

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

"REAWAKENING PRIDE ONCE LOST":
INDIGENEITY AND EUROPEAN FOLK METAL

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty
of Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Middletown, Connecticut

May, 2000

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CD Tracklist

<u>Track</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Duration</u>
1	13 and 19	Clash of the Elder	1.30
2	18	Out of Ginungagap	0.39
3	21	Pagan Prayer (opening)	1.04
4	22	Pagan Prayer (fiddle tune)	0.24
5	28	My Kantele	2.18
6	31	Cares	1.22
7	32	Galderbesjungen	0.30
8	33	Lövjerskan	1.10
9	35	High Reel	0.22
10	36	Dearg Doom	0.53
11	38	Beneath a Bronze Sky	0.50
12	40a	Maeves March	3.31
13	40b	King of the Faeries	1.06
14	41a	To Invoke the Horned God 1 (Danny Abs Slide)	0.48
15	42	To Invoke the Horned God 2 (opening)	1.02
16	43a	Wodnesuno	0.53
17	44	Sigorleo_	1.34
18	45	Samhain	1.36
19		Brian Boru	1.08

Introduction

My task here is a compromise. Heavy metal is a genre I have listened to as a fan for seventeen years, and it would be easy enough to follow the path set by Robert Walser and Deena Weinstein and examine the development of metal communities in the U.S. Instead I have chosen a geographically distant sub-genre of black metal which, though not my initial intent, lends some objective distance. The very globality of black metal makes me as much a part of its community as of the local.

Utilizing the Internet, fanzines, newsgroups, and interviews – some at a distance, some face-to-face – I hope to draw the picture of a sub-class of black metal that makes constant allusion to “the folk” as a connotative concept. Tentatively called folk metal, this is a sub-genre of heavy metal that incorporates instruments, melodies, and texts commonly associated with folk life or folklore. Each practitioner within this style adopts and adapts different aspects of “the folk” in an attempt to reinvigorate “ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b: 39). What is of primary interest is not just what materials are used and how they are incorporated, but what messages the musicians hope to encode by using folk texts.

In this study, then, I intend to focus on the production and product of folk metal. As such, the primary focus is on bands and their music. Whether or not messages are interpreted in the intended way, musicians produce meaning by producing music. Intentionality, however, is a tricky premise. As Stuart Hall has shown, nothing is natural about communication; messages have to be

constructed, or "encoded," before they can be sent. This is an active and interpretive social event and as such messages received, or "decoded," are subject to distortion or misinterpretation.

Misinterpretation, however, cannot be endless. Communication systems construct codes already known to the sender and receiver which encode language in advance, limiting the amount of distortion that can occur. This presents a slight contradiction by maintaining that messages are open to variable readings but equally asserting that the codes used are so conventionalized as to make it unlikely that one reading will differ markedly from another. The result is a system of cultural codes that does not irresistibly impose meaning but rather determines a preferred reading.

It is these meanings that I endeavor to identify, intended by the bands whether or not they are "properly" interpreted by the audience. In doing so I will outline Bakhtin's chronotope, which I will then counterpose against Viggo Vestel's idea of "imaginary places."

Both of these – the chronotope, and the imaginary place – exist in contrast to "real" and "imagined" places. The former can be understood as inhabitable space – a bar, a sports arena, a classroom, a kitchen – in the past, present, or future. An imagined place exists when someone thinks of such a place. Imaginary places, on the other hand, are those that cannot be reasonably believed capable of holding a physical presence. Similarly, a chronotope is a simultaneous "hereness"- "thereness" where hereness is understood by its spatiality and thereness by its virtuality.

Fans remain an important part of the musical dialogue but band intentions, especially in heavy metal, have been all but ignored in scholarly work. Robert Walser (1993) and Deena Weinstein (1991) have both concerned themselves with how its fans read the music, but fan literature is far more likely to concern itself with what a band was trying to accomplish on a specific album. It is common, for example, for 'zines and biographies to treat intentionality. For example, in an interview in *Masterful Maga'zine*, Frode Glesnes of the band Einherjer says the group "needed to release a heavy metal album with the whole Viking package: choirs, folk arrangements, and clean vocals. [*Odin Owns Ye All* (1998)] has all that" (quoted in Hilarowicz).

Essentially these bands are playing with heritage, or what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1995) calls "the transvaluation of the obsolete, the mistaken, the outmoded, the dead, and the defunct" (369). It is a way of producing hereness signified by now and transporting the listener to thereness signified by then.

Chapter 1 opens with an exploration of genre formation and differentiation. I separate popular and folk music and discuss how semiotic clashes can be resolved within heavy metal, which has at times been considered part of both. I then move into a brief delineation of how black metal works in space, that is to say how and where its community exists. The chapter concludes with an introduction to Bakhtin's chronotope and a brief discussion about the Internet as a site for research of community formation, a topic that will be revisited at more length in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2 briefly outlines the development of black metal from within the related styles of thrash and speed metal in the early 1980s to its fetishization of Satan and eventual fragmentation into trans-historical paganism. For many "purist" black metallers, this latter move disqualifies a band as "black," placing it instead beneath a variety of other modifiers: pagan, Viking, troll, forest, and the like. I will argue that, from a musical standpoint, such a move is unnecessary.

Chapters 3 through 5 each deal with specific treatments of black-cum-folk metal. Viking metal, which I address in chapter 3, is much less concerned with traditional aural materials like instruments and melodies. Instead, Viking bands limit themselves mainly to the use of Norse mythology as a textual source, which they often augment with stylized shanty-like melodies that are meant to evoke apropos images.

Chapter 4 examines three Scandinavian bands as case studies of processual methodology in the creation of folk metal. Norway's Hades uses no traditional material and draw textual ideas from mythology only indirectly, but they are able to elicit a folk-like quality by including fiddles, mouth harp, and even traditional Norwegian tunings within quasi-traditional song structures. Finland's Amorphis developed a style based largely around the dominant use of lyrics taken from the *Kalevala*, a collection of Finnish epic poetry that has seemingly achieved the status of national epic. They have also incorporated indigenous songs and popular Finnish forms like the humppa into their music. Sweden's Otyg has eschewed the use of folk tunes, but compose melodies strongly influenced by local dance forms and lyrics based on Scandinavian folklore.

Chapter 5 uses the compositional methods outlined in the previous chapter to explore folk metal in Ireland and the England, where it has achieved what I consider to be the most successfully integrated style. It is here that bands first developed a musical language using folklore, mythology, melody, instrumentation, and language together without sparking an overwhelming feeling of disjointed superimposition.

Chapter 6 examines the metal community as a virtual community linked by various electronic media. Here I suggest that the Internet makes a global community possible where a local folk metal scene simply is not viable. By means of a variety of methods, metallers are able to create and maintain relationships of varying intimacy across nations.

What will become clear is how folk metal, often in spite of itself, violates many of the semiotic codes that have defined heavy metal for three decades while remaining identifiably within its orbit. However its fans or detractors may interpret it, it continues to be produced by an increasing number of bands across an ever-widening geographic space. As such, it is clear that folk metal has had a meaningful impact upon the black metal scene that has yet to be measured.

I owe many thanks to the musicians and fans that have allowed me to interview them, several of them giving more of themselves than I could have reasonably expected. Among these are John and Keith O Fathaigh of Cruachan, Deorth of Ragnarok (UK), and Alan Nemtheanga Averill of Primordial. Daniel Fredriksson not only gave me valuable information as a member of Otyg, but he

was also of great assistance as an editor wearing his other hat as an ethnomusicologist. Fellow band member Vintersorg was equally kind with his time and resources, not only introducing me his solo work but also sending me a promotional copy of *Sangovindars Boning* before its official release. Pasi Koskinen and Olli-Pekka Laine were able to take time out of their busy travel schedule to meet with me between isolated concert dates in New Jersey and Mexico City.

I also owe a special debt to Thomas Bossius and Kelly Boyle. Thomas, a graduate student studying with Krister Malm, discussed black metal with me at length and happily critiqued my work as it progressed. Kelly assisted me with translations from Irish to English, despite the myriad pressures of being a first year Master's candidate. All other translations are my own.

Making Places and Using Genres

It is quite common to find folk melodies used within the context of art music. Brahms's *Hungarian Dances* and Liszt's *Rhapsodies* stand as two obvious examples – as do the works of Sibelius, Kodaly, and Bartok – but this type of borrowing has a much longer history and can be traced with certitude even as far back as the numerous appropriations of the French song *L'Homme Armé* in a variety of mass settings. Travel on the road of musical borrowing has never been one way, however, and there exist a variety of examples of folk and popular uses of classical texts, including rural Hungarian bagpipe melodies adapted from Erkel's opera *Hunyadi László* (Maróthy 19) and the soloistic quoting of Mozart in Spinal Tap's satirical "Big Bottom."

This kind of musical cross-fertilization is well known in popular music. Elvis Presley's "Love me Tender," for example, was based on the antebellum melody "Aura Lee" and Pepsi-Cola's "...Hits the Spot" jingle was lifted from Scotland's "The Border Rant" (Cantrick 101-102). More recently, Ireland's Thin Lizzy, Horslips, and The Corrs recorded versions of traditional tunes in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s respectively. Simultaneously, there has been a movement within heavy metal – a sub-genre of rock – to incorporate classical and folk elements within their music.

What follows is about heavy metal. Specifically, it treats those bands, primarily of the last ten years, who use folk materials or otherwise elicit "the folk," musically, textually, or visually. It should be noted that this is not an attempt to

valorize or legitimize the genre by demonstrating its musicality or compositional savvy. Instead, I am seeking to uncover what this music communicates – or attempts to communicate – to its audience.

Robert Cantrick wrote nearly forty years ago that,

Evidence [of folk appropriations in popular music] obviously breaks down any supposed distinctions between the popular music of the twentieth century...and older times. It also demonstrates the futility of trying to raise barriers between folk, popular, and jazz music.... We are apt to conclude that writers who attempt to divide popular music into warring sects cannot be taken very seriously. (101, 103)

It is indeed tempting to dismiss such critiques, but value yet exists in general divisions within music culture, as genres remain a helpful tool, “not so much to classify as to *clarify traditions and affinities*” (Frye 247-248, italics added).

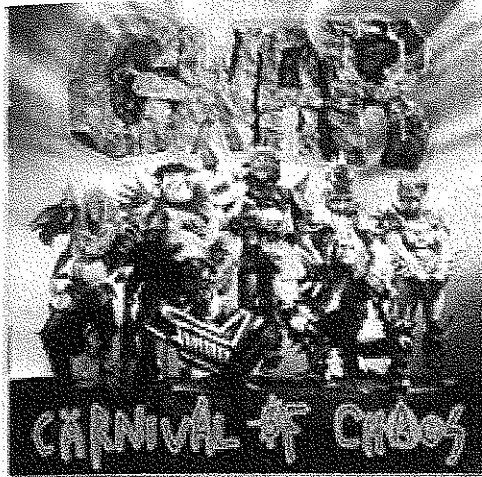
Defining a Genre

We mark musical boundaries through difference and similarity, aural as well as visual. Since music is an affective text, it tends to be categorized by the similarity of responses elicited. As an example, examine the album covers pictured on the following page (illus. 1-2). Without any prior knowledge of either band, a viewer would be wont to classify them together when compared to the cover of an Amy Grant or a Burt Bacharach record. A viewer with general knowledge of genre classifications might well infer that both fall within the boundaries of what is termed heavy metal.

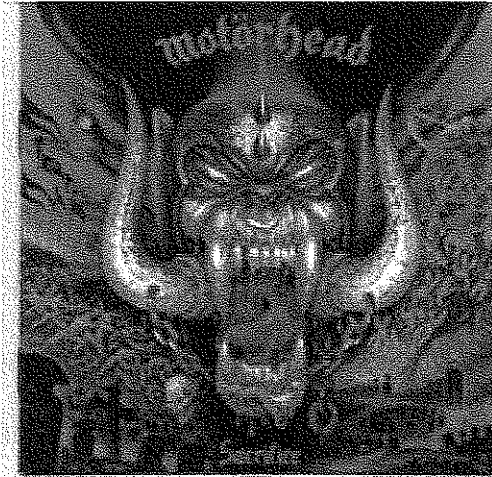
In fact, the first album contains a song entitled “Sex Cow” that might best be called a hoe-down, and Lemmy Kilmister has said of his band, Motörhead, that “we don’t do heavy metal, we don’t do punk, we don’t do speed, black,

doom, or scrap metal. Molten metal, home-baked cornbread metal" (in Jancik and Lathrop 196).

illus. 1



illus. 2



The point is that genre classification serves a functional purpose of which bands and fans are all cognizant. They work commercially to "draw on expectations of consumers by appealing to conventional generic codes" (Gunn 35). But genres do not sell music, but rather a set of verbal and visual codes that cue viewers into anticipating a very specific something. Genres become adjectives with which bands can be described.

Though genre formation has not received the scholarly attention that they might deserve, Franco Fabbri has theorized five rules for how they typically work (see Frith 1996: 91-93). The first rule broadly covers formal and technical codes that include playing conventions, instrument choice, production quality, and melodic-rhythmic considerations. Then come the semiotic rules, that is to say how the music works rhetorically. How meaning is conveyed and how the performers interact with the audience are of primary concern here.

Behavior rules suggest how musicians and fans act in public. What gestures do band members use to display their skills and how do they portray themselves in interviews, press photos, and other verbal-visual media? What is the appropriate way for a fan to listen and respond to a recording? The ideological codes delineate the relationships between the genre community and the community at large and embody what the music stands for as a social force. Finally, commercial rules define production beyond simple aesthetics, intellectual ownership, and community building on the mediated level – how events happen, how live performance is viewed against recordings, and how recordings are made and promoted.

Given that critical classification into genres is necessarily inevitable, what happens when a band violates genre codes by including stylistic deviancies or denying classification entirely? Effectively *nothing* happens in the latter case. Though many bands may balk at being categorized as “punk,” “gothic,” “metal,” or any number of other things, audiences and critics continue tagging bands for comparative purposes.

Since musical categories set up expectations in the listener, disappointments are inevitable when those expectations are met too precisely or not met at all, so in the case of stylistic deviance, a genre will either fail or sub-divide. Failure results when codes become too restrictive. Division occurs when stylistic transgressions become systematized (Frith 1996: 94). Thomas Gencarelli echoes this assessment when he writes that changes in style imply that the older styles no longer work and can be precipitated by concomitant changes in social

structure (Gencarelli 21). Furthermore, these changes can be controversial if they expose inconsistencies, discrepancies, or contradictions in the existing code.

The basic problem with genre classifications is that as functional representations of a collection of musical works they must necessarily exclude sounds that are potentially meaningful. They act as a "linguistic filters" that isolate texts from music's very fluidity (Gunn 34).

Folk vs. Popular: a genre distinction

Any discussion of cross-genre fertilization must first define what the genres in question are. At first glance, the categories of "folk" and "popular" seem self-evident, and in fact the definitions used hereafter will closely parallel the common, connotative distinctions.

To begin with the terms "popular" and "pop," John Blacking, drawing from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, writes that popular music does not attempt "to appeal to refined or classical taste," and it must be noted that this definition is often thought to include folk music. He concludes that pop and folk music are often seen as degenerations of or crude or failed attempts at art music (Blacking 11, 12).

Peter Manuel offers a much more exacting definition of western pop, listing seven primary features: 1) it is primarily urban in provenance and audience, 2) it is performed by crudely trained professionals without an intellectual view of their output, 3) it is related to the cultural art music, but of a

lesser sophistication, 4) it is diffused through the mass media, 5) it is secular, 6) its "star system" weaves "an aura of glamour" around its celebrities, and 7) it is characterized by high repertoire turnover, which is to say that the newest songs are given ontological priority over older releases (Manuel 2-3).

In his book *Reclamations*, Abbs suggests contrariwise that what is commonly called "popular culture" really exists only as "mass culture." As such, it cannot properly be called popular since "unlike traditional folk culture (which it often seeks to simulate) mass culture is not made by the populace, nor does it generally express the authentic experience of a particular people" (53).

The problems intrinsic to any of the above definitions should be evident. Abbs' "authentic experience" is indefinable and whether or not the music is "made by the populace," people nevertheless consume it. It must therefore fulfill some "authentic" need or desire. The definition mentioned by Blacking, though he does not claim it as his own, suggests that there is no art or skill in producing pop music, nor is there any edification to be had by using it. We need not even go so far back as Irving Berlin to demonstrate that there can be art in the popular, but he serves as an excellent example.

Manuel's definition can be dissected just as readily, but three points are of special interest in regards to folk metal. It must be noted at once that "it is not metallers from [the cities] who make 'folky' black metal, it's people from the country-side and often from the parts...where the folk music movement is strong" (Thomas Bossius, pc). It is also not wholly secular. Many folk and Viking metal bands have a discernible tint of religiosity to their music, typically pagan, and

many musicians place religious significance on their music (see my discussion of Deorth and Ragnarok in chapter 5, see also Moynihan and Söderlind 1998). Finally, it is certainly not played with crudity or without skill. Of all western popular music genres, metal is perhaps the one that prides itself most on its virtuosity.

Ultimately, for the purpose at hand, "pop music" will largely be defined as a conglomeration of the music typically found in the Billboard rock and pop charts and played on MTV and radio stations like WAAF in Boston and KROC in New York City – though it will be admitted that listeners of the latter two would more commonly define their listening habits as "rock" or "alternative."

"Folk music" is manifestly more difficult to define. It is often considered to stand outside the corporate economy. Bob Dylan, for example, is often perceived as a folk musician, even though his label aggressively marketed him (Gracyk 9). There also exists an aesthetic of blurred lines between artist and fan which leads to a profusion of amateur groups (Weinstein 1991: 95). It is frequently presented as a prioritized "other" against which popular music is negatively contrasted (Middleton 1990: 129).

Along with this go the ideas often attached to traditional or ethnic music. Here "the people" make folk music for themselves, without any connections to the market. In the west, this definition folk music commonly elicits images of Irish fiddlers playing at the local pub for a pint or Kentucky hootenannies in a neighbor's barn. And this is how most of the musicians with whom I spoke viewed the matter. This is not to imply that there exists in this definition a sense

of backwoods, inbred yokels; rather it is to suggest that folk music is seen as something produced in the home or out among friends on a primarily amateur basis.

It is here that rock (e.g. Bruce Springsteen and Tracy Chapman) is often romanticized oppositionally to pop (e.g. Britney Spears and New Kids on the Block). Camille Paglia, for example, has written that the latter category has fallen victim to market forces and thereby lacks the folksy authenticity of the former. Live performance atrophies (as one might consider the practice of lip-synching on stage), the artist is exploited, and any authentic source is lost without a direct link to or knowledge of folk music or the blues (Paglia 19-21). Her analysis critically fails, however, because she too is working from an unstated assumption of what "folk" and "authentic" mean.

Janós Maróthy suggests perhaps the most usable description of folk practice. Folk music is making "a music of your own" from *whatever materials are available* (Maróthy 15, italics added). In other words, the indefinable quality of folk music does not sit with original melodic invention so much as with its re-interpretation. The folk musician, therefore, carries with him a fluid song idea that can be remolded in each new context. A similar characterization by Charles Seeger was set among a list of three classes of folk music (see Middleton 1990: 127-128).

Using the definitions outlined above, heavy metal certainly cannot be called "popular," excepting its brief shining moment in the years surrounding 1987. It makes neither pop nor rock charts, it receives virtually no airplay, and it

cannot be considered to be popular with large tracts of fans across broadly defined regions, and certainly folk metal fails such tests even more dramatically. It might well be called populist, with its often strict adherence to what Weinstein calls a "blue collar ethos" (Weinstein 1991: 113, but see also 113-117), but can it be called a folk music?

One argument centers on questions of authenticity, a feature considered of primary importance to many fans of heavy metal (see Weinstein 1991 and 1998, Walser 1993, Gencarelli 1993, Gracyk 1996). Lawrence Grossberg suggests that, "'authentic rock' depends on its ability to articulate private but common desires, feelings and experiences into a shared public language" (1992: 207).

Another link bridging folk authenticity to rock is identified by Karl Dallas in *The Electric Muse* (1975), where he argued that rock's quasi-oral modes of composition and dissemination, the constant variation of material, and the close ties between performer and fan make it a folk genre, if not "folk music." Gencarelli's study of metal fans in New York City (1993) adds to this quasi-folk articulation the fact that metal was created out of a sub-culture without formal training and, somewhat dubiously, that its elemental style was expanded and made vastly more complex by later thrash and death metal groups.

Weinstein, on the other hand, concludes that metal cannot be considered a folk style (1991: 95), though a folk ideal certainly permeates it. I am inclined to agree with her findings, but her study is limited to heavy metal sub-categories that existed *before* the 1990s. Black metal had not fully developed until several

years later, and there is still heated discussion in some quarters regarding the inclusion of so-called "folk metal" underneath the umbrella of black metal.

The definitions that prove most helpful are those of the folk-metallers themselves. One musician offered the very romantic ideal that folk tunes, almost the definition of authenticity in some circles, are not really ever composed, but rather "ooze" from nature. A metal musician using a folk song as source material is not perceived as "ripping off someone else;" instead he is granted being part of a chain of tradition (Daniel Fredriksson, pc).

Another told me that he feels that folk music is a part of every race. "It is the song of their ancestral homes, the earth, wind, sun and rain and, by the gift of their gods made into sound...it is the song of that people's life-force itself." In order to create his own folk music, as Maróthy suggested, he looked to where the musical glory of his ancestors was strongest: "within my own blood and bone" (Deorth, pc). Metallers wanting to be connected to these roots often make this move within their genre.

Space, Place, and Community

What is being discussed here? The simple answer "black metal" falls well short of being satisfactory. "Folk metal" is equally problematic because many of the bands interviewed simply do not care for the term. Some, like Cruachan and Enslaved, opt for describing themselves as a qualified black metal. Bands like Primordial, on the other hand, attempt to define themselves across genre categories.

Trying to define the area of study more broadly brings up a new set of difficulties. As narrowly as we might try to define these specific instances of black-cum-folk metal, "mass media" or "popular media" might be just as aptly applied, despite the above caveats against the inherent connotations of the words "mass" and "popular."

But other caveats apply. Work on mass media often proves difficult because it "violates the notion that places are containers of integrated culture" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b: 9). Indeed, how are we to place objects that refuse to stay put? What culture do we study when looking at a global product when the producer and consumer might well live thousands of miles and cultures apart?

I would suggest that in the case of heavy metal there exists a global community linked by various media. It exists as an active, self-sustaining, international community linked by fanzines, concerts, tape trading, email, and the Internet (see Gencarelli 16). In such a case, traditional fieldwork-based research falls flat in the face of a musical community without a strong, geographically placed musical scene.

Black metal in the U.S. is an excellent example of this. Personal experience has clearly demonstrated to me that a community of passionate, knowledgeable fans exists in the Northeast. Regrettably, there are few venues that would suffer a black metal show were there even bands to play. Most black metal bands are European, and though there is a fair amount of touring between the British Isles and the continent, very few bands play in the States for more than a handful of isolated shows in the bigger metropolitan areas.

The situation is compounded in areas like Scandinavia where the population is small, travel is expensive and venues are few and far between (Daniel Fredriksson, pc). Many bands, like Ireland's Primordial, simply do not play live shows for a variety of unrelated reasons. It cannot be said, under these circumstances, that a scene exists per se, but compact discs are being bought in large enough numbers to propagate the genre, which implies that a community must exist somewhere.¹ What remains to discern is whether black metal and its offshoots can comprise a musical scene or community.

Will Straw defined a musical community as a group with a relatively stable membership whose music involvement revolves around the continual exploration of one or more idioms rooted within a geographically specific historical heritage. He defines a scene as a space in which a number of practices co-exist and interact in a variety of processes, following different rates of change and cross-fertilization (1991: 373).

If a scene is defined by its geographical space, and a community by its membership, black metal cannot generally be called a scene, though there do exist musical scenes in which black metal is a part. We still find ourselves without a specific space to study, but we now have a community. Recall that Gencarelli defined the metal underground as global, linked through various media. In a community that does not or cannot include live performance, recordings and alternate means of communication become centrally important.

¹ To get a broad picture, take the bands Amorphis and Vintersorg. Amorphis typically sell 40-50,000 copies worldwide, about 20% of which are U.S. sales. Vintersorg's *Till Fjälls*, on the other hand, has only sold about 7,000 copies (HOZ at Relapse Records and Vintersorg, pc).

However, when a genre lacks the backing of major labels and distribution companies, and when sales are typically limited to the low thousands, bands do not get disseminated by old-fashioned means – small, local record stores and chain stores. Though there are a handful of specialty stores that deal exclusively in metal and related styles, sales come primarily from the multitude of mail-order companies and internet distributors, as well as direct marketing by the labels themselves (some of which are listed in appendix 2).

This makes for a community that does not necessarily exist with much face to face contact. This has led some critics to question metal's viability as a subculture. Writing of the metal culture in the 1970s, Will Straw described little hobbyist culture. He describes an affinity group devoid of the collection of obscure artifacts, the reading or producing of genre literature, or importation of rare records and development of specialty stores. Another characteristic of that period of metal was the "non-invocation of rock history or mythology in any self-conscious or genealogical sense.... As well, there was nothing to indicate that heavy metal listeners were interested in tracing roots of any musical traits back to a period preceding the emergence of [the genre]" (Straw 1993: 376, 375).

This is certainly not the case anymore, and Straw himself points out that this began to change in the evolving Los Angeles scene of the early 1980s, and though black metal has been largely unconcerned with its own heritage (often to the point of denying that one exists), black-cum-folk metal is specifically interested in heritage.

In this style of metal, bands purposively draw on their own local-ethnic identity – mythically, linguistically, musically – in an effort to link themselves and their audience with their past. What results is what Bakhtin called a “chronotope.” These chronotopes specify “a time-space nexus that helps us to understand how people make sense – make narrative – of the multiple contexts that they embody and experience” (Slobin 2000: 7). More broadly, “when people are gathered in a public space or around their loudspeakers at home, they are certainly *here*, but that *here* is an overlay of chronotopes: in the living room but in the shtetl, or in the Knitting Factory [a club in New York City], but in New Jersey fifty years ago” (Slobin 2000: 9).

Chronotopes have a way of drawing the listener into history. Once that sense of history has been invoked, black metal ceases to be merely trebly, satanic metal with growling, indiscernible vocals. As will be shown in the following chapters, some black metallers cease to consider it within their ken once “the folk” has been evoked and have devised a plethora of differentiating adjectives to precede “metal”: fairy, folk, Viking, forest, troll.

This kind of metal, and the community for which it is produced, tend towards what Harold Innis called “time-binding” culture (in Carey 160). These groups are concerned with history, continuity, and permanence and show symbolic allegiance through oral, mythopoetic, and religious symbols. The value of the oral tradition is that it cannot be so easily controlled by state or commercial concerns (Innis in Carey: 166).

Time-binding bands may lose some of their freedoms in that they remain commercially distributed. However, the various uses of folk culture can encode meanings in ways that evade common detection in much the same way that many South African protest songs encoded revolutionary messages within seemingly benign songs (Jay Pillay, pc).

This black-cum-folk metal community, then, spreads from Scandinavia to the United States and beyond via an assortment of media types. With improvements in long distance communication, community relationships drift from the local and shift horizontally. They become increasingly separated by space but remain tied by extra-local cultural centers (Innis in Carey: 162).

In Western Europe and the U.S., the Internet stands as one of the most highly accessible of these extra-local centers. However, it remains difficult to defend it as a site of difference great enough to constitute fieldwork, which is still often read as an injunction to go out in search of difference (Clifford 213). It is implied that difference must be defined in relation to the researcher, that there can still be found ethnically distinct locations that somehow retain a spatial purity. However, as Gupta and Ferguson point out, "the irony is that as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, *ideas* of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient" (1997b: 39). These ideas are worth investigating.

The people ethnographers of all types study are busily constructing their own places that are not necessarily defined only by locale. In fact, a place "is more an *event* than a *thing* to be assimilated to known categories...[place] can

be psychical as well as physical, and doubtless also cultural and historical and social" (Casey 26, 31). Space, like community, must be worked, defined, to exist as such, but there is no injunction that it must be geographically placed.

James Clifford goes so far as to suggest that Internet ethnography might well be valid and valuable research. After all, he argues, "electronic travel is...a kind of *dépaysement*" (Clifford 192), though he is not so foolish to believe that such work would be immediately acceptable to the academy. "Going out" is supposed to act as a filtering device, ferreting the native out of the ethnographer, assuring that an advocate – or worse, a fan! – is not hiding under the sheep's clothing of professionalism (Weston in Gupta and Ferguson 1997a: 169).

Even this is changing. Fieldwork is gradually incorporating other mediated means of gathering data. Susan Harding's work on Christian Fundamentalism in Lynchburg, Virginia, draws on novels, television, sermons, and other types of media in addition to the more traditional researcher/informant model (see Clifford 194). David Edwards "lurked" on an Internet newsgroup devoted to the diasporic Afghani community in Washington, D.C. Regrettably, though his Internet involvement was informative, it was not interactive; he limited his activities to reading the newsgroup without posting. Wanda Bryant (1995) devoted her entire dissertation to a study of the community building on the Internet newsgroup Folk_Music. Most recently, Matthew Smith has written about community-building strategies in online fanzines (1999).

What I am undertaking here, then, is a version of what Kamala Visweswaran calls "homework." "Being at home," she writes, "allows us to travel

in radically new ways," and it requires as much learning as unlearning (Visweswaran 113). She stresses that "the field" and "home" are interdependent, the dividing lines not always distinct, but that by studying "home" we become better able to articulate ourselves.

The Rise of Black Metal

The history of heavy metal has largely been written, though not necessarily all in one place (e.g. Bashe 1986, Walser 1993, Weinstein 1991, Miller 1988). There has also been a fair amount of research into the psyche of the "average" metalhead (e.g. Weinstein 1991, Arnett 1996, Gaines 1991, Berger 1999), all of which suggests that headbangers take great pride in knowing at least the basic historical contours of the genre.¹ The inference is that a knowledgeable fan is a serious fan.

Like rock and metal in general, black metal developed as a series of accretions to pre-existing styles. It can be said with near certainty that it existed as an identifiable genre by the time Mayhem's demo, *Pure Fucking Armageddon*, was released in 1986. Venom, the band that first used the term in any official capacity as the title of their 1982 album, is generally agreed to be the first group to be properly called "black metal." My own discussions with fans and musicians have suggested this to be the case in the United States, and Viggo Vestel's informants in an Oslo suburb have maintained the same (Vestel 10-11). A cursory survey of many web-sites dedicated to such things can serve as a further confirmation.

¹ A number of websites have been devoted to the dissemination of metal history and arcana, the best of which are: <http://www.evilmusic.com>,
<http://www.anus.com/hsc/hcl/mfaq.html>,
<http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/2308>

Excepting Venom, however, this new class of metal appears to have been imposed from without. Quorthon of Bathory offered the following explanation in a 1994 interview in the second issue of *Ultrakill*:

Look, when the first Bathory line-up got together ten years ago, we were all in our mid-teens. We didn't see ourselves as founding a movement. It just happened around us. It was the media who began to lump together ourselves, Venom, Celtic Frost and Sodom, calling us Black Metal [sic]. All we were doing was picking up on the satanic imagery as a way of rebelling against society, simple as that.

This only stands to reason, for as Joshua Gunn has pointed out, genres are an inevitable mode of understanding and exchanging musical knowledge (1999). They act as a necessary metadiscourse between participants in third order signification, where the first order is the eliciting of feeling, the second propositional understanding through the use of adjectives, and the third the exchange of ideas with others (Gunn 33, see also Barthes 90).

Early black metal was really characterized by three criteria. Perhaps most importantly, the lyrics were satanic. This characterization survives in the minds of many purists, like Møgge Hakansson of Marduk, who insist that black metal must be overtly satanic, disallowing any so-called pagan or Viking metal, even by bands that are openly anti-Christian (Bossius, pc).

Secondly, the music – though derived from speed metal – has obvious differences from speed and death metal styles.² Guitars are marked by high treble, vocals flow more melodically than the choppy phrasing of death metal

² Speed metal, which developed out of the Los Angeles metal scene in the early 1980s, is perhaps best exemplified by bands like Metallica, Megadeth, and Death. The music is characterized by breakneck tempos, often as fast as 220 beats per minute, frequent changes in tempo and meter, down-tuned instruments, and a growling, often chant-like vocal delivery. Death metal grew out of speed and differs primarily in lyrical content, which concerns itself with morbid images of death, disease, and grisly violence. There is also less stress on metrical complexity.

while continuing to share the savage cross of shrieking and grunting, musical phrases are often longer and more complex, and structures tend to be longer and less strophic than other metal of the time.

Finally, a band had to consider themselves black metal bands. "Black metal" was a term that bands originally applied to themselves. In a 1987 interview in *Kerrang!*, Abaddon of Venom reaffirmed the band's classification of itself saying, "[*Calm Before the Storm*] is still Black Metal. It's not any less loud or heavy, it's just more controlled" ("Spit and Polish" 12)

Musically, Venom's 1982 release *Black Metal* still depends heavily on the verse/refrain form of most early speed metal and remains stylistically undifferentiated from other metal bands of the period. The title track is an honorific anthem to rock of the same sort as Manowar's 1996 "The Gods Made Heavy Metal" (see ex. 1 and 2).

Ex. 1	Ex. 2
Black is the night – metal we fight Power amps set to explode Energy scream – magic in dreams Satan records their first note (Refrain) For Black metal Black metal – black metal Black metal – black metal Lay down your soul for the gods of Rock & Roll - Venom "Black Metal"	The gods made heavy metal And they saw that it was good They said to play it louder than hell And we promised that we would When losers say it's over with We know that it's a lie The gods made heavy metal And it's never gonna die -Manowar "The Gods Made Heavy Metal"

These kinds of anthems have a long history in metal, including AC/DC's "Let There Be Rock" and "For Those About to Rock (We Salute You)," Judas Priest's "Rock Forever," Saxon's "Rock the Nation," and Motörhead's "Rock 'n' Roll." In listening to the whole of Venom's output, it comes as little surprise that they would record such a song. Their oeuvre is little different form that of their contemporaries, and even Venom's textual Satanism follows the lead of Black Sabbath, who set the course of dark occultism throughout the 1970s.

Venom's brand of black metal Satanism consisted largely of hokey lyrics invoking Satan seemingly for the sheer shock value of the name. "Sons of Satan" (ex. 3), released on Venom's first album, *Welcome to Hell* (1981), is similar to "Black Metal" in that it is a call to support a movement – the black metal movement under the auspice of Venom.

Ex. 3 Put away your virtues Stop your climbing the walls Sign your name on the paper We'll have ourselves a ball It was the battle of envy You were so mighty and brave But your foolish compulsion Sent you to the grave Hell has deceived you – you were so blind Join Venom's legions – we're gonna drive you wild - Venom "Sons of Satan"	Ex. 4 Death is swift 'neath Satan's sword all the same young and old life means nothing to my lord, ha! drink from chalice warm and sweet Virgin's heart final beat lightning strikes, virgin dies Satan smiles S.A.C.R.I.F.I.C.E. The moon is black and the witches dance Heaven is denied Sacrifice – sacrifice Bring the wench to the altar priest - Venom "Sacrifice"
---	---

"Sacrifice" (ex.4), released on *Black Metal* the following year, is clearly luciferian, but musically it remains well within the set codes of other speed metal bands of the period, including Metallica and Slayer.

The real change in conceptual creation occurred in the mid-eighties when Mayhem and Bathory released two albums that can be said to have truly defined what was to become the black metal genre. It was on these albums, *Bathory* (1984) and *Pure Fucking Armageddon* (1986), that the three characteristic transgressions listed above cohered into a distinct style. Quorthon of Bathory has remarked somewhat speciously, "when we started, there were no forerunners. We had to invent everything ourselves."³

Neither Bathory nor Mayhem could stylistically be classified as speed metal; lyrically they expanded satanic themes well beyond the sophomoric imagery of Venom. Two examples amply illustrate this point (full text in Appendix 1). The first, "De Mysteriis dom Sathanas," was released in 1994 on Mayhem's first full-length album of the same name (ex. 5). It was their only full-length release to include the guitar work of Euronymous, who had been murdered the previous year by band-mate Count Grishnakh (Varg Vikernes). Though recorded well after the establishment of black metal, it stands as a genre classic. The second example, "Dies Irae" (ex. 6) comes from Bathory's 1988 *Blood, Fire, Death*. Of special interest is the acrostic formed by taking the first letter of each line (see appendix 1).

³ <http://www.cs.york.ac.uk/~gavin/bathory.html>

Ex. 5	Ex. 6
"De Mysteriis dom Sathanas"	"Dies Irae"
Welcome!	Creed of the eternal life I swore
To the elder ruins again	Held my candle of life to the void
The wind whispers beside the deep forest	Risen from the dead I death's power
Darkness will show us the way	In the name of the one with horns on head
<i>Heic noenum pax</i>	Sleep of eternity withdrawn as dark upon
Here is no peace	The life of mine drew the very end so near
The sky has darkened thirteen as we are collected woeful around a book made of human flesh	The price another life the gospel of the Horned one to spread shore to shore

Often this lyrical Satanism extended into the personas of black metallers. Varg Vikernes, bassist for Mayhem and founder of Burzum, stated his goal in the following terms:

We want to create the most possible fear, chaos and agony so that the idiotic and friendly Christian society can break down. We are overall not interested in that the truth comes through. When we spread lies we cause confusion and confusion leads to chaos and at last breaks down. People shall be oppressed and we support everything that oppresses man and takes from him his feelings as free individuals... [We spread chaos and evil] through our music. It tears apart the soul of the listener, and through it we spread death and devastation. We like that. (Horn)

Just as frequently, Satanic lyrics became tiresome to musicians and fans alike. Quoting an informant named Borivoj in the New York City scene, Thomas Gencarelli writes, "I think, for awhile, there was this whole trip with satanic lyrics, where every new band that was playing extreme metal was writing about Satan. That was a trend for awhile. Then slowly, it started dying down" (Gencarelli 219).

We might return to Quorthon here, as his creative influence in Bathory prefaces future developments in black metal. *Blood, Fire, Death* is undoubtedly a black metal album, but its first song, and instrumental entitled "Odin's Ride into

the Nordland," anticipates the direction that Quorthon was to take. Immediately after its release, Bathory recorded *Blood on Ice*, a saga-like tale of revenge wrought with the assistance of "One-Eyed Old Man" (Odin) evoking many of the motifs used in the old Norse myths. It is a great departure from Bathory's sound, both musically and lyrically, and this might well be the reason the album was not released until 1996.

In the liner notes Quorthon explains the genesis of the album and begins to delineate the origins of black metal's first new branch, Viking metal, and his words warrant quoting at length:

...I came to the personal conclusion that this whole satanic bit was a fake: a hoax created by another hoax – the Christian church, the very institution they were attempting to attack using satanic lyrics in the first place. Since I am an avid fan of history, the natural step would be to find something in history that could replace a thing like the dark side of life. And what could be more simple and natural than to pick up on the Viking era? Great era and great for metal lyrics. Being Swedish and all...I sensed I might have something.

And so the Satan and hell type of soup was changed for proud and strong Nordsmen, shiny blades of broadswords, dragon ships and party-'til-you-puke type of living up there in the great halls [sic]...an image of my ancestors not too far away from the romanticized and, to a great extent, utterly wrong image most people have of that period in time.

This conscious decision to move from Satanism to a more localized dark mythos was premised on sentiments similar to those voiced all too frequently by Vikernes: Christianity is a stranger in Scandinavia, a stranger that oppresses the natural tendencies and religion of the local people. As will be seen in the next chapter, this move created an "imaginary place" that for many inspired a new kind of nationalism. Viggo Vestel writes that this manifested itself as a "Norway for true Norwegians" mentality in which Norwegians were "white, strong, and Aryan – and of course non-Christian" (Vestel 11).

"A people or class which is cut off from its own past," writes John Berger, "is far less free to choose and to act as a people or class than one that has been able to situate itself in history" (Berger 33). This is the very premise upon which the black-cum-folk metal is based. It was the release of *Blood, Fire, Death* and the recording of *Blood on Ice* that redefined black metal not simply as Satanic, but far more broadly as pagan.

"Odin Owns Ye All":
Viking Metal in Scandinavia

On its most basic level, folk metal retained the musical characteristics of its direct antecedent but altered its thematic content to include Norse mythology, if not entirely excluding the satanic. Although Bathory was recording and releasing Viking metal by 1990, widespread incorporation of Norse themes was initially slow in coming. They are themselves aware of the problematic claim that they are even a black metal band: "People have no clue what we are to sound like on the next album because we changed every second album. Now we have touched upon black metal, death metal, Viking epic shit – whatever. There are really no stages that we didn't go through."¹

A telling example of this confusion, found in the liner notes to Abigor's *Nachthymnen* (1995), is the parenthetical note preceding the lyrics to the album's first track, "Unleashed Axe-Age." It reads "this vision should not be seen as a part of the upcoming Viking trend." The song tells of the coming of Ragnarok – the release of Fenrir, the launching of Naglfar, the cleansing fires of Surt – but here Ragnarok is used as nothing but interesting thematic material.

The remainder of the album is distinctly luciferian, as the following lyrics suggest (ex. 7-8). In fact, the final words of the liner notes again mirror words by Vikernes quoted in the last chapter: "the music of Abigor is a weapon and shall

¹ Adrian Bromley, "Questions and Queries with Quorthon," from <http://www.cs.york.ac.uk/~gavin/bathory.html>

haunt all those who try to discover something beautiful in it...And the dark spirit of Euronymous still guards all black ways."

Ex. 7 I'm the one behind the shadows Tyrant of damnation Believer in war I will build the bridge of hate To walk on pagan ways In the light of the moon - "Scars in the Landscape of God"	Ex. 8 I am Satan and Satan is me Finding myself through this experience Wash away all that ever was I obey the deepest inner instincts And gain the endless power of darkness To place the seed of evil Right in the heart of the earth - "Revealed Secrets of the Whispering Moon"
--	---

The Viking trend presaged by Abigor was actually taking place around them, and it remains more "true" to how black metal is often defined than the folk influenced metal that followed. Its folk elements are predominantly textual or musically evocative rather than musically-historically accurate. Enslaved, probably the first truly "Viking" metal band, falls largely in the former category. Grutle Kjellson, the band's singer, bass player, and primary lyricist, says of the band that "The category all depends on the lyrics...The lyrics describe the music, the music is metal, but our Viking lyrics explain how we're not black metal, so we use the term 'Viking metal.' It is not really a category, the category is metal and the Viking stuff is just something with which we've put a label on the music many years ago" (Schwartz 36).

This is not an uncommon distinction in Viking metal. In a recent interview, Frode Glesnes of the Norwegian band Einherjer said, "we've labeled our music as Viking metal since 1993, and we're not about to stop now. [Our new album] is the art of Viking metal! The lyrics are 'Viking' and the music is 'metal.' It's as

simple as that" (in Hilarowicz). When speaking of the new title, *Norwegian Native Art*, he calls it as a description of who the band is and what the band is trying to do, explaining "we are proud Norwegians performing the superior art of our genre."

Kjellson's lyrics deal almost exclusively with the coming of Christianity and the ensuing battles. "For Lenge Siden," from *Eld* (1997), is representative (ex. 9).

Ex. 9

Hymns were sung
In the times when our people were still
proud
In the long gone past
A long time ago

Then came the disease
The disease from south [sic]
Deception and false knowledge
Infected out minds

The song stands as an open denial of Christianity and a call to return to the ancient ways. The final verse concludes "we shall once again sing/hymns from ancient times/like we did in those days/a long time ago."

What is most remarkable about their earlier albums, however, is that Kjellson chose to sing lyrics in Old Norse and Old Icelandic. Though no textual credits are given, the entirety of their first full-length release, *Vikingligr Veldi* (1993), comes from saga texts. Credits within the album jacket state that "these are 'Vikingligr Veldi's' lyrics in their original language; Icelandic (except track IV, which is in ancient Norwegian)...The Icelandic lyrics are translated and edited to their full extent by Mr. [Sigvalda] Thorlakson" [sic].

Subsequent albums have each included verses taken directly from the *Elder Edda*. Given Enslaved's subject matter, an unintentionally ironic example of this is "Yggdrasil" (ex. 10), recorded on their second album, *Frost* (1994).

Ex. 10	(trans.)
Eg veit at eg hekk Pa vindalt tre Netter heile nie Med geir-odd sara Og gieven Odin Gjeven sjolv til meg sjolv Oppa det treet Som ingen veit Kvar det av rotom renn	I know that I hung in the windcold tree nine whole nights with hurt point To Odin given self given to myself in that tree which nobody knows from which roots it ran

The four stanzas of this song are the first four stanzas of the "Rune Poem," stanzas 138-146 of the *Hávamál*, which tells of Odin's sacrifice of himself by hanging himself on the World Tree, Yggdrasil, and wounding himself with his spear to gain the secret wisdom of the runes. Although this manner of sacrifice was not unknown in Germanic heathendom, Lee Hollander points out that "it is difficult...to avoid the conclusion that the conception of the first two stanzas is derived from the crucifixion scene of the Bible" (Hollander 36).

The dirge-like music is centered on an A minor power chord, and the ends of lines are sung in unison. The first two verses are acoustic: the lead guitar vamping on A minor, a mouth harp beating on one and three. After the second verse, the form is repeated once before an electric, chromatically descending line is played, ending on an A minor power chord, resuming the form. The vocal line of the first verse is shown in example 11.

Ex. 11

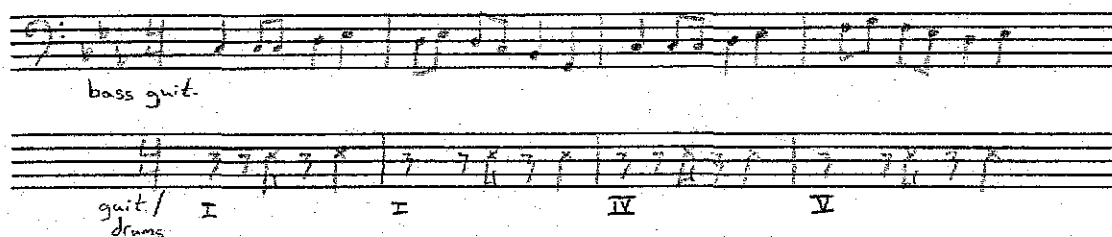
Enslaved's "Yggdrasil," from *Frost* (1994)

Although the majority of Viking metal bands follow the example of Enslaved and limit themselves primarily to textual borrowings, many others can be additionally classified as musically evocative of the Vikings. Unlike folk metal bands drawing from other mythologies, bands using Norse mythology as text have no musical-historical examples to augment their illusion. This has led to the creation of an ahistorical "Viking music" that is used in tandem with the metal style to conjure up appropriate images.

Drawing heavily from sea shanties and media images of pirates and Vikings, this music is of two main types. The first is largely stepwise in motion with many repeated note figures, frequently minor, and primarily sung in unison. The style of performance is perhaps most readily remembered if one recalls Monty Python's "Spam" sketch or "Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest" from the opening titles of Victor Fleming's *Treasure Island* (1934). A repetitive, arching ascent-descent structure and its lesser dependence upon lyrics characterize the second type, more evocative of rolling waves on the open sea.

Three examples of this second type, which can be dealt with more briefly than the first, are presented in examples 12-14. The first shows the bass and snare drum lines of the introduction and A section of Einherjer's "The Conqueror," recorded in 1996. The aurally low quality of the bass, coupled with the step-wise ascending-descending line mimics the motion of a small boat on open water.

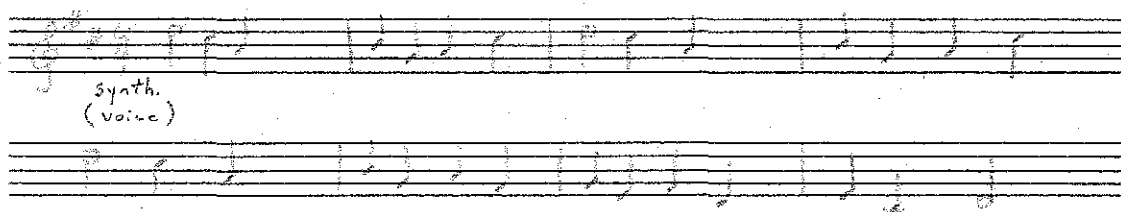
Ex. 12



from Einherjer's "The Conqueror," from *Dragons of the North* (1996)

This is a popular motive for the band, who uses a similarly constructed line on their subsequent album, *Odin Owns Ye All* (1998), in "Clash of the Elder," again in the A section (ex. 13).

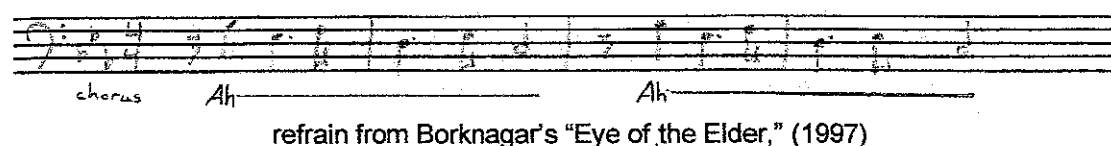
Ex. 13



opening melody from Einherjer's "Clash of the Elder" (1998)

Here a synthesizer, accompanied by an E power chord on the upbeats, chimes the line in skip-step motion. This can be seen, too, in Borknagar's "Eye of the Elder," from *The Olden Domain* (1997).

Ex. 14

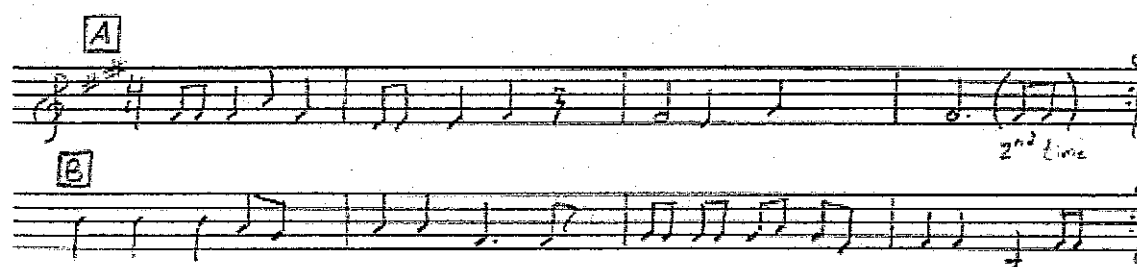


This line comes toward the end of the song, before the final refrain and is atypical of the band. Like Einherjer, Borknagar writes lyrics based on the Norse mythology without drawing directly from them in the way Enslaved does; though Einherjer does include an excerpt from the Havamal inside the jacket of their first album, they include no such texts within their songs.

Returning to the first type of "Viking" song, it will be useful to briefly examine how different media aurally evoke sea-faring marauders. There are few movies that treat the subject of Vikings, and only a handful of television shows that have done so, but the singing used in these is so similar to that used in the presentation of pirates that a comparison will not be untoward.

To begin, let us look at a recent example of a movie shanty from *Muppet Treasure Island* (1996). Largely step-wise motion and repeated note figures (ex. 15) characterize the tune, sung alternately in unison and at the octaves. Though newly composed by Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, its lusty performance and positioning over the opening credits recall Fleming's original.

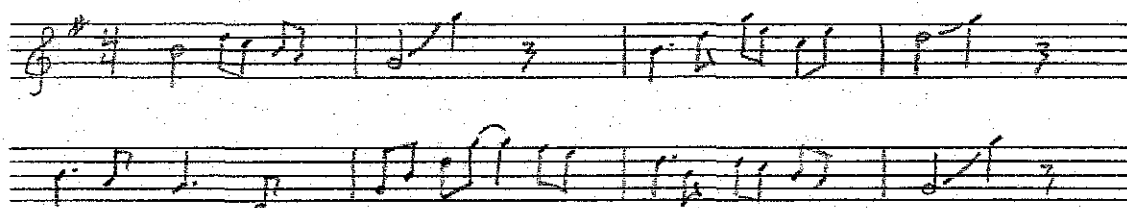
Ex. 15



opening song, *Muppet Treasure Island* (1996)

A far more stylized "Viking" song is presented in Kirk Douglas's *The Vikings* (1958). Mario Nascimbene wrote an angular, arpeggiated tune (ex. 16) that appeared twice in the film, each time during a celebration scene. The melody cannot be readily compared to shanty melodies, but the style in which it is sung is similar. Again, voices are in unison, and in a move to conjure drunken revelry, pitch has become secondary to overall shape. Each line concludes with an octave whoop, though the final pitch is only approximated.

Ex. 16



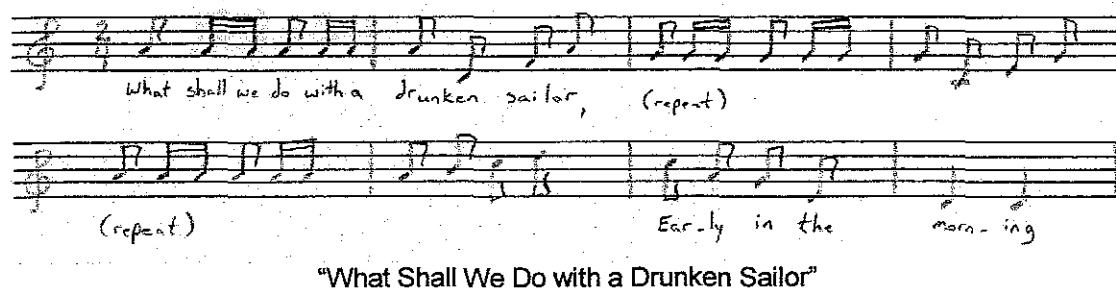
"Viking" song from Kirk Douglas's *The Vikings* (1958)

The point of all of this is to illustrate a mechanism of media stereotyping through which viewers have been socialized to equate certain aural configurations with images of sailors, sea-borne marauders, and Vikings. Though rooted in traditional sea shanties, these aural images have been perpetuated through the media of pirate movies and television shows,² and they have been extended – by association – to Vikings. As I will illustrate below, drawing examples from *Odin Owns Ye All*, many Viking metal songs rely on this kind of instant aural association.

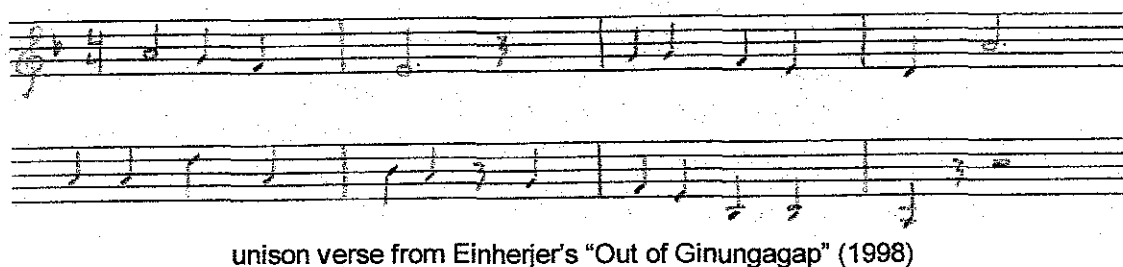
As a point of departure, example 17 shows the melody of "What shall we do with a drunken sailor" (Terry 30), as printed in 1921. Example 18 shows the

"Viking" melody occurring between the two verses/refrain pairs in "Out of Ginungagap."

Ex.17



Ex. 18 (transposed down, major 2)



The text of the first verse in example 12, which is set syllabically, reads "Bur had three sons/Vile, Ve, and Odin/ They killed the giant Ymir/and founded what we know."

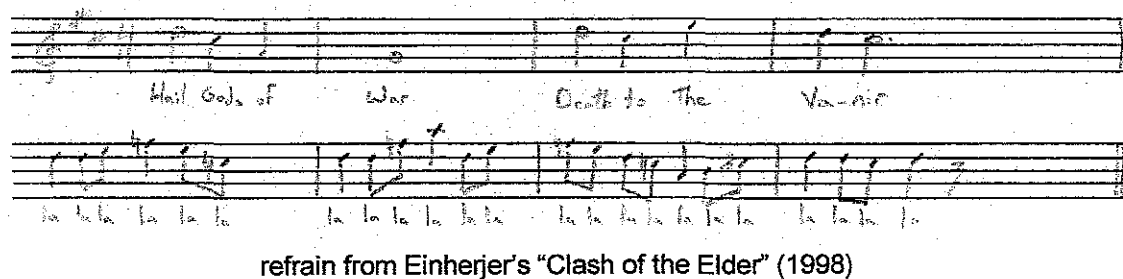
What is most remarkable about this section of "Ginungagap" is its similarity to "Drunken Sailor." Even a latent familiarity with the latter will engender recognition in the listener that, in turn, will evoke appropriate images. Here, of course, the images drawn forth are tempered by the textual and visual context of the song. An untutored listener might not recognize the image of Odin

² Both Monty Python and The Muppet Show, for example, have used shanty type melodies while portraying Norse characters, as have many Warner Brothers cartoons featuring Bugs Bunny.

on the album's cover, but a glance at the text would be sufficient to reveal the Norse context of the song.

The refrain of "Clash of the Elder" is similar in many respects (ex. 19). The first line is set to the same intervallic material as is used in "Ginungagap," followed by a short cadence and then a four bar unison chant comparable to Nascimbene's. As with Nascimbene's, exact pitch of the chant is secondary to contour. The whooped D minor chord in bar two adds muddiness to a texture in which perfect unisons and proper pitch would be inappropriate.

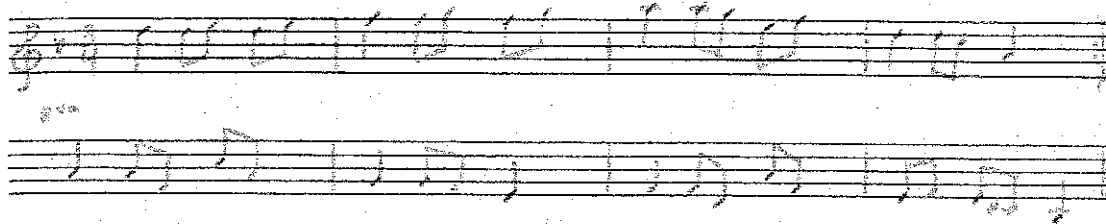
Ex. 19



These methods are by no means singular to Einherjer. Naglfar, Mithotyn, and Vargevinter – among a number of others – use these same methods to create “Viking” music. But where bands like Einherjer and Vargevinter work to incorporate these kinds of motives into the body metal song, Mithotyn includes what they claim to be traditional songs – like “Tills Dagen Gyr” – almost out of context on *In the Sign of the Ravens* (1997). It is sung much like Enslaved’s “Yggdrasil;” a solo singer leads with the band joining at the end of lines. The rhythmic accompaniment consists of a drum struck on one and three and a synthesizer holding the chord progression I iii V I, with a single chord held drone-

like on each measure. The song sounds in C-sharp minor, although this results from down-tuning the instruments one half step. The melody appears below, written in D minor (ex. 20).

Ex. 20



"Tills Dagen Gyr"

Other bands, like Sorhin, retain the satanic elements of black metal while allowing their music to be influence by more recent folk tunes. Eparygon, Sorhin's guitarist, "manages to make really brutal riffs and melodies based on traditional music but without ever giving the impression of being anything else than unholy black metal.... [A basic riff might be] based on folk music (but it's Eparygon's own tune), and after a while he even makes his guitar sound like an electrified, satanic key fiddle" (Bossius, pc).

When one looks at the overall history of thematic material in heavy metal, one is struck by what Frederic Jameson would call the "blank parody" of occult imagery. Robert Walser cites Jameson in relation to Iron Maiden, but Maiden's broad pastiche of the occult can be seen in a great many other bands as well. If we examine the origins of black metal we might see the same meaningless bricolage in Celtic Frost or Bathory, for example, who have admitted to running the gamut of metal sub-styles. Since many of these earlier bands articulate occult meanings without "any logical reconciliation of the incongruities," they

have become "a meaningless imitation of the past that is no longer understood" (Walser 1993, 153).

By and large, the same cannot be said of Viking metal bands. These groups articulate a very specific mythology which controls not only textual choices, but also the imagery used on albums and frequently the kind of music composed. John Berger has suggested that "vague historical or poetic or moral references" have an advantage because "they are imprecise and ultimately meaningless...they should not be understandable, they should merely be reminiscent of cultural lessons half-learned" (Berger 140). These same half-learned lessons must operate for these "Viking" themes to work.

The result is the construction of what Viggo Vestel calls "imaginary places," that is to say places "not capable of carrying a physical presence, according to what might loosely be called 'rational' knowledge" (Vestel 5). By focusing on ancient kinship ties to a Viking past, these bands have tapped into a more specific locality than simply a local or national scene. They have created – or perhaps more properly invented – ties "to the mythical past and heathen Norway" (Vestel 11).

Without "authentic" music to draw from, Viking metal bands must create an aural illusion with the cultural materials available. Sea shanties can play a minor role in this illusion building process, but what are more important are the newly composed shanty-like tunes created for specific media purposes. Vestel suggests that "through this use of assumed attributes of the historical (or prehistorical) place of the Vikings, the connection to the 'real' is loosened by

time, allowing this construction of 'Norway' to become a more or less an imaginary place [sic]" (11). "Viking" themes can only be successfully employed because – somewhere, sometime – most media-savvy Europeans and Americans have seen *Treasure Island*, *Monty Python*, *Bugs Bunny*, or any of the other myriad images of swashbucklers and pillaging Northmen.

"Magic and Mayhem":
Folk Metal in Scandinavia

While Viking metal continues to be popular among underground fans, Scandinavia has begun to see an increase in another sub-genre of black metal that can be called folk metal. "Folk" here must be understood to be problematic, both to the practitioners of the style as well as to proponents of pure black metal. As will be seen, many of these bands play in a style that is nearly identical to black metal and identify themselves as such, but many satanic black metallers state very clearly that "forests and fairy tales and Vikings have nothing to with black metal" (Bossius, pc). This has led to a further lexical fragmentation of the style, with some fans going so far as to make clear distinctions between fairy metal, forest metal, vampire metal, and a multitude of others differentiated by lyrical matter.

These multifarious sub-categories of an identifiably unitary musical style simply act as differentiating machines between fans, where binary difference is constructed in order to privilege one style as "normal" (here, pure/satanic black metal) so that the "abnormal" might be more easily purged (Grossberg 104). The ostensible purpose is for black metallers to further separate themselves as a privileged other. This distinction cannot, however, simply be discarded as superfluous pedantry because, as Lawrence Grossberg points out, "popular culture is not defined by formal characteristics but by its articulation within particular formations and specific sensibilities" (Grossberg 79).

These differences can serve to articulate very specific fan bases with equally specific needs and interests as listeners. Fans adopt a "distinctive mode of reception" which reflects these interests (Jenkins 209-210), interests that might not be served by a band gleaning lyrics from mythology or fairy tales, even if the musical style is identical. But these differences can also needlessly obscure stylistic similarities.

"Folk" must then be defined in context if we are to make any assessment of folk metal in relation to black or Viking metal. Most broadly, it is a sub-genre of black metal on a musical-phenomenological level that diverges first in lyrical content – thus including Viking metal, the Vikings being understood as "a folk" – and subsequently, and to varying degrees, in musical accretions to the basic style. As we narrow our focus, allowing Viking metal to slough off into a separate category of folk metal (see chapter 3), folk metal acts as a chronotope structured to evoke eldritch time. By utilizing recognizably traditional melodies or instruments and images of beasties, mythical heroes, gods and the like, musicians are able to construct an imaginary place.

This definition raises a basic difficulty, a "code violation" as it were. Deena Weinstein has described the "standard code" of heavy metal instrumentation to include vocals, guitar, bass, and drums with the synthesizer existing as an accepted deviation. "While keyboards do not violate the heavy metal code," she writes, "other instruments, such as horns, orchestral stringed instruments, or an accordion would break it" (Weinstein 25). But even such a modest assertion as this can be challenged, as Charlie Benante of Anthrax did when asked if he

would ever use keyboards as a major part of a song. "That is gay," he responded. "The only band that ever used keyboards that was good was UFO" (Sulmers, 24).

But instrumentation is a staple distinction of many folk metal bands. Even the Viking metal sub-category typically avoids non-standard instruments, but folk metal groups often depend upon them. Clearly either metal codes must be re-inscribed to include more than loud, distorted timbres of guitar, bass, drums and voice – though this does describe the vast majority of metal bands – or folk metal must be re-defined outside of metal.

Thomas Gencarelli has stressed that sincerity in metal is displayed through originality and individuality. Constantly challenging boundaries and taking stylistic risks is interpreted as dedication to the genre since it suggests that a band is not interested simply in monetary success to be had by using tired formulas (Gencarelli 228). It becomes a question not of giving the fans what they want (i.e. "selling out"), but of giving the fans what the band wants. A band like Satyricon, for example, carries a great deal of credibility in Europe because they "don't care what people say...we have no interest in what other people might think about the direction we go in."¹ Varg Vikernes voiced a related sentiment in an interview with Karl Milton Hartveit: "I am not in this for fame or money. It is to stimulate the fantasy of mortals, to make them dream" (Horn).

¹ "Satyricon," *Lexicon of the Damned* e-zine.

http://members.xoom.com/_XMCM/lexicon666/satyricon_interview.html

These sentiments, though pervasive, are somewhat disingenuous. Theodore Gracyk suggests four modes of inauthenticity in rock: presenting emotions not true to the musicians' lives, celebrating live performance over studio work, down-playing the importance of musical craft though a myth of primitivism, and presenting a "romantic mythology" that disdains the commercial side of rock (Gracyk 224). The first is a commonly held opinion and requires no additional comment. The ontological priority of live performance versus studio work is of key importance to black metal in general, and folk metal especially, and should be dealt with in context.

The last two points, the myths of primitivism and commercial disinterest, have much bearing on heavy metal. Primitivism remains a carry-over from punk, and though it holds no practical sway in metal, it does carry a certain ideological weight. Both Weinstein and Walser have refuted this myth by pointing out that virtuosity is extremely important in metal, especially for the guitarist (Walser 1993, chapter 3 and Weinstein 1998, 143). Commercial disinterest is perhaps more difficult to disprove, but it is true that most bands discussed in this study sell very few albums, and many musicians hold day jobs. In light of this, it would come as a surprise were a band to refuse a major distribution deal. Having briefly outlined several modes of inauthenticity, one remains that is of far more importance to folk metal bands, though it has been frequently overlooked.

Szatmary has illustrated the importance of cover versions of songs to the white pop industry in the 1950s (Szatmary 24-26). But the idea of originality and self-creation as a measure of authenticity has pervaded the rock industry since

the late 1960s, when covers were removed to B-sides of singles so that bands might distance themselves from unoriginal material while maintaining some connection to an authentic past. Creating music from one's own resources replaced the idea that authenticity "constituted a relationship, through creative repetition, to an authentic source" (Weinstein 1998, 142). Andrew Goodwin has added that the notion of a single, creative compositional force has remained central to the reception of popular music (see Goodwin in Frith and Goodwin).

It is this very notion of authorship that plagued Led Zeppelin, a band that is very strongly identified with songs not composed by the group. The band grew out of the English blues revival, and a number of their songs came out of the rhythm and blues tradition. When pressed on their use of extant material, band members would point out that questions of authorship and ownership are not always clear. Robert Palmer has said that "it is the custom, in blues music, for a singer to borrow verses from contemporary sources, both oral and recorded, add his own tune and/or arrangement, and call the song his own" (quoted in Headlam 324).

Despite the continued popularity of the Led Zeppelin, and regardless of the positive effects many "original" blues artists enjoyed as result, the band was roundly criticized as "rip-offs" for their use of covered material. In 1987, Willie Dixon sued for and secured royalties for the use of his "You Need Love" as source material for Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love." It was in this environment that authorship became synonymous with authenticity (Headlam 326).

Led Zeppelin unquestionably had great influence on the metal bands that followed in their wake, but perhaps one of their most intangible influences was a cautionary one. Despite the contemporary folk revival in the UK, very few early metal bands covered material by other bands. This can be partially attributed to the fact that bands like Black Sabbath would not have been able to find material that embodied their musical vision. Additionally, though Judas Priest did cover "The Green Manalishi," for example, many fans had never heard Fleetwood Mac's original, if they were even aware of its existence (Weinstein 1998, 143). But consider also that few groups would want the same charges of inauthenticity lodged against them that Zeppelin's "borrowings" received.

What metal bands did do was draw material from classical music, like Manowar's "Flight of the Bumblebee" and "William Tell," Ritchie Blackmore/Rainbow's excerpts from Beethoven's Ninth, and Accept's "Metal Heart/Für Elise," but as Weinstein asserts, these were not acknowledgements of metal's musical past. Rather they were used as proclamations of virtuosity (Weinstein 1998, 143, also Walser 1993, chapter 3). Interestingly, the compositional authenticity of folk metal has not yet been criticized, though many bands use similar techniques to those of Led Zeppelin, only drawing from older sources.

Otyg's Daniel Fredriksson has suggested to me that this is because folk tunes are seen as "the definition of authenticity." He adds that "someone who plays a folk tune isn't seen as ripping off someone else, he or she is granted being a part of a chain of tradition, of the 'soul of nature'" (Fredriksson, pc).

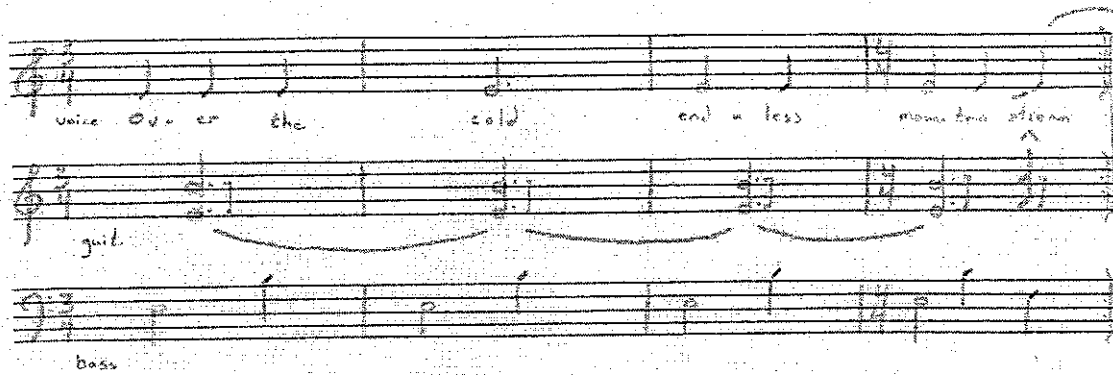
Case Study 1: Hades

A study of the Scandinavian folk metal scene serves as an ideal starting point, as the four major stylistic features are far less integrated here than they are in the British Isles. The first two of these characteristics, the use of traditional instruments and the adaptation of traditional musical forms and structures might be most easily introduced by the Norwegian band, Hades.

Lyrically, Hades cannot be easily classified. Their first full length release, *...Again Shall Be* (1994), shared aspects of both Viking and satanic black metal while their second release, *Dawn of the Dying Sun* (1996), added lyrics taken from Chaucer's "Alone Walkyng," originally printed in 1572. If nothing else, Hades stands as an excellent example of the difficulties in classifying black metal into sub-categories, but *Dawn* includes studio work on two tracks by Norwegian folk musicians Oystein Fosshagen and Tomas Hals on fiddles, with Hals doubling on mouth harp.

It is the last track of the album, "Pagan Prayer," that proves most useful. The song is built around a repetition of thirteen beat phrase over a drone-like E minor chord, shown below (ex. 21) divided into three bars of 3/4 and a final bar in 4/4. Stress is initially marked by the bass guitar striking E on beats one of each bar, though additional stress is eventually given on the "pick-up" third beat of each measure with a bass iteration of the major fifth.

Ex. 21



opening vocal, Hades' "Pagan Prayer," (1996)

The overall tonality of "Pagan Prayer" is markedly similar to the Gorrolaus, or "very loose," tuning of the Hardanger fiddle in which the melody strings are tuned F3 D4 A4 E5 with the sympathetic strings sounding D4 E4 F4 A4 (Grinde 92). The lowered E minor tonality could easily be achieved by down-tuning the fiddles, a practice all too common in black metal bass and guitar styles.

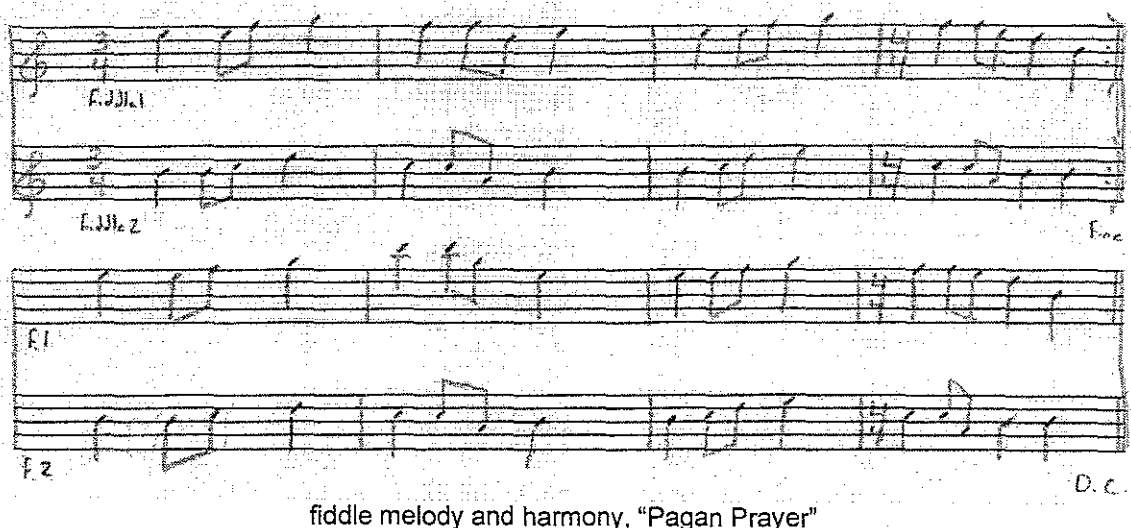
Not surprisingly, the last beat is marked by multiple kinds of accent. Most obviously, it stands out as an odd, extra beat to an otherwise uniform structure. It is also marked by only the second articulation by the rhythm guitar – the first being the E power chord struck on the first beat and held without reiteration until the return of the cycle. Finally, the chord changes from a barred E-minor to a barred D power chord, and change possible simply by sliding the barred fingering up one fret.

The lyrics are delivered in an unvarying chant on the tonic very similar to Gregorian recitation, generally only changing when the bass guitar re-articulates

its line. The words read as a prayer to the "great gods of Aasgaard," imploring guidance "through the night" to "let us enter thy hall."

The violin melody (ex. 22) is introduced twice in the song, once approximately half way through where it is played over the droning chord structure, and again at the end of the song where it closes the track without accompaniment. Though it not an identifiably traditional melody, it is structured very much like a springar, a kind of slaatter in triple time probably introduced to Norway from Finland (Grinde 98). Nils Grinde describes the springar as being played in a kind of "stylized rubato" that varies regionally.

Ex. 22



fiddle melody and harmony, "Pagan Prayer"

This melody is particularly immune to regional classification. Much like the Sunnfjord springars, the notes are almost unmeasured – except for the slight articulation offered by the bass guitar – and the tune is of an irregular length that defies easy categorization into duple or triple time. Similarly, "Pagan Prayer" can be compared to the Fana springars, which typically "[consist] of several short

polyphonic phrases (usually two or four measures) in 3/4 time. Each phrase is repeated several times with variations – often a different ending measure – to form a musical period” (Beal 249, 244).

A final note on instrumentation is of some interest. This album marks the second appearance of the mouth harp, multi-tracked by Tomas Hals, in folk-black metal. It first appeared two years earlier on Enslaved’s *Frost* release on the song “Yggdrasil” discussed in the last chapter. It should also be noted that “Yggdrasil” marked the first use of a singularly “folk” instrument on a major black metal release. The instrument itself dates in Europe to the medieval era, and though no one is sure when it was introduced into Norway, it remains a familiar folk instrument throughout the region (Grinde 89-90).

This remains a troublesome song to classify. It stands essentially alone on the album; it is one of only two songs on the album that treat pagan imagery. The other, “The Awakening of Kings,” is vaguely evocative of the ancient Norsemen, speaking of “ten centuries of torment/of a northern soul” and prophesying that “soon the hammer shall strike/this is the dusk of the weak/the dawn of an age of...strength!” Fiddles appear on this track, too, but to a much lesser degree, limited to backing harmonies between verses that are frequently buried in the mix.

Still, it seems clear that the fiddles and mouth harp were added with specific, evocative intent. That they do not appear on the tracks with satanic lyrics suggests more of their purpose than anything else might. They act as an additional placing device, declaiming an ideo-local meaning, setting the more

than casual listener squarely in the country-side, if not specifically Norway's, and unhesitatingly suggesting bygone times.

Case Study 2: Amorphis

Amorphis came to popular attention in metal circles in 1992 with the release of their first full-length album, *The Karelian Isthmus*. Originally a death metal band, they distinguished themselves in a saturated genre with outstanding musicianship. Lyrics were the standard fare of death and mayhem, as illustrated in the following excerpt from "Black Embrace" (ex. 23)

Ex. 23

Terror, when the darkness binds your limbs
Terror, when the fear freezes your nerves
Horror, when the pain climbs up your veins
Darkness, creeping under your skin

Curiously, the primary lyricist of at the time, Esa Holopainen, anticipated the direction the band was to take on future albums by including three songs based on Irish mythology, including "Exile of the Sons of Uisliu" (ex. 24).

Ex. 24

A wave of sound of Noisiu's voice
His singing was ever sweet...
Noisiu's grave has now been made
And the accompaniment was mournful

For him I poured out – hero of heroes
The deadly drink that killed him

Dear his short, shining hair
A handsome man, even very beautiful

Dear the grey eyes that women loved
Fierce they were foes

The 1994 release of *Tales from the Thousand Lakes* signaled a new lyrical direction for the band. Their subsequent albums, until the 1999 release of *Tuonela*, drew heavily from the *Kalevala* and the *Kanteletar*, two collections of Finnish epic and ballad oral poetry collected by the Finnish scholar Elias Lönnrot during the middle of the nineteenth century. First published in 1840-1841, the *Kanteletar* contains nearly seven hundred lyrics collected largely in Karelia on Finland's eastern border.

"Black Winter Day" (ex. 25), a perennial favorite with fans, is a typical example of Amorphis's textual adaptation. Along side is Keith Bosley's 1992 translation of "The Calloo" (Lönnrot 1992, 14), the lyric on which "Black Winter Day" is based.

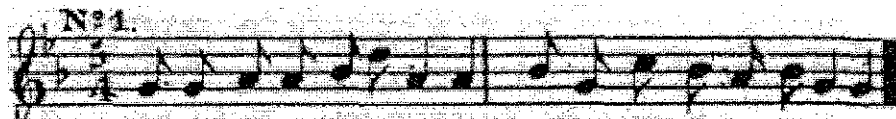
Ex. 25	Ex. 26
"Black Winter Day"	"The Calloo"
This is how the lucky feel How the blessed think Like daybreak in spring The sun on a spring morning	How do the lucky ones feel and how do the blessed think? This is how the lucky feel how the blessed think— Like daybreak in spring The sweet sun in the morning
But how do I feel In my gloomy depths?	But how do the luckless feel And how do the calloos think? This is how the luckless feel how the calloos think—
Like the flat brick of a cloud Like a dark night in the autumn A black winter day No, darker than that Gloomier than an autumn night	Like a dark night in the autumn a black winter day— I'm blacker than that Gloomier than an autumn night.

Amorphis did not, however, limit itself to textual appropriations. According to Pasi Koskinen, Amorphis's singer, the opening riff of "Magic and Mayhem" quotes the melody of "Pajupilli."

The 1996 release of *Elegy* further distinguished Amorphis as an innovative force in underground music. All texts on *Elegy* were gleaned from the *Kanteletar*, and the band continued its progress away musically from its death metal origins. *Elegy* is musically less harsh than their previous albums, due partially to the addition of Pasi Koskinen on clean vocals and partially to a concerted movement backwards towards their own musical roots and influences.

"My Kantele" is as an exceptional gateway to the new Amorphis. It is the only track to be re-released as an acoustic version on a mini compact disc (MCD) that also included covers of songs by Hawkwind and Kingston Wall. The primary melodic riff of "My Kantele" is an altered version of a popular lullaby tune sung to various texts. The melody is quite old (ex. 27), and a kantele version in 5/4 was published by Lönnrot (Lönnrot 1992, 7).

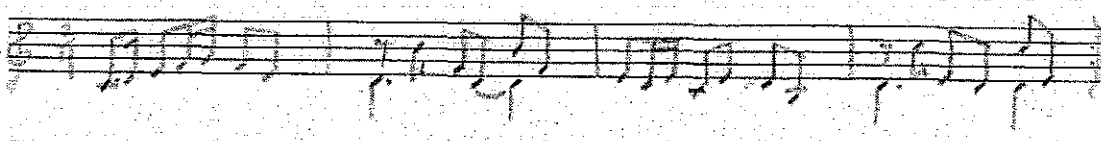
Ex. 27



tune as published by Lönnrot in first edition of the *Kanteletar*

Example 28 shows the variant played by the guitar in "My Kantele," this time in 3/4.

Ex. 28



opening guitar riff, Amorphis' "My Kantele," (1996)

The text of "My Kantele" is much less of an adaptation than "Black Winter Day;" rather it is taken almost directly from the beginning of the *Kanteletar*. Below (ex.

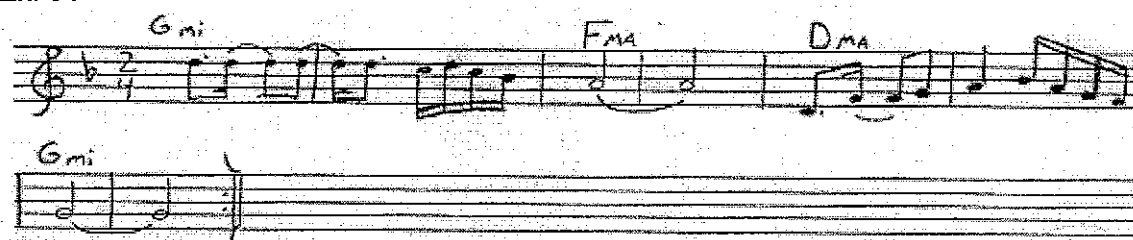
29) is an excerpt from the *Kanteletar* translated by Bosley (Lönnrot 1992, 9); the right column is Amorphis's text (ex. 30).

Ex. 29	Ex. 30
Lönnrot's "My Kantele"	Amorphis' "My Kantele"
Truly they lie, they talk utter nonsense who say that music* reckon that the kantele was carved by Vainamoinen* fashioned by a god out of a great pike's shoulders from a water-dog's hooked bones: no, music was made from grief moulded from sorrow-- its belly out of hard days its soundboard from endless woes its strings gathered from torments and its pegs from other ills So my kantele will not play, will not rejoice at all music will not play to please give off the right sort of joy for it was fashioned from cares moulded from sorrow	Truly they lie, they talk utter nonsense who say that music* reckon that the kantele was fashioned by a god out of a great pike's shoulders from a water-dog's hooked bones: moulded from sorrow-- its belly out of hard days its soundboard from endless woes its strings gathered from torments and its pegs from other ills Truly they lie, they talk utter nonsense

Another admittedly tongue-in-cheek structural nod to Finnish culture is found in "Cares," where the band included what they called an humppa – or Finnish tango – between the two verses. Oli-Pekka Laine explains that "it was kind of a joke at first, and it was arranged in a different way. It was like heavy metal, but then we started to jam it in a different way because it was an old track.... It's hard to be ironic anymore – like it doesn't make you laugh anymore – but people are laughing because we've been playing it for five years" (pc).

What is perhaps most remarkable about the use of an humppa here is that it is completely unidiomatic to the song. Seemingly dropped in the middle of "Cares," the tune is played on an undistorted guitar, accompanied by a synthesizer holding the chords over the rolling, almost polka-like, bass and drum quarter-note lines (ex.31).

Ex. 31



Even the humppa used in "Cares" was newly composed for the purpose. The inclusion of short melodic phrases was so seamless as to be almost unnoticeable, and many Finnish fans that would recognize the tunes appreciated the cleverness of it all.

Koskinen described the evolution towards *Tuonela* lamenting, "we became some sort of national product, like we were selling Finland, and we got sick of it" (pc). By relying so heavily on traditional sources, the band became inextricably connected to a Finnish national identity in a global context. Explains Koskinen: "at gigs people came with *Kalevala* books and asked [our] signatures [be put] to it and stuff like that. And people were extremely interested about stuff like this. And some people came to ask what is your favorite figure in *Kalevala* and stuff like that, so I think that they appreciate it" (pc).

Despite Koskinen's assertions, this still creates the frustrating situation that "even if you immediately recognize the music as being Finnish (which provides evidence for the existence of national features), you can not explain your experience" (Heiniö 186). The "national product" that the band felt they were selling was therefore based as much on function as on content because even though the contest was present, it might not necessarily be recognized. Their music became national "because it [was] believed to be national; this belief effect[ed] the response to the music" (Heiniö 189).

So what is "Finnish" about Finnish music, and do such features apply to Amorphis? Mikko Heiniö (186) has suggested seven characteristics defining a national, more specifically a "Finnish," music:

- (1) It is written by a composer a) living in or b) born in Finland
- (2) It ties in with Finland's national history
- (3) It's a) name or b) words are particularly Finnish
- (4) It contains Finnish folk music
- (5) It is a) by Sibelius or b) Sibelian
- (6) Its style is a) traditional, b) undeveloped, or c) not international
- (7) It is by nature Finnish, e.g. gloomy, melancholic, leisurely

Of course these criteria cannot be accepted without criticism, especially the last, nor can they be applied simply to Finnish music – Lewis Foreman (1997) offers a similar list of criteria to define Englishness – but several of them can easily be seen in the music of Amorphis. However, the third characteristic, as it applies to the specific use of the Finnish language, clearly does not apply. Nor is their music Sibelian, underdeveloped, or traditional, but the remaining criteria do have some bearing.

The most apropos for Amorphis is perhaps the seventh, though it is also the most troublesome. It is doubtful that “melancholic” or “gloomy” can or should be so broadly applied to a national music, but when asked how texts were chosen, Oli-Pekka Laine offered “the most brutal ones,” while Koskinen countered with “the most depressing” (pc).

In the final analysis, for Amorphis an identity connected so closely to Finland's national epic became too confining; this was not how they wanted to be defined, but four consecutive “folk metal” albums had already taken its toll. When I asked Koskinen and Laine for their thoughts on being categorized as folk metal, they tripped over each other to make their point:

- Koskinen: I don't think that it's exact, the whole metal thing,
because we have so many different influences
from other sorts of music.
- Laine: I think bands like Skyclad could be...

Koskinen: ...folk metal. Yeah.

Laine: Doesn't sound too good [applied to Amorphis].

Case Study 3: Otyg

Outlined above are the four primary characteristics of folk metal:

1) traditional instruments, 2) folk melodies or 3) folkloric texts, and 4) traditional or quasi-traditional forms. Every band in this study meets at least two of these criteria, and it would be a hard case to make to suggest that a band could be categorized as folk metal without adopting at least two of these modes.

Both Hades and Amorphis are easily categorized with the umbrella-genre "metal," and while they can be just as easily classified inside the sub-genre of folk metal, they remain a great deal more ensconced within the timbral palette of metal than Sweden's Otyg. In many ways, Otyg shares many similarities with folkmusikvågen of the 1970s, which in turn shared many characteristics with the folk movements in Britain and the U.S. during the 1960s.

What initially strikes the listener is the liberal use of violin, flute, and even mouth harp, despite its foundation on the same distorted, highly trebled guitars and heavy, melodic bass lines found in black metal. The label "metal" is almost immediately problematic when applied to a band that sounds much like the folk-rock of Ireland's Horslips or the Finno-Swedish Hedningarna, but the placement of the bass guitar high in the mix and the rougher distortion on the guitar are important distinctions. Distribution and marketing can also be a factor – as can the band members' own perceptions – in cases where the band might well defy common-practice classifications of any sort.

First, let us consider the context within which folk music currently operates in Sweden. The folk music vogue in Sweden was nearly 100 years in the making, and over the years a variety of attempts have been made to resuscitate folk music, including the creation of fiddler's clubs and societies – including the Sveriges spelmäns riksförbund (Swedish Fiddler's Association) – and competitions.

The first fiddler's competition in Scandinavia was held in Norway in 1880, and certain of these "kappleiks" are still held in various areas, but the credit for the first such competition in Sweden must go to Anders Zorn, who established it in 1906 (Ramsten 43). In fact, statistics from the Zorn competition can serve as a fair bell-weather of the vitality of Swedish folk music. In the years 1966-67 approximately three-quarters of the competitors were over forty, while in 1980 fully two-thirds were under forty (Ramsten 53). Similarly, combined membership in the Sveriges spelmäns riksförbund and various provincial fiddler's clubs had grown from 3,400 in 1977 to 8,200 in 1984 (Ternhag 19).

Not surprisingly, a full picture of the folkmusikvågen is complicated, but without question in the 1970s many young Swedes found expression in the genre that had been called folk music since the 19th century. "In the search for alternatives to the multinational control of popular music and the bourgeois art music, many youths turned to folk music.... The reaction against concert hall music and international entertainment led these people in a search for music with proletarian antecedents" (Kjellström, et. al. 9).

Interest in folk music was further increased by the 1970 collaboration of the Progressive rock band Contact and the folk trio Skäggmanslaget on the song "Gråtlåtan, polska efter Hjort Anders." Skäggmanslaget were influenced by the British folk scene of the 1950s and 1960s (Lundberg 45), but were themselves influential for a number of reasons. Clearly they had a reputation as skilled musicians, but the political currents of the time were such that left-leaning youths were seeking an alternative to the establishment, and folk music "stood for the people." These changes in political attitudes were reflected in changes in the perception of folk music itself. It was no longer the sole property of fathers and grandfathers but rather existed for everyone. This movement towards youth is reflected in the statistics above. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, "Gråtlåten" was well received by key figures within the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation. Without such high-level support it is unclear whether it would have done so well (Lundberg 44).

Despite the growth and hybridization of folk in the 1970s, by the middle of the 1980s folk and folk-rock were, in the words of Nils Hansson, "hardly breathing" (Hansson 80). In 1986, folk music in Sweden won new life when Hedningarna formed and oriented itself towards "a historic sound ideal." However, in spite of their carefully groomed "medieval" image and heavy reliance on archaic instruments like the moraharpa and sackpipa, the band used electronics to create a rock-influenced sound and musical language.

The inclusion of two Finnish women singers specialized in an archaic form of Karelian song in 1990 served to augment their historicism, but at the same

time was offset and updated by new electronic techniques and experiments in sampling and distortion never before used in folk or folk-rock (Hansson 81). Hedningarna's success inspired a number of bands to follow in their wake, including Hoven Droven, Gemarna, Den Fule, and many others.

The status of folk music in Sweden now is primarily due to its growth twenty years ago. It is now characterized by "enthusiastic experimentation," and "new instruments, new combinations and influences from other genres and cultures [that] have all made their mark on modern Swedish folk music" (Lundberg 39-40).

In this light, Otyg might best be considered from the ground up, leaving music to the last. In addition to the standard code of instruments, the band's original line-up consisted of a violinist and a mouth harp player, as well as two guest musicians playing flute and salgflojt, or willow-flute. The band's second release, *Sagovindars Boring*, no longer included a separate mouth harpist, but the bass player, Daniel Fredriksson, overdubbed mouth-harp, salgflojt, and nyckelharpa lines. In fact, the final mix is quite heavily laden with folk instruments.

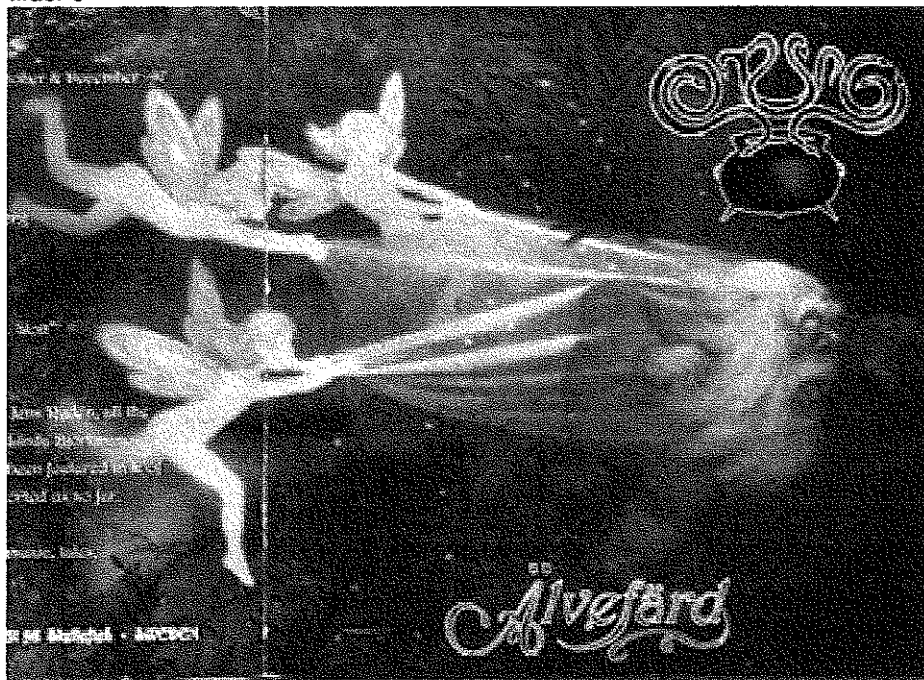
The texts sung in an archaic form of Swedish, and presented in the liner notes without translations, treat of "obscure (and often denied) creatures in our folklore, such as trolls, elves, huldren, lövjerskan, and so on. I also write about other folklorical [sic] supernatural phenomena, and the lyrics are written like rhyming poems in an old tongue" (pc). Fredriksson explains:

The main reason that we have the Swedish lyrics is of course that it could never be translated. Vintersorg doesn't write the lyrics in just 'old Swedish' it is more that he takes words from

different times and dialects, it is like a melting-pot of the not-so-modern Swedish language, in a very romantic and, I think beautiful, form. (pc)

The images used on the album reinforce this fairy tale construction. The cover illustration is taken from a Theodor Kittlesen painting of three elves pursuing a vittra, a kind of gloomy doppelganger (illus. 3). The interior illustrations show member of the band superimposed over scenes of the Swedish countryside.

Illus. 3



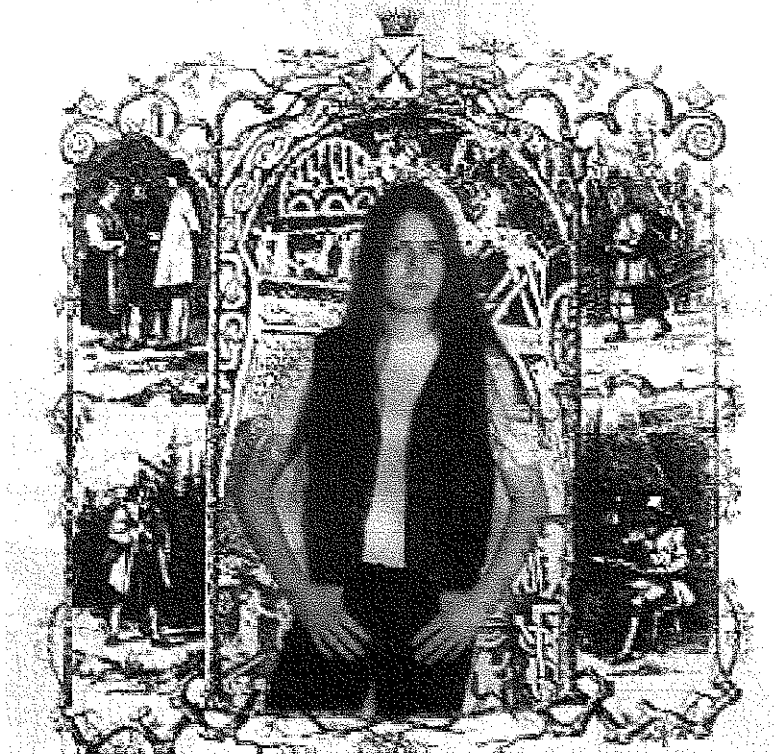
Cover painting, Otyg's *Alvefärd* (1998)

In evoking the forest, these scenes recall many of the other names for this type of metal: fairytale, forest, and troll (which comes from the Swedish "trolsk" which can also mean "magical"); but their purpose is more akin to that of the quasi-shanties found in Viking metal. The forest encompasses many of the major themes of this music. It is the location of supernatural beings, and it remains untamed and outside of culture and society, unknowable. Most

importantly, it is a place of danger and dark forces. It is "the soul of [Scandinavia], so to speak, that the Vikings lived closer to and which has been suppressed by Christianity" (Vestel 13).

Guitarist, singer, and frontman Vintersorg takes great pains to maintain this visual connection with Sweden's past and carries it in his solo project as well. A detail from the back cover of *Till Fjälls* places him in the center of an old woodcut taken from a Swedish history (illus. 4).

Illus. 4



Till Fjälls (1998), back cover detail

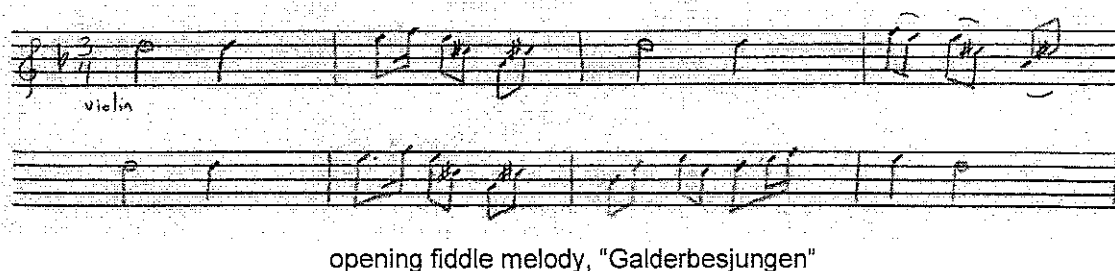
Having linked themselves linguistically and visually to their own heritage, what remains to be made are musical connections. Vintersorg writes most of the riffs and the general outlines of a song with other band members contributing

arrangement ideas or solo sections. Fredriksson, for example, writes his own bass lines and the violin parts are frequently written in collaboration (pc).

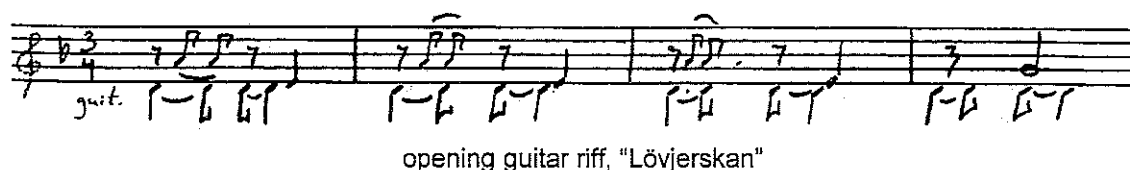
Members' own experience with folk music varies, but traditional tunes have not yet been integrated into their music in the same way that it is used by Amorphis or many of the Irish bands discussed in the following chapter. And it is important to point out that, at least in Sweden, metallers from Stockholm and Gothenburg are not making this kind of folk metal. Rather is "people from the countryside and often from the parts of Sweden where the folk music movement is strong" (Bossius, pc).

Notwithstanding the caveats, many songs are written in folk forms. Fredriksson describes "Galderbesjungen" (ex. 32) as a kind of slängpolska, and the fiddle/nyckelharpe melody in "Lövjerskan" (ex. 33b) is similar to an Orsapolska from the Dalarna region, where the second beat is played longer than the first. The latter tune opens with a repeated four-bar figure played by the guitar (ex. 33a).

Ex. 32



Ex. 33a



Ex. 33b



fiddle melody, "Lövjerskan"

Here in "Lövjerskan" the sense of elongation is increased through the use of articulation and anagogic stress. Fredriksson, however, stresses that the band has never consciously decided that a song should be played in a regional dialect. Vintersorg adds that he "grew up with both folk music and metal, so it came quite naturally to get influences from both areas" (pc).

Aside from form, the performance of songs is also informed by traditional playing. Fredriksson points out that "since all of us listen to different folk/rock bands, and they often use the different folk forms, with flexible time, sometimes the songs are played in similar style" (pc). He also candidly admits that, despite his background in folk music, which he started playing in 1993, some stylistic touches come not from "traditional" folk music, "like the little pause just before the end of some songs (i.e. Älvadimmans Omdanings). That is of course a normal way to end a traditional tune, but we got it from Hedningarna records."

The various methods used by bands to evoke the traditional have now been introduced, but it is valuable to consider the differences between the three bands discussed above. Hades superimposes folk-like melodic material on top of a droning black metal chant. There is no dispute that Hades is a black metal

band, and the rather rough juxtaposition has the effect of disjuncture. "Pagan Prayer" would indeed be a dull song without the springar tune, but it remains more a mixture, in the chemical sense, than a solution.

Amorphis, on the other hand, is able to form a solution to Hades' mixture. Like Led Zeppelin, they appropriate unoriginal material, but two primary differences are evident. First, the Finns use tunes that cannot so easily be traced to their originators; question of authorship simply cannot exist where the material has entered so thoroughly into the public domain. Second, Amorphis takes small melodic units and reshapes them to fit their needs. Zeppelin was still a part of the blues revival; their motivations were never in doubt. They may well have played in their own style, but they were still playing the blues. Despite Koskinen's complaint, however, Amorphis really is not "the national band of Finland." Their music is informed by their Finnishness, but it cannot be said to be "Finnish music."

Otyg joins aspects of the other two bands. Without using Swedish folk tunes, they are audibly more Swedish than Amorphis is Finnish. The use of flexible time and elongated beats and the broad inclusion of folk instruments presents even the most casual listener with an identifiable sonic palette. Fredriksson admits that he has never thought of Otyg as "Swedish," but rather as "Nordic" or "ancient," and he defends his opinion by pointing out that the myths and fairytales used are found throughout Scandinavia, and that Kittlesen was Norwegian. The sound might not announce itself as necessarily "Swedish" to an audience such as he has in mind, but the liner notes would. A Norwegian might

well be able to relate to the music or the texts better than a Canadian, but the language alone aids in the construction of an imagined place more Swedish than anything else.

"Reawakening Pride Once Lost":
Folk Metal in the British Isles

Thus far, this discussion has been limited to the production of a stylistic variant of heavy metal through the addition of folk-like characteristics. We have seen how melody and form are adopted and adapted in a move to expand or reinvent certain metal codes. The previous two chapters have exposed these different modes of integration. What I intend to describe in the present chapter is the way in which bands join folk to metal to create a fully formed hybrid. It is in the British Isles that the most holistic style of folk metal has been developed, predominantly in the northern areas and in Ireland, so it is there that we must now turn our attention.

In order to understand how this has been achieved there is one additional consideration that has thus far been over-looked. Robert Walser has demonstrated the importance of timbre in heavy metal, but notes also that it is the least often analyzed parameter of music (Walser 1993, 41-46). Part of this, no doubt, is due to the difficulty in describing what the ear actually hears, but there has also been a long history of ignoring timbre in western musicology.

As early as 1880, Edmund Gurney argued in *The Power of Sound* that timbre is not important and cannot belong to a musical work. A work, he suggests, can only relate to structure because that is all a listener can remember with any accuracy. Timbre is only rendered important in performance, and then only in helping the listener to grasp form. To be sure, this is an archaic source,

but the difficulty in accurately classifying timbre has been discussed at length by as current a scholar as Theodore Gracyk (1996). In fact, auditory memories are restricted to "species of timbre." Although the ear is capable of hearing minute differences in timbre while active listening is taking place, nuances fade within seconds of the cessation of sound (Gracyk 59-60).

But it is timbre, to a very great degree, that characterizes heavy metal. Walser stresses that "the most important aural sign of heavy metal is the sound of an extremely distorted electric guitar.... Any performance that lacks it cannot be included in the genre" (Walser 1993, 41). This is indeed the case, though the development of folk metal has allowed for the inclusion of certain experimental releases by established metal bands and solo artists into the practical field of metal.¹

Of primary importance, then, is how to resolve the disjuncture that occurs when two manifestly different genres of music are abutted against one another. The tone qualities inherent in folk music are often in direct opposition to those that comprise heavy metal. A band like Amorphis is able to avoid disrupting aural codes by removing melody from the purview of the traditional and re-inscribing it within their own genre. Otyg depends rather more heavily on their "folkishness," supporting formal structures and instrumental associations with a decidedly metallic accompaniment. Contrariwise, Hades relies more upon a system of superimposition of folk onto metal rather than one of re-inscription.

¹ e.g. Ulver, *Kveldsanger*, Head Not Found HNF 014 and Zpoan Vtenz, *Gime Nugalèt*, Eldethorn Records ELD 005

As similar developments in Scandinavia discussed above have suggested, the growth of folk metal in Ireland and Britain was not isolated happenstance. But neither was it necessarily a direct result of that experimentation. The interest in and revival of folk forms – and the subsequent hybrid forms – has a long history in the British Isles. In his book on the British folk scene, Niall MacKinnon traces revivalism in the Isles as far back as Robert Burns and marks the notable upsurge of interest around the turn of the twentieth century, offering the following plea for Englishness made by Cecil Sharp in 1907:

Our system of education...is calculated to produce citizens of the world rather than Englishmen.... How can this be remedied? By taking care I would suggest, that every child born of English parents is, in its earliest years, placed in possession of all those things which are distinctive products of its race.... The introduction of English folk songs into our schools...will also tend to arouse that love of country and pride of race the absence of which we now deplore. (MacKinnon 21)

Somewhat ironically, this is the same kind of jingoistic, artistic nationalism that has recently come into favor with black metal bands in Norway (see Vestel 1999). Similarly, the bands described below seem to share this desire for a wider general knowledge of local-traditional forms.

The intrinsic problems with this were touched upon in the previous chapter in respect to Finland, namely what is “Englishness,” or any kind of “localness”? The list of Finnish traits offered by Heiniö has been expanded by Lewis Foreman (1997) to describe “Englishness,” though the list remains substantially the same, and the same characteristics could be used to define any “national” music. A revised trait list might consist of:

- 1) the use of folk materials, i.e. songs, dances, etc.
- 2) the use of traditional forms (marches and music hall in England, for example)
- 3) settings of local literature or legends

- 4) evocations of place
- 5) characteristic modes, moods, tempi, settings, arrangements, etc.

Robin Denselow has attributed the later folk craze of the 1960s to the wild popularity of skiffle bands in the previous decade. In fact, he credits Lonnie Donnegan, whose "Rock Island Line" was released in 1956, as the progenitor of the movement. By the middle of 1956, he notes, there were six hundred skiffle bands just in greater London. Denselow further asserts that skiffle united and launched the folk and rock-rhythm and blues cultures by creating an interest in the likes of Woody Guthrie on the one hand and the blues on the other. This opened a path for both the singer-songwriters in the folk clubs and the development of rock in the newly established blues venues (141-142).

By the 1960s, a vibrant folk scene existed in Britain with singers like Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl acting very much as pioneers. MacColl believed very firmly that folk songs were a powerful catalyst of social action and solidarity, and his work in radio balladry were a great source of both inspiration and material to young folkies, including Christy Moore – later of Planxty and the Bothy Band – and Luke Kelly (N. O'Connor 154-155).

At the same time in Ireland, the 1960s saw ballad singers, like the Clancy Brothers, and dance bands dominating mainstream music. By the mid-'60s, however, British and American rock had become a powerful source of inspiration to young Irish musicians. Because of Ireland's size,

there existed no great degree of musical specialization, and musicians used what they liked from every style available, resulting in a certain exoticism that Nuala O'Connor has called a musical "cocktail" (121).

Barney McKenna of the Dubliners described the Irish scene in the 1960s saying that, "most of the rock music was 'He and She'...it was all the one theme, you know what I mean; whereas the folk theme brought out a wider spectrum. You had songs and tunes about every walk of life" (quoted in N. O'Connor 137). This "folk theme" influenced a great many musicians during the following years, each with a different take on folk music and its uses. Sweeney's Men, formed in 1966, were the first purist folk band to involve themselves in electric music, paving the way the pure electric folk of Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span. Planxty on the other hand, formed in 1973, tried to present traditional material in new ways through the use of new arrangements and accompaniments and untraditional combinations of instruments. Included in the broad array of folk and folk-influenced rock bands was Tír na nÓg, whose 1971 *Tír na nÓg* "[reworked] the old Irish myth, making it available to a whole new audience through the recorded medium" (Prendergast 74).

The 1970s were a heady time for traditional music in Ireland. Emigrants were returning home and, for the first time, Irish youth were not forced to leave Ireland to find work. Small labels were beginning to take more risks and releasing a greater variety of sounds. Added to this were the folk festivals at Ballisodare in County Sligo and Lisdoonvarna in Clare

and the European folk circuit (N. O'Connor 132). On this wave of revival rode a great many new bands, both the traditionalists and the more contemporary, experimental folkies. The decade was characterized by the Irish supergroups – like Clannad, The Bothy Band, Planxty, and De Danaan – and “the creative interaction of diverse musical forms (N. O'Connor 132)

However, these bands still played Trad – albeit in non-traditional ways through the inclusion of electric guitars, saxophones, and synthesizers while still playing jigs, reels, and airs. The first rock band inspired by and incorporating folk idioms without being “folk-rock” was Horslips, who released their first album, *Happy to Meet, Sorry to Part*, in 1972. They did play traditional tunes, but they were a rock band first and foremost. Example 35 shows the first section of “The High Reel” as played by the fiddle. The song was composed by the band, but in a traditional style.

Ex. 35

mm. 1-8, "High Reel"

The eight bars above open the tune, a standard AB reel, where sections A and B are played only once per cycle. The melody is played throughout on the

fiddle. In the A section, the fiddle plays unaccompanied except for chord 'hits' by the drums, bass, and guitar on the first beat of bars 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8, which serve to reinforce the harmonic structure of the song. During the B section, the fiddle continues to play the melody while the rhythm instruments accompany in a rock idiom.

An even clearer example of folk appropriation comes from their second LP, the 1973 concept album based on the fifth century BC *Tain bo Cuailgne*, which stands central within the Ulster cycle of heroic tales. Perhaps the most successful song on the album is "Dearg Doom." The song consists of five sections; the first three quote directly from "O'Neill's March" and present the verse and refrain of the song (ex. 36). The fourth is a uilleann pipe break, and the final section is a secondary chorus.

Ex. 36

A

(voice) My love is older than black marble by the sea — My heart is older than the old oak tree —

Guitar

B

I have the flesh of silver in the sun if you see me comin' you'd better run, run, run From Dearg Doom

C

Doom) From Dearg Doom — From Dearg Doom

mm. 1-12, "Dearg Doom"

My love is colder than black marble by the sea
My heart is older than the old oak tree
I have the flesh of silver in the sun
If you see me comin', you'd better
Run, run, run
From Dear Doom (last line 4x)

The only variance from "O'Neill's" comes in the measure 3-4 of section B, which reprises the riff from section A rather than repeating B measures 1-2. At the end of the song, that is after all the lyrics have been sung, the band modulates up a whole tone and plays "O'Neill's March" through while the song fades out.

Horslips never hedged about their intent. Eamon Carr has said that they wanted to:

provide an essentially Irish rock music, something distinctly our own, to galvanize each style with the other. We felt it was very important to convey our Irishness – a sense of our own identity and our heritage.... Since our work was in the hard rock context, most young people could relate to it immediately and learn a lot about Irish folklore as well. (quoted in Prendergast 81)

Horslips' most lasting impact might well have been "to take the idea that Irish traditional music belongs to everybody and put it to practice" (N. O'Connor 124).

A band need not incorporate folk music nearly so completely in order to assert local identity. Thin Lizzy's 1973 remake of the popular ballad "Whiskey in a Jar" reached number six on the English rock charts and made a huge impact in Ireland, where it received continual airplay (N. O'Connor 125-126). But Thin Lizzy were like Horslips only insofar as they shared the hard rock aesthetic of the mid-seventies.

Thin Lizzy was an Irish rock band of another kind, using themes and lyrics to evoke Ireland, rather than depending upon musical themes. Their first album,

released in 1971, includes the songs "The Friendly Ranger at Clontarf Castle," "Eire" (ex. 36), and "Dublin" (ex. 37).

Ex. 37	Ex. 37
"Eire"	"Dublin"
In the land of Eire Where sat the high king Faced with the problem Dreaded by kings	After our affair I swore that I'd leave Dublin and in that line I'd left behind the years, the tears, the memories and you in Dublin.
Gather all the menfolk Speaking the Celtic tongue The land is Eire The land is young	...
Stands [Red O'Donald] Fighting the Saxon folk With you and me Oh.... All along the northlands They fight bitterly The land is Eire The land is free	How can I leave the town that brings me down that has no jobs is blessed by God makes me cry? Dublin
	And at sea with glowing hair I think of Dublin - of Grafton Street and Derby Square Those are for my cares. And you, in Dublin

Another, more indirect assertion of an Irish identity is the use of 6/8 time, which has remained uncommon in rock music, but remains popular with traditional Irish musicians. "Honesty is no Excuse," "Return of the Farmer's Son," "Remembering Part 2," and "Old Moon Madness" all use this most identifiable of Irish Trad time signatures. Whether or not it was a conscious aesthetic decision or a product of unconscious adaptation on Phil Lynott's part is impossible to say. Davey Bates of the Belfast band, Sweet Savage - who toured briefly with Thin Lizzy - has suggested of their own music that it was likely unconscious. "Eye of

the Storm," it was pointed out to him many years after its initial release, "sounds like a jig" (pc).

The subsequent years saw Ireland develop a thriving international rock culture including U2, Sinead O'Connor, The Cranberries, and the Pogues. There was little that was identifiably Irish in these bands short of their political statements, excepting the Pogues whose mix of Trad and punk "sounded like a pack of drunken Irish louts let loose in a studio" (Prendergast 108). These last were irreverent and innovative enough to win praise from Elvis Costello, who asserted that "the Pogues saved folk from the folkies" (quoted in Prendergast 159).

In 1995, two seminal albums were released into the Irish underground, Primordial's *Imrama* and Cruachan's *Tuatha na Gael*, each introducing a brand of metal influenced by the Irish Trad scene. In a move calculated to reveal their intent forthwith, Primordial opened *Imrama* with "Fuil Arsa," sung in the Irish language and offered without translation (given in ex. 38). Speaking of its text, Alan Nemtheanga said that, "it is all I ever wanted to say to Irish people. It is for them alone, really. It is for those among us with a fire left raging in our veins...and it was perhaps a statement of out intent" (pc).

Ex. 38

Our Blood will live on, enduring forever
In a circle around the globe

Oh, ancient gods, our fire is still burning
Teaching your people forever

That which rises from the dust
Will return again
I have walked in the woods
Felt the spirits
Felt the pain

As frontman of one of the more subtly Irish bands, Nemtheanga is quick to correct anyone who might pigeonhole Primordial. "We see what we do as fundamentally a few things...Irish, passionate and pure, Dark Art perhaps, and of course metal." He is well aware that people come to the band with certain presumptions, and "black metal and Celtic are two of those." Primordial prefers not to foster such expectations, and consequently places themselves in opposition to other bands – like Celtus or Tamalin – who unashamedly mix rock and traditional into a "glowering, moody rock music...earthed with the ethnic sounds of Irish trad, but worked to an end where the words popular and commercially successful spring to mind" (R. O'Connor 14).

What Primordial offers the listener is predominantly black metal, often lyrically satanic, but with gentler interludes composed of solo vocal songs, like "Dark Song," or whistle and bodhran tunes that approximate Trad formal structures.

"Beneath A Bronze Sky" (ex. 38) is of the latter type. Constructed like a three-part jig, it lacks any real formal complexity, relying instead upon a repetitive four-bar structure.

Ex. 38



tin whistle melody of "Beneath a Bronze Sky"

Typically a jig consists of two or more eight-bar phrases, often repeated in a binary AA BB. Here the phases are each repeated four times, giving the length of a standard jig without the melodic interest, despite whatever ornamentation might be added. There is a degree of interest given by the addition of spoken words during the second repetition of the form, but it is largely rhythmic as the vocals are mixed such that they are rendered at times unintelligible. The text to the A section reads:

Whisper, Wonder, days of slumber
In the daylight whisper, wonder
/ - / in twilight shadow

Ultimately, however, Primordial's commitment to their Irishness is more cerebral than musical. It is hard to escape, but it is not as forcibly asserted as many of their contemporaries. What Nemtheanga describes as "Dark Art" is contextualized within an aura of ancient Ireland, placed within a framework of whistle, bodhran, and the ancient poets. "I guess with our music we are wishing to create something timeless, not really transient or reflecting only that era...Dark and Metal and honest and pure...I would hope that it should not matter where you are from, and that the music stands on its own. Satan is, of course, an equal opportunities employer!" Primordial remains an exception within the Irish folk metal. They are more closely aligned with the black metal scene but pride themselves on what they consider their indefinability.

Trad influenced folk metal in the Isles is epitomized by Primordial's coeval band, Cruachan, and others like Waylander, Geasa, Ragnarok (UK). At the same time, folk influenced rock and hard-rock remains popular in Britain with bands like Skyclad and even Jethro Tull, who's *Crest of a Knave* included

Fairport Convention's Ric Sander and won the 1989 Grammy Award for Best Metal or Hard Rock album – incidentally beating out Metallica's ...*And Justice for All*.

Cruachan performs perhaps the most successfully hybridized version of Irish folk metal. Their 1995 debut, *Tuatha na Gael*, opens with the traditional air, "I am Tuan," played on uilleann pipes and whistle (ex. 39).

Ex. 39

The musical score for "I am Tuan" is presented on three staves. The first staff is marked with a box containing the letter 'A' and includes fingering numbers (i, i, III, IV, III, VII, III) and a repeat sign. The second staff is marked with a box containing the letter 'B' and includes fingering numbers (IV, V). The third staff includes fingering numbers (III, VII, IV) and ends with the word "fade". The title "melody of 'I am Tuan'" is centered below the staves.

This is a standard air excepting that the repeat structure omits the second iteration section B, thus the form A A B A A (outro). To heighten the sense of temporal-spatial placement, the song opens with the sounds of sweeping wind that induce a feeling of isolation that is only increased by the mournful, minor quality of the air.

"Maeves March," is another tune in a traditional style but written by John O'Fathaigh, the group's whistle and flute player. Written as a march in 6/8, "Maeves" illustrates O'Fathaigh's strong familiarity with Trad. The repeat

structure is somewhat irregular, as are some of the phrases, but melodically it is well within the standard parameters of step-wise motion with leaps limited to intervals of a perfect fifth (see full transcription in appendix 2).

The song opens with a three-time repeat of the A section by the whistle and bodhran. The B section is an eight-bar transition comprised of a short, ascending line beginning on the second beat of the last measure of A – again played three times – and a two measure cadential formula. The whistle introduces the transition, with the electric guitar joining for the last six and a half bars (the second iteration of the ascending line). The guitar then continues to play in parallel octaves with the whistle while the bass limits itself primarily to playing the tonic of the changes.

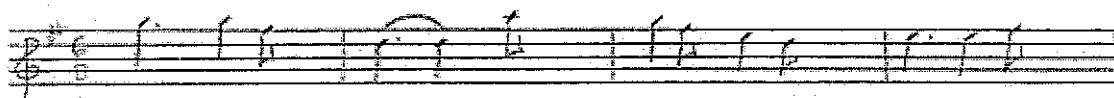
A secondary transitional line (D) follows the melody in section C and turns back into B, which in turn leads to a reiteration of the form C D B. Then follows a final melody played by guitar and pipes in E section, and then a reprise of sorts. The final structure of "Maeve's March" is:

A B C D B C D B E E' C D B A

where E' is a repetition of E transposed one down a major second.

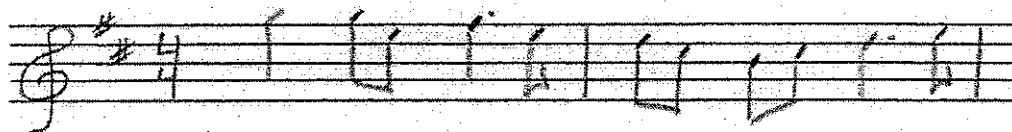
Examination of the secondary transitional phrase reveals a process that James Cowdery calls "recombination" (Cowdery 92). Through recombination it is possible to compare melodic material in tunes that do not share general outlines and, in fact, sound like entirely different melodies. By comparing excerpts, however, we discover certain motives that reappear within the general traditional corpus (ex. 40a and 40b).

Ex.40a



Transitional phrase D, "Maeves March"

Ex. 40b



mm. 1-2, section C, "King of the Faeries" (end of CD track 12)

Cowdery defines another technique that can be applied to Cruachan's music, called "conjoining." He explains that "tunes grouped by the conjoining principle have sections in common, while other sections differ" (Cowdery 90). Cowdery's work is primarily concerned with delimiting "tune families," and as a consequence he defines conjoining as an analytical technique, not a compositional one, but basically it identifies tunes that were written by lifting large pieces of melodic material – not necessarily intentionally – and recontextualizing them. This is a process that has been described to me by several Irish musicians, who suggest that one way of composing new songs is to start with an existing motive (recombining) or line (conjoining) and writing around it to complete a form.²

We find an example of conjoining in "To Invoke the Horned God," on *Tuatha na Gael*. This song is constructed of five separate sections and closes with a reprise of the first. The overall structure is:

² Mel Mercier and Niall Vallely, personal communication

A B [C D] E A

Together sections C and D comprise a modest variant of the Trad tune "Danny Abs Slide" (ex. 41a and 41b).

Ex. 41a



"To invoke the Horned God," sections C and D

Ex. 41b



"Danny Ab's Slide" (in Cowdery 116)

Horslips used the second half of this same jig as the opening melody of "The March" on *The Tain*, altering it only enough to play it in 4/4.

Although the conjoined portion of "To Invoke the Horned God" is abnormally large – including an entire traditional tune – it does conform to a Cowderian analysis. In fact, the process does not differ markedly from that described by John O'Fathaigh:

I mainly come up with the folky parts, and basically, if we like them we fit them together if the changes sound OK. And then from the basic tune we build on it or, more often than not, pull out parts from a number of songs and make two or so songs into one out of the parts that are left. Lyrics are then put over the music. (pc)

Despite parts its formal structure mimicking that of a traditional tune, "Horned God," could not be mistaken for an electrified Trad song in the same way that "Maeves March" or "Brian Boru" (cd track 19) might. The track opens with a momentary screech of highly distorted noise before the whistle launches into a fast eight-bar melody in 4/4 (ex. 42).

Ex. 42

A $\text{♩} = 200$

whistle

E- E- D Δ E- D Δ

E- E- D Δ E- D Δ

unison
(whistle, guitar, bass)

tin whistle melody of section A, "To Invoke the Horned God"

The first eight measures are played with strongly articulated quarter-note bass and guitar hits on each chord change followed by strummed eighth notes until the next chord. The drums support the rhythm with a steady back beat and constant

eighth notes on the high-hat; the second eight bars are played in unison. Before the entire A section is repeated as noted above, the first eight measures are played twice without bass guitar and with distortion on the lead guitar switched off, creating a softer, cleaner sound.

The text is sung over power chords over a steady four on the drums. The beat remains constant, but the slow delivery of the lyrics provides a sense of slowing down. A two bar descending cadential phrase leads to an A minor chord that falls on the one of "Danny Ab's Slide," sections C and D as shown in example 6a.

In section C, both the time signature and the pulse are changed. The change in pulse is effected by the high-hat, which articulates the first beat of the first three measures and beats a steady four on the last. The uilleann pipes and whistle trade two-bar phrases the first time through C, playing in unison on the last two of each repeat. After three repetitions of the slide, the signature returns to 4/4, but the pulse remains halved.

The remaining lyrics are sung extremely slowly – approximately one syllable per whole note – to the final section E. This marks a return to slow power chords by the bass and guitar in an arcing line

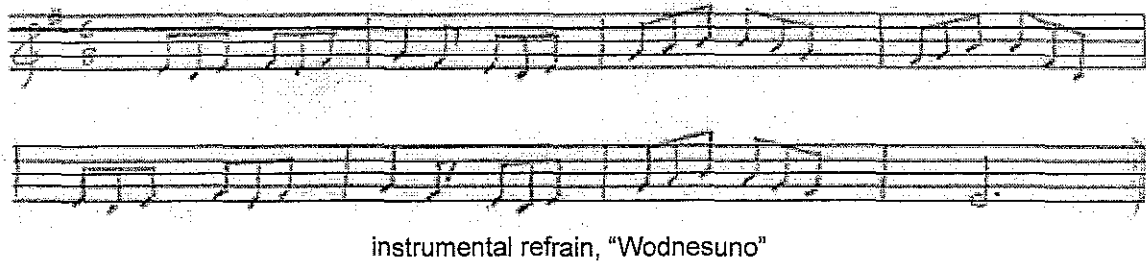
|| E | F# | G | F# ||

while the pipes reinforce the fourth until the chords move to a descending line eight bars later.

|| A | E | D | D ||

Another curious example is found in Ragnarok (UK)'s "Wodnesuno" (ex. 43a). Here the source material is the slip-jig "The Kid on the Mountain" (ex. 43b, from Krassen 85), and first appears after the second verse.

Ex. 43a



instrumental refrain, "Wodnesuno"

Ex. 43b



"The Kid on the Mountain," section A

The excerpt from "Wodnesuno" is clearly based upon the melody collected by O'Neill, but is it an example of conjoining or of recombining? The general contours of the line are similar, but the tunes bear no over-arching similarities. Once examined, it becomes clear that the first three beats are clearly and directly related. Note also that measures 3-4 of the "Wodnesuno" excerpt are borrowed from the final four beats of "The Kid on the Mountain." The last bars are simply a cadential variant of the first. Of such examples, Cowdery wisely advised that "if we wish to understand this process, we must look for *principles* – the overlapping and flexible ways in which musicians work with their materials – rather than looking for categories to impose from the outside" (Cowdery 88, original emphasis).

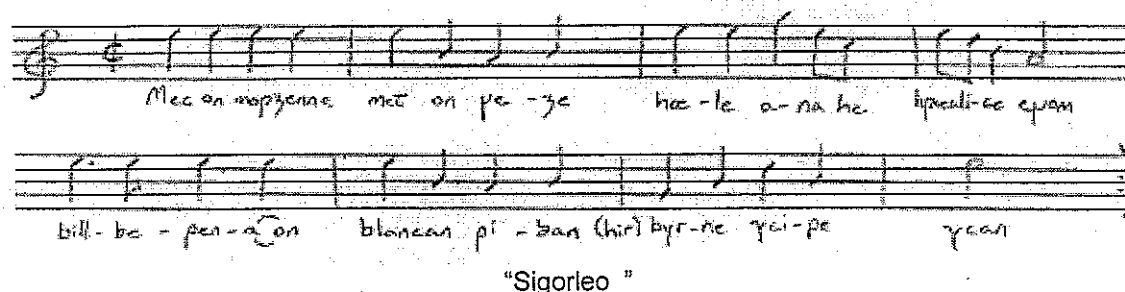
There is also a greater amount of "covering" songs not written by the bands, the type of wholesale appropriation for which Led Zeppelin was so roundly criticized. Here, however, the songs in question have typically entered the public domain so far in the past that it is impossible to trace authorship to an early, authoritative recorded source. As mentioned previously, Cruachan has recorded "I am Tuan" and "Brian Boru's March," the last being said to date from the Battle of Clontarf in 1014 (Prendergast 86). Ragnarok (UK) recorded a version of "John Barleycorn," though singer and guitarist Deorth vehemently insists that "only the vocal arrangement is traditional. The rest of the music is purely my own creation" (pc). Another Irish band, Waylander, recorded a version of "King of the Faeries" on *Reawakening Pride Once Lost* (1998) that, though traditional, sounds far more like a cover of Horslips' mid-1970s recording of the same (cd track 14).

What remains of the output of these bands and others of their ilk is a blend of folk and metal. The majority of bands tend towards a more integrated style, adding instruments and text as invocation and atmosphere in the highly distorted and more purely metal parts while supporting the more traditional portions with power chord support or electrified and distorted unisons with a heavy back beat.

There remain a handful of bands, like Ragnarok (UK), who continue to separate the folk from the metal. Often this involves nothing more than using folk-like, acoustic, or spoken word pieces as divisions between harsher tracks or as intros and outros. Both *To Mend the Oaken Heart* (1997) and *Domgeorn*

(1999) open with this kind of piece, and each album is interspersed with the same. The fourth track on *Domgeorn*, "Sigorleo_" (ex. 44), is a simple strophic song, very much in the style of "John Barleycorn", sung a cappella and in Old Saxon.

Ex. 44



Deorth wrote fully half of *Domgeorn* in Saxon because "it fits the ideas and subjects of our songs better than modern English would, simply because it is the language which grew within, and was a part of, those ideas." These ideas center very much around a kind of ancient nationalism and a pride in its religion that is tolerant, "but not so that it will tolerate 1300 years of oppression, and the time for revenge – to fight back – is long overdue" (pc).

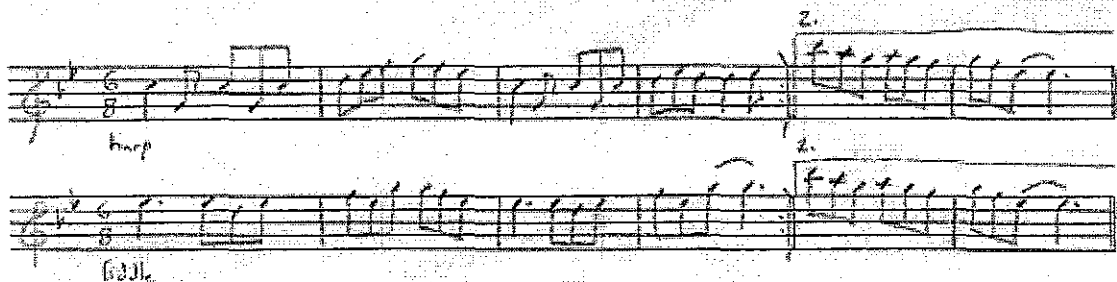
Similarly, within the liner notes of *Domgeorn* the song titles are written using the Anglo-Saxon rune *futhorc*, as are some of the lyrics of "The Battle of Maldon." Deorth explains the latter usage as a differentiating mechanism between the song proper, which is in Old English, and the chant, which is in Old Norse and comes from the "Hattatal" in Snorri Sturlson's *Edda*. The use of runes in the titles Deorth describes as inscriptive, and hence closer to their original purpose.

But like Alan Nemtheanga's use of the Irish language in "Fuil Arsa," the runes serve a purpose that approaches meaningful obfuscation. Stephen Pollington has pointed out that runes "suggest antiquity and secret learning; those which are not magical in the strict sense nevertheless retain a certain glamour of the ancient and the arcane" (Pollington 9). Despite modern translations being made available, one must still seek them out. Their visual and aural presence recalls the eldritch past; they serve to reinforce the imaginary world wrought by mythic texts.

Aside from clear stylistic division between tracks, another mode presents itself: strong division within a song. Ragnarok again presents us with an excellent example of this kind of folk-metal composition in "Samhain."

The track opens to the sounds of an owl hooting and a crackling fire. The song itself begins after a quick fade in with a simple 6/8 rhythm on bodhran. After the time has been established, the harp and guitar play an eight-bar melody that the violin harmonizes on its reiteration (ex. 45).

Ex. 45



framing harp and fiddle tune from "Samhain"

A final two-bar phrase drops the final E of the melody to a C. An eighth note figuration of [a b] acts as a pick-up beat to the following section, a verse in a pure black metal style with the power chord phrase below.

[a b] ||: B | E | D c| C [ab] :||

If fear stills thy heart
Hold close to the fire/
The harvest moon rises
And burns as the pyre/
Mock not the ancients
Invite not their curse
Misfortune or mirth
Do they hold in their purse

Samhain

The harp and fiddle duet that opens the piece returns after verse sections with rondo-like frequency and serves a framing function. Except for the refrain, the text is sung in the usual black metal growl; the acoustic melody reorients the ear and reminds listeners that this is not to be interpreted as pure, satanic black metal. In fact, the final fiddle/harp reprise that closes the song is underscored by the sounds of children at play.

Taken out of context, these prove to be little more than interesting departures from an established sub-genre of metal. The production of folk metal, however, is much more meaningful to the bands than such a simple reading would allow. Every musician with whom I have spoken has voiced not only a strong interest in the histories, myths, and religions of their locale, but also a deep patriotic sentiment. It should be stressed that this is not necessarily a jingoistic or xenophobic nationalism, but rather an abiding pride that simply "being" cannot satisfy. "Doing" is prerequisite to many of them: studying history

and literature, practicing ancient religion, writing and performing poetry and music. In essence, they are "spreading the word." The word is not uniformly understood among either bands or fans, but by using traditional motives and texts, these bands are able to access something more meaningful. Deorth has stated this most romantically, but he does touch upon that indistinguishable something that all of these bands are trying to reach:

I feel that these musical forms are a part of everyone. It is the song of their ancestral homes, the earth, wind, sun and rain, and by the gift of their gods made into sound – manifesting itself in tribal chants, fertility rites, ritual and praise – its melodies weave within the patterns of their very DNA. It is the song of that people's life force itself. (pc)

Continuity with the past, then, functions as an important vehicle for the transmission of potent symbolism. Many fans and musicians are fully cognizant of this and rely upon its effects, and the past functions in much the same way in Scandinavian folk-black metal. Niall MacKinnon writes that "an art form with a strong sense of its past depresses the attention to self and the cult of individualism," noting contrariwise that an art form without links to the past accentuates the present (MacKinnon 67). These invocations of the past are the chronotopes that draw one outside of time to be a part of something more ancient, perhaps perceptually more noble than contemporary popular culture.

Metal Communities Connected

Black metal is not a genre typified by live performance. Especially in North America, there are few venues that will any longer cater to heavy metal in general. The shows that do occur frequently happen in conjunction with metal festivals and rarely offer more than a twenty minute set. Periodically, once bands are in the U.S. they might play a handful of shows in the larger cities, but there is little in the way of continental tours outside of Europe. Dimmu Borgir, for example, played a set at The March Metal Meltdown in Asbury Park, New Jersey in 1999 and a single show in New York City shortly thereafter before returning to Europe. Amorphis, who also played at the Meltdown, flew to Mexico City for a concert the following night before returning briefly to their label offices in Pennsylvania for press interviews while playing no additional concerts.

The difficulties are compounded for folk metal, many of whom have frequent personnel turnover (especially on the folk instruments) and lack major label support to help convince clubs that tin whistle and violin can be used in metal. It also remains far more of a niche market within black metal, limiting the resources allotted to it by labels.

As a consequence, much of the community building that takes place in the black and folk metal community happens through alternatives to face-to-face contact. Tape trading, though frowned upon by many larger labels, becomes an inexpensive way to hear new bands, build contacts, and share knowledge with other fans. Newsgroups like alt.music.black-metal and alt.rock-n-roll.metal serve

as information clearinghouses where anybody can ask anything and generally get a somewhat knowledgeable response. Finally, the Internet has become an invaluable resource for many fans for the dissemination of information both general and specific.

Tape Trading

Tape trading, by far the least instantaneous means of community building, is often the most valuable to fans. Very few metal fans known to me are able to spend hundreds of dollars annually to acquire new recordings; given the demographic make-up of heavy metal, it seems unlikely that fans at large are any more capable of doing so. Dubs and trades seem a large part of many young fans collections, whether fans of metal, 1960s psychedelia, or almost any other genre of music. Some musicians welcome dubbing, even going so far as to encourage bootlegging. Barney Greenway of the grindcore band Napalm Death is one of the latter, drawing the line only at profiteering. He is the first to admit that Napalm Death could not have made it so far professionally without this kind of word of mouth distribution, and he is not alone in this opinion.¹ But he is equally quick to comment that he despises those that sell bootlegged recordings either above cost or as authorized releases (pc).

Trading is well recognized by both bands and fans as a powerful tool for disseminating new material. Metallica became the superstars they did only through giving their own material away and by letting fans do it as well through

¹ At the 1999 March Metal Meltdown, many of the bands I interviewed expressed similar views. All seem to understand bootlegging as a valuable tool for developing a reputation.

trading, a fact so well-known that even VH-1 credits it in their "Behind the Music" documentary on the band.

With the advent of MP3s, trading has become even easier, with songs and albums now easily downloadable on the Internet. A recent thread on alt.music.black-metal ("Death to CD-R traders and bootleggers") began by bemoaning the loss of income to bands by this kind of piracy but quickly developed into a lively debate. Rob K. wrote that, "if you think about it, MP3s are no different than tape trading. Tape trading is what made the underground what it is today. Only now, people can do it easier, quicker, and more efficiently."

The majority of the arguments for such bootlegging focussed on three major points: 1) many older recordings simply can no longer be purchased commercially (e.g. Possessed's *Seven Churches*) or were never commercial in the first place (Grateful Dead concert bootlegging), 2) many people with large libraries of CD-R recordings own many of them only because they could be had without purchase (i.e. they never would have bought them in the first place), and 3) most avid fans and collectors fetishize the object of their collection (the liner notes, the art, etc.). Many belonging to this last category might use a CD-R as a stopgap until they can buy a commercial copy. I will admit that many of my own acquaintances and I are of this type.

The anti-bootleggers' primary argument on the difference between cassette and CD-R bootlegging centered on the fact that cassette boots degrade over time and a collection cannot be sustained over the long-term. Let me again bring personal experience to bear on this. I obtained a sizable collection of 70s

Progressive rock by dubbing friends' recordings in the mid-1980s, and they dubbed many from me as well. Over the last fifteen years I have replaced many of them with original vinyl or CD re-issues, not necessarily because most of them have degraded beyond listenability; in fact I still use most of them. Rather I wanted the liner notes and cover art, as did many of my fellow traders. The same can be said of my collection of metal, and those of my metallers acquaintances, as well as my informants. Despite covering only two genres – progressive and metal – this sample of people numbers over fifty (including friends and acquaintances, dubbing contacts, and informants) primarily in two distinct geographical areas – the Midwest and the Northeast – though many of my Internet informants are scattered across the Western Hemisphere.

Though it is difficult to make generalizations based on such a disparate grouping, a clear pattern does emerge. Objects collected become objects fetishized. Though there is much to be said for music as a stand-alone art form, it must be admitted that once many of us own a dub of a commercial recording, we then desire all its accoutrements. As Edward Macan (1997) has argued of progressive rock recordings, the cover art visuals and design can carry as much interpretive weight as the music itself.

Trading via cassette, CD-R, or MP3 is an important aspect of collecting to many fans. On the level of the individual, it allows access to unavailable recordings and greater dissemination across broader fan communities. It can also act for fans of metal in the same way as radio for fans of pop music. Downloading an MP3 gives a fan a taste of a new record before they buy it,

which can save a great deal of money and aggravation. Websites like MP3.com, where bands can upload songs or even entire albums, make new recordings available to many that might not otherwise be able to listen before purchase, creating new fans from the outset.

On a community level it allows for the creation of a wide network of trader acquaintances. Few of these will necessarily develop into friendships, but some do. Additionally, the connectivity of the Internet makes trading in bad faith much more difficult. Internet traders tend to look out for one another, offering "bad trader lists" both on websites² and through Usenet postings.

Usenet

Usenet newsgroups are another kind of community wherein any number of people can post questions, thoughts, and opinions and almost be guaranteed some response. Unlike various forms of Internet chat (IRC), newsgroup discussions do not take place in real time. Instead, a message is posted to a list accessible by anyone. In turn, anybody can respond. For example, it is not uncommon on alt.music.black-metal, a relatively high traffic group I have followed for approximately four years, to see nearly one hundred messages daily. Yet it remains almost impossible to accurately gauge the number of silent participants, or "lurkers," who read the lists without ever posting.

² <http://user.iworld.net/frost/traders.html>
<http://members.tripod.com/~malkim/link.html> (includes ten additional trader lists)
<http://fourier.phy.ulaval.ca/smoisan/traders.html>

Serious messages on alt.music.black-metal, those not specifically designed to incite riot, are of four basic types: questions about specific bands or the genre in general, information (reviews of recordings or show, concert dates, etc.), trading/buying/selling, and advertisements for new bands, 'zines, or websites. Typically questions will receive some kind of honest answer within a day. Adverts often spark critical discussions about aesthetic or methodological issues. Matthew Smith (1999) has suggested that this last is specifically designed as a community building technique. Inviting others to critique or contribute is a strategy aimed at increasing the sense of belonging and asserting affinities.

The kinds of questions posted to alt.music.black-metal vary from the extremely general to the extremely specific, but many new fans post queries to flesh out their own knowledge of the field. Curtis, a poster largely unfamiliar with black metal, asked the following question about the birth of the style in April, 2000. I have included two representative answers, the first of which was made by one of the newsgroups most prolific posters, Sybren.

(Curtis) I don't listen to this type of music much, but a guy keeps arguing with me that Iron Maiden was the first ever black metal band. Do you agree, what are the origins of black metal [sic]? Thanks.

(Sybren) Iron Maiden was the coolest band of the 80's, massively influential and all, but had absolutely *nothing* to do with Black Metal. I've never seen any serious debate on 'the first Black Metal band' [because] everyone always points to Venom :)

(Mastema) Iron Maiden was a great metal band. One of the best ever. Nobody talks about the NWOBHM [New Wave of British Heavy Metal] anymore, except about Maiden... They influenced all the modern forms of metal, may it be trash [sic], speed, power, death and black. Without them, metal music would not be what it is now... They're the bridge between old and new metal. The most influential metal band, maybe... But they didn't played a sole BM song.... [sic]

There were a handful of other responses, though many were limited to a simple

"no" or "Venom was the first" kind of answer.

Another recent thread, titled "Anton LaVey's 'Satanism' and why...", garnered much more response by its incendiary content. Posted by Olok, it began as a supremacist diatribe that simply cannot be summarized:

I hate Anton LaVey. Jew Anton LaVey's "satanism" seem [sic] to have more to do with butt-spankings and orgies to feed his jewish libido than with what I consider satanism – war on JUDEO-christianity, return to the pagan beliefs of our Aryan ancestors and to wipe out all non-Aryan influences on our daily lives. His followers are just as lame, and seem to be comprised of every type of social, sexual deviant and mongrelized in existence [sic]! Not one warrior among them!

Olok continued for two more paragraphs concluding with a sizable list of "HAILS," "WARS," and "DEATH TO." Initial responses were short and dismissive: "Oh boy...", or "Is your swastika on too tight?" Gradually, however, people began to attack the poster and his arguments.

Over the following two weeks the posting received 136 responses, including a fair number of rebuttals by Olok as his argument was dismantled piece by piece by the group. Tangential discussions began between frequent poster to the list as repartee was bandied between people well known to each other.

(jonnyx) Could this guy's dick get any smaller? We can only wait and see...

(Sharund) Why are you interested in his penis size?

(Martha Hughes) haha! Sharund, you shit-disturber. I knew you'd ask something like that!

(jonnyx) I knew it was gonna be her or you who asked it!!!

(Sharund) Well... maybe it's just me... but I don't go around wondering about the size of people's penis when I disagree with them... and thus a valid question I think hehehehe... but maybe I am the only one who doesn't practise this...

Looking at all the posts, Olok had very few supporters, and though many responses were limited to simple declarations of "what an idiot" and the like, a

sizable number of them attacked Olok's position. It becomes clear while reading the thread that not only do most contributors to the list disagree with these kinds of statements (even the avowed Satanists, who took Olok to task for his interpretation of Satanism), but they also will not allow them to pass unnoticed.

It would be hard to argue against Olok's posting as a message intended solely to raise a violent response. However, it appeared clear throughout his posts that these are his beliefs. But it seemed equally clear that he is a young malcontent looking to stir up trouble and who, most likely, has no real idea what he is talking about. The entire thread shows a community trying to set up boundaries and normative behavior. Despite the looser social mores of alt.music.black-metal, they are still in place. Given the subject matter of the list, it is difficult to find topics that go too far over the edge of "common" decency as to be off-limits. It becomes clear, though, that any poster must be well informed and ready to defend any brash proclamations.

Another aspect of community must be its continuity of membership and, to a point, shared knowledge. The group alt.music.black-metal has a fairly stable population of regular posters – necessary to sustain the large number of daily messages – and a much larger group of infrequent posters. As suggested above, it is impossible to take an accurate count of lurkers, but it can be assumed to be quite large. Obviously, they all use the web to varying degrees, but most with whom I spoke felt the Internet to be a community or a partial community. Vic, a frequent poster to alt.music.black-metal, was perhaps most emphatic in this belief, writing to me in an interview:

I DO consider the internet-metalheads to be a community of sorts, and most of my fellow metalheads I only know through the net. I'm not a 'scene' member locally, but I do consider myself part of the 'global' scene – I use the Internet to facilitate support of 'grass-roots-level' bands that I know about (most of whom I only found about on the Internet). It's a case of technology enabling a wider dispersion of information – the mechanics are different, but essentially what goes on is the same as far as bands getting out there, getting noticed, spreading by word-of-mouth, etc. (pc)

Continuity is further facilitated by shared memories of past threads on the list. As with most groups of this kind, including email lists like AMSLIST (American Musicological Society) or the SEMlist (Society for Ethnomusicology), certain topics recur with a certain predictable frequency. Any long time member of such a list is aware of common threads that typically elicit "we've been through this before" responses. In a thread about the newest release by the band Mayhem ("My thoughts on the new Mayhem"), issues of authenticity and "trueness" were raised by many posters.

The main concern centered around whether or not this band could be called Mayhem, as many of the original members of the band that released *Pure Fucking Armageddon* and *De Mysteriis dom Sathanas* are dead (original singer Dead and guitarist Euronymous) or in prison (Count Grishnakh, a.k.a. Varg Vikernes). The question was one of mereological essentialism: can a band that has gradually evolved through the replacement of individual members to include none of its original members be called the same band even the oldest current member might well have shared membership with the last original member? Trueness in all of its incarnations and interpretations is a familiar subject to many members of alt.music.black-metal. This was pointed out towards the end of the thread by Deadmetal, who wrote that "this has fuck all to do with the 'we're true, you're false' fingerpointing of several years ago" (posted April 9, 2000).

All of this is just a miniscule sample of what goes on in alt.music.black-metal, but it does begin to illustrate how the group operates. First, there certainly exists a sense of list history, a memory of past list threads. This is not limited to black-metal, but can be seen across Usenet groups and email lists. As new members join or begin to take part, old threads are reborn in new clothes. This is inevitable in general interest information forums because what was considered important but unclear or unknown to a Usenet newcomer (or "newbie") in 1996 will almost certainly be of interest to a newbie in 2000.

Secondly, there is a sense of what is and is not appropriate on a list. As a public forum, Olok could not be barred from participation in the list, but he could be heckled and tormented by its members for appearing to be either stupid or merely ignorant. This is a loose attempt at establishing community norms on a forum where few mechanisms exist to enforce accountability. Since Olok could not be forced to cease his abusive behavior through any official channels, the group attempted to control his outbursts by making him seem foolish. Over the four years I have read this newsgroup, most victims of this type of treatment have been slow to post new messages, although there certainly exist posters who thrive on this type of conflict and persist. This is not the case on email lists, where members who consistently violate norms can be and are removed from the list or restricted in what they can post.

Finally, there is a familiarity and conversationality among the most active members. Discussions do take place, and snide remarks are common between acquaintances. Casual posters might well be offended by such comments, but

many posters are well known and a kind of conviviality exists between them. Describing newsgroups as a coffee shop atmosphere, Vic offers that "we all go in there when we want and chat with other people who happen to be there at the same time. We discuss things seriously, we cut up, we talk about new releases and classics, we suggest new music to other people...." (pc). Even without face-to-face contact, listers grow accustomed to a variety of writers and styles and are able to develop amiable relationships over great distances.

World Wide Web

A multitude of websites built for the metal community exist as well. These include web-zines, official band and label pages, fan pages, information sites, album reviews and databases. Web-'zines, fan and information sites, and databases are of course the best window into the connected community. Official band pages and label pages, though carrying a great deal of information, exist for the primary purpose of selling their products. They are, however, often the best place to buy new recordings.

The large number of personal websites, the size of existing webring³, and daily activity on a variety of newsgroups along with my own fan surveys have suggested that a large number of black metal fans are connected to the internet. Approximately fifty percent of my own informants said that they used the Internet

³ A webring is a collection of related web pages privately owned and connected by means of a linking program. Once on site hosted by a webring it becomes much easier to navigate to similarly themed sites. One can easily view a list of all member sites or be taken randomly from page to page with a click of a button.

for information about metal or for buying metal recordings.⁴ The Relapse Records website alone receives 130,000 hits per month (HOZ, pc). The connectivity of metal fans is in itself a topic worthy of deeper study but well beyond my current scope.

What can be quite overwhelming is the sheer depth of information that can be had by looking to fans of metal. To be sure, the Internet is full of lies, misinformation and shallow content, but there also exist a great many high quality niche pages. If one is looking for classificatory or historical information, two excellent pages are "Evil Music" and "The American Nihilist Underground Society."⁵ "The Viking Metal List" is an exhaustive catalogue of Viking references in heavy metal, and the "Tolkein Music List" does the same for references to the works of J.R.R. Tolkein. "Mega's Metal Asylum" lists the web pages for 183 different metal 'zines.

But can a large presence through the web and Usenet be considered a community? Is the Internet a community? There are three main critiques of the Internet as community: 1) it is anonymous, 2) because it is anonymous and lacks physicality there is no accountability for transgressions of communal codes, and 3) because it lacks governance, it exists in a state of anarchy incapable of sustaining a stable community (Surratt 270). Recently, however, a great deal of work has been done on the Internet as community (Surratt 1998, M.J. Smith 1999, Wellman and Gulia 1999, Reid 1999).

⁴ Twenty-five surveys were received from my web page. I added to this eight informants with whom I corresponded both in person and via the Internet. Though these numbers are indeed sparse, they correspond closely with personal experience.

⁵ All web addresses are listed in Appendix 3

Carla Surratt shows in great detail what mechanisms of socialization and control exist, pointing out that the people involved in this kind of communication "1) act as if they are face-to-face; and 2) act as if the norms of the community, in whatever form they are written, are the official policy. Quite simple, they agree to agree" (274). She further asserts that participants are fully aware of the dangers of anonymity to the social order and consequently minimize its effects through norms and rules that demand a high degree of self disclosure by means of description (desc) and finger (f) commands for the users and administrative requirements for and control of personal information.

Such "real" communities are meaningful to their members because they serve as a means to formulate and sustain identity and their institutions and mores build problem-solving strategies appropriate to the needs of each community. Virtual communities, of necessity, maintain the same modes of identity building and problem solving as actual communities. In tandem, the virtual and the actual expand the scope of group interaction, making communities more "glocalized." They are "simultaneously more global and local" (Wellman and Gulia 186). Global connectivity de-emphasizes locality as a pre-requisite and allows for the creation and maintenance of long-distance communities.

Metallars Evaluate Folk Metal

This suggests a certain amount of invention when considering the definition of a folk metal community. Under the circumstances, it proves most useful to view folk metal fans as taste public, insofar as fans of folk metal do not

necessarily share lifestyles and span the widest possible geographic space. Undoubtedly a shared musical taste and specific musical knowledge, perhaps even ethnicity unites these fans. Even the last is problematic.

The production of folk metal is no longer even limited to the north of Europe; bands using similar techniques of hybridization can now be found in Singapore, Japan, and Malaysia, each using local traditions in the creation of a new kind of metal. Rudra, an Indian band working out of Singapore – who include flute, dholak, dolki, and Sanskrit singing in their music – have gone so far as to define themselves as “the dawn of Vedic metal.”

Folk metal clearly holds some appeal for metallers and musicians alike. Certainly for the musicians it is in part attributable to an interest in new or different material, and in expanding the existing boundaries of the genre. Fans, too, constantly look for new sounds and fresh ideas, but in interviewing fans – both face to face and over the Internet – I discerned only two different reactions to folk metal. The first, by far the most prevalent, focussed around an interest in roots; negative reactions, on the other hand, dismissed folk metal as metal by virtue of its exploration of ethnic roots.

Jesse, a professional who works for a music software company, has perhaps the most poetic view of folk metal. He is the only fan ever to admit to me that listening to black metal can be exhausting or to admit even more broadly that much of it is overly simplistic and predictable. Most fans limit their criticisms to specific bands. He has been a fan of folk music as well, first of Irish trad then

Scandinavian, and enjoys the traditional aspects of folk metal, suggesting that they make the music more accessible. "To this day," he says,

[black metal] reminds me of standing atop some distant mountain, hearing the distant music above the icy cold wind...It is easy to zone out and dream of longboats and fjords and fantastic times and places of yore...these driving beats like oars on the water or folk melodies can be important, catchy, or driving. (pc)

Of course, not all fans are so explicit. Many, like Lorjef, have a much more instinctual reaction. Describing Cruachan, he says simply, "Cool, because it's Celtic – my father was Irish." Similarly, Sorgfulle enthused about Cruachan: "I LOVE the name because I am very much into and proud of my Celtic heritage. Piotr called the band "Guinness metal," appreciating that they successfully reconciled his love of Irish trad and metal.

Curiously, I received the strongest positive reactions from fans that are ethnically Irish. In my interviews – all of which included listening to unidentified samples – it was Cruachan that was embraced most happily by metallers. To be sure, many expressed a liking for other bands, but few to the same degree. Most could identify bands geographically, the most common mistake being to hear Otyg as Norwegian. This in itself is a testament to Otyg's "Scandinavian-ness," rather than a distinct Swedishness, as is broadly the goal as stated by Daniel Fredriksson. It is also indicative of the success many of these bands have in forging an identity based on location-specific indigeneity.

Countering Piotr's praise of Cruachan, Demona described them as "celtic-gaelic shit with blackened vocals," musing that their music sounds "like something you'd listen to while eating lucky charms." Her criticisms of Hades

and Otyg were equally dismissive, calling the former "amateurs with a misinterpretation of black metal" (referring primarily to their use of fiddles), and describing Otyg as "the type of crap I'd expect to hear at an Eastern European wedding...stupid fiddles, moronic vocals; this ain't black metal."

Other critics echoed dismay at the use of non-metal instruments, especially the violin, complaining that such examples were "too sing-songy" or had "an almost happy feel," or that "the violins sucked."

Unfortunately, my sample is statistically insignificant, but the clarity with which only two opposite views are delineated does suggest several conclusions. I would hazard to guess there does exist among folk metallers at large a strong interest in heritage or folk life. Musicians and fans alike have all voiced powerful callings to the past. Contrariwise, those that would dismiss folk metal do so on the basis of its instrumentation first and its text second. By relying more heavily on acoustic instruments, folk metallers must rely much less on the "heaviness" and gloom that typifies most black metal.

The Connected Community

Very little of the preceding could have been written without the intervention of long distance communication. Many of the interviews, for example, were conducted or concluded by means of email. Much of the research cited was found by using an Internet connection, and a fair number of the books were obtained by means of long-distance borrowing from distant universities. There is even some information that can only be found on the World Wide Web or Usenet.

It is surprising to me that so little credit is given to modern connectivity, and consequently its use in academia is frequently viewed with scorn. But does this mean we are to ignore communities that exist largely across such spaces? I am not suggesting that the web can replace or reproduce the field, but the Internet can be ancillary to a field. This chapter, though barely scratching the surface, points in a single possible direction. Wanda Bryant's much more substantive research into a Usenet community points to another.

What I have been able to illustrate is how metallers interact online and, to a limited degree, how they read their music. Deeper research is certainly defensible, and it could only be augmented by a study of a local folk metal scene, if such could be found. What seems clear to me, however, is that there exists no Irish folk metallers in opposition to Swedish or Lithuanian folk metallers. Rather what attracts the majority of these fans to the music is the same thing that repels its detractors: the immediate juxtaposition of metal and folk elements. It is able to exist as a coherent genre because of the Internet. Through tape trading, downloading, and the long-distance sharing of tastes and knowledge, its interpreters (those that produce and those that consume) are able to make connections and discern patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Conclusions:
To Achieve Ancestral Powers

The hallmark of folk metal is its folkishness. This statement seems so obvious as to appear dumb when put in print, but before dismissing such a statement out of hand, let us consider what that might mean. It is *like* folk but it is *not* folk, or what I see as a divergence from folksiness, which is connotatively "of the folk" while the former is merely "like the folk." It is a music based upon its own local heritage.

Heritage, to return to the words of Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, "is not a lost and found, a stolen and reclaimed.... [It] produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past" (369-370). It is creating the new that is most important here. Despite constant citation of the past, these groups want to produce something never before done, doing what Jim Lockhart of Horslips described as "an attempt to create something indigenous and new, but essentially indigenous" (quoted in N. O'Connor 122).

Clearly the bands described above have different ideas about what constitutes indigeneity within their own context. Norwegian Viking metal bands recreate a specious past parsed out of Norse mythology and proto-modern sea shanties. The result is a romanticized reconstruction of Norway peopled by a new kind of Nordic marauder in the guise of the black metallar (Vestel 11). This construction of the native Viking does not necessarily rely on historical truth but on associative links designed or modified to recall them. The authenticity of this

music to fans lies not in representational veracity, but in something more intangible. It is not a quality of the music at all but "the story it is heard to tell" (Frith 1996, 275).

Amorphis presents an altogether different case. Unwittingly or no, their move to include texts from the *Kalevala* and *Kanteletar* has roots in nineteenth century Karelianism which in the words of Matti Vainio "brought about an 'awakening' in the people's consciousness" (Vainio 164). What is peculiar about the *Kalevala*, however, is that it was uniquely created by a collector. As a whole, no variants of it exist outside those written by Lönnrot in the process of creating his final version. Though the material was still transmitted orally as late as the mid-nineteenth century, and considered by members of the band to be hundreds, even thousands, of years older, it exists outside of a living tradition.

Nevertheless, Amorphis is able to bring to bear a certain amount of oral tradition. A Karelian singer, even a literate one taking text from written sources, would "[tend] to express some lines in the formulas to which he is most accustomed in his own singing.... His basic training shines through and enables him to reconstruct lines according to his own creative habits" (Bates 125). Members of the band conveyed this sentiment to me as well, telling me that stories and melodies are never sung in the same way by the same person. "The only thing to remember," points out Pasi Koskinen, "is there's sort of a pattern that you should keep and you can use your imagination as much as you can" (pc).

Ironically, this compares favorably with defense of Led Zeppelin offered by Robert Plant, who maintained that it was common for blues musicians to take and reshape extant material, perhaps adding new words, and calling the song original. The difference, perhaps, is that the tunes used by Amorphis are well ensconced within the public domain, existing as recordings only when field workers have made them. Blues materials used by Zeppelin, on the other hand, were still in circulation as moneymaking enterprises for a variety of musicians.

The strength of these styles lies primarily in their relationship to tradition and to other musical genres. "Authentic" reproduction of traditional songs is less important than establishing a link to the past and obtaining the concomitant sense of continuity. The focus under such circumstances moves away from the song itself in favor of changing the role of music making, making it possible to place it in the hands of "ordinary" people, away from the controls of the industry. For many of these musicians, folk music has become "a symbol for social and cultural awakening, a reaction against an over-civilized community and the standard cultural systems" (Kjellström et. al. 172).

Folk metal musicians share an interest in folk history, and their folkishness should be viewed in the light of this as well as the various national folk and folk-rock revival. In addition to the interest in mytho-historic tales, it has led many bands in search of an "historic sonic palette," which Märta Ramsten has identified in Sweden in the revival and use of certain folk instruments, like the mouth-harp, bagpipes, bowed lyra, and mora harpa. Electric folk bands like Hedningarna

serve as archetypal examples of this type of revivalism, but folk metal bands like Otyg clearly share the same ideological impetus.

English and Irish bands have a seemingly less exotic sonic palette from which to draw and instead pull more directly from melodic traditions. Waylander, Cruachan, and Ragnarok (UK) use more pre-existing tunes than any Scandinavian bands, both in the context of a "cover" (e.g. "King of the Faeries," "John Barleycorn" and "Brian Boru" respectively) and fully incorporated into otherwise newly composed songs. How are these to be understood: as parody, re-enaction, revival, fakesong, or something else? It might be useful to examine each in turn.

To begin with parody, the modern sense of the word would likely suggest a strong sense of irony, even ridicule; even the kindest denotation implies a pastiche. Neither sense is strictly correct in the case of folk metal. To be sure, there must of necessity be some pastiche, but few bands resort to the kind of satire that might well result from such usage.¹

Re-enaction depends upon suspending the present, and as such should not be judged by modern day standards (MacKinnon 62). Accuracy and historic authenticity become manifestly important, and they are the only true watermarks of aesthetic value. The Society for Creative Anachronism (S.C.A.) is one such re-enactive organization that attempts to recreate the Medieval and early Renaissance periods on historically accurate models. Though many local

¹ The only example I have found that approaches parody in this sense is from a relatively new German band called In Extremo. Their first release, *Weckt die Toten* (Metal Blade 1998), consists of medieval lyrics in their original form sung over a romping heavy rock accompaniment (guitar, bass, drums) and three bagpipers who double on shawms.

chapters and even some "kingdoms" view their goals as far more generally educational and recreational and allow for more variance or interpretation, others take their re-creation so far as to deny the use of eye-glasses by members at events, gerrymandered or anachronistic clothing, or stopgap measures in instrumentation – for example using a modern trombone instead of the small-belled, small-bored sackbut – earning themselves the pernicious nickname, Society for Compulsive Accuracy.

The UK folk scene of the early 1970s had moved away from this kind of "musical taxidermy" in favor of a living, evolving tradition, typified by Planxty, The Bothy Band, Steeleye Span, and Fairport Convention. This was certainly a revival, in which the past was entered symbolically, both by playing old songs in radically new ways (listen to Fairport's 1978 version of "John Barleycorn" in *Tippler's Tales*, for example) and by playing new songs in old styles. In such a revival, integrity cannot be threatened by incursions of the present. Such a situation must necessarily allow for and even welcome new composition and experimentation within the forms in question.

As well as being read as a type of revival, in which the past is entered symbolically, folk metal can be seen as a type of fakesong, or a kind of new music not only based on but also mimicking old styles. The nouveau shanties of Viking metal stand as the clearest example, but the polska-style songs played by Otyg and the jigs and reels of Cruachan and Primordial are among these as well. This is not to be understood as an aped authenticity, though it is would easy enough to mistake these stylistic appropriations as an attempt to gain folk

credibility in the same way progressive rock appropriations of classical music was misinterpreted in the 1970s (see Macan 1997). Instead it should be read as a new move by bands to reinterpret their own roots in a way most meaningful to them.

Regardless, this music cannot be called "folk music." It might be better described as what Dan Lundberg calls "global form – local content" (Lundberg 52). Where the intentionality of a folk musician might be along the lines of "here is my music, come share it with me," a folk metallers is more likely to think along the lines of "cast your mind back along the aeons and recall what once was." This "once was" is often a specious reconstruction of myth, history, and wishful thinking, but the imaginary places it constructs are no less powerful.

Peter Wicke has written that, "the essential nature of the rock experience does not consist of decoding the music as a structure of meaning but rather in being able to place one's own significance on the sensuous experience which it provides" (Wicke 72). To be sure, folk metal bands attempt to draw listeners into certain chronotopes, casting the mind's eye into a local or national past. But why should this be considered so unusual? It seems only logical that bands of any genre looking to establish some differentiated identity in an already glutted market might do well to reassert their own locality. As Niall MacKinnon has argued, "perhaps what we should be questioning is the oddity of cultural forms which seek their 'roots' externally or which even seek to accentuate and celebrate their discontinuity, their divorce from indigenous cultural roots" (MacKinnon 67).

It is an old call to recollect your roots, and one that folk metal has taken up in a way that Eamon Carr recognized as one that reaches youth. This is not the heavy metal described by Robert Walser or Deena Weinstein, alienated and hopeless, grasping for promised social dominance and affluence diminishing in the face of deindustrialization. Neither is it premised on broad displays of virtuosic guitar licks or screaming, operatic vocals. Instead, folk metal offers the listener a fetishized past without the blue-collar trappings of proletarian sincerity.

In 1902, in his Preface to Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, William Butler Yeats summarized the power of the connections between the Irish landscape and its myths, writing:

We Irish should keep these [legendary] personages much in our hearts, for they lived in the places where we ride and go marketing, and sometimes they have met one another on the hills that cast their shadows upon our doors at evening...What beauty was lost to me, what depth of emotion is still lacking in me, because nobody told me...that Cruachan of the Enchantments lay behind those long, blue, rugged hills.

Such romantic images are the bread of folk metal. The abundance of natural sounds used within recordings bespeaks a desire for a deeper connection with the world about us.

The most effective folk metal draws in the listener by every means available – the moaning wind, a crackling fire, singing birds, the cheerful sounds of children at play – but it is not grasping for elusive, indefinable authenticity, as Robert Walser has argued (Walser 1993, 159). It is instead a call to engage in the fantasies of a past time and in doing so to contact a psychological deep untouched by modern anxieties.

Appendix 1

Ex. 5 Welcome! To the elder ruins again The wind whispers beside the deep forest Darkness will show us the way <i>Heic noenum pax</i> Here is no peace The sky has darkened thirteen as we are collected woeful around a book made of human flesh <i>De grandaevus antiquus mulum</i> <i>tristis arcanas mysteria scriptum</i> The books bloodwritten pages open <i>Invoco crentus domini de</i> <i>daemonium</i> We follow with our white eyes The ceremonial proceeding <i>Heic noenum pax</i> - Bring us the goat <i>Rex sacriticulus mortifer</i> In the circle of stone coffins We are standing with our black robes on holding the bowl with unholy water <i>Psychomantum et precr exito annos</i> <i>major.</i> <i>Ferus netandus sacerdos magus.</i> <i>Mortem animalium</i>	Ex. 6 Creed of the eternal life I swore Held my candle of life to the void Risen from the dead I death's power In the name of the one with horns on head Sleep of eternity withdrawn as dark upon The life of mine drew the very end so near The price another life the gospel of the Horned one to spread shore to shore Eternally his word let hear Be silent, listen to the wind crying out the Answer to all mankind call from other Side speech of horned divine To end your search in hope to find As sure night divides the day and as sure day divides the night Raging flames is all that awaits us on the other side Doomed the very moment he calls See his star ablaze his children On the night the flames reach for the sky Night is come to enter the never- ending burning fire Onto you all his word is given Fear not, reach to take his hand Hear our master calling us his children Eternal life us given death withdrawn As wolves among sheep we have Wandered Victory lies beyond their spit and scorn Even the heavens shall burn when we are gathered Now when the flames reach for the sky
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Appendix 2:
"Maeves March"

A

B

C

D

E

E' trans. ↓ whole step

sim

(F)

cadence after Final A

Form: A B C D B C D B E E' C D B A (F)

Appendix 3: Web-sites and Newsgroups (some of the better ones)

Information Resources

"Evilmusic"

<http://www.evilmusic.com>

"Hessian Studies Center"

<http://www.anus.com/hsc/index.html>

"Lithuanian Metal Scene"

http://www1.omnitel.net/liudnas/death_e.htm

"Mega's Metal Asylum"

<http://www.lut.fi/~mega/muzac0>

"Satan Stole My Teddybear"

<http://www.chedsey.com/>

"The Tolkein Music List"

<http://www.telia.lv/~witchcraft/jrrt/>

The Viking Metal Page"

<http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Palladium/7195/viking/vikings.html>

Labels and Distributors

"Century Media"

<http://www.centurymedia.com>

"Darkwoods of the Abyss" (Full Moon Productions"

<http://www.darkwoods.com>

"Hammerheart Records"

<http://www.hammerheart.com>

"Misanthropy Records"

<http://www.misanthropy.com>

"Neat Records" (see also for Eldethorn)

<http://www.neatrecords.com>

"Noise Records"

<http://www.noiserecords.com>

"Osmose Productions"

<http://www.osmoseproductions.com>

"Red Stream"

<http://www.rstream.com>

"Relapse Records"

<http://www.relapse.com>

'Zines

Ablaze, <http://www.ablaze-magazine.de/>

The Chamber, <http://crawford.tzo.net/chamber/main/>

Chronicles of Chaos, <http://www.chroniclesofchaos.com/>

Eternal Frost, <http://www.inetnow.net/~goden/eternalfrost/>

Frost Zine, <http://frost.tsx.org/frame/index.cfm>

Masterful Webzine,

<http://portal.republika.pl/popup/index.asp?url=http://priv4.onet.pl/lu/odsmaal/>

S.O.D. Magazine, <http://members.aol.com/sodmag/index.html>

Some Newsgroups of Interest to Metallars

alt.music.black-metal
alt.rock-n-roll.metal
alt.rock-n-roll.metal.death
alt.rock-n-roll.metal.drain
alt.rock-n-roll.metal.gnr
alt.rock-n-roll.metal.hard
alt.rock-n-roll.metal.heavy
alt.rock-n-roll.metal.oldschool
alt.rock-n-roll.metal.metallica
alt.rock-n-roll.metal.megadeth
alt.rock-n-roll.metal.ironmaiden
alt.rock-n-roll.metal.progressive

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Amorphis

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Bathory

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Borknagar

The Olden Domain (1997), Century Media

Celtic Collections

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Cruachan

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Untitled demo (1997)

Dawn

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Einherjer

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Odin Owns Ye All (1998), Century Black 7906

Enslaved

Vikingligs Veldi (1993), Voices of Wonder, Anti Mosh 008

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Hades

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- Horslips
The Tain (1973), Outlet Recording Co. Ltd. COAS M005
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- Vargavinter
FrostfÖdd (1996), Black Diamond Productions
- Vintersorg
Till Fjälls (1998), Napalm Records, NPR 056
- Waylander
Reawakening Pride Once Lost (1998), Century Media 77211
- Zpoan Vtenz
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