THE METAL FOLK: THE IMPACT OF MUSIC AND CULTURE ON FOLK METAL AND THE MUSIC OF KORPIKLAANI

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Folk metal developed in England during the 1990s as musicians incorporated folk instruments, folk tunes, folklore, and indigenous languages into heavy metal music. Folk metal is now found in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and South America. This thesis examines folk metal music, lyrics and visual images, utilizing the Finnish band, Korpiklaani, as a case study.

The first chapter discusses current folk metal research and outlines the need for and contributions of this current work. Chapter two introduces the influence of other genres, e.g. the blues, on the formation of heavy metal and addresses the emergence of metal subgenres as a result of changes made to the heavy metal sound. This leads to the next chapter, which discusses the history of folk metal and its characteristics as a heavy metal subgenre. Chapter four introduces music and culture found in Finland while the fifth chapter examines these elements in performances by the Finnish band, Korpiklaani. Chapter six discusses folk metal’s function as a mechanism to preserve and perpetuate national identities in reaction to hegemony in Europe. This work addresses folk metal as a heavy metal subgenre that reaffirms folk music, culture and national identities in resistance to Europeanization.
CHAPTER I

Introduction

This thesis will contribute to the existing documents on heavy metal music by examining cultural influences on folk metal as well as folk metal’s role in the preservation of music and culture in reaction to Europeanization. Heavy metal music emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since that time, over twenty-four variations of this music have developed. Each variant is characterized by specific musical, lyrical and vocal elements that distinguish one from another. These characteristics are a result of technological advances, including the use of sound samples and synthesizers found in industrial metal: the development of new playing techniques, e.g. the use of running 16th and 32nd note double kick (bass) drum patterns heard in thrash metal; new singing techniques as heard with the various methods of manipulating the timbre of the human voice; and the result of contact and interaction between musicians from differing musical backgrounds, as heard in symphonic metal. Other variants emerged through extra-musical and cultural influences, as musicians began to incorporate specific folk elements into their music.

Despite the emergence of heavy metal in the latter half of the twentieth century, it is only in the last two decades that scholars have devoted time and research to metal music. Existing material focuses predominantly on either “classic” or traditional bands, the evolution of the music or the extreme nature of the music and its practitioners. Few studies discuss folk traditions, music and culture and how these elements are integrated into and influence metal music. This selectiveness creates a skewed perception of the music and its culture, describing only a portion of the heavy metal family tree. For example, research is only now being conducted on musicians from Finland, Norway, Sweden and the Faroe Islands, who incorporate historical, cultural, religious and folk music traits into heavy metal (examples include Olivia
Lucas’ work on heavy metal in Finland,¹ Josh Green’s research on folk metal in the Faroe Islands² and Florian Heesch’s work on the band, Amon Amarth, from Sweden).³ By integrating these elements into metal music, musicians have created a heavy metal variant known as folk metal. This music is characterized by the concurrent performance of heavy metal music with the integration of folk music, mythological and/or cosmological stories, vocal performances in non-English languages, a focus on historical events or historical figures and lyrics or images that identify with a specific nation or group of people.

Prior to the discussion of metal and folk metal studies, the classificatory terms “style,” “genre” and “subgenre” should be addressed, as these terms play an integral role in classifying the numerous heavy metal variants. The first two terms, style and genre, are often used interchangeably. In The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, genre is defined as a “class, type or category, sanctioned by convention…an ideal type.”⁴ Within The Harvard Dictionary of Music, Fourth Edition, style is described as that which is “employed principally for the sake of comparing works or performances with one another and identifying the significant characteristics that distinguish one or more works or performances from others.”⁵ The two words serve the same purpose, as both are used to describe and classify music by creating and defining groups or categories based on certain musical characteristics.

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Genre, however, has taken on a holistic meaning and is used to describe the mode of music production, the “style in which it is produced,” and refers to the identifying markers of the music. The authors Keith Negus, Harris M. Berger, Keith Kahn-Harris, Deena Weinstein and Robert Walser use genre in this holistic sense. This nullifies the word “style” when describing musical types. Instead, style is applied when discussing physical aesthetics of audience members and listeners (the way they dress, the way they wear their hair, the presence of tattoos and piercings, etc.). In this thesis, genre will be used holistically to refer to heavy metal as a whole musical genre, encompassing all of the variants that exist within it.

The use of the term subgenre demonstrates the accepted and holistic application of genre. Subgenre indicates a variation of a genre and the subcategories that exist under the large generic umbrella. Examples of subgenres were mentioned earlier, e.g. industrial metal, thrash metal, symphonic metal and folk metal, but were labeled as heavy metal variants. Throughout this thesis, the term subgenre will be used in conjunction with the names of heavy metal variations to denote generic subcategories. This compartmentalization and categorization of generic varieties is not unique to heavy metal. For instance, Latin jazz, smooth jazz, Gypsy jazz and big band are all subgenres of jazz. These subcategories denote distinguishing characteristics that create individual musical identities in the larger genre of jazz. Gypsy jazz, Latin jazz and folk metal all indicate the integration of Western genres with traditional, ethnic or folk music. In current studies, the integration of these elements with heavy metal has not yet been fully explored.

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In the documentary, *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey*, the film director/anthropologist Sam Dunn and film director Scott McFadyen categorized and created a family tree of twenty-four metal subgenres. Each subgenre is defined by musical or lyrical characteristics, an affiliation to a particular geographical area, emergence during a specific time period, or a particular objective. Included in the family tree, for example, are the following subgenres: death metal, which is defined by lyrics focusing predominantly on death while the sound of the vocals are low, guttural and distorted (examples of death metal bands include Cannibal Corpse, Immolation and Nile); Norwegian black metal, which refers to a variation of black metal found in Norway, usually during the early 1990s (examples of Norwegian black metal bands include Mayhem, 1349 and Gorgoroth); and shock rock, which is characterized by theatrical live performances intended to scare audience members or members of the public (examples of shock rock bands include Alice Cooper, Marilyn Manson and GWAR). Subgenre titles allow for the classification of myriad bands based on common musical, lyrical traits or intentions.

The family tree created by Dunn and McFadyen also illustrates the relationships existing between heavy metal subgenres. Relationships emerge when musicians integrate characteristics from earlier or contemporary bands, thus synthesizing a new sound. Characteristics of earlier subgenres will remain but will be adapted for a new context, possibly with new additions. These relationships in the tree also establish a chronology, illustrating a timeline for the emergence of each subgenre and the development of the heavy metal genre at large.

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9 The film *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey* documents the history and development of heavy metal music and culture. The film illustrates the influence of social environments, religion, gender and censorship on metal music, musicians and culture.


11 Thrash Metal was formed when the fast tempos and aggression of punk music were combined with the New Wave of British Heavy Metal’s emphasis on musicianship and technique. Dunn and McFadyen’s tree demonstrates the connection between these different genres.
While Dunn and McFadyen’s tree is extensive in scope and content, further analysis of this lineage reveals the absence of bands and subgenres. For instance, the shock rock band, GWAR, and the industrial band, KMFDM, are not included. Also missing is the folk metal subgenre and every band affiliated with it. Instead, the filmmakers chose to focus only on popular or extreme subgenres. Additionally, even though the filmmakers recognize the blues as the foundation of heavy metal in their film, they did not include this music in the family tree. Similarly, in the works *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology* by Deena Weinstein and Robert Walser’s *Running With The Devil: Power, Gender and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, the authors also mention the importance of the blues to metal music and “classic” heavy metal bands, but do not construct a lineage demonstrating the relationship of the blues to this genre. The omission of this predecessor, among others such as rhythm and blues, eliminates a large portion of metal’s history and does not fully illustrate the relationship between heavy metal and other musical genres.

Despite this genealogical selectivity, *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey* does address the influence of history, culture and the environment on heavy metal’s development. In the film, connections are made between heavy metal and the American blues, discussing discontent with working conditions and lifestyles during difficult economic times, along with rock and roll, which was a convivial outlet for youths in a world rebuilding after global warfare. Heavy metal was influenced by these critical and genial sensibilities that occurred as a result of social, economic and political conditions in the United States and Great Britain. Folk metal, however, demonstrates the impact of these same elements along with influences of the ecological environment, history and culture more explicitly than most other heavy metal subgenres. It is the

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13 Ibid.
explicit integration of these elements from cultures around the world in heavy metal that makes folk metal a unique subgenre.

In Dunn and McFadyen’s second documentary, *Global Metal*, the filmmakers document the globalization of heavy metal and the influence of non-Western cultures on the music. In this film, the researchers mention subgenres related to folk metal at the outset of the project, but they do not provide further discussion of these subgenres or the musical characteristics that make them unique. Despite the work’s title, the majority of the bands discussed in the film perform a Westernized style of heavy metal. Only a small segment is devoted to a folk metal band from Israel and a minor portion of the movie showcases a performance of the *morin huur*, a bowed, two stringed horse-head fiddle from Mongolia, during a heavy metal concert. Rather, the filmmakers document death metal in Indonesia, thrash metal in Brazil and black metal in China, for example, focusing on the political and social issues in these nations. For instance, the footage on Brazil discusses the history of the country’s political system as interviewees describe the sudden influx of Western heavy metal imports into the country once the dictatorship dissolved and the government became democratic.

In interviews, the filmmakers also discuss one of the most well known Brazilian metal bands, Sepultura. An opportunity to explore the influence of Brazilian rhythms and instruments on the music of Sepultura emerges when the former vocalist and founder of the band, Max Cavalera, briefly discusses the incorporation of these elements into the band’s music. Cavalera describes this integration as a means of creating a unique and separate identity for the band,

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15 Sam Dunn and Scott McFadyen. *Global Metal*. Montreal: Seville Pictures, DVD-ROM, 2007. The film *Global Metal* is Dunn and McFadyen’s follow up documentary to *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey*. While the filmmaker’s first film focused on heavy metal in the West (American and Great Britain), *Global Metal* studies this music throughout the world.

16 Both death metal and thrash metal developed in the United States. Black metal formed in Northern Europe.
distinct from American and English bands. However, this segment lasts less than two minutes and the researchers do not pursue the topic. Discussion of these elements is imperative to studies of folk metal as they reveal the influence folk music, customs and cultures have made on heavy metal. Although Sepultura is not considered a folk metal band, the interview between Dunn and Cavalera clearly demonstrates the impact of Brazilian music and culture on some of the band’s work.

Only one folk metal band is briefly included in Global Metal during interviews held with Kobi Farhi, the lead singer of the Israeli band “Orphaned Land,” and when footage is shown of the band performing a concert and incorporating the bouzouki, a round bodied, long necked lute found in Greece, into the metal performance. However, this section of the film focuses on anti-Semitism and religious tensions in the Middle East and not the integration of folk and traditional instruments into heavy metal.

Throughout their second film, Dunn and McFadyen chose to discuss cross-cultural issues found in heavy metal around the world. While they demonstrate the similarities that exist between bands from Brazil, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Israel and China, the filmmakers create a homogeneous perception of heavy metal. Global Metal does not highlight the diversification of the heavy metal sound in cultures around the world. In contrast, the actual heterogeneity promoted by folk metal bands demonstrates the impact of culture, folk instruments and folk tunes on the lives of musicians as these elements are incorporated into their music. The reintroduction of heterogeneity through heavy metal subgenres is one of the foundational functions of folk metal, which will be discussed in this thesis.

While some authors, such as Walser and Weinstein, focus on heavy metal as a whole, emphasizing “classic” heavy metal bands and sounds, researchers have begun to focus on
specific heavy metal’s subgenres. A work focusing on particular subgenres is Keith Kahn-Harris’ text, *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*. In his research, Kahn-Harris discusses pagan elements and ideologies as portrayed and advocated by black metal bands. His work on this material focuses on the Vikings and their conflicts with Christian missionaries as well as the romantic portrayal of the Northern European environment by some Scandinavian bands. While both of these topics are found in folk metal, the author does not discuss them in the context of the folk metal subgenre and only mentions the folk metal bands, Orphaned Land from Israel, and the Finnish group, Korpiklaani, in passing. Kahn-Harris does not further develop his discussion on these bands nor does he include in depth analysis on the folk metal subgenre.

The above works by Kahn-Harris, Walser, Weinstein, Dunn and McFadyen demonstrate a trend in heavy metal studies. These authors gravitate toward the classic forms of heavy metal (the music and culture in the early years of the music’s development) or focus on the extreme nature of the music and musicians. The influence of folk customs, music and culture is briefly mentioned in these studies, though it is not always pursued. This thesis will redirect the attention given to the popular or extreme subgenres and will address folk metal, which has been relegated to passing references and footnotes.

Despite the shortcomings of *Global Metal*, this film and other recent works demonstrate a growing interest in the impact of culture on heavy metal around the globe. The text *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the Globe*, edited by Jeremy Wallach, Harris Berger and Paul D. Greene, discusses the globalization of heavy metal music. The essays in this work examine heavy metal in Malaysia, Nepal, Brazil, Israel and Norway, creating a survey from around the world. Ross Hagen contributed an essay to this text, titled, *Musical Style, Ideology*  

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and Mythology in Norwegian Black Metal, which reiterates the interest in extreme heavy metal bands and music. Hagen briefly mentions the incorporation of Scandinavian folk melodies into black metal guitar lines, but does not provide detailed analysis regarding this integration of folk melodies into the music. However, Hagen does address the pagan beliefs and Norse mythology found in Scandinavian heavy metal, albeit in reference to black metal.

There are, however, two specific works that address the origins, history and characteristics of folk metal and the related subgenres of pagan metal, black metal and Viking metal. The first, Reawakening Pride Once Lost: Indigeneity and European Folk Metal by Aaron Patrick Mulvaney, discusses folk metal in Ireland, England and Scandinavia, citing Celtic bands, such as Horslips, as progenitors of the subgenre in the 1970s, and gives prominence to the band Finnish band Amorphis. These countries and bands have played a significant role in the development of folk rock and folk metal, however, the topics discussed by Mulvaney need to be readdressed to include contemporary bands and new research. This current thesis will examine the influence of folk music, folk rock and heavy metal music from America, England and Ireland, leading to the development of folk metal. Discussion in this work will culminate with a focus on folk metal in Finland.

The second work that specifically discusses folk and pagan metal is the interview compilation created and produced by Bill Zebub in 2009, titled Pagan Metal: A Documentary. Throughout the course of the film, Zebub interviews folk metal musicians, attempting to clarify and gain access to details concerning the origins, background and significance of folk metal.

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21 Ibid., pp. 55-62.
Interviews are conducted with members of the folk metal bands Korpiklaani, Finntroll, Ensiferum, Turisas, Tyr and Primordial. Topics pertinent to the study of folk metal are discussed during the conversations, such as why folk instruments are incorporated into heavy metal music, the promotion of national sensibilities, and ideologies surrounding the function of folk metal. Although the participants offer insightful answers to these questions, the interviewer does not follow up with responses to elicit more details or further explanation from the musicians. In addition, interviews are not presented in a coherent manner, as questions and answers are haphazardly dispersed throughout the length of the film. This leads to confusion regarding the inquiries to which the musicians are responding. Despite the shortcomings of Zebub’s *Pagan Metal: A Documentary*, the film does offer first-hand accounts from folk metal musicians and incorporates live musical performances from the interviewees’ bands. To date, this is the only full-length documentary on pagan and folk metal bands.

The current literature and studies in heavy metal lack a concise and specific definition and discussion of folk metal. As outlined above, most works focus on the “classic” or traditional types of heavy metal or discuss the extreme nature of the music and its practitioners, while briefly mentioning folk metal in conversations of other subgenres. Although these subgenres constitute a large portion of the heavy metal family tree, an exploration of other bands and subgenres will contribute to the overall discussion of heavy metal music in general.

This thesis answers the question: what is the function of folk metal? In this work, I demonstrate the significance of folk metal as a mechanism for the preservation of folk music and culture in resistance to Europeanization and Americanization. I argue for the importance of this subgenre as a vehicle to promote and perpetuate specific music and cultures to listeners around the world as I discuss the impact and influence of cultural elements on heavy metal in general.
and folk metal in particular. Initial discussion in chapter two chronicles the history of heavy metal music, beginning with the blues, and addresses metal music as it exists presently. This history demonstrates the connectedness between various events in history, e.g. slavery and World War II, and music genres that emerged in America and Great Britain, such as the blues, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, skiffle, and folk rock, and how these topics are related to one another. This history concludes with the development of folk metal and its place in the larger metal genre.

In chapter three, I address the characteristics of folk metal that distinguish this music from other heavy metal subgenres, leading to a concise definition of folk metal. This definition is applicable to a number of bands and is not confined to one geographical location or time period. Based on this discussion and the characteristics outlined in it, listeners and researchers will be able to determine whether or not a band or a particular type of music can be considered folk metal. This chapter answers the following questions: What is folk metal? Where and how did it originate? Where does folk metal fall in the history of heavy metal? How does one identify as a member of the folk metal subgenre? How is the culture of a particular community reflected in folk metal?

Following this general discussion of the folk metal subgenre, I address folk music, cultures, communities and traditions found in Finland. I have chosen to focus on Finland as some of the most prominent folk metal bands, e.g. Amorphis, Finntroll, Moonsorrow, Turisas, Ensiferum, and Korpiklaani, have originated from this country over the last two decades. This chapter explores the music, culture, history, social atmosphere, religion and indigenous groups found in Finland, e.g. the Sami. The elements discussed in this chapter are then examined in the context of folk metal.
Chapter five discusses the aforementioned Finnish elements as they are seen and heard in the music of the Finnish folk metal band, Korpiklaani. This chapter combines the topics addressed in chapters three and four and demonstrates their relevance to the music of this band. For example, I address why Korpiklaani is classified as a folk metal band, what Finnish or Sami characteristics are present in the group’s music to achieve this designation, why these traits exist in the context of folk metal and what is accomplished through the music, lyrics imagery and performances of Korpiklaani. This chapter and discussion provide a case study for folk metal research.

The overall significance of folk metal and Korpiklaani’s music is addressed in the sixth chapter. Although I focus on one particular band, my argument is applicable to the folk metal subgenre as a whole. In this chapter, I argue that Korpiklaani’s music functions as a reaffirmation of Finnish folk music and cultural identity in reaction to Europeanization, Americanization, modernization, and political hegemony. Correlations are made between the development of folk metal in Finland during the 1990s, the effects of Finland’s entrance into the European Union and the romantic notions expressed by members of Korpiklaani and other Finnish folk metal musicians in regards to the folk culture and folk music in Finland. This chapter addresses folk metal as a form of performance preservation, revivalism and revitalization of folk music and culture, as these elements are expressed in new contexts for new audiences around the world.

Heavy metal music continues to grow and evolve through the adaptation and modification of the genre’s music, lyrics and instrumentation. This persistent development illustrates metal musicians’ interests in expanding the heavy metal sound, while further analysis reveals the underlying functions of these developments, as seen in the reaffirmation of cultural
heterogeneity in Europe through folk metal. This thesis will contribute to heavy metal research by analyzing the presence of Finland’s folk instruments, folk tunes, song forms, themes and cultural practices in Korpiklaani’s music and the influence of these elements on the construction of national identity.
CHAPTER II
AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HEAVY METAL MUSIC

Heavy metal music is rooted in rock and roll. While rock musicians and their music play a significant role in the history of heavy metal, rock and roll performers contribute only a fragment to its lineage. For a more comprehensive historical perspective, discussions must also include the significance of the blues, rhythm and blues, and rock and roll as well as the influence of extra-musical factors such as racial sentiments in the United States, warfare in Europe and Vietnam, technological advances and the contact and interaction between musicians from different musical and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the culmination and presence of lyrical themes considered unfit for “polite society,” the use of electric instruments performed at loud volumes, the prominence of the electric guitar’s distorted timbre and the influence of the critical and uncompromising song lyrics from folk musicians in the 1950s and 1960s led to the development of heavy metal music in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The Blues and Its Influence on the History of Heavy Metal

Several elements characterize the blues: a 12-bar chord progression, the use of blue notes, particular instruments (the acoustic guitar, harmonica and piano), and emotionally driven lyrics describing secular situations. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of the blues is the form of the music with a chord progression following a 12-bar structure, consisting of progressions between the tonic, subdominant and dominant degrees in the scale. While this is often considered the standard progression and format for the blues, 8 and 16-bar forms exist while some songs do not adhere to any of these forms.\(^{22}\) The 12-bar blues played a significant

role in the early years of heavy metal music. For instance, Led Zeppelin’s first two albums, *Led Zeppelin* (1969) and *Led Zeppelin II* (1969) are strongly influenced by the blues as well as this chord progression and structure. Although the form is less prevalent in heavy metal today, some musicians, such as those in the English band Motörhead, continue to structure their music based on the 12-bar blues.

In addition to the music’s structure, blue notes are also a distinguishing characteristic of the blues. Blues notes are altered degrees in the diatonic scale, lying between two adjacent notes in Western tuning, and are heard when raising or lowering a scale degree by a half step or by bending a string to produce microtones between pitches. The most commonly altered notes in a blues tune are the third, fifth and seventh scale degrees and demonstrate the confluence of African tunings and musical instruments in America. Although these notes characterize the blues, they are now found in other music genres, such as heavy metal and can be performed both vocally and on instruments, such as the guitar.

The altered fifth degree is one of the strongest connections between the blues, heavy metal and exists in classical music as well. This altered note, known as the tritone, is heard when an interval of a fifth is lowered or an interval of a fourth is raised a half step. Traditionally in Western music, these intervals are considered stable. However an unsettling sense of instability is created when they are altered. Due to the “unsettling” and “dissonant” sound of the tritone, it was termed *diabolus in musica* (the devil in music) during the Middle Ages and its use was generally avoided. Since that time, the tritone has been used to create tension in compositions,


23 Bending refers to the method of producing microtones.
sometimes being used to allude to evil. For example, in Black Sabbath’s eponymous song, the main guitar theme is constructed around the tritone (G and D-flat). Within the context of this song, the interval is used to accompany the narrator’s encounter with Satan in hell. The use of this interval on the guitar, however, emerged in the blues.

In regards to instrumentation, the acoustic guitar is significant to the blues, although other instruments, such as the harmonica and piano, are also used in performances. The guitar is often affiliated with this music for several reasons. The instrument is easily transportable, can be quickly tuned by the musician and provides the performer the opportunity to play the instrument and sing simultaneously. This last trait is one of the most crucial reasons for incorporating the guitar into the blues. The guitar fulfills the same role in heavy metal music. After the instrument was electrified in the 1930s, it became the focal instrument of metal music as musicians performed melodies, riffs, chords and solos in front of audiences and on recordings on the guitar while singing simultaneously. The release of guitar and rock themed video games, such as Guitar Hero (2005) and Rock Band (2007), capitalize on the musicians’ and audiences’ fascination with the instrument and its function in rock and heavy metal. However, the prominence of this instrument originated in the blues as a means to accompany the singing of lyrics.

Blues lyrics are distinct from those of other genres. Songs focus on an individual, often the singer, and are often a catharsis, expressing emotions rather than recounting a narrative. Blues songs discuss relationships with women, money, drugs, alcohol, gambling, itinerant lifestyles, illness, death and other everyday life issues from the perspective of the performer. Emotions in these compositions are often melancholic in nature. This state of being was referred
to as “the blues” in much of America during the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{26} These lyrical elements and the emotions used to express them are one of the characteristics that distinguish the blues from other genres, such as American popular music.

Historically, the subject material and emotional content of the blues were not particularly common in early American songs. If topics, such as love, lifestyles or relationships, were discussed, they were presented in a manner that was not as explicit as the blues. In his work, “Blues: Chronological Overview,” David Evans compares the lyrics of the blues to other American songs, noting,

The highly secular content of the blues, its concentration on the self in the here and now, and its expression of certain emotions and subject matter that are beyond the bounds of polite society have caused it to be viewed by many both within and outside of the African American community as low-down, self-centered, or even ‘the devil’s music.’ On the other hand, a more positive view expressed by some intellectuals and some blues singers themselves stresses the existentialist quality of blues lyrics, their emphasis on self-reliance and self-sufficiency, and their often outstanding poetic quality.\textsuperscript{27}

Evans’ description of the blues is applicable to other genres, including heavy metal. The phrase, “the devil’s music,” for example, was later used in reference to rock and roll, by what Evans calls, “polite society.” In the history of these musics, “polite society” is the white, moralistic, religious, and powerful members of society.

Evans also refers to the lyrics, which discuss “…certain emotions and subject matter that are beyond the bounds of polite society.”\textsuperscript{28} His description of blues lyrics is very much applicable to those of heavy metal. Metal musicians often write lyrics focusing on aspects of life that people would rather ignore. Though some themes are expressed through metaphor, they are

\begin{footnotes}
http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03311?q=blues&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1
#firsthit.
\item[28] Idem.
\end{footnotes}
often presented in a practical and explicit manner. This presentation led to censorship and an increased awareness of metal lyrics in the 1980s. For instance, in 1985 the “polite society” was manifested through the Parents’ Resource Music Center (PMRC), which publically raised concern over the lyrics found in heavy metal. The PMRC cited song content based on items such as sex, violence, language and the occult. Such secular themes and the explicit emotions and words used to express them began in the blues.

The blues changed during the 1920s and 1930s as African-Americans migrated to larger cities in the United States. These migrations were caused by economic hardships brought on by the Great Depression and ongoing racial discrimination in rural areas. As a result, blues music, which had once been performed in a rural, musically homogeneous context, was introduced to urban heterogeneity as rural blues artists came into contact with musicians who performed, for instance, jazz, big band and gospel. The interaction of musicians from various genres initiated changes to the blues. While the blues had often been performed by a single individual, ensembles began to form. In addition, the music became more rhythmic, as swing and boogie rhythms were introduced to the blues. In the years between the Great Depression and World War II, contact between musicians from different genres, such as those listed above, led to an increase in instrumentation (brass instruments, percussion, vocalists, a stringed bass instrument), the size of ensembles grew, and new rhythmic figures were incorporated into the music. This new music became known as rhythm and blues.

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29 Robert Walser. *Running With the Devil: Power Gender and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993, p. 138. This organization, established by Tipper Gore, is responsible for the “Parental Advisory: Explicit Content” warning labels that are placed on CDs.
Rhythm and Blues, Race and the Electric Guitar

The venues in which music was performed changed as well. For instance, big band performances began taking place in casual clubs or large formal theaters for audiences during the 1930s. To fill the sonic space of these areas, ensembles grew larger to produce a greater volume of sound. The combination of larger ensembles and venues led to the modification of the acoustic guitar, resulting in the electrification of the instrument.

The acoustic guitar was modified as both ensembles and performance venues grew in size and musicians struggled to hear the acoustic guitar in these settings. One of the earliest commercially marketed electric guitars created to compete with the additional instruments and space, was manufactured by the Dobro Company in the early 1930s, followed by Rickenbacker’s “frying pan” model shortly thereafter.31 The string bass was similarly modified, though not until 1951, when Leo Fender produced and marketed the first commercially successful electric bass guitar, the Precision Bass.32 This electrification and amplification of the originally acoustic instruments, made possible their continued use within these new musical contexts and ensured their continued use in later genres, e.g. heavy metal.

New timbres were “discovered” by musicians as a result of the electrification and amplification of the guitar. Electric guitar timbres were originally clean, similar to those of an acoustic guitar. However, as early electric guitarists increased the volume of their amplifiers and pushed the equipment beyond its manufactured limits, the tones became “crackly,” harsh sounding and distorted. Rather than prevent the distortion, guitarists incorporated the new

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timbre into their playing and even sought methods of consistently producing the sound.\textsuperscript{33} To this day, the electric guitar and its distorted sound are quintessential characteristics of metal music.

Rhythm and blues continued to change in America, following the guitar’s modification and the advent of the instrument’s distorted timbre. The music’s popularity grew as teenagers searched for new entertainment that was not their parents’ swing, big band and popular music, leading to an increase in rhythm and blues record sales among young American listeners.\textsuperscript{34} To capitalize on this new demographic, record companies began marketing to young listeners. Although rhythm and blues was originally written by and performed for an African American audience, record labels increased their target audience to include white teenagers. In an attempt to appeal to these listeners, labels released rhythm and blues songs performed by white musicians, known as covers.\textsuperscript{35} Although covers contributed to the creation of and popularization of rock and roll in America, they also revealed the racial tensions and barriers that existed in the United States during the mid-century.

In his book, \textit{Rhythm and the Blues: A Life in American Music}, the music journalist Jerry Wexler describes the issue of race and its prevalence in the recording arts

Beginning in 1942, the \textit{Billboard} chart for black records was termed the “Harlem Hit Parade,” changing in 1945 to the euphemistic “Race Records.” Granted America’s rubrics of race have always been peculiar. “Race” was a common term then, a self referent used by blacks. “He’s a race man to the bricks” was a compliment; it meant a musician’s ethnicity was out-front and formidable. On the other hand, “Race Records” didn’t sit well. Maybe “race” was too close to ‘racist.’ In 1949, my suggestion for a change was adopted by \textit{Billboard}; I came up with a handle I thought suited the music well – ‘Rhythm and Blues’… ‘Rhythm and Blues’ is a label more appropriate to more enlightened times.\textsuperscript{36}

By changing the terms used to classify these recordings, this differentiation between white and black musicians became obscured. Even though racial barriers continued to exist into the 1950s, the advent of the rhythm and blues name reflects changing attitudes toward race in America. These attitudes would continue to change along with the music, as a new genre, rock and roll, emerged.

American Rock and the British Beat

Some of the most prominent musicians in rock and roll were Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry and Little Richard. These performers demonstrate a confluence of music genres, as heard in their performances of rock and roll. Berry’s musicianship reflected his experiences with the blues, rhythm and blues, and country music, 37 Presley’s early recordings demonstrate the influence of country music, gospel, and the blues, while Richard’s influences include gospel, the blues and rhythm and blues. 38 In addition to their records, Presley, Berry and Richard gained popularity by participating in various Hollywood films, bringing further attention to rock and roll music. While other American performers, e.g. Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra, also starred in films, these musician/actors were popular music artists. The emergence of rock and roll performers marked the beginning of a new, younger era of musician/actors from a new genre of music.

Touring also contributed to the popularity of emerging rock and roll artists. By traveling, listeners were able to see and hear musicians perform live, supplementing studio recordings and appearances on television shows. However, although Presley had gained popularity in America

and was successful on the charts in England, he never performed in Great Britain. Coupled with Presley’s lack of touring in this region and the decline of skiffle, an American music that was popular in England at the end of the 1950s, opportunities were developing for the emergence of new music outside of America. Soon, a new British sound, comprised of electric guitars, electric bass, drum set and vocals, developed as a reaction to these circumstances. This new music from Britain is known as beat music.

Beat music became the foundation for the British music invasion of America in the 1960s. British bands, such as the Beatles, achieved success in England, followed by success on music charts in the United States. As the music became more popular in America, it soon spread from small clubs on the shores of the River Mersey in Liverpool to baseball stadiums in New York City. Until this point in the history of rock and roll and heavy metal, music flowed unidirectionally from America to England. For example, the blues, jazz and skiffle were American genres that were introduced to the British listeners. However, the British Invasion marks the beginning of a two directional flow between America and England. This flow of music and the interactions of musicians from both countries continues to this day and is a crucial relationship in the history of heavy metal.

As rock music and beat music gained popularity in America and England, larger audiences began to gather to hear and see musicians perform live. To capitalize on this

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40 Murray Lerner and Paul Crowder. *Amazing Journey: The Story of the Who*. DVD-ROM. United Kingdom: Spitfire Productions, 2007. Skiffle music was performed in ensembles with guitars, banjos, percussion, vocals, and, sometimes, home made instruments, such as the tea chest bass (This instrument consisted of a large wooden tea chest with a broom handle inserted into the chest and a single string connected to the top of the handle and the chest that was plucked). This genre was popular for only several years at the end of the 1950s in England, but some well-known rock music figures, e.g. John Lennon and Paul McCartney from the Beatles and Roger Daltrey from The Who, began their careers in skiffle bands.
42 Other names for this music include “British beat music” and “Merseybeat.” Merseybeat refers to the river Mersey, which flows through Liverpool, an area from which some of these bands emerged.
increasing interest, promoters and band managers booked performers in spaces that were able to support large crowds. However, up to this point, most music amplification systems were designed for small clubs and intimate venues, not stadiums or large arenas. This shift to larger performance areas required more powerful sound production technology to fill these sonic spaces and necessitated onstage monitors so the musicians could hear themselves over audiences in crowded venues.

Despite earlier advances in technology, e.g. the electrification of instruments, the popularity of beat music and rock and roll progressed faster than manufacturers could produce powerful amplification systems. Larger performance venues presented several technological challenges. One performance signifying these obstacles was the Beatles’ performance at Shea Stadium in 1965. This performance demonstrates why more powerful amplification systems were required for this music.

The Beatles’ performance took place in a baseball stadium, which, as a large open space, required a powerful sound system to reach the listeners in the stands (fig.1). During the concert, the group was situated over 100 feet away from the audience, with the stage constructed around second base. In addition to the large sonic space and the distance between the band and the fans, the sheer volume produced by the screaming fans drowned out the sound produced by the musicians during the performance. While the band played through their onstage amplifiers and through the stadium’s sound system (fig.2), the technology was not strong enough to compete with the sound produced by the fans in such a large space. The Beatles performance at Shea stadium provided a profound example as to why musicians required more powerful amplifiers for their live performances.

Following the electrification of the guitar in the 1930s and the Beatle’s performance at Shea Stadium, music technology continued to evolve. Amplifier manufacturers continued to experiment and produce more powerful systems than before, thus affording musicians the ability to perform in and be heard over an audience in a large space. With these new amplifiers, musicians played at louder volumes without compromising the instrument’s timbre, unlike the early rhythm and blues electric guitarists. However, while some musicians desired a clean tone, others sought methods to repeatedly and consistently produce a distorted guitar timbre.

To meet these demands of musicians, manufacturers constructed devices and methods that deliberately produced distorted guitar tones.\(^{43}\) Musicians could still play with a manipulated timbre but did not need to strain their amplifiers to produce the desired sounds. Musicians were now also able to perform loud music with these manipulated timbres. This is heard in the music of the Kinks and The Who from England during the 1960s. Although this technology was still in the early stages of development at this time, the foundation for the heavy metal sound was established with the electric guitar, powerful amplification and a distorted guitar sound. Following the 1960s, music technology was continuously modified to meet the needs of musicians.

Unrest in the 1960s and the Emergence of Heavy Metal Music

Later developments in rock and beat music emerged during the 1960s, a tumultuous time in America marked by civil, social and political unrest. For example, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his speech on racial equality on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. in 1963, as a part of the Civil Rights Movement, five years before his death. His speech came at a pivotal point in American history as activists fought to end racial prejudices, which existed

\(^{43}\) Distortion pedals or overdrive pedals are examples of devices created to manipulate guitar timbre.
prior to the birth of the blues. As civil unrest occurred domestically, international relations between the United States and other countries throughout the world were changing with the assassination of the American President John F. Kennedy in November 1963 and an escalation of the United States’ military involvement in Vietnam. Yet despite moments of uncertainty in America, the 1960s are often remembered for the reaction against “the establishment” and the “hippie” generation’s messages of peace, love and harmony. The country was in a dynamic shift. Bob Dylan’s ominous prediction from 1964 became a reality, as he sang, “…the times, they are a changin’.”

The war in Vietnam, conscription in the United States, the deaths of John F. (1963), Robert (1968) Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1968) and the shootings at Kent State University (1970), however, signaled an end to the counterculture’s ideologies for universal harmony. In addition to these political and social events, some of the major music festivals in America, e.g. Woodstock and Altamont, signified the close to this decade and highlighted the shifting ideologies.

It was during the festival at Woodstock in 1969 that members of the public were exposed to the political and social activism prevalent in the music of folk singers such as Country Joe MacDonald, Joan Baez and Arlo Guthrie. At this concert, performers protested the war in Vietnam as well as social differences in America, e.g. racism. Due to the political stances expressed by folk singers along with the explicitly critical nature of their lyrics, a number of these performers were viewed as detriments to American society for their stances against “the establishment.”

This reaction to the folk singers of the 1960s echoed the “Red Scare” and McCarthyism sentiments of the 1940s and 1950s. During this time, individuals throughout the entertainment
industry, e.g. film, literature, and music, were labeled as Communists for espousing ideals that were viewed as anti-establishment and seen as Leftist. Heavy metal musicians faced similar reactions in the 1980s as parent organizations, such as the Parents Music Resource Council (PMRC), formed to censor heavy metal artists due to the explicit nature of their lyrics. While folk singers were viewed as threats to the political foundation of the United States, heavy metal musicians were seen as a detriment to the moral standings of youth in America.

The socially and politically critical songs of the 1960s and those performed at Woodstock were similar to early blues lyrics, which pragmatically discussed relevant issues. For instance, folk singers who composed songs and performed in the 1960s, e.g. Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger and Joan Baez were critical of the war in Vietnam and the effects of the war on military men and their families. Even artists not affiliated with folk music composed songs advocating the dissolution of social division and promoted peace as heard in John Lennon’s song, “Give Peace a Chance” in 1969. These critical themes and lyrics were often performed with the accompaniment of acoustic guitars, harmonicas and generally melodious or unaggressive vocals. Despite the fact that the technology to produce guitar timbre distortion and the ability to play through powerful amplification systems was available to these musicians, they chose not to incorporate this technology into their performances. Rather, much of the folk music and protest songs from the 1960s and Woodstock are marked by acoustic sounds.

Woodstock celebrated the counterculture movement as concert attendees worked and lived together for three days on the festival’s concert grounds. Their goal was to demonstrate an alternative way of life to the highly structured lifestyle of their parents’ generation and raise awareness to social and political issues. As Woodstock was an opportunity to express reactionary and shifting ideals, the events four months later at the Altamont music festival in
California were the death of these same ideals. The concert was free to attendees, similar to the festival in New York, and drew large crowds from all across the country, as it promised to be a successful follow up to Woodstock. One of the most prominent differences between Altamont and Woodstock, however, was the use of the Hell’s Angels as security for the event. This resulted in physical violence between concert goers, performers and the security detail. The festival is known mostly for the death of Meredith Hunter, a concert attendee who was killed during the Rolling Stones’ set. The events that transpired at this concert were recorded for the Rolling Stone’s film, *Gimme Shelter*, which was released the following year. Altamont and the events that occurred at it indicated the changes that were taking place in America at the end of the 1960s.

As hard drugs became more prevalent in society and more American soldiers were drafted for fighting in Southeast Asia, the music of the late 1960s reflected and critiqued the social and political climate in the United States and around the world. The music of the folk singers from this decade and the sentiments expressed by musicians at Woodstock revealed the dissatisfaction and tension in America between the younger generations, their parents and the political and social policies. However, even though the sentiments expressed by musicians in their songs were politically charged, these lyrics were accompanied by acoustic instruments. This approach to music would change in the 1970s. The culmination of blues lyrics discussing subjects “polite society” would rather ignore, instrument electrification, increased amplification, the development of guitar timbre manipulation, the influences of rock music from the 1950s and 1960s, and the changes taking place politically and socially in America at the end of the 1960s, led to the formation of heavy metal music.
Heavy Metal

The core elements of heavy metal are broken down into two categories: musical and lyrical. This music is dominated by distorted guitar timbres and a strong presence of bass instruments, either with percussion or electric bass. These timbres and sounds are ubiquitous in the early forms of heavy metal and throughout the history of the music. While some musicians do incorporate acoustic instruments into their music, an electric guitar with a distorted timbre will most always be included as well. A distorted guitar timbre complements the themes and contents of song lyrics, which are aggressive, abrasive and uncompromising.

These types of lyrics explicitly argue an opinion or condemn a person or event with vocals that are less melodious and more akin to shouting or yelling. For instance, songs released by the American industrial metal band, Ministry, were influenced by political and social events taking place during the early 2000s. The albums *Houses of the Molé* (2004), *Rio Grande Blood* (2006), and *The Last Sucker* (2007) are all critical of the American president, George W. Bush, and his administration. One song in particular, titled “Lies Lies Lies,” explicitly states that the events of September 11, 2001 were not caused by terrorists, but by American politicians.

These sentiments and opinions echo the protest songs by the folk singers from the 1950s and 1960s. The main differences between the folk songs and heavy metal songs lies in the electrification, amplification and timbre manipulation of the guitar and the vocal timbre by which the lyrics are delivered. Without these harsh and loud sounds, the music would be more characteristic of the blues or folk music of the previous decades. These musical elements coalesced to create music quite unlike metal’s contemporaries in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Lyrics that are expressive, explicit and emotional are paramount to heavy metal. Metal songs discuss topics ranging from anti-Christian ideologies, love, hate, self-harm, suicide, serial
killers, self-loathing, dissatisfaction with political or social policies, war, death, personal psychological struggles, and the end of the world. Despite the fact that these songs highlight undesirable aspects of society, metal songs also provide positive encouragement to listeners. Lyrics often champion the individual by discussing inner strength and belief in oneself as heard in the songs “Versus the World” by Amon Amarth and “Inner Self” by Sepultura. These lyrics are often written with little regard for censorship and are typically delivered in a forceful and aggressive manner. The music and lyrics of this genre must complement one another to effectively express the emotions and issues within a song.

Though the time period of metal’s birth is agreed upon (the late 1960s and early 1970s), debate surrounds the geographic origins and progenitors of the music. For instance, in the documentary, Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey, directed by Sam Dunn, Scott McFadyen and Jessica Wise, some musicians cite the San Francisco band, Blue Cheer, as the first heavy metal band, noting the band’s raw and loud performances of blues and psychedelic rock as the origins of metal music. Others feel the London-based musicians from Led Zeppelin created this genre from their performances of electrified blues. Still, others contend that the Birmingham band, Black Sabbath, is the first heavy metal band because of its occult references, “un-polite” lyrics, distorted guitar timbres and dissonant guitar riffs. Although musicians from the aforementioned bands incorporate these elements into their music, the early music of Black Sabbath is consistently characterized by these traits. As such, I consider Black Sabbath to be the first heavy metal band.

Black Sabbath, along with its contemporaries, is characterized by the above-mentioned traits, which were becoming prominent in the music of the late 1960s and very early 1970s. Bands such as Blue Cheer from America and Led Zeppelin from England were increasing performance volumes\(^\text{48}\) as well as consistently using a distorted guitar timbre. However, these bands were different lyrically, despite the fact that they shared common musical sounds. Blue Cheer’s lyrics reflected the Counterculture movement occurring in San Francisco, as heard in the lyrics of the songs “Feather from Your Tree” and “Gypsy Ball,” while Led Zeppelin’s lyrics discussed women and sex in songs such as, “Since I’ve Been Loving You,” “Dazed and Confused,” and “Heartbreaker.” As these bands were writing and releasing these songs, the musicians from Black Sabbath released songs focusing on war, eternal damnation and a relationship with Lucifer, accompanied by slow, melancholic and distorted sounding guitar riffs.\(^\text{49}\) This music indicates a shift away from the lyrics promulgated by contemporary bands and toward music and lyrics that were more sinister and “evil.” The tritone, played on a guitar with a distorted timbre, served as a fitting accompaniment to the lyrics of these songs.

Formed in 1968, Black Sabbath’s lyrics and musical direction evolved with the changing Western attitudes at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, marking the end of the Counterculture generation. Song lyrics are darker, cynical and discuss realistic and relevant subjects. For example, the songs “War Pigs,” “Black Sabbath,” “Wicked World,” “Hand of Doom” and “Electric Funeral,” focus on the war in Vietnam, the fear of being condemned to Hell, the plight of the poverty stricken individual, drug use and fears of atomic holocaust, respectively. These themes are not entirely unique to this band, but the distinction between the songs of Black Sabbath and contemporaries was in the darker, more sinister themes.


\(^{49}\) A riff is a short repeated motive played on an instrument. Guitar riffs are ubiquitous in heavy metal music.
Sabbath and other musicians, was the prevalence of the distorted guitar timbre, the new musical context and the impact of the post-World War II British culture on the band’s music.

The members of Black Sabbath – Ozzy Osbourne, Tony Iommi, Geezer Butler and Bill Ward – were raised in Birmingham, England following the Second World War. As a major contributor to English industry, the Nazis bombed this city heavily. Though the end of the war signaled an end to fighting and air raid threats, citizens were left with the task of rebuilding the city and its infrastructure. Along with other post World War II British bands, the members of Black Sabbath grew up during this reconstruction period and experienced the socioeconomic repercussions of the war. The experiences and attitudes of these musicians are reflected in their songs.

One of the most important characteristics differentiating Black Sabbath from other bands of the time was the incorporation of occult themes in their music. For example, the group’s eponymous song is a narrative of eternal damnation and what one will encounter in Hell. While early blues lyrics mentioned the devil and evil in songs, Black Sabbath’s music became popular for this shifted focus to the darker and “un-polite” elements of life. Yet, as topics related to Satan and hell were found in the band’s lyrics, Black Sabbath’s songs described the occult as something to be feared rather than embraced. However, this did not stop the “polite society” from raising concern about the band, its music and image.

The Diversification of the Heavy Metal Sound

Heavy metal continued to grow and diversify in the wake of the music from the 1970s and the music of bands such as Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin and Blue Cheer. Other bands

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50 Major bombings of the city became known as the Birmingham Blitz.
emerging during the 1970s, that can be considered progenitors of heavy metal, include the English bands Deep Purple and Judas Priest as well as Alice Cooper from America. It was also during the 1970s that punk, another influential genre, emerged. As punk gained popularity in America and Great Britain, heavy metal artists found themselves competing with the growing interest in this new music. Certain heavy metal musicians, such as Steve Harris, the founder and bassist of the English band Iron Maiden, discredit punk entirely as a genre and have expressed hatred towards the music. However, while tension existed between heavy metal and punk musicians, punk would eventually influence heavy metal musicians, leading to the creation of new metal subgenres, such as thrash metal and grindcore.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, groups emerged from England, America and other European countries, e.g. Germany, playing metal music faster, louder and more aggressively than Back Sabbath, Led Zeppelin or Deep Purple. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, for example, the English bands Judas Priest, Motörhead, Diamond Head and Iron Maiden emerged in a musical movement known as the New Wave of British Heavy Metal. Musicians in these bands further developed the heavy metal sound as they performed songs at faster tempos, utilized more aggressively distorted guitar sounds, and wrote lyrics that were not only blues derivatives but also incorporated elements of fantasy, mysticism or poetry (Iron Maiden’s song “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” released in 1984 is an adaptation of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s poem by the same name).

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53 British bands from the 1970s, e.g Black Sabbath, Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin constitute the first or “old” wave of British heavy metal.
American bands contributed to the development of heavy metal as well in the 1980s. Thrash metal bands, e.g. Slayer, Metallica, Megadeth, Anthrax and Exodus, continuously attempted to exceed the music created by earlier bands. These American thrash metal bands combined the musicianship of musicians from the New Wave of British Heavy Metal and the speed and intensity of punk music. American thrash metal from this time is characterized by tempos that faster than those used by New Wave of British Heavy Metal bands, the incorporation of new playing techniques (the use of double kick/bass drum patterns is a common feature of thrash metal, as heard in the song “Angel of Death” by Slayer) and composing lyrics that explicitly focused on death, serial killers, suicide and war. Bands affiliated with this kind of music and lyrics are referred to as extreme metal bands, due to the content of the lyrics along with the speed, intensity and aggression of the music.

Metal music’s practitioners became more extreme and aggressive, just as their music and performances intensified. While the members of Black Sabbath and thrash metal bands sang about the occult, murder, war and death in their lyrics, later bands would promote topics such as nationalism, elitism and proclaim direct links to Satan while actively “practicing what they preached.” For example, black metal music from Norway gained notoriety and international attention due to homicides, suicides and church burnings, carried out by black metal musicians. One performer in particular, Varg Vikernes who created the musical project Burzum, has been imprisoned for murder and was most recently convicted in 2013 by French authorities under suspicion of planning a terrorist attack and inciting racially motivated hatred against Muslims.

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54 Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth and Anthrax are referred to as “The Big Four,” as they are four of the most prominent American bands that formed the thrash metal sound.
and Jews. These heavy metal subgenres, bands and musicians represent some of the most extreme ideologies that exist in the genre as well as in the world.

Although heavy metal is sometimes linked with lyrical, musical and ideological extremism, these characteristics do not permeate the entire genre. Other bands and subgenres represent different attitudes toward heavy metal and music in general. For example, progressive metal musicians are dedicated to the advancement of music through the use of odd time signatures, intricate rhythmic patterns, composing songs of extensive length as well as incorporating philosophical and spiritual content in lyrics. Bands that are affiliated with this category include Tool, Rush, Dream Theater and Meshuggah.

As these progressive musicians are focused on furthering their musicianship through heavy metal, musicians in other subgenres further the heavy metal sound by merging disparate music with heavy metal. This integration of sounds and instruments is heard in symphonic metal as orchestral instruments, such as violins, cellos, and French horns, are incorporated into a heavy metal context. Music from the bands Epica and Nightwish demonstrate the integration of these elements. These two bands further develop heavy metal music through the performances by the vocalists. While heavy metal vocals have traditionally been performed by men, both of these symphonic metal band are fronted by women vocalists (Simone Simons in Epica, and Floor Jansen, currently, in Nightwish) whose vocal performances are characterized as melodious and operatic. Symphonic metal, however, is only one instance of the integration of various musical elements into heavy metal music. Regardless of how musicians modify the sound, lyrics of heavy metal or what new music is incorporated into it, the foundational elements of the heavy

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metal genre, e.g. distorted guitar timbres, an emphasis on the bass instruments (either guitar or percussion), and explicit or aggressive lyrics, remain the same.

Folk metal is another example of the confluence of different musics. In this subgenre, heavy metal music is combined with music and instruments that are not considered a part of metal, but rather folk music traditions. While most musicians in heavy metal focus on the current state of society and culture (critiquing contemporary social and political policies), some performers identify with and emphasize the music and instruments affiliated with historical, pre-modern, non-urban, folk groups. The incorporation of folk elements into heavy metal music is the foundation for the folk metal subgenre and it is through this music that national identities and folk cultures are represented in a new context. The core elements of heavy metal, outlined above, remain the same in the folk metal, but changes occur when folk instruments, tunes and song structures are integrated into the heavy metal music. Although the introduction of symphonic instruments and music or folk instruments and folk tunes into heavy metal music would appear to be anomalous, the concurrent performance of these elements with heavy metal creates a new subgenre, expanding the sound of heavy metal and introducing heterogeneity to the music.

Currently, there are over twenty-four heavy metal subgenres. As has been discussed, subgenres develop through the contact and collaborations of musicians from various musical genres, a desire by musicians to focus on elements that members of the “polite society” would rather ignore, and the persistent interest of musicians to expand the heavy metal sound. The heavy metal genre and the subgenre tree created by Sam Dunn and Scott McFadyen continues to grow and expand, as relationships are established between music within heavy metal and with genres outside metal to create new music, such as folk metal.

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CHAPTER III

FOLK METAL: A HEAVY METAL SUBGENRE

Uncertainty surrounds the emergence of folk metal as a distinct heavy metal subgenre. Some musicians, such as Keith Fay and Alan Nemtheanga, agree that the integration of folk elements with heavy metal music began in Europe during the early 1990s while the authors Keith Kahn-Harris, Ross Hagen, and Aaron Patrick Mulvaney, argue that folk metal developed from black metal, another metal subgenre that emerged during the 1980s. However, black metal is not the sole predecessor of folk metal as rural folk music, urban folk music and folk rock also influenced the development of this subgenre.

Folk Metal’s Relationship with Black Metal

The oft-cited origin of folk metal is black metal. The black metal name is borrowed from the work of the English band, Venom. In 1982, Venom released an album and song titled, *Black Metal*, which laid the foundational music for later bands that followed the image and sound of Venom. The music on this album is characterized by fast paced drumming, barked vocals and low production quality, which were reactions to music being produced by bands affiliated with the New Wave of British Heavy Metal. The title song and others on the album introduced listeners to explicitly

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57 Keith Fay is the vocalist for the Irish folk metal band, *Cruachan*. Alan Nemtheanga is the vocalist for the Irish pagan metal band, Primordial.

58 Fan sites list the English bands Golgotha (1984) and Skyclad (1990) as the first folk metal bands.
satanic imagery. Lyrics condoned satanic worship, as heard in the songs, “Black Metal,” “To Hell and Back” and “Leave Me in Hell,” while the cover of the Black Metal album depicts a face with horns protruding from its temples and an inverted pentagram between the eyebrows (fig. 3).

Despite the explicitness of their album covers, titles, and lyrics, the members of Venom were not Satanists. These musicians wrote dark, frightening and shocking songs, which had been introduced to listeners through the emergence of Black Sabbath in 1970. However, the musicians’ approaches to their subject matter differed. Although Black Sabbath’s guitar sounds were heavily distorted and characterized by the use of the tritone,\(^{59}\) the lyrics described hell as a place to be feared and even promoted feelings of love and reverence for a higher power. For example, in the song “After Forever,” a portion of the lyrics follow as

Could it be you’re afraid of what your friends might say
If they knew you believe in God above?
They should realize before they criticize
that God is the only way to love…

…Perhaps you’ll think before you say that God is dead and gone
Open your eyes, just realize that he’s the one
The only one who can save you now from all this sin and hate
Or will you still jeer at all you hear? Yes! I think it’s too late.\(^{60}\)

Conversely, Venom’s songs expressed a celebratory mentality towards damnation and hell, as heard in the song, “Sons of Satan.”

…Hell the deceiver,
  Satan’s child,
  You’re a believer,
  And we’re going wild.

  Put away all your virtues,
  Stop your climbing the walls,

\(^{59}\) The tritone is an augmented fourth interval. Due to the “unsettling” and “dissonant” sound produced by the interval, it was termed *diabolus in musica* (the devil in music) during the Middle Ages and was avoided in Church music.

Just sign your name on the paper,  
We’ll have ourselves a ball…\textsuperscript{61}

As Kahn-Harris states, the musicians in Venom approached their subject matter with humor and a “tongue in cheek” sentiment.\textsuperscript{62}

Venom’s popularity grew during the 1980s and 1990s. As the band’s music spread throughout Europe and came into contact with other musicians and cultures, the image and music created by Venom, was changed and modified by other performers to appear more sinister, medieval and militaristic. During live performances in the 1980s, members of Venom wore black leather trousers with studded accessories and often did not wear any clothing to cover their torsos. While later black metal musicians continued to dress in a style similar to the members of Venom, additions were made to appear more evil and more connected to death and Satan. The most well-known additions are the use of face make up, known as corpse paint,\textsuperscript{63} and the modification of Venom’s studded accessories to resemble rudimentary medieval armor. With these changes, the black metal image became strongly identified with death, militancy and, later, anti-Christian ideologies.

Following Venom’s \textit{Black Metal} album from 1982, a second wave of this music emerged in Norway during the early 1990s. Norwegian black metal gained notoriety not only as an extreme and aggressive music, but also for the actions of the musicians who performed it. Musically, it is characterized by “screamed, high-pitched vocals, extremely rapid tempo, ‘tremolo’ riffs, a ‘trebly’ guitar sound, and simple production values. Black metallers embraced

\textsuperscript{63} Corpse paint is typically applied to the face, hands and arms of a musician. The purpose of the paint is to appear as a corpse several days after death.
Satanism wholeheartedly and on occasions, fascism and racism too." Norwegian musicians replaced the tongue in cheek humor of Venom with a serious approach to the music, as bands used the music as a vehicle to advocate individualism and anti-Christian ideologies.

While musicians incorporated these sentiments into their music, these same beliefs became manifest through the burning of Christian churches. The black metal musician, Varg Vikernes, is commonly associated with several church burnings including the Holmenkollen Chapel in Oslo, the Skjold Church and the Åsane Church, while other arsons remain unsolved with no convictions. In addition to these acts of destruction, Norwegian performers were arrested for assault and murder, further establishing their reputations as extreme individuals who performed extreme music. Given the history and background of this music and the actions of its practitioners, the relationship of black metal to folk metal may seem unclear. How does black metal, characterized by Satanism, a fixation on death and the criminal acts of musicians, relate to music that promotes folk culture and elements affiliated with it?

These subgenres are related through the presence of national and folk elements in the music and lyrics of black and folk metal. Norwegian black metal bands combine images of national landmarks, Norse mythology and folk tunes with lyrics and images that focus on Satan and Hell. This incorporation can be identified as a precursor to the development similar actions in folk metal, excluding the satanic elements. This integration of folk elements into a heavy
metal context is one of several characteristics of folk metal. However, the introduction of folk elements into Western music existed prior to black metal and even before the existence of heavy metal.

Integrating Folk Tunes with Popular Music

Folk and non-European tunes have been integrated into compositions throughout the history of Western Art music to express national identities. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Edvard Grieg and Béla Bartók each incorporated these types of tunes into their compositions. For instance, the final movement of Mozart’s piano sonata no. 11 in A Major (K. 331) was influenced by the music of Turkey and the Turkish military marching bands, the janissaries, while Grieg introduced Norwegian melodies and folk imagery into his Lyric Pieces for piano (opuses 12, 38, 43, 47, 54, 57, 62, 65, 68, 71) and Béla Bartók collected tunes from Eastern European groups and incorporated them into his works, such as his *Fourteen Bagatelles*, op. 6. The integration of folk tunes, themes and imagery has been present in Western music before musicians introduced these same elements into heavy metal.

While classical composers integrated national elements into their music in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century, popular artists began merging folk elements into contemporary music in the middle of the twentieth century. Folk music experienced a revival in the 1950s and 1960s in Europe and the United States. Artists such as Pete Seeger, The Kingston Trio, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Graham Nash, are only a small number of the artists in America who were popularizing folk music as well as merging this music with the electrified elements of rock and roll. Bob Dylan’s use of the electric guitar and other rock instruments in the middle of the 1960’s, e.g. drum set and electric bass
guitar, emphasized this integration of folk and popular music. However, his decision to “go electric” also spurred backlash from folk purist fans. Despite this opposition to his new sound, Dylan’s electrification was a catalyst for the development of folk rock in America.

As folk musicians gained popularity in America, a similar movement occurred in Western Europe. An Irish group that introduced folk music to a popular audience was the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. These musicians performed as a vocal group accompanied by acoustic instruments, often a guitar or banjo, and sang traditional Irish tunes. Although the musicians originated from Ireland, the performers achieved success in America after performing on the Ed Sullivan show in 1961. The group’s international popularity demonstrates the significance of popular media, such as Ed Sullivan’s television show, for the dissemination of localized culture to a global audience. Without this exposure from mass media, the group may not have achieved the same level of success outside of Ireland, the musicians’ home country. Through media, the musicians were introduced to a large, multinational audience through audio recordings and visual performances.

Aside from the performance of Irish tunes, the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem also established their Irish identity by wearing Aran sweaters during live performances. These props became one of the most recognizable visual characteristics of the group. While the group’s music played a significant role in defining Irish identity, the clothing worn by the musicians also reinforced their Irish heritage. These elements, both the music and clothing, established an Irish identity.

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68 During his 1966 concert in Manchester, England, a fan shouted “Judas” at Dylan during the electric portion of his set. Dylan responded to the heckler, saying “I don’t believe you…you’re a liar.” He was then heard commenting to his backup band, “Play it fucking loud.”

69 These sweaters are made on the Aran Islands, a group of islands off the west coast of Ireland.
Folk music continued to develop in the wake of Bob Dylan and the Clancy brothers throughout the 1970s. In Europe, the performance of folk music as popular music was gaining popularity through the performances of the English groups the Fairport Convention and Jethro Tull, along with the music of the Irish bands, Horslips, Planxty and the Bothy band. For instance, on Jethro Tull’s albums *Songs from the Wood* (1977) and *Heavy Horses* (1978), musicians juxtaposed acoustic instruments, such as flutes, mandolins, and tin whistles, with standard electric rock instruments. Lyrically, the songs describe the English countryside and reference English folk culture. Even though Jethro Tull is not a heavy metal group,\(^{70}\) the merging of folk elements and rock music indicates musicians’ interests to introduce their culture into popular music.

During the time Jethro Tull was recording in England, the band Horslips was integrating rock music with Irish folk tunes in Ireland. Although Horslips combined folk tunes and instruments into performances, much of the band’s music was performed on and accompanied by electric guitars with distorted timbres, electric bass and a standard drum set. To complement these musical elements, songs were also performed in the Irish language, Gaeilge. The merging of the Irish language, folk tunes and folk instruments with rock instrumentation and music qualifies Horslips as a member of folk rock as well as a predecessor to folk metal in Ireland. Irish folk metal vocalists, such as Keith Fay from the band Cruachan,\(^{71}\) and Ciaran O’Hagan from the band Waylander,\(^{72}\) have stated that Horslips’ Celtic inspired folk rock influenced the

\(^{70}\) Incidentally, Jethro Tull was awarded the first Grammy Award for Best Hard Rock/Metal Performance: Vocal or Instrumental in 1989. The awarding was controversial for two reasons. First, Jethro Tull is not considered to be a part of the heavy metal genre, even by members of the band. Secondly, Metallica, who are considered by numerous sources to be one of the most important bands in the history of heavy metal, had also been nominated for the same award. The bestowing of the award to a folk rock band caused consternation among the metal community.


music of folk metal bands in Ireland. These folk rock bands represent a small number of groups, in both America and in Europe. However, the confluence of these genres, folk music and rock music, established the foundation for future integrations of folk elements and heavy metal music.

Despite the fact that record companies produced an abundance of folk rock and folk music in the 1970s, artists and record labels shifted away from folk influenced music by the end of the decade. For example, the advent of digital synthesizers and their use in popular music during the 1980s spurred the synth-pop movement in America and Europe. The electronic sound gained popularity while interest in folk music either stagnated or diminished. Even members of the folk rock band Jethro Tull experimented with this new technology and produced songs that sounded less acoustic and more electronic. Contrary to the acoustic folk music of the 1960s and 1970s, music of the 1980s is defined by the prevalence of the synthesized, digitized, electronic sound.

Although the music of the 1980s is characterized by the inundation of electronic sounds, one of the first instances of the hybridization of folk and heavy metal music occurred in this decade. In 1984, the English band Golgotha released an extended play (EP) record, *Dangerous Games.* The songs on this album are reminiscent of Jethro Tull’s and Horslips’ music, as vocal harmonies, acoustic instruments and folk elements are present in the songs “Old England’s Green,” “The Great Divide” and “Dangerous Games.”

However, Golgotha is distinct from the folk rock bands of the 1970s due to the former’s use of a highly distorted guitar timbre, a defining characteristic of heavy metal music. This sound distinguishes the band from the earlier folk rock musicians and places the *Dangerous Games* EP in the metal genre. Following the release of this record, the musicians in Golgotha

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shifted their focus from combining folk elements in heavy metal to synthesized music on the two full length albums, *The Unmaker of Worlds* (1990) and *Symphony in Extremis* (1993). On these albums, electric keyboards, which digitally produced the sounds of organs, strings, brass, and percussion, for example, replaced traditional rock and folk rock sounds. These two records represent the shift away from the traditional and acoustic instruments to purely electronic or computerized machines in the 1980s.

After the release of Golgotha’s *Dangerous Games*, the shift toward folk metal did not continue until the emergence of the English band Skyclad74 in the 1990s. Skyclad is the first band that maintained a folk metal identity throughout much of its career. The group’s music fuses folk tunes, themes and structures with heavy metal music. The band is characterized by the use of heavy metal instruments and sounds alongside fiddles, accordions and other acoustic instruments, e.g. mandolin. In addition to the incorporation of folk instruments, members of Skyclad also wore clothing reminiscent of English pre-modern rural groups, establishing a connection to the folk culture of England. These signs of membership to a specific group or culture, reflected in the music, instrumentation and attire, are paramount to the definition of a folk metal band.

Since the emergence of Skyclad in the 1990s, folk metal has spread across a large area and continues to evolve and develop. This subgenre exists in Norway, Finland, Estonia, Ireland, Russia, the Faroe Islands, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Ukraine, Latvia, and Argentina. The existence of this music demonstrates the dynamic nature of heavy metal music and the musicians’ predilection for variation within the genre. Variants (subgenres) emerge by the diffusion of music through the contact of music and cultures, from interactions between

74 The name Skyclad is derived from a pagan ritual of nudity, in which the participants are clothed or “clad” only by the sky.
musicians, either within the genre or outside of it,\textsuperscript{75} and from the influence of culture.\textsuperscript{76} Folk metal is only one heavy metal subgenre, characterized by particular traits, and possessing a distinct musical identity. However, establishing a definition of this music is a multifaceted matter. Definitions must discuss the integration of folk instruments, the use of performance techniques specific to folk music, the incorporation of folk melodies, lyric themes, language and non-musical elements, e.g. clothing, physical aesthetics and symbols, as they exist in a heavy metal context. The simultaneous performance of folk and metal music is a definitive characteristic of folk metal.

The Importance of Context

Folk metal music represents a confluence of traditional and modern culture exemplified by the convergence of folk and popular music. These two types of music reflect a dichotomous relationship between folk and urban cultures. In his article, “The Folk Society,” the anthropologist Robert Redfield focuses on the relationship between these types of cultures, which he refers to as the “folk-urban continuum”.\textsuperscript{77} Redfield characterizes a folk society by the following traits: a small group living in geographical and communicative isolation, practice oral tradition exclusively, is homogeneous with a strong sense of solidarity and familial structure, emphasizes tradition and continuity and is self sustaining with little or no division of labor except when determined by sex.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{75} Interaction between classically trained musicians resulted in the symphonic metal subgenre, while musicians who were influenced by the New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM) and punk music lead to the formation of thrash metal.

\textsuperscript{76} Industrial metal demonstrates the influence of technological advances. As computer technology developed in the West, musicians incorporated this technology into their music. Trent Reznor, founder of the industrial metal band, Nine Inch Nails, relies heavily on technology even in lives performances.


Redfield’s definition is expanded by Howard Odum, an American sociologist, who states that folk societies often survive in isolation from other groups, are homogenous, do not impose artificial structures on the group, do not seek technological advancements, are not politically powerful and do not emphasize intellectual progress. Both authors agree that folk societies are isolated, homogenous and are structurally defined by kinship. However, Odum emphasizes a lack of technological and intellectual advancements, which can be subsumed under the heading, pre-industrialization. While Odum also does not discuss the absence of written records, this can be included in “lacking intellectual advancement,” or pre-industrialization, as noted. Although Redfield and Odum define folk societies by the presence of the aforementioned elements, these are idealistic circumstances created by the authors, not based on one singular community. Also, while the authors introduce the ends of the spectrum, they do not indicate what lies between these two points. However, for the purpose of this work, I will only focus on the ends of the continuum, their oppositional relationship and the music found in these groups.

The characteristics of the urban society are converse to those outlined above. Urban societies are characterized by the use of a written language for communication and documentation, while folk societies rely on oral tradition. Structurally, the relationships between members of an urban group are socially, or artificially, constructed and maintained, rather than defined by kin relations. These non-familial relations reflect the heterogeneity and large populations of these societies. To maintain order in a large population of people not related by blood, a unified system of social order, applying to all members of the group, is required. The structures of these large populations lead to increased division of labor, labor specialization and a concept of individualization. As shown, the urbane develops from folk groups. However, as

noted above, the transitional stages are not distinguished, which means that overlap will exist among the infinite number of points on the spectrum, as a folk group develops into an urban one.

Regardless of a group’s position on the folk-urban continuum, the music present in the culture reflects those societal characteristics listed above. Similar to the social dichotomy, folk music, from a folk society, and popular music, from urban groups, is defined in oppositional terms. Due to these oppositional terms, as will be defined and discussed, folk metal is an anomaly and a product of hybridization. This particular music is a synthesis of folk and popular music, blurring definitional boundaries.

Folk music definitions vary in length, detail and focus. However, myriad descriptions share common characteristics. For example, in 1955 members of the International Folk Music Council (IFMC), A. E. Cherbuliez, Oneyda Alvarenga, Maud Karpeles, Douglas Kennedy, Egon Kraus, Jaap Kunst and Curt Lange, defined folk music as

…the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission. The factors that shape the tradition are: (i) continuity which links the present with the past; (ii) variation which springs from the creative impulse of the individual or the group; and (iii) selection by the community, which determines the form or forms in which the music survives.

The term can be applied to music that has been evolved from rudimentary beginnings by a community uninfluenced by popular and art music and it can likewise be applied to music which has originated with an individual composer and has subsequently been absorbed into the unwritten living tradition of a community.

The term does not cover composed popular music that has been taken over ready-made by a community and remains unchanged, for it is the re-fashioning and recreation of the music by the community that gives it its folk character.

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80 Classical music is often included in these distinctions but will not be addressed as a part of this relationship.
81 The International Folk Music Council is now known as the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM).
Adding to the definition included in the IFMC’s journal, Bruno Nettl states that folk music is characterized as music that must

…[be transmitted] by oral tradition. Folk music, in its native setting, is not written down. As a result, its compositions develop variants, and the original form of a folk song is rarely known. Folk music may originate anywhere, but it is most frequently created by untrained, unprofessional musicians, and performed by singers and players with little or no theoretical background. Folk song is frequently old, and the style of folk music may be archaic. But folk and non-literate cultures do have a music history; they allow their music to change, their compositions to be altered, and their repertory to be turned over. Folk music is frequently associated with other activities in life, but it also serves as entertainment. And most important, because folk music is the musical expression of a whole people or tribe, or a significant portion of a culture, it must be performed and accepted in order to remain alive.83

Odum’s and Redfield’s definitions of the folk society, those published in the IFMC’s journal in 1955 and that offered by Nettl will be combined to articulate a concept of folk music that will be applied to folk metal in this chapter. In this current study, folk music describes music that: is often affiliated with small, pre-industrialized/non-urban groups, is performed by musicians not trained in Western Art music standards, the composer is unknown, is orally transmitted, is subject to variation and interpretation by performer’s, is sanctioned by a group, has experienced longevity as result of this sanctioning, embodies the musical identity of a group of people and is typically performed on acoustic instruments. Music existing under these conditions will be considered folk music for the purpose of this work.

While the published definitions by Nettl and the authors affiliated with the IFMC establish the cultural condition under which this music develops, they do not include descriptions of instrumentation involved in the performance of folk music. In addition to these social and cultural conditions outlined by the above authors, I have included acoustic instruments to the list of qualifiers. Also, while folk music originates anywhere, as stated by Nettl, it is typically not

performed on electric instruments. For instance, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Mumford and Sons, come from communities not defined as folk societies, but are considered folk musicians. Their music is characterized as folk since they typically do not perform with electric instruments. While the context of this music is important, it cannot always be a definitive characteristic, since, as noted by Nettl, folk music can exist anywhere. Due to the heterogeneity of the urban society, overlap will exist and folk music will be present in an urban setting.

As stated earlier, urban societies are characterized by industrialization, advanced technology, heterogeneity, and interactions between various groups with artificial social structures rather than structures that are biologically determined by kinship. Popular music in urban contexts is reflective of these elements. For example, the musicologist, Philip Tagg, defines popular music as,

(1) conceived for mass distribution to large and often socioculturally heterogeneous groups of listeners, (2) stored and distributed in non-written form, (3) only possible in an industrial monetary economy where it becomes a commodity and (4) in capitalist societies, subject to the laws of ‘free’ enterprise, according to which it should ideally sell as much as possible of as little as possible to as many as possible.\(^\text{84}\)

To complement Tagg’s definition, the ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel, describes popular music as that which is listened to by a wide audience, is perpetuated commercially, does not require private funding, is distributed by mass media, is secular, is hierarchically stratified and the repertoire experiences a high turn over rate.\(^\text{85}\) Likewise, in 1981 the editors of the *Popular Music* journal, Richard Middleton and David Horn, stated that this music is found in societies exhibiting complex division of labor structures, systems of hierarchy and are either industrialized


or are on the verge of industrialization.\textsuperscript{86} While discourse demonstrates a relative consensus regarding the definition of folk music, descriptions and concepts of popular music are more varied and less concise as demonstrated with those provided. This definitional ambiguity is the result of the urban society’s social and cultural complexity.

In comparison to folk societies, urban areas are larger, are characterized by a more diverse population, require imposed infrastructure and demonstrate economic development. The definitions of the popular music found in these areas relates to this complexity. The popular music definitions by Tagg, Mauel, Middleton and Horn all refer to attributes that define this music as well as its context in this paper. In this study, popular music is: stored, transmitted and disseminated through mass media (mass media refers to written forms, such as notation or tablature, and the non-written recording mediums, e.g. compact discs - CDs, long play records - LPs, digital video discs - DVDs, internet videos and digital formats), listened to by a heterogeneous audience, is located in urban areas, found in industrialized societies and socially stratified societies, survives through free enterprise and is often considered a commodity. Music found under these conditions will be considered popular in this work, including folk music disseminated through mass media in urban settings. Folk music may also be considered popular music, depending on the setting in which it is found. Contextual and musical distinctions will be addressed later, in regards to the hybridization of folk and metal music.

The definitions from the aforementioned authors, as well as those articulated for the purpose of this study do not characterize the music itself. Rather, the descriptions focus on the context and methods by which the music survives in a group. Only Nettl addresses the performer’s skills regarding professional training and knowledge of music theory. However, his words can be construed as a bias towards Western Art music, which places a premium on both

performance and theoretical knowledge of music. While not all folk musicians are trained according to Western standards, e.g. how to read music or understand music theory, not all popular musicians are trained in this manner either.

For instance, in a 1980 interview, John Lennon, from the Beatles, recounted how none of his band mates knew how to read music when they first started performing,\textsuperscript{87} James Hetfield, lead singer and rhythm guitarist for Metallica, stated that he cannot read music nor does he know the location of notes on the guitar\textsuperscript{88} while Gene Hoglan, who has performed as the drummer for Fear Factory, Testament, Dethklok and Viking, taught himself how to play the drums by listening to other drummers perform.\textsuperscript{89} The skills of these popular musicians were learned through experiences and interaction with other musicians and not through formal training. Again, the boundaries between the folk and popular traditions are ambiguous and overlap, as indicated by the lack of theoretical knowledge and methods by which these popular musicians learned to play their instruments. Ambiguous distinctions persist as musicians incorporate folk elements into popular music, a characteristic that defines folk metal.

Characterizing and Defining Folk Metal

Folk metal is distinct from other heavy metal subgenres. Folk metal musicians perform with folk or indigenous instrumentation, incorporate folk tunes into metal music, use both English and non-English languages for vocal performances, write lyrics explicitly affiliated with a particular culture or group of people, and use physical images, such as symbols or clothing, to


directly and consciously connect the musicians with a culture. While all of these traits do not need to be present simultaneously, those elements that are incorporated must be performed concurrently with heavy metal music in order to be considered folk metal.

Some musicians do not incorporate folk instruments into their music, but rather they transpose melodies to electric guitars while singing in both English and non-English languages. Others sing in English but focus on mythical characters, historic events or groups in a given area. Still yet, some musicians perform with folk instruments, wear clothing that establish membership to a folk culture but sing in English. Numerous trait combinations may be recognized when identifying folk metal bands. These qualifying markers will be discussed in more detail to construct a better understanding of this music.

The presence of folk instruments in a heavy metal context is one of the most prominent characteristics of folk metal. Traditional metal bands consist of a vocalist, electric guitars, electric string bass, percussion and sometimes keyboards. Percussion instruments are normally acoustic, though they may be electric, depending on the subgenre. Electric keyboards are less typical, but are used by some folk metal performers. These electric instruments are advantageous as they can be digitally programmed to simulate the sound of any instrument and increase the sound of the ensemble. Despite the capabilities of electric keyboards, musicians still choose to incorporate the original, acoustic instruments into their ensemble, both in the studio and during live performances.

90 Drummers from industrial metal bands, e.g. Nine Inch Nails and Ministry, and progressive metal bands, Rush and Tool, use electric drums. This allows percussionists to play a multitude of sounds by striking the electronic drum pad. Neil Peart, the drummer for the progressive metal/rock band Rush, incorporates both electronic and acoustic percussion into his performances.

91 Members of the Finnish band, Finntroll, state that they record the original instrument in the studio but use a keyboard to simulate the sounds of the instrument during a live performance.

92 Keyboardists have the ability to simulate the sounds of pianos, harpsichords, sitars, gongs, flutes, train engines, crickets and sounds of applause.
Folk instruments incorporated into heavy metal vary and reflect the musicians’ place of origin, their musical traditions or a culture with which they are attempting to establish membership. For example, musicians from Ireland might choose to include a fiddle, bodhrán or uillean pipes to identify with their Irish heritage, music and culture. However, musicians from Finland might choose a *kantele* or a *jouhikko* to establish their musical identity. The instruments introduced to the heavy metal context are left to the discretion of the musicians.

Through this incorporation of folk instruments, musicians accomplish several goals. First, folk instruments provide performers the opportunity to increase the sounds produced by the typical heavy metal instrumentation (electric guitar, bass and acoustic drums). By introducing instruments, such as those listed above, into the ensemble, musicians are not confined to the sounds commonly heard in heavy metal music. However, as noted earlier, instruments can be simulated on electronic keyboards. But the presence of folk instruments in ensembles leads to the instruments’ second function; a direct affiliation to the instrument’s geographical location and culture. For example, musicians performing with a Hardanger fiddle affiliate themselves with Norwegian music, specifically the Hardanger district in Norway, just as a band performing with a bodhrán identifies with Irish music and culture.

In addition to this cultural affiliation, musicians are able to perform folk tunes idiomatically on the instrument the tune was originally composed for. For example, Irish tunes are often written for fiddle or flute. The incorporation of these instruments allows musicians to perform tunes in the correct idiom. Some musicians, however, choose to perform melodies on electric guitars or electric string basses in the heavy metal ensemble. For instance, with some modification, it is possible to play a tune originally written for a fiddle on an electric guitar due to the similar construction of the two instruments. However, music for an accordion,
nyckelharpa or hurdy gurdy is not so easily transposed to the guitar due to the instruments’ construction and the nuances of their sound. Furthermore, even though advancements are made to synthesizers to reproduce a number of instrumental sounds, they are not always capable of identically replicating these sounds. By incorporating folk instruments, musicians are able to perform folk tunes in the original idiom rather than reproduce them with an electronic instrument.

The incorporation of folk tunes is another distinguishing trait of the folk metal subgenre. Some musicians quote folk tunes in heavy metal compositions while other performers compose songs built entirely around a folk melody. For instance, a main instrumental line played on the guitar may reference a folk melody or it may be a folk melody performed in its entirety, while other parts of the song, e.g. verse or middle eight, follow Western chord progressions. In this latter method, the heavy metal music is incorporated into the folk music, and is the harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment to the folk tune.

Combined with the use of folk tunes, lyrics focusing on folk elements also define this subgenre. In general, lyrics play a significant role in characterizing any heavy metal subgenre. Song texts focusing on death and mutilation to the human body establish membership to the death metal subgenre while anti-Christian or satanic lyrics characterize black metal. Folk metal lyrics are folkloric and nationalistic and consciously evoke a culture, group of people, geographical location, time period in history or a mythological/cosmological story. Lyrics discuss historically oppressed groups or those feared as tyrants and oppressors, advocate methods of subsistence and survival that are no longer practiced or describe stories of creation found in national/regional folklore. The concurrency of these lyrical themes and the incorporation of folk instruments in a heavy metal context establish a folk metal identity.

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93 Folk metal is sometimes referred to as pagan metal because of references that are made to pre-Christian and pagan elements. The labels are often used interchangeably. For instance, the Finnish folk metal band Korpiklaani is often included on a tour called Paganfest.
However, despite these lyric characteristics, some musicians explicitly identify with a particular group or nation by the language used by vocalists.

The dominant language of heavy metal is English, since the music developed through contact and musical exchange between the United States and Great Britain, two English speaking countries. To connect to a wider audience and achieve greater success, non-English speaking bands often perform songs in English. Vocalists who choose to sing strictly in their native tongue do not have the same exposure to a wide audience as English speakers, since the chosen language may not be spoken by the larger population. Languages and dialects found in Norway, Finland, Ireland or Sweden are spoken by isolated groups within an area, but will rarely be found outside a particular region. Max Cavalera (former vocalist for the Brazilian band Sepultura and current vocalist for the band Soulfly), provides an example of this exposure in a non-folk metal context. On early recordings, Cavalera performed nearly all of his vocals in English, despite the fact that his native language is Portuguese. However, by singing in English, Cavalera gained access to the English speaking listeners and markets in the United States and Great Britain.

Despite the prominence of English in heavy metal, non-English languages, such as those found in Finland, are common in folk metal. It is rare, however, for vocalists to sing entirely in their native tongue and not use some degree of English, as this limits the band’s exposure to a large audience. Rather it is more common for bands to record songs in both English and their first language. The Finnish band Moonsorrow is an exception to this as the Finnish language dominates the band’s songs. Songs not sung in English are often translated into English by the band and are listed in album liner notes or by fans who translate lyrics and post the texts online.

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The language used by vocalists fulfills three functions. First, by using English, a band’s music reaches a wider audience. This wider dissemination of music leads to increased popularity in English speaking areas and markets. Second, by singing in their native language, vocalists are able to better communicate with their audience members who speak the same language and maintain the integrity of their conceptualizations and ideas. Third, by using a non-English language, bands affiliate with a particular culture, group of people and location. Musicians singing in their native language, reject the hegemony of the English language in heavy metal and establish a sense of national pride. However, if the language is not native to the musicians, its use is a form of respect to the culture in which the language originates. Similar to the incorporation of folk instruments, cultural identity is defined and determined by language.

In addition to these instrumental and lyrical characteristics, other visual elements representing folk society and culture are also utilized by folk metal bands. Methods by which performers visually represent a culture vary. For example, on stage, some musicians wear attire similar to that worn by peasantry from rural villages. In these instances, male musicians wear loose fitting shirts and non-denim trousers while females wear articles of clothing that do not accentuate their physical appearances. Unlike pop performers, women in folk metal often wear traditional dresses or clothing similar to that of male performers. Articles of clothing worn by musicians visually establish a connection to a particular culture

Other visual symbols are visible in album artwork and during live performances. These images are derived from a specific culture and are used to evoke a concept or emotion in relation to the music and band members. Norse symbols are prevalent in the artwork of the Swedish death metal band, Amon Amarth. To declare their heritage and affiliation with Norse and Viking
culture, the musicians incorporate Viking ships, Nordic runes, a representation of *Mjölnir*\(^{95}\) and images of Norse gods, such as Thor and Odin, into performances and on album covers. Additional symbols will be discussed in the following chapters, which specifically reference religious practices found among Northern Europe groups.

The aforementioned traits distinguish folk metal music and bands from other heavy metal subgenres. While heavy metal bands reflect modernity in lyrics, clothing and technology, folk metal bands integrate elements of pre-modern and pre-industrial folk cultures into modern musical contexts. The confluence of modern instruments and sound with pre-modern elements is the unique and definitive characteristic of this music. As stated earlier, all of the elements characterizing folk metal music do not need to be present, leading to myriad combinations of traits. However, whichever traits are utilized, they must be integrated into and performed concurrently with metal music. Without metal music, the converging elements become more characteristic of folk music or folk rock. Concisely, folk metal is defined by the presence of folk elements in heavy metal, establishing an affiliation with a particular culture or area of the world.

\(^{95}\) *Mjölnir* is the hammer used by the Norse god, Thor. It represents strength and power.
CHAPTER IV
FINLAND’S CULTURE, FOLK MUSIC AND TRADITIONS

Finland is divided into three separate cultural zones: the west, the east and north. The culture from each area reflects the presence of indigenous communities living in particular regions or indicates contact that occurred between Finnish people and groups from outside of Finland. For example, Western Finnish culture is similar to that of Eastern Sweden, which is a result of commerce, the activities of Swedish Vikings in the Finnish territory and the historical designation of Finland as a Swedish province. Likewise, the northern portion of the country, known as Lapland, is home to the nomadic reindeer herders, the Sami, who originated from western Russia. Within Finland, this nomadic group is found specifically within the northernmost region of the country. Cultural backgrounds, such as the above, define and establish the identities of groups found within these areas.

Geographically, the northern and eastern areas of Finland are significant since they connect Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden and Finland) to Western Russia. As a connecting landmass, Finland is a cultural pathway on which groups of individuals and their respective cultures journey, either passing through the country or settling within it. As a result of these migrations to and through the territory, varying cultures, histories and music exist in Finland.

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The Sami: Lifestyle, Religion and Musical Practices

Early ethnographic documents describe the lifestyles and subsistence patterns of early groups that inhabited Finland. One area of focus was the Lapland region and groups living there. In his work, *Germania*, the Roman historian Publius Cornelius Tacitus describes these people as

…extraordinarily wild and horribly poor. They have no arms, no horses, no permanent homes. They live on grass, they dress in skins, they sleep on the ground. They pin their one hope to the arrow. Lacking iron, they use bone to provide it with a sharp point. Their hunting provides food for men and women alike; the womenfolk, in fact, follow the man everywhere and demand their share of the prey. The children have no other protection from storm and tempest than may be granted them by a few interwoven branches. In such a refuge, the young gather, and the old retire to it.  

Tacitus’ document was written around 100 A.D. and presents a record of the early Lapland inhabitants. Despite the age of his record, some traits described by Tacitus characterized groups in Finland up until the twentieth century. For instance, community members used animal skins as articles of clothing or footwear (though the skins were sewn, stitched together and fitted for a person rather than draped over the body) and practiced a nomadic hunting and gathering lifestyle (ascertained from Tacitus’ claim that these people have no permanent homes, live off grass and are bound to the fate of the arrow for hunting). Present day groups no longer live in conditions identical to those recorded by the Roman ethnographer as culture contact, population growth, land development and climate change have impacted and altered the lives of this nomadic group leading to the modernization of some communities and ending the nomadic lifestyle of others. Although these groups were historically characterized by herding and nomadism, today, sedentism has become more prevalent as groups remain within local regions in Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia.

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The nomadic Sami are one of the most well-known Lapland groups, found throughout northern parts of Finland, Sweden, Russia and Norway. Historically, these nomads procured food by hunting, gathering and fishing, similar to subsistence patterns described by Tacitus. As a practice relying on the availability of natural resources, hunting and gathering forced communities to constantly search for and pursue food sources. This subsistence pattern led to the movement of these populations throughout northern areas of Finland and Scandinavia as they exploited the resources available to them.

To adapt to this persistent movement and the snow covered terrain of the area, the Sami created skis and snowshoes to more easily traverse the northern European landscape. These new methods of transportation allowed people to travel faster and more efficiently across the territory, especially in winter conditions. Skis and snowshoes were advantageous not only as a means of travel, but were also effective for tracking and hunting large game, such as reindeer. Hunters were able to cover greater distances more quickly and with less energy by walking on the snow with snowshoes or gliding across the top of it on skis. As such, animals could be hunted more efficiently. Roberto Bosi argues that these developments in transportation eventually led to the domestication of the reindeer, an animal that remains significant to the Sami.

Animal domestication is significant for the survival of the Sami. Two animals are particularly important in the lives of this group. Dogs were one of the earliest animals domesticated and trained by the nomads and were used to track and hunt game in Lapland.

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99 Saami is an alternate spelling of this name. The denotation of Lapp for these nomadic herders is now considered derogatory, though it was widely used in past documents.
102 Ibid., p. 24.
Often, these animals were used to pursue large animals, such as reindeer, which are one of the largest animals in this area of the world and provided a number of resources to hunters. However, the constant tracking of these wild animals meant that group members were themselves continuously moving as they tracked the animals. But with the combination of hunting technology, e.g. projectile points, skis and snowshoes and the use of dogs for hunting, this constant pursuit decreased as the nomads eventually domesticated the reindeer and began herding the animal.

Domestication benefited the Sami in several aspects. One of the most beneficial results of breeding and herding was the decrease in the hunters’ movement across large areas in pursuit of this food resource. Rather than traveling across Lapland tracking food, communities controlled a herd, giving the group constant access to the animal and the resources it provided. First, reindeers were a source of food, essential proteins and energy. As food, this resource is paramount for survival, especially during winter months when rivers are frozen and other sources of meat are scarce. Second, reindeers produce milk, which is used for drinking and making dairy products, e.g. butter and cheese,\(^{103}\) providing further nutrients to herders, similar to the animal’s meat. Third, fur was used as articles of clothing, e.g. full body coverings, hats, gloves, footwear and blankets once they had been tanned and treated, to keep the Sami warm and protect them from the cold Lapland climate.

In addition to the protection provided by personal articles of clothing, hides were also used to create shelters. Tanned skins were sewn together and fixed to a wooden framework,\(^{104}\) creating a structure in which community members could sleep and remain protected from the natural elements. The construction of Sami housing (wooden poles and reindeer hides), allowed

for quick assembly and disassembly of shelters for travel. These structures along with the contents of the camp were transported with the use of the domesticated reindeer. Items were attached to and carried by the animals or were dragged behind on sledges tied to the animal’s body. As pack animals, reindeer were particularly useful to herders when the community moved camp from one area to another during seasonal changes. Reindeer were an essential element for the Sami in Lapland, due to the amount of resources that could be obtained from the animal.

The importance of the reindeer is also indicated in the artwork and religious practices of Sami herders. For instance, cave carvings depicting humans with reindeer features, such as antlers or elongated noses, are identified shamans. The reindeer’s spirit was acknowledged in religious practices since the animal ensured the survival and continuity of a group. Artwork and ethnographic records indicate that, prior to the presence and influence of Christianity in Lapland, herding groups practiced shamanism. This religious practice is not specifically unique to this area of the world, however, as the religious practices of the Sami are related to those found among groups in northwestern Russia and Siberia. Similarities between religious practices from groups in these different areas indicate the migration patterns taken by nomads as they moved from one region to another.

Among the Sami, shamans are referred to as noaides. These members of the community ensure the continuity of the group through their connection to the spiritual world by invoking the spirits of animals and other natural elements to provide for and protect the community members. This communication occurred through ritual practices, to ensure, for

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106 Lewis L. Langness. *The Study of Culture, Third Edition*. Novato, California: Chandler & Sharp Publishers, Inc., 2005, p. 298. Langness defines this religious practice as that “based on the idea that a spirit or a power can be invoked to possess a person (a shaman) and thus endow him or her with supernatural power of a various kind.”
example, that hunters obtained food for the group during hunting excursions. Spirits were also called upon to facilitate the healing of group members when they were ill or injured. Prior to contact with Christianity and before the advent of and access to modern medicine, shamans were important members of groups as healers and connections to the spiritual dimension to ensure the survival of the nomadic group.

As indicated above, the reindeer was an imperative resource for these nomads, providing a number of elements for their survival. While food, clothing and shelter were obtained from this animal, the Sami also believed that the bear possessed greater spiritual and magical power. Bears were considered the “animal-king,” capable of reasoning, magic, and even knowing whether a pregnant woman carried a boy or girl in her womb.\textsuperscript{109} Although the Sami respected and revered the bear, it was still hunted by the Sami. To ensure the protection of the hunters and to express gratitude to the spirit of the bear for providing the community with food and fur, hunting expeditions were preceded and sanctioned by rituals performed by a shaman.\textsuperscript{110}

In order to communicate with the spirit of the animal, the shaman entered the metaphysical realm by beating a drum, reciting chants and invoking particular spirits. In the context of the ritual, the drum is viewed as a transporter, often a horse, which carried the shaman into and through the spiritual world.\textsuperscript{111} As will be discussed, these drums were later prohibited and destroyed by Christian missionaries who condemned shamanistic practices.

Sami shaman drums are categorized and classified by structure and design, of which there are four types. These variations are the result of groups living in isolation from one another, possessing the same general concept of the drum, but interpreting the concept differently based

on available construction material. The design and construction of drums are regionally defined, originating from groups living in the south, north and eastern areas of Lapland. Ørnulv Vorren and Ernst Manker describe these drums:

First there is the frame type, where the skin was stretched over a frame made by bending round a strip of wood as broad as a hand. This belongs to the southern part of Lapland as also does the second kind, the ring type. Its frame was made from a wooden ring which had grown naturally. The northern Lapp drum, the bowl type, was wide-spread from Finnmark in the north to the Pite district in the south. The membrane on this was stretched over a wooden bowl which had two or more perforations. The fourth kind is the angle frame type, the frame of which was made by two bent pieces of wood joined together giving an angled cross sections. This belongs to Finnish Lapland.\(^\text{112}\)

The general concept of the drum was widespread throughout areas of Northern Europe. Different groups however, created specific, identifiable variations indicating the drum’s regional origin and to which group it was affiliated.

Due to its use in rituals and the belief that it transported the shaman throughout the spirit world, drums were not used as musical instruments in secular contexts. Rather, they were strictly heard in spiritual or ceremonial settings. As such, drum membranes were decorated with images of animals, natural elements, humans and mythological characters, which possessed religious significance to the Sami.\(^\text{113}\) With the combined spiritual function of the drum and the images adorning its membrane, the shaman’s drum can be interpreted as a representation of the physical and cosmological world of the Sami people. The drum connected the earthly physical world with the spiritual metaphysical one through the shaman mediator. However, these cosmological and mythological beliefs were not shared throughout northern Europe and Lapland. Christians, in particular, did not agree with or condone the practices of the shamans or their relationship with the spirit world.

\(^{113}\) Ibid., pp. 95-96.
Christianity, from the southern and western areas of Europe, eventually came into contact with the religious practices of the Sami and other Lapland nomadic groups around the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{114} This contact occurred as missionaries were sent to outposts and settlements in northern European regions to maintain the faith in Christian communities and to convert members of the indigenous populations. Changes took place in the religious practices and lifestyles of herding groups as a result of this contact and subsequent interaction between groups with differing cultural and religious backgrounds. For example, the construction of Christian churches and graveyards altered the nomadic lifestyle. When a death occurred in the nomadic group, the body was carried to a church so that the priest could perform the last rites over the deceased.\textsuperscript{115} The spread of Christianity by missionaries throughout Finland and other areas in northern Europe eventually led to the loss of some indigenous religious practices.

Coincidentally, missionaries sent to these territories wrote some of the most detailed historical accounts of Lapland nomadic herders. These accounts document the writer’s personal daily experiences as well as the day-to-day activities of the Sami. For instance, Roberto Bosi discusses the importance of Knud Leem, a missionary from the Norwegian Lapland area, as an ethnographer and his detailed documentation of the nomads’ lives. In 1725, Leem traveled to the northern most part of Norway to convert the indigenous population to Christianity. To accomplish his objective, Leem lived among the herders. As a result of his immersion into Sami culture, the missionary assisted group members with day-to-day activities and gained an understanding of their culture. Although he did convert members of the indigenous population to Christianity, it was not through force.\textsuperscript{116} Leem’s work with the Sami demonstrated respect for

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., p. 68.
the herders and their lifestyle as he learned about these people and their way of life. However, not all missionaries approached these groups with the same cultural respect exhibited by Leem.

Approximately 130 years after Leem’s interactions with the Lapland inhabitants, Lars Levi Laestadius, a Swedish pastor, began a movement to assimilate the Sami population into Western society. As a step in this process, Laestadius attempted to eradicate shaman practices by ordering and enforcing the destruction of drums, thereby destroying an essential element to Sami religious practices and their way of life. As noted above, the beating of the drum was a significant part of religious practices and acted as the carrier of the shaman through the spiritual realm. However, the sounds produced during rituals allowed Christian missionaries to more readily identify where and when these events were taking place. By following the sounds of the drum, missionaries were able to target unconverted groups, confiscate and destroy the drums and begin the process of assimilation with religious conversion. While the drums represented the herders’ cosmological beliefs and sense of belonging in the world, the eradication of these objects symbolized the destruction of cultural elements, overtaken and replaced by Western ideologies and practices.

Not all Sami ritual or musical practices faced a fate similar to that of the shaman drums. For instance, the vocal tradition performed by the Sami, the joik, is still performed to this day. While specific words were used in joiks, vocables, e.g. no, na, lo, la, lai, vo, yo, often replaced words. These syllables are a defining characteristic of this vocal tradition, but do not possess any translatable meaning. Rather, they introduce and emphasize rhythmic figures or embellish

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melodies, giving the vocables musical significance within the context of the *joik*. The presence and function of these syllables in the vocal tradition give *joiks* a unique musical identity.

Traditionally, *joiks* were performed during rituals, along with the beating of the drum, as the shaman invoked spirits and entered a trance-like state. The name of this tradition translates, “to sing something or someone” but not to sing about a person or item. Ande Somby clarifies this translation by stating that this vocal practice is “the ability to bring something into the room that is not there before you start...” Somby’s description indicates that *joiks* sonically create the subject during the performance, rather than describe it.

Tina K. Ramnarine elaborates on this practice, describing the function of *joiks* as possessing the

…‘power to encompass and express’ the reindeer, the bear, or the person referred to and recalled in the *joik* (DuBois 2006:71). Edstrom notes that in pre-Christian Scandinavia, shamans were thought to receive their *joiks* from supernatural beings (1985:160). Joiks are performed for animals and land as well as for people. Joik performance thus points to a complex set of relationships between music, environment, and the sacred...

Ramnarine’s description underlines Somby’s, noting that *joiks* express or recall animals, elements or people. The relationship and function of *joiks* in rituals becomes apparent with these descriptions. The shaman invoked spirits by *joiking* a particular animal and establishing a connection with the animal’s spirit in the metaphysical realm. For example, a shaman *joiking* a bear or reindeer invoked these particular spirits to ensure successful and safe hunting expeditions.

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119 Ibid., p. 300.
121 Tina K. Ramnarine. “Acoustemology, Indigeneity, and Joik in Valkeapää’s Symphonic Activism: Views from Europe’s Arctic Fringes for Environmental Ethnomusicology,” *Ethnomusicology* 52, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2009), p. 188.
122 Ibid., p. 191.
123 Ibid., p. 189.
Joiks were also used to construct a sense of community among the group. By “singing someone,” the one joiking acknowledged the significance of those who were joiked and made them known to the community, affirming their Sami identity. This practice established a social function of the joik in addition to its purpose in religious contexts. However, due to its performance in shaman rituals, Christian missionaries also attempted to outlaw joiks during the conversion and assimilation of herders. Despite this prohibition, joiking is still practiced among groups who experienced no or limited contact with missionaries. The tradition has also been diffused to a wide audience through its incorporation into popular and contemporary music as discussed by Olle Edström in his article “From Jojk to Rock & Jojk: Some Remarks on the Process of Change and of the Socially Constructed Meaning of Sami Music.” By using joiks in popular music, the tradition remains alive musically, though the religious meanings associated with the practice have changed with the use do the tradition in new musical contexts.

As an historically non-sedentary group, the Sami did not possess many musical instruments. As discussed earlier, drums were used in shaman rituals and not as an instrument for entertainment or in a musical performance. The only Sami instrument used for secular purposes was a wind instrument fashioned from the stem of an angelica plant, known as a fadno. Categorized as an idioglot oboe (the reed is carved from the body of the

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126 Ørnulv Vorren and Ernst Manker. Op. Cit., pp. 112-113. Fadno refers to the new growth of this plant, while the term pâska denotes older growth.
musicians produced melodies on the *fadno* during travel and periods of rest. New instruments were easily constructed as communities moved from one place to another since the *fadno* was fashioned from a plant found throughout Lapland during warmer times of the year. However, while the *fadno* was used to perform instrumental tunes, Sami music was predominantly focused on vocal performances, e.g. *joiking*.

Finnish Folk Instruments, Music and Culture

While contact with Christian missionaries brought changes to the music and culture of the Lapland inhabitants, the Sami were not the only group to experience forced conversions or the presence of western European culture. Just as the nomads were impacted by people, culture and products from Western Europe, sedentary groups in western and southern Finland experienced a similar situation, brought on by culture contact. Similar to the Lapland herders, village groups living in Finland possessed few musical instruments. The instruments used by sedentary groups were more complex and larger compared to those found among the Sami. Since village groups did not constantly move with the seasonal changes, follow game or herd animals across territories, musical instruments were not in danger of breaking during transit nor were they seen as easily disposable. Instruments found in these

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sedentary contexts include the torvi (a trumpet fashioned from an animal horn), the pilli (a clarinet), the kantele (a plucked zither, now recognized as the national instrument of Finland) (fig.4) and the jouhikko (a bowed lyre) (fig. 5).\textsuperscript{129} Musicians performed tunes on these instruments as solo instrumentalists, as well as accompanied the singing of folk songs and dances.

Some of these instruments were replaced by western European instruments when they were introduced to the Finnish musical culture around the 1500s. For example, Finnish musicians began using the violin instead of the jouhikko for performances.\textsuperscript{130} Despite the replacement of instruments, some tunes and songs composed for the jouhikko, could be performed on the violin, due to similarities between the construction and playing techniques of the instruments (both are bowed, stringed instruments). The accordion was introduced to Finnish musicians as well, but was not received positively by some Finnish religious groups, earning the moniker “the Devil’s lungs.”\textsuperscript{131} Despite the adverse attitudes toward the accordion and the replacement of the jouhikko by the violin, these instruments have become fully integrated into the folk music of Finland. Although instruments such as the violin and accordion are now common in performances of Finnish music, the substitution of Western instruments for those from Finland demonstrates the Westernization which took place in the country and its impact on members of the folk population and their music.

\textsuperscript{129} Timo Leisiö. Op. Cit., p. 479.
\textsuperscript{130} Timo Leisiö. Op. Cit., pp. 481-482.
\textsuperscript{131} Idem.
Dances were also influenced by the presence of western European culture in Finland. Prior to the introduction of modern and popular dances, participants often listened to and performed poetry and verse from the *Kalevala* (a collection of myths and poetry compiled by the Finnish song collector, Elias Lönnrot),\(^\text{132}\) listened to the history of the Finnish people, forged social bonds through gatherings and drinking, participated in dances and participated in Finnish music. However, similar to the accordion and violin, modern dance and song forms common throughout Finland today were introduced to the Finnish population by contact and interactions with Western Europeans.

During the dance craze of the early twentieth century, some dances were created through the hybridization of folk and modern dances or were adapted by Finnish dancers. For instance, the tango from Argentina and the American foxtrot became popular during this period,\(^\text{133}\) along with polkas. Polkas, in particular, gained popularity, leading to the development of a Finnish adaptation of the dance form, known as *humppa*. This dance is a hybridization of “[American] jazz…elements of American foxtrot, polka like dances, *rekilaulu* (round-dance songs), and Russian romances.”\(^\text{134}\) *Humppa* is defined by the quick tempo of the music, typically played in 2/4 or 2/2 and the strong presence of the accordion. Modern versions of dance form are performed by rock ensembles and folk metal bands in Finland (see chapter 5).

The aforementioned instruments, introduced to the Finnish folk by Western Europeans, were used as instruments for entertainment and enjoyment. The music performed with these instruments is often heard at convivial social gatherings. One Finnish instrument in particular, the *kantele*, was used in similar ways to those listed above, but also bore greater significance than the *jouhikko*, violin or accordion. While these instruments often accompanied singing and

\(^{134}\) Idem.
dancing, the *kantele* was also played during recitations of poems and myths from the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*.

The *Kalevala* was collected, organized and published in a single document by Elias Lönnrot, in 1835 and again, as an expanded text, in 1849. Although he collected a majority of the poetic verses in the *Kalevala* from the rural Finnish population, Lönnrot did fabricate and interpret portions of the text to create cohesion among the collected verses. For this reason, it is argued that the published text is not a collection of the true verses as they existed among the Finnish folk. Despite concerns regarding the authenticity of the text, the *Kalevala* is accepted as the national epic of Finland.

The verses of this epic recount the lifestyles, history, mythologies and culture of the Finnish people. For instance, portions of the text describe a story of genesis, focusing on Väinämöinen (also spelled Wainamoinen), the epic’s main character who is both a shaman and musician. Tina K. Ramnarine describes this character as “the mythical embodiment of the nascent Finnish nation.” It is this character who creates the *kantele* and first performs music on the instrument, revealing the mythological origins of the *kantele* and its power over an audience. These mythological stories emphasize the importance of particular elements of Finnish culture, such as the *kantele*, music and communication with the spirit world.

The length, detail and quality of the verses collected by Lönnrot demonstrate the intellectual and creative processes of the rural living Finns who were uninfluenced by westernization. Urpo Vento notes the importance of the epic to Finnish culture:

(1) The ancient Finnish world view was thought to be reflected in the Kalevala and original folklore. (2) The Kalevala was understood as a description of the ancient

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138 Ibid., p. 24.
Finnish original religion - Lönnrot's aim was to leave out Christian motifs from the epic, making Väinämöinen the last receding figure of the heathen age. (3) The Kalevala represents the ancient Finnish legends, which are also linguistically very close to ancient Finnish. (4) The dispersion of the Finno-Ugric peoples, the Finnish tribe, is symbolically presented in the Kalevala. (5) The struggle between good and evil is allegorically depicted in the Kalevala, the opponents being Väinämöinen and Louhi the mistress of the North, in other male and female types the fundamental character of the Finns and variations between tribes are evident. (6) The picture of the return of Väinämöinen, the national hero, has carried the utopia of the better future of the people.139

While the Kalevala is a literary document held in high regard by Finns, it also contains stories and myths that create negative perceptions and stereotypes of the modern Finnish society. One rune in particular, number twenty, describes the creation of alcohol, a substance which Finns are known for consuming. As a result of this consumption, individuals in Finland have stereotyped their culture as one with a drinking problem.140

In most cultures, alcohol is offered to guests and strangers as a sign of greeting and welcoming, to be enjoyed during celebratory occasions, such as weddings or festivals. Finland is not the only country in the world in which alcohol is present or stereotyped as drinking culture as countries in Northern Europe are home to other cultures that are similarly stereotyped. For instance, Ireland is known for Guinness stout and Jameson whiskey as well as stereotypes of the Irish people as perpetual drunks. Although there is a degree of truth to stereotypes, countries and cultures, other than these, can be characterized similarly based on the brewing or distilling of alcohol and the actions of its drinkers.

European nations, e.g. Ireland and England, are also known for songs that are sung during the consumption of alcohol. While these songs are often celebratory in nature, Finnish songs also highlight the dangers of drinking and the negative impact of alcohol on one’s life and those

around the person drinking. Modern drinking songs, in particular, juxtapose lyrics extolling and warning against drunkenness. Some of these words are accompanied by festive sounding tunes, while some music is melancholic, complementing the lyrics. In his article “Drinking to Death: Traditional Masculinity, Alcohol and Shame in Finnish Metal Lyrics,” Atte Oskanen notes that alcohol related social issues are more prevalent in eastern Finland’s rural communities, prompting bands from these areas to raise awareness of alcoholism through music.\footnote{Atte Oskanen. “Drinking to Death: Traditional Masculinity, Alcohol and Shame in Finnish Metal Lyrics,” \textit{Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs} 28, no. 4 (2011), p. 363. Accessed November 19, 2013, \url{http://versita.metapress.com/content/jv46125n1p00rm25/fulltext.pdf}.} Similarly, the band Korpiklaani notes the ambiguity of drinking songs in the liner notes for the song “Juodaan Viinaa.”

However, the lyrics are not all fun and joy. They also include references to different problems in life, getting old, death and escapism. An old Finnish proverb, ‘Viina on viisasten juoma,’ roughly translated as ‘Alcohol is the drink of the wise,’ means that only sensible people should drink alcohol. Chorus of this song may refer to the fact that this proverb is often misinterpreted to mean that ‘you should drink more to get wise.’\footnote{Korpiklaani. “Joudaan Viinaa,” \textit{Karkelo}, Nuclear Blast Records NB 2306-2, 2009. p. 4.} The prevalence of alcohol in Finnish culture and the problems it causes in society, leads Finnish musicians to advocate alcohol awareness in popular songs. But as stated in the passage above, misinterpretation may take place and the unintended result of increased alcohol consumption may occur.

In Finland, death is the most severe consequence of drinking. In addition to death caused by long term alcohol consumption, e.g. cirrhosis of the liver, alcohol related homicides have also risen in recent years.\footnote{Bill Zebub. Op. Cit.} The increase in these deaths across the country raises national concern regarding alcohol, while before concern was more isolated and confined to particular portions of Finland. Even though performers attempt to advocate for an awareness of the ramifications of
drinking, their messages are not always explicit. Folk metal music and lyrics create contradictions by incorporating Finnish and other drinking related songs into their repertoire, extolling alcohol but warn against its dangers. Despite the ambiguity of lyrics and messages, it appears that the goal of these lyrics is to make known the effects of alcohol so that listeners avoid harming themselves, others, society and the culture as a whole.

The Finnish culture is characterized by an extensive history of migration, assimilation, hybridization, literary creation, musical adaptation and the presence of cross cultural social issues. Even though these elements describe the history of the country and its people, most are still prevalent in contemporary Finnish culture. For instance, drinking songs are still popular among Finns, as will be discussed in the music of Korpiklaani, a Finnish folk metal band. Likewise, Sami culture is no longer confined to Lapland, in the northern area of the country, as it has permeated the urban areas of southern Finland and contemporary culture. The perpetuation and diffusion of music and culture throughout Finland is the result of cultural contact, which continues to occur throughout the present day. Elements discussed in this chapter highlight several qualities and traits of the cultures within Finland, creating identities that are uniquely Sami or Finnish. These characteristics establish the foundation for Finnish folk metal bands as they promote localized music and culture to a global audience.
CHAPTER V
THE MUSIC AND LYRICS OF KORPIKLAANI

The best known and most prominent Finnish folk metal bands include Finntroll, Amorphis, Moonsorrow, Turisas, Ensiferum and Korpiklaani. Each group demonstrates unique musical and lyrical identities within the folk metal subgenre. Although these bands differ, each demonstrates an affiliation to Finnish culture, reflected in the music, lyrics and live performances of the musicians. This study focuses specifically on Korpiklaani, based on the musicians’ commitment to represent Finnish music, history, identity, heritage, ethnicity, language and culture through folk metal.

Shamaani Duo and Shaman

Korpiklaani has undergone several name and lineup changes throughout the history of the group. Jonne Järvelä (the band’s founder, lead guitarist and vocalist), is the only musician who has consistently performed in the group. As such, Järvelä plays a significant role in writing and developing the band’s music, lyrics and image. His role in forging the identity of Korpiklaani is directly influenced by his experiences with Finnish folk music and his contact with the Sami in Lapland.

Järvelä recalls his first contact and interactions with Lapland culture in an interview with Octavio Ramos Jr. from Soundchecks Music Review,

…everything started when I moved from the south of Finland to the northern part of the country at the beginning of the 1990s - actually, the year was 1993…Up north in Lapland live the Sami people who have their own language…I became familiar with these people, and suddenly I was living with them in the very deep part of the forest. Of course, we started to play music, and soon after that I found
By living among the Sami and immersing himself in the culture, Järvelä became exposed to the music, language and lifestyle of these people. Through this immersion, the singer experienced Sami religious and musical practices directly from the members of the culture. His active engagement with the Lapland group provided him the opportunity to learn cultural elements in a context that was not available to him in southern Finland. The singer’s immersion and experiences in Sami culture established an identity and foundation for his own compositions and performances. The results of Järvelä’s contact are heard on the album, *Hunka Lunka*, released in 1996. This is the first and only collaboration recorded by Järvelä with the female vocalist Maaren Aikio under the band name, Shamaani Duo.145

The period between 1993 and 1996 reveals a number of influences from Sami culture in the music of Shamaani Duo. For instance, the name of the group references the shamanistic beliefs and rituals practiced by groups living in Finnish Lapland. Shamanism historically played a significant role in the lives of Lapland groups as well as those living in western Russia, such as the Ural Mountains region (see chapter 4). Furthermore, the band’s name (*shamaani* is the Finnish spelling of the word shaman) establishes a connection to a specific group and area of the world (groups practicing shamanism and living in Finland’s Lapland region). The name of the group indicates the influence of Sami culture on Järvelä’s musical and cultural background.

Beyond the group’s name, a shaman drum was included into the music to further identify with Lapland religion. On the album *Hunka Lunka*, the liner notes indicate that this percussion instrument is a shaman frame drum, known as the *tüngür*, found in the Tuva language areas in

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Russia. This object was reinterpreted by Järvelä in the new context of Shamaani Duo and given new meaning once it was removed from its religious setting. Originally, the drum spiritually connected the shaman to the metaphysical world, but within the new musical setting of the band, the instrument was ascribed a new, secular and musical function. The design and structure of the instrument did not change, only the significance given to it. The drum gained new significance, as it became a musical item, referencing Sami religious practices and reflecting Järvelä’s experiences in Finnish Lapland.

Other instruments used on the album include an acoustic guitar, a string bass instrument, an electric keyboard and tambourine. Of these, the acoustic guitar is heard most prominently. Traditionally, ethnographic records do not document this instrument among the Sami. The use of this instrument reflects Järvelä’s musical background in western music. Playing a less significant role on the album is an electric keyboard, which is used to play simple chord progressions and add atmospheric elements to the music. With the exception the keyboard and string bass, all the instruments heard on Hunka Lunka are acoustic. This album demonstrates the first instance of Järvelä integrating musical sounds and cultures, reminiscent of Jethro Tull’s recordings from the 1970s, by simultaneously performing western instruments with the tüngür. Through this integration of elements from Sami culture with those from Western popular music, the foundation was established upon which Järvelä’s later projects were built.

Joiks performed by Järvelä and Aikio throughout Hunka Lunka reflect Sami culture in addition to the name and incorporation of the shaman drum. Listeners are immediately

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147 Reinterpretation is a theory that was propounded by the anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits. The act of reinterpreting a cultural or musical item “is the process by which old meanings are ascribed to new elements or by which new values change the cultural significance of old forms. It operates internally, from generation to generation, no less than in integrating a borrowed element into a receiving culture. But it is in the latter process that the phenomenon is most easily to be studied.”
introduced to this vocal tradition on the first track of the album, “Šamanât.” This song begins with the low sound of a bass instrument, a plucked melody performed on an acoustic guitar and Aikio’s voice. A *joiking* duet is then heard between Järvelä and Aikio. The vocalists perform the same syllables, both simultaneously and in a repeated exchange throughout the course of the song, using the distinctive *joik* vocables *no, na, lo, la, lai, vo, vo, and hey*. When these syllables are not used, lyrics are sung in Tunturi, a dialect of the Sami language. The English language is not used in any lyrics or song titles on the *Hunka Lunka* album, maintaining a strict linguistic affiliation to Sami culture.

The music performed in Shamaani Duo is Järvelä’s first hybrid product, synthesized by integrating popular music and Sami practices. As discussed above, the incorporation of the shaman drum and *joiks* affiliate the music with Lapland groups. The presence of the Sami vocal tradition performed simultaneously with western instruments creates music that is neither purely Sami nor strictly western. It is a hybrid product with its own identity. This act of combining popular music and folk elements into a single context continues to define Järvelä’s music to the present-day.

Shamaani Duo and the album *Hunka Lunka* reflect the first phase of the music that later developed into Korpiklaani. Sami language, religious elements and vocal traditions permeate this first record. Järvelä’s immersion into Sami culture impacted the prominence of these traits in the music of Shamaani Duo, as they were combined with musical instruments used in performances of popular music. The following albums *Idja* and *Shamaniac* (released under the name Shaman) are transitional records. The formation of the band Shaman demonstrates a

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shift away from Sami elements and the acoustic sound of Shamaani Duo to the integration of Finnish folk music in heavy metal (see below).

After the release of *Hunka Lunka*, Järvelä relocated to southern Finland, away from the music, culture and lifestyle of the Sami, a move that later affected his compositions. Although he no longer lived in Lapland, the singer retained his experiences with Sami music and culture, incorporating them into a new musical context. The diffusion of Sami culture through Järvelä, led to the integration of elements from the rural northern culture with those from the urban and modern south. The result of this shift in location was manifested in the music of Järvelä’s new band, Shaman. This band marks the beginning of the transition towards folk metal.

The musicians in Shaman wrote and performed songs on electric guitars with a distorted timbre, while using an electric bass guitar and standard Western acoustic drum set. These instruments replaced the acoustic guitar, which had played a prominent role in Shamaani Duo’s music, though some acoustic instruments (an acoustic guitar and a shaman drum) are still heard on Shaman’s first album, *Idja*. The acoustic items on *Hunka Lunka* became de-emphasized on *Idja* as electric instruments gained prominence. More descriptive labels for this album are folk rock, “Sami rock” or “*joik* rock” because of the electric elements. Despite this sound shift, Shaman’s music continued to be influenced by Sami culture (Järvelä continued to *joik* and sing in the Tunturi dialect). The merging of electric rock instruments with the *joiks* is the greatest difference between the music of Shamaani Duo and Shaman.

Further development occurred before the recording of the group’s second album, *Shamániac* (2002). Prior to his work with Shaman, Järvelä collaborated with the Finnish folk metal band Finntroll, contributing *joiks* as a guest artist on the album *Jaktens tid* (2001). Shaman and Finntroll shared a common interest: the integration of folk elements into rock and heavy

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metal music. Finntroll’s music differed from Shaman’s, though, as the former’s was more characteristic of thrash and black metal. Electric guitars with heavily distorted timbres dominated Finntroll’s music while the percussion consisted of running sixteenth note patterns on the bass drum, as heard in the song “Födosagan.”

The vocal performances differed as well. Finntroll’s vocalist, Jan “Katla” Jämsen, sang in a harsh style, characterized by a distorted timbre,\(^{151}\) while Järvelä’s vocals were more clean and melodious. Up to this point in Järvelä’s music, his vocal performances were predominantly clean and not marked by any distortion or harshness to the voice.\(^{152}\) However, the Shaman vocalist’s work with other musicians influenced his vocal performances, and his voice became harsher sounding. Shaman’s sound became more characteristic of a heavy metal band as a result of Järvelä’s collaboration with the musicians in Finntroll,

Folk tunes became more prevalent in Shaman’s music as well. However, tunes were not performed on Finnish instruments, such as the kantele or jouhikko, but were played on electric guitars or synthesizers, the latter of which reproduced the sounds of whistles or flutes. For example, folk tunes are performed on an electric guitar and synthesizer in the song “Mu sieiddi beales mun gottan (Kanöhta lävlla / Álihasta / Mu sieiddi beales mun gottan).” Shamániac is a noticeable shift away from the acoustic folk sound of Shamaani Duo’s Hunka Lunka and the folk rock sound of Shaman’s first album, Idja, towards an integration of folk and heavy metal music.

The transition from the Sami influenced rock music of Shaman continued after the release of Shamániac. The most significant change came with the abandonment of the Tunturi

\(^{151}\) Harsh vocals refer to a vocal technique used to distort or produce a “harsh” vocal timbre. Early performances of this technique can be heard in the performances by Cronos, lead vocalist for Venom. This technique has undergone change and variation throughout the years and is used to produce vocals that can be characterized as barking, growling and golem-esque. The clean vocal style is converse to harsh vocals. The clean style is used by many popular singers and classical vocalists.

\(^{152}\) An exception to this can be heard on the ninth track on Idja, “It Šat Duolmma Mu.” However, this is the only track on this album in which harsh vocals are heard.
dialect used in the vocal performances. Every album released after *Shamániac* uses both the English and Finnish languages. *Joiking* was seldom heard after this album as well as the musicians in the band developed a folk metal sound. *Joiking* is hardly heard and referenced after *Shamániac*.¹⁵³ The singer expresses his reason for this shift,

[The] most affected thing to shift to a more metal sound was my life with Finntroll. I learned a lot in those couple of years that I was on their gigs and *Jakten ts tid* album. After that time it wasn’t return to old way to make music…Also at Shaman time it was strongly yoik oriented folk metal but it just came years enough from my years in Lapland, so yoiks and sàmi language just fade away little by little. Our sound went more metal because of my life. People can hear everything of my life from Korpiklaani albums.¹⁵⁴

Järvelä comments reveal the impact of cultural context on his life and music. His experiences living in Lapland led him to *joik*, as heard throughout *Hunka Lunka*. The constant contact with the Sami provided him the opportunity to practice and refine his technique to replicate the vocal tradition. However, once he was in the urban south and no longer in contact with the Sami, *joiking* became minimized in the music of Shaman as rock and heavy metal music took precedence on *Idja* and *Shamániac*. This resulted from Järvelä’s contact with modern technology and heavy metal musicians, such as those in Finntroll. Constant contact, interaction and exchange between the musical cultures listed above formed the foundation on which the music of Korpiklaani and the band’s folk metal identity is constructed.

Korpiklaani: Folk Metal’s Finnish Woodsclan

Songs released after the *Shamániac* album no longer solely referenced Sami religious practices and music. These Lapland elements are still present in Korpiklaani’s music, however,

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they are now juxtaposed with the music and culture of Finland as a whole. For instance, instruments discussed in the previous chapter, such as the violin (fiddle), jouhikko and accordion were added to the music and performed simultaneously in songs with the electric guitar, electric bass and western drum set. The incorporation of Finnish instruments into the context of heavy metal reflects the broadening of the musicians’ musical focus to include music found throughout Finland and not only from one specific area, e.g. Lapland.

As listed above, numerous changes occurred in Järvelä’s music, leading to the development of a folk metal identity. This new musical sound was solidified by the release of the album *Spirit of the Forest*, under the name Korpiklaani. Korpiklaani is a compound Finnish word, comprised of the nouns ‘korpi’ and ‘klaani,’ which translate into English as wilderness and clan, respectively. Järvelä remarked that the new name was created through conversations with other band members and representatives from the Napalm Records label:

> There was a lot of name candidates but what was good sounding name to me it was not that to other guys in the band or our new record label. Anyway, final name candidates was Woodstribe and Woodsclan but in Napalm Records they thought that the name could be in Finnish, so they asked from me that what Woodsclan is in Finnish. I said Korpiklaani. They liked it, so here we are...

The role played by the band’s record label should be noted. Although the support from the Napalm Records representatives may have been motivated by a desire for increased marketability, the name they supported remains in use to this day.

Changes to the name and music of the band reflect the shift initiated by Järvelä’s movement from Lapland to the south of Finland. The music progressed away from the joiking tradition and language of the Sami toward Western electric rock instruments, Finnish folk instruments, harsh vocals and use of the English and Finnish language. A Finnish folk identity is

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155 A transliteration of Korpiklaani is “wilderness clan.”
expressed from the release of *Spirit of the Forest* and continues through to the band’s lastest release, *Manala*, in 2012.

The music performed on Korpiklaani’s first album, *Spirit of the Forest* (2003), is pure folk metal, integrating folk instruments and tunes with heavy metal instruments and sounds. While Järvelä’s first album, *Hunka Lunka*, is defined by the prominence of the acoustic guitar and clean, melodic vocals, by the release of *Spirit of the Forest*, electric instruments and distorted timbres, both instrumentally and vocally, dominated the music. The development of this new sound is the result of the band’s locale, situated in Finland’s southern and urban area and not the rural north. The transition from the acoustic to the heavy metal sound also indicated a departure from the Sami elements, heard in the music of Shamaani Duo and Shaman.

Although some of the Sami practices which characterized Järvelä’s early music, such as *joiking*, were de-emphasized or abandoned during the transition to Korpiklaani, Lapland shamanistic elements continue to exist in the band’s artwork. Several shaman images are consistently included in album art: the shaman drum, a depiction of a shaman with his drum (fig. 6 and 7) and an old man with reindeer antlers fixed to his head, who is interpreted to be a shaman (fig. 8). All of these images are found on albums beginning with Shaman’s *Idja* (1999) and through the release of *Manala* (2012). Figures six, seven and eight demonstrate the use of these Sami elements in Shaman’s and Korpiklaani’s artwork.
Images depicting shamans or elements of Sami culture are not restricted to album cover artwork and are also seen in live performances. For example, reindeer antlers or bones and a shaman character are often affixed to Järvelä’s microphone stand during concerts. At a performance held at “The Legendary Peabody’s Concert Club” in Cleveland, Ohio, his microphone stand was adorned with a skull, antlers and vertebrae of a reindeer. Different combinations of these decorations exist and change over time. For instance, only antlers are placed on the stand at one concert, while during another show both a skull and antlers are attached to the stand. The adornment of the microphone stand with some element of a reindeer is a tradition in live performances in Korpiklaani (fig. 9).
As indicated by the advent of Korpiklaani’s Finnish name, linguistic changes occurred with the shift to folk metal as well. On the albums *Hunka Lunka*, *Idja* and *Shamániac*, Järvelä sang lyrics in the Tunturi dialect. However, all lyrics performed in Korpiklaani are sung in either Finnish or English. Coincidentally, while the band’s record label encouraged a Finnish identity
as Korpiklaani, the majority of song titles and lyrics on the band’s first album, *Spirit of the Forest*, were in English. Of the fourteen songs on the album, only four titles are in Finnish, “Pellonpekko,” “Hullunhumppa,” “Juokse Sinä Humma” and “Hengettömiltä Hengiltä,” the first three of which are instrumentals. “Hengettömiltä Hengiltä,” is the only track with Finnish lyrics, found toward the end of the album with a duration of only thirty-six seconds. The prominence of the English language on this album may have been motivated by a desire to reach listeners outside of Finland in English speaking areas. This album, *Spirit of the Forest*, is a pivotal point in the career of Korpiklaani as it marks the departure from the influences of Lapland culture and redirects the focus to Finnish folk music in heavy metal.

Evoking Finland: Instruments, Song Structures and Lyrics

The fiddle, * jouhikko*, flutes, accordion, mouth harp, *torupill*,157 kantele, mandolin and tin whistle have all been used in recordings of Korpiklaani’s music to perform folk tunes. As these instruments have come to characterize Finnish folk music throughout history, their incorporation into Korpiklaani’s music establishes the musical identity of the group as Finnish. The use of acoustic, un-synthesized instruments also reinforces the identity of the group (fig. 10). With the use of the acoustic folk instruments, Järvelä has declared,

There is no other folk metal band who dare to play as folk as we do. We are using only real instruments like fiddle, accordion, many kind of pipes. We are not using synthesizers as so many other folk metal bands do. Many other folk metal bands are more like black metal but we are more like regular heavy metal with folk elements. Korpiklaani’s folk music rocks like a reindeer.158

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The singer reveals a strong pride in the use of these folk instruments. Pride is expressed not only in regards to the Finnish-ness of the instruments and music, but also as a unique member of the folk metal community.

Folk song styles and structures became more prevalent in Korpiklaani’s music as a result of the incorporation of folk instruments in the ensemble. The two song styles most commonly heard in the band’s music are the *humppa* and polka. Both types are common throughout Finland and are characterized by quick tempo with 2/2 or 2/4 meters. The *humppa*, specifically, was created by the band Dallappé, and is a “version of jazz, mixing elements of American foxtrot, polka-like dances, *rekilaulu*"\(^{159}\), and Russian romances.”\(^{160}\) *Humppa* is often referred to as

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\(^{159}\) Timo Leisiö. Op. Cit., p. 478. *Rekilaulu* is a vocal genre focusing on historical or epic stories.  
\(^{160}\) Ibid., p. 483.
“accordion jazz,”\textsuperscript{161} because of the instrument’s prominent role in the music, as melodic, harmonic and syncopated patterns are performed in it. Both the humppa and polka accompany social dances. However, folk metal musicians who perform these song styles typically only focus on the music and not the dances.

*Humppa* and polkas are explicitly referenced in Korpiklaani’s song titles are imitated in the band’s music. Examples of the influence of these songs include “*Hullunhumppa,*” “*Louhen Yhdeksäs Poika,*” “*Vaarinpolkka,*” and “*Ievan Polkka,*” “*Happy Little Boozer,*” “*Väkirauta,*” “*Spring Dance,*” “*Kirki,*” “*Tervaskanto,*” “*Liekkiön Isku,*” and “*Nordic Feast.*” These styles were well adapted into heavy metal due to the fast tempos and relatively straightforward meters. If the folk instruments were removed from the ensemble, the music would become more characteristic of thrash metal or punk music.

The incorporation of the folk instruments and lyrics referencing Finnish culture establishes a Finnish identity. As discussed in chapter three, lyrics explicitly discussing folk or other cultural elements identified with a specific group are a defining characteristic of folk metal. Lyrics referencing Sami or Finnish culture have constantly been heard throughout the various forms of Järvelä’s music. For example, the song “Spirit of the Forest” discusses a shaman and his connection to nature, while “*Vesaisen Sota*” (Vesainen’s War) recounts fighting that took place during the Russo-Swedish War (1570-1595).\textsuperscript{162} These examples reflect elements that are specific to Sami culture and political tension between European countries. Korpiklaani’s songs include topics related to alcohol, the Finnish nation/Finnish history, folklore, the wilderness, spirituality, love, war, hunting and celebratory events.

Alcohol is one of the more prominent topics in Korpiklaani songs. In a 2005 interview, Järvelä explained,

The lyrics are very Finnish, particularly when they speak about the ‘world,’ such as forest life, drinking beer, and more shamanistic subjects...My own life is my main inspiration. I like beer and I like forest life, so it’s what I write about.\(^{163}\)

Due to the prevalence of alcohol and the music that accompanies the lyrics, Järvelä considers Korpiklaani to be a party band.\(^{164}\) For example, the songs “Wooden Pints,” “Pellonpekko” (an instrumental song, the title of which refers to the god of wheat and barley from the Kalevala), “Ryypäjäiset” (an instrumental song, the title translates as, “booze-up”), “Beer Beer,” “Happy Little Boozer,” “Let’s Drink,” “Vodka,” “Juodaan Viinaa” (Let’s Drink Booze), “Bring Us Pints of Beer (If You Don’t Drink, You Can Leave),” “Kohmelo” (an instrumental song, the title of which translates as “hangover”), “Tequila” and “Petoeläimen Kuola” (The Predator’s Saliva) all discuss alcohol in some form and its consumption. The titles and music accompanying the lyrics indicate the musician’s attitudes towards drinking as something to be enjoyed rather than prohibited.

Members of the band openly consume alcohol during live performances. In a performance at Cleveland’s “The Legendary Peabody’s Concert Club” in 2010, I witnessed several members of the group openly drink beer and vodka during the show. By the end of the concert, Jonne Järvelä and Kalle “Cane” Savijärvi (the group’s rhythm guitarist), were visibly intoxicated, as were members of the opening bands who wandered on stage during Korpiklaani’s set. On stage consumption occurred again during a performance two years later at the same venue, as band members distributed cans of beer to audience members from the stage. Alcohol is not restricted to song lyrics and is incorporated into live performances just as the folk

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instruments and items affiliated with Sami culture. The actions of the musicians demonstrate that they actively practice and advocate drinking to construct an image of Finnish culture.

Even though drinking is openly condoned and practiced, members of the band have expressed concern regarding the social implications of alcohol among Finns. When asked about the drinking culture in Finland, Jarkko Aaltonen (the band’s bassist) countered the question, stating,

We have a drinking problem as a nation…In Finland…I think the most common violence is when…two men are drinking and one of them just decides to kill the other one, at some point of the night. In Finland, we have the highest solving rate of crimes. The police can always find the murderer. That’s only because it’s usually sitting still next to the body and calling to the police, ‘I think I’ve just killed my friend. Please come and pick me up.’

Although the lyrics and band members promote alcohol consumption, the musicians do recognize the issues it causes within Finland. Concern about the social problems of alcohol has been raised in songs by other Finnish heavy metal bands, e.g. Niskalaukaus’ song Elegia. However, Järvelä’s personal attitude toward drinking, reflected in Korpiklaani’s lyrics, indicates that he does not share the same concern. Based on the songs written since Spirit of the Forest in 2003, it does not appear that the band will adopt a stance against alcohol.

Although Järvelä considers Korpiklaani to be a “party band,” songs also reference the natural environment, folklore as well as historical events and people specifically linked to Finnish culture. Images of the forest, natural elements and animals comprise the majority of Korpiklaani’s lyrics, which reflect Järvelä’s background and time spent living with the Sami in Lapland. Song titles, such as “Mother Earth,” “Pine Woods,” “Spirit of the Forest,” “Native Land,” “Metsämies” (Forest Man) “Paljon On Koskessa Kiviä” (The Rapid Has Many Rocks),

“Ali Jäisten Vetten” (Under the Icy Waters) and “Korven Kuningas” (King of the Woods) all reference the natural world in Finland. As stated earlier, the name, Korpiklaani, translates as “wilderness class” or “woods clan,” which immediately establishes this connection to life in the forest.

Lyrics evoke images of nature, such as trees, forests, wolves, birds, eagles, rivers, the wind, the northern lights, the midnight sun and seasonal changes. These elements are sung about explicitly or are used as similes or metaphors. For example, the song “Crows Bring the Spring” discusses the end of winter as signaled by the return and sounds of crows. Other songs, such as “Before the Morning Sun,” “With Trees,” “Shaman Drum,” “Native Land,” “Korpiklaani,” all discuss and celebrate landmarks and a Finn’s relationship to these items.

The band’s eponymous song demonstrates the appreciation and respect for the natural world and the relationship of a woodsman to the forest and its inhabitants. Within this song, qualities associated with animals and landmarks are used to describe the song’s narrator.

Brought up by Kanervala,
To travel through Tapiola,
    Born a noble warrior
    Grown a strong wanderer.

Travelin’ through the wilds, woods,
Treasures of the virgin forest.
    Spirit of all time in my heart,
    Strength of the mountains
        In my hands.

    Clan of the forest,
    Clan of the wilderness,
        Hands of a bear.
    Clan of the forest,
    Clan of the wilderness,
Strength of the mountains.
    Clan of the wilderness
    Clan of the wilderness
Hands of a bear,  
Wisdom of a lynx,  
Music from the horned one,  
Speed from the wolves’ legs.  
I have.  

References to animals, such as the bear, are particularly important, given the significance of the animal to the Sami, as discussed in the previous chapter. The qualities discussed in this song depict an image of the quintessential Finn as a person who is strong and connected to the natural world of Finland.

The folk metal lyrics and music of Korpiklaani consistently promote an idealized Finnish identity. The material discussed above, indicates the bands members’ conceptions as to how Finns should represent their country as individuals who are strengthened by the spirits of the forest, able to consume alcohol without any negative ramifications and embrace the music and culture of the rural groups within Finland. By exhibiting these characteristics and performing these actions, an idealized Finnish identity is portrayed by an individual, just as is done by the members of the band. Culture, both Finnish and Sami, is manifested through the lyrics and music of Korpiklaani. The band’s folk metal identity is established through the explicit depiction of folk and indigenous cultures through the use of instruments, folk tunes, symbols and lyrics in the context of heavy metal.

Korpiklaani’s music is the result of cultural contact and interaction. Specifically, the experiences of the band’s founder and vocalist, Jonne Järvelä, with Sami and Finnish culture, established the foundation on which Korpiklaani’s music is built. Elements of these cultures are persistently represented in the band’s music, album artwork, concert visual elements, musical instruments and folk tunes. Though some elements have become less prominent over the years,

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e.g. *joiking*, each one discussed in this chapter has contributed to the formation of a Finnish folk metal identity.

Sami and Finnish culture are reflected in the music and words of Korpiklaani’s folk metal songs. The reflection of specific cultural elements, such as folk culture and music, is the result of metal music’s diffusion throughout the world, coming into contact with new cultures and different groups of people. The music’s contact with new musicians has led to the emergence of the heavy metal subgenre, folk metal. As a unique subgenre, it is defined by the incorporation of folk elements (such as instruments, tunes, song forms, non-English languages and lyrics) into heavy metal music. This chapter has demonstrated the influence of Finnish culture and folk music, on the formation of Korpiklaani’s folk metal identity. This heavy metal subgenre is the vehicle through which localized elements, found in Finland, are introduced to a global audience, as music and culture are diffused around the world.
CHAPTER VI
REAFFIRMING FINNISH FOLK MUSIC AND CULTURE

The Classification and Popularity of Folk Music

Music is often broken down into three categories: folk, popular\textsuperscript{170} and classical. Disregarding hierarchical connotations, these three labels refer to conditions in which music is created, disseminated and perpetuated. The concept of folk metal becomes multifarious when these music categories are related to particular settings, e.g. rural and urban. Not only are disparate musical elements merged into a single context, but cultural elements from rural societies and urban settings are integrated as well. The band Korpiklaani is a hybrid product of both music and culture found in different contexts. How does one classify Korpiklaani’s music then? Can it be considered both folk and popular music simultaneously or is it bound to only one classificatory term?

While Korpiklaani’s sound is defined by the incorporation of folk tunes and instruments with heavy metal (a popular music genre), folk music, itself, is also considered and commercially promoted as popular music. Traditionally, folk music has been affiliated with rural or pre-industrialized communities. However, it is no longer performed strictly in these areas and is prevalent within urban societies as well. When individuals from rural areas migrated to urban settings, the music they brought with them then became affected by industrialization, commercialism, and was exposed to a large heterogeneous community of musicians and audience members. The impact of these elements led to the popularization of rural music in the

\textsuperscript{170} As discussed in chapter 3 (p. 51), I am defining popular music as that which is stored, transmitted and disseminated through mass media (mass media refers to written forms, such as notation or tablature, and the non-written recording mediums, e.g. compact discs - CDs, long play records - LPs, digital video discs - DVDs, internet videos and digital formats), listened to by a heterogeneous audience, is located in urban areas, found in industrialized societies and socially stratified societies, survives through free enterprise and is often considered a commodity.
new, urban context. Folk music that has been influenced by the above elements in urban settings can be considered popular music or more specifically, popular folk music.

Musical and political movements, such as folk revivals and protest songs of the 1950s and 1960s in the Western hemisphere, influenced the popularization of folk music. During this time of civil unrest and ideological shifts in America, folk music was used as a means of voicing dissatisfaction with political and social policies. Ellen Koskoff relates that in North America specifically:

One of the outcomes of a new ethnic and political consciousness in the United States and Canada at the midcentury was the renewal of interest in roots and old time, Old World or traditional musics. This interest crystallized in the 1950s and 1960s in the form of revivals, festivals and other forms of cultural displays where members of different groups could perform old musics in new settings for new audiences…where various governmental policies such as school segregation, the Vietnam War or the authority of their parents could be protested. Folk singers such as Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, and the Kingston Trio in the United States and Gordon Lightfoot, Joni Mitchell, and Buffy Sainte-Marie in Canada became not only national singing stars, but also national heroes to a younger generation of idealistic “flower children.”

While these musicians were popularizing folk music in the United States and Canada, similar events were occurring in Western Europe with bands such as The Fairport Convention, Jethro Tull, The Bothy Band, and The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. The music by these English and Irish musicians indicate the shift and integration of folk music into popular music as it was becoming more prevalent around the world. As a result, popular folk music was disseminated by recordings, gained commercial popularity and received national recognition via televised broadcasts, such as the Ed Sullivan Show in America.

Folk metal and the music of the band Korpiklaani are continuations of the folk revivals from the 1950s, 1960s, as older forms of music continue to be performed for new audiences in

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new contexts. Since folk music is found in both rural and urban contexts, its characteristics begin to overlap with those associated with popular music. Today, it is common to hear popular folk music played on Pop radio stations and see music videos recorded by popular folk musicians. Norm Cohen notes that in the general classification of popular music, the label “folk music” is often found in “…trade or popular publications, in newspaper reviews, on the bins in music stores, or on the spines of compact discs and cassettes.”

The term has come to refer to music that not only originates in a particular context, but also denotes a certain genre of popular music. The definitions of folk music changed with its popularization to account for the effects of commercialization.

Although folk music is found in both rural and urban settings, folk metal is strictly a form of popular music. While some may consider folk metal to be an anomaly or oxymoron, it falls into this category for several reasons. To illustrate this point, I will elaborate on a portion of Bruno Nettl’s folk music definition, “folk music may originate anywhere…”

Does this phrase refer to a geographical, spatial location or can it be used in reference to a musical context? To expand on Nettl’s words, I interpret this statement in the following manner: folk music may be written and performed in any geographical location, in any societal setting, and in any musical context. Folk music exists in any context. It is with this foundation that musicians in the band Korpiklaani successfully combine and perform heavy metal with Finnish folk elements. Without the presence of electric guitars and other heavy metal characteristics, Korpiklaani’s music becomes popular folk music. The folk elements must be performed concurrently with heavy metal for the music to be considered folk metal.


In comparison to folk music’s contextual flexibility and versatility, descriptions of popular music indicate that this music originates and survives only under particular economic and societal circumstances. For instance, this music must be perpetuated commercially through mass media,\textsuperscript{174} it is “only possible in an industrial monetary economy where it becomes a commodity,”\textsuperscript{175} and is found in societies that are industrialized or are on the verge of industrialization.\textsuperscript{176} The survival of this music through commercialism, industry, as well as media and technology for transmission, confines the production of popular music to urban settings, where these elements exist. The contextual parameters of popular music are more stringent than folk music. As a result of these contextually derived definitions, the music performed by the musicians in Korpiklaani is possible only under specific circumstances.

In addition to contextual descriptions and definitions, Korpiklaani’s music is also classified by its timbres. The emphasis on electric guitars with distorted sounds over acoustic instruments with unmodified timbres indicates that Korpiklaani’s music is not rural folk music. By utilizing highly distorted guitar timbres, the musicians in Korpiklaani align and affiliate themselves with heavy metal and its distinct sound.

In \textit{Running with the Devil: Power, Gender and Madness in Heavy Metal Music}, Robert Walser discusses the significance of timbre in the identification and classification of music:

Of all musical parameters, timbre is least often analyzed, but its significance can hardly be overstated. Scan across radio stations, and a fraction of a second will be sufficient to identify the musical genre of each. Before any lyrics can be comprehended, before harmonic or rhythmic patterns are established, timbre instantly signals genre and affect...The most important aural sign of heavy metal is the sound of an extremely distorted electric guitar. Anytime this sound is musically dominant, the song is arguably...metal...any performance that lacks it cannot be included in the genre.\textsuperscript{177}

When electric guitars are not present, Korpiklaani’s music is an urbanized popular folk music or resembles folk music found in rural areas and rural societies. Without the electrification, amplification and timbre manipulation of instruments, folk metal as a subgenre would cease to be affiliated with heavy metal entirely. The timbres of Korpiklaani’s music are one of the characteristics that establish its place in popular music.

As popular music, the music written by the members of Korpiklaani is exposed to a large audience and is commercially distributed around the world as songs are recorded, published and stored in mass quantity through analog (sheet music, long play records, 45s, cassette tapes) and digital (compact discs, digital video discs and MP3’s) technology. By recording the music through these mediums, the folk tunes, and music in general, are less likely to change from one performance to another. Rather, the form of the music becomes static and audiences expect to hear the music in a live concert as it was performed and produced on a record. While folk music is transmitted through oral and aural tradition, folk metal is shared predominantly through media technology; and as folk music is open to interpretation by performers and dynamically changes, folk metal is static and remains relatively unaltered between performances and over time. Korpiklaani’s music shares more definitional characteristics with popular music than folk music from rural societies.

Once the music has been recorded, it is disseminated to listeners. Due to the instant connectivity made possible by the internet, music reaches and is shared with a large, heterogeneous audience around the world. Traditionally, folk music has been affiliated with groups analogous to Robert Redfield and Howard W. Odum’s concepts of the folk society, which were characterized by homogeneity. This trait developed from groups existing in isolation from other communities, resulting in little to no cultural or musical variation. Although this lack of
culture contact and diversity ensured the perpetuation of a traditional form of the culture and music, it also meant that these elements could not diffuse to other areas. The contact achieved through the commercialism and other media outlets, such as the internet, allows Korpiklaani’s music to reach a large number of listeners with varying musical and cultural backgrounds. The localized elements found in the band’s music are introduced to listeners across the world as a result of the popular status of Korpiklaani’s music.

Glocalizing Music

The music created and performed by the members of Korpiklaani is a hybrid product. Hybridization refers to the process through which two or more elements (folk music and heavy metal music) are combined to create a new and independent product (folk metal). While this process sufficiently describes how folk metal is generated, a more specific term that describes the combination and dissemination of this music to a large audience is glocalization. Glocalization emerged from business and economic discourse and refers to the “‘simultaneity—the co-presence—of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies…the basic idea of glocalization is the simultaneous promotion of what is, in one sense, a standardized product, for particular markets, in particular flavors…”178 The term has also been defined as “the interpenetration of the global and the local resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas.”179 From a marketing stance, glocalization refers to the integration of a widely spread, standard, general item with local and specific elements to appeal to a particular group of consumers.

This process also applies to the music of Korpiklaani. The process, however, is reversed. Rather than large business corporations integrating local materials into a standard product, independent and local musicians fuse their localized music and culture with the generalized and standard item (heavy metal) in order to appeal to a larger group of listeners and disseminate local music and culture to a wider, global audience.

Glocalization is relevant to studies of folk metal in general. A glocalized item is a synthesis of two or more items, one general and one specific, that appeals to a specific group of consumers. The music of the band Korpiklaani is created from individual cultural elements, e.g. Finnish instruments, the Finnish language, particular song forms and Sami religious practices, which represent the particularized markets, and a “universal,” general or standard template, heavy metal music. Through this integration, the music of Korpiklaani may appeal to individuals who listen to heavy metal and Finnish folk music or are interested in Finnish and Sami music and cultural practices. Korpiklaani’s music promotes Finnish identity through the processes of hybridization and glocalization.

The two processes disseminate music and culture to audiences, both locally and internationally. The Finnish musicians in Korpiklaani promote specific elements of their culture and society in their music and construct an idealized and romantic image of Finnish culture for the audience. Items extolled in songs are seen as representative of the society and culture, while other elements face criticism and are not approved of by the musicians. For instance, members of the group “practice what they preach” in regards to alcohol by openly drinking onstage, distributing alcohol to audience members and writing songs about beer, vodka and tequila. The presence of alcohol in the songs and actions of the band members demonstrates the acceptance
and promotion of the substance as a sign of Finnish identity and celebrate it as part of the culture, despite the social problems it causes in Finland.

Similarly, the presence of images associated with Sami shamanism on Korpiklaani album artwork and in live performances, e.g. the shaman drum as well as the shaman figure, demonstrates an acceptance of and appreciation for these religious beliefs and practices, when historically, the Sami have been marginalized in Finland and in the construction of Finnish identity. These elements are found on every Korpiklaani album, either on the front cover artwork, on the back of the CD or directly on the disc. If the band members were against shamanism, these images would not likely be included on releases, songs would likely criticize shamanism and discredit it as a religious practice, or the shaman drum and joiks would not likely be used in the context of the bands Shamaani Duo, Shaman or Korpiklaani.

The presence and promotion of these elements in the music and artwork of Korpiklaani, along with the folk tunes, song forms and instruments from other areas in Finland, demonstrates the significance the musicians place on the Sami and the group’s importance to the construction of Finnish identity. Social and political changes have been occurring in Finland in regards to the identity of the Sami and their place in the construction of a Finnish national identity. For instance, in 1995, the same year that Finland entered the European Union, steps were taken by the Finnish government to recognize the Sami as an indigenous group in Finland and to accommodate the group’s language in official matters. Other events indicating an attempt to rectify the marginalization of the Sami include the establishment of the Sami Parliament of Finland, the election of the Sami politician Janne Seurujärvi to Finnish Parliament in 2007 and

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the establishment of Sami National Day on February 6. Although the Sami are becoming more active in Finnish government and are less marginalized today, disputes still arise concerning land rights and the assimilation of the Sami into Finnish culture.\textsuperscript{182} These issues are not confined to Finland, however, and permeate other areas in which the Sami are found, e.g. Norway.

Through this inclusion and simultaneous promotion of Finnish and Sami identities, the members of Korpiklaani challenge attitudes toward the marginalization of the Sami and its representation in Finnish culture, identity and politics. However, the merging of Sami and Finnish identity raises issues. For instance, with what authority do the Finnish members of Korpiklaani utilize Sami elements in the construction of Finnish identity in the context of folk metal? It must be remembered that Jonne Järvelä, Korpiklaani’s vocalist, lived with the Sami in the early 1990s and the music of Shamaani Duo and Shaman was heavily influenced by his experiences with the group. However, this is an issue that can only be answered by members of the Sami community, their perception of Korpiklaani and their attitude regarding the representation of Sami culture in folk metal.

Although a number of folk metal bands have emerged from Finland since the middle of the 1990s, folk metal is popular in other countries as well. Since the development of this heavy metal subgenre in Great Britain, folk metal bands are also found in Ireland (Cruachan), Russia (Arkona), the Faroe Islands (Tyr), Switzerland (Eluveitie) and Israel (Orphaned Land), to name a few. Each band incorporates traits and characteristics which establish a connection to the country’s music and culture. For instance, members of the band Orphaned Land affiliate themselves to Israel by singing in Hebrew, focusing on religious topics related to Judaism, Christianity and Islam in their lyrics, and performing on instruments found in the Middle East, such as the oud, an eleven string pear shaped lute, and the ney, an end blown flute. The same

\textsuperscript{182} United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe. Op. Cit.
distinction and fusion of music and culture is prevalent in the music of Korpiklaani as the band members communicate a Finnish identity to audiences around the world by combining particular Finnish or Sami elements with heavy metal music.

Folk Metal as a Reaction to Hegemony

As a folk metal band, Korpiklaani is relevant not only as a vehicle to promote cultures and music in Finland, but is also a mechanism to resist political and economic structures in Europe, e.g. the European Union, and the promotion of a single, European identity. In 1993, the European Union (EU) officially formed from the European Economic Community (EEC). It is stated on the official site of the EU that these institutions were “…created in the aftermath of the Second World War. The first steps were to foster economic cooperation: the idea being that countries who trade with one another become economically interdependent and so more likely to avoid conflict.”

By establishing connections between European economies, The EEC and the EU committee members took precautionary measures to prevent the emergence of political leaders, such as Adolf Hitler in Germany during the 1930s, who promised financial prosperity to citizens in economically struggling countries. In addition to connecting the economies of European countries, the EU also gained power as a political and legislative entity, leading to a unionized identity that is promoted among the members of the organization.

184 Twenty-eight countries currently comprise the European Union: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
Finland entered the EU in 1995. As a result, the country changed its currency to the Euro and now contributes to the larger economic system in industries such as telecommunications, lumber, paper products and stainless steel. The membership of Finland, as with any country to the EU, is symbiotic. Each country contributes to the larger economy and benefits from the system as it grows and flourishes. However, the economic unification also influenced political sentiments in some European countries, resulting in the relegation of national identities to one that is European. Members of Korpiklaani view this unification and promotion of a collective identity as deleterious to the perpetuation and promotion of Finnish identity, music and culture.

Several folk metal musicians in Bill Zebub’s 2009 interview compilation, titled *Pagan Metal: a Documentary*, express this same attitude. In this film, Zebub conducts interviews with a number of folk metal musicians, including those from the Finnish groups Korpiklaani, Finntroll, Ensiferum and Turisas. During one exchange with the members of Korpiklaani, the filmmaker asks why folk metal is currently popular in Europe. The band’s bassist, Jarkko Aaltonen, responds:

I was just talking about that with Alan [Averill Nemtheanga] from [the Irish band] Primordial. And, at least in Europe I think, and he agreed, that everything is becoming European Union and everything is supposed to be European. But no one really wants that. People are more interested in getting to their own past and their own history. People don’t want to be European. They still want to be Finnish or German or whoever. And we are, in some way, preserving the original culture, perhaps.

Aaltonen’s response reveals an underlying function of folk metal and Korpiklaani’s music: to preserve and perpetuate individual cultures in resistance to the Europeanization. The

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incorporation of elements affiliated to a specific group not only increases the variety and diversity of sounds of the band but also asserts a distinct musical and cultural identity.

The number of Finnish folk metal bands increased around the same time the European Union officially formed in 1993 and when Finland entered the organization in 1995. Some of the bands mentioned throughout this work formed in the middle and latter part of the 1990s, such as Moonsorrow (1995), Ensiferum (1995), Turisas (1997) and Finntroll (1997). Even though Jonne Järvelä, Korpiklaani’s founder and vocalist, did not release any albums through Korpiklaani until 2003, his album *Hunka Lunka*, released in 1996 as *Shamaani Duo*, was characterized by the inclusion of distinct Sami elements, e.g. *joiking* and a shaman’s drum. This album established the foundation for his later work under the band name Korpiklaani and the integration of Finnish identifying markers into heavy metal. Aaltonen’s comment above, regarding the loss of individual national identities and resistance to European identity, indicates that the European Union impacted the development of Korpiklaani and these folk metal bands in Finland and Europe, to some extent.

A resistance to the hegemony of the European Union explains the prominence of this heavy metal subgenre in Europe. The incorporation of instruments, tunes, histories, mythologies and elements affiliated with a particular country and culture, and singing in non-English languages, such as Finnish or Sami, reinforces Korpiklaani’s band members’ resistance to the larger political structure. The use of the Sami language, especially, also raises awareness about the culture and lifestyle of this European minority group. Even though much of the band’s music represents Finland as a whole, the experiences of Korpiklaani’s vocalist with the Sami permeate the band’s sense of Finnish nationality.
Distinctions should be made between nationality and nationalism. In the *Oxford Dictionary Online*, nationality is defined as “the status of belonging to a particular nation”\(^{188}\) while in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music 4th edition*, Ryan Minor defines nationalism in music, as “…materials that suggest a national character. These may include actual folk music, melodies or rhythms that merely recall folk music, or religious music associated with a particular nationality…”\(^{189}\) Whereas nationality refers to an individual’s affiliation to a particular nation, nationalism is the pride expressed from that membership. Though one will most likely never come into contact with all the members of the nation community, solidarity binds all members under one identity,\(^{190}\) which is expressed through nationalism. As a folk metal band, Korpiklaani’s music is a promotion of national pride through heavy metal music. Typically, these expressions do not attack or denounce other national identities nor do they advocate extremism or violence. However, folk metal has been construed by individuals outside of the music’s community, such as in Germany, as a dangerous form of nationalism.

In another segment of Zebub’s pagan metal documentary, Korpiklaani’s bassist discusses the opposition encountered when certain bands promote a particular music, culture or identity. He specifically cites German folk metal bands, stating:

> Germans have a problem with their past, which I think you have heard of, the past of the Germans. And in Germany, anything even remotely connected with nationalism is always labeled as Nazism. Then once you get labeled a Nazi band, there’s no future for you anymore in Germany. No one wants to be labeled that, not even the Nazis bands want to call themselves Nazis…On the last European Paganfest [tour] that we were on, about a year ago, there was this riot threat in Berlin because some guy had decided that [the folk metal band] Eluveitie from Switzerland, Moonsorrow [from Finland] and Tyr, from the Faroe Islands, were...


Nazis. And they were trying to have the whole festival cancelled and everything like that.¹⁹¹

Although Korpiklaani and other folk metal bands promote cultural identity and pride in their country through the images, tunes and instruments associated with their homeland, the risk of extreme nationalism is a concern. Given Germany’s political movements of the past, nationalism is an uncomfortable subject for some musicians and citizens in Europe, due to the Nazi connotations associated with this word. Nazi connotations, however, are not limited to folk metal. Other metal bands, such as the German group Rammstein, have faced similar accusations for the use of the German language and images portrayed in the band’s artwork and music videos.

A strong sense of national pride also raises the issue of exclusivity and the impact of external influences on a country. Just as a unified European identity is promoted among the member states of the European Union, Americanization is also a concern for some folk metal bands. As Max Cavalera, the former vocalist of the Brazilian band Sepultura, endorsed the promotion of musical identities separate from those in America, a similar sentiment is expressed by members of the Finnish band Ensiferum. When asked if Finnish culture was negatively impacted by outside cultures, several members of the band responded:

Markus Toivonen (MT): “Yeah, it is.”

Sami Hinkka (SH): “Well, I think that’s like a global ‘problem’ or something.”

Janne Parviainen (JP): “Yeah, it’s not just a Finnish problem.”

Interviewer: “The reason why I ask is if I wanted to visit Finland, I want to meet Finns, I want to know how they live. It would bother me if I went to Helsinki and saw Americanized Finland.”

MT: Yeah, it is a little bit, and nowadays, a little bit more, like, European.”

JP: I think it’s the same in every country. You just can’t say that about Finland.

MT: Yea, it’s the same problem everywhere.

JP: McDonalds and stuff is everywhere in the big cities. Countryside is the countryside in every country you go. Maybe if you go deep enough in the forest you can find something...

MT: Real Finnish culture.\(^{192}\)

The responses reflect a romantic depiction of the Finnish countryside (folk society) that remains “pure” and “unspoiled” by American fast food chains, commercialization and the economic and political unification from the European Union. It is this romantic ideology that is promoted in the music of Korpiklaani.

The Promotion of the Nation, Folk Music and Culture

The notion that folk society members, uninfluenced by industrialization, represent the essence of a nation’s identity, was proposed in the eighteenth century by the German philosopher, Johann Gottfried Herder, who believed that songs, along with poetry and stories from rural communities, were “…the living voice of the people, indeed humanity.”\(^{193}\) Authors have argued against Herder’s idea, stating that it was too romantic and that his notion of “the folk” referred to a large population of people, rather than just the members of folk societies.\(^{194}\) Regardless of whom Herder was referencing in his writings, whether a specific group or a large number of people, it is the correlation between his ideas and the sentiments expressed by the musicians from Ensiferum and Korpiklaani that is significant. Each rejects modernization, Westernization and the affects of industrialization on a country, its people and the culture. The folk elements


\(^{194}\) Ibid., p. 647.
incorporated into folk metal represent an idealized image of the nation, people and music and reject popular European or American culture.

Herder’s concept of the folk is found in other musical contexts and not only in folk metal. For example, Western Art music composers of the nineteenth century held similar beliefs prior to the emergence of this subgenre. Nineteenth and twentieth century works by composers, such as Edvard Grieg (Norway), Bedřich Smetana (Czech), Béla Bartók (Hungary) and Modest Petrovich Musorgsky (Russia), are often characterized by the prominence of folk melodies and an interest in music by the “folk.” Folk revivals in the 1950s and 1960s in America continued this interest in “roots” and folk music, just as folk metal bands have once again revived interest in this music for today’s generation of listeners. Only the context of the music’s performance has changed, moving from orchestral halls and small festivals with minimal amplification to larger venues and performances requiring instrument timbre manipulation and amplification. The band Korpiklaani is a continuation of this romanticism and fascination with folk music.

While the musicians in Korpiklaani seek to reestablish folk music and promote a romantic image of Finnish society, culture and music, in reaction to the influence of Americanization and the economic and political unification of the European Union, the means by which these actions take place is paradoxical. The resisted elements of modernization, Americanization, Europeanization are fundamental to the musicians’ cause. Even though the members of Korpiklaani appear to be asserting and preserving Finnish identity, they are doing so with music that emerged from England, in the case of folk metal, and America, in regards to the heavy metal genre. Does this negate the motivations behind the music and actions of Korpiklaani and other folk metal bands? Despite the ideological contradiction of folk metal, this reaction and resistance to Americanization and Europeanization is not diminished by performing
Finnish folk music with heavy metal. Rather, the combination of these elements reinforces heterogeneity and cultural diversity in environments where homogeneity is seemingly promoted.

The combination of popular music and folk elements in the music of the band Korpiklaani reaffirms heterogeneity musically and culturally. Musically, the band adds to the diversification of the heavy metal sound. Although there are over twenty-five heavy metal subgenres, most of them utilize the same instrumentation. For example, death metal, black metal, progressive metal and thrash metal all use the same instruments. The instrumental sound is relatively homogeneous, while the techniques and styles of playing vary. The incorporation of folk instruments increases the variety of sounds produced by musicians in the ensembles. The use of the fiddle, kantele, jouhikko, frame drum, accordion, flute and mouth harp all add to the standard heavy metal ensemble sounds of electric guitars with distorted timbres, electric string bass and drum set (which can be either acoustic or electric). By incorporating folk instruments into the ensemble, a group’s sound becomes more diverse and establishes a distinct musical identity among other heavy metal subgenres. As a folk metal band, Korpiklaani is musically diverse and distinct.

Culturally, a distinct Finnish identity is established through the use of non-English languages, the romanticism of folk elements, the incorporation of specific and unique cultural characteristics, e.g. shamanism, and the glocalization of folk music in a new musical context for a new, global audience. The promotion of Finnish national identity through Korpiklaani’s music resists the imposition of the homogeneous European identity felt by individuals in the European Union. The hybridization, glocalization and dissemination of heavy metal music with folk elements allows for the revival, preservation and perpetuation of national identities, music and culture in a form of popular music, in a time and place where cultural diversity has been replaced
by singularity and unification. Music produced by the Korpiklaani band is a continuation of folk revivalism in the twenty-first century.

The music, lyrics and imagery of Korpiklaani demonstrate only one instance of musical and cultural diversity in a time and location where these items are supplanted by economic and political organizations. The hybridization of Finnish folk music, mythologies, Sami culture and the Finnish past with heavy metal reassert the significance of these elements and define the Finns and Sami as individuals who are distinct and unique among other European nations. Without the integration of Finnish or Sami elements with heavy metal music, the music and culture of these groups may never be made known to or experienced by listeners around the world.

Some may feel that the national pride expressed by the members of Korpiklaani through performances on acoustic instruments, songs sung in the Finnish or Sami language and the use of Finnish song forms in the context of heavy metal, is unorthodox. Purists may view the simultaneous performances of folk music and heavy metal as non-traditional, but there must also be the realization that the world is changing and modernization is growing ever more present. Adaptations and concessions must be made in order to preserve musical and cultural elements that may be lost. In fact, these changes are already occurring. For instance, folk music is now classified as a form of popular music, national identities are subsumed under one continental label and the practice of recording music through analog and digital means has replaced the art of oral tradition. It would appear that folk music and distinct identities are in danger of being lost forever to commercialism, technology the impact of economic structures. Today, however, one of the means by which folk music and culture will continue to survive is through the processes of hybridization and glocalization, as folk music and heavy metal are combined to create folk metal.
As a new musical product and context, the music of the band Korpiklaani is a new vehicle through which local music and culture are preserved and shared around the world.
CHAPTER VII
SUMMATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Folk metal may be described in numerous ways by those who come into contact with this music and the bands that are members of the subgenre. To begin, this music does not appeal to every fan of heavy metal music. The most prominent criticism of folk metal is the incorporation of the folk instruments, tunes, structures and clothing, into heavy metal music, as some fans state that these elements do not belong in the heavy metal genre at all. For instance, on the website, Metalsucks.net, comments were made to an article posted in 2009 titled, “Is the Pagan/Folk Metal Fad on the Way Out?” in which some fans advocated the dissolution of folk metal altogether. One user even expressed contempt for folk music in general with the comment, “I hate folk music and high (sic) dislike it being forced into metal.” Other comments express similar attitudes regarding folk metal, though with more colorful language. However, for those who attacked folk music and folk metal, other users on the same article defended the music and the bands associated with the subgenre, e.g. “Folk metal kicks ass, and is going nowhere as far as I’m concerned.”

These opinionated comments permeate heavy metal as a whole and are not confined to discussions of folk metal. It is not uncommon for metal fans to adamantly disagree on or criticize particular subgenres, bands or musicians, expressing their contempt or even hatred while supporters protest the accusations. This is a part of the metal community, where fans are entitled to their opinions and are free to express their perspectives on the music. However, when heavy metal fans express contempt for folk metal, it creates a different dilemma, rather than just expressing opinions on one subgenre or another. Those who speak out against this music are

196 Ibid.
criticizing and attacking not only the folk metal music of a band or subgenre, but also the national music, folk instruments, history and identity of the individuals in the band and the members of the culture reflected in the music, lyrics and images of performance.

Korpiklaani explicitly represents music and cultures found in Finland, as discussed in this thesis. The band’s music represents Finnish identity through the incorporation of the *kantele*, *jouhikko*, fiddle and accordion, the Finnish language and the use of song forms found in Finnish folk music, e.g. the polka and *humppa*, into heavy metal. In addition, the band members also integrate items affiliated with the Sami community from northern Finland, which are performed concurrently with the Finnish elements. The display of reindeer bones and antler’s on Jonne Järvelä’s microphone stand, the incorporation of *joiks* as part of the music and the images of the Sami shaman in Korpiklaani’s artwork, not only represent Sami culture but also promote the significance of this group as part of the overall culture and identity of Finland.

Even though Korpiklaani is considered a Finnish folk metal band, the music of the group is not built upon one singular identity, but two, Finnish and Sami. Musical and cultural heterogeneity are reintroduced and reinforced through the representation and integration of these cultures in the music of the band. Musically, the folk instruments and tunes add to and increase the traditional sounds of heavy metal music, e.g. electric guitars with distorted timbre and the sounds produced by the drums and bass. Culturally, Korpiklaani’s music preserves elements of Sami and Finnish musical traditions and reasserts national identities, maintaining cultural diversity. The music, lyrics and performances of Korpiklaani preserve and perpetuate folk music and culture.

Through the music and performances, the musicians affiliated with folk metal are preserving and adapting tunes, instruments and culture from areas around the world in the
context of this heavy metal subgenre. These performances are taking place in the wake of Europe’s unionization and, as Jarkko Aaltonen from Korpiklaani along with Markus Toivonen and Janne Parviainen from the folk metal band Ensiferum related, the advocacy of a singular, European identity. But as expressed by Aaltonen, individuals in Europe wish to maintain separate and unique identities, culture and music. As discussed in the sixth chapter of this thesis, folk metal functions as a reaffirmation of national identity for musicians who feel that their identity and music are lost to Europeanization and Americanization in Europe. Folk metal then, is not only a vehicle through which the music and cultures found in a particular area are preserved, but is also an opportunity to perform and transmit the music and culture to audiences within that area as well as to those around the world.

However, folk metal’s position in the heavy metal genre is not without opposition. As mentioned above, some metal fans feel that folk elements have no place in heavy metal music and that the heavy metal sound should not stray from that performed by the classic and traditional heavy metal bands from the 1970s and 1980s. Just as the members of the folk metal subgenre assert their national identities in a unified political atmosphere, they must also assert their national music and identities in a homogeneous musical context. These musical struggles will persist as long as there are those who wish to expand the heavy metal sound, challenging the standards and traditions of the music, its practitioners and its fans. Folk metal’s detractors must also realize the influence of individual cultures on the development of heavy metal music. An examination of the interconnectedness and related individual parts reveals the separate identities and elements that influence and create the larger structure and genre of heavy metal music.

Culture plays a significant role in the creation and development of music, just as music serves as a means to perpetuate culture. Although these points have been discussed in regards to
folk metal, they have a wider applicability to music, in general. For instance, chapter one addressed the impact of slavery, racial discrimination, economic collapse, social movements, politics and warfare and how each contributed to the development of the blues, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, and heavy metal. These elements can be seen in the music either indirectly, such as the movement of blues musicians to larger cities in search of employment during the Great Depression, leading to the creation of rhythm and blues, or directly in the lyrics of songs, as heard in the Black Sabbath song “War Pigs,” which criticize politicians and their role in the Vietnam War. The culture and social climate of a band or musician influences the music that is produced by these individuals.

Conversely, music perpetuates culture and a multitude of elements found within it, e.g. music or religious practices, as evidenced by performances of folk metal musicians, such as Korpiklaani. Without the inclusion of folk instruments, folk tunes, folklore, non-English languages and mythological lyrics, folk metal bands lose the connection to the culture that they wish to represent. This connection not only establishes a unique identity for bands in the folk metal subgenre (culture influencing the music) but it also ensures the continued performance of and attentiveness to these elements in this new, musical context (music perpetuating the culture). The roles played by culture in the creation and development of music and music’s function in the perpetuation of culture, are intertwined and inseparable. It is in folk metal that this relationship is explicitly identifiable. This persistent influence and performance of folk music and culture will continue to be seen and heard through the music of folk metal bands, such as Korpiklaani, and in the music of folk metal bands yet to come.
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Figures


