

Jakub Kosek

Pedagogical University of Krakow

ORCID 0000-0001-7664-4599

“Acidofilia”: The Work of the Acid Drinkers in the Discursive Landscape of Metal Music Culture

Introduction

In recent years, Polish metal music has become increasingly popular abroad. Metal bands, especially black and death metal groups such as Behemoth, Vader, Mgła, Decapitated and Batushka tour abroad and frequently perform at prestigious festivals such as Wacken Open Air, Bloodstock Open Air, Brutal Assault and Graspop Metal Meeting. In Poland, it is mainly TSA, Turbo, and the band Kat (later Kat & Roman Kostrzewski), sometimes referred to as the “big three of Polish metal” in national music criticism, who are mentioned as pioneering heavy metal bands. Also worth mentioning are distinguished national bands such as the Acid Drinkers, Closterkeller (with their charismatic vocalist Anja Orthodox), Hunter, Luxtorpeda, Frontside, the Sixpounder and Flapjack, as well as bands that are less frequently mentioned today but are still important for the development of metal sub-genres: Fatum, Destroyers, Wilczy Pająk, Hellias, Hammer, Exorcist, Imperator, Armagedon, Taranis, Neolith, Corruption, Graveland, Pandemonium and Dead Infection.¹

The focus of this article is the artistic activity of one of the first thrash metal bands in Poland, the Acid Drinkers, founded in 1986 in Poznań. I begin with an outline of the state of research in the field of indigenous metal music studies and survey key perspectives and research categories related to song studies and the multimodality of popular music culture. I then analyze selected aspects of the Acid Drinkers' creative output.

The State of Metal Music Studies in Poland

Research in the field of metal music studies in Poland is still in its early stages, although there has been a noticeable increase in the popularity of this area in recent

¹ Obviously only selected national music groups are listed. In the international online database of metal bands, *Encyclopaedia Metallum: The Metal Archives*, nearly 4,000 Polish groups are included. It must be noted that many of the groups listed ended up at different stages of their careers, cf. <https://www.metal-archives.com/lists/PL> (access date: 8.07.2022). On the Polish black and death metal scene of the 1990s, see an interesting book *Rzeźwospolita* (Dorosiński 2021).

years. The first national academic publication on metal culture was Barbara Major's post-doctoral book entitled *Dionysus in bovver boots. Ecstatic of heavy metal music* [pl. *Dionizos w glanach. Ekstazyzm muzyki metalowej*] (2013) which is set in the current of cultural anthropology. This was followed by some isolated articles in academic journals and chapters in edited volumes. The situation remained the same until 2017 when a national academic conference called *Towards a Polish Variant of Metal Music Studies* [pl. *Ku polskiemu wariantowi Metal Music Studies*] was held at the Pedagogical University of Cracow [Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Krakowie] on 8–9 June. During the conference, papers were presented by male and female representatives of various scientific disciplines from key academic centers in Poland. Speakers included experienced independent academics, early-career scholars, and students. While this and other similar events were partly inspired by conferences organized in Poland on the study of rock culture and counterculture (mainly in Tułowice and Korfantów near Opole as well as in Toruń and Poznań), the most important impetus was to encourage the study of metal music in Poland by engaging with the ever-internationalizing field of metal music studies.

Since the Major's landmark book, there have been four multi-author publications in Poland devoted exclusively to metal music culture. These include two thematic issues of the journal *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia de Cultura*, namely *Metal Studies. Studies in Metal Culture* [pl. *Metal Studies. Studia nad kulturą metalową*] (volume 10, issue no. 3. [2018]) and *Metal Culture in Ritual and Media Space* [pl. *Kultura metalowa w przestrzeni rytualnej i medialnej*] (volume 11, issue no. 3 [2019]). Two collective works have also been published, *Artists and Scenes of Metal (Counter)Culture* [pl. *Artyści i sceny metalowej (kontr)kultury*] (2020) and *Elements and Ideologies in the Narratives of Metal Music* [pl. *Żywioły i ideologie w narracjach muzyki metalowej*] (2022). More events and publications are planned, which hopefully will encourage further development in national metal culture studies.

Metal Music as Multimodal Discourse

Popular music studies draw on a wide range of disciplines and scientific perspectives, including musicology, cultural studies, literary studies, linguistics, cultural anthropology, sociology, media studies and social communication. In recent years, Poland has seen a sharply increased interest in so-called song studies (cf. e.g., Gajda, Tański 2022: 4–7; Tański 2021: 31–40; Regiewicz, Szargot 2021 and others). In Polish music criticism and academic studies, the term *piosenka* / *pieśń* is used most often, though alternatively, the term *utwór słowno-muzyczny* [meaning a musical work with text] or *song* is also used. I prefer to use the latter here as it allows for broader coverage of the issues of interest. As Waldemar Kuligowski points out in his introduction to the work *Song Studies. The Poetics and Politics of Song Production* [pl. *Song Studies. Poetyka i polityka wytwarzania piosenki*] (2021):

The advantage of the English noun *song* lies [...] in its extended meaning, indicating both a 'musical composition' and 'lyrical poem or ballad' and derived from the Old English

sang, meaning ‘voice’, ‘song’, ‘art of singing’, ‘psalm’, ‘poem’. This vast semantic field clearly indicates that we are interested in the process, the becoming of meaning, the ways in which songs are sung and used (Kuligowski 2021: 7).

One of the most influential perspectives in song studies is espoused by Simon McKerrell and Lyndon C.S. Way who consider music as a communicative component embedded in a multimodal discourse² alongside modes such as text, still images, moving images, color, gesture and other sounds (McKerrell, Way 2017: 1–2). In an article published in the journal *Popular Music*, Simon McKerrell, characterizing the method of multimodal discourse analysis from a music studies perspective, rightly stated:

Multimodal discourse analysis incorporates text alongside other ‘modes’ such as sound and image as communication, and starts from the position that people construct their own stories, their own worlds and culture, and that the analyst’s job is to get their hands dirty and draw out the surface and subtextual meanings that emerge from music as social communication (McKerrell 2016: 427).

An important approach to the study of multimodality as an important feature of contemporary media is the sociosemiotic perspective. As Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz has noticed, social semiotics is a perspective derived from the work of Michael Halliday and described in depth in the work of Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen.

The theory has extensive links with the field of film, art history, iconography, and draws on the work of Michel Foucault, Basil Bernstein, Pierre Bourdieu, Stuart Hall. At its core is an analysis of the use of signs – belonging to different resources – as products of social and cultural contexts. For multimodal studies of interaction and discourse, the text is a window that allows the individual user to be seen and known. A sociosemiotic analysis of texts as the result of the use of multiple modalities, shaped by a variety of collective agendas and values, can provide us with a window into the whole culture (Lisowska-Magdziarz 2019: 120).

Songs as multimodal text-and-music narratives are also worth considering from a transmedial optics (cf. Kosek 2022; Kosek 2019) and performative perspective (cf. Eckstein 2010; Tański 2021b). Metal composition functions in a dense network of genre, scene, media and discursive relationships and connections. “Narrative texts” (Bal 2012: 3) of metal culture would have to be analyzed with a social dimension, polycontextually, in trans-discursive optics. Concerning the study of literature, these planes and categories are insightfully described by Adam Dziadek. The researcher notes: “If the reality is polycontextual, the description of the associated text should be the same. The text is not confined to literature alone, as Roland Barthes’

² The notion of *discourse* itself is, of course, variously defined and semantically fuzzy. A number of extensive studies have been devoted to this issue, cf. the chapter *The Study of Discourse* (Teun van Dijk 1997: 1–34), the book *Discourse* (Howarth 2000) or *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis* (van Leeuwen 2008). Here, we shall adopt a broad definition of discourse as a set of “socially sanctioned utterance practices that define both the place of the subject and the status of reality” (Markowski 2006: 536).

Mythologies brilliantly demonstrates – the book attempts to capture and describe the diverse phenomena of French reality in the 1950s” (Dziadek 2013: 35). Dziadek pays attention to the social and economic foundations of each text; he also states that “a text, especially a literary text, inevitably involves naming the world, naming experiences, sensations, feelings, emotions, things and phenomena around us” (ibid.).

The lyrics of metal songs, although they often operate with simplicity, specificity and platitudes, frequently also touch on important, up-to-date, socially and politically involved issues. This paper highlights the multidimensionality of selected songs by a group of merit to the Polish ‘scene’ – understood in the broad terms proposed by Keith Kahn Harris (2007) – and to national musical culture as a whole from the perspective of multimodal and (trans)discursive song studies. The specificity of song research is well captured by Waldemar Kuligowski:

In the work of research known as *song studies*, we assume that we process a multitude of different information when we come into contact with a song. What kind of information is concerned? These are musical features (melody, form, rhythm, instruments used), lexical features (language, words), information concerning the performance (style, attributes) and performers (voice, gender, age, identifications), but also reception (time, place) and recipients (their expectations, emotions, reactions). It is these elements that make up the “worlds” of songs, they bring to life their “socially created realities” (Berger and Luckman), this is “poetics and politics” that is most appropriate for them (Clifford and Marcus). (Kuligowski 2021: 12).

Of course, exploring these ‘worlds’ of songs of a single band or artist, taking into account all the aspects indicated above, is a complex task. It would require extensive expertise and likely involve a multidisciplinary research group consisting of cultural scientists, anthropologists, linguists, literary scholars, musicologists, music theorists, media scholars, sociologists or psychologists and other specialists. Technological and production aspects should also be borne in mind. In this context, song studies should open a dialogue with representatives of technical and scientific sciences, including specialists in electronics and acoustic engineering.

This paper focuses on selected narrative texts of the thrash metal group Acid Drinkers, text-media relations, and intertextual dialogue with other motifs and productions present in Polish and world metal culture. The perspectives proposed by Keith Negus and Pete Astor are relevant here. They advocate for an ‘architectural’ approach to popular songs that treat songwriters more as ‘architects’ than romantically inspired expressive artists (Negus, Astor 2015: 226). They moreover indicate that repetition and playing with ambiguity are important and integral components in the architecture of songs (ibid.).

Dimensions of the Acid Drinkers’ Output

The Acid Drinkers was formed in 1986 in Poznań. The founding members of the group were Tomasz “Titus” Pukacki (vocals, bass guitar), Robert “Litza” Friedrich (guitar, vocals), the guitarist Dariusz “Popcorn” Popowicz and the drummer Piotr

“Chomik” Kuik. There have been several personnel changes in the group. Currently, alongside band founder Tomasz Pukacki and guitarist Dariusz Popowicz, the line-up includes drummer Maciej “Ślimak” Starosta (since 1989) and guitarist Łukasz “Dzwon” Cyndzer (since 2017). Importantly, the band composed English lyrics from the very beginning. Their use of English reinforces a certain dialogue with the Anglo-Saxon roots of hard rock and heavy metal music. The group’s lead singer repeatedly mentioned his musical fascinations and inspirations in interviews, including bands associated with the New Wave of British Heavy Metal (i.e., Iron Maiden, Saxon, Judas Priest, and others), the achievements of Motörhead, early albums by Metallica and the Polish group TSA. The band’s debut album, titled *Are You a Rebel?* was released in 1990. To date, the group has released fifteen original studio albums (cf. Discography), two albums containing covers of various popular rock and metal songs in unobvious, sometimes even “subversive” arrangements (*Fishdick*, Loud Out Records, 1994; *Fishdick Zwei – The Dick is Rising Again*, Mystic Production, 2010) and several compilation and concert albums. It is also worth mentioning the Acid Drinkers tribute album *Ladies and Gentlemen On Acid* (Makumba Music, 2019), released on the occasion of the group’s 30th anniversary. The album features artists of note in Polish popular music, such as Katarzyna Nosowska, Krzysztof Zalewski, Ania Rusowicz and the bands Vader, Decapitated, Illusion, Proletaryat and Corruption.

Accumulated over more than three decades, the group’s artistic output could be the subject of a separate, comprehensive dissertation. Some have attempted to write a biography of the band. An interesting book, especially from a fan perspective, is *Report on Acid Drinkers* [pl. *Raport o Acid Drinkers*] by music journalist Leszek Gnoiński. Published in 1996, it naturally does not cover the remarkable years that came later.³ Analysis of the impact of the Acid Drinkers might be considered from the viewpoints of musicology, production or cultural studies in addition to the historical-biographical perspective. In this paper, I particularly emphasize a cultural studies approach in my analysis, highlighting the group’s well-thought-out image and artistic, visual, and textual strategies as led by Tomasz “Titus” Pukacki.

The band’s visual identity was an important factor in putting the Acid Drinkers on the map of the domestic metal scene. The group’s provocative name refers to consumers of cheap alcoholic beverages, especially the cheap wine commonly called *jabol* [pluck, vino] in Polish punk rock circles. A creatively logoized version of the band’s name has become an important trademark present on album covers, stage props, gadgets, T-shirts worn by fans, etc.

Album cover iconography is a key element of the band’s visual communication. In this context, a central figure in Polish graphic artist Jerzy Kurczak, the creator of cover projects for several famous Acid Drinkers albums as well as albums by other bands that have achieved iconic status among Polish music fans, such as *Ostatni Wojownik* [*Last Warrior*] by the group Turbo and *Oddech Wymarłych Światów* [*The Breath of Extinct Worlds*] by Kat. The cartoonish, comic aesthetic is a hallmark of

³ Also noteworthy are the audio-visual materials dedicated to the group, cf. exemplary productions listed in the “Filmography” to this article.

the visual sphere of the Acid Drinkers. Categories such as humor, irony and the grotesque are essential elements of the poetics of numerous cover images, this reflected and reinforced by the band's song lyrics. The subversive combination of the humorously depicted components on the cover of their 1990 debut album (e.g., lighted sticks of dynamite placed in the mouth of a cartoon character tied to a chair with a rope; a runaway dog and a mouse; a keg of beer; women's underwear) with the genre-ambiguous musical layer (a collage of heavy metal, thrash metal, glam, punk rock and elements of acoustic blues and rock and roll) was something of a novelty on the Polish phonographic market. Even the title of the group's debut album *Are You a Rebel?* had a communicative and provocative function. It was a kind of "test", an introductory question addressed to the listener. The person choosing to listen to the album should, by definition, be open to musical, spontaneous, rebellious, trans-genre, or crossover (to borrow terminology from music journalism) artistic material.

The covers of Acid Drinkers albums often allude to the titles of specific albums and songs in a clear, humorous convention (e.g., *Strip Tease* including a peculiar depiction of the Statue of Liberty; and *25 Cents For A Riff* with an image of a US quarter and the figure of a stout man in a suit, presumably intended to symbolize a greedy representative of the music industry). Such iconographic elements often refer to pop culture, especially American symbols (e.g., Coca-Cola cans, dollar banknotes, a T-shirt of one of the male characters on the wrapper of the 1991 album *Dirty Money*, *Dirty Tricks* adorned with the logo of the tobacco brand Marlboro, etc.). In terms of intertextuality (cf. e.g., Głowiński 1986; Nycz 1990), we can also find references to symbols associated with metal culture. An example: the cover of one of the band's most important albums, *Infernal Connection* (1994), features a chicken carcass wearing a white T-shirt with a black emblem that alludes to the iconography of the famous British band Venom, particularly the cover of their *Black Metal* album. The contrast of elements, depending on the viewer of the visual image, can have different effects, including a humorous one due to the unusual nature of the concept. However, it may also arouse distaste, for example among representatives of vegan circles due to the use of slaughtered poultry on the cover, or satisfaction, especially among fans of the band Venom, who, when choosing to listen to the album *Infernal Connection*, hope for artistic references to this group.

The Acid Drinkers' cover iconography can also be perceived using the category of self-intertextuality (cf. Głowiński 1986: 80). Frequently, the band's later albums are visually reminiscent of their earlier album covers, particularly in the ways key motifs are reused and adapted, especially American pop culture symbols and animal figures. In this context, the cover of the *Ladies and Gentlemen on Acid* compilation album, released in 2019, is an interesting graphic concept. This album is a collection of covers of Acid Drinkers songs recorded by various performers from the Polish music scene. The cover artwork refers to the visual sphere of several previous albums. Thus, it depicts a character with a jester's hat on his head (an allusion to the revered 2008 album *Verses of Steel*) and dynamite in his mouth (*Are You a Rebel?*), seated on a cow (1998's *High Proof Cosmic Milk*). The cover also features, among other images, the iconic Coca-Cola can (debut and *Strip Tease*), a small chicken

carcass wearing a Venom T-shirt (*Infernal Connection*), and banknotes (*Dirty Money*, *Dirty Tricks* and *Fishdick*, among others).

This (self-)intertextual play is part of a wider, complex artistic strategy. Of course, there is a ludic function involved, but the message, particularly in the lyrics, is not limited in this way. In the textual layer of Acid Drinkers’ songs, there are many themes and motifs characteristic of numerous artists and bands, especially heavy and thrash metal musicians. Therefore, in the group’s discography, we can find stories oscillating thematically on such topics as interpersonal relationships, sex, stimulants, dangers, and conflicts of the modern world, violence, death, and war. The pieces such as “Barmy Army”, “Anybody Home??!!”, “Drug Dealer”, “Pizza Driver”, “Poplin Twist”, “The Joker”, “I Fuck the Violence (I’m Sure I’m Right)”, “Swallow the Needle”, and “The Ark” constitute lively highlights during the band’s concerts. It is worth noting, however, that some songs clearly feature socially engaged narratives and that some could even be regarded as “protest songs” (cf. Eyerman, Jamison 1998; Dillane, Power, Devereux, Haynes 2018: 1–10; Gajda 2021: 81–87) constituting verbal and musical manifestos mostly directed against specific ideas, phenomena, institutions or actions.

Songs of this type are present on the band’s first album, including, for example, “Barmy Army”, which talks about a crowd following a madman (dictator). An excerpt from the last stanza:

I’m a shooter and a target, I’m a hero – killer.
 If I kill more, I’ll get a monument
 I’ll die with desire, I got their word:
 Fire will burn over my head!
 (Acid Drinkers, “Barmy Army”, *Are You A Rebel?*, Under One Flag 1990)

The song addresses the senselessness of war and human suffering in a blunt manner using uncomplicated language. The composition provides a glimpse into wider social problems, manipulation of those condemned to death on the battlefield and authoritarianism of certain groups and those in power. All this highlights the opposition of “us” (soldiers, victims of war, messengers to carry out top-down orders) vs. “them” (rulers, politicians making promises to reward obedient followers by erecting monuments in their memory, etc.). An important element in the “architecture” of the song is also the chanted refrain: “Barmy Army! Dead Army! Barmy Army! Shadows Army!”. Amounting to a kind of socially-critical slogan, these words work not only as strong structural elements in the music but also provide meaningful resonance in the lyrical context of the song and have become equally resonant in the mouths of fans when collectively chanted during the band’s energetic concerts.

In another song, also from the debut album, a clearly expressed declaration against violence can be heard in the chorus: “I fuck the violence and I’m sure I’m right”. The theme of war returns in the song “Nagasaki Baby”, a description of the victims of an attack, possibly a nuclear attack, as the title of the song might suggest. However, it is important to bear in mind that works dealing with social and political issues are sometimes misunderstood and exploited in different ways by

the audience. Simon Frith argues that songs are not so much about the ideas themselves, but about the way they are expressed. Writing about protest songs, he notes:

In pop terms, these don't function to convey ideas or arguments but slogans. And the paradox here is that the political power of a pop song—as a slogan—need not bear any relationship to its intended message at all. Irony, in particular, seems to be a doomed lyrical strategy. The Strawbs' 1973 single "Part of the Union," for example, was meant as an anti-union song, but its ironic chorus ("they can't get me, I'm part of the union!") became a gleeful picket line chant [...] (Frith 1996: 165).

Frith provides other examples: the misuse of John Lennon's famous ballad "Imagine" by participants in a Tory pre-election rally and Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA" and the attempted takeover of the popular song by the Republican Party during the 1984 presidential election (ibid.).

It is like that many Acid Drinkers fans, giving in to the ludic atmosphere of the band's live performances, chant "Barmy Army! Dead Army!" without much thought about the pacifist content of the song. However, it is notable that among the group's fans there are also some very engaged people who carefully analyze each release, exchange insights and opinions in online forums or closed groups on social media, prepare and share covers of songs in the digital space, and are active and creative members of the culture of participation.

Occasionally, Acid Drinkers' songs also include references to the biographies of real-life people. One example of this is the album *La Part Du Diable* from 2012. The album's title evokes associations with an opéra comique by French composer Daniel Auber (1782–1871) with libretto by Augustin Eugène Scribe. The album features the song "Andrew's Strategy", the lyrics of which refer to the crimes committed by Anders Breivik, the far-right terrorist responsible for the two attacks of 22 July 2011 in Norway in which 77 people were killed and several hundred injured. The song's chorus contains subversive words that direct the listener's attention to the figure of the killer:

Andrew having random fun
firing his machine gun
Andrew having random fun
(Acid Drinkers, "Andrew's Strategy", *La Part Du Diable*, Mystic Production 2012)

Another song from the same album, "Bundy's DNA", concerns famous American serial killer Ted Bundy who was sentenced to death for killing many women between 1974 and 1978:

Arrested twice – ran away twice
Leadin' this death race is what he likes
Aspen was cold, as cold as ice
Killin' ain't fun when hunger strikes
when Lisa died the feeling was there
inside his soul venom would brew
sit back, relax, behold the chair

Ted, it's your fate waitin' for you
 (Acid Drinkers, “Bundy's DNA”, *La Part Du Diable*, Mystic Production 2012)

Tomasz “Titus” Pukacki, who writes most of the band’s lyrics, dedicated one of the songs on the album to the nature of the electric chair (“Old Sparky”). This, in turn, is a reference to the manner of Bundy’s execution, which took place on 24 January 1989. In the text of the song, the narrator addresses an anthropomorphized chair, which has a somewhat absurd effect:

There were so many names
 women, children, men all just
 Ted, Virginia, Martha, James
 they were all turned into dust
 and so many have been waitin'
 for your manly, warm embrace
 though your reputation's shakin'
 the respect you had was ace
 (Acid Drinkers, “Old Sparky”, *La Part Du Diable*, Mystic Production 2012)

The ironic, often absurd, and grotesque effect in the lyrics of Acid Drinkers’ songs is intensified by stylistic devices such as hyperbole, animation, colloquialism, numerous metaphors, repetitions, paradoxes, and exclamations. While media discourses sometimes stereotype metal lyrics as banal and worthless, the Acid Drinkers’ songs demonstrate a diverse thematic lyrical range that is near-journalistic in character and sensitive to social phenomena.

Acid Drinkers brings the same creativity to their cover songs as well. According to the *PWN Polish Language Dictionary*, a cover is a new version of a musical work previously performed by another artist or group.⁴ Kurt Mosser categorizes covers into *reduplication covers*, *interpretive covers*, *send-up (ironic) covers* and *parody covers* (cf. Mosser 2008). Metal culture researcher Deena Weinstein claims that covers exist on a continuum, from those that are radically different from the original to those that are nearly identical to the original (Weinstein 2010: 245). On the other hand, P. D. Magnus, the author of the recent work *A Philosophy of Cover Songs* (2022), proposes a division into *mimic covers* (close to the original) and *rendition covers*, whose creators do not attempt to imitate or ‘impersonate’ the original. In the case of the latter differences from the original can occur along a number of different dimensions (cf. Magnus 2022: 43–47).

On the Acid Drinkers’ albums *Fishdick* and *Fishdick Zwei – The Dick is Rising Again*, we find mostly covers of rock and metal hits, including “Ace of Spades” by Motörhead, “N.I.B.” by Black Sabbath, “Another Brick In The Wall” by Pink Floyd, “Whole Lotta Rosie” by AC/DC, and “Highway Star” by Deep Purple. Despite performing cover songs, the band’s personality and musical character are present in, for example, Tomasz “Titus” Pukacki’s distinctive voice, humorous interludes, and music-text transfigurations. The second album includes some surprising covers of songs that seem far afield from the metal scene. For example, they cover “New York, New

⁴ Cf. <https://sjp.pwn.pl/szukaj/cover.html> (access: 10.07.2022).

York” originally performed by Liza Minnelli and popularized by Frank Sinatra with a heavy/thrash metal aesthetic and “Et si tu n’existais pas” by the French-American singer Joe Dassin for which drummer Maciej “Ślimak” Starosta provided lead vocals for the Acid Drinkers’ rendition. The band also covers some iconic metal compositions, rendering them in peculiar and, for some listeners, highly controversial ways. For example, in the case of Metallica’s famous ballad “Nothing Else Matters”, the Acid Drinkers version features Czesław Mozil, who is primarily associated with alternative pop music, and a musical arrangement featuring accordion, flute and clarinet. Perhaps even more peculiar, thrash metal band Slayer’s already classic song “Seasons in the Abyss” was reworked as a country song by the Acid Drinkers.

In many cases, artists use surprise effects and contrasts to achieve a humorous and original effect in the songs they cover. The Acid Drinkers’ covers are, therefore, not reduplicative; they are creative interpretations (*rendition covers*) and frequently also ironic variants (*send-up covers*), playfully distancing themselves from the originals. While multimedia extensions of songs through music videos and other audiovisual media are beyond the scope of the present study, it is worth noting that the Acid Drinkers’ cover of the iconic The B-52’s hit “Love Shack” and created a music video for it, forming a dialogue with the American group’s humorous audiovisual narrative.

Conclusion

The word “Acidofilia”, borrowed from the name of the album by the band Acid Drinkers released in 2002 and used in the title of this article, is a neologism that uses the suffix *-philia* (in Polish *-filia*) from the Greek word *philo*, expressing, as the last segment of a compound word, ‘a liking for something’. The title of the album and the songs can be interpreted as a “liking” for acid, stimulants, especially when considering the lyrics of the song, in which we find references to figures of deceased rock artists such as Janis Joplin, Kurt Cobain, Jim Morrison and Bon Scott. The refrain of the song contains phrases such as: “My body’s falling apart / I feed on Acidofilia / It’s very difficult art / You better don’t ask to heal ya”. Fans of the band may also understand the title of the album as a kind of positive attitude towards the band, a fondness for the long-standing and inspiring run of the group.

This article seeks to distinguish several dimensions of the Acid Drinkers’ output which amounts to a complex multimodal narrative that engages in dialogue with those who came before as well as their contemporaries in rock and metal (sub) genres. In metal culture, different institutional, ideological, ethnic, cultural and media discourses collide. The Acid Drinkers operate in this trans-discursive space of metal art and culture. Conscious artistic and visual endeavors, a well-thought-out musical and textual architecture of the songs, numerous awards in industry referenda and national prizes, as well as recognition from other artists, have all contributed to the important position that Acid Drinkers takes in the history of Polish popular music.

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Acid Drinkers, *Ladies And Gentlemen On Acid*, Makumba Music 2019

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Abstract

The main subject of this article is the artistic activity of one of the first thrash metal bands in Poland, the Acid Drinkers founded in 1986 in Poznań. The text outlines the state of indigenous metal music studies and identifies selected theoretical contexts related to song studies and the multimodality of popular music culture. In the analysis of the Acid Drinkers' work, particular attention is paid to the intertextuality of the iconography of Acid Drinkers' album covers, selected protest songs created by the band, and ironic interpretative covers, which also constitute an important element in the group's discography.

„Acidofilia”. Twórczość Acid Drinkers w dyskursywnym krajobrazie kultury muzyki metalowej

Streszczenie

Głównym tematem niniejszego artykułu jest działalność artystyczna jednego z pierwszych zespołów thrashmetalowych w Polsce, założonej w 1986 roku w Poznaniu grupy Acid Drinkers. W tekście nakreślono stan badań z zakresu rodzimych metal music studies, a także wskazano wybrane konteksty teoretyczne związane z badaniami nad songami oraz multimodalnością kultury muzyki popularnej. W analizie twórczości polskiego zespołu zwrócono szczególną uwagę na intertekstualność ikonografii okładkowej Acid Drinkers, wybrane protest songi stworzone przez zespół oraz ironiczne covery interpretacyjne, które stanowią również istotny punkt w dyskografii grupy.

Keywords: metal music studies, Polish metal music, creative activity of Acid Drinkers, covers, song studies

Słowa kluczowe: studia nad muzyką metalową, polska muzyka metalowa, twórczość Acid Drinkers, covery, studia nad piosenką

Jakub Kosek – PhD, Assistant Professor in the Department of Media and Cultural Studies at the Institute of Polish Philology of the Pedagogical University in Krakow. Author of the monograph *(Auto)biograficzne narracje transmedialne twórców rockowych* [(Auto)biographical Transmedia Narratives of Rock Artists] (Kraków 2019), editor of several issues of the journal *Studia de Cultura*, among others *Kultura metalowa w przestrzeni rytualnej i medialnej* [Metal Culture in Ritual and Media Space] (2019); *Metal Studies. Studia nad kulturą metalową* (2018) and multi-author monographs *Artyści i sceny metalowej (kontr)kultury* [Artists and Scenes of Metal (Counter)Culture] (2020) and *Żywioty i ideologie w narracjach muzyki metalowej* [Elements and Ideologies in Metal Music Narratives] (2022). Chairman of the organising committee of a series of national, interdisciplinary scientific conferences in the field of metal music studies (from 2017). Current research interests: discourses of heavy metal, multimodality of popular music, transmediality of songs.