatively in any official capacity in much the same way as rock music, which in any official context was

¹⁹⁵ Encyclopaedia Metallum, *Oblachniy Krai*, https://www.metal-archives.com/bands/Облачный_Край/5436 [last accessed 09/09/2017]; Vladimir Marochkin, *Istoriia gruppy SHAH*, <http://metalrus.ru/groups/73#> [last accessed 09/09/2017]; Vladimir Marochkin, *Istoriia gruppy EVM*, <http://metalrus.ru/groups/175#> [last accessed 09/09/2017].

referred to by a different name, usually *estrada* (akin to traditional, acceptable pop music) or *djazz*.¹⁹⁶

This policy of ignorance lasted until 1984 when a ban on certain groups (Western and Soviet) was introduced by the Ministry of Culture and applied to the city of Moscow.¹⁹⁷ At least one list of banned artists was circulated and, according to Ramet, Zamascikov and Bird, included 68 non-Soviet groups and 38 Soviet artists including Nina Hagen, Patty Smith and Elvis Costello.¹⁹⁸ Ramet, Zamascikov and Bird also list some of the banned Soviet underground groups and this includes Zigzag, implying this is either the same or a very similar list which Andrei Bol'shakov refers to when he recalls his time with that band:

Мы дали лишь один концерт, как вдруг был опубликован список запрещенных музыкальных коллективов, среди которых 'Зигзаг' стоял на первом месте.¹⁹⁹

Bol'shakov goes on to say that organising concerts for all unofficial groups had become practically impossible by 1984, and this situation would continue until heavy metal was officially recognised as a genre and, at least in the Moscow context, actually legalised in 1986 as part of the liberalisation of culture among Gorbachev's reforms.²⁰⁰ Some bands, including Kruiz and Chernyi Kofe,

¹⁹⁶ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 18.

¹⁹⁷ Kan, 'Living', p. 271.

¹⁹⁸ 'Soviet', p. 191.

¹⁹⁹ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 76; Pushkina also talks about this list on p. 175 regarding Rondo.

²⁰⁰ Smirnov, *Vremia*, p. 75; see also Viktor Troegubov, *Aria*, (Moscow: NOTA-R, 2005), p. 7.

moved away from heavy metal during this difficult period in order to become professional bands but this did not always work, especially in the case of Kruiz.²⁰¹ Other bands went to different areas including Estonia and Leningrad, or performed concerts outside of the city limits where unofficial bands could play without venue owners fearing raids.²⁰² A similar list was circulated in Ukraine's Nikolaev region by the local Komsomol in 1985 and lists 38 foreign bands, although Ukrainian heavy metal band Perrön is also included.²⁰³

Quite apart from whether the music could be performed or not, getting hold of essential equipment was problematic: electronic instruments were difficult to come by and the necessary technology for electric guitars was prohibitively expensive or simply unavailable. Soviet society, however, was educated, innovating and enquiring, and people overcame these technical problems by resorting to doing it themselves, making electric pickups for acoustic guitars from those in public telephones, using piano strings to convert a normal guitar to a bass, and students of electronics quickly became bands' engineers.²⁰⁴ While this DIY technology was not good enough for professional-standard heavy metal bands to use, it was an excellent starting point for most amateur bands.

Heavy metal culture, too, was often homemade: in the same way that the *stiliagi* made their own clothes in the 1950s, *metallisty* (metal fans and musicians, members of the metal culture generally; literally, 'metal workers')

²⁰¹ Troitsky, *Back*, p. 97.

²⁰² Smirnov, *Vremia*, p. 145.

²⁰³ Yurchak, *Everything*, p. 214.

²⁰⁴ Steinholt, *Rock*, pp. 19-20.

embroidered and painted designs on their leather jackets, made their own spikes, bought chains from pet shops and sewed these to their clothes.²⁰⁵ Initially, style varied from one city to another, thus in the Baltic states *metallisty* used fashionable makeup and wore a few chains and sharp spikes; in Leningrad they wore bracelets with flat rivets, real leather jackets with straight zips and just one chain; in Moscow it would be leatherette jackets with wide, slanting zips, lots of chains and bracelets with sharp spikes.²⁰⁶ The style quickly became homogenised as groups of *metallisty* travelled across the country and interacted, and the ‘uniform’ began to split along subgenre lines instead. In the same way as in the West, fans of ‘softer’ metal such as Europe or Bon Jovi would dress ‘менее вызывающе’.²⁰⁷ Speed metal fans are described as dressing ‘с головы до пят – в черном, увешаны металлическими предметами’ and wearing inverted crosses and t-shirts painted with ‘Satan’ in English.²⁰⁸ Inverted crosses are more likely to be associated with black metal, a subgenre of speed metal at the time.²⁰⁹ Groups of *metallisty* were large enough to have a hierarchical structure, and their leaders were likely to be older and more experienced, have records, magazines and posters, an apartment for displaying their collections, or hosting gigs; they also knew the most. Leaders such as these were called ‘деды’ and enforced a strict code of conduct in the groups.²¹⁰ Groups of *dedy* would also get together without the ‘rank and file’ members.

²⁰⁵ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p.11.

²⁰⁶ Zapesotskii and Fain, *Eta neponiatnaia*, p. 177.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 178.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 179.

Being identifiable in the street meant *metallisty* were a target: not only for the police, who focussed on non-conformist individuals and groups, but also for a group called the *liubery*. *Liubery* originated in the Moscow suburb of Liubertsy and sought to enforce Soviet values through violence.²¹¹ *Metallisty* were not the only target for vigilante *Liubery*: other nonconformist groups including hippies and punks were sought out, leading to unlikely alliances of *metallisty* and punks in St. Petersburg.²¹²

Metallisty became one of the largest groups in the Soviet Union, but their story has been under-examined in scholarship in similar ways to that of metal fans in the West and other areas of the globe: covered by psychological studies, usually detrimentally but, as Zapesotskii and Fain indicate, quietly brushed under the carpet in histories of rock music.²¹³

Russian metal in scholarship: ignored, unconsidered; irrelevant?

Russian metal music is not discussed in detail in any of the primary sources or scholarship on rock music in the Soviet Union I have consulted. There are a number of histories of Russian rock music and Russian youth culture which mention metal but the only one that contains a substantial discussion in the form of a chapter devoted to metal music culture and its fans is the one I have referred to in the previous discussion of style among Soviet metal fans.²¹⁴ All the other scholarship I will discuss here contains only brief mentions of metal

²¹¹ Cushman, *Notes*, pp. 182-183.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²¹³ *Eta neponiatnaia*, p. 174.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 173-181.

music and culture amongst detailed examination of Soviet youth or popular music culture, and though brief these are telling.

Cushman's sociological study of the rock community in Leningrad/St. Petersburg in the late 1980s and early 1990s tends not to make finer distinctions within the broad category of rock music. Some of Cushman's respondents, though, do make references to hard rock or heavy metal. Igor Romanov describes himself as a *metallist* who plays like Eddie Van Halen in "hard and heavy", "metallic" styles'.²¹⁵ Romanov played in Rossiiane and describes their music as 'complicated'.²¹⁶ His well-detailed abhorrence of playing other people's wholly unsuitable songs is in keeping with being an authentic rock musician but in the interviews Cushman uses, Romanov does not expand on his status as a metal musician. In Cushman's study the only references to Romanov's preferred playing style appear in Romanov's own words, since Cushman does not elaborate on the metal aspect of his music at all. In the same work another interviewee, Iurii Morozov, also describes himself as playing 'metal', which, he claims, no-one else did: 'they played hard rock. Rossiiane, more or less'; a summation which supports Romanov's assessment that Rossiiane played complicated music in the hard 'n' heavy style.²¹⁷ This is also not expanded upon or investigated by Cushman, as the interview turns to Morozov leaving that chapter in his life behind and moves on to his avant-garde years; as the chapter goes on to recount, when he does return to recording something "metallic" he is pulled in by the KGB, except

²¹⁵ *Notes*, p. 81.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

that they are ‘pestering’ him about practising yoga, not recording metal music.²¹⁸ Towards the end of the section discussing his career, Morozov gives his opinion of Oblachnyi Krai, a ‘weak’ concert group but one which has a prodigious amount of recordings, and of Avgust, a group he considers ‘pseudo-metal’.²¹⁹

The final mention of heavy metal in Cushman’s book is during his narration of an event that occurred in Berlin where he was witness to an interview between a local journalist and Iurii Shevchuk, one of the heavyweights of Russian rock music as the leader of DDT, but not someone associated with metal-sounding music. The journalist asks Shevchuk how he intends to perform in the city. Shevchuk replies with the word *moshchnost*’, to which the interviewer responds ‘you mean, like heavy metal?’ Shevchuk then walks away from the interview: the horror of having one’s music described as heavy metal when you consider that term derogatory is clear from Shevchuk’s reaction, although Cushman does not explicitly comment on this.²²⁰ Despite the fact that Cushman chooses not to dig deeper into the presence of metal as a genre within Soviet rock music, it seems clear from each of these instances in which interviewees or subjects bring up the topic of metal that it has important, if contested, meaning for members of the rock scene at the time of Cushman’s research. Cushman’s interviewees also consistently refer to bands and musicians closely associated with the heavy metal tradition, including Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and Jimi Hendrix.²²¹

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 25, p. 26.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 30, p. 32.

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 306.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 43, 47, 50, 59, 72, 73, 83, 84, 125, 277 and 301.

Pilkington and Starkova's interview-based sociological study of youth culture in Moscow, Samara and Ul'ianovsk includes discussion of metal fans and offers some insights into the how metal is understood as a genre. It tells us that in 1998 the *metallisty* included fans of Aria, Alisa and Kino: Kino is certainly not a heavy metal band, but there is no reason at least some members of a *metallisty tusovka* (a group, gathering or event with likeminded, usually young, people) could not be fans of non-metal bands, in the same way that fans of the Grateful Dead were often found in heavy metal circles in 1980s America.²²²

The Moscow *tusovki metallistov*, like other large local *tusovki*, organised themselves around bands rather than segregating out age and coolness.²²³ The inclusion of Kino in bands liked by *metallisty* is incongruous but entirely appropriate, as distinction between styles is not always relevant in Pilkington's study comparing Western youth culture preferences with those in Russia: drawing on Frith's 1983 book *Sound Effects* and Shuker's *Understanding Popular Music* from 1994, Pilkington informs us Russian youth partly followed the class lines of Western working-class preference for 'mainstream pop, heavy metal, and reggae' and middle-class preference for "'alternative", "underground" or "progressive" rock, jazz, folk and blues'.²²⁴ This study explains that the metal-fan youth of Soviet Russia are not so different to their counterparts in the West at approximately the same stage of metal's development in their respective locales.

²²² Pilkington (with Starkova), "'Progressives", pp. 114-115; *tusovka* (plural: *tusovki*) has several, contextual, meanings including groups of likeminded people, gatherings of such people (for e.g. concerts), and events involving these groups; Gaines, *Teenage*, p. 171.

²²³ Pilkington, "'Progressives", pp. 114-115.

²²⁴ 'Reconfiguring "the West"' in Hilary Pilkington (ed.), *Looking West?* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p. 176.

Some studies mention metal music but do not expand on its significance: Ramet, Zamascikov and Bird's cultural-historical chapter published in an edited volume from 1994 looks primarily at the political and media responses to rock and includes some positive and negative reactions to metal, but does not turn to socio-cultural investigation as to why this might be.²²⁵ The majority of the chapter is devoted to an overview of rock developments in different areas of the Soviet Union since the 1950s and little actual analysis of the music itself or of fan culture is undertaken, although there is a five-page section on political analysis of lyrics, with no reference to the music. The analysis of lyrics compares official rock with unofficial rock and contains a song by Kruiz, cited as an example of 'social estrangement' in opposition to positive social themes performed by VIAs Voskresenie, Dialog and Zemliane.²²⁶

Ramet, Zamascikov and Bird describe the view of Aleksei Kozlov of Arsenal (a jazz-rock group) that heavy metal music is 'a channel for young working-class Russians to work out their resentment toward more affluent members of Soviet society'²²⁷ The authors try to stand with Cushman's interviewees' view that 'rock is art' rather than a political statement, but maintain that individuals are political when they state 'the message conveyed by any particular rock artist stands quite apart from the rock medium as such'.²²⁸ Beyond these cases, heavy metal is simply ignored or mentioned only to supplement a point about

²²⁵ 'Soviet', pp. 181-218.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

something else; moreover, in these brief references, the information is sometimes incorrect.²²⁹

Ryback's account from 1990 contains a just few pages on heavy metal, in which he talks of Kruiz and Chernyi Kofe's official record releases on Melodiia in 1987, and discusses the places where *metallisty* congregated in Leningrad and Moscow, their interactions with other subculture groups and a description of problems supposedly associated with heavy metal music and culture, including comparisons with AIDs and drug use, as well as concerns about the physiological damage headbanging is reported to be capable of causing.²³⁰

In the same year as Ryback, Zapesotskii and Fain produced the first Soviet sociological study of youth culture, a book which draws on interviews with participants in the various youth movements as well as the authors' observations. The discussion of metal culture is quite positive which is in opposition to most contemporary Western or Soviet scholarship, and the authors criticise the press for their attacks on metal music.²³¹ Zapesotskii and Fain advocate for *metallisty* against the labels applied to them and are keen to remind their reader that 'сила может быть направлена на служение идеалам добра или зла'.²³²

²²⁹ In the appendix of *Ibid.*, p. 210 and p. 212, Strannye Igri is described as going on to form Aria, whereas in fact members of Strannye Igri formed AVIA: Aria's entry states it includes former members of Chernyi Kofe, Al'fa and Art, and gives Aria's formation date as 18th February 1986, thirteen days after the date of Aria's first concert.

²³⁰ *Rock around the Bloc*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 228-230.

²³¹ *Eta neponiatnaia*, pp. 179-80.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Zapesotskii and Fain devote a whole chapter to metal music and culture, as well as referring to *metallisty* elsewhere in their study, especially in the section describing their sociological research project, *Ekspperimental'naia laboratoriia izucheniia molodezhnykh problem*.²³³ The chapter ““Металл” и металлисты” starts with a selection of quotations from detractors and supporters of heavy metal music and culture before describing *metallisty* as ‘одно из самых многочисленных категорий неформалов’, with ‘самые разные’ demographics; they go on to describe, though, that the majority of participants are young and not well educated, arguing that heavy metal culture is not a way of life like hippie or punk culture, but an interest group more like following a football club.²³⁴ Teenage fans are reported as being interested in the music because of its embodiment of power, courage and strength that is ‘совершенно естественная для подростка’.²³⁵ Interestingly, the authors report that there are a lot of female *metallisty* (*metallistki*), and one could not meet ‘сколь-нибудь разбирающихся в музыке любительниц “металла”’; similarly, Zapesotskii and Fain describe the ‘элита’ of the *metallisty*, the most truly ‘metal’ participants, as nonaggressive and tolerant of non-*metallisty*.²³⁶ The group containing the hooligans, the ‘лохи’, is called ‘псевдометаллисты’: instead of being interested in music, these members engage superficially, interested only in naming metal bands and their leaders.²³⁷ The hooligans would start fights against the *metallisty*, on the basis that the true fans could not

²³³ Ibid., pp. 208-219.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 174.

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 180.

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 175.

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 176.

name a certain number of bands. Zapesotskii and Fain are adamant that the increasingly common portrayal in the late Soviet period of *metallisty* as ‘безнадежные дебилы, дуреющих от музыкальных грохота’ would only result in increasing intolerance towards other groups as well as the ‘остекленение’ of teenage nihilism.²³⁸ The authors end the chapter by calling for everyone to treat *metallisty* like normal people.

Zapesotskii and Fain describe how the ‘metal uniform’ changed from regional styles to a homogenous look after 1987, and how the preferred style of metal influenced dress. Black metal receives special attention, its proponents described as an ‘антисоветский’ group who, unlike other *metallisty*, avoid contact with official organisations. *Chernyi metallisty* are more likely to be those who ‘злостно хулиганят’, fraternise with pro-fascist and right-wing extremist groups, and provoke confrontation with other *neformal’nyi* groups.²³⁹ It is interesting that other metal genres included in this work are not described at such length or in such negative terms.

‘Металлический рок’ is described as fighting ‘на два фронта’: over the acceptance and rejection of rock (across the generations), and, internally, among adherents themselves, over which is the best rock music. Zapesotskii and Fain report that:

Многие меломаны считают (и не без оснований, на наш взгляд)
“металл” деградировавшим в художественном отношении

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 181.

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 178.

продуктом развития очень интересного в конце 60-х – начале 70-х годов “тяжелого рока”.²⁴⁰

Of course, where one style ends and the next begins is, as we have seen, very much open to debate, but the bias of the public because of the press’s campaign against heavy metal is very clear:

В целом общественное мнение в нашей стране очень сильно против “металла” в ходе выполнения прессой определенного “социального заказа” в духе самых мрачных застойных времен.²⁴¹

Zapesotskii and Fain cite A. Nazarov, a correspondent with the APN (Agentstvo Pechati Novosti), as an example of the type of reporting taking place during the 1980s. Nazarov, as they report, describes *metallisty* as ‘без социального опыта [и] критического отношения к действительности’ who see metal music as a ‘панацея’ and are very immature: an opinion shared by the Western ‘specialists’ translated from *Rolling Stone* into *Rovesnik*.²⁴² Zapesotskii and Fain explain the ‘правда’ and ‘полуправда’ of such statements but do not explain the ‘бессмыслица’ as that is clear from the excerpts. For *pravda*, they clarify that metal music is for crises, to help you live through them but, and herein lies the *polupravda*, these crises are no deeper than those in e.g. operetta or ‘classic’ *estrada*.²⁴³ They also extol the virtues of talented virtuosos, describing Yngwie Malmsteen and the Scorpions

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 179-180.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 180.

²⁴³ Ibid.

as among the best to come to the Soviet Union, and then list five Russian groups with an ‘отличная репутация’: these groups are Master, Chernyi Kofe, Aria, Kruiz and Avgust.²⁴⁴

Artemy Troitsky is a journalist with a special interest in Russian rock music who wrote prolifically in the 1980s and early 1990s. Three of his many works on music culture are relevant here: his 1987 book *Back in the USSR*, the expanded Russian-language version, *Rok v Soiuzе* which followed in 1991, and the 1990 encyclopaedia which Troitsky edited and contributed entries for. Troitsky’s accounts cover the Soviet and Baltic rock scenes from the 1970s and into the late 1980s, and are based on his close personal involvement in both: his works read at times like an autobiography of his experiences.

Troitsky is not openly disparaging about heavy metal itself in his entry on the genre in the encyclopaedia; rather he implies that Russian metal bands are poor copies of Western bands, which is the source of his dissatisfaction.²⁴⁵ In the Russian-language version of his book-length history his attitude seems slightly more disparaging: he states that ‘о “металлистах” почти нечего писать’ and describes Russian metal bands as having ‘худшее качество звучания’, although here he also claims that he has nothing against heavy metal generally.²⁴⁶ A group of which no mention is made in *Back in the USSR* but which comes up in the encyclopaedia is thrash band Shah whose members sing in English: Troitsky describes what the group does as ‘честно’, because it does

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Troitskii, ‘Khevi-metal’, p. 358.

²⁴⁶ Troitskii, *Rok*, n.p.

not try to find words in Russian. He says the writers of Russian lyrics would ‘обидятся’ if he were to describe their texts but then states that ‘возможно, с моей оценкой текстов “хэви метал” кто-нибудь и не согласится’.²⁴⁷ He describes Chernyi Kofe’s hit ‘Vladimirskaia Rus’ as having the same depth as ‘Trava u doma’, Zemliane’s superficial hit.²⁴⁸ Also missing from the English *Back in the USSR* is Troitsky’s approval of Russian heavy metal at a time when Russian rock is apparently declining: in 1986 the Rock Panorama festival took place in Moscow. In the English version of the book, Troitsky describes the heavy metal groups as ‘a little more convincing’ than their rock counterparts whose ‘nightmarish’ pop and disco melodies were as ‘vomit-inducing’ as their lyrics’ ‘banality’, leading to bands that were simply ‘bland and superficial’.²⁴⁹ In the later Russian text, they are described as ‘исключением’ from the ‘синтетический’ and ‘пошлейшая поп-мелодика’ played by the bands of other genres.²⁵⁰ This may be more poor translation of Troitsky’s text than actual difference of information, but it is nevertheless noteworthy.

Despite occasional instances in which they are singled out for praise, Troitsky is generally disparaging of heavy metal bands, for instance describing Kruiz’s eponymous 1987 Melodiia album as ‘Ritchie Blackmore meets Cozy Powell and tries to sing in Russian’.²⁵¹ He is even more negative towards early metal-influenced bands: Rossiiane is, in his opinion, merely ‘a cross between free-wheeling drinking songs and heavy metal’ while the VIA with the heaviest

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ *Back*, p. 120.

²⁵⁰ Troitskii, *Rok*, n.p.

²⁵¹ *Back*, p. 141.

sound, Zemliane, is simply ‘dreadful’ because it combines heavy metal ‘heroics’ and the ‘pomposity of official popular music’.²⁵² Yet he praises the virtuosity of Kruiz’s then-leader and guitarist Valerii Gaina, describing him as ‘sensational’, a term he also uses to describe Aria’s official professional debut at Rock Panorama ’86.²⁵³ He is complimentary of Aria’s lyric style too: one of his main criticisms of Russian heavy metal is the combination of the ‘classic’ heavy sound with ‘sweet pop’ lyrics which he regards as ‘quite ridiculous and even distasteful’, which he says Aria avoids.²⁵⁴

The other widely-read contemporary authority on Soviet and Russian rock music writing in Russian is Il’ia Smirnov, who shares Troitsky’s dislike for inauthenticity. Smirnov’s book, *Vremia kolokol’chikov*, describes how groups ‘типа КРУИЗа’ moved from light-hearted disco tunes in their early years, giving the example of Kruiz’s *Krutitsia volchok*, to heavy metal songs with lyrics evoking slaughter. He gives the reason for this change in tone, genre and subject matter as metal music having been ‘легализован’ in 1986.²⁵⁵ By contrast, Smirnov sees the band Rossiiane as remained true to its ‘art’ because the members ‘действительно жили тем, что они делали’, suggesting that the change in style from disco to metal should be regarded as inauthentic.²⁵⁶

Smirnov also recounts an episode in the Moscow suburb of Zhukovskii when a gang of *metallisty*-hating *liubery* from the neighbouring region of Liubertsy invaded a concert by heavy metal band Veselye Kartinki, but offers no

²⁵² Ibid., p. 73, p. 88.

²⁵³ Ibid., p. 88, p. 120.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 120.

²⁵⁵ *Vremia*, p. 75.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 75.

judgement.²⁵⁷ Another portrayal concerns a concert given by Oblachnyi Krai: Smirnov argues that it is difficult for heavy metal bands, especially those who have moved into the genre, to create something ‘творчески самостоятельное’ but rates short-lived band Bastion from Odessa, telling how it “‘умыла” Chernyi Kofe but was nothing like Tiazhelyi Den’ or similar bands, although it is unclear whether he is supportive of Tiazhelyi Den’ or not.²⁵⁸ He then describes Oblachnyi Krai as a group whose way of life proves that there can be liberated people within Soviet heavy metal because Oblachnyi Krai ‘действительно жил’ the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ life of, for example, Ozzy Osbourne, rather than simply copying it.²⁵⁹ In general, Smirnov does not pass judgment on heavy metal music itself, but rather on the bands which swap from styles that had been officially permitted earlier to metal once it too was permitted; he regards the switch in genre allegiance as an inherent marker of inauthenticity. It seems telling that this is the only extensive discussion by Smirnov of heavy metal, and it is as a device to illustrate authenticity in Russian rock generally. Similarly, Troitsky’s derision of Kruiz is accompanied by accusations against Chernyi Kofe of the same, genre-switching, nature, and Smirnov also criticises both bands, but I have found no other bands accused of this.

Ustinov’s 2009 interview-based chronicle of Russian rock also contains references by interviewees to Western bands including Ozzy Osbourne and Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Uriah Heep, Judas Priest, Jethro Tull, Jimi Hendrix and Bad Company, all of which are either considered heavy

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 145.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 186.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 187.

metal or have had a great influence on the sound of Western heavy metal.²⁶⁰ Ustinov's history finishes in 1979, before the majority of Soviet heavy metal bands were established, and so focusses on rock generally rather than choosing specific genres, but does discuss the hard rock/heavy metal band Rossiiane whose members went on to hard rock bands including Zemliane, Alisa and Avgust.²⁶¹ Ustinov himself mentions that the band contained 'много прекрасных музыкантов и ярких личностей': in fact, Rossiiane is described as playing *iarko* by two of the four respondents who talk about the group.²⁶² Another describes the band as 'крутые' and a 'классика жанра'.²⁶³

The side-lining of heavy metal as a support for an argument about authenticity, combined with distinct focus on the negatives of the lyrics of many Russian bands, relegates the subject to an irrelevant issue. The exclusion of heavy metal from scholarship, either because it does not fit the current focus of scholarly attention or a particular scholar's remit, or simply because it is not deemed worthy of consideration, has left a gap in knowledge and understanding in the field of Russian popular music studies. The fact that there is little other literature on Russian heavy metal, including journalism, results in its inadvertent erasure from cultural history.

A brief history of Aria

²⁶⁰ *Etot russkii*, p. 134, 135, 136, 141, 159, 164, 170 and 197.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

Aria may not have been the first heavy metal band to form, to release an album or to become professional, but it was the first heavy metal group to release a wholly heavy metal album and to play exclusively heavy metal with a complete team of professional members. And, because of both the USSR-wide network of *magnitizdat* distribution and extensive touring in the provinces organised by its manager, Aria quickly became popular across the whole Soviet Union.

Aria was founded by Vladimir Kholstinin and Alik Granovskii during 1985. Kholstinin had previously been working with future Aria bassist Vitalii Dubinin in the hard rock band Volshebnye Sumerki which they formed when they met during their first year at the Moskovskii Energeticheskii Institut (MEI) in 1975. Volshebnye Sumerki performed cover versions of songs by bands including Grand Funk Railroad, Deep Purple and Black Sabbath, and the vocalist was Aria's future singer Artur Berkut. After the group broke up at the beginning of the 1980s, Kholstinin and Dubinin lost touch but were reunited in Al'fa in 1983, although Dubinin soon left after the group failed to gain philharmonic status. In his place came Granovskii, and Kholstinin approached Granovskii with his heavy metal ideas once he had had time to work on them after leaving Al'fa in 1984. Granovskii was, by that time, part of the VIA Poiushchie Serdtsa, having again replaced Dubinin. Dubinin had already kindled the idea of hard rock with Poiushchie Serdtsa's manager Viktor Vekshtein by introducing Volshebnye Sumerki's work to him and Vekshtein was open to the idea, since he believed at the time that 'в популярной музыке нужно что-то менять' even though unofficial culture was subject to a

crackdown during this time.²⁶⁴ Vekshtein hoped to make an export group consisting of some future members of Gorky Park and Granovskii, and when original vocalist Nikolai Noskov left in February 1985, Vekshtein invited Valerii Kipelov to join from the ‘практический прекратила’ VIA Leisia, Pesnia.²⁶⁵ Sergei Potemkin also left at this time and opened up a place for Kholstinin, who was approached by Granovskii due to their collective interest in heavy metal. Kipelov, however, knew only of Western hard rock bands Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Grand Funk Railroad and Slade, so was introduced by the two guitarists to undeniably metal bands Iron Maiden and Judas Priest in the following weeks.²⁶⁶ Vekshtein also knew nothing of heavy metal but was impressed by its expressivity and grandeur and, after some doubts about whether it could be played live due to censorship controls, eventually permitted Kholstinin and Granovskii to record their own music as long as they did not disrupt the work of Poiushchie Serdtsa. In this way, Aria has been a professional, although not necessarily official, band since its inception.

Maniia velichiia was written in the months preceding its release in autumn 1985 by Kholstinin and Granovskii with contributions from Kipelov and Kirill Pokrovskii, keyboardist with Poiushchie Serdtsa. L’vov’s sound engineering expertise was employed for the recording as well as his drumming skills, although immediately afterwards he was replaced on drums by Igor’ Molchanov who, having been part of Al’fa, was more experienced with hard rock drumming. Andrei Bol’shakov was recruited with help from the album’s

²⁶⁴ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 22.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

main lyric writer, Aleksandr Elin, as a second rhythm guitarist: Kholstinin had written the rhythm section for two guitars and had played both parts on the recording, but this would not be possible in live shows. The final album contributor was Margarita Pushkina who wrote the lyrics for ‘Torero’.

Poiushchie Serdtsa had access to Western recording equipment so the album was recorded on to two Maxell 35-90 reel-to-reel cassettes using a 16-channel Tascam machine.²⁶⁷ The album recording had been organised over a long period of time and Kholstinin knew exactly what balances to use but, in an experience with engineers similar to that of Tsvety, an engineer came into the studio and changed everything.²⁶⁸ The long lead-in period is not unusual in heavy metal studio albums, but Kholstinin states in the video released for Aria’s 30th Anniversary that he wanted to make sure it was just right as other popular metal bands had already released albums.²⁶⁹

Aria’s style centres around 1970s hard rock and NWOBHM, with Kholstinin citing ‘Judas Priest, Iron Maiden и прочие’ and NWOBHM specifically as influences.²⁷⁰ Aria has, indeed, been compared to Iron Maiden since its performance at Rock-Panorama ’86 when Troitsky described the band as ‘трудно отличить от Iron Maiden!’, as well as by German fans after a concert

²⁶⁷ Aleksei Glebov, ‘XXX-Files #6’, *YouTube channel AriaRussia*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUASNqtMXHA&list=PLHcR_L8uEISfwYYiOOI5HQYPWB8aZs5Mc&index=6 [last accessed 20/07/2017]; Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 28.

²⁶⁸ XXX-Files #6; see Ustinov, *Etot russkii*, p. 179 for Stas Namin’s account of a Melodiia engineer thinking the distorted guitar was faulty when recording with Tsvety.

²⁶⁹ XXX-Files #6.

²⁷⁰ Aleksei Glebov, ‘XXX-Files #17’, *YouTube channel AriaRussia*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tS_4MnjKKVE&list=PLHcR_L8uEISfwYYiOOI5HQYPWB8aZs5Mc&index=18 [last accessed 20/07/2017].

in Berlin in 1988.²⁷¹ Aria has also been accused of copying Iron Maiden and German band Accept; in justification Kholstinin points out that Yngwie Malmsteen sounds very similar to Ritchie Blackmore and no-one makes anything of it.²⁷² In my interview with him, Aleksandr Elin pointed out that ‘1100’ from the 1987 album *Geroi asfal’ta* is almost identical to Iron Maiden’s ‘Aces High’ from its 1984 album *Powerslave*.²⁷³ In magazine interviews and literature, Aria and especially Kholstinin also repeatedly refer to American hard rock band Grand Funk Railroad as a major influence.²⁷⁴

Fans of Aria describe influences including British bands Nazareth, Deep Purple, Judas Priest, Black Sabbath and regard Iron Maiden, especially, as influencing the first album.²⁷⁵ One fan commented on the copying allegations levelled at Aria, stating that all music is ‘second hand’, and listing rap and reggae as examples of ‘recycling’ alongside heavy metal.²⁷⁶

Thematically, Aria follows the classic metal themes of war and power, often subverting them into anti-war protests or songs about how power eventually destroys. Aria also plays on the lack of responsibility in heavy metal music with songs about hope and hopelessness, fate and destiny, and simply having a good time. Notably absent in terms of themes and imagery is sex: there are

²⁷¹ Troitskii, *Rok*, n.p.; Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 114.

²⁷² XXX-Files #17.

²⁷³ Aleksandr Elin (rock-poet, lyric writer for Aria), interview with the author, 27/11/2015, Moscow.

²⁷⁴ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, generally p. 19, p. 23, and in individual interviews p. 65, p. 74, p. 118, p. 149; Arto Lehtinen, ‘ARIA’, *Metal Rules*, <http://www.metal-rules.com/metalnews/2013/09/05/aria-legendary-russian-metal-band/> [last accessed 03/03/2015].

²⁷⁵ Various Aria fans, interviews with the author, 28/11/2017, Moscow.

²⁷⁶ Aria fan, interview with the author, 28/11/2017, Moscow.

songs about women, or at least females of some form or other, and relationships, and these are predictably destructive or melancholy, but sex does not feature in any of Aria's songs. Depictions of violence are mostly avoided too, being mentioned as something that happened in the past which someone must atone for or threatened as a consequence, but not detailed during a song and the violence is never extreme.

After the release of *Maniia velichiia* and once a second guitarist had been found, Aria played its first concert on the evening of 5th February 1986 at the *Dvoretz Kul'tury Moskovskogo aviatsionnogo instituta* (DK MAI), as part of a Komsomol initiative. Aria had been invited by a journalist who had heard its music: *Maniia velichiia* had spread quite widely in the intervening months thanks to *magnitizdat*. Aria appeared on the bill as Poiushchie Serdtsa and afterwards went back to their professions as musicians in that VIA, however the band appeared on the DK MAI stage as fully-fledged heavy metal musicians, complete with chains and 'дурацкие костюмы'.²⁷⁷ The lyrics would have needed to pass the Komsomol committee's inspection, but only the lyrics: the musicians' look, the sound and other crucial components of metal music and culture went unscrutinised until the performance, and clever writing meant that the lyrics were uncontroversial, at least to the uninformed eye.²⁷⁸ The lyrics were written to express an anti-war sentiment, at least at first glance, and this was a topic that was acceptable to the authorities on the committee without being meaningless or contrary to heavy metal.²⁷⁹ Elin, in his interview

²⁷⁷ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, pp. 34-6.

²⁷⁸ Elin, interview.

²⁷⁹ Elin, interview.

with me, stressed that the lyrics were as apolitical as he could make them (since, as he considers it, no music is truly apolitical), because the band very much wanted to play heavy metal.²⁸⁰ Aria has never claimed to be making any kind of political statement: the members have always maintained they simply want to be able to enjoy playing heavy metal, which is the opinion shared by a large majority of heavy metal scene participants.²⁸¹

In making the songs uncontroversial, Elin has been accused by at least one fan of writing ‘слабые’ and ‘дурацкие’ lyrics.²⁸² Other fans, however, are more forgiving, perhaps because of understanding the political situation, and one writes that Elin’s lyrics are responsible for Aria being welcomed.²⁸³ Another fan is impressed by Elin’s composition and states that the songs were a collective effort by Aria and its associates.²⁸⁴ This collaboration is explained as Elin changing the lyrics until everyone was happy, although Pushkina describes this as writing ‘тексты “левой ногой”’.²⁸⁵

Conclusion to chapter two

Aria’s history does not follow the normal pattern of band creation, Western or Soviet: its members were already part of a professional (non-metal) band when they formed Aria, which started out almost as a side-project. They did have to

²⁸⁰ Elin, interview.

²⁸¹ Gaines, *Teenage*, p. 198, p. 201.

²⁸² ‘Metaloleg’, <http://www.darkside.ru/album/3534/> [last accessed 03/03/2015].

²⁸³ Mikhail Tulupov, <http://muslib.ru/ariya/albums/807463/maniya-velichiya> [last accessed 03/03/2015].

²⁸⁴ ‘Aleksandr III’, *Ariia Alike Granovskogo*,

<http://www.mastersland.com/index.php?release=1> [last accessed 05/03/2015].

²⁸⁵ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 31.

fight for their performance rights and access to equipment, but not in the same way as most other contemporary Russian metal bands. Likewise, Russian metal does not follow the normal rules for metal globalisation and glocalisation, but Russian rock does follow a similar pattern, and the local metal grew out of its rock parent in a similar way to Western metal from Western rock. Russian metal in the early 1980s still had very strong ties with Russian rock according to the available scholarship. Aria is not alone in employing external lyric writers, but this was the exception rather than the norm, and practically unheard of in any other metal music context. This list of exceptions, differences and abnormalities means that investigating the authenticity of the band and, indeed, the whole culture, is problematic.

CHAPTER THREE

Authenticity in metal music

Understanding authenticity

Authenticity is a term long-associated with rock music and especially with heavy metal. It can be most simplified as a perception about what constitutes good and bad music, in the sense of music that expresses something rather than music which does not, or simply which music is commercial.²⁸⁶ In heavy metal, as frequently in rock more broadly, it is considered inauthentic to aspire to commercial success, or to enjoy it once it is achieved.²⁸⁷ Authenticity in heavy metal is, in many ways, more of a defining concept than the notion that the music itself conforms to ideal genre or subgenre rules: whether a song is considered metal or not is less important than whether it is authentic or not, although the labels of authenticity tend to be applied to bands rather than individual songs, since it is people, rather than the musical products themselves, who can wish to be commercial. In a similar way as belonging to the genre, whether a band is authentic or not is rather subjective but somewhat less so, since there is a perhaps more definite boundary between bands which are predominantly interested in commercial success and bands which are not.

‘Selling out’ – that is, achieving commercial success – is perhaps the greatest faux-pas a metal band can perform and the worst insult to a metal band is to

²⁸⁶ Simon Frith, ‘Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music’ in Simon Frith, *Taking Popular Music Seriously* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 260.

²⁸⁷ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, p. 154.

say it has 'gone commercial'.²⁸⁸ Rock ideology rejects business and considers it a necessary evil, and heavy metal follows this ideology. Heavy metal is, however, a much more commercially mediated genre as the term 'heavy metal' is a commercial sales category.²⁸⁹ Glam metal suffers from this perception (hence its name change to 'glam rock' on Encyclopaedia Metallum, and therefore being packaged with bands such as The Sweet and Slade), especially since it became popular on MTV: becoming popular in mainstream media is considered straightforward selling out.²⁹⁰ The replacement of intensive touring, a badge of honour among heavy metal bands, with production of expensive videos for mass consumption was not only selling out, it also shut out the smaller bands which could not make the high-quality videos MTV demanded.

Heavy metal culture's response to glam metal's commercialisation was a return to rejecting the hegemonic cultural styles and making music that was darker, heavier and noisier, which included thrash.²⁹¹ Metallica started life as a thrash metal band but soon moved away from metal's conservative structures and sought other styles of music to add to its initially-metal sound, as well as releasing polished videos on MTV, in order to increase its fan base but at the cost of being termed inauthentic by many fans of its older music.²⁹² Importantly, Metallica is not perceived as inauthentic simply because it is

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 115.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 147, although on p. 7 Weinstein claims that heavy metal is not just a 'marketing category' but a genre.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 164.

²⁹¹ Walser, *Running*, p. 14.

²⁹² Ibid., p. 110, p. 172; Samir Puri, 'The Trooper or the Sandman?' in *Metal Music Studies*, Vol. 1(1), 2015, p. 70.

commercially successful: Iron Maiden is at least as commercially successful as Metallica and is not labelled as inauthentic, because Iron Maiden has not explicitly sought commercial success.²⁹³ It is the conscious change in music style to gain more fans which caused Metallica's downfall in some fans' eyes, as well as the introduction of new, mainstream sounds that disobeyed the metal code and, therefore, betrayed its metal roots.²⁹⁴

In the classic metal production arenas, well outside commercial institutions like MTV, new bands can be successful by following the authenticity norms and producing unique music that conforms to the genre's codes, performing it well and avoiding anything that might be deemed acceptable to mass media.²⁹⁵

They must not slavishly adhere to older bands' work for fear of being labelled copiers, but must not stray too far in case they drop outside of the code, since while metal owes a great debt to rock and roll, it is still more than simply rock and roll turned up loud, sped up and made angry.²⁹⁶ Starting out by playing other bands' music is acceptable, but a band cannot be considered authentic until the members are composing and playing their own music: a tribute track here or there is acceptable, and exclusive tribute bands do have their place, but band members are fundamentally artists and, as such, must produce their own, unique art.²⁹⁷ Innovation is encouraged, but there is a limit to how much can be added to remain within the metal code.

²⁹³ Puri, 'The Trooper', pp. 71-73.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 70.

²⁹⁵ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, p. 186, pp. 194-5.

²⁹⁶ Walser, *Running*, p. 16.

²⁹⁷ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, p. 62.

Technological innovations have allowed heavy metal to become increasingly complex: from recording technology that allows takes and retakes to remove mistakes, to stage equipment for creating spectacular arena shows. Heavy metal could not have existed before the electric guitar or the amplified bass but, like Metallica's high-end video production, using too much technology is considered inauthentic. Heavy metal is about craft, and using the shortcuts of technology to produce great sounds is inauthentic: one has to have talent and work for the music, and making up for inadequacies with effects is considered fake.²⁹⁸ This act of working confers authenticity on the music, in the sense that no-one can simply pick up a guitar and be a metal god: that status has to be earned through hard work and craft, and this is borne out on stage with exertion, sweat and concentration.²⁹⁹ Such work not only endears the band to their fans who, being working class, appreciate the effort that goes in to make great music but also separates it from punk bands, since although they might share a tendency (especially in thrash and other, more underground styles of metal music) towards 'speed, noise and violence', punk music favours amateurism, simplicity and nihilism whereas metal music prefers control and virtuosity.³⁰⁰

Authenticity and choice of language

²⁹⁸ Stephen Timmons, 2016. *A Hard Road*. [Lecture in Popular Culture Lecture Series, University of Nottingham] 24 April.

²⁹⁹ Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, p. 234.

³⁰⁰ Walser, *Running*, p. 14.

Although lyrics are not as important as in other genres of music, including rock, they are still a constituent part of the vast majority of metal songs. As metal music and culture spread out from its Anglophone homes, bands in non-Anglophone countries had to make a choice: make their own music in their own language(s), or continue to use English. Overwhelmingly, the choice fell upon English in the early stages of metal's globalisation and English is now seen as the only 'authentic' language in certain subgenres including death metal and some black metal.³⁰¹ Other subgenres appear to have no specific authenticity code regarding language use: indeed, the culture of heavy metal as a whole is deterritorialised, as it does not represent one culture or territory as a single genre or style of music and culture.³⁰² There is, however, an understanding that English makes the music relevant to a wider audience, introducing a delicate commercial aspect to language choice: because English is more commercially viable, using this as the predominant vocal language could signify a wish to become more popular and so 'sell out'. This is rarely seen as a problem among local fans, since English is much more widely spoken than any other language, especially as a second language.³⁰³ In Slovenia, for example, bands started with Slovene but quickly moved on to English in order to have wider appeal, but also sang in Croatian and other 'local' (meaning Yugoslav) languages.³⁰⁴ Iraq's Acrassicauda sings in English for the same

³⁰¹ Ferrarese, 'Eastern', p. 216.

³⁰² Weinstein, 'Globalisation', p. 45.

³⁰³ Nations Online Project, *Most Widely Spoken Languages in the World*, http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/most_spoken_languages.htm [last accessed 16/08/2017].

³⁰⁴ Muršič, 'Noisy', p. 302, p. 304.

reason, but also because English makes it sound educated and is considered transgressive in Iraqi popular music culture.³⁰⁵

Despite the lack of authenticity code for language, English has become the primary language of metal music around the globe.³⁰⁶ The Brazilian thrash/death metal band Sepultura sings in English, as do most other Brazilian bands, but they do not do this for reasons of subversion or resistance, or because metal is an ‘adoption’ of a foreign, Anglophone, model: rather, Latin American critics ‘understand these acts of translation in terms more complex’ than subversion or adoption, but beyond explaining which bands use which language on which albums and stating that Sepultura’s use of English allowed it ‘a very particular entrance to the international market’, Avelar fails to expand on the complex terms or provide any reference for further exploration.³⁰⁷ His use of the term ‘translation’ refers to the perceived necessity to translate one’s local troubles and problems into metal’s vocabulary in order to make sense of those issues in the proper themes and motifs: however, other cultures’ metal cultures demonstrate that such translation of metal is unnecessary, since it is something that is holistically experienced. In Nepal, for example, thrash metal is sung in both Nepali and English and concerns local issues such as religious sacrifice and corruption, while in Malaysian Borneo the local black metal bands continue to use anti-Christian themes despite such symbols’ loss of meaning in the primarily-Muslim state.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Weinstein, ‘Globalisation’, p. 35.

³⁰⁶ Avelar, ‘Otherwise’, p. 143.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Paul D. Greene, ‘Electronic’, pp. 109-134; Ferrarese, ‘*Eastern*’, p. 213.

A notable exception to the Anglophone dominance among metal bands recognised outside their own country or common language areas is the German band Rammstein, an industrial rock/metal band with a succession of global hits. All of Rammstein's studio albums from *Mutter* onwards have charted in multiple countries, including reaching number one in Germany and Austria (all four albums), Finland (*Reise, Reise, Rosenrot* and *Liebe ist für alle da*), United Kingdom (all except *Rosenrot*), Denmark and The Netherlands (only *Liebe ist für alle da*), and sixteen of Rammstein's wholly Germanophone singles charted in non-Germanophone countries.³⁰⁹ Rammstein has never written a song wholly in English, although its vocalist Till Lindemann has undertaken a side project in English.³¹⁰ Oliver Riedel, Rammstein's drummer, even goes so far as to state 'the German language suits heavy metal music. French might be the language of love, but German is the language of anger'.³¹¹ This counters Klaus Meine's statement 'that German was inadequate to express metal feelings and themes', when asked why his group Scorpions sings in English.³¹²

³⁰⁹ MusicLine.de, *Rammstein Longplay-Chartverfolgung*, http://www.musicline.de/de/chartverfolgung_summary/artist/Rammstein/?type=longplay; austriancharts.at, *Discographie Rammstein*, <http://austriancharts.at/showinterpret.asp?interpret=Rammstein>; finnishcharts.com, *Discography Rammstein*, <http://finnishcharts.com/showinterpret.asp?interpret=Rammstein>; Official Charts, *Rammstein*, <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/3931/rammstein/>; danishcharts.com, *Rammstein*, <http://danishcharts.com/search.asp?cat=a&search=Rammstein>; dutchcharts.nl, *Discografie Rammstein*, <http://dutchcharts.nl/showinterpret.asp?interpret=Rammstein> [all last accessed 25/09/2017].

³¹⁰ Justin Beckner, *Lindemann: "People Think We Want to be Provocative but it's Just Our Way to Express Ourselves"*, https://www.ultimate-guitar.com/news/interviews/lindemann_people_think_we_want_to_be_provocative_but_its_just_our_way_to_express_ourselves.html [last accessed 16/08/2017].

³¹¹ Jackie White, *Little Black Rammbook* (Thame, Oxon.: Diamond Distinction Limited, 2011), p. 54.

³¹² Weinstein, *Globalization*, p. 45.

There is, of course, a significant time difference between Scorpions and Rammstein: Meine was talking in the 1970s, whereas Rammstein was formed only in 1994. English was very prevalent among these first adopters of metal: Northern Europe and Japan were inundated with Anglophone metal, with bands performing the whole range from nothing but English songs to a repertoire where only the choruses were in English.³¹³ Among the socialist nations, the Yugoslav Republic of Slovenia was one of the first to start using English in the 1980s.³¹⁴ In the Soviet Union and its satellite states, as I explained in Chapter Two, the spread of metal was rather different and tied in to the spread of the local rock scene.

Language in the Soviet rock and metal scenes

As discussed in Chapter Two, rock in the Soviet Union was initially performed as faithful copies of Anglophone Western material before Russian musicians started to experiment with their own language and sound. The translation of rock's meaningfulness into Russian culture occurred with the music style's conversion to 'Russian linguistic conventions' which introduced lyric writers to 'important Russian poetic traditions' too.³¹⁵ This led to a relative highlighting of the lyrics over the music, as lyric writers became recognised as 'rock poets' and often worked for a number of bands: Margarita Pushkina

³¹³ Ibid., pp. 43-44; Timothy Strikwerda, 'Hard and Heavy Exports' (conference paper, Boundaries and Ties: the Place of Metal Music in Communities, University of Victoria, June 9-11, 2017).

³¹⁴ Muršič, *Noisy*, p. 304.

³¹⁵ Cushman, *Notes*, p. 104.

wrote lyrics for Avtograf, Aria, Vysokosnoe Leto, and Kruiz in the 1970s and early 1980s.³¹⁶ One of Cushman's interviewees goes so far as to claim:

What's most important in rock music is poetry. The music is only secondary, and what you need to do is to make sure, first and foremost, that the quality of your poetry is the best that it can be. Only then you have to think about putting that poetry to music.³¹⁷

This can be seen in the types of hard rock and heavy metal that proliferated in the early 1980s, when bands like Kruiz, Legion, Chernyi Kofe and Oblachnyi Krai played melodic and lyrically complicated songs in the style of Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin. Even when thrash-oriented bands emerged in the later 1980s, some still favoured a clear lyric line: Master and Chernyi Obelisk sing with clean vocals in a style more similar to Metallica than, for example, Slayer or Megadeth, two of the other pioneers of thrash metal. Iron Maiden is one of the best-known Anglophone bands for including literary themes in its music, including complete heavy metal renditions of epics such as Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner', which allows the band to explore complex contemporary social themes in a historical or fantastical context.³¹⁸ In the same way as metal musicians in Japan and China who sing melodic metal inspired by poetry and literature continue to sing in their native languages, Russian melodic groups, both rock bands and metal bands which have not gone down the extreme metal route, sing predominantly in Russian.

³¹⁶ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, pp. 175-176.

³¹⁷ *Notes*, pp. 105-106.

³¹⁸ Walser, *Running*, pp. 161-2.

Translating global themes into local situations is not only about translating the words: there must also be a translation of meaning which is relevant to the local culture. In a similar way to some early Japanese bands who sang English choruses to preserve the foreignness of the music, some Russian rock compositions used English-sounding refrains alongside Russian verses, whereas others fully translated lyrics, both linguistically and culturally, to provide a more Russian environment.³¹⁹ Cultural translation also occurs in many situations, not just in conversion of the themes to local understanding. In Russian rock, McMichael gives the example of translation of the foreignness in the Rolling Stones' 'Dear Doctor' into the Russian equivalent by Zoopark's Maik Naumenko, who takes this foreign song and makes it contemporary Soviet, but keeps it distant and foreign by remaining faithful to the music and vocal arrangement, such that anyone familiar with the original would immediately recognise it as an English rock song.³²⁰ In a similar way, heavy metal's Christian themes such as Satan worship are relevant and transgressive to an Anglo-American audience, but to a Hindu Nepali audience they are meaningless, so are replaced with locally-relevant themes of religious animal sacrifice, but the music remains broadly the same.

Authenticity as Art, Authenticity as Craft

³¹⁹ McMichael, 'Translation', p. 213.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

Cushman's interviewees view rock music as the sort of art that is only authentic if kept away from external social forces and, while this was true in their constructed world of *vnye* (see next section), there still existed a 'fundamental struggle to define rock music as an authentic form of artistic practice within the space of Soviet society'.³²¹ They considered their rock as art because art is not politics, in the sense that it 'expresses general and universal feelings' instead of something contemporary.³²² In the same way, Iron Maiden's 'Two Minutes to Midnight' might be about a specific incident in history, the moving of the Doomsday Clock, but is arguably more relevant to other situations and events as appropriate to the listener's experience.³²³ Cushman cites Leo Tolstoy's view that art is something transmitted or expressed that causes receivers to feel the way the artist does, and inauthentic art is incapable of doing this, which certainly correlates with authenticity relating to meaningfulness and inauthenticity to meaninglessness in rock and heavy metal.³²⁴

Heavy metal, though, is not always art: art can be appreciated by the individual, and its effects can be immediate on first experience rather than building up over time. Heavy metal music, on the other hand, is collaborative, communal and takes time, where self-worth is the reward and this reward is not always forthcoming.³²⁵ This brings metal closer to the idea of craft, defined by Richard Sennett as 'an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job

³²¹ *Notes*, pp. 91-92.

³²² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

³²³ 'Face_your_fear_79', *Let Them Go*, and 'Five_Nails', *We Will Never Surrender*, both at https://www.metal-archives.com/reviews/Iron_Maiden/Powerslave/77/.

³²⁴ *Notes*, pp. 102-103.

³²⁵ Timmons, *Hard Road*.

well for its own sake'.³²⁶ Honesty, too, is a priority for metal musicians and for the music they create, because they are 'in it for the love of the craft'.³²⁷

This apparent opposition of art and craft within the status of an 'authentic' culture does not actually exclude either one or the other: it is part of the combination of ideas from both Romanticism (closer to art) and Modernism (closer to craft) in rock culture.³²⁸ Among the Romantic characteristics listed by Keightley which are used by heavy metal bands to authenticate their music are sincerity, community, 'live-ness', and tradition, whereas Modernist features include elitism, celebration of technology, sounds which shock, and irony.³²⁹ Walser highlights the dialogue between Romanticism and Modernism that pervades rock music, using the example of Guns N' Roses' 'Paradise City' which combines irony and sincerity.³³⁰ These juxtaposed characteristics of rock music are still relevant to heavy metal, though, as rock covers heavy metal within its own definition of exclusion, where pop and other mainstream music is excluded from the genre.³³¹

Heavy metal music's collaborative nature ties into its authenticity, because the hard work and effort of the whole band, as well as its fans and other stakeholders, contribute to the authenticity of the product. If one stakeholder fails to act authentically, it can bring the whole project down and if a band

³²⁶ *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 9.

³²⁷ Gaines, *Teenage*, p. 198.

³²⁸ Kier Keightley, 'Reconsidering Rock' in Simon Frith, Will Straw and John Street (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 135.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

³³⁰ *Running*, p. 168.

³³¹ Keightley, 'Reconsidering', p. 109.

member dies or is incapacitated, the whole band can disintegrate but may also pull closer together.³³² These ties relate to the ethics of the working-class roots of heavy metal.

Authenticity of *Vnye*³³³

Soviet music culture was effectively split along amateur and professional lines, with the officially recognised, supported and legal scenes of *estrada*, VIA and other such sanctioned activities on one hand, and the amateur, underground scene of rock and its related genres on the other. These kinds of music-making did not exist in complete opposition, however: because VIAs were legal did not automatically make rock illegal. Rather, rock music and all other non-sanctioned, ‘unofficial’ culture existed in a different social construct to the official Soviet world, characterised by Alexei Yurchak as *vnye*, which is similar to ‘without’ in the sense of ‘external of/to’.³³⁴ Rock music could not be opposed to anything in Soviet society because it was simply not part of it. For example, Aria was made up of *professional* members whose workbooks stated they were musicians, and the band members earned enough money to live as musicians, but Aria was not an *official* band because its name could not appear in any formal capacity on posters and flyers, and its initial concerts were conducted under the members’ official band’s name, Poiushchie Serdtsa. Aria had no recording contract with Melodiia so could not release albums except as unofficial, underground tapes to be copied and traded in the same way as any

³³² Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, p. 71.

³³³ *Vnye* is Yurchak’s term and so I have used his transliteration.

³³⁴ *Everything*, pp. 127-8.

other amateur band, but the musicians did not have to contend with state demands on culture interfering in the music they wanted to make, only in the music they made as a living. As such, they existed both within the Soviet state as official musicians, and outside, that is *vnye*, as members of an unofficial band.

This phenomenon of *vnye* makes discussion of authenticity more difficult in the Soviet context. In Western contexts, authenticity is fundamentally the difference between bands which are perceived to or actively desire to become commercially successful at the expense of all else, opposing those bands who make music for music's sake, a sense of art or craft driving their decisions rather than how popular they might be. For Soviet bands, as for bands in the GDR, the idea of being able to even become commercially viable legitimately with their music in more or less the same format was impossible and, as such, did not enter into discussions of authenticity with the same weight. Wicke and Shepherd argue that, instead, the lack of commercial attraction makes socialist rock (and, by extension, metal) more authentic because the band does not have a professional status to aspire to, and so can only make music, not compromises.³³⁵

One of Russia's highest regarded virtuoso guitarists, Igor' Romanov, joined a professional VIA for a time as he felt this was the only way to continue making the music he loved which required sophisticated technology that was unavailable to him in the world *vnye*. It also allowed him to make money from

³³⁵ ““The Cabaret is Dead””, p. 26.

being a musician and have no need for other jobs. As a self-confessed *metallist*, Romanov was also eventually allowed to play his own compositions and so play his 'hard and heavy' style in the official Soviet cultural context, thus bringing the world of the 'underground' very much into the public eye.³³⁶ Romanov's move to the professional scene, although temporary, was quite at odds with the usual attitude to professional musicians, who were regarded as having no status by their amateur counterparts.³³⁷ In Soviet Russia, though, 'going commercial', as this move to the professional and official sphere was known, had a fair amount of acceptance as it protected the purity of one's status as a musician (itself a sign of authenticity) and was seen as no different to Western bands 'following a producer's suggestions' after accepting a lucrative contract, an act which on its own is not a sign of inauthenticity.³³⁸ This professional aspiration and achievement is quite different to Kruiz and Chernyi Kofe's change in style in order to attempt to become professional: Kruiz and Chernyi Kofe went too far and not only aspired to 'go commercial' but also did everything they could to become official. Romanov did not: he made the choice to go commercial but did it in order to make metal music, and while he had to follow cultural orders to perform whatever music his band was playing, he still played metal music when he could. In this way, Romanov's situation is more authentic than Kruiz or Chernyi Kofe, although the circumstances for bands and individuals are very different.

³³⁶ Cushman, *Notes*, p. 81.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

Wicke and Shepherd also argue that ‘going commercial’ is inevitable because economy (and politics) is an intrinsic part of art and culture, and so terms such as ‘authenticity’ and ‘commercialism’ are abstract and theoretical, holding only as much meaning as the policies in which they are employed.³³⁹ Thus, while rock groups in the Soviet Union and GDR may have been able to become professional and, therefore, make a living from their music, this sort of ‘going commercial’, while still frowned upon among local musicians but also seen as a means to an end, is very different to the Western idea of ‘going commercial’, with its connotations of distance from meaningful music, disregard for the real fans and interest only in money. Nonetheless, Troitsky notes that by 1986, Western-style commercialism appeared to have arrived on the Soviet rock scene, as the ‘парад бескрылой вторичности’ of the philharmonic (professional) rock bands seen at Rock-Panorama ’86 is described as losing ‘всякую связь с духовными и интеллектуальными корнями’ of its founding amateur movement.³⁴⁰

The construction of *vnye* ties in with another Russian language issue related to authenticity: truth. Central to Cushman’s explanation of authenticity in Russian rock music is the notion that in Russian there is *pravda*, akin to everyday truth as in opposition statements of true or false, and *istina*, ‘real’ truth.³⁴¹ *Istina* is tied closer to *vnye*, whereas *pravda* sits tighter with the Soviet official culture. Rockers in Cushman’s interviews search for ‘honesty’

³³⁹ ‘Cabaret’, p. 35.

³⁴⁰ Troitskii, *Rok*, n.p. Importantly, metal bands are specifically excluded from this description.

³⁴¹ *Notes*, p. 107.

in their music, much like the crafters of heavy metal: ‘honesty’ could be a translation of *iskrennost*, another being ‘sincerity’, with ‘honesty’ associated with craft and ‘sincerity’ with art.³⁴² *Iskrennost* is impossible to find in the *pravda* of Soviet society because it was a ‘big lie’ and so a more honest and authentic society was constructed *vnye*.³⁴³

Constructing a society such as the world *vnye* might seem entirely inauthentic, but the society from which this *vnye* separated was itself far from authentic. With its reliance on the not-wholly-authentic *pravda*, Soviet society itself constructed idealised milieus within which phenomena were part of the society and outside of which they were not; belonging to the milieu did not guarantee support, only that phenomena were recognised at all. Soviet society was constructed to include everything that was pro-Soviet and everything that was anti-Soviet, but not everything fitted neatly in to these categories, and it is this ‘other’ that constitutes *vnye*. For Soviet rockers and *metallisty*, it was more authentic to exist *vnye* than to participate in the inauthentic societal construction, to seek *istina* over *pravda*, to live meaningful, interesting lives rather than the ones described as ‘uninteresting’ by one of Yurchak’s interviewees.³⁴⁴

Indeed, the West itself was part of this construction as the ‘imaginary West’ that was neither truly ‘Western’ but opposed that which was ‘Soviet’.³⁴⁵

³⁴² Ibid., pp. 108-9.

³⁴³ Ibid., p. 110.

³⁴⁴ *Everything*, p. 132.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 158-206.

Within the construction that is Soviet society, the ‘imaginary West’ is the only factual, *pravil’nyi* West, because it is the only one which officially exists and thus cannot exist outside of the Soviet construct, because this West is not a concrete place or thing, rather a set of concepts and discourses. The real, *istinnyi* West cannot exist within that construction, but also does not exist entirely separate from it and, as such, must exist *vnye*.

The appropriation of only relevant or desirable qualities from an original concept is quite similar to the global spread of metal, where aspects of metal or a metal subculture or subgenre are appropriated into the local music and culture and become locally authentic but would be alien to the culture from which they have been borrowed. In a different genre’s spread in a very different part of the world, tango grew so popular on the tiny South Pacific island of Rapanui that it became part of the ‘traditional’ and, therefore, authentic music set of the island, although metal has not.³⁴⁶ In Malaysian Borneo, the black metal scene is organised around the satanic and anti-Christian themes of first-wave black metal but incorporates the Norwegian second wave’s use of corpse paint, as well as singing primarily in English.³⁴⁷ In fact, singing in English is considered ‘the sole authentic code’ for Anglo-American initiated music in the South-East Asia area, due to colonisation by the British.³⁴⁸ In Japan and China, however, the local language is preferred in order to tie in with the literary traditions explored in the music which is more melodic in nature.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁶ Bendrups, ‘Nako’, p. 317.

³⁴⁷ Ferrarese, ‘*Eastern*’, p. 213.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

³⁴⁹ Kawano and Hosokawa, ‘Thunder’ pp. 247-267; Wong, ‘Dream’, pp. 63-85.

For metal musicians, the high level of music technology required was often only available to professional bands and so it was practically impossible to perform metal music on an amateur basis, meaning they had to make up for this loss of authenticity, in ‘going commercial’, with other symbols of authenticity. These symbols are ‘soft’ in the West, always secondary to the commercialisation aspect and some, like language, have no actual code of authenticity without the tie to commercialism, but in socialist contexts they must take on greater meaning to make up for the loss of the commercial markers of authenticity. Heavy metal bands used symbols of both Western metal and Russian rock as their dual parentage allowed. From Western metal they took the sound and look, dressing according to the metal code and following the sonic markers of distortion and highly-amplified bass; from Russian rock, they took the Russian language and concern with meaningfulness. Russian rock was able to be used as a source of authenticity because it was still authentic and transgressive, unlike Western rock which had become commercialised and compliant, and although Russian rock did have an inauthentic counterpart in VIA, this added authenticity to amateur rock. Soviet metal musicians looked to the forms of metal music that had the most meaning in their local context, added Russian lyrics and produced a type of music that was not Soviet, but not Western either. These symbols were firmly ensconced within *vnye*, as they did not belong to the Soviet world or the Soviet-constructed imaginary West, because they bore no meaning for Soviet society.

Conclusion to chapter three

The prevailing scholarly understanding of authenticity within metal is based on a model where commercialisation of metal music is possible and most of the constituent qualities can be simplified to be either in support of or against commercialism, including language choice, technology and use of new sounds. In socialist contexts, however, the commercial aspect is unobtainable by normal Western standards, and these other qualities become more important in the determination of authenticity. In Soviet Russia the milieu of *vnye* promoted authenticity, since Soviet official society was regarded as inauthentic, and this was the case for Russian rock too, which remained transgressive. Russian rock and metal were able to be authentic because they could oppose the inauthentic official music of VIAs, although membership of a VIA did not preclude authenticity in other ways, especially in metal music due to the physical difficulties of obtaining the means to perform the music. Equally, existing *vnye* was neither a prerequisite nor an automatic confirmation of authenticity. Russian rock also influenced Russian metal authenticity, setting the rules by which metal would initially be judged authentic, specifying that authentic music is Russian language-based with meaningful content.

CHAPTER FOUR

Delusions of Grandeur: analysing Aria's first album³⁵⁰

Maniia velichiia was released on 31st October 1985.³⁵¹ It was distributed in the usual *magnitizdat* format through kiosks initially, although the album carried only 'Ария-85' on the cassette to identify it.³⁵² The version I have used for this research is the 1993 MOROZ Records release on CD, the first commercial release of the album, which is complete with cover art showing rocks spelling out the band's name jutting from a reflective lake into a reddening sky.³⁵³ The album's name does not appear on the front cover but is written on the reverse, inside cover and CD of this release in blackletter script.³⁵⁴

The album contains eight tracks, seven songs with lyrics and one instrumental with a choral vocal line. In terms of their lyrics, themes shared by multiple songs include rejection of ideologies, hopelessness, power, and bad fate. The album deals with the contemporary political state of affairs too: situations covered by the songs give examples of restrictions imposed on culture, movement, and expression, revealing an interpretation of Soviet bureaucracy and its impact on normal people as well as musicians. Musically the clearest influence on the album is NWOBHM, with Iron Maiden the closest Western

³⁵⁰ Except where otherwise specified lyrics and information about music and lyric writers are from the relevant song page under the album page, <http://aria.ru/publications/albums/mania.html>, on Aria's official website.

³⁵¹ 'Khronologiya', <http://aria.ru/publications/history.html> [last accessed 22/07/2017].

³⁵² Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 29; for a description of how these kiosks operated, see Kan, 'Living', p. 267.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

³⁵⁴ For an interesting discussion of the use of blackletter script in metal bands' promotional material and logos, see Vitus Vestergaard, 'Blackletter Logotypes and Metal Music', *Metal Music Studies*, Vol. 2(1), 2016, pp. 109-124.

band to the style of most of the songs. The influences of Black Sabbath, Judas Priest and Deep Purple are clear too. The only overarching theme that can be related both to heavy metal and Soviet everyday culture is apathy: Aleksandr Elin's banal lyrics and the consistent feeling of hopelessness across the album tie in with heavy metal's inability to propose real change even as it exposes the flaws in the system. Usually, NWOBHM bands express anger about a situation even though, as the lyrics also suggest, they cannot help the situation: Iron Maiden has a plethora of angry songs from its second album onwards and Venom is credited with being the main influence on the thrash and black metal genres, both of which are quite angry-sounding. Aria did start to include angrier, harsh sounds from its second album *S kem ty?* onwards, using faster rhythms and focussing more on the major key, but there is nothing in *Maniia velichiia* which could be classed as angry. Rather, there is a lot of use of the minor key and instrument echoes, which gives an ethereal feeling to much of the music; the rhythm guitar is, indeed, rarely without its echo.

Maniia velichiia's opening track is 'Eto rok', written by Kholstinin and Granovskii with lyrics by Elin, and musically it is similar to a lot of Judas Priest's output, as noted by at least one fan.³⁵⁵ The rhythm guitar and vocals are in a minor key throughout most of the song but once the chorus starts, the mood changes to major, which contrasts with the lyrics:

Грозный пророк

³⁵⁵ 'NausikaDalazBlindaz', *Russian Metal Debut Matches the Best of the West*, https://www.metal-archives.com/reviews/Ария/Мания_величия/1088/ [last accessed 22/07/2017].

Вычислил срок
Мы считали, что он нас смешит,
Как паяц в шапито.
Этот урок
Слишком жесток
И никто не ответит теперь,
Почему и за что

Like the staccato rhythm throughout much of the rest of the song, this juxtaposition of major melody and negative lyrics is somewhat unsettling. The song is about war: no specific battle or event is mentioned until the final verse but the general horrors of war are narrated. The first verse evokes firestorms like those that consumed Dresden in the Second World War, while the second verse almost has a science-fiction feel:

[...] Плавится камень как воск
Грудой ненужных молекул становится мозг, мозг

The final verse is not placed in one single context and instead begins by talking generically about war and its futility, and then evokes a specific historical battle, Waterloo, as well as future destruction with Armageddon, as promised in the Bible, in the second line, so tying together the historically-oriented first verse and future-oriented last verse.³⁵⁶ In the chorus, it is unclear who the

³⁵⁶ ‘Armageddon’ is also a term very often associated with nuclear war: a Google search for “nuclear armageddon” returns about 220,000 results. There are 214 bands listed on

‘пророк’ is, but he seems to be some kind of observer, putting people on show for his own amusement. The *prorok* is used relatively often in Soviet and Russian rock culture, with DDT’s track ‘Oni igraiut zhestokii rok (monolog v Saigone)’ from their 1983 album *Kompromiss* and Krematorii’s ‘Prorok na karuseli’ on the 1984 album *Krematorii II* both mentioning a *prorok*, and the *prorok* is also the eponymous subject of poems by Lermontov (1841) and Pushkin (1826).³⁵⁷

It is also unknown who the observed are, but it could be the band, *metallisty* generally, or even a completely different group, depending on who the subject of the song is. This ambiguity is a common device in metal songs, used to make them relevant to a wide range of listeners who will add their own experience to interpret meaning as well as to avoid or refute unwanted accusations such as those made by the PMRC and its supporters in the 1980s.

‘Eto rok’'s main argument is an anti-war one. War and anti-war sentiments are a frequent theme in heavy metal in its global context, in keeping with ideas of protest and hopelessness for the future. Anti-war lyrics were also common in late Soviet popular music: in a survey of 201 independent and 100 VIA songs reported in 1987, five independent and one VIA song were found to be explicitly anti-war.³⁵⁸ Here the jolting rhythm and change of tone take the

Encyclopaedia Metallum with the lyric theme ‘Armageddon’ and a song title search for ‘armageddon’ yields 1519 results.

³⁵⁷ Russmuss.net, *Oni igraiut zhestokii rok*, <http://russmus.net/song/3563> [last accessed 09/09/2017]; Krematorii, *Diskografia*, <http://www.crematorium.ru/archive/discography?id=801> [last accessed 09/09/2017]; Donald Rayfield with Jeremy Hicks, Olga Makarova and Anna Pilkington (eds.), *The Garnett Book of Russian Verse* (London: The Garnett Press, 2000), pp. 188-189, pp. 84-85.

³⁵⁸ Cushman, *Notes*, p. 349.

listener or audience into the battles described in the verses, disorientating and unsettling them. The music provides power with the driving bass and drums, as well as in the repetition of the last word of the first two verses and the three exclamations of 'Eto rok' at the false end, all as the vocal line soars up both in scale and intensity. This power seems both at odds with the anti-war stance and in support of it: power can be used as a force to destroy, as in war, but can also be used as political or other less tangible power to avoid war and promote peace.

The song, and therefore the whole album, starts with a clearly distorted electric guitar chord which slides into a display of guitar virtuosity, not unlike the introduction to Deep Purple's 'Speed King' from the album *Deep Purple in Rock*. The guitar diminishes and then returns with the drums to set up the staccato rhythm before the vocals jump in. The rhythm guitar is quiet when the voice is active during the verses, then the guitar comes back in until the voice starts again, emphasising the use of voice as just another instrument. The vocal line is different in the first two verses compared to the last: in the first two lines of the verses, the last word is sung lower in pitch than in the comparative last verse line, except for the final line which is lower in the last verse and not repeated. This makes the last verse sound different, although the gap of 1:34 between the second and final verse masks the difference well. The last verse sounds much more desperate, as it explains why the experiences were reported in the first two verses, and sounds like it is trying to stop a recurrence of the scenarios covered in those verses. The chorus, though, with its closing lines 'И никто не ответит теперь, / Почему и за что' draws on the classic heavy

metal theme of hopelessness as it sounds as if, despite the band's call for peace, war will continue unabated as no-one takes responsibility for what is going on. This issue of responsibility is another frequently occurring theme in the genre: bands sing about bad things that happen and even lay blame for them, but tend not to take responsibility for changing anything. In this way it could be said they are no better than those they criticise, but heavy metal is not about finding solutions or being the saviour, rather it is simply about having fun while exposing society's problems. The chorus of 'Eto rok' is completely different in sound to the rest of the song, in addition to the tonality being contrary to the meaning of its lyrics: it does sound like the musicians are having fun because of the jaunty rhythm and major key, but there is no resolution or revolution as the song follows classic heavy metal lines in exposing the horror of war and avoiding any real solution. Even the song title refers to the hopelessness of the situation and the lack of responsibility that can be taken by anyone, since it is fate that is the driver.

The second song on the album is 'Torero' (Granovskii, lyrics by Pushkina). It starts with a very quiet guitar that may be acoustic but is certainly undistorted, which is then entirely replaced by the electric rhythm and bass guitars. The song addresses a bullfighter in Madrid and so removes itself from the Soviet context concertedly, if superficially. 'Torero' appears to concern a generational conflict, as the matador is 'сын вдовы'. What the threat and its opponent are is not made clear: in the Cold War context it could be the West fighting the Soviets or the Soviet order fighting the West; it might be dissidents fighting the system or even the system fighting the people. It is also possible

that it represents generic fighting for a cause. The fight appears to be hopeless, given the apparent inevitability of the matador's death in the last verse: the matador's cape is described as his 'траурный покров', and the narrator tells him 'будешь убит'; however, this idea contradicts the refrain, immediately before the chorus, which suggests that mystical forces will protect him:

Бог хранит тебя,
Смерть щадит тебя

At the end of verse one, 'Качается чаша весов' implies a fine balance between the pure power of the bull and the skill and experience in the matador. The matador, though, does not seem to enjoy his experience, as:

Пусть не знает никто,
Что творится в душе.

The generational necessity of following one's father into the profession does not appear to be welcomed by the matador, possibly because his father died doing the same thing. In this sense the song is also anti-war, as the violence is neverending and seemingly pointless.

To add credence to the reading of the song as foreign and exotic, there are definite 'Spanish' influences in the music of 'Torero', highlighting that events of the song occur far from the Soviet Union. The trills and stepping progressions are sonically reminiscent of flamenco, but could also be a

reference to the musical accompaniment to bullfighting. The use of the undistorted guitar at the beginning of the song is also classically Spanish in tone, with the staccato plucking and use of flourishes evocative of flamenco.

It is also entirely possible that the song is, simply, narrating a bullfight as an exotic but also heroic and undeniably masculine scene. Similar examples in metal include 'Flash of the Blade' on Iron Maiden's 1984 album *Powerslave*, which is about a mercenary's life, and Europe's 'Cherokee' from the 1987 album *The Final Countdown*, relating the story of the Native Americans' violent evictions. Pure narration is not a device often used by metal bands and usually only turns up in songs such as Judas Priest's 'Living after Midnight', Scorpions 'Rock You Like a Hurricane' or AC/DC's 'Shoot to Thrill', which are hedonistic celebrations of masculinity through virility, but as the Iron Maiden and Europe examples show, it is not unheard of in themes outside of hedonism.

Following 'Torero' is 'Volonter' (Kholstinin and Granovskii, lyrics by Elin), which has the longest instrumental section on the album and begins with a haunting sound like a cold wind blowing before the bass guitar starts a steady beat, the rhythm guitar coming in at 0:55 with a slow-tempo, simple line. The vocal line follows the rhythm set by the guitar but does not start until 2:03, thirteen seconds longer than the entirety of the later instrumental track 'Maniia velichiiia'. 'Volonter' has many similarities to Black Sabbath's 'Heaven and Hell' from the 1980 album of the same name, including the guitar introduction, verse lines and chorus start. At 03:36, for the coda, a change of voice occurs as

Pokrovskii growls through the first four lines before Kipelov's melodic vocal style returns for the last four lines. 'Volonter' is almost a duet, as Kipelov sings the majority of the vocal line but Pokrovskii takes on the response lines and backing vocals.³⁵⁹ The song has been described by a fan reviewer as 'the first true epic' of the Russian metal scene and compared to songs by both Judas Priest and Iron Maiden, with the reviewer making it clear that in all the quoted comparisons to this song, the Western examples occurred after the recording of 'Volonter'.³⁶⁰

The canonical source on Aria describes 'Volonter' as telling the story of Stalinist Russia.³⁶¹ Certainly the haunting introduction creates an atmosphere harking back to the past. The male subject did terrible things long ago and they are now catching up with him: 'был суд, приговор суров и строг'. Given the constraints in cultural life at the time of the album's recording, when bands were being blacklisted, the song perhaps serves as a reminder of the treatment of freedom of expression during Stalin's purges.³⁶² Equally, though, it could be interpreted as a response to discussion of heavy metal, and not only in the Soviet Union but also more widely, for instance as a response to moral panics and the parental backlash against heavy metal that occurred at around the same time, especially in the USA.

³⁵⁹ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia* p. 27.

³⁶⁰ 'kluseba', *Where the Future Meets the Past*, https://www.metal-archives.com/reviews/Ария/Мания_величия/1088/ [last accessed 22/07/2017].

³⁶¹ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 30.

³⁶² Troitsky, *Back*, pp. 97-9.

In 'Volonter's' coda, the lyrics as published on the website of the second line of the coda are 'Чьи-то уши самый тайный слышали приказ' but on the recording Pokrovskii sings the last word as 'рассказ' which changes the meaning from something formal and in the official realm to something informal, a tale exchanged among acquaintances or even a published story, which rather changes the meaning to something the listener did voluntarily, possibly reporting on a *samizdat* work or other supposedly dissident act. It also changes the tense of the event, from something that will happen in the 'приказ' to something that has already happened in the 'рассказ'. The two-part coda is like the pronunciation of a prosecutor as they condemn the song's subject, the first growled section relating the *volunter's* history of watching and reporting on their fellows and the second clearly-sung section stating 'Нет покоя' for the *volunter* compared to 'Тем кто знал и все-таки молчал', so explaining how the *volunter* should feel compared to other citizens. The stance of the narrator is obvious as their usual, clear vocals state what should be done while the growled vocals iterate what will happen to those who do not follow their consciences.

The next track is 'Bivni chernykh skal' (Granovskii, lyrics by Elin), which tells the story of a man who attempts to defy nature and the gods. He climbs a mountain, claims he no longer needs gods and then an avalanche carries him away. In the chorus we hear the lyrics 'Он дотронется до солнца', which is reminiscent of the story of Icarus, in which a son disobeys his father by flying too close to the sun and having the wax melted on his artificial wings. The Icarus myth is used often by metal artists, with bands as disparate as Iron

Maiden, Rush, Faith No More and Rammstein all taking it as a theme. While Iron Maiden subverts the theme by using it as a lesson about why teenagers should listen to their parents, 'Bivni chernykh skal' follows the expected theme of power: the Icarus myth can be identified with over-ambition, hubris and taking freedom for granted. 'Bivni chernykh skal' is not about Icarus specifically, and the man is climbing rather than flying, but nevertheless the comparison is evident in the trope of ascent and challenge to the godly realm.³⁶³ The futility of this attempt to prove he no longer needs gods shows the power of nature and, by extension in the context of this song, the gods, both of which were seen as less powerful than the Soviet human.³⁶⁴ In the late Soviet period, the cracks of the totalitarian regime were starting to show, with Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko falling ill and forcing a change of leader three times in twenty-eight months: the power of the state was not all it seemed to be. Many young people lived *vnye* and were unengaged in Soviet life, emphasising that the state was not really in full control. Gods and nature retaliating on the unbelievers is a striking and excessive allegory for the reasons behind Gorbachev's reforms.³⁶⁵

To highlight the enormity of the man's imagined power, the natural world in 'Bivni chernykh skal' is represented by large and powerful forces including mountains, glaciers and avalanches: the juxtaposition of the small man and the mighty mountain is evident in the original title of the song, 'Chelovek i

³⁶³ Aria did, in fact, go on to release a song about Icarus, 'Ikar', on their second album, *S kem ty?*, written in 1986.

³⁶⁴ Yurchak, *Everything*, pp. 234-5.

³⁶⁵ For example, Gorbachev sought to end the food crises caused by low grain yields and increasing reliance on imports. For an in-depth discussion of 'the grain problem', see Gaidar, *Collapse*, pp. 205-211.

gory'.³⁶⁶ When people try to conquer mountains they can fail with deadly consequences, avalanches are unpredictable and powerful enough to kill even the best-prepared person and glaciers are a huge, unstoppable force in nature, carving great valleys from solid rock. The Soviet Union covered a vast area which not only contained all these insurmountable hazards, but was itself too large and heterogeneous to be controlled.³⁶⁷ The man, by contrast, has his shouts curtailed when the echo 'разбило о ледник', and he himself is merely a 'песчинку', a remnant of a glacier's passing, but also a survivor of it. He may be 'среди гор ничтожно мал' but he is a constant presence, and nature cannot destroy him utterly. This could represent the man himself, as a survivor against the odds, and show that he truly does have power even though it does not take the form he expects, or it could represent the qualities of arrogance, over-achievement and self-centredness which characterise authoritarian regimes including the USSR.

The music of 'Bivni chernykh skal' is melodic at the outset, a bright rhythm guitar introducing the song which becomes darker in mood as the guitar drops into a minor chord and Kipelov's voice comes in. In the same way as 'Eto rok', 'Bivni chernykh skal' is mostly in a minor key, but with brighter major interludes. The chorus is very high-pitched and near screaming, at the top of Kipelov's range, and it has an echo, possibly produced by backing singer Pokrovskii rather than electronically. The phrases which make up the introduction are repeated immediately after the chorus before the instrumental,

³⁶⁶ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 28.

³⁶⁷ Gaidar, *Collapse*, p. 13.

at the end of the instrumental, and finally at the very end of the song, lasting twenty seconds each and accounting for more than a quarter of the whole song. The song ends on a single chord which decreases in pitch and becomes minor as the song fades, a fade which accelerates as the notes descend. There is a certain desperation in the sound of the song as a whole: the human side of things has to be represented by the band members since they are human, and so they relay the subject's vehemence in his power over nature, but tempered by the knowledge that he must fail and so introducing the anxious tones. The melodic start and its three repetitions highlight the man's positivity and belief in his own power, but the overall minor tonality and strained vocals emphasise the futility of his situation, and suggest a sense of desperation to his actions. The chorus has the most strained sound and lasts twenty-three seconds, being sung three times and so taking up almost a quarter of the song; it has, though, the most positive lyrics:

Он до цели доберется
По своей пройдет стезе,
Он дотронется до солнца,
Сокрушит преграды все

At this point, the relayed achievements of the man are completely at odds with the tone of voice and style of music used in the song. This is very much like Iron Maiden's 'Invaders' from the 1982 album *Number of the Beast*, which also has a chorus at odds with the lyrics as Steve Harris' guitar carries on a jaunty tune while Bruce Dickinson's voice is almost screaming in terror.

The instrumental title track 'Maniia velichiia' (Pokrovskii) incorporates both Western liturgical themes and heavy metal characteristics. The electric organ starts the piece, setting the tune for the two choruses of the vocal (but wordless) line, a boys' choir and adult male voices, to follow with full percussion and electric guitar come in at 0:52 and 1:14 respectively.³⁶⁸ The distorted electric guitar whines and growls through the song's minor key and is juxtaposed with the vocal line, first copying it before increasingly twisting the tune, becoming more improvised until it is doing entirely its own thing. A brighter section comes in at 0:51 where the melody switches to the major key and chimes are used to add colour, but after twelve seconds it suddenly reverts back to the minor key, implying a sudden return of danger, aggression, or fear.³⁶⁹ The song ends with the wailing guitar fading out alone. The organ fits well with the vocals and ties in the electric guitar because of its similar sound: both the electrified guitar and traditional pipe or electrified organ (or synthesizer) are the only examples of instruments which can play a note indefinitely, which gives a sense of infinite power to their music.³⁷⁰ In juxtaposition are the liturgical-sounding parts of organ, choruses and chimes and the heavy metal guitar and drums, as they feel added to the music in the same way as a guitar solo feels improvised, although is quite deliberate and well-honed. The whole track in general has a haunting feeling, the choral sections sudden and unexpected but not as disjointed as the electric guitar,

³⁶⁸ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 27.

³⁶⁹ Walser, *Running*, p. 121.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-3.

which creates its uneasy, out-of-place sensation which trails off at the end, leaving the listener unsettled.

The sixth track is 'Zhizn' zadarom' (Granovskii, lyrics by Elin) and has an ambiguous title. It seems most likely that the song is about musicians and music-making in the West, since it concerns putting a price on everything, therefore capitalism, an idea associated with 'the West' in Soviet Russia.³⁷¹

The verses explain scenarios in which something is done for free and someone else profits from it and the last line, also repeated partway through the instrumental after the last chorus, 'жизнь он отдал задаром', makes it clear that this, selling out and becoming commercialised, is a negative way to live. There is a lot of repetition in the song: in the first two verses, the third and fourth lines are repeated and the first and second line are almost identical. The chorus is two identical lines of three words followed by a wordless vocalisation, and that constant repetition of 'Все заслонила цена' reinforces the song's negativity. In fact, 'Vse zaslonila tsena' was the song's original title.³⁷²

The song also alludes to authenticity, one of the most important tropes in heavy metal music. 'Zhizn' zadarom' can be interpreted as offering an anti-commercial message in a similar way to its anti-capitalist direction, thus seeking to establish the song's, and by extension the band's, authenticity. The chorus, however, suggests that nothing is truly free and so offers a note of

³⁷¹ Yurchak, *Everything*, p. 7.

³⁷² Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 28.

caution in claiming authenticity must be wholly non-commercial. This may stem from the ambiguities of the late Soviet system and the way in which musicians' careers could take shape, since it was entirely possible to be successful while being non-commercial given Soviet cost of living was so low, especially if a band considered the measure of its success to be simply the ability to continue making the music it wanted. In this way the song, especially the last verse, is about a musician, or other artist, selling out to a manager or similar and losing his 'ум, красота и талант'. As Igor' Romanov experienced during his time as part of an official group, becoming professional meant compromising on 'ум, красота и талант' and tarnishing the status of the professional musician.

After the second chorus the last line is repeated, although after the guitar solo only the final 'wo-o-o-oah' vocal construction part of the chorus is repeated. 'Zhizn' zadarom' is somewhat less heavy and bass-driven than the other songs on *Maniia velichiiia*, sitting somewhere between hard rock and heavy metal: the guitar solo is relatively short, and while all the classic instrument markers of heavy metal are present, the song does not have as much power. The driving introduction is not prominent once the singing starts, even in the instrumental sections, and the end has a brief section of wailing guitar, increasing in pitch and reminiscent of the chorus' vocal construction. 'Zhizn zadarom' almost fades into insignificance, much like the musician who sold out.

The next track, 'Mechty' (Kipelov, lyrics by Elin), is a slow, bass guitar-driven mournful dirge in the minor key, reminiscent of Black Sabbath's 'Black

Sabbath' from the album of the same name. The guitar solo is relatively short and continues the mourning, hopeless sound with no respite. 'Mechty' would not be out of place on any metal band's repertoire because the subject matter is fitting for the depressive side of heavy metal music and culture: fans have described it as a love song which, in the context of heavy metal music, is quite accurate.³⁷³ The lyrics blame dreams for giving hope to the song's second-person female addressee, who is alone and tired of her situation. In the context in which these lyrics were written, phrases including 'надежда иллюзорная', 'жизнь идет где-то за стеною', and 'Ты устала быть рабой' carry more weight than they would outside regimes which seek to control their society. 'Mechty' is about fighting against that oppression but instead the dreams, in the sense of ambitions, are in the wrong and are a 'надежда иллюзорная', although the last verse reiterating that the addressee has already tried to be 'жестокая', 'прозрачной словно лед, / Недоступной и далекой / И живущей без забот', so ignoring the problem has not worked either.

There is no clue as to who this female might be. It could be an actual or imagined woman, a representative of the female population or a friend. It might also be an object or abstract noun: *strana* is feminine, and Russians refer to Russia as *Mat' Rossiia*. *Rodina* (also as *Rodina-mat'*) and *otchizina* (cf. *otechestvo*) are also feminine. As well as *mechta*, also referenced in the song are *zabota*, *zhizn'* and *nadezhda*: this latter term is also a female name, but it seems unlikely the female subject is simply a woman called Nadezhda, as that would not be in keeping with the long Russian tradition of layering metaphor

³⁷³ Aria fan, interview.

into poetry. It is most likely that the subject is left deliberately anonymous so the listener can make their own interpretation of the song. Similarly, the master of her slavery is not revealed either, leaving the identity or nature of the oppressor open to interpretation. As in the opening song, 'Eto rok', this open subject leaves the song relevant to a wide range of listeners, so they can bring their own experiences to bear, be it a ballad for a lost lover or a lament for the state of one's country.

As in 'Volunter', in 'Mechty', one line is sung differently to its written version. Kipelov sings 'сейчас' in place of 'опять' in the first rendition of the chorus: this, again, is not reflected in the lyrics published on the website. The performed version gives a sense of time to the song, that this situation is ongoing and not just a one-off disappointment. It also signals a starting point, telling us that life has not always been this way. This makes more sense than starting with 'опять', and provides a reason for the hope and *mechty*: a way to return to the past before the start of the song, to a time when she was not a slave.

More ambiguity can be found in the final track, 'Pozadi Amerika' (Kholstinin, Granovskii and Pokrovskii, lyrics by Elin). The whole song appears to be an anti-Western track, until the last line of the second and final verse:

Он понял круиз - опасный каприз
В дороге любой случится сюрприз
Злой бурей сорвется ласковый бриз

И сложно порою с выдачей виз

The last line of this verse, which appears just before halfway through the song, is far from a simple rhyme and, while not strongly anti-Soviet, is certainly not pro-Soviet. As in 'Mechty', any hope for change is seen as pointless, as the current state system gets in the way. In fact, the places that are 'позади' in the song have all been passed by the subject, a male reading a travel magazine at bedtime. The track's original title of 'Vokrug sveta za 20 minut' is, indeed, much more descriptive.³⁷⁴ *Vokrug sveta* is, in fact, the title of a Russian geographic magazine that has been published since 1861 and was an important source of information about the world outside the USSR during the Soviet period.³⁷⁵

The lack of ability to travel freely as a Soviet citizen, exemplified by the necessity to not only obtain visas to enter foreign countries but also to obtain the 'foreign' passport required to leave the Soviet Union, meant that this cruise was very much restricted to the mind's eye of the reader.³⁷⁶ Foreign travel, especially outside of the Eastern Bloc and other allies of the Soviet Union, was off-limits to most ordinary citizens and even those citizens who were allowed to go abroad had to endure months of bureaucracy at the offices of numerous state departments.³⁷⁷ This places 'Pozadi Amerika' in a much more specific

³⁷⁴ Troi, Troegubov and Pushkina, *Ariia*, p. 28.

³⁷⁵ See <http://www.vokrugsveta.ru>.

³⁷⁶ Anne E. Gorsuch, *All This is Your World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 81-82.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

context than ‘Mechty’, especially with the repercussions for not following the rules about foreign travel highlighted as a caution in the last verse.

The foreign places mentioned on the tour are all outside the Soviet Union too, but not all are outside of authoritarian regimes: Singapore is considered to have been under authoritarian rule since the People’s Alliance Party won every election (either outright or as the majority party) since 1959.³⁷⁸ Hanoi is the capital of Communist Vietnam, one of the Soviet Union’s allies and heavily financially supported by the latter during the 1980s.³⁷⁹ Antarctica has been the site of Russian research bases since 1956.³⁸⁰ It is unlikely that Elin was thinking of these places specifically because of these contexts when he wrote these lines, and much more likely he was thinking of exotic locations, especially as all the other places listed are in Western or Westernised capitalist states or entirely non-socialist areas. Indeed, all of the places mentioned are far away ideologically or physically from the USSR specifically and, as such, ‘Pozadi Amerika’ is neither pro- nor anti-Soviet, but is much less ambiguous in its context within an oppressive regime than any of the other tracks.

Musically, the song has been compared to Scorpions’ output.³⁸¹ This track falls firmly into the heavy metal genre, starting with the sound of metal being struck, likely to be simply an effect created using the drumkit’s cymbals,

³⁷⁸ BBC Monitoring, ‘QandA: Singapore Elections’, *BBC News*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4976536.stm> [last accessed 28/06/2017].

³⁷⁹ Gaidar, *Collapse*, p. 146.

³⁸⁰ Danilov, Aleksandr, Valerii Lukin, Sergei Baliasnikov, ‘50 let otechestvennykh issledovaniy v Antarktide’, *Arkticheskii i antarkticheskii nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut*, <http://www.aari.ru/Antarctic50th/RusInAntarcticaReview.html> [last accessed 28/06/2017].

³⁸¹ ‘kluseba’, *Where*; ‘naverhtrad’, *Velichie – ne bredovoe*, https://www.metal-archives.com/reviews/Ария/Мания_величия/1088/ [last accessed 22/07/2017].

before the bass guitar starts driving and rhythm guitar comes in. The vocal line, though, seems at odds with the other instruments during the verse, the voice calm and melodic against the harsh and distorted guitar and drums, much more so than in the rest of the album's tracks. The voice is counterpointed by the rhythm guitar during the verses too, just as in the opening song 'Eto Rok': when Kipelov sings, it is quiet, but when the vocalist pauses, Kholstinin semi-echoes the line. When Kipelov sings the last 'Позади Америка', the other instruments stop playing, so the song, and by extension the album, ends quite abruptly, which is unusual compared to the other album tracks but normal for metal songs which use sudden endings to control their space.³⁸² The bass and guitar end on the last beat of 'Перед ним весь мир' and the guitar winds up into a screaming chord on the first syllable of 'позади', before the voice finishes, with its echo lingering a fraction of a second longer. The guitar solo is disorderly but organises itself briefly before descending into chaos again, regrouping just before a reprise of the chorus. This chaos reflects the jumping about of the virtual traveller from Australia to Europe and then Antarctica.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about 'Pozadi Amerika', given its shocking sounding title, is the simple banality of the lyrics. This has not endeared the song to fans, who variously describe the lyrics as 'глуповатые', 'прямо дурацкие', 'несуразные', 'Soviet' and 'communistic' propaganda, and simply 'silly'.³⁸³ How much of this is merely to get the song past the censor is

³⁸² Walser, *Running*, p. 149.

³⁸³ 'Featus'; 'Metaloleg'; 'Domilition'; all available at <http://www.darkside.ru/album/3534/> [last accessed 03/03/2015]; 'navertrahd', *Velichie*; 'TitaniumNK', *Aria Kicking Ass – the Beginning*; 'natriX', *The First Russian Heavy Metal Album*, all available at https://www.metal-archives.com/reviews/Ария/Мания_величия/1088/ [last accessed 01/08/2017].

unclear, but the ordinariness is wholly at odds with the music, described by many of the same fans as ‘просто отличная’, ‘хорошо выражена’, ‘upbeat’ and ‘incredibly progressive’.³⁸⁴ One fan raves about it:

This track has a vision and it is the most unique song on the whole record. This simply already sounds like nothing else I have ever heard in its whole structure. It is incredible that such a young band in such an isolated country creates such a visionary masterpiece. In only about five minutes, the band puts more ideas than so called progressive metal bands would put in ten minute epics. I really wasn't prepared for that surprise.³⁸⁵

The opposed opinions on this one song echo the opposed opinions about heavy metal generally, and reinforce the idea that metal, like other music, is subjective and means very different things to different people. ‘Pozadi Amerika’ is at once a progressive masterpiece and a stupid piece of propaganda.

Conclusion to chapter four

The apathy, hopelessness, and sheer banality of the lyrics in the whole of *Maniia velichiia* draw on the apathy of Soviet youth, their disillusionment with the system expressed against a background of distorted sound, designed to

³⁸⁴ ‘Featus’; Tulupov; ‘navertrahd’, *Velichie*; ‘Titanium NK’, *Aria*.

³⁸⁵ ‘kluseba’, *Where*.

shock and awe but with a trite message about nothing more exciting than the risks of selling out or the deadly trials of a foreign entertainer. It also contains warnings in the form of retribution against people with ideas above their station and those volunteering for dirty work. Paradoxes are exposed in ambiguous titles and juxtaposition of incongruous instruments, as well as lyrics and music which have opposing meanings, while hope for change is swallowed in chaotic arrangements or nullified by the distance of the subject, historically or spatially. The minor key is prevalent among the tracks and, along with the tendency of the songs to fade, offers no comfort to the listener anxious for meaning.

Except that there is meaning. The fact that the songs are full of pointlessness highlights the lack of meaning in everyday life in the late Soviet period for Soviet youth, the lack of opportunities and the dearth of anything interesting. Only in existing *vnye* did much of the youth find meaning and interest in their lives, and *Maniia velichiia* reinforces that, because there is very little of interest directly in the lyrics: all the excitement is in the music which plays enthusiastically while the lyrics fade into apathy.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored how heavy metal came into and interacted with the cultural policy of the Soviet Union. Heavy metal was formed in the West during the Cold War period of détente and used the uncertainty and tension of this period to explore local and global problems facing youth. Metal music and culture then spread around the world, the problems it explored being relevant to many cultures and, where there were other, more important problems, these were added to the mix and replaced aspects that were unimportant. This globalisation and glocalisation of the music has led to different aspects of the music and culture being taken up or discarded by the local fans and artists as they search for their own local meaning. In Nepal, for example, clean vocals and high volume are associated with traditional music so local bands who aim to be transgressive sing in growled vocals: volume is a key definition of the metal code and cannot be compromised. Metal is more traditionally transgressive in the Soviet and East German context but also more so because it was underground, unofficial music which could hope to be, at best, ignored by the state.

The West was not a metal paradise, however: the PMRC and its allies successfully lobbied for labelling of records with explicit lyrics in the USA. These conservative groups were unsuccessful, though, in attempting to do worse by taking bands to court over lyrics which supposedly promoted violence, sexual perversion, or suicide. By only looking at the lyrics they, in fact, ignored the majority of the song, because in heavy metal lyrics are merely

part of the vocal line which occupies the same sonic space as the rhythm guitar, in opposition to the space inhabited by the drums and bass guitar. This means that a multifaceted approach must be taken even when focussing on lyrics.

Fans, on the other hand, are unlikely to focus on the lyrics: in contrast to most scholars and critics, fans rarely understand what lyrics mean although they may know all the words to their favourite bands' songs. That does not mean that fans have nothing meaningful to say about heavy metal music, especially since lyrics should not be foregrounded, but fan sources should additionally not be used in isolation due to their tendency to mythologise their metal gods.

Terminology is another problematic area: as well as studying this album in a foreign language, metal music and culture itself has a large grey area concerning not only what belongs to the culture but also how it is expressed, and mainstream media have tended to simply refer to it as 'rock'. This is why the inclusion of metal as a part of rock instead of as a separate entity in the scholarship of Russian rock is not very surprising but, as it has been tackled in other global settings already, the near-dearth of the subject is a little unexpected. The growth of Russian rock, though, mirrors that of metal in nations other than the UK and USA, in that it was first copied, then translated and finally original music was created. Metal started in Russia in a similar way to the origin nations and so grew out of Russian rock instead of following the usual pattern. This means that much of the terminology that applies to Russian rock in the context of the scholarship also applies to Russian metal as Russian rock is treated as a semi-homogenous entity and not split into its constituent (sub)genres in any depth. Aria, too, had a very different foundation: unlike

most contemporary Russian bands its members were part of an official band but managed to perform heavy metal music under the guise of this VIA as a sort of side project. This avoided the local crackdown in Moscow of unofficial bands which either broke up or severely limited the output of many other rock and metal groups until Gorbachev's cultural reforms took hold in 1986.

Aria's status as an unofficial band with professional members poses some interesting questions regarding authenticity. Authenticity is a key component of rock music and is even more important in metal music, and is usually explained in terms of commercialism. In Soviet society, however, there was no commercial status to aspire to which has led at least one scholar to argue that socialist rock is automatically more authentic than capitalist music. In fact, the situation is more nuanced: no commercialism means that other signifiers of authenticity that would usually either themselves be tied to commercialism or play a much lesser role to commercialism become more powerful. The opposed official and unofficial status of bands as well as the professional and amateur status of musicians, which as we have seen in the case of Aria do not necessarily sit together, leads to a world which exists in conjunction with but, at the same time, completely separate to the Soviet world: the world *vnye*.

Existing *vnye* was neither a prerequisite nor a guarantor of authenticity in the Russian rock (and, by extension, metal) culture but it was a route to meaningful music, which became the main differentiator between authentic and inauthentic music in the Soviet context. While it is true that authenticity generally does constitute meaningfulness, this aspect is usually tied up in commercialism, as commercial music is deemed to be meaningless. Other aspects which became

more influential included honesty and being true to the music, the latter of which metal bands Chernyi Kofe and Kruiz failed at because of their change in style away from heavy metal to music that was more acceptable to Soviet society. This attempt to become professional and official is not the same as Igor' Romanov's professional status: Chernyi Kofe and Kruiz changed their style away from meaningful music and made too many compromises, whereas Romanov made only the compromises he needed to in order to be able to play metal music, which was eventually possible within the band he was part of. It was an unfortunate situation that the technology required to make metal music was unavailable outside of the official realm. Romanov also achieved a kind of authenticity in becoming professional too: he was able to make music for a living, and so did not need to take another job in order to avoid the risk of being sent to prison for parasitism, and having only 'musician' in his workbook meant he was unblemished by the 'real' world.

One final aspect of authenticity concerns language: in conventional metal culture there is no requirement regarding language, although in non-Anglophone cultures using English can be seen as aspiring to commercial success as well as sometimes being an act of transgression. In Russian rock and metal, English had already been used in the copying stage as part of Russian rock's development and so the culture had already experienced English in a transgressive manner; indeed, when Russian language was first used it was deemed too Soviet to be authentic. This changed as Russian rock music became more sophisticated and English became an impediment to understanding the lyrics, which had become foregrounded in Russian rock.

Russian metal, too, experienced the same poetic focus on lyrics by choosing a style of metal which suited clean, well-sung vocals, with Aria itself taking elements from NWOBHM and classic metal and applying Russian lyrics written by rock poets.

The album *Maniia velichiia* is a strong example of the NWOBHM, especially Iron Maiden, influence in Aria's music. Not only does the music have many of the same expressions and sounds, but also the lyric themes are congruent with the Western style. The most striking thing about the lyrics is their banality, where everyday occurrences and language are set to a driving heavy metal sound. This is not unusual for heavy metal generally, as long as the main topic is related to heavy metal's themes in some way, but taking the ordinariness too far as in much of the VIA output is inappropriate. Another common theme is hopelessness, which ties in with the banal lyrics in pointing out something which is undesirable but then not proposing how to change it. This is a common theme in heavy metal generally and was well-suited to late Soviet culture, as there were many things to complain about but no real way to change them. Another prevalent theme in heavy metal and in late Soviet culture is being anti-war: this is the main theme of the first song on the album and also features in most of the others in some way. Themes of power, especially over nature or gods, and retribution are also explored. Aria uses juxtaposition of musical instruments and rhythms and ambiguous titles and lyrics to create uncertainty and discord to investigate these themes in an exciting and powerful way. The banal lyrics, if taken on their own, would simply highlight the uninteresting nature of late Soviet society for the contemporary youth, but

when coupled with the driving, exciting music, the whole package provides an escape into *vnye* where *metallisty* belong.

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