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“Anthems for Doomed Youth” – the notion of
‘Englishness’ in the music, lyrics and iconography of
The Libertines

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Coming from a family of musicians, my interest in music was fostered from a very young age. While, as a child, I was actively engaging in various forms of music, from playing the piano to singing in school choirs, my adolescence was characterised by a passive exploration of music as an art form. I remember recording my favourite songs on cassette tapes in order to be able to repeatedly listen to them and dissect their lyrics.

I have always been a fan of song lyrics. Not only can they evoke strong feelings in the listener, but also help to construct and shape an individual's identity and acknowledge them as members of a particular social group.

Over the years, my infatuation with music and song lyrics has only become stronger, which is why it was out of doubt for me to write about anything else than what I am so passionate about.

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1 Introduction

In a country that, throughout its history, has held a dominant position in global politics and culture, nationalism and belonging to the nation are often prevalent as the main source of identity construction. The perceived homogeneity of members of the same nation group shapes and structures everyday experiences and creates a sense of community among the group. Despite its strong political bond as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in recent years, regional and local identities have become stronger and have led to movements demanding political independence, particularly in Scotland and Wales, which raises the question whether a shared British identity ever existed.

Increased celebrations of 'Britishness' can be dated back to the period between 1900 and 1950, when the two World Wars reinforced the sense of community among the British people. The shared experience of war with all its ramifications and consequences resurrected the national spirit that had suffered after the urbanisation and transformation of Britain's landscape and society through the Industrialisation. However, the aftermath of the war and the emergence of a global mass culture promoted by the United States led to an increased Americanisation of Britain and the fear of losing their strong national identity.

Attempts to define what constitutes 'Britishness' show that, despite the strong patriotism during and shortly after the wars, the British national identity is not more than the sum of its individual parts. There are only a few institutions that represent a 'Britishness', among them the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the National Health Service (NHS) and the British Army, Navy and Royal Air Force. A shared national identity in multinational states such as Britain often involves the obliteration of regional traditions and cultures by one dominant culture. In the case of the United Kingdom, England's dominance over the other member states is reflected not only in politics (an English government voting for English laws), but also in popular culture.

Music is often disregarded in its role as a signifier in the construction of national identity. Cultural theorists such as Anthony Easthope (1978), for instance, claim that nations such as Britain, "[c]ompared with France or Italy [...] can profess little in the way of painting and music". Even though the Britpop phenomenon had already reached its peak when his book *Englishness and national culture* was published, Easthope argues that discourses of

‘Englishness’ are rooted in the literary canon and entirely neglects the influence of popular music. Other scholars (e.g. Cloonan 1997, Hesmondhalgh 2001, Bannister 2006, and Morra 2014), however, investigate the role of music in defining the nation and illustrate that English popular music has generated a discourse of pop-‘Britishness’ (or rather pop-‘Englishness’) from the 1960s onwards.

When four young men from Liverpool got together to form a band, they certainly did not expect to start a cultural revolution. Proud of their English heritage, The Beatles took both Britain and the United States by storm and shared their perception of England through their music and lyrics. By combining influences from American jazz and British music hall, they appealed to a large audience around the globe and up until today they remain one of the most influential English bands in history.

The cultural impact of music became particularly evident in the 1970s, when punk music emerged from the underground into the core of mainstream Britain. Punk’s rebellion and anarchy was directed towards the monarchical and imperialist ‘Englishness’ that dominated the 70s. “God save the Queen / the fascist regime” (Sex Pistols, ‘God Save the Queen’), yells Johnny Rotten, expressing his anger towards the establishment and giving a voice to the marginalised, the socially and geographically remote individuals whose identity was repressed by the dominant ideology.

In the mid-1990s the reciprocal relationship between music and politics was underlined by a new movement within the Labour party. After two decades of Thatcherism and political conservatism, Tony Blair and the New Labour promoted a young, modern, multicultural Britain under their slogan ‘Cool Britannia’. This new form of ‘Britishness’ was reinforced by Blair’s celebration of popular culture, a stark contrast to the previous prime ministers John Major and Margaret Thatcher. Blair was regularly seen with and supported by musicians such as Noel Gallagher and his band Oasis, which eventually led to his landslide victory against the Tories.

Music, as a cultural product, is shaped by its cultural context. Through music, people identify themselves as belonging to a social group with a set of shared ideas and social values, which are in turn reflected in the songs that are produced by this particular group. The reciprocal relationship between music and social identity is apparent, for instance, in the surfaces of subculture. Subcultures that often form around particular musical genres

(e.g. in the case of punk) reject the identities imposed upon them by dominant social groups and fight cultural hegemony.

The scope of this thesis is to investigate the influence of twenty-first century popular music on contemporary English culture and national identity. Bands such as Kaiser Chiefs and Arctic Monkeys are said to follow the traditions of The Beatles, Sex Pistols and Blur in commenting on what it means to be English. Their 'Englishness' is reflected in a number of ways. First of all, their use of distinct national symbols, e.g. Union Jack flags in their album art, press releases and live shows reinforces the emotional connotations with these symbols and emphasises their identification with England as their nation. Lyrically, contemporary musicians deal with a variety of elements that characterise 'Englishness'.

The Kinks, in the 1960s, already established a notion of 'Englishness' that is located in rural visions of England's past. They identify a tension between their idealised past and the British present that is characterised by Americanisation and mass culture. Anti-Americanism is still present in contemporary English music. Bands such as The Libertines comment on the threat that is posed upon British identity by the spread of mass entertainment and American-style capitalism. "There's fewer more distressing sights than that / Of an Englishman in a baseball cap", sings Doherty in their song 'Time for Heroes', the baseball caps as a symbol for the American influence on the British youth.

In contrast to the United States, British culture is continuously immersed in class hierarchies. In popular music the dominant class is the working class. Countless musicians emphasise their plebeian roots and share their working class experiences in their songs. The celebration of working class culture in popular music is closely tied to the notion of authenticity. Only life at the lower end of the class hierarchy is considered an authentic English experience and hence, only the working class is able to represent 'Englishness'.

Bob Dylan winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016 illustrates the central role popular music now has in the cultural discourse. Given the lack of research in this field, this thesis seeks to further examine the role of popular music in the construction of national identity. By analysing music, lyrics and iconography of the English rock band

The Libertines, I want to evaluate how contemporary alternative music portrays the English life.

The first part of this thesis describes the most important debates on the question of 'Englishness'. First, I will present three different definitions of nation in relation to national identity. Then, I will provide an overview over the current state of the United Kingdom including an analysis of Britain's future role in the European Union after Brexit and the political ramifications of the exit vote as well as the growing demands for Scottish independence. Furthermore, I will analyse three different versions of 'Englishness': England as it is portrayed by George Orwell, female England and the challenges posed upon English identity in the aftermath of the war by the loss of its colonies and growing multiculturalism.

The third chapter deals with the role of music in the formation of national identity. Music can be seen in three different ways:

1. as representation of a society and its shared values,
2. as an internal dialogue performers engage in in order to estimate the anticipated response from the listeners,
3. or as the experiences shared by the composer that are then re-created in the consciousness of the listeners

The different influences on the decoding and encoding of pop performances are described in 3.1 and 3.6 provides a detailed introduction to the analysis of popular music based on David Machin's *Analysing Popular Music*.

Chapter four offers an overview over discourses on 'Englishness' in popular music from the 1960s up until now. The 2012 Olympics are taken as an example of the role music plays in the construction of British national identity. The opening ceremony, directed by Danny Boyle, attempts to re-define 'Britishness' by highlighting the role of popular culture in the history of the nation.

After a short introduction to the band and its reception in the music press, chapter six provides a thorough analysis of different aspects of 'Englishness' in the music, lyrics and iconography of The Libertines. I will analyse their sound in relation to conventions of the indie genre and influences from other bands. Furthermore, I will elaborate on the English life that is portrayed in their lyrics, from references to Romantic poetry and obsession

with the war era to the blatant anti-Americanism that is apparent in twenty-first century popular music. Concluding the chapter is an analysis of their album iconography and how it is influenced by their personal experiences.

Chapter seven highlights the problematics that accompany discourses of 'Englishness' in popular music. As Martin Cloonan (47) argues, "artists who are held to encompass a form of Englishness are overwhelmingly white, male, and working in the rock/pop idiom". I will illustrate how the English pop canon is constituted through exclusion in terms of gender, genre and ethnicity.

The final chapter can be seen as an attempt to offer a positive outlook into the future of British music. A new form of 'Englishness' that is defined by multiculturalism and a plurality of social identities, is slowly finding its way into the pop canon and will hopefully erase the limitations posed upon contemporary British acts that are non-white and non-male in order to promote the diversity that makes England what it is today.

2 Down in Albion – An introduction to the ‘Englishness’ question

So come away, won't you come away
We could go to,
Deptford, Catford, Watford, Digberth, Mansfield
Anywhere in Albion

- Babyshambles, ‘Albion’

2.1 Nation and Identity

The concepts of ‘self’ and ‘identity’ have only relatively recently found their way into psychological studies. The first publication to mention the self was William James’ *The Principles of Psychology* published in 1890 (Ashmore and Jussim 3). Since then, the two concepts have been broadly discussed in non-scientific publications as well as popular culture and were included in the scientific discourse. Over the past few decades, thousands of works on self and identity have been published. Ashmore and Jussim found a total of 31,550 psychology publications on self and identity between 1974 and 1993, making them “the most actively researched topics in all of psychology” (Baumeister 1). However, despite the centrality of these concepts in social psychology there is no distinct definition of self and identity.

Baumeister provides an overview of the historical changes perceptions of the self have undergone, evolving from a “banal, obvious, everyday phenomenon into an intricate and challenging problem” (Baumeister 3). In medieval times, self and identity were relatively fixed, “defined by very stable, visible, ascribed attributes, such as family membership, social rank, [...] place of birth, and gender” (Baumeister 4). The social order was determined by God’s will and people had a fixed role in society. Through secularisation, industrialisation and other social changes, Christian views were largely abandoned and the notions of self and identity became more challenging, complex, and difficult.

Our concept of identity does not only govern our human interactions, but also how we see ourselves and others in this world. By identifying ourselves as members of a particular social group, we are able to define and localise ourselves in the plurality of identities that surround us and identify others either as similar to us (belonging to the same social group) or as different (belonging to a different social group). Furthermore, this categorisation

into social groups determines how we treat and interact with other people. “One of the principle features [...] of intergroup behavior and attitudes [is] the tendency shown by members of an ingroup to consider members of outgroups in a relatively uniform manner” (Tajfel 21). For example, in a 1976 study on interracial housing, Hamilton and Bishop investigated group behaviour by analysing the participant’s reactions to the arrival of a new family in 18 white suburban neighbourhoods. Eight neighbourhoods became home of a coloured family, while ten neighbourhoods remained white. After conducting interviews with the residents, Hamilton and Bishop (57) found that “the race of new neighbors persists in being a highly salient feature”, since participants with new neighbours of a different race referred to their neighbours in terms of their racial category. The perceived homogeneity of the other group reinforces in-group favouritism, which is illustrated in a 1971 study by Tajfel. In this study, students from Bristol “were categorized into groups on a trivial basis (for example, their preference for painters)” (Reicher, Spears and Haslam 47) and asked to “allocate rewards between two other individuals about whom nothing was known other than the fact that one was from the ‘in-group’ and the other from the ‘out-group’” (Reicher, Spears and Haslam 47). The results indicate that despite there being no connection between the group members apart from a minor shared interest, “the individuals displayed high levels of in-group favouritism” (Reicher, Spears and Haslam 47). There are several other studies on in-group favouritism and intergroup discrimination (e.g. Tajfel et al. 1971, Tajfel and Billig 1973, and Allen and Wilder 1975) that provide “clear and consistent evidence of bias in favor of the ingroup” (Tajfel 23) even under arbitrary and trivial conditions such as determining the group membership by tossing a coin. These studies demonstrate that “the mere categorization of persons into groups invokes a social norm of discrimination, that is, a norm specifying that one ought to favor the ingroup” (Allen and Wilder 1971).

These insights into intergroup behaviour provide a fascinating base for an analysis of the different forms of identification with one’s nation, from moderate patriotism to radical nationalism that often goes hand in hand with racism and xenophobia. The different ways in which this identification with England and the United Kingdom is expressed will be explored in the following chapter. However, prior to an analysis of the distinct features of the English national identity, I will provide an overview over the three most dominant definitions of the term ‘nation’ and what it means to belong to a nation.

2.1.1 Nation as class dominance

In the 1970s, British cultural studies frequently draw from the Marxist belief that “nation is a form of ideology, that is, a way of thinking designed to promote the interests of a particular social group” (Easthope 6). In a capitalist nation, the ruling class seeks to ensure its hegemony and cultural identity is “really just an exercise in class domination” (Easthope 6).

However, as Smith points out, the assumption that the identification with the dominant class is representative for the collective identity of a nation lacks cultural depth. Class is a category of economic interest, which generally does not play an important role in the formation of collective identities. Furthermore, “[c]lass’ signifies a social relationship. There are always two or more classes [...] in conflict, which helps to sharpen class differences, and hence identities, as studies of working-class culture in Britain have revealed” (Smith 5). Nairn criticises the simplicity of the Marxist discourse and calls “[t]he theory of nationalism [...] Marxism’s great historical failure” (Nairn 3). He argues that it is highly unlikely for a dominant class to inflict its identity on subordinate classes without their consent. “[N]ational identity was not just imposed from above, but spontaneously supported from below, not just an ideology, but something actually lived into, for example, in the fight for national liberation” (Easthope 7).

According to Easthope the formation of a nation is driven by “an exercise of force rather than democratic enactment” (Easthope 7). A great example for this involuntary construction of nation is “the birth of the new South Africa” (Easthope 7) and Nelson Mandela’s first appearance as elected president on 2 May 1994. In his speech Mandela accentuates the symbolic unification of the people of South Africa, who, despite their various different cultures and traditions, are united by their shared destiny (Easthope 7). In this example, the initial act of violence in the nation-formation is legitimised by the general will, “as the state becomes supported by the people” (Easthope 7). This shows that the Marxist view of nation as an ideology imposed from the dominant class fails in its explanation, as it is too “simplistic and reductive” (Easthope 8).

2.1.2 Nation as ‘imagined community’

In the 1980s, Benedict Anderson coined the notion of nation as an ‘imagined community’. “[I]n Western Europe the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought” (Anderson 11). Religious communities were replaced by the idea of nation-states that are based on a common national language and evolved through the emergence of print capitalism. Anderson shows that even though ancient communities were already linked by a common set of signs, “such classical communities linked by sacred languages had a character distinct from the imagined communities of modern nations” (Anderson 13). The convergence of print media created a common language for a large number of people. In Europe, “[s]peakers of a huge variety of Frenches, Englishes, or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand each other in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper” (Anderson 44). This common language as well as the production and distribution of print media “provided the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation” (Anderson 25).

Anderson emphasises that nation is *imagined*, “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 6). The nostalgic idea of pre-national, organic communities, of “*real* human communities” (Hobsbawm 46) is opposed to the inauthenticity of large nation-states.

‘Nation’ as a term is radically connected with ‘native’. We are born into relationships which are typically settled in a place. This form of primary and ‘placeable’ bonding is of quite fundamental human and natural importance. Yet the jump from that to anything like the modern nation-state is entirely artificial. (R. Williams *Towards* 180)

Easthope provides a radical criticism of this empiricist view by showing that “[this] binary opposition cannot be sustained” (Easthope 10). He claims that “it is the case for every speaking subject that immediacy, spontaneity and direct presence are necessarily deflected and betrayed by the universalising, classificatory force of language” (Easthope 10). Therefore, the idea of a native community in which all members are engaged in face-to-face conversations is impossible and pre-national communities were as ‘inauthentic’ as today’s nation-states.

2.1.3 Nation as culture, state and discourse

In his book *Nations and states*, Hugh Seton-Watson (1) defines nation as “a community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a national consciousness”. This sense of solidarity, a social bond between the members of a community is reinforced by “providing repertoires of shared values, symbols and traditions” (Smith 16). Symbols such as “flags, coinage, anthems, uniforms, monuments and ceremonies” (Smith 16f.) strengthen the idea of belonging to a nation and provide “a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world, through the prism of collective personality and its distinctive culture” (Smith 16).

From a psychological perspective, belonging to a nation signifies the identification of an individual as a member of a particular social group, the individual’s nationality. However, as pointed out by Easthope (43), “any cultural grouping might claim to be a nation but would not be recognised as such unless it achieved state and territorial realisation”. Nations are not only defined through a shared set of symbols; they are “territorially bounded units of population” (Smith 14). This can be seen in the increased homogenisation of culture through globalisation in the Western world. Despite cultural similarities, the Western world is not becoming one big nation, because nation is a political term as much as it is a cultural term.

The complexity and multi-dimensionality of national identity shows that the term “can never be reduced to a single element” (Smith 14). In recent years, the discourse on national identity has extended to include questions of gender, race and ethnicity, e.g. Schwarz 1996, Alibhai-Brown 2000, Kundnani 2007 and Hastings 2007.

Easthope, however, concludes that there is one thing that defines national identity more than any other: discursive formations. Nation as a state manifests itself in national institutions and practices, e.g. opera houses, universities, parliament buildings etc. “[T]he Royal Navy, the Old Bailey, the Bank of England, [...] all [...] can be identified as in some way characteristically English” (Easthope 55f.). Nation as culture, on the other hand, is established in a literary canon, a discursive formation. “Running across state and culture, this coalescent adjectivalisation provides an apparently unified object, ‘Englishness’, which invites subjects into identification with it [...] in a process which gives the effect of national identity.” (Easthope 56).

2.2 British, I mean English - A *United* Kingdom?

In one of the most iconic moments in Britain's recent history a beautiful young woman and a handsome young man were leaving Westminster Abbey, where they had just exchanged their wedding vows. They were carried to Buckingham Palace, celebrated by cheering and joyful crowds that waved thousands of Union Flags. The couple, now Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, are among the most celebrated Britons in the world, which was evident in the never before seen media coverage and public interest in their Royal Wedding in April 2011. For a brief moment, their marriage did not only represent the holy union of two people, but the union of their future Kingdom, a Kingdom that is now on the verge of splitting into its separate parts, as independence movements gain momentum in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Batchelor).

Like any other public event involving the Royal family "major royal weddings in Britain possess a cultural importance which dwarfs other celebrity events" (Blain and O'Donnell 164). With an audience of over two billion people worldwide (Sedghi), not only the participants of the Royal Wedding, but the whole nation jumped into the spotlight and every little detail of the ceremony was later analysed by tabloids and newspapers all over the world. The bride's dress, designed by the British fashion label Alexander McQueen, "should combine tradition and modernity" (H. Alexander) and featured a Victorian-style corset "incorporating individual, hand-cut and embroidered flowers representing the rose, thistle, daffodil and shamrock" (H. Alexander). The flowers stand for the four nations England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, turning the dress into a representation of the United Kingdom, where the separate parts, the separate nations with their own individual identities are woven together to become one.

Looking beyond the glitz and glamour of the Royal Wedding the questions remains whether such a unified identity even exists. "These are difficult times to be British", proclaim Gamble and Wright (1) in an introduction to their book about the 'Britishness' question.

Being British is less easy than it was, because the state which underpinned the British identity is no longer the confident structure of earlier times. Many British people have become much more aware of their separate identity as Scottish, or English or Welsh, and for an increasing number of them this other national identity has come to be

regarded as primary identity, and the British identity only a secondary identity, or even an identity they no longer want. (Gamble and Wright 1)

The United Kingdom is one of the last European multinational states and “something of a historical anomaly in contemporary world politics. Most of the other large multinational states in Europe have long since collapsed” (Gamble and Wright 2f.). With the union of England and Scotland in 1707, which was later extended to include Wales and Ireland, a political community was created that up until now deals with the complicated issue of creating and maintaining a collective national identity. Multinational states like Britain in particular, depend on the establishment of common purposes and enterprises. The ongoing weakening of the attachment to ‘Britishness’ after the Second World War “has been associated with the weakening of the two enterprises that defined a large part of what Britishness meant in the twentieth century: empire and welfare” (Gamble and Wright 2).

The Second World War, from a British perspective, is the last tale of Britain’s exceptionalism, “the last national story that we could tell ourselves that had a legitimate and satisfactory ‘us’ and ‘them’ in it” (Seaton 75). With the declaration of war against Nazi Germany, Britain served as the “protector of its ineffective European neighbours” (Parekh 35) and the Union’s solidarity and national cohesion had never been bigger than in those times of war. A shared collective experience of this magnitude creates a common history, which constitutes a strong social identity. In his original speaking notes from a speech made in Dover on 14 August 1946, Winston Churchill manages to encapsulate the British national spirit in the aftermath of war. “We can still say [that] nearly a thousand years [have] passed since a foreign invader has set his foot upon English soil” (qtd. in Hennessy 160). This achievement, claims Churchill, has enabled the British “to develop [their] own English and British way of life” (qtd. in Hennessy 162). In the next part of the speech he reminds Britons of their collective values and their shared past and promises them an outlook into a bright future.

But one last thing at least we will promise. In our own place and in our own way this glorious Foreland of England, [...] will still do its best for all. And we will still strive forward, [...] towards that fair future, for all the men in all the lands. (Churchill qtd. in Hennessy 166).

This glorious self-definition and bright outlook will soon face a setback with the political changes and challenges that emerged in the second half of the 20th century. The post-war,

Thatcherite view, still “deeply rooted in imperial consciousness, relied heavily on religion, fed the aggressive individualist impulse [and] felt deeply uncomfortable with Britain’s cultural diversity” (Parekh 35). An increased demand for greater autonomy from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as the growing alienation from the European Union towards the turn of the century led to a new crisis of the British identity.

2.2.1 Being British

The most fundamental problem that is hindering the identification with Great Britain as one, united nation is that “[f]rom the start [Britain] was a multinational state, dominated by the largest nation, the English.” (Gamble and Wright 1). Sporadic attempts to reinforce a shared identity among the four component states were based on the obliteration of their individual cultures and traditions and therefore, rejected by the subordinate nations Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Despite the establishment of English as a common national language, for example, “the other languages survived, and eventually revived – very strongly in the case of Wales” (Gamble and Wright 1), which indicates that a unified British identity never successfully replaced the already established national identities.

Despite a variety of common institutions such as the monarchy, or the parliament, reflections in literature, arts and popular culture seem to “emphasise difference rather than unity” (Gamble and Wright 2). In Britain’s most popular sport football, for example, each of the four nations has their own national team and national league (Cashmore 240). “Team GB in the Olympics is a notable exception, but there is never likely to be a Team GB in the World Cup” (Gamble and Wright 2).

One of the few institutions left that represent a united Britain is the BBC. “The Corporation has an obligation to the nation because it is for the nation” (Seaton 78). By balancing programmes that feature local news stories as well as programmes appealing to the whole of Britain, the BBC is one of the only institutions that manages to restore a union without erasing the differences. Part of its success is that “it is enjoined to engage with the public not only as consumers but as members of an evolving society” (Seaton 79). However, even though the BBC seems successful in setting forth the union, the ‘Britishness’ that is portrayed by the broadcasting company is not clearly defined. As Seaton (81) observes, the kind of ‘Britishness’ the BBC works with is concerned with “something less contentious than religion or politics”. It is a ‘Britishness’ that is not trying

to attempt to be British, a 'Britishness' featuring a variety of common interests of Britons such as sports (BBC radio 5), philosophy and literature (BBC radio 4) and a variety of music genres (e.g. BBC radio 1, BBC radio 6).

The identification with one's country is not only reinforced through the shared history of members of the same nation, but also through these common interests, e.g. national sports, gardening, art, music. "Being British, seeing Britain as a more or less valued part of one's personal identity, implies identification with Britain" (Parekh 33). Therefore, a national discourse on 'Britishness' as a "necessary part of any Unionist project in a multinational state like the United Kingdom" (Gamble and Wright 3) has to be established. This discourse has to examine and review what traits and values are shared by the population. The most common characteristic shared by all members of Britain is that they are all British (Parekh 32). However, there is a set of attributes and values apart from their 'Britishness' that is considered to be shared by most, if not all Britons. According to Parekh (33)

[i]t is taken to consist either in such qualities of temperament as stubbornness, stoic self-discipline, emotional self-restraint, understatement and uncomplaining nature, or in such habits and practices as the love of animals, gardening, personal hobbies and of sports, keeping one's distance from others, and the tendency to mind one's own business.

This is one of the first attempts to define a 'Britishness' that is not rooted in the political union of four separate countries, but as 'Britishness' of the people. Parekh emphasises that a British identity cannot be based on shared rituals and myths, customs and folk memories only, because they differ greatly throughout the four nations. However, a common identity "is articulated in terms of certain institutions, values and practices. This common culture is the collective product of the four nations and provides a framework within which they interact" (Parekh 36f.). By strengthening these institutions and ensuring an ongoing support of common public values, e.g. liberty, equality and respect, British identity could be re-established and prevented from being replaced by the separate national identities.

2.2.2 The future of the Union

The referendum on 24 June 2016 in which 51.9% of Britain's population voted to leave the European Union (*EU Referendum Results*) does not only raise questions concerning

Britain's future role in the European Union, but also concerning the political ramifications for the United Kingdom. As Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon emphasised before the Brexit vote, "[s]hould the UK elect to leave the EU but Scotland vote to remain, a second Scottish independence referendum might be triggered" (Henderson et al. 2). Data that had been gathered by Henderson et al. prior to the vote reflects the result from 24 June when a majority of Scotland voted to remain in the European Union (*EU Referendum Results*). This result provides the biggest threat for the UK so far, since the Scottish government are in the process of holding a second independence referendum. Jeffery (119) outlines what the independence of Scotland would entail:

An independent Scotland might well retain the pound sterling and by implication remain subject to UK monetary policy [...] An independent Scotland might recast the UK as the union of Scottish and English crowns which existed for the century or so prior to the union of the Scottish and the English in 1707. There would no doubt be some level of cross-border portability and reciprocity of citizenship rights with the rest of the UK, over and above that which exists, for example, between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

		British only %	More British than X %	Equally British and X %	More X than British %	X only %
UK's membership of the EU a good thing	England	47	52	36	27	15
	Wales	35	35	37	31	35
	Scotland	45	43	43	45	41
UK's membership of the EU a bad thing	England	28	23	31	43	58
	Wales	31	37	32	31	38
	Scotland	38	36	27	22	33
Vote to remain in a referendum	England	52	56	39	29	20
	Wales	45	40	42	34	38
	Scotland	43	51	47	53	47
Vote to leave in a referendum	England	33	27	37	51	63
	Wales	34	44	32	34	38
	Scotland	33	38	38	25	35

Table 1: National identity and EU membership (Henderson et al. 10)

As Henderson et al. (9) observe "[i]n Wales and Scotland, national identity (British or Scottish/Welsh) does not appear to structure attitudes on EU membership consistently". In a survey from 2014 those who identified as British instead of Scottish were more likely to favour an independent United Kingdom. The results in Table 1 highlight the large contrast between the English and Scottish votes. "[M]ost eurosceptics focus on the

apparent threat to Britain and Britishness posed by ‘Brussels’” (Henderson et al. 8). However, in England the results indicate that those who “felt more British than English were actually more positive in their attitudes towards the EU” (Henderson et al. 8). The more apparent and the stronger the sense of English national identity “the more likely respondents were to think EU membership a bad thing and to want to leave the EU” (Henderson et al. 9).

In his essay “England and Britain, Europe and the Anglosphere”, David Willets reviews the relationship between the UK and Europe. His definition of ‘Britishness’ is largely based on Britain as a political framework for the compound states, which is why “Europe as a political project is particularly problematic for Britain because Britishness above all depends on a set of political institutions” (Willets 59). In a speech at the Conservative Party conference the year after Britain signed the Treaty of Maastricht in December 1991, the prime minister John Major emphasised that joining the European Union would not affect Britain’s sovereignty and independence:

I will never, come hell or high water, let our distinctive British identity be lost in a federal Europe ... If there are those who have in mind to haul down the Union Jack and fly high the star-spangled banner of the United States of Europe, I say to them: you misjudge the temper of the British people! ... And to those who offer us gratuitous advice, I remind them of what a thousand years of history should have told them: you cannot bully Britain. (qtd. in Kumar 226f.)

However, this attempt to create a sense of community while reassuring the people of Britain that becoming part of the EU is not a threat to the British identity, was unsuccessful. In a different speech, which gained a lot of criticism, Major claims that “Fifty years from now, Britain will still be the country of long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, [...] as George Orwell said – ‘old maids cycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist’” (qtd. In Kumar 227). However, he fails to reflect a British community, because the reference he lists are “quintessentially English” (Kumar 227). Despite more recent attempts, e.g. by Gordon Brown, to express a unified notion of ‘Britishness’, the UK government has failed to establish “a refreshed British identity, once again celebrating something that is bigger than the sum of its parts” (Gamble and Wright 4) and it remains to be seen whether the tensions between England and Scotland will be resolved or eventually lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom.

2.3 What it means to be English

2.3.1 Orwell's England

Simon Featherstone (14) calls George Orwell “the most influential twentieth-century theorist of Englishness”. His essays on ‘Englishness’ have influenced a large number of politicians and cultural theorists, because he “offers a definition of England that mixes populism, patriotism and radicalism in a convincing voice and a supple syntax” (Featherstone 14). As Clarke points out, Orwell’s analysis of ‘Englishness’ reflects a struggle of defining the English identity as patriotism became associated with right politics. “The reinterpretation of English patriotism undertaken by Orwell after 1939 was, according to his account, part of a broader ‘relocation in the Left’s thinking’” (Clarke 88). Orwell’s ‘Englishness’ is anti-authoritarian and revolutionary, but at the same time traditional. Patriotism, he argues, has to be distinguished from nationalism. While nationalism “depends upon a hierarchical classification of identities and a competitive discrimination of value between nations” (Featherstone 16), patriotism shows the acceptance and devotion to a particular region and a particular spirit.

Compared to other European nations Britain lacks a revolutionary tradition of socialism and Marxism, which is why Orwell supports “the idea of radical social transformation and, in particular, socialism. Indeed, in his book *The Lion and the Unicorn*, he proposes that it ‘is only by revolution that the native genius of the English people can be set free’” (Clarke 95). The ‘native genius’, for Orwell, is defined by a set of values such as respect for legality or the belief in justice, liberty, and objective truth (Clarke 95).

However, Orwell’s ‘Englishness’ is not only manifested in a political revolution but can be located in a nostalgic idea of a traditional, pastoral England. Orwell expresses his nostalgic attachment to the English countryside and the English life before “Hitler, Stalin, bombs, aeroplanes, tinned food, [...] Hollywood films and political murders” (Orwell qtd. in Clarke 98). The ‘Old England’ described by Orwell is innocent and safe and not yet affected by the traumas of war. This Orwellian rural and romantic vision of ‘Englishness’ has had an important influence on Britain’s popular culture and has been picked up by various pop artists from the 1960s onwards.

2.3.2 Female England

Nationalism as well as gender are socially and culturally constructed and “frequently play an important role in constructing one another – by invoking and helping to construct the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ distinction” (Mayer 1). This distinction involves power relationships and culturally constructed hierarchies, because one gender usually benefits more from the political and cultural institutions that constitute a nation. “Feminist research has steadily revealed that men and women participate differently in the national project” (Mayer 5). Women are generally offered a passive role in the construction of a nation.

The only way in which women are seen as a central part in the national project is through their reproductive values, “which include biological and ideological reproduction, reproduction of ethnic or national boundaries, transmission of culture and participation in national struggles” (Mayer 7). In secularised societies the nation-defining role of religion was gradually replaced by academics. Women, however, the same way they were excluded from most religious practices were excluded from schools and universities. “The work that women artists, writers and scientists did produce was often judged to be the result not of genius, but of nimble fingers, diligence in observation, skill at following the example of a male teacher” (Wiesner 177).

When women are understood as being involved in the creation of the nation it is only as mothers and defenders of culture, not as those creating it. In her book *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf criticises the “refusal of English institutions to allow women full economic and social rights, whether in law or education” (Featherstone 24). She claims that England belongs to men and the “restrictions of women’s investment in the material and ideological substance of Englishness rendered them aliens in their ‘own’ land” (Featherstone 24). The suffragette movement in the late 19th century was an attempt by women to claim their ability to participate in the nation formation, because for women, the right to vote “represented full and proper status as members of the British nation” (Eustance, Ryan and Ugolini 4). Political rights, however, do not automatically imply cultural representation and because nation is often constructed by the dominant social group, this group is “able to define who is central and who is marginal to the national project” (Mayer 12). This is why up until today women are not seen as capable to contribute to the construction of national identity the same way men do.

2.3.3 Post-war England

As Giles and Middleton (110) emphasise “[t]he idea of Englishness which existed in 1900 and which was called upon between 1914 and 1918 was not the same sense of Englishness for which men were exhorted to fight in 1939”. While ‘Englishness’ before and during the war is characterised by “forms of heroism and self-sacrifice represented in the idea of ‘dying for King and Country’” (Giles and Middleton 110f.), post-war England signifies the “‘patriotism of private life’ in which to be English was to value the pleasures of ‘privacy and domesticity’” (Giles and Middleton 114). The loss of their homes and loved ones caused many Britons to place an increased importance on family life and the creation of a brighter future for the next generation. “[P]oliticians [...] became convinced that once the war was over they really would have to build a new kind of society” (Corbishley 373), which was frequently emphasised, e.g. in the elections shortly after the war when the new Prime Minister proclaimed the start of a new era in the hopes of keeping people’s spirits up.

“After 1948, social work – particularly family-welfare work – expanded in England” (Todd 362). Voluntary agencies such as FWA and FSU provided financial support as well as “practical assistance to residents who were bombed out of their homes” (Todd 365). This spirit of community and support reinforced the already strong feeling of national belonging that had been present in times of war. However, the continuous growth of unemployment even years after the war led to countless strikes and a loss of the national spirit particularly in the working class.

When in the late 20th century Britain’s colonies gained independence, England was faced with even more political and economic challenges and furthermore, confronted with an identity crisis. The loss of its colonies marks the moment when England lost “command of its own narrative of identity” (Featherstone 20). ‘Englishness’ that was often defined through England’s imperial power, now faced challenges that “were posed by the colonised themselves” (Featherstone 21).

When “the MV Empire Windrush arrived at Tilbury Docks carrying 492 Carribean passengers” (S. Alexander) on 22 June 1948, a whole wave of immigrants from Britain’s colonies came to England in the hopes of a better life.

For the passengers of Empire Windrush in 1948, and the thousands who followed after, the British Nationality Act 1948 was their saving grace. The act allowed them, and others living in Commonwealth countries, British Citizenship and full rights of entry and settlement. (S. Alexander)

England suddenly had to face the economical challenge of supporting an immense number of new citizens and furthermore, handle the new diversity and multiculturalism that characterises the country today. Black immigrants were seen as ‘not English’ and as a potential threat to the nation. “Unofficial ‘colour bars’ were introduced, and workplace discrimination was commonplace” (S. Alexander). However, over the years, voices promoting inclusion and diversity became louder and Britain began to accept its plurality.

Despite Britain’s attempt to establish a ‘Britishness’ of inclusion, up until today, ethnic minorities are underprivileged and discriminated. “[T]he widespread critique of multiculturalism [...] has given rise to an overenthusiastic reclaiming of national pride and heritage” (Bhattacharyya 5). Events such as the London bombings in 2005 only reinforce already existing feelings of xenophobia and racism and there is “a widespread acceptance that British versions of multiculturalism were to blame, at least in part, for the emergence of British residents who wished to launch terrorist attacks at home” (Bhattacharyya 6). Fear of terror and a growing Islamophobia have led to a rise in nationalistic movements not only in Britain, but all of Europe, e.g. the Front National in France or the Freedom Party in Austria and may have also played a role in Britain’s Brexit vote.

3 Music as an important signifier in the construction of national identity

If you've lost your faith in love and music
The end won't be long

- The Libertines, 'The Good Old Days'

3.1 Encoding/decoding pop performances

Prevalent models of communication interpret the act of communicating as a linear process with distinct notions of 'message', 'sender' and 'receiver'. The message is transferred from the sender to the receiver, where it is decoded. In this linear model the receiver is relatively passive, which is why it fails to reflect more complex communication structures. Stuart Hall criticises this model for its "concentration on the level of message exchange and for the absence of a structured conception of the different moments as a complex structure of relations" (Hall *Encoding* 128).

The processes of 'encoding' and 'decoding' a message "are *determinate* moments" (Hall *Encoding* 129) in successful communication. For an event or experience to be successfully communicated, i.e. transmitted from a sender to a receiver, it has to be brought into a different form, a linguistic form. "In the moment when a historical event passes under the sign of discourse, it is subject to all the complex formal 'rules' by which language signifies" (Hall *Encoding* 129). The transposition into and out of the symbolic form of the message is by no means arbitrary and underlies particular conventions. In order for the transposition of a message to result in successful communication, the message must be realised "under the discursive rules of language" (Hall *Encoding* 130). A message that is not meaningfully encoded and decoded in a way that compensates asymmetry on either end of the communicative chain results in misunderstandings.

Reality exists outside language, but it is constantly mediated by and through discourse. Discursive 'knowledge' is the product not of the transparent representation of the 'real' of language but of the articulation of language on real relations and conditions. Thus there is no intelligible discourse without the operation of a code. (Hall *Encoding* 131).

Even though particular codes appear natural and innate because they are "so widely distributed in a specific language community or culture, and [are] learned at [such] an early age" (Hall *Encoding* 132), they are never natural and always culturally-specific. The

visual sign for ‘cow’, for instance, is arbitrary, even though it represents the concept of ‘cow’. “These ‘conditions of perception’ are, however, the result of a highly coded [...], set of operations” (Hall *Encoding* 132). Codes relate signs to the already established “maps of meaning into which any culture is classified” (Hall *Encoding* 134) and by encoding a message, the speaker sets the “limits and parameters within which decodings will operate” (Hall *Encoding* 135). These parameters are necessary and ensure a basic level of reciprocity between the speaker and the receiver.

In music, where the message is typically conveyed through the lyrics, the parameters and limits are even less clear than in verbal communication, because they are influenced by the sounds, visual images and in the case of a live performance, by the movements, gestures, and expressions of the performer. In his essay “Performance analysis and popular music manifesto” Philip Auslander demonstrates the different influences on the perception of a music performance. “Part of the audience’s pleasure in music comes from experiencing and consuming the personae of favorite artists in all their many forms” (Auslander 9). He distinguishes between three distinctive personas that are active in pop performances. The first one is the performer as a human being, the real person. The central element of every pop performance is the performance persona, a role that is taken on by the artist. Furthermore, every performance includes a character, the fictional narrator of the song that is being performed. The second category, performance personas, are “the signified to which the audience has the most direct and sustained access” (Auslander 12).

Decoding in pop performances most likely takes place on the level of the negotiated code, which implies the majority of the audience “probably understand quite adequately what has been dominantly defined and professionally signified” (Hall *Encoding* 137). Decoding within the negotiated position, however, still leaves room for interpretation. In contrast to universally recognised or widely distributed signs, e.g. showing one’s middle finger as a rude gesture, pop performances largely operate on a connotative level. There are relatively few limits in decoding pop performances, because meanings in pop are “more conventionalized and changeable” (Hall *Encoding* 133). At the connotative level “the sign is open to new accentuations” (Hall *Encoding* 133) and therefore, allows a range of possible interpretations.

3.2 Music as representation

The Frankfurt School and Theodor Adorno in particular see music as a representation of the society in which it was created and illustrate how music and society are related. “For Adorno, all cultural products embodied some kind of ‘social meaning’, whether that belonged to the realms of ‘autonomous art’ or ‘mass culture’” (Martin 91). Musical compositions are made up of various elements and units, which Adorno refers to as ‘motives’. The relation between these individual motives and the whole composition equates the relation between the ‘individual’ and ‘society’ (Wirkin 31). Similar to a composition, the social world is made up of fragments and these fragments embody the whole. “[T]he fragments of culture may be seen as ‘expressing’ the social totality” (Martin 98) the same way the individual elements that constitute a composition reflect the “social structures and processes, conflicts and contradictions [that] are somehow presented in musical forms and structures” (Martin 99). As Adorno argues,

[i]t is not for music to stare in helpless horror at society. It fulfils its social function more precisely when it presents social problems through its own material and according to its own formal laws – problems which music contains within itself and the innermost cells of its technique. The task of music as art thus enters into a parallel relationship to the task of social theory. (Adorno 130)

According to Adorno composers and lyricists “do not confront their musical material in a totally fresh and unrestrained manner. Already they have been socialised within a particular cultural context, and – whether they see themselves as conformists or radicals – may find it hard not to display its influence” (Martin 99). Adorno interprets music as a form of language, a total supply of sounds that is constructed and shaped by society and not only the final work a composer creates, even the material he works with is socially constructed (Martin 99). “[B]y working on and reformulating the materials, the composer is creating a sort of coded representation of society” (Martin 99). Everything from scales of notes to rhythmic patterns is based on already established cultural conventions. As a result, music does not only reflect the specific meanings attached to it by composers, it predominantly serves as a representation of a society.

3.3 Music as social action

Howard Becker believes that music, as every other art form, “depends on the collaboration of a number of people” (Martin 174). As it was argued in 3.1, art is always representative of a cultural community. However, Becker does not agree that music represents “the ‘core’ of the culture” (Martin 180), but rather “the musical taste of certain groups who have occupied dominant positions in society and thus been in a position to establish and legitimise their music through their privileged access to financial, political and symbolic resources” (Martin 180). Similar to national identity, music is determined by the tastes and values of the dominant social group that is usually the white, male upper class. Music as a collective social action underlies certain conventions this dominant group agrees on. “In music, for example, such conventions range from the most general – such as the taken-for-granted convention of the diatonic scale – to particular details of the sort of sounds which are [...] accepted as appropriate [...] within various ‘styles’” (Martin 187). Conventions provide a form of orientation not only composers and performers but also for listeners.

[T]he essential point is that the ‘style’ adopted or developed by a player is a matter of accepting or rejecting certain known conventions: even in the heat of the creative moment, in mid-solo flight, so to speak, the improviser must somehow select from among all the confusing barrage of possibilities those which will sound ‘right’. (Martin 196)

In an internal dialogue the performer interprets the various alternatives from the viewer’s perspective. “What makes all this possible is [...] our capacity, as human beings, to ‘take the role of the other’” (Martin 197). Similar to authors, composers create “an imaginary (or real) person whom they are writing ‘for’ and whose anticipated responses they use as a guide at the ‘editorial moment’” (Martin 197). Thus, music as a social interaction in a common cultural context is shaped by the internal dialogue performers engage in in order to estimate the anticipated response from their audience.

3.4 Music as communication

Among social theorists, music is often interpreted as a type of language and a form of communication. Alfred Schütz argues that not only are people able to take the role of the other, they “synchronise their own experience with that of the person or persons who created the music” (Martin 199). This connection between composer, performer, and

listener is regulated through 'inner states'. Schütz differentiates between 'inner time' and 'outer time', the latter representing the "external, 'clock' time, which is always passing at a regular rate and can be precisely measured" (Martin 199). The former describes people's subjective experience of time, which are not always consistent. Sometimes one and the same amount of time seems as if it is "'flying' or passing 'slowly'" (Martin 199). Music, according to Schütz, is a "meaningful arrangement of tones in inner time" (Martin 199). Furthermore, he claims that "musical meaning can unfold only gradually, when the listener is immersed in 'the ongoing flux of the musical process'" (Martin 200). Musical meaning is only created when the inner experiences shared by the composer are re-created in the consciousness of the listener, i.e. "when the subjectivities of two or more people are brought into alignment through being synchronised" (Martin 200).

3.5 Music and identity

In his book *Taking Popular Music Seriously*, Simon Frith provides a contemporary, postmodern analysis of music in relation to identity. Identity, claims Frith, is an ethical and aesthetic process, because responding to particular styles and genres in a negative or positive way is "implicitly, an ethical agreement" (Frith 299). In performing or listening to music "we both express ourselves, our own sense of rightness, and suborn ourselves, lose ourselves, in an act of participation" (Frith 295).

Music seems to have an odd quality that even passionate activities like gardening or dog-raising lack: the simultaneous projecting and dissolving of the self in *performance*. Individual, family, gender, age, supercultural givens, and other factors hover around the musical space but can penetrate only very partially the moment of enactment of musical fellowship. (Slobin 41)

Music operates on two different levels. On a collective level, "[w]e hear things as music because their sounds obey a more or less familiar cultural logic, and for most music listeners [...] this logic is out of our control" (Frith 306), because we are influenced by our cultural conventions. On a personal level, we interact with music by integrating it into our lives. The response to music provides the means to make sense of the world we live in. "[I]n responding to a song, we are drawn, haphazardly, into emotional alliances with the performers and with the performers' other fans" (Frith 306).

Through music as well as other forms of art, we identify ourselves as belonging to a social group that shares the same interests. "Being part of a social group [...] positions the

individual in a particular way within the culture, as a member of a social class, a subculture, within a particular ethnic group, or a gender reality” (Ruud 9). However, the link between social identity and musical expression is not as straightforward as one might think. “[W]ho could possibly deny that African-American music is made by African-Americans; that the difference between male and female experience will be embedded in male and female music” (Frith 294). These essentialist claims are based on a simplified notion of identity, an identity that is relatively stable and does not undergo any changes.

Anti-essentialism is a necessary part of musical experience, a necessary consequence of music’s failure to register the separations of body and mind on which such ‘essential’ differences (between black and white, female and male, gay and straight, nation and nation) depend. (Frith 307)

Identity, however, is a process and “the decentred or postmodern self involves the subject in shifting, fragmented and multiple identities. Persons are composed not of one but of several, sometimes contradictory identities” (Barker 170).

The problem here is not just the familiar postmodern point that we live in an age of plunder in which musics made in one place for one reason can be immediately appropriated in another place for quite another reason, but also that while music may be *shaped* by the people who first make and use it, as experience it has a life on its own. (Frith 294)

Frith criticises the belief that music is just a sheer representation of a particular cultural context. He believes that a group only identifies itself as group “*through* cultural activity, through aesthetic judgment” (Frith 296). Thus, music presents an identification of both, self and others, “of the subjective in the collective” (Frith 295).

3.6 Analysing popular music

The realm of popular music is dominated by a number of discourses on the specific cultural value judgments that determine whether a song or piece of music is considered ‘popular’ or not. At the very core of these debates stands the question of authenticity. There is a general agreement among people that an indie band is more authentic than a group of boys that were cast in a television show. However, what factors lead to that judgment is relatively unclear. Machin argues that the idea of authenticity in music can be traced back to the idea of nature versus artifice. Blues, for example, “is viewed as an authentic expression of an oppressed race” (Machin 14). In contrast, a pop-boyband seems to lack “this deeper expression of feeling” (Machin 14). As early as in the 19th

century, music was seen as a form of higher communication. “The music we hear [...] is the sound of the force of the existence of the universe” (Machin 15). Even in secularised societies music is seen as a spiritual gift that allows us to share our deepest thoughts and feelings. “From this lies the logical association with musicianship and ethical qualities, being true to oneself, being sincere – qualities we might group as part of authenticity” (Machin 15).

When we assess artists this is often in terms of whether or not they produce music from the heart and whether their performance has some kind of sincerity or whether it is contrived. In the case of a boy band we perceive a look and music designed for specific markets; in other words, something that is produced, contrived, of culture rather than of the soul. This means that such acts, however catchy their tunes, however innovative they might in fact be, however finely crafted their songs, will not be taken seriously as evidence of true musical expression. (Machin 15)

Another way to identify popular music is through music as an association with subcultures (Machin 25). Subcultures combine symbols, e.g. a certain type of clothes, hairstyles, body art “to communicate a way of life” (Machin 26). Punk, for example makes use of elements from mainstream culture and appropriates them to indicate a “lack of alignment with consensus culture” (Machin 26). In punk culture, style and music become “markers of distinction and status (Machin 26) and constitute an individual’s identity. As Hesmondhalgh (274) observes, “[p]opular music is more than mere entertainment. It is a means by which people affirm, create, and nurture their individual identities”. These constructed identities are then shared with others through an individual’s appearance and style. Fashion and style are a means to categorise people into social groups. Music, therefore is “not so much about creativity but the result of shared conventions and shared definitions as people come to inhabit cultural spaces” (Machin 2).

With all the different types of music that are available in the 21st century, music has become a lifestyle choice, a way of constructing our identity and a way of differentiating ourselves from an imagined other (Machin 27). Therefore, in a way discourses about popular music are always discourses about identity.

Machin distinguishes between four main factors that have to be taken into consideration when analysing popular music: the sound, the lyrics, the album art, and the genre conventions.

3.6.1 Album iconography

Prior to the emergence of downloading platforms and music streaming services, music was either consumed in live shows, on the radio, or on records and CDs. The first thing we experience when buying a record, however, is not the sound or the music itself, it is the album art. “We are generally able to hazard a guess at what a band will sound like, through a record sleeve, or a publicity shot” (Machin 32). Therefore, album art plays an important role in the communication of meaning. Meaning in popular music is not only signified through the sounds and lyrics, but also through visual language. “[T]he iconography of virtual designs, the salience of elements, the way viewers are aligned to the people in images and levels of visual modality” (Machin 35) all contribute to the creation and communication of meaning.

The communicative purpose of visual signs is usually both connotative and denotative, both to certain extents. “[W]hether the communicative purpose of an image is primarily denotative or connotative depends to some extent on the context in which the image is used” (Machin 36). While the denotation of an image is usually rather straightforward, the connotation can be regarded as a “meaning potential that can be realised in different contexts and which is sensitive to that context” (Machin 37). There are several connotators that play a crucial role in analysing the visual images of popular music.

The most straightforward feature of album art or publicity shoots is the way the singer or the band are presented. Their postures “suggest something about the band, whether they are approachable, independent or moody, whether they are to be thought of as a unit or as individuals” (Machin 38). Authentic bands are expected to show some form of cohesion by performing in a choreographed manner while at the same time emphasising the individual character of the members. “An important part of poses is the gaze of the artist, whether or not they look at the viewer, whether they look downwards or upwards” (Machin 39). The gaze establishes a relationship between the artist and the viewer, it “creates a form of visual address – the viewer is acknowledged” (Machin 40). A photograph of a smiling person, for example, may seem as an invite to smile and hence

invoke a similar response in the viewer. If artists look away from the camera, however, the viewer is not actively addressed but “invited to simply observe [...] without any required response” (Machin 40). Both, posture and gaze are affected by how close or distant the people in the image appear to us. Closeness creates an “association of physical proximity and intimacy” (Machin 42), whereas distance signifies a form of exclusion.

Apart from the meanings communicated by people; settings, objects, and their representation play a significant role in the analysis of visual images. Certain objects, for instance, may carry a particular cultural symbolism. On a Clash cover, for example, one of the band members is “wearing a shirt that carries a Union flag. In British punk culture this symbol was worn out of irony and a sense of disrespect” (Machin 48) to the Union. Other factors such as size, colour, tone, or focus contribute to the modality, “how closely [an image] represents naturalistic truth” (Machin 50). Generally, the more abstract an image the more it is trying to communicate a concept instead of a documenting particular moment in time (Machin 51).

Colours, objects, and settings, all have a communicative function. “[T]here is an iconic element in the choice of colour” (Machin 61) and particular colours communicate particular moods. Red, for instance, is used on warning signs while colours such as blue and green have a calming effect. At the same time, colours have an associative value. “[W]e might associate yellow with sunlight and green with vegetation or we might associate white with purity and blue with truth” (Machin 61).

The last important signifier that has to be considered in the analysis of album images is the typography, the way a band’s name is written. “Artists establish a fixed way of writing their name which is then used on record sleeves, on merchandise [...] and as part of live performances” (Machin 69). The font and style of written material communicate certain values. A bold font, for example, “can be made to mean daring, assertive or solid and substantial” (Machin 70), while roundness “can come to signify ‘smooth’, ‘soft’, ‘natural’, ‘organic’, ‘maternal’, and so on” (Machin 73).

The combination of the band’s pose, the setting, the colours that are dominant in an image, and the typography has a large influence on the perception of a band’s image and how consistent it is with the sound and general appearance of the group.

3.6.2 Analysing sound

There are two separate components in sound analysis: the semiotic resources (pitch, melody and phrasing) and the sound qualities (arrangement and rhythm). “[I]n contemporary music we can think about the kinds of melodies, harmonies, instrumental sounds and vocal styles, all as carrying meanings” (Machin 100). Even the most basic feature of sounds, i.e. the pitch can evoke metaphorical associations. “Cooke shows that classical composers have used high pitch to suggest ‘up and away’ due to its energy and low pitch to suggest ‘closer, down and relaxation’” (Machin 100). Higher pitch is usually associated with feeling good, while lower pitch connotes feeling down. “[D]eep sounds are often used to symbolise gravity or danger” (Machin 100), because we are conditioned to associate them with ominous things such as thunder. While in real life, the pitch of a sound is often static, in music, we generally experience movements in pitch, i.e. ascending or descending melodies. While the movement from a low pitch to a higher pitch is associated with brightness and energy, “descending melodies are associated with income emotion” (Machin 101).

Furthermore, when analysing the arrangement of a melody, it is helpful to distinguish different levels of ‘soundscape’:

‘figure’ for the ‘focus of interest’; *‘ground’* for the ‘setting or context’; and *‘field’* for the place where observation takes place. These categories can be used to think about the way that music creates perspective and the meaning of arrangement. (Machin 115)

The voice or dominant instrument is usually the focus of interest, while the other instruments remain in the background. Figure and ground, however, may alternate throughout the course of a song. This backgrounding and foregrounding of instruments and voices in a song “has important associations with social distance” (Machin 116). Backgrounding generally requires a louder and sharper voice. In the Sex Pistols’ ‘Anarchy in the UK’, for example, Johnny Rotten almost yells the words to the song, which emphasises the distance between him and the listener. The closer we are to someone, the softer the vocals and the greater the intimacy. Female jazz singers, for example, “can be heard almost whispering lyrics. This increases the sense of intimacy and therefore the level of personal contact” (Machin 116). Furthermore, volume can be seen as connected to social status. The higher the volume, the more space it occupies. “It

is hard to imagine British punk music of the 1970s without shouted, snarling vocals. These voices were making themselves heard. They were invading space” (Machin 117).

3.6.3 Analysing lyrics

The most important aspect of a pop song, apart from its sound, are the lyrics. As Machin (77) points out, “[l]yrics are not only about artists telling stories but also communicating discourses about their identity”. Every song has an underlying discourse schema that reveals “the social values that underlie the song” (Machin 78).

Previous research on lyrics [...] had found that 83 per cent of all records were about love and therefore, [...] repetitive, manipulating only a limited range of values. But in his more detailed analysis Carey found that earlier songs tended to emphasise fate where relationships are something that simply happens to people while they wait around. In later songs couples have more control in bringing about relationships and there is a theme of the freedom to change, to make a relationship what you want it to be. In earlier songs being alone was valued negatively, whereas later it is evaluated more positively, as an opportunity to explore the self. (Machin 79)

Apart from the main storyline, it is important to identify who is represented in a song and what the main character’s actions are. By analysing whether the main characters of a song are described as individuals or a collective, for instance, “we can assess what kind of world is being signified in the songs” (Machin 85). Furthermore, by relating the characters to certain sets of values, we can identify what kinds of discourses are used to connote meaning. “[I]n the late 1970s the Sex Pistols collocated the British Queen with terms such as ‘anarchy’ and ‘fascist’” (Machin 87) as a protest against the British monarchy. The implication of two separate entities of ‘us’, the oppressed, versus ‘them’, the monarchy, the ones who dictate us, emphasises the authenticity of the Sex Pistols’ music, because they represent the marginalised and the oppressed.

Similar to the iconography of a visual image, the setting and circumstances play an important role in the lexical analysis of a song. “[D]ifferent genres of songs often make reference to certain kinds of settings. Rap might speak of ‘streets’, folk music of ‘hills’ and ‘streams’; rock music of ‘roads’” (Machin 92). Furthermore, a thorough analysis of the lyrical composition, which underlies certain genre conventions, is a crucial step in decoding a song’s meaning. For instance, while rap songs tend to have complex rhyme schemes, folk songs are usually more lenient regarding their song structure.

4 Discourses of ‘Englishness’ in popular music over the years

Seeking fame and fortune
We walk the streets of London

- The Libertines, ‘Fame and Fortune’

4.1 Forms of national discourse in popular music

4.1.1 The 2012 Olympics in London

In his book *Englishness and National Culture*, that was published in 1999, Antony Easthope (178) claims that “[c]ompared with France or Italy the cultural tradition in England can profess little in the way of painting and music”. Oskar Schmitz, a German author, even named Britain the land without music (A. Blake xi). A decade later, however, in the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Danny Boyle attempts to re-define ‘Britishness’ in a way that highlights and reinforces the role of music in British national identity. *The Guardian*’s Owen Gibson writes that

there was [...] an effort to tell a thousand small stories, amid a jumble of ideas that may or may not have translated to the expected international audience of up to 1 billion. One of the show’s recurring themes, juxtaposing Britain’s past with its present, was set in the opening two-minute film directed by Boyle and made by the BBC. It chased the Thames from its source in Gloucestershire to the heart of the stadium, to a soundtrack featuring Big Ben, the Sex Pistols, the EastEnders theme and the Clash’s London Calling. (Gibson)

The first act of the ceremony ‘Green and Pleasant Land’ was set in a pastoral landscape, depicting rural Britain “with real horses tilling real soil and gangs of country folk playing cricket and football amid water wheels and cottages billowing smoke” (Gibson). A children’s choir performed the anthems of the four nations, before the animals were herded off and “hell broke loose” (Gibson). To the almost threatening sound of drums the oak tree from the centre of the pastoral scene rose from the ground to make place for the industrial machinery that destroyed the green and pleasant land and transformed Britain’s landscape forever. This “sequence entitled ‘Pandaemonium’ dramatized the disappearance of the agrarian, pastoral past into what Boyle acknowledges as ‘a lot of destruction involved in the Industrial Revolution’” (Morra 21).

Following this dark depiction of Britain's history, we arrive in the present. In the segment named 'Happy and Glorious', Her Majesty The Queen herself arrives in London accompanied by the famous British actor Daniel Craig as James Bond. The ceremony continues with a homage to British institutions such as the British Army, RN, RAF as well as a full sequence celebrating the National Health Service, one of the last institutional structures representing the true British union. "[W]hen people talk of the National Health Service whether in Scotland, Wales or England people think of the British National Health Service: here national is unquestionably 'British'" (Jeffery 113).

The final sequence 'Frankie and June say ... thanks Tim' is devoted to British popular culture and popular music in particular. "For Boyle, this popular music culture epitomizes much more than recent expression; it represents and articulates the very fundamental, authentic identity of the modern nation itself" (Morra 22). The 86-track playlist of the opening ceremony features artists such as David Bowie, The Beatles, New Order and Sex Pistols as the "successors to the legacy of Blake, the Industrial Revolution, and their prophetic origins in Shakespeare" (Morra 22).

By invoking moments of change and revolution to enforce a narrative of cultural continuity, the show's creators [...] suggest that the most subversive element of the event is to be found in this very inclusion of popular signifiers within a nationalist celebration. Redefining national spectacle to prioritize the involvement of 'ordinary people', the show positioned the national popular at the centre of a defining nineteenth-century narrative of modern Britishness. (Morra 22)

The 'Britishness' that is portrayed in the opening ceremony is not that of an imperialist nation, it represents the culture of the ordinary folk: children's literature, Mr. Bean, David Beckham and popular music from the 1960s up until now. As former prime minister David Cameron claimed, the London Olympics are not run by the state, they are run by the people (qtd. in Lyall). However, the contemporary Britain "is inextricably bound into the history of the British Empire" (Morra 23). By acknowledging Britain's past and celebrating its present, Boyle provides a holistic view of contemporary 'Britishness' "in terms of individual creativity and initiative, meritocracy, the NHS, multiculturalism, and an enthusiastic internationalism ensured by the Olympic context" (Morra 20).

4.1.2 Pop's 'Englishness'

Martin Cloonan, in his article "State of the nation: 'Englishness,' pop, and politics in the mid-1990s", investigates the relationship between 'Englishness' and popular music. This relationship, according to Cloonan, has always been characterised by a certain ambiguity and fluidity. He distinguishes between five variations of pop's 'Englishness'. The first category (i) *Ambivalent Englishness*, is what Cloonan (55) calls a "fascinated revulsion". Even though it's a preoccupation with 'Englishness', it is not a necessarily a celebration of it. The second category is rather straightforward, (ii) *Overt Nationalism*, which predominantly includes far right groups. (iii) *Hip Little Englishness* lies somewhere between the first two categories and describes a more active and reactionary 'Englishness'. An example for this category is the former The Smiths singer Morrissey. "Throughout his career, Morrissey has continually commented on national obsessions such as the Moors Murders [...] and subcultures" (Cloonan 55). His solo work increasingly appealed to a far-right audience which lead to the accusation that Morrissey is racist.

This accusation first surfaced with the Smiths' "Panic", which included the line "Burn down the disco," which some interpreted as being against black music. Comments by Morrissey such as "to get on Top of the Pops these days, one has to be, by law, black" and 'the phenomenon of the National Front interests me' furthered the claims. (Cloonan 55f.)

As Cloonan (56) points out, it is important to put these things into perspective and despite these quotes alluding some form of racism, they are not straightforward enough to accuse Morrissey of being racist.

The fourth category Cloonan mentions is (iv) *Hip Big Englishness*, with Billy Bragg as it's central member. "Bragg is the paradigmatic 'Big Englishness' artist and is part of the folk troubadour tradition, which has very deep roots" (Cloonan 56). It is an 'Englishness' that celebrates both, nationalism and internationalism. "Bragg is, in many ways, the modern manifestation of this view. While very aware on international issues [...] his work returns again and again to themes of England and its economic and political malaise" (Cloonan 56). The last category is that of (v) *Nonarticulated Englishness*, which includes genres such as jungle, techno and rave where lyrics are not always important. The form of 'Englishness' expressed by these genres can be seen in the "the lifestyle they encompass" (Cloonan 57).

4.2 The British Invasion (1960s)

Prior to the 1960s, the musical landscape in Britain was mainly characterised by two styles: folk music and the music hall. Folk songs usually told stories of a vanished past, of rural lifestyles that were obliterated by industrialisation and urbanisation (Simonelli 2). The other tradition the Victorian music halls were established in the 1850s when “entrepreneurs started to build specifically designed halls specifically for entertaining a drinking public with popular music” (Simonelli 3).

People sat at tables, beer arrived in large ewers, the audience talked back to the performers and the performers answered back to the audience. Sing-alongs were popular. The audience was mainly a working-class and lower middle-class group, made up of factory hands, artisans, tradesmen, shopkeepers, and occasionally their wives. (Simonelli 3)

In the 1920s, an improved standard of living and the influence of American culture changed the structure and values of the British society and when American jazz appeared in Britain, the Americanisation of British culture seemed inescapable. Jazz was quickly taken up by British artists and incorporated into their music. “The music came from America, but it became identifiably British in that it challenged and supported the pursuit of the classless society, mastered British rhetoric” (Simonelli 8) and appealed to the British public, particularly younger demographics.

By the time The Beatles performed their first shows, Britain was on the verge of a cultural revolution. “The Beatles and their contemporaries [...] are much more than musical talents; they represent a social and cultural revolution that ushered in the Swinging Sixties and ‘modern Britain’” (Morra 11). There was something distinctively ‘British’ about the band, despite the undeniable American influence on their music. Some writers point it down to the influence of the old music halls while others claim that “rather than looking back, they were creating contemporary equivalents to music-hall songs” (Laing 23).

Morra provides an analysis of ‘Englishness’ in The Beatles’ most famous songs. “In some of their more wistful and nostalgic songs, the Beatles *advertise* an ambivalence about idealizing the past, either as personal experience or as a manifestation of a vanished, idyllic England” (Morra 159). “There are places I remember / All my life though some have changed”, sings John Lennon in their song ‘In My Life’. These places remind him of old lovers, but “these memories lose their meaning / When I think of love as something

new”. Despite the nostalgic glance back into the past, the song ends “by acknowledging the inevitability of change and the greater relevance of contemporary, individual experience” (Morra 159).

Their album *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* artistically combines old and new musical forms in an engagement with contemporary British national culture.

Invoking traditional musical signifiers of Britishness, the album also suggests that by 1967 these signifiers constituted both the music hall of previous generations and the very popular culture with which the name of the Beatles had become so strongly associated. (Morra 160)

In creating an alter-ego, a fictional performance persona, the *Sgt. Pepper* band, The Beatles distance themselves from their received perception and themes of nostalgia that appear throughout the album. Even though these themes are still communicated, it is done through an artificial and distant voice (Morra 160). In contrast to the rest of the album, the very last song ‘A Day in the Life’ reinforces “a return to a familiar, received reality” (Morra 160). Declared as their “single finest song” (Fleming), it deals with the ordinary life of a person growing up in Liverpool. “Woke up, fell out of bed / Dragged a comb across my head” (The Beatles ‘A Day in the Life’). Despite describing an ordinary day, the continuous chord changes and changes in lyrical themes signify “a much more complex musical voice informed by a much more complex English reality” (Morra 161). In rejecting and at the same time resorting to the past, *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* is extraordinarily English and underlines the band’s “role in defining the nation” (Cloonan 48).

The second 1960s band that is considered to play a crucial part in the formation of modern English identity, is Ray Davies’ band The Kinks. No other British band “catered to stereotypical notions of ‘Englishness’ [more than] the Kinks” (Baxter-Moore 145). The band are “often depicted as the founders of something of a canon of ‘Englishness’ in pop” (Cloonan 48), celebrating everything English from the “ruralness of ‘The Village Green Preservation Society’” (Baxter-Moore 149) to the urban life in ‘Dead End Street’. “Preserving the old ways from being abused / Protecting the new ways for me and for you” (The Kinks, ‘The Village Green Preservation Society’). ‘The Village Green Preservation Society’ emphasizes distinctively British institutions that are in danger of being replaced by American mass culture: “We are the Custard Pie Appreciation

Consortium / God save the George Cross and all those who were awarded them” (The Kinks, ‘The Village Green Preservation Society’).

Their album *Arthur (Or the Decline and Fall of the British Empire)* “dramatizes a tension between the past and the present by invoking different cultural signifiers of English identity, experience, and tradition” (Morra 165). The focus of the album does not lie in portraying ‘little Englishness’, but in relating past experiences, e.g. the decline of the British Empire and the end of WWII, to the contemporary British voice (Morra 165). “How is your life and your Shangri-la / And your long lost land of Hallelujah / And your hope and glory has passed you by” (The Kinks, ‘Arthur’), sings Davies and paints an extremely dark and pessimistic picture of the future of his generation.

As pointed out by Morra, this darkness and tension is reflected in the musical style of the album. “*Arthur* uses a variety of musical styles from different historical moments, mediation between folk and music hall, country and hard rock” (Morra 166f.), reflecting an uncertainty “about the culture language of this nation” (Morra 167). The album places Britain’s confidence and greatness in the past. “The lyrics of ‘Arthur’ refer both to a vanished Britain and to an outdated musical tradition: a ‘long-lost land of Hallelujah’ and ‘hope and glory’ has passed by” (Morra 167).

Another moment of ‘Englishness’ in The Kinks’ music is their engagement with working class life. “‘Dead End Street’ began a series of songs that spoke with an authority of the working-class existence” (Baxter-Moore 160).

What are we living for?
Two-roomed apartment on the second floor
No money coming in,
The rent collector’s knocking in, trying to get in.
We are strictly second class,
We don’t understand
(The Kinks, ‘Dead End Street’)

While both, The Beatles and The Kinks romanticise and idealise the imperial past, The Kinks are more pessimistic in their depiction of present Britain. Both bands, however “are held to encompass a form of Englishness” (Cloonan 47) and changed the British musical landscape forever.

4.3 No future? (1970s)

During the mid-1970s, the Queen's reign approached its 25th anniversary, which "offered the nation a chance to forget gloomy headlines and enjoy a day of national celebration" (Kennedy et al. 182). The previous decade had been characterised by recession and unemployment and "[t]he UK was in such dire economic straits that the country had to get a loan from the International Monetary Fund after the value of sterling plunged" (Kennedy et al. 182). The government's need to cut spending led to a large number of people without jobs, particularly in the North and "[t]he loss of jobs in the old industries of Wales and Scotland made many people in these countries think they would do better on their own" (Corbishley et al. 400). The Queen's Silver Jubilee provided a silver lining in those grim times.

The celebrations began on 6 February 1977, the anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. The palace and the government together had planned an ambitious series of events and tours for the jubilee year. The Queen declared that unity was the theme of the Jubilee, and that she wanted to be seen by as many of her subjects as possible, both in the UK and around the Commonwealth. (Kennedy et al 182).

In May 1977, after touring the Commonwealth countries, the Queen started a three-month tour around the UK. In a speech to the Houses of Parliament in 1977, the Queen not only acknowledged the changes Britain had undergone in the past 25 years, but highlighted the importance of the Union. "The problems of progress, the complexities of modern administration, [...] these among other things have helped to revive an awareness of historic national identities" (*Royal*). She continues that "this Jubilee is a time to remind ourselves of the benefits which union has conferred, at home and in our international dealings" (*Royal*) and calls the members of the United Kingdom to "draw closer together" (*Royal*).

The highlight of the Silver Jubilee celebrations was a procession to St Paul's Cathedral on 7 June. With over 1 million spectators the Queen and the Royal Family progress to St. Paul's after lighting a bonfire in Windsor Great Park (Kennedy et al. 183). "On 9 June came the final event of the Jubilee celebrations, with a river procession along the Thames, from Greenwich to Lambeth" (Kennedy et al 183). After arriving in Lambeth, the Queen was brought to Buckingham Palace by carriage and ended the celebrations by appearing on the balcony to the celebration of cheering crowds outside the palace. People were

celebrating all over the UK and “approximately 6,000 street parties were held in London alone” (Adams 474).

However, “not all of Britain was in a mood to celebrate” (Kennedy et al 183). The United Kingdom was still deeply divided with the ongoing Civil War in Northern Ireland and nationalism at its peak in Wales and Scotland. “What was celebrated was an edited, English version of what it was to be British” (Savage 352). And suddenly, an anti-Jubilee protest emerged, led by no other than the English punk band the Sex Pistols. They could not have released their single ‘God Save the Queen’ at a better time.

We took the Queen’s portrait, by Cecil Beaton, we printed it just like a silk screen image [...], we filled in some colors, but we put a safety pin through her nose, and we wrote on the side “God Save the Queen, she ain’t no human being.” We basically didn’t molly-coddle her, we didn’t put her up on a pedestal, we were basically saying “this icon is a joke.” [...] That was punk rock, and we wrote the song and equally painted a portrait, our version of the Queen, and got it on the front page of the Daily Mirror, on Queen’s Silver Jubilee day! (McLaren qtd. in Adams 471).

The song, despite being banned by most radio stations, climbed up the charts, reaching number one in the *NME* charts. The official *BBC* charts, however, only ranked it number two, which led to accusations that the charts had been altered in order to prevent it from reaching the first spot. The controversy culminated when “McLaren and Virgin came up with the wheeze of having the Pistols play on a boat cruising the Thames, a parody of the Queen’s waterside procession” (Spencer). ‘God Save the Queen’ was a rejection of an English nationalism characterised by a monarchical and imperialist superiority. “God save history, God save your mad parade”, mocks Johnny Rotten over ragged guitar-riffs. The sound of ‘God Save the Queen’ was like a “flash of leather and loud noise; there was the return of the repressed, threatening violence; [...] the ultimate statement of pop’s everlasting present, just at the moment when the masses were celebrating a past” (Savage 355).

The Sex Pistols claimed that there was “no future in England’s dreaming” (Sex Pistols, ‘God Save the Queen’). There was nothing to look forward to, so the country decided to look backwards. “This dominance of history [...] was, for many punks, a problem” (Adams 475) and led to a symbolic declaration of war against dominant cultures. “London calling to the faraway towns / Now war is declared and battle come down” sings Joe

Strummer in The Clash's 'London Calling'. "London calling to the underworld / Come out of the cupboard, you boys and girls" (The Clash, 'London Calling'). The song "captures the punks' desperate, somewhat theatrical yearning to fight the kind of pitched battle their parents had fought 30 years earlier" (Queenan). The phrase 'London Calling' was previously used "as a verbal beacon of hope by the BBC World Service during the dark days of World War II" (Queenan). The clear distinction in times of war between 'us', the nation, and 'them', the nation's enemies, is not apparent for post-war generations, which is why it "had to be constructed from within" (Adams 475). 'We' are the young working class, growing up among "bombsites, council blocks, graffiti and grime" (Adams 470), which is juxtaposed with high culture, the Royal Family, Big Ben and London as cultural centre of Britain. Punk Rock "facilitated a reframing and re-imagining of English culture" (Adams 469) from an outsider's perspective. The sabotage of the Queen's Silver Jubilee provided an opportunity for socially as well as geographically remote individuals that are usually suppressed and excluded by the dominant social group, to become part of a movement that even made newspaper headlines (Adams 476).

Towards the end of the 1970s, however, the rebellious spirit of punk dissolved into a monetarisation and appropriation by mainstream culture. "On 4 May 1979 [Margaret Thatcher] became Britain's first woman Prime Minister" (Corbishley et al. 392) and the victory of the Conservatives marked the end of a period of economic recession and social unrest that sustained the anti-movement of punk culture.

The very freedom which Punk had not only sung about, but enacted in every possible way, was now hijacked by the New Right to mean something quite different: an inequality that was not only institutionalized but installed as a ruling cultural and social principle. (Savage 541)

Despite the sudden death of punk in 1979, it had a lasting cultural impact, not only by paving the way for new musical forms, but by giving a voice to a marginalised and excluded part of society. The 'little Englishness' that is captured by bands such as Sex Pistols and The Clash, will later influence a whole new generation of English musicians and punk remains an important part of England's cultural heritage.

4.4 The Britpop era (1990s)

4.4.1 Cool Britannia

The win of the Conservatives in 1979 marks the beginning of an era of “radical change” (Tinwell 124). Thatcher’s political agenda that “was built on monetarism and individualism” (Tinwell 126), encouraged privatisation of state-owned industries, control of public spending and the defeat of inflation (Heath, Jowell and Curtice 32). Attempts to erase the boundaries between ‘upper’, ‘middle’ and ‘lower’ classes were unsuccessful and resulted in an increased gap between the rich and the poor. During the Thatcher era, “[t]wenty per cent of people were placed under the poverty line with those better off enjoying up to nine times more income than those worse off” (Tinwell 125). Unemployment hit a record high and the polar separation contributed to an increase in racial incidents, because particularly young blacks were affected by unemployment.

A growing number of people were frustrated with Thatcher’s politics and used popular culture as a means “to communicate the strong divide in political and public opinion on issues such as class, race, gender, monetarism and Thatcher’s persona” (Tinwell 126). Left musicians in particular, pursued an anti-Thatcherist agenda. In 1988, Morrissey released a song titled ‘Margaret on the Guillotine’, in which he gives voice to the rage of the working class. “The kind of people / Have a wonderful dream / Margaret on the guillotine”. Despite the fact that Thatcher’s government progressively reduced art funds, popular music flourished at that time (Horton).

Even years later, when Thatcher’s death was announced in April 2013, a large group of people still rejected Thatcher and her politics. The song ‘Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead’ from the popular 1930s musical *The Wizard Of Oz* re-entered the British charts shortly after her death. “This song was performed [...] to celebrate the demise of the antagonist character ‘The Wicked Witch of the East’: hence, this was a clear communication that Thatcherism was regarded as the public’s enemy” (Tinwell 130f.). Despite the song entering the charts, the BBC decided not to play it out of respect to the grieving family and friends. “When the song should have been played, the BBC news reporter Sinead Garvan articulated how the song had come to be in the charts and, importantly, why people had wished to do this” (Tinwell 131). ‘Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead’

exemplifies the importance of popular culture as a way for the marginalised and neglected social groups to communicate their opinion.

After nearly two decades of political conservatism and traditionalism under Margaret Thatcher and John Major, “a deep transformation began to take place” (Navarro 232). With Tony Blair as the new leader of Labour, the party changed its direction “towards a more central electorate” (Navarro 232). The aim of Blair’s campaign for the 1997 elections was to highlight a new, modern form of ‘Britishness’ “that connected the widely frustrated British voters with the image and principles of what New Labour was meant to be” (Navarro 232). With his slogan ‘New Labour, New Britain’, he distanced himself from the conservative Thatcherite past to promote a rebranding of Britain’s image. Britain, in his vision, was a young, modern and vibrant country.

A crucial part of this rebranding was to appeal to a young demographic. While Thatcher’s government showed a hostile attitude towards popular art and music, “Blair identified very publicly with youth culture, being photographed with Noel Gallagher of Oasis, Bono, Bob Geldof and sometimes even holding a guitar” (Huq 94). His opponent, John Major, on the other hand, “won headlines [...] by his inability to give the names of the five [Spice Girls]” (Huq 98).

The negative campaigning of the Conservatives provided a stark contrast to the youthful and engaging appearance of Blair. “The Conservatives opened by targeting potential switchers with warnings of what life would be like five years on” (Butler and Kavanagh 151) from now. In their video campaigns, New Labour were portrayed as “a tree without roots [...] It had ditched everything it stood for” (Butler and Kavanagh 152) and they ended with the slogan “You can only be sure with the Conservatives” (Butler and Kavanagh 152). However, these warnings and depictions of New Labour as a threat to the United Kingdom by the Conservatives were not nearly as successful as Blair’s campaign.

Blair’s vision of a new national identity was encapsulated in the slogan ‘Cool Britannia’. “The phrase [...] was first used in 1967 as the title of a track by *Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band* in a satirical portrait of Harold Wilson’s government” (Navarro 232). New Labour, however, used it to support their idea of a young and modern Britain. Blair’s campaign

“was more about conveying impressions of newness, change and youth to Generation X voters than about communicating its formal content” (Butler and Kavanagh 152).

Throughout the campaign, Blair was emphasising his identification with popular culture: “I am [...] from the rock and roll generation, the Beatles, colour TV, all the rest of it, that’s where I come from” (Blair qtd. in Huq 95). His ability to address the ‘Zeitgeist’ of the decade eventually led to a landslide victory for New Labour and his election as Prime Minister. “It was well known that popstars such as Noel Gallagher of *Oasis* were invited to Downing Street, [...] aimed at making the government likeable” (Navarro 233), which proved to be a successful strategy.

It was a fruitful symbiosis on both ends. As Noel Gallagher points out in the documentary *Live Forever: The Rise and Fall of Brit Pop*: “I think a lot of young people had accepted a conservative rule and dole culture and daytime telly [...] and going to the odd football match as that was it. Britain was dead in the 80s” and New Labour were seen as a force of change. Oasis’ former manager Alan McGee was open about his political agenda and stated that “[i]f I can get a million kids to vote Labour because Noel and Liam have endorsed them then I’ve done my bit” (qtd. in Navarro 235). Noel Gallagher himself took advantage of the opportunity to promote New Labour when Oasis won at the 1996 Brit Awards. In his acceptance speech, he said that “[t]here are seven people in this room who are giving a little bit of hope to young people in this country. That is me, our kid, Bonehead, Guigs, Alan White, Alan McGee and Tony Blair” (qtd. in *Live Forever: The Rise and Fall of Brit Pop*).

Popular music played a crucial role in Blair’s rise to power and in exchange, Blair established a Creative Industries Unit and Task Force, which function it was to promote the creative industries. He invited Alan McGee to become part of this task force and implement strategies to utilise and market popular culture (Navarro 234f.). By promoting national symbols such as the Union Jack, popular culture was commodified under New Labour. This “marketisation of the cultural aspects [...] was rendered possible because the emotional connotations of particular national emblems” (Navarro 243). Britpop, under New Labour, became an essential part in the intensification of these emotional connotations and consequently, the distribution of nationalist commodities. Therefore, it played an important role in the establishment of a new ‘Britishness’ in the 1990s.

4.4.2 Rekindling the 1960s spirit

It might have looked like an innocent pop single, but what Blur released 20 years ago [...] was more like an act of war. Girls & Boys camouflaged itself well: on the surface it was a gaudy tale of holidaymakers trading STDs in Kavos, recounted over trashy electro. But bubbling away underneath was the culmination of a plan [...] to halt the pervading Americanisation of guitar music and reassert some belief into a British scene suffering from an identity crisis. (Jonze)

Thousands of fans gathered around the world to mourn Kurt Cobain's death in April 1994. The frontman of Nirvana, rock's most influential band of the 90s, is believed to have taken his life on 05 April 1994 at the age of 27. While bands such as Nirvana and Soundgarden had dominated the early 90s music scene, Cobain's death marked the end of grunge and left a void that would soon be replaced by a very English phenomenon. "In 1995, [...] Nirvana was gone, and Nirvana – whatever people thought of Kurt [...] and the band – represented grunge in the eyes of the world" (Henderson 99).

The English rock band Blur had already been mildly successful in the early 1990s with one of their songs 'There's No Other Way' reaching the top ten of the British charts in 1991. However, their success "had [...] been made to look irrelevant by the visceral force of bands such as Nirvana" (Jonze). Damon Albarn, Blur's frontman, however, was confident success would come: "If punk was about getting rid of hippies, then I'm getting rid of grunge" (Albarn qtd. in Jonze). Similar to the 1960s, when the British music scene was swamped by American rock'n'roll, it is perhaps no surprise that 1990s bands were rekindling the 1960s spirit to "reassert some belief into a British scene suffering from an identity crisis" (Jonze).

In 1993, *Select* magazine featured a new generation of British bands with Suede's Brett Anderson against a Union Jack background on the front cover. The issue was headlined "Yanks Go Home" (Hesmondhalgh 274), proclaiming a new era of British music. Suede were amongst the leading bands of that new British Invasion:

When we started we were trying to play songs about twisted English lives to rooms full of people obsessed with Pearl Jam [...] I wouldn't say we started Britpop because the Beatles, Bowie and the Kinks did that. But I think we were crucial in opening people's ears to British music again. (Anderson qtd. in Scott 109)

The sound of Britpop was very hybrid. Bands such as Suede found one of their main influences in David Bowie, “especially Bowie’s work from the first half of the 1970s, such as *Hunky Dory*” (Scott 110). Blur’s sound is inspired by The Who, The Kinks, Pink Floyd and The Jam (Cloonan 62) and Blur’s biggest rivals Oasis were constantly compared to The Beatles. Noel Gallagher, the main creative force behind the band, affirms that “[w]e can never remember life without the Beatles” (qtd. in Scott 112). In a thorough analysis of some of Oasis’ most popular songs, Scott (113) identifies a “common pop language” that is shared by the two bands.

While Scott dismantles criticism of fraud and plagiarism on the side of Oasis, he highlights how the sound of The Beatles inspired Oasis to create their own distinct musical style. “Liam’s and Noel’s voices are both Lennon-like”, claims Scott (113). However, in comparison to The Beatles, “Oasis are very much a live band” (Scott 113). The Beatles are mostly considered a studio band, particularly after 1966. Oasis, on the other hand, “can effectively re-create their sound outside of a studio” (Scott 113). Their songs draw upon a large number of influences from mid-70s punk to David Bowie and T. Rex. ‘Cigarettes and Alcohol’, for example, shows an outstanding similarity to ‘Get it On’ by T. Rex. Their song ‘Roll with It’ from *(What’s the Story) Morning Glory?* resembles The Beatles’ ‘Ticket to Ride’ and the piano figure in ‘Don’t Look Back in Anger’ “may remind us of ‘Golden Slumbers’ or John Lennon’s ‘Imagine’” (Scott 114).

Lyrically, Oasis provide numerous references to The Beatles. In ‘Supersonic’, Gallagher sings “You can sail with me in my yellow submarine” a reference to the famous Beatles song. “‘Take Me Away’ quotes ‘I’d like to be under the sea’ from ‘Octopus Garden’” (Scott 118) and the most famous line in ‘Don’t Look Back in Anger’, “So I start a revolution from my bed / Cause you said the brains I had went to my head”, is a direct quote from “a tape of Lennon dictating his memoirs” (Scott 118).

The ‘Englishness’ of Britpop bands is not only apparent in their influences from the past. At the height of the Britpop phenomenon, the *Independent on Sunday* “listed the British music industry as number two in its list of ‘Ten things Britain can still be proud of’” (Cloonan 50). Despite being labelled Britpop, however, most bands portrayed distinctively English values. “Britpop should really have been called Engpop because, with few exceptions [...] the bands were English” (Scott 103). Adding to the confusion,

Britpop does not describe one particular genre. “Britpop is best understood [...] as a discourse: a group of utterances and statements that have a significant role in organizing and understanding of the social realm” (Hesmondhalgh 276). The discourse of ‘Englishness’ in Britpop operates on several levels of exclusion, which are identified by Cloonan in his article “State of the nation: ‘Englishness,’ pop, and politics in the mid-1990s”.

The frequent conflation of Britain and England in pop and pop commentaries has a long history, as is shown by Hughie Charles and Ross Parker’s 1939 song ‘There’ll Always Be an England.’ This talks of the colors ‘red, white, and blue’ – which are actually the colors of the *British* Union flag. (Cloonan 58)

When talking about pop music, the terms ‘British’ and ‘English’ are often used interchangeably and pop bands such as Blur “have been viewed as representing both [England and Britain], but, for example, the Scottish bands Runrig and the Proclaimers could never be put forward as being British” (Cloonan 58).

One of the main characteristics of ‘Englishness’ in pop is a rejection of modern life and a nostalgic sentiment that are not only apparent in the recreation of the sound of earlier bands, as it was shown with Oasis and The Beatles, but in an active celebration of the past. On *Modern life is rubbish*, Blur sing of a Sunday “before [...] shopping and football matches” (Cloonan 63) where “You meet an old soldier and talk of the past”, about “The England he knew [that] is no more” (Blur, ‘Sunday Sunday’). This Orwellian longing for an idealised past is one of the main characteristics of pop ‘Englishness’.

Furthermore, the rejection of modernity is also a rejection of modern music. Blur’s songs represent “a throwback to an earlier age of songs, rather than to the diverse texts that are the basis of techno and jungle” (Cloonan 62). Despite the growing impact of club culture in Britain, electronic dance music is completely ignored in the canon of ‘Englishness’. As Hesmondhalgh (278) points out, “[t]he Britpop history of rock saw British musical identity as not forget out of a cosmopolitan interaction with other cultures, but as made up of a limited number of essential national characteristics and musical traditions”. Therefore, cosmopolitan dance music was not seen as articulating those essential national characteristics and was largely omitted from the discourse of ‘Englishness’.

4.5 Hooray for the 21st century – the legacy of Britpop

When Oasis released *Be Here Now* in 1997, Britpop had, according to Alan McGee, “just run out of steam” (qtd. in Barker). The increased commercialisation of ‘Cool Britannia’ eventually led to a rejection of the Britpop label, even by its former members and while the turn of the century marks the end of the Britpop era, new bands soon began to emerge and caused what is often referred to as a ‘second wave of Britpop’.

In a 2008 article for *The Telegraph*, Neil McCormick asks “Is this the return of Britpop?”. The UK charts were dominated by British bands such as Keane, Kaiser Chiefs and Razorlight and even though their success reached nowhere near the status of Oasis or Blur, “they write songs people love to sing, [...] that sound fantastic on the radio” (McCormick). A few years later, in 2006, “popular music fans in Great Britain once again felt a sense of energetic generational turnover, as a host of young rock bands, like the Arctic Monkeys or Kaiser Chiefs, rode waves of hype [...] to the top of sales charts” (Sutherland and Straw 143).

Similar to the Britpop bands, the new generation of British rock seeks inspiration in the past. However, “[u]nlike Oasis and Blur, the Kaiser Chiefs look back to the 1970s, rather than the 1960s, for their musical models” (Collinson 168). The Kaiser Chiefs’ sound is influenced by David Bowie, The Stranglers, Madness and XTC and “[t]he band’s sonic nostalgia is buttressed by references in lyrics, interviews and promotional material to Leeds United Football Club and its glory days of the 1970s” (Collinson 169).

One of the most successful bands of the late 2000s are Alex Turner’s Arctic Monkeys. Turner’s lyrical sophistication and witty lines catapulted the band to the top of the contemporary British music scene.

By drawing on the routines and rituals of everyday northern English life, routines and rituals that are commonplace in other parts of the British Isles, Turner is working in the tradition of the Kinks’ Ray Davies who took similar everyday ‘images, sentiments and feelings’ and ‘arranged them in such a way that their reference to British society is both unmistakable and highly novel’. (Collinson 170f.)

Alex Turner and Pete Doherty from the Libertines were seen as pioneers of a new generation of sophisticated songwriters. “Doherty has [...] been credited with bringing literariness back to English pop music” (Fallon 256) and Turner has been said to

“glimpsing the same playing field as Jarvis, Nick Cave, Patti Smith et al. The kind of artists who treat this stuff as a full-time job, rather than a mere craft” (Wilkinson). Turner’s songs are full of references from The Police in ‘When The Sun Goes Down’ (“I’ve seen him with girls of the night / And he told Roxanne to put on her red light”) to Shakespeare in ‘I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor’ (“Oh, there ain’t no love, no Montagues or Capulets / Just banging tunes and Dj sets”).

The cult around the Monkeys even went as far as that “Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, was embarrassed publicly by his inability to name any of the songs on the Arctic Monkeys’ first album” (Collinson 169). Apart from their lyrical finesse, the Monkeys’ success can be tracked back to their authenticity. Turner’s strong Sheffield accent connotes “a particular type of urban and authentic working-class Englishness” (Collinson 171). While prior to the acknowledgement of popular music as a signifier in the formation of national identity it was seen as admirable to acquire a standard accent, the frequent use of localised forms of English in popular music has changed the perception of non-standard accents and dissolved the “hierarchy of English speech” (Featherstone 150).

The musical heritage of 1990s Britpop can be seen in their influence on indie bands from the early 2000s. In an interview with *BBC* Kaiser Chiefs vocalist Ricky Wilson states:

[Britpop] gave me so much pride to be British [...] There’s some great bands that have come out of America and Australia, but we don’t have to rely on them to give us our music, to fill our charts. The British have always done it best, from Franz Ferdinand back to the Beatles. (qtd. in Collinson 168)

Continuing the tradition of Britpop, contemporary bands make use of a variety of narratives and images that celebrate their ‘Englishness’ and as Tom Meighan of Kasabian observes: “Oasis did the job ten years ago and now it’s us” (qtd. in Collinson 165).

5 The Libertines – The boys in the band

And they all get them out for
The boys in the band
They twist and the shout for
For the boys in the band

- The Libertines, 'Boys in the Band'

The Libertines are an English indie rock band centred around the friendship and song writing partnership between Peter Doherty and Carl Barât, both born and brought up in England. Their interests revolve around music, e.g. The Smiths and The Jam, classic British sitcoms as well as literature and poetry (Thornton and Sargent 16f.). Their approach to music and particularly their relationship with their fans will have a long-lasting influence on the British music scene. Peter and Carl are not only musicians, but poets and their songs provide an insight into the life and problems of contemporary England. Praised by critics for their exceptional lyrics and raw energy, they have been called “the most important group to have emerged since the fall of Britpop” (Harris 377).

What is notable about the band, that furthermore includes bassist John Hassall and drummer Gary Powell, is their early use of the internet as a means to spread their visions of a utopian England and encourage fans to share their poetry. Their attempts to break down barriers with fans included spontaneous gigs in their apartment and excessive nights out that sometimes even resulted in them getting matching ‘Libertine’ tattoos together with their fans.

Their ‘Englishness’ is apparent everywhere, from their music to their style and “The Libertines were perhaps the last successful band to position themselves as ostensibly British” (Jonze). Receptions from critics are overwhelmingly positive when it comes to their music. Stephen Dowling from *BBC News*, for example, writes that “The Libertines kick-started a British music revival with their Jam-influenced ramshackle rock – and won notoriety for the tumultuous relationship between front men Pete Doherty and Carl Barat”. *NME* calls them “one of the most exciting, chaotic rock’n’roll groups of the past 20 years” and “one of the most inspiring and influential British bands of the 21st century” (*NME* The Libertines).

In a 2007 essay about the musical legacy of the Libertines, Anthony Thornton explores their influence on the bands that followed:

[P]erhaps the thing that most marks these bands out as post-Libertines is their attitude towards the fans. Traditionally, bands see fans as a necessary evil: they make sure that once the show's over there is an invite-only aftershow before taking themselves off to the hotel. "The social aspect is so important," McGee [their manager] says. "The Libertines never differentiated between an NME journalist or a fan – everyone was the same." (Thornton)

In their book *The Libertines: Bound Together* Thornton and Sargent document the story of the two musical geniuses Doherty and Barât from their early beginnings playing shows in their shared flat in East London to the band's great success and decline.

Their short musical career before they split up lasted from the late 1990s to the mid 2000s. In this time span they released two studio albums with Britain's largest independent label *Rough Trade Records*. The label that also released records for the Strokes (the American version of The Libertines), helped them to become one of the most renown bands of the early 2000s.

However, even more so than for their music, the band were known for making newspaper headlines through drug problems, theft and most of all their difficult relationship with each other. They were true 'libertines', freely indulging in the pleasures the world has to offer with a live fast, die young attitude.

Almost twenty years after their first show together, the Libertines start another UK tour. After "an impossibly circuitous route of addictions, arrests, breakups and the occasional inglorious, cash-oriented reformation" (Nicolson), Pete and Carl seem to have buried their issues and moved on. Their shows may be less dysfunctional, but still energetic and their song writing has, if anything, only become better throughout the years.

There will be those who miss the intimacy and melodrama of the bad old days, or lament the sight of corporate hospitality lounges sully the Arcadian dream-realm, but on the whole, you'd have to say the Libertines reunion has been a quixotic triumph, over themselves as much as anything else. (Nicolson)

6 Aspects of ‘Englishness’ in the music, lyrics and iconography of The Libertines

Have we enough to keep it together?

Or do we just keep on pretending (and hope our luck is never ending)

- The Libertines, ‘Can’t Stand Me Now’

The Libertines’ sound, their raunchy post-punk with a poetic wit, played a major role in defining a new musical genre, that of indie rock. Definitions of indie rock are surprisingly diverse and range from a musical genre, to a subculture, a particular way of life or just the opposite of ‘mainstream’ culture. “Defining a category like indie is not only problematic for scholars who seek to understand culture; it is also difficult for community members themselves” (Fonarow 25). As Fonarow observes, there are no clear boundaries between what is considered ‘indie’ and what not. However, in an attempt to define what constitutes indie music, she establishes the following five categories:

- (1) a type of musical production affiliated with small independent record labels with a distinctive mode of independent distribution;
- (2) a genre of music that has a particular sound and stylistic conventions;
- (3) music that communicates a particular ethos;
- (4) a category of critical assessment; and
- (5) music that can be contrasted with other genres, such as mainstream pop, dance, blues, country, or classical. (Fonarow 26)

The Libertines’ first label *Rough Trade Records* started as a small, independent music shop in London. “Inspired by City Lights in San Francisco, I started the shop in order to be able to listen to music all day and to provide a community-based environment where hopefully people could discover good and interesting music” (Travis qtd. in Marr), says the manager of the label in an interview with one of the artists he signed, Johnny Marr from The Smiths. “I believe a lot of the greatest music is to be found on independent labels”, he continues, “and the spirit and acumen of its operations are much better suited to the nurturing of art and music and mayhem and beauty” (Travis qtd. in Marr). In contrast to major labels, who are often believed to have a large influence on the music and style of a particular band, being represented by an independent label is associated with more freedom in the musical production and therefore, authenticity. Major labels are often driven by corporate aims. “Major label record companies have shareholders and a board of directors pressuring the staff to make the right moves to make the most money,

not [necessarily] to display the right music” (Ostrow). This commodification of music is rejected by indie artists, who celebrate music as a free art form that is not affected by capitalist interests, but as “art for art’s sake” (Fonarow 37).

A common definition of indie music, perceives ‘indie’ as a distinct musical genre such as hip-hop, techno, or country. “From this perspective the boundaries of indie result from an adherence to specific musical conventions and specific practices in the production of music” (Fonarow 39). Indie bands typically consist of four members, all white, young, working or middle class males, with one or two vocalists and the rest of the band playing electric guitars, bass guitars, and drums. The Libertines are a stereotypical example of an indie band with Peter Doherty and Carl Barât as vocalists and guitarists, John Hassall on the bass, and Gary Powell as drummer. While in the United States indie attracts a number of female performers, “[w]ithin the British indie music scene, [...] punk, grunge and garage musical styles associated with laddish masculinity are included in indie despite the fact that indie is generally represented as feminine in most public discourse” (Fonarow 40).

The indie sound can be characterised as melodic garage rock that places more emphasis on the overall sound than the production values. “Permeating the indie tradition is an espousal of simplicity and austerity, a hypervaluation of childhood and childlike imagery, a nostalgic sensibility, a technophobia, and a fetishization of the guitar” (Fonarow 39). The simplicity of indie songs, in comparison to the overproduced mainstream music that dominates pop charts, is again, a symbol of authenticity. Despite the lack of musical craftsmanship that can be experienced in some indie performances, the bands are seen as authentic and ‘real’, because “within the indie community [...] musicianship is viewed as a formal training that distances a performer from the essence of music” (Fonarow 42f.). Technical proficiency is associated with emotional and spiritual detachment from the music itself and “[i]ndie calls nostalgically for a return to and restoration of ‘original’ musical practices and ideals” (Fonarow 29).

This simplicity is even reflected in the song structure. The Libertines’ ‘Can’t Stand Me Now’, for example, shows a very basic alternation between verse, pre-chorus and chorus. While the structure is simple, the song’s tension is created in the 48-second-long intro. The messy, melodic guitar solos comprising the intro set the mood for the rest of the song.

In live performances, Pete and Carl often face each other on stage, engaging in a debate with their guitars; Carl playing one riff, Peter replying with another. Most Libertines songs show an extensive degree of foregrounding and backgrounding of both guitars, while the other instruments remain in the background, which emphasises Pete and Carl's equal role as frontmen of the band. Furthermore, their guitar play reflects the often personal and conversational style of their lyrics. Frequently, Carl and Peter sing to each other about each other, their problems, troubled past, and most of all their love for each other. "An ending fitting for the start / You twist and tore our love apart", sings Carl in 'Can't Stand Me Now', probably their most intimate song commenting on Peter's behaviour that eventually led to the band's split.

Indie's celebration of simplicity and authenticity goes hand in hand with a rejection of computer-generated sounds and electronic music. However, "[s]everal of the most popular indie bands of the mid-1990s, such as Pulp, began to resuscitate synthetic sounds and synthetic clothing fabrics for the indie community" (Fonarow 46). Despite the increased use of synthetic sounds in their music, indie bands remain drawn to more traditional forms of music. In Britain, up until today, a large number of indie bands are influenced by music hall and traditional folk songs. "Indie promotes a return to basics: the simple, the ordinary, and the untrained. All superfluous elements should be stripped away to purify music" (Fonarow 50).

Lyrically, indie rock can be characterised by a set of recurring themes and topics. Indie's ethos can best be described as "a spirit of *independence*, being free from control, dependence, or interference" (Fonarow 51). The main reason musicians prefer independent labels is because they allow them to retain artistic control over their songs. However, indie's spirit of independence is also evident in song lyrics. "Indie is generally a middle-class phenomenon, yet it idealizes the working class with its supposed 'authentic' experience" (Fonarow 52). Examples for the celebration of working class culture by The Libertines will be given later in this chapter.

A fourth way of defining 'indie' is as a category of critical assessment and aesthetic judgement. "Indie is not merely a sound with generic conventions but a discursive practice of critical judgment as well" (Fonarow 57). Frequently, the aesthetic judgement of indie fans even ignores genre conventions and bands such as the American hip hop

band Public Enemy are celebrated for their ‘realness’ from hip hop and indie fans alike. “The music of other genres accepted into the indie canon generally conforms in either its production or attitude to one or more of indie’s values” (Fonarow 57).

The indie canon is largely determined by the music press. Magazines, such as *New Musical Express (NME)* “position themselves as evaluators of a broad range of music who can then use their expertise to judge the relative merit of all artists’ productions” (Fonarow 58). However, by exclusively mentioning white, male indie bands in their top ten or top 100 lists, magazines such as *NME* strongly favour one particular genre and group of musicians. As Fonarow (58) points out, “[m]ore than 50 percent of [*NME*’s] top fifty albums of the 1980s were indie”.

In the broad media, indie is often characterised “as the genre where music and art overlap” (Fonarow 60). Pete Doherty, for example, frequently paints and has displayed his art in several exhibitions. Indie musicians value their artistic expression more than commercial success. Moreover,

[i]ndie music often issues from the same wellspring of ideas that generates other aesthetic movements, and this connection can be seen in the intellectual and artistic reference points scattered across indie lyrics – surrealist films, underground books, existential philosophers, modern art, performance theory, Romantic poets, and Shakespearean plays. (Fonarow 60)

Indie is often seen as a more artistic and more authentic ‘other’, positioning itself “in relation to the mainstream as oppositional force combating the dominant hegemony of modern urban life” (Fonarow 67). A large number of characteristics that define indie music only do so in contrast to mainstream pop music. One of the main differences between indie and mainstream music is that “[i]ndie connotes small, personal, and immediate, while mainstream evokes all that is enormous, distant, and unspecialized” (Fonarow 63). Indie musicians frequently prefer to play intimate shows in small venues, despite being able to sell out larger stadiums. The only exception are large shows at festivals such as Glastonbury, Reading, or T in the Park (Fonarow 63). However, even when playing large shows, indie artists attempt to avoid mainstream venues. “Blur, [for example], after it achieved mass success, arranged a stadium-sized show with multiple acts at Mile End, a non-traditional stadium [...] rather than Wembley” (Fonarow 64).

Indie's preference of small venues is also heavily affected by the often intimate relationship between the artists and the fans. The Libertines, for instance, as it was shown in chapter 5, frequently interacted with their fans on and off stage. "Indie bands often mingle in the crowd before and after shows, and artists are easy to meet in these settings. Audience members regularly approach band members at shows" (Fonarow 64). This emphasises the equal relationship between artists and their audience and contributes to the authenticity of indie music. Even though pop music often deals with personal topics such as love and relationships, it does so in very general terms. Indie music is often more intimate, not only in its setting, but also in its lyrics. Indie bands, such as The Libertines, share their everyday experiences and transform them into a poetic narrative that often evokes feelings of sympathy and understanding in the listeners. When Pete Doherty and Carl Barât sing about their broken relationship, the listener feels part of their story and sometimes even part of their friendship.

Indie musicians often draw their inspiration from musicians from the same genre. The Libertines name several British indie bands as their musical influences, from The Clash to Chas and Dave. Their biggest influence, however, are The Smiths. Named as one of the best British bands in history, the group around vocalist and frontman Morrissey "arrived, changed music overnight, then months later imploded but never left NME or music fans the same" (Knowles qtd. in Chrisafis). Morra (105) calls The Smiths quintessentially English and calls Morrissey "a 'living sign' of English sensibility". In an emotional interview with *Q Magazine*, Doherty emphasises his love for The Smiths:

Even if I'm feeling blank or not particularly feeling happy or sad, suddenly a song will come out and it'll suddenly occur to me that's how I really feel. It's better than any therapy or any conversation. You just hit something on the head and it captures your mood. Like Will I Wonder by the Smiths. I used to put that on, especially the 7-inch (it was the b-side of How Soon Is Now) where you'd hear all the crackles and then the drumbeat and then... (starts to hum Well I Wonder). Just that mood. (Doherty qtd. in Goddard)

Their position as a stereotypical British indie band highlights the 'Englishness' of The Libertines' sound. The following sections will offer an analysis of their lyrics, style and album iconography in order to illustrate why The Libertines are a perfect example for the construction and definition of national identity in popular music.

6.1 The Arcadian dream

Peter and Carl met in 1997 through Peter's sister Amy, who shared a flat with Carl. Amy "told Carl about her younger brother Peter who was, she said, a poet" (Thornton and Sargent 16) and Peter about her housemate, who was a very talented guitarist.

Peter went to stay with his sister at the squat. [...] Carl poked his head round the door of Amy-Jo's room and saw Peter gazing out of the window. [...] Peter was surprised that Carl lapped up his William Blake-derived ideas of Albion and Arcadia. Carl shared his fierce pride in Britishness. (Thornton and Sargent 16)

This encounter does not only mark the beginning of a wonderful friendship, but a musical partnership à la Lennon/McCartney (The Beatles) and Morrissey/Marr (The Smiths). The unusual bond over music, literature, film, and poetry left them "[i]ntoxicated by the idea of Albion and Arcadia, a romantic fantasy of pursuing experience, perfection and Britishness" (Thornton and Sargent 17). Their rejection of modern life inspires the pair to dream about a long forgotten past.

Nostalgia is a common theme in British music. In the 1990s, bands such as Blur treasured the past, not only in their music, that often echoes previous eras, but also in their lyrics. "Blur represent a throwback to an earlier age of songs, rather than to the diverse texts that are the basis of techno and jungle. Even the first three album covers [...] hark back to an earlier age" (Cloonan 62). Their second album, for instance, is titled *Modern Life Is Rubbish*. The rejection of modernity often goes hand in hand with an idealistic vision of the past. The Libertines, in their celebration of the good old 'Albion', are "trying to resurrect a romanticized Britain" (Thornton and Sargent 21).

The Libertines have always used their friendship and literary idols as a creative source for their song writing. In a very personal song about their struggle to maintain their friendship, Pete and Carl sing "The Arcadian dream has fallen through / But the Albion sails on course / So let's man the decks and hoist the rigging" (The Libertines, 'The Good Old Days'). Albion, an old name for the United Kingdom, is a ship they sail to their Arcady, a utopian land of their dreams. The concept of Arcadia became popular in the European Renaissance and reflects "the idea of an idyllic setting of forests and hills" (Parker 16). Arcadia can be compared to the Garden of Eden in Christian myth, where women and men lived in a perfect state of harmony with nature. "More contemporary

uses of the word express a nostalgic sense of a naturally ordered utopia or wilderness, uncontaminated by modern forms of organization and civilization” (Parker 16). On his solo album *Grace/Wastelands*, Doherty even names a song after this utopian ideal. Doherty creates an image of a Garden of Eden, a paradise in the wild valleys. The protagonist, a shepherd, hears angelic pipes as he stumbles upon this land where “Maids upon such a molten green / They employ their holiday with dance and game / And things I may never name” (Peter Doherty, ‘Arcady’).

The Libertines’ mythology is inspired by Romantic poets and William Blake in particular. Peter, for example, identifies himself as the piper from Blake’s ‘Introduction’ from the *Songs of Innocence*, a shepherd that turns into a poet that is “Piping down the valleys wild / Piping songs of pleasant glee” (1-2). The pastoral world that is established in Blake’s poem is picked up by Doherty in his song ‘Arcady’. Doherty’s Arcady is a land of pastoral delight, an old forgotten England, where “your life trips along / It’s pure and simple as the shepherd’s song” (Peter Doherty, ‘Arcady’). When the shepherd in Blake’s poem encounters an angel on a cloud, the angel asks him to pipe him songs, so the shepherd “piped with merry cheer” (6). Now, the piper is no longer piping for his own amusement, but is writing “happy songs / Every child may joy to hear” (19-20). Doherty, in a way, is like this piper, always gathering dozens of fans around him during shows or on the streets.

The Libertines are not the only 21st century band attracted by Blake’s lyrical themes. “While [Blake] may have had primarily philosophical and religious concepts in mind [...] musicians with a penchant for intoxication have seized on them with aplomb as axioms of rock ‘n’ roll hedonism” (Fallon 249). Julian Cope, for example, is even described as “Blake’s natural heir” (Fallon 251). Through his references to Blake in album booklets and various depictions of Blake’s poetry in his songs, Cope rethinks Blake’s visions and transforms them to apply to a modern day context. “For both Cope and Doherty, Blake [...] provides a pacific and open patriotism, an appealing alternative to official and right-wing forms of nationalism” (Fallon 259).

Peter and Carl draw from Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and Experience* and adapt them to the setting of present day London. “Blake’s influence on The Libertines is not explicit, but informs their vision of a grim, corrupt London through the miasma of which pockets

of eternity can be sniffed out” (Fallon 256). In their song ‘Vertigo’, for example, they sing about the experiences of a London street drinker:

Down in the street below
Hear the drunken archangel sing
I know what’s on your mind my boy
Cause I can see oh everything
(The Libertines, ‘Vertigo’)

The collision of the utopian ideal of a pastoral Albion and the grim vision of modern life in London reflect Blake’s contrasting themes of ‘Innocence’ and ‘Experience’. The peaceful life in Arcadia erupts into mayhem. “So you see how twisted it becomes / See how quickly twisted it becomes” (Peter Doherty, ‘Arcady’). As in Blake’s ‘Earth’s Answer’ from the *Songs of Experience*, the innocent paradise turns into a dark and twisted world:

Earth raised up her head
From the darkness dread and drear.
Her light fled,
Stony dread!
And her locks cover’d with grey despair.
(1-5)

Throughout the poem, Blake uses symbols of captivity. The earth is “prisoned on watery shore” (6), “chained in night” (11), but eventually “breaks this heavy chain” (18) and sets herself free. Similar to the Earth, the poor young shepherd in Doherty’s song is confined by his love and trapped in her bed, but he realises that this love was just an illusion and free love is not “with bondage bound” (Blake, ‘Earth’s Answer’ 25). “When the catgut binds my ankles to your bedstead / That ain’t love, no that ain’t love” (Peter Doherty, ‘Arcady’).

As illustrated by Fallon (257), “Blake’s opposed categories of Innocence and Experience are constantly present in Libertines songs, especially those on their self-titled second album”. In ‘Can’t Stand Me Now’, Doherty depicts himself as innocent boy, similar to “the innocents of Blake’s ‘Little Boy Lost’ and ‘Infant Sorrow’” (Fallon 257):

No, you’ve got it the wrong way round
You shut me up and blamed it on the brown.
Cornered the boy kicked out at the world
The world kicked back a lot fuckin’ harder now
(The Libertines, ‘Can’t Stand Me Now’)

He blames the fallen world for his spoilt behaviour that eventually led to the band's decline. However, even though Peter and Carl's musical partnership and their shared vision of sailing the ship Albion through the rough waters of the present into a brighter future was soon shattered by feuds and fights and even though "the Arcadian dream's all fallen through / [...] the Albion sails on course" (The Libertines, 'The Good Old Days').

Other literary influences apparent in The Libertines' lyrics include Samuel Beckett, Anthony Burgess and Oscar Wilde. The two essential lines in 'Vertigo' ("The rapture of vertigo/ And letting go"), for instance, are a direct quote from Samuel Beckett's *Malone Dies*:

What I sought, when I struggled out of my hole, then aloft through the stinging air towards an inaccessible boon, was the rapture of vertigo, the letting go, the fall, the gulf, the relapse to darkness, to nothingness, to earnestness, to home. (Beckett 19).

The name of the song 'Horrorshow' is a reference to Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* and quotes one of the terms made up by Nadsat, a character in the novel. Furthermore, the song 'Narcissist' from their second album mocks the self-involvement and narcissism of the celebrity world: "You see all the models in magazines and on the walls / You wanna be just like them / Cause they're so cool". However, "They're just narcissists / Well, wouldn't it be nice to be Dorian Gray? / Just for a day" (The Libertines, 'Narcissist'). Dorian Gray, the main character of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is so obsessed with his own beauty that he sells his soul, because he is scared of aging and losing his best asset, his beautiful face. However, his greed and indulgence eventually lead to his death and as The Libertines point out "Oh, what's so great to be Dorian Gray / Every day?" (The Libertines, 'Narcissist'). Through these various references to works from the British literary canon, The Libertines emphasise their 'Englishness' and gain a place in the history of great British poets and writers.

6.2 War era

The era between 1914 and 1945, from the start of the First World War to the end of WWII, bears a certain fascination for a large number of British artists. British popular music is full of allusions and references to the war era, commemorating a time when Britain's national identity was still intact and stronger than ever. The Who's Pete Townshed, for example, "notes of his childhood that everyone of his age 'went to granddad' and said,

‘what do you think made the fucking Germans do that?’” (Morra 162). While a lot of contemporary artists idealise the war era, not because of the gruesome events that happened during war, but because of the strong national bond that was apparent in times of war, The Who “are fundamentally pessimistic about a modern generation living in the shadow of a violent past whose origins they neither know nor understand” (Morra 162). Their album *Tommy*, for example, “is set in the immediate aftermath of the First World War and from the outset underlines a connection between domestic and national trauma” (Morra 163).

In 20th century Britain, “war and preparation for war became deeply embedded in popular culture, particularly in the cultural artefacts that are created for the youth” (Paris 8). In their song ‘A Day in the Life’, The Beatles emphasise that “the English army had just won the war”, a portrayal of the “high summer of imperial supremacy” (Abravanel 3) that is often associated with war-time and post-war Britain.

However, not every war song reflects Britain’s glory. In Peter Doherty’s ‘1939 Returning’, he sings about a “captured clandestine” that fought for Germany and was “Caught behind enemy lines in 1939” (Peter Doherty ‘1939 Returning’). At the same time, a young woman leaves “town in worn out shoes” (Peter Doherty ‘1939 Returning’), trying to escape war-ridden London. A large number of families fled from the city that was later heavily bombed in air raids carried out by the German ‘Luftwaffe’. Families often sought shelter with relatives and friends in the countryside, as it is illustrated by Doherty: “Packed off ours in evacuations / To farmer’s wives, green and pleasant lives / Far from the doodlebugs” (Peter Doherty ‘1939 Returning’). The contrast between the city “grey with dust” and the green and pleasant countryside reflects the contrast between Pete’s Arcady and the grim London that is continuously portrayed in The Libertine’s lyrics. The woman in this song survived the war and is now haunted by the horrors of her experiences in the past. She is now “back out west in sheltered accommodations / Staring blank into the TV guide in 2009” (Peter Doherty ‘1939 Returning’). She, as many others, is unable to cope with the traumas of the war.

In a speech at the 2004 *NME* Awards, Doherty and Barât recite a poem of Siegfried Sassoon called ‘Suicide in the Trenches’:

I knew a simple soldier boy
Who grinned at life in empty joy,
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,
And whistled early with the lark.

In winter trenches, cowed and glum,
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,
He put a bullet through his brain.
No one spoke of him again.

You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.
(1-12)

The poem tells the story of a soldier in World War I, who killed himself in the aftermath of the war. The boy once “simple” and grinning at life “in empty joy”, was so traumatised by his war experience that he could see no other way than ending his own life. The contrast between the first and the second stanza reflects the destruction of the Blakean ‘Innocence’ through the grim realities of war. Giles and Middleton (111) call Sassoon’s poem an attack “on the heroism and Englishness” that is often celebrated in relation to the two World Wars.

The post-war eras are characterised by economic decline and unemployment. Walter Greenwood’s novel *Love on the Dole* that inspired a Libertines’ song with the same title, provides a rather dark description of life in England after the First World War:

The doorsteps and window-sills of the houses are worn hollow. Once a week, sometimes twice, the women clean them with brown or white rubbing stone; the same with portions of the pavement immediately outside their front doors. And they glare at any pedestrians who unavoidably muddy their handiwork in traversing the strip. Some women there are whose lives are dedicated to an everlasting battle with the invincible forces of soot and grime. (Greenwood 11).

Doherty and Barât disregard this dark and filthy chapter in Britain’s society and they “run from the dust and gloom” (The Libertines, ‘Love on the Dole’) into a, hopefully, brighter future.

6.3 Did you see the stylish kids in the riot?

Glastonbury Festival, June 2007. A tall young man in a grey suit, ruby shirt and scarf, and a black hat is seen walking through the muddy backstage area. His right arm is wrapped around a beautiful blonde woman and he is holding a drink in one hand, a cigarette in the other. She is wearing tight black pants, black boots and a black shirt. Their look is messy, but appealing and they have been the subject of numerous articles in tabloids and fashion magazines. The two lovers, Peter Doherty and Kate Moss, are Britain's most famous celebrity couple of the late 2000s, this generation's Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love, "[b]eautiful, damned and undeniably cool" (Surace).

There has always been a relationship between fashion and music, popular music in particular. "[T]he correlation between music and fashion informs not only the creative activities that are part [...] of these industries, but also the interests of both existing audiences for specific brands or stars and the tastes and habits of consumers" (Miller 2). Similar to the commodification and fetishizing of national emblems in the Britpop era, the early 2000s celebrate musicians as fashion icons and commodify their appearance and clothes.

As Miller writes in her book *Fashion and Music*, fashion as well as music always operate within consumer culture. "In modernity, consumer culture became the primary means through which individuals marked themselves out in a social context where people becoming, otherwise, more and more anonymous" (Miller 16). Through fashion, both musicians and fans can communicate and highlight their membership to a particular social group. Industrialisation and urbanisation brought along mass culture and "people came to be defined not by who they were born to be, their ancestry or what they did for a living, but instead by the choices they made in their self-presentation and in relation to consumer culture" (Miller 16f.). In modern and postmodern societies, social identity is defined and enacted through commodities and the fashion industry makes use of the meanings and identities that are associated with fashion products.

Musicians in fashion advertisements, for example, signify a lifestyle that is desired by the consumer, but can rarely be accessed in real life. "Music stars [...] carry connotations of their symbolic value as bohemian outsiders" (Miller 17). The bohemian lifestyle has played an important role in the arts since the 19th century. "[T]o be bohemian was to reject

the ideals of middle-class, bourgeois life, with its emphasis on financial success, and instead to ‘dramatize’ poverty” (Miller 14). Later it became associated with standing out from the mass and seeking extremes. A central aspect of modern day Bohemia is “excess of all kinds: alcoholism, drugs, erotic deviance, political extremism, blasphemy and madness” (Miller 14). Through its celebration of rock stars as fashion icons, the fashion industry glamorises these extremes and sells a romanticised version of the Bohemian lifestyle.

Kate Moss and Peter Doherty epitomized this Bohemian lifestyle and Moss was considered the style icon of the 2000s with her ‘rock chic’ look, characteristically made up of “black garments, leather, studs, just-out-of-bed hair and smoky eyes” (Miller 1). Doherty was considered a troubled poet, a fashionable rock star that can be seen reading Oscar Wilde between taking lines of cocaine. Doherty’s look signifies a certain level of sophistication. He is often seen wearing suits and blazers and “he’s never without a hat” (Surace). At the same time his style is messy and scruffy, reflecting his rough side with scarves or necklaces loosely hanging around his neck, cigarettes as fashion accessories and his chronically unkempt hair. The contrast in his music, poetic lyrics versus distorted guitars, is reflected in his style and provides him with a messed up elegance that is unique among the world of rock musicians.

While the music of The Libertines is largely inspired by punk, their style resembles the 1950s Teddy Boys or that of Edwardian dandies. “The Teddy Boys were a study in contrast – a cocktail of formal styling and vulgarity, poured together and shaken up violently” (Lam). Teds were dressed in sharp suits, long jackets and narrow trousers as a working-class parody of upper-class nobility. Teddy Boy aesthetics became “a sort of rebellion, a method of accessing privileged experiences intended for someone else” (Miller 121). Similar to the teddy boys, Doherty mocks the “stylish kids in the riot” (The Libertines, ‘Time for Heroes’), the upper class, rich kids, who joined the May Day riots in 2000 where hundreds of demonstrators protested against capitalism. Despite his literariness and sophistication, he identifies himself as member of the working class, which reflects the ambiguity in Doherty’s persona. His music as well as his style show heavy contrasts: the pied piper on the one hand, a dilly boy on the other, William Blake versus the Sex Pistols and Burberry suits with cigarette burns. On tour with The Libertines for example, “[r]ather than pursuing the romantic pastoral vision of a troubadour he was

projecting, he was holed up in a Paddington hotel room taking enormous amounts of smack and crack” (Thornton and Sargent 129). Doherty embodies a number of polar opposites; romanticism and rock’n’roll, poetry and drugs, English gentleman and punk rock attitude; but remains, in all his ambiguity, very English.

6.4 We’ll die in the class we were born

Despite the Marxist idea that national identity is imposed from the dominant class, English popular music is deeply rooted in the working class. “Much of English popular music may have been born in art schools [...], but when it represents the nation, it generally does so in plebeian tones” (Cloonan 65). Long before the formation of The Libertines, bands such as The Smiths, The Kinks or Oasis were considered to “give a voice to the voiceless” (Devereux, Dillane and Power 16). Morrissey, frontman of The Smiths and the Gallagher brothers, for example, were celebrated as working class heroes and repeatedly point to their working class background in songs and interviews. In the 2003 documentary *Live Forever: The Rise and Fall of Brit Pop* Noel Gallagher asks “what aspirations did we have? None. All we had was rock’n’roll”, emphasising the harsh reality of the working class life.

As pointed out by Morra (81), “[t]he majority of today’s assessments tend to insist upon a working-class identity that is in fact *legitimated* by its position as consistently marginalized, anti-institutional, undereducated and deprived” (Morra 81). “I want to live like common people / I want to do whatever common people do”, sings Jarvis Cocker in Pulp’s ‘Common People’, a tale about a working class boy meeting a wealthy Greek girl that wants to experience life as it is for the less fortunate. The boy tells her to

Rent a flat above a shop
Cut your hair and get a job
Smoke some fags and play some pool
Pretend you never went to school
(Pulp ‘Common People’)

While countless musicians “glamorize [their] plebeian roots” (Hiliard 280), Jarvis Cocker ridicules the idealisation of a working class background. According to Wiseman-Trowse (80), “‘Common People’ represents the defining moment of the Britpop phenomenon, precisely because of its engagement with class identity”.

The same year Pulp released ‘Common People’, Britpop’s obsession with class differences reached its peak when Oasis and Blur released a single the same day. “Blur were from the suburban Essex town of Colchester, Oasis from Burnage, [...] Blur were art school students, Oasis were lads on the dole.” (Wiseman-Trowse 1). The war between those two bands was a war between North and South, working class and middle class. “Certainly the tensions between Blur and Oasis seemed to be oriented around issues of authenticity” (Wiseman-Trowse 2). While Blur were trying to relate to the working class by singing in a fake Cockney accent, Oasis were seen to stay true to their roots. “In monetary terms, I’m not working class”, claims Noel Gallagher in an interview with the Belfast Telegraph, “[i]t’s a state of mind. [...] We haven’t forgotten where we’ve come from” (qtd. in John Meagher).

These discrepancies are addressed by “Cockney troubadour” (Peters) Jamie T in his song ‘Sheila’, in which he describes the stories of three adolescents living in London, each facing their own tragic destiny: Sheila, who falls into the river Thames after a night out and drowns, Jack ‘The Crackerman’, who is shot whilst selling drugs, and Georgina, who is addicted herself and dies from an overdose. Between the narration of these dark stories, the song features a sample of John Betjeman’s poem ‘The Cockney Amorist’, a portrait of a lover’s loneliness, that is projected onto the city:

Oh when my love, my darling,
You’ve left me here alone,
I’ll walk the streets of London
Which once seemed all our own. (1-4)

The poem goes on mentioning the places the two lovers used to visit together:

I will not go to Finsbury Park
The putting course to see
Nor cross the crowded High Road
To Williamsons’ to tea,
For these and all the other things
Were part of you and me. (17-22)

A similar sentiment is evident in ‘You’re my Waterloo’ by The Libertines, in which Doherty uses English places as a metaphor for a love relationship. “And you’re my Waterloo / I’ll be your Stanley Park”. He refers to Waterloo Station, a place that had shaped both him and Carl, as Barât points out in his autobiography *Threepenny Memoir*:

The Lives of a Libertine. “[It was] Camden that made us, formed The Libertines, but the centre of my world, the heart of Albion, was undoubtedly Waterloo” (Barât 9f.).

In their celebration of “the decaying beauty” (Barât 10) of London, The Libertines dress up as “Dickesian types for [an] NME cover back in 2003” (Anderson) to emphasise their lack of wealth and luxury. They describe themselves as dilly boys, poor, homeless, male prostitutes that were usually seen in and around Piccadilly Circus: “Me, I’m just a dilly boy / Fresh flower pressed Piccadilly boy” (The Libertines, ‘Dilly Boys’). Doherty and Barât unashamedly highlight their grim and deviant background. Their apartment in East London, in which they played countless gigs, was described by Thornton and Sargent in their book about The Libertines.

The atmosphere was that of a debauched shindig. Candles were lit and they strummed their skiffly, acoustic gig of half-formed songs and covers. Friends and like-minded people thronged into the flat, which was full of junk-shop memorabilia, books and records. Halfway through, the electricity ran out and a hat was passed around to collect coins for the meter. (Thornton and Sargent 18)

The idealisation of this “cheery vagabondage” (Babyshambles, ‘Deft Left Hand’) lifestyle, favouring Bethnal Green and Brick Lane over Oxford Street and Regent’s Park, is a homage to the true England, the working class England, that is not yet infiltrated by globalised, mass culture. “What became of the love we knew / What became of the working class?”, asks Doherty in ‘Hooray for the 21st Century’. The answer is “Nike, Reebok, Adidas / Scratch cards, Pitbulls, ecstasy / Hooray for the 21st century” (The Libertines, ‘Hooray for the 21st Century’). His reference to chavs, a working class phenomenon that arrived in the early 2000s, shows how little contemporary England has to do with the idealised version of the working class portrayed by The Libertines. Originally, ‘chav’ “was defined as ‘a young working-class person who dresses in casual sports clothing’” (Jones 7f.). However, it “now encompasses any negative traits associated with working-class people – violence, laziness, teenage pregnancies, racism, drunkenness, and the rest” (Jones 8).

This change of working class culture is reflected in the Kaiser Chief’s ‘I Predict a Riot: “I tried to get to my taxi / The man in a tracksuit attacks me”’. The demonization of “people at the bottom has been a convenient way of justifying an unequal society throughout the ages” (Jones 10). These unequal conditions led to a British class war that was reinforced

by the election of Margaret Thatcher as prime minister in 1979. Through Thatcher's government,

[working class] institutions, like trade unions and council housing, were dismantled; its industries, from manufacturing to mining, were trashed; its communities were, in some cases, shattered, never to recover; and its values, like solidarity and collective aspiration, were swept away in favour of rugged individualism. (Jones 10)

Instead of promoting improved conditions for the working class, Thatcherism and the New Labour promoted a new mantra that was "that able individuals should 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps' and climb the social ladder" (Jones 250). Everyone should aspire to become middle class and the "[p]ride in being working class has been ground down over the past three decades" (Jones 233).

English music, however, reflects the opposite. Joe Strummer, frontman of The Clash, for example, "famously spent much of his career railing against injustice, co-organizing antiracism movements, and vehemently advocating social activism" (Morra 83), despite the fact that he was the son of a diplomat. As Dorian Lynskey points out, "[a]ny discussion of class in pop is required, seemingly by law, to note that Joe Strummer was a privately educated diplomat's son" (Lynskey and Fitzpatrick). However, despite the fact that a majority of successful modern English pop bands come from an educated background, he adds that "[p]ublic school may be able to give us a Joe Strummer but it can't give us a Johnny Rotten" (Lynskey and Fitzpatrick).

Similar to Joe Strummer and The Clash, The Libertines celebrate working class culture despite their middle class background, much to the dismay of Noel Gallagher, frontman of Oasis, who comes from a real working class background. "They're attention seekers. Doherty and Amy Winehouse romanticise about being dirty little f***ing street urchins carrying guitars around with them and living some kind of poetic f***ing torture" (qtd. in Meagher). However, it is the "continuous invocation of working-class authenticity (and consequent musical legitimacy) [that] has informed the efforts of many middle-class musicians to efface or deny their own social origins" (Morra 84). Even the Sex Pistols, are regarded as "art school tossers" (Bragg qtd. in Morra 81). "Real punk bands were nasty working-class people who had true convictions and [had] been in trouble with the police" (Bragg qtd. in Morra 81). According to Bragg, educated middle class bands can never portray a true working class experience. Doherty and Barât, however, try to

reconcile as they sing in ‘Love on the Dole’ that “all night long we were singing Northern songs”, working-class songs. Simultaneously, they prove their support for working class folks by mocking the middle class and call their fans to “Strike a light / Raise your glasses / Drink a toast to the boring classes” (The Libertines, ‘Love on the Dole’).

6.5 Yanks, go home!

In the late 1990s, when the outshining glory of Britpop slowly faded away, the British music scene was dull, controlled by “witless DJs and acoustic fumblers” (Thornton and Sargent 14). The charts were dominated by American nu metal bands and in December 1998, *NME* magazine featured Fred Durst, “a portly baseball-cap-wearing misogynist arsehole” (Thornton and Sargent 14) on their Christmas issue cover. “Music was not only rubbish, it was American rubbish” (Thornton and Sargent 14).

The Americanisation of Britain in the 90s caused an “ideological shift [that] marks a turn from the vision of the vast and unshakeable British Empire toward a romanticized Englishness tied to tradition and the past” (Abravanel 6). British pop music is obsessed with the working class England that has not yet been shaped by American mass culture. “Americanization generally referred to the rise and spread of American-style capitalism and the mass entertainment that often followed in its wake” (Abravanel 4).

In their song ‘Fake Tales of San Francisco’ the Arctic Monkeys ridicule the Americanised British music scene of the early 2000s: “Fake tales of San Francisco / Echo through the room”. A fictional band from Rotherham in South Yorkshire, claims to be from the US and plays a show “with their trilbies and their glasses of white wine” (Arctic Monkeys, ‘Fake Tales of San Francisco’). Turner describes this band as “fucking wank” and emphasises that the people at the show are “not having a nice time” (Arctic Monkeys, ‘Fake Tales of San Francisco’). In the chorus, Turner and his backing vocalists shout “I don’t want to hear you kick me out, kick me out” (Arctic Monkeys, ‘Fake Tales of San Francisco’), mocking the ‘fake’ US band. His problem with the band is that they’re “not from New York City, you’re from Rotherham” (Arctic Monkeys, ‘Fake Tales of San Francisco’) and they are pretending to be something they are not. Turner criticises these bands for abandoning their British roots and claims that the Arctic Monkeys “stick to the guns / Don’t care if it’s marketing suicide, we won’t crack or compromise” (Arctic Monkeys ‘Who the Fuck Are Arctic Monkeys’). Similar to the discourse about

authenticity regarding the working class background, bands that dismiss their national roots are not authentic, they're just "doing what they're told" (Arctic Monkeys 'Who the Fuck Are Arctic Monkeys').

In the early 2000s, 'Englishness' is celebrated by the rejection of the American dream, a dream that is based on fake values, as pointed out by Morrissey:

In America
The land of the free, they said
And of opportunity
In a just and truthful way
But where the president
Is never black, female or gay
(Morrissey, 'America Is Not the World')

"Much of the anti-Americanism in British popular music is consequently characterized by a rhetoric of righteous resistance" (Morra 175). America is seen as an antagonistic force. In David Bowie's 'I'm Afraid of Americans', Johnny, the protagonist, travels to America and falls into the consumerist trap, losing his identity "to the empty commercialist cliché of a capitalist superpower" (Morra 175). In an interview with Mojo magazine, Bowie explains:

The face of America that we have to put up with is the MacDonald's/Disney/Coke face, this really homogenous, bland cultural invasion that sweeps over us – which is unfortunate, because the aspects of America that are really magical to us are the things it seems to reject, like black music or the Beat poets. (qtd. in Pegg ch.1)

In contrast to the white rock'n'roll scene in America, British bands of the 60s were open about their influence from African American musicians. "By the 1960s, the United States had already undergone a well-established cultural revolution, symbolized most evidently by the white appropriation and dissemination of 'black music' into a mainstream youth culture" (Morra 178). At the peak of the British Invasion, Paul McCartney was interviewed by an American magazine and famously stated that "don't you know who your most famous people here are?" (qtd. in Morra 178), when the reporter was oblivious to who Muddy Waters was. The lack of cultural integrity and authenticity in American pop music was even surprising for Mick Jagger, when he claimed the United States are the "most repressive society, very prejudiced in every way" (qtd. in Morra 178f.). By embracing the voice of the authentic, black America,

[c]ontemporary celebrations of British popular music continue to reinforce a moral superiority in relation to a crass, capitalist American empire. In these assessments, that empire is characterized not only by the artistic limitations of the culture with which it invades ‘the world’, but by its established oppression and marginalization of more authentic voices. (Morra 179)

Britons relate their own experiences as marginalised working class people to the oppression of black voices in America. However, despite the attempts of recognition for their influences, England’s music scene of the 60s was still distinctly English. Moreover, by releasing their British version of American blues in the United States, British musicians constitutes the same type of cultural appropriation that white American artists were being accused of. This reception has “enabled a rhetoric in which the ‘Mother Country’ can be seen to have redressed the flaws of its former colony by defining and re-appropriating its most essential and overlooked indigenous voice” (Morra 180).

The rejection of capitalistic American mass culture enables a celebration of ‘Britishness’ that stands strong against the influences from American culture. “United in its opposition to ‘America’, this rhetoric celebrates British culture, institutions, and practices as necessary manifestations of resistance against an inauthentic, imperial threat” (Morra 176).

An example of blatant anti-Americanism in the British music press is the cover of *Select magazine* in April 1993, that featured “Suede frontman Brett Anderson in front of a Union flag, [and] proclaimed ‘Yanks go Home: Suede, St Etienne, Denim, Pulp, The Auteurs – and the Battle for Britain’” (Morra 176). A decade later, in the early 2000s, the Libertines shoot their first *NME* cover, “with the gutter panache of very modern punk poets” (Beaumont). With this cover they continue tradition of highlighting their ‘Britishness’ by posing in front of the Union Jack (Thornton and Sargent 53). Peter Doherty, dressed in a Premier League jersey, is staring into the camera with tired eyes, while the other lie in the back. The headline next to their band name reads “Come on England!”, which emphasises that again, England is seen as capable of representing the whole British Union. “The Union Jack is the symbol of the political union between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland” (Savage Introduction). Its predominant use by “white rock groups from the South East” (Savage Introduction), however, emphasises the dominance of England over the other three nations and fails to reflect a true union.

Another example of nationalist iconography used by the Libertines are the Welsh guard uniform Peter and Carl were not only frequently photographed in (e.g. Thornton and Sargent 72f.), but which also appeared in the music video for their song ‘Don’t Look Back into the Sun’. In this video, the camera is following Peter and Carl walking through Central London, stealing their own album from a music shop and playing a wild and exhilarating show.

Furthermore, The Libertines’ anti-Americanism is apparent in the lyrics to their song ‘Time for Heroes’, in which Peter sings that “There’s fewer more distressing sights than that / Of an Englishman in a baseball cap”. The baseball cap represents the American influence on the British youth and the negative American mass culture has on Britain. “It’s all these ignorant faces that bring this town down” (The Libertines, ‘Time for Heroes’), claims Doherty, but adds that despite the cultural decline, “I cherish you my love” (The Libertines, ‘Time for Heroes’), England.

6.6 What became of the likely lads?

As Machin observes in *Analysing Popular Music*, meaning is not only communicated through the lyrics and sound of a band, but also through their album art. The Libertines’ first studio album *Up the Bracket* was released in 2002 and named as one of the ‘100 Best Albums of the 2000s’ by *Rolling Stone*. Thornton and Sargent (64) call it “an album about Britishness and commented on Britishness.” The twelve songs on the album are “[s]tuffed with allusions to Hancock, the Krays and peculiar British vernacular, it contained songs that [...] provided social commentary and a sharp critique of British culture” (Thornton and Sargent 64). The name of the album itself is a reference to Doherty’s favourite comedian Tony Hancock and his famous phrase “A good punch up the bracket never hurt anybody” (Hancock qtd. in Thornton and Sargent 55).

The title track ‘Up the Bracket’ deals with “two shadow men on the Vallance Road” in Bethnal Green, “where the UK’s most notorious gangland figures, the Kray twins, were brought up” (Thornton and Sargent 62). The second track ‘Death on the Stairs’ is inspired by Carl’s fear of wasting his life, not living his dream. “He was obsessed with the idea of being old and alone watching telly. ‘Death on the stairs’ we called it” (Doherty qtd. in Thornton and Sargent 17). The rest of the album is full of blazing rock songs and sing-

along anthems providing “a snapshot of their intense lives living on the edge of society” (Thornton and Sargent 65).

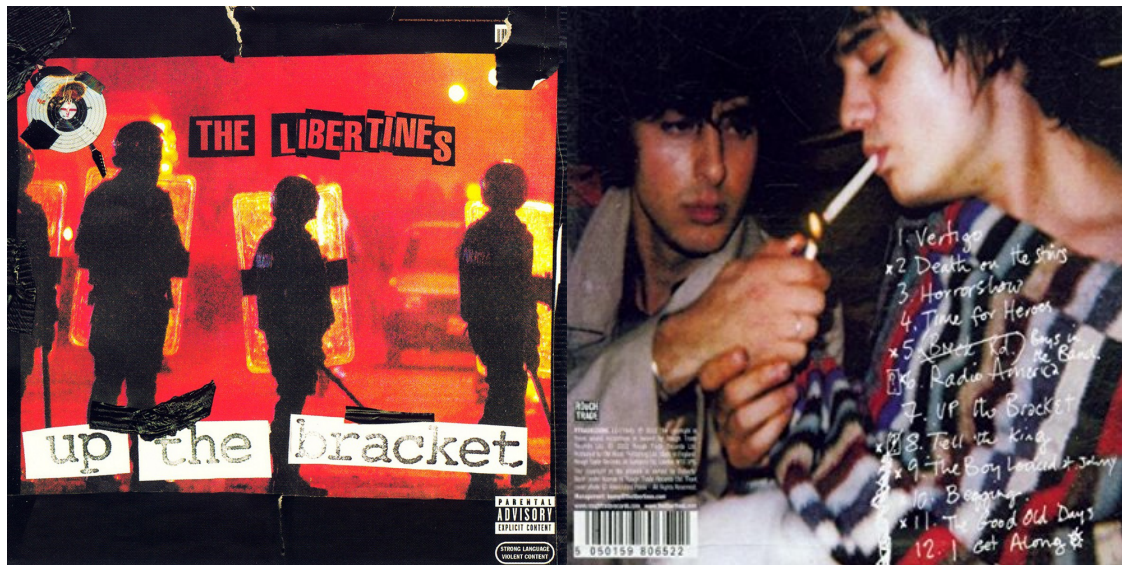


Figure 1: *Up the Bracket* front and back cover

The front cover of the album shows the shadows of three and a half armed officers carrying riot shields. The highly saturated red background immediately signals ‘danger’. As Machin (63) points out “[a] highly saturated colour can mean a maximum intensity of feeling”. Their choice of colour and the heavy contrast between the dark policemen and the bright red background emphasise this intensity and it almost looks like the streets were set on fire, as it is common in riots. The image symbolises a raw, destructive energy, a rebellion that even the armed police cannot stop. This front cover perfectly reflects the rebellious spirit of the Libertines, “the most debauched newcomers on the rock scene for some time” (Reynolds).

The typography is reminiscent of the punk era, particularly the font used by the Sex Pistols on *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here’s the Sex Pistols*. The album title looks like a cut out from a newspaper, or letters that were stamped on a piece of paper and then taped onto the background image, creating a messy, cheap look. The song list on the back cover is scribbled in Pete’s handwriting emphasising the ‘sloppiness’ and carelessness of their character.

The back cover also shows what looks like a candid shot from a night out. The two frontmen, probably intoxicated, are very close in this photo, a symbol of their close relationship in real life. Carl is looking after Pete, giving him a hand lighting his cigarette. Carl is an important figure in Pete's life, as Pete emphasises: "Carl saved me, essentially; he looked after me after I left college" (Doherty qtd. in Thornton and Sargent 17). The back cover already indicates that the two frontmen are the driving force behind the musical and lyrical accomplishments of the band. Considering it was the first album the band released and the general public was not yet familiar with the pair, the intimacy created in this image and the closeness of the two to the camera that alludes to the viewer as being a part of this scene, immediately establishes a relationship between the viewer and the two artists.

This relationship is reinforced in the iconography of their second, self-titled album *The Libertines*. This album is even more personal; Pete and Carl provide an insight into their deeply ruptured relationship. "Have we enough to keep it together?", sings Doherty in the opening track, "Or do we just keep on pretending / And hope our luck is never ending now" (The Libertines, 'Can't Stand Me Now'). Maddy Costa describes the experience of listening to this song when "you realise The Libertines isn't simply an album: it's the central chapter in a sprawling roman à clef. Song after song seems to refer directly to Barat and Doherty's fraught relationship" (Costa). What used to be a poetic friendship, a shared utopian idea of sailing the good ship Albion to their Arcadia, was now in shambles. In 2003, when The Libertines (without Pete, whose increasing drug problems led to him having to leave the band) played a show in Japan, Carl received a message: "Peter had robbed Carl's flat and been arrested" (Thornton and Sargent 136). This loss of trust in their friendship is reflected in 'Can't Stand Me Now'. "If you want to try / If you want to try / There's no worse you could do", Carl shouts at Pete, "I know you lie / I know you lie / I'm still in love with you". Their conflicted feelings seep through every chord and every sigh and after Peter was sent to prison it looked like their ship Albion ran aground. Their music, however, continued to prove successful and their single 'Don't Look Back Into the Sun' reached "their highest chart entry to date" (Thornton and Sargent 137). When Peter was released from prison a few weeks later, Carl decided to forgive him and wait for him at the gates.

Then at 10.30 a.m. a tiny door opened in the massive gates and prisoner LL5217 stepped out into the light, a battered guitar case in one hand and a polythene bag stuffed with clothes and letters from friends and fans in the other. [...] He'd had his hair freshly clipped that morning at his own behest – he wanted to look his absolute best. (Thornton and Sargent 144)

When Peter saw Carl standing at the entrance, waiting for him, everything was forgotten. “The soul brothers of Albion cast aside doubts, fears, issues and problems. [...] And then, in true British fashion, they resolved to go and get extremely drunk” (Thornton and Sargent 148). As expected, their night of celebration turned into a spectacular reunion show. Anthony Thornton and Roger Sargent, the authors of *The Libertines: Bound Together*, both working for *NME* at that time, were present that night and were the first ones to interview and photograph the pair, which resulted in a legendary *NME* cover story and the most iconic portrait of Peter and Carl that also became the cover of their second album.



Figure 2: *The Libertines* front and back cover

The image on the front cover was taken by Roger Sargent the night of their reconciliation. Despite their issues in the past that culminated in Peter breaking into his friend's flat, their closeness in this image shows that they have forgiven each other. It is the second photo on an album sleeve that only shows Peter and Carl and excludes the other two members of the band. Only on the back cover we first see John Hassall and Gary Powell, the bassist and drummer of the band, which accentuates the dominance of Pete and Carl over the other two. The story of The Libertines is the story of Pete and Carl, not that of Pete, Carl, John and Gary. They are not the first English band that places a special emphasis on the two vocalists. Oasis, for example, consisted of Liam and Noel Gallagher,

Paul Arthurs, Paul McGuigan and Tony McCarroll. However, the headlines were constantly dominated by the Gallagher brothers and their notorious feuds. Pete and Carl are what Noel and Liam were in the 1990s, what Morrissey and Johnny Marr were in the 1980s and what John Lennon and Paul McCartney were in the 1960s, a pair that together brought their creativity to new heights and dominated the British music scene of their decade.

The Libertines' cover photo is candid, but highly symbolic. The way Pete stretches his bare arm towards the camera insinuates drug abuse, the injection of heroin in particular. Both Pete and Carl look intoxicated and Pete is holding a cigarette in his right hand. Peter's bare arm furthermore exposes their matching 'libertine' tattoos. There is a strong symbolism in their matching tattoos that whatever happens, they will always have something reminding them of their time together, "All the memories of the fights and the nights / And the blue lights, all the kites we flew together / I thought they'd fly forever" (The Libertines, 'Music When the Lights Go Out'). Their juvenile belief that their friendship would last forever was soon destroyed by all the "Pubs / And the clubs and the drugs" (The Libertines, 'Music When the Lights Go Out') and despite their attempts to reconcile, Peter's drug addiction eventually led to the band splitting up in late 2004. Carl, John and Gary played their last show in Paris on 17 December 2004 while Peter stayed in a rehab clinic in Thailand.

Eleven years later, on 11 September 2015, something most fans never thought would happen, The Libertines were back together and released their third album. Celebrated by fans and press as a happy ending to a story that got lost in tabloid horror shows, the album "isn't perfect, but it succeeds in redressing the balance, reminding you that before Doherty became an embarrassing red-top fixture, he and Barât were genuinely great songwriters with a uniquely skewed vision" (Petridis *Libertines*). The twelve songs on the album are filled with literary allusions (e.g. 'Anthem of Doomed Youth'), Pete and Carl trading lines like in their 'Good Old Days' and a beautiful balance between typical energy-laden Libertines songs (e.g. 'Fury of Chonburi') and introspective ballads (e.g. 'You're My Waterloo'). "Their inward gaze is more clear-eyed and unsparing than before: the songs seem, for want of a better word, more mature" (Petridis *Libertines*).

The eighth track of the album, 'Heart of the Matter' accounts for their difficult past. "With all the battering it's taken / I'm surprised it's still ticking". They confess their past mistakes and acknowledge, that no one can be blamed, but them: "It's only I who'd take the blame, but try me anyway / And you'll get by you'll get by / With your wicked little smile" (The Libertines, 'Heart of the Matter'). Pete and Carl both get by and get along and their second reconciliation marks a new beginning as they celebrate "the glory hallelujah day" (The Libertines, 'Heart of the Matter'), the day the Libertines got back together.

The front cover reminds of their first album. It shows four silhouettes against a coloured background. The silhouettes, however, are not armed policemen, but the band themselves. This is the first studio album that shows all four band members on the front cover, maybe a sign that the new Libertines have moved past the debauched relationship between Pete and Carl that constituted the first years of their success. In contrast to the aggressive, bright orange that stood against the black figures on their first album, the colours in this image are darker and less rebellious. The only thing that remains of their old punk spirit is the scribbled album title (with the crossed out alternative title) and their old logo, this time in white, symbolising purity and new beginnings. The diluted blue background connotes thoughtfulness and introspection, which is why, despite a few songs reminding of the old Libertines spirit, *Anthems for Doomed Youth* is a lot more mature, almost tame compared to their other two albums.

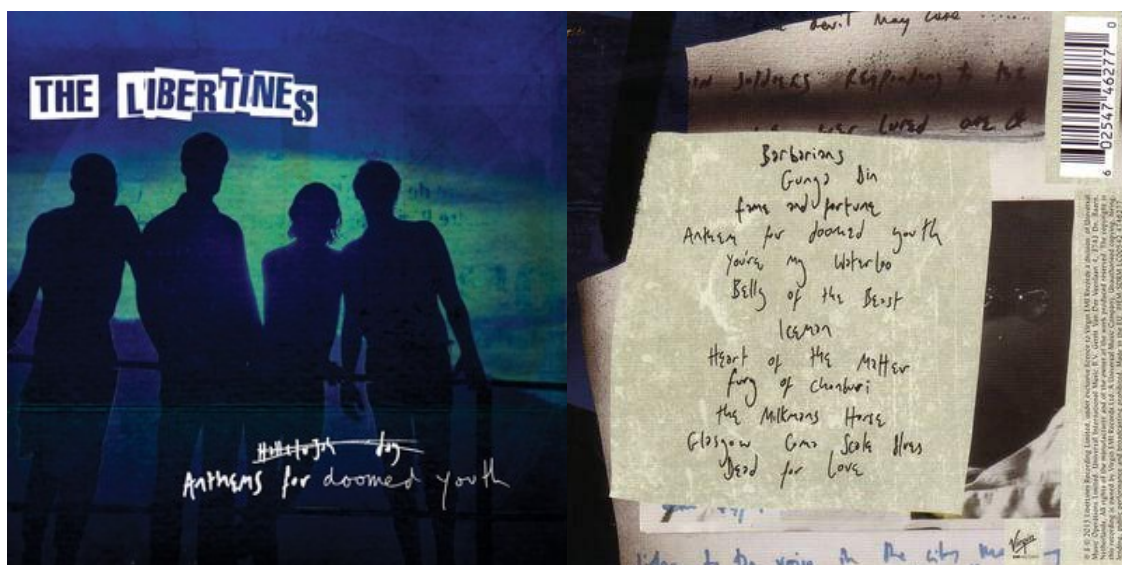


Figure 3: *Anthems for Doomed Youth* front and back cover

7 The problematics of pop-‘Englishness’

7.1 Exclusion in terms of gender

The musical representations of ‘Englishness’ that were discussed in this paper were exclusively male, which raises the question why women in popular music are not considered to hold a role in defining the nation. As pointed out in chapter 2.3.2, women hold a passive role in nation formation. Cloonan (60) observes that “female artists such as PJ Harvey, [...] and Skin (Skunk Anansie) are asked to interview questions about being women in rock, but *not* about being English”. In 2011, PJ Harvey released an album titled *Let England Shake* that deals with England’s post-war trauma and her own love/hate relationship with her country. In a song called ‘England’ she sings “From the country that I love / England, you leave a taste / A bitter one”. Despite her album being “an opaque exploration of Englishness delivered in a high, keening voice” (Petridis *Harvey*), Harvey remains excluded from the canon of ‘Englishness’. And she is not the only female singer that is not considered as ‘worthy’ of representing ‘Englishness’. Even if Lily Allen sings about Tesco bags and lunch in the park in ‘LDN’ and Adele baffles Americans with her cockney accent, female British artists are not seen as authentically British.

The international popularity of Duffy or Adele might help to temper the effect of Lady Gaga and to invoke the reception of the British Invasion groups. Nonetheless, for many, that very success only underlines an essential superficiality. [...] Groups such as Oasis and the Arctic Monkeys, for example, really ‘couldn’t be bothered with the effort of ‘breaking’ America.’ (Morra 112f.)

The difference between the Spice Girls posing in front of a Union Jack flag and The Libertines using the Union Jack as a symbol is that the Spice Girls are one of the core acts of mainstream pop culture and are therefore, considered less authentic. While The Libertines’ Union Jack represents Blake’s England that is characterised by the opposing notions of ‘Innocence’ and ‘Experience’, the Spice Girls symbolise consumerism and mass culture.

Furthermore, the Spice Girls are not considered to represent ‘Englishness’, because “[t]he canon of great English pop songwriters is apparently a male-only preserve” (Cloonan 60). Leonard (27) relates the male dominance in rock music to the “commercial nature of music production”. Music is produced for men by men and through the establishment of

a rock canon, “a list of performers who can be considered culturally worthy” (Leonard 27), the music industry carefully selects representatives of a particular genre or time. In her analysis of various rock guides and encyclopaedias, Leonard shows that women are largely excluded from the rock canon. Female solo artists or bands with one or more female vocalist made up less than 25 per cent of the entries Leonard examined.

An illustration of the way in which the work of female musicians is separated out from ‘general’ rock lists may be noted in the Us magazine *Rolling Stone*’s 30th anniversary issue dedicated to ‘Women of Rock’ (1997). This issue contains 28 interviews with women musicians and a 30,000-word history of female performers. [...] However, this rhetoric rings quite hollow when one turns to the final page of the edition, which has a printed ballot for the 1997 *Rolling Stone* readers’ poll. Of the 60 suggested artists only nine were women, a fact that seems to suggest that female musicians are still considered outsiders to rock music. (Leonard 30)

For women to be included in the rock canon, they often have to portray a certain masculinity. Patti Smith, the grandmother of punk, for instance, was often “sought to expand the masculine part of herself to sell the public a strong woman fronting a rock-and-roll band” (Wendell xxii). However, as Florence Welch, XFM’s ‘greatest woman in rock of all time’ argues, being a woman in rock is about “[p]ervading the idea of femininity – managing to be vulnerable and powerful at the same time” (Welch qtd. in *NME Florence*).

In a 2011 study, Berkers and Eeckelaer analyse how gender differences are reinforced by the music press. By comparing news reports on two English rock’n’roll artists, Pete Doherty and Amy Winehouse, they show how “Doherty is discussed more positively (rock and roll) than Winehouse (rock and fall)” (Berkers and Eeckelaer 13). Both artists are born and raised in Britain, are about the same age, and come from a middle-class background. Furthermore, “both artists were infamous for their excessive rock and roll lifestyle” (Berkers and Eeckelaer 7). The study analyses perceptions of the two artists the year they both released an album (2009) in two major British newspapers, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. Berkers and Eeckelaer (7) found “40 articles about Amy Winehouse and 47 discussing Pete Doherty”. In their qualitative analysis of the 87 articles, they created ten frames that are either positively or negatively connoted. The five positive frames are grouped together as ‘rock and roll’ and the negatively connoted

frames make up the category ‘rock and fall’. The results of their study are provided in Table 2.

Frames	Amy Winehouse	Pete Doherty	Sig.
Rock and roll			
Living on the edge	17.5% (7)	40.4% (19)	*
Hero	0.0% (0)	10.6% (5)	*
Independent individual	7.5% (3)	17.0% (8)	†
Authenticity	10.0% (4)	2.1% (1)	n.s.
Success	5.0% (2)	10.6% (5)	n.s.
Total Rock and roll	40.0% (16)	80.9% (38)	***
Rock and fall			
Concern	27.5% (11)	8.5% (4)	*
Cannot deliver	7.5% (3)	0.0% (0)	†
Media victim	10.0% (4)	2.1% (1)	n.s.
Dependent individual	7.5% (3)	4.3% (2)	n.s.
Crazy	7.5% (3)	4.3% (2)	n.s.
Total Rock and fall	60.0% (24)	19.1% (9)	***
Total	100% (40)	100% (47)	

† = $p < 0.1$; * = $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** = $p < 0.001$; n.s. = not significant.

Table 2: Frames used in newspaper articles that discuss Winehouse and Doherty
(Berkers and Eecklader 8)

As the results indicate, the perception of Doherty’s behaviour is more positive than Amy Winehouse’s. He is seen as a hero, and “his willingness to take risks and ‘accept the consequences’ or even ‘dare damnation’” (Berkers and Eecklader 9) is emphasised. Winehouse, on the other hand, is seen as victim. “Whereas Pete Doherty is predominantly framed as an artist who dares to live on the edge, many journalists interpret similar behavior in Amy Winehouse as damaging, harmful and unhealthy, particularly for the artist herself” (Berkers and Eecklader 10).

The 2015 documentary about the life and passing of Amy Winehouse raises the question whether the media was at fault for her death. Winehouse, who was struggling with drug addiction and bulimia, regularly made headlines of national and international magazines culminating in the media being on ‘death watch’ throughout the last years of her life (Hearsum 182). Doherty, on the other hand, is celebrated for completing his rehab and inspiring others to become clean as well. Despite her tragic death in 2011, Amy Winehouse is one of the only female artists celebrated as representing ‘Britishness’ and is even described as a “national treasure” (Morra 11).

7.2 Exclusion in terms of genre

When analysing popular music in terms of 'Englishness' it becomes apparent that there is a limited representation of genres other than British indie. While Britain has produced a large number of successful pop acts, e.g. Adele, Coldplay or One Direction, pop artists are not seen as representing and expressing a particular notion of 'Englishness'. First of all, pop music is often associated with wealth. As Dorian Lynskey explains, "[o]nly 7% of British pupils attend fee-paying schools yet they are disproportionately dominant in pop [...] from Mumford & Sons and Coldplay to Florence Welch and the Vaccines" (Lynskey and Fitzpatrick). However, because true English life is considered a working-class experience, pop acts are not capable of portraying an authentic 'Englishness', even when commenting on the English life in their lyrics.

Furthermore, pop music is perceived as mass culture. The British charts are often dominated by pop acts from the United States and advocates of a more traditional 'Englishness' that celebrates the old Empire and the time before the Industrial Revolution, before innocent, rural life was destroyed by factories and modern technologies, reject the imported mass culture from America. Pop music becomes a synonym for modernity and indie's rejection of everything modern ties in with this vision of an old, rural England more than any other genre.

Despite the perceived lack of authenticity in pop music, there are various other genres that portray authentic urban lives. In the United States, for example, the genre that is most associated with authenticity is hip hop. The hip hop genre emerged from the early breakdancing and DJ scene in the late 1960s (J. Williams 137). Through its increased use of breakbeats and a less linear form of music, hip hop has always involved some sort of freedom, "a freedom of the DJ as listener to foster creativity with the collage of cultural information he/she had available" (J. Williams 140). Hip hop was, from the very beginnings, seen as cultural commentary that, through its reflection of particular values and beliefs shared by a collective, created some sort of community amongst its listeners.

Similar to indie music in the UK, "[h]ip-hop's origins in the South Bronx became the romantic mythology of an artistic culture born out of dismal socio-economic conditions" (J. Williams 142). Furthermore, the same way indie artists often base their sound on music from previous eras, hip hop is known for the practice of 'sampling', which is including

particular beats from earlier performers in songs. The borrowing of sounds is considered as an “intensification of the lyrical topics” (J. Williams 154) of hip hop songs that often allude to previous eras. Hip hop’s authenticity “is intrinsically concerned with the pursuit of the origin” (J. Williams 164) of the genre. In contrast to modern day hip hop that is perceived as corrupted by commercial values the origins of hip hop are seen as a “site of truth and purity” (J. Williams 165). Moreover, hip hop’s commentary on urban, working-class life and its particular production tools, such as vinyl scratching, emphasise the authenticity of hip hop music.

Despite the thriving hip hop scene in the United Kingdom (e.g. Tinie Tempah, Dizzee Rascal), rap artists are often neglected by the music press. As David Hesmondhalgh (282) observes, “[i]t is quite common for people who read the British music press regularly, and who consider themselves to have a deep and broad knowledge of contemporary popular music, to be completely unfamiliar with the biggest names in these genres”. Electronic Dance Music, for example, “was the most debated form of the 1990s” (Hesmondhalgh 278) and despite the growing club culture in Britain, electronic music is absent in the canon of ‘Englishness’ established by the music press.

The English band Bloc Party, however, are an exception in that despite being rooted in the indie-rock genre, they often pick up elements from electronic music and are still celebrated for their ‘Englishness’. Their lyrics comment on various forms of ‘Englishness’ from William Blake (e.g. in ‘Ion Square’: “Barefoot on Bishopsgate / Trying to find Blake’s grave”) to life in East London (e.g. ‘Song for Clay (Disappear here): “East London is a vampire / It sucks the joy right out of me”). *NME* describes Bloc Party one of Britain’s finest bands and as “true heirs to the Libs’ [i.e. Libertines’] legacy” (Imran). Their language is similar to that of The Libertines, showing a passion for literature and the English life. However, Bloc Party seem to be the first British band that successfully comment on 21st century ‘Englishness’ and at the same time address a broad audience that is not restricted by limitations in terms of class, gender or ethnicity:

Bloc Party are to be believed because they are a band for the whites, the blacks, the straights, the hip-hop kids, the freaks, the geeks, the emo kids, the punk-funkers, the queers and, yes, the fashionistas. Not because they are all these things (though they are a lot of them), nor because they’re all things to all men (in fact they’re the complete opposite). Back in 2002,

Pete'n'Carl said it was 'Time For Heroes'. Well now it's the anti-heroes' time. (Imran)

Furthermore, Bloc Party are one of the first British indie bands with a black vocalist. While The Libertines are an inter-racial band as well, the large emphasis on the two white frontmen, Peter Doherty and Carl Barât, underlines their 'whiteness' rather than emphasising their diversity. In a genre and industry that is dominated by whiteness, Bloc Party's lead singer Kele Okereke highlights the racial exclusion he frequently experiences. He addresses this issue in an interview with *The Independent*: "Every [time], I was asked what it felt like to be a black musician making indie music – the subtext always being that this was not a genre for the likes of me" (Okereke qtd. in Elan). He describes the British music scene as "shockingly conservative" (Elan) and "one of the few arenas where diversity is not encouraged" (Okereke qtd. in Elan).

7.3 Exclusion in terms of ethnicity

The music industry's exclusion of ethnicities other than white Europeans can be traced back to an early view of 'Englishness' as signifying 'whiteness'. Stuart Hall calls the "great outspoken British value 'whiteness'" (Hall *Heritage* 7) and emphasises that 'Englishness' is often related to overt nationalism and racism and hence, excludes non-white artists (Aughey 105). While in sports, "successful black sportsmen and women [have] at least temporarily transcended the limitations of non-white representations of 'Englishness' (and/or 'Britishness')" (Cloonan 59), music remains exclusive in its idea of 'Englishness'.

Even the exclusion of hip hop in the canon of 'Englishness' is less a matter of genre and more a matter of race. "That rap enters the debate via a white rather than black performer, Mike Skinner rather than, say, Dizzee Rascal, is an indicator of the overwhelming whiteness of Britpop, new and old" (Collinson 170). The two English rappers Jamie T and Plan B, for instance, are frequently celebrated for their authentic depictions of the dark and gritty aspects of life in England. Jamie T's album *Panic Prevention*, for example, "perfectly encapsulated post-millennial British youth culture, from the suburbs to the cities" (Cooper). However, while black rappers such as Tinie Tempah and Dizzee Rascal are successful artists, they are not seen as representing the same type of 'Englishness' Jamie T and Plan B stand for.

8 The future of British music

Unlike any other European country, Britain's cultural landscape reflects an affection for popular culture and popular music in particular. While the British national identity is often characterised by shared hobbies and interest, e.g. football, gardening, and afternoon tea, and a shared common ideology, more recent studies in British cultural theory provide evidence for the important role of popular music as a signifier of national identity in Britain.

Popular musicians such as The Beatles, The Kinks, Sex Pistols, The Clash, Oasis, Blur and more recently, Arctic Monkeys and The Libertines reflect upon their British identity and create a discourse of pop-‘Britishness’ that is reinforced by the music press. Musicians who are seen as representing ‘Britishness’ are typically white, male, working class, and from England. Even though journalists and fans often ascribe them a unique British identity, the majority of the artists in the pop-canon are English and hence fail to represent the other three member states of the British Union. This cultural hegemony of England has led to a rise in nationalist movements particularly in Scotland and Wales and provides a potential threat to the Union as Scotland prepares for another independence referendum.

The notion of ‘Britishness’ in popular music is furthermore characterised by an exclusion in terms of gender. Most artists that represent ‘Britishness’ are male. Because the role of women in the construction of national identity is largely passive and women in popular music are often seen as representing consumerism and mass culture, they are restricted in their ability to represent the nation and largely omitted from the pop-canon of ‘Britishness’. However, not only women are excluded from the canon. Interracial bands and artists from ethnic minorities, despite being successful as musicians and providing authentic depictions of the English life, suffer from the racial exclusion of the white British music industry.

Exclusion in terms of genre can be explained through indie's emphasis on authenticity. Indie music contrasts the authenticity of small, independent labels with the capitalist orientations of major labels. Capitalism and mass culture are associated with an Americanisation of British culture and rejected by most indie artists. Furthermore, British indie musicians often celebrate their working class background as an authentic experience

of 'Britishness'. Despite the Marxist belief that cultural identity is posed upon the subordinate classes by the bourgeoisie, British popular music openly celebrates the suppressed and marginalised and ridicules the 'art school tossers' that constitute the upper and middle classes.

After the Second World War, Britain's identity suffered an enormous crisis. Through the loss of its empire and the growing economic demands as well as a wave of immigration from ex-colonies, Britons lost their sense of national pride and the growing ethnic and cultural diversity eventually gave rise to a new form of British identity that is characterised by overt nationalism, xenophobia and Islamophobia. Furthermore, the loss of trust in the politics of the European Union led to the UK's decision to leave the EU, which marked the beginning of new negotiations with the European Union and an uncertainty about Britain's future. Nevertheless, the Brexit vote can be interpreted as the Britons taking back the power over their own country. The regained strength of the British national identity could act as a catalyst for a cultural renaissance.

Through their identification with Britain's past and an unfiltered depiction of Britain's present, popular musicians contribute to the cultural rebirth of 'Britishness'. However, it remains to be seen whether this new type of 'Britishness' remains rooted in an old, imperialist tradition, or whether it successfully reflects the cultural diversity of modern day Britain. The role of popular music in the establishment in this new version of 'Britishness' could be to promote diversity and multiculturalism by providing an end to the favouritism of white, male, indie musicians and creating a more diverse musical landscape that includes female artists, artists from genres other than indie as well as artists from ethnic minorities. The new generation of musicians will be able to draw upon the cultural legacy of British musicians that, through their musical and lyrical explorations of British life as well as their references to an already established literary canon of 'Britishness', have sparked a new discourse on national identity and illustrated the immense influence of popular music on politics, culture and national identity.

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10 Appendix

10.1 Abstract

English national identity is often defined by a shared set of values, rules and regulations, or a feeling of belonging through a common literary canon. Even though bands such as The Beatles, The Smiths or Oasis generated a discourse of pop ‘Englishness’ that has lasted from the 1960s up until today, the role of popular music in the formation of English national identity is still largely neglected. However, previous research on the 1990s phenomenon of Britpop illustrates the large influence of British indie on culture and politics. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of contemporary popular musicians in the national discourse. A thorough analysis of the music, lyrics, and iconography of the English indie rock band The Libertines demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between music and national identity. Through their rejection of mass culture, celebrations of working class life, and anti-Americanism; and the nostalgic vision of an old, pastoral Albion, The Libertines establish a notion of ‘Englishness’ that is characterised by overt nationalism and exclusion in terms of class, gender and ethnicity and fails to reflect the country’s diversity.

Keywords: Englishness, national identity, English national identity, popular music, music and national identity, The Libertines, British indie, indie rock, British culture, Britpop

10.2 Zusammenfassung

Nationale Identität bezeichnet im Wesentlichen die gemeinsamen Überzeugungen, Regeln und Gesetze eines Kollektivs oder das Gefühl der Verbundenheit durch einen gemeinsamen Literaturkanon. Obwohl es in England seit den 1960er Jahren durch den Erfolg von Bands wie den Beatles, The Smiths oder Oasis immer wieder Debatten über den Einfluss von Musik auf die nationale Identität gibt, bleibt der akademische Diskurs noch in traditionelleren Auffassungen verhaftet. Einige Studien zum Phänomen des ‚Britpop‘ aber zeigen die musikalischen Einflüsse sowohl auf Politik als auch auf die englische Kultur. Das Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, anhand einer Analyse der Musik, Songtexte und Ikonografie der englischen Indie-band The Libertines zu zeigen, wie auch im 21. Jahrhundert Musik und nationale Identität zusammenhängen. Durch die thematische Auseinandersetzung mit dem Leben der englischen Arbeiterklasse, der Ablehnung von kulturellen Einflüssen aus den Vereinigten Staaten und einem nostalgisch verklärten Blick auf das vorindustrielle England zeigen die Libertines den nationalistischen Charakter der englischen Identität, der es nicht gelingt, die kulturelle Vielfalt des Landes zu repräsentieren.

Stichwörter: englische Nationalidentität, nationale Identität, Musik und nationale Identität, Englishness, The Libertines, Britpop, englische Musik, Indie, englische Kultur

10.3 Poems

John Betjeman

Poem: The Cockney Amorist

Oh when my love, my darling,
You've left me here alone,
I'll walk the streets of London
Which once seemed all our own.
The vast suburban churches
Together we have found:
The ones which smelt of gaslight
The ones in incense drown'd;
I'll use them now for praying in
And not for looking round.
No more the Hackney Empire
Shall find us in its stalls
When on the limelit crooner
The thankful curtain falls,
And soft electric lamplight
Reveals the gilded walls.
I will not go to Finsbury Park
The putting course to see
Nor cross the crowded High Road
To Williamsons' to tea,
For these and all the other things
Were part of you and me.
I love you, oh my darling,
And what I can't make out
Is why since you have left me
I'm somehow still about.

William Blake

Collection: *Stories of Innocence and of Experience*

Poem: Introduction

Piping down the valleys wild
Piping songs of pleasant glee
On a cloud I saw a child.
And he laughing said to me.

Pipe a song about a Lamb;
So I piped with merry chear,
Piper pipe that song again—
So I piped, he wept to hear.

Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe
Sing thy songs of happy chear,
So I sung the same again
While he wept with joy to hear

Piper sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read—
So he vanish'd from my sight.
And I pluck'd a hollow reed.

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs

Every child may joy to hear

William Blake

Collection: *Stories of Innocence and of Experience*

Poem: Earth's Answer

Earth raised up her head
From the darkness dread & drear,
Her light fled,
Stony, dread,
And her locks covered with grey despair.

Prisoned on watery shore,
Starry jealousy does keep my den
Cold and hoar,
Weeping o'er,
I hear the father of the ancient men.

Selfish father of men!
Cruel, jealous, selfish fear!
Can delight,
Chained in night,
The virgins of youth and morning bear.

Does spring hide its joy,
When buds and blossoms grow?
Does the sower
Sow by night,
Or the ploughman in darkness plough?

Break this heavy chain,
That does freeze my bones around!
Selfish, vain,
Eternal bane,
That free love with bondage bound.

Siegfried Sassoon

Poem: Suicide In The Trenches

I knew a simple soldier boy
Who grinned at life in empty joy,
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,
And whistled early with the lark.
In winter trenches, cowed and glum,
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,
He put a bullet through his brain.
No one spoke of him again.
You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go..

10.4 Music and Lyrics

Arctic Monkeys

Album: *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not* (2006)

Song: When The Sun Goes Down

I said, "Who's that girl there?"
I wonder what went wrong
So that she had to roam the streets
She don't do major credit cards
I doubt she does receipts
It's all not quite legitimate

And what a scummy man
Just give him half a chance
I bet he'll rob you if he can
Can see it in his eyes,
Yeah, that he's got a driving ban
Amongst some other offences

And I've seen him with girls of the night
And he told Roxanne to put on her red light
They're all infected but he'll be alright
'Cause he's a scumbag, don't you know?
I said he's a scumbag, don't you know?

Although you're trying not to listen
Avert your eyes and staring at the ground
She makes a subtle proposition,
"I'm sorry, love, I'll have to turn you down"

He must be up to something
What are the chances? Sure it's more than likely
I've got a feeling in my stomach
I start to wonder what his story might be
What his story might be, yeah

'Cause they said it changes when the sun goes down
Yeah, they said it changes when the sun goes down
They said it changes when the sun goes down
Around here
Around here

Look here comes a Ford Mondeo
Isn't he Mister Inconspicuous?
And he don't even have to say 'owt
She's in the stance ready to get picked up

Bet she's delighted when she sees him
Pulling in and giving her the eye
Because she must be fucking freezing
Scantily clad beneath the clear night sky
it doesn't stop in the winter, no

and they said it changes when the sun goes down
yeah, they said it changes when the sun goes down
and they said it changes when the sun goes down
Around here

Well, they said it changes when the sun goes down
Over the river going out of town
and they said it changes when the sun goes down
Around here
Around here

and what a scummy man
Just give him half a chance
I bet he'll rob you if he can
Can see it in his eyes that he's got a nasty plan
I hope you're not involved at all

Arctic Monkeys

Album: *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not* (2006)

Song: I Bet That You Look Good On The Dancefloor

Stop making the eyes at me
And I'll stop making the eyes at you
And what it is that surprises me
Is that I don't really want you to
And your shoulders are frozen
(Cold as the night)

Oh but you're an explosion
(You're dynamite)
Your name isn't Rio but I don't care for sand
And lighting the fuse might result in a bang b-b-bang!
Go!

I bet that you look good on the dancefloor
I don't know if you're looking for romance or

I don't know what you're looking for
I said I bet that you look good on the dancefloor
Dancing to electro-pop like a robot from 1984
Well from 1984!
I wish you'd stop ignoring me
Because you're sending me to despair

Without a sound yeah you're calling me
And I don't think it's very fair
That your shoulders are frozen
(Cold as the night)
Oh but you're an explosion
(You're dynamite)

Your name isn't Rio but I don't care for sand
And lighting the fuse might result in a bang b-b-bang!
Go!
I bet that you look good on the dancefloor

I don't know if you're looking for romance or
I don't know what you're looking for
I said I bet that you look good on the dancefloor
Dancing to electro-pop like a robot from 1984
Well from 1984!
Oh there ain't no love no, Montagues or Capulets
Just banging tunes in DJ sets and
Dirty dancefloors and dreams of naughtiness
I wanna bet that you look good on the dancefloor
I don't know if you're looking for romance or
I don't know what you're looking for
I said I bet that you look good on the dancefloor
Dancing to electro-pop like a robot from 1984
Said from 1984!

Arctic Monkeys

Album: *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not* (2006)

Song: Fake Tales of San Francisco

Fake Tales of San Francisco
Echo through the room
More point to a wedding disco
Without a bride or groom

There's a super cool band yeah
With their trilbies and their glasses of white wine
And all the weekend rock stars in the toilets

Practicing their lines

I don't want to hear you
(Kick me out, kick me out)
I don't want to hear you no
(Kick me out, kick me out)
I don't want to hear you no
(Kick me out, kick me out)
I don't want to hear you
I don't want to hear you

Fake Tales of San Francisco
Echo through the air
And there's a few bored faces in the back
All wishing they weren't there

And as the microphone squeaks
A young girl's telephone beeps
Yeah she's dashing for the exit
Oh, she's running to the streets outside
"Oh you've saved me," she screams down the line
"The band were fucking wank
And I'm not having a nice time"

I don't want to hear you
(Kick me out, kick me out)
I don't want to hear you no
(Kick me out, kick me out)
Yeah but his bird thinks it's amazing, though
So all that's left
Is the proof that love's not only blind but deaf

He talks of San Francisco, he's from Hunter's Bar
I don't quite know the distance
But I'm sure that's far
Yeah, I'm sure that's pretty far

Yeah, I'd love to tell you all my problem
You're not from New York City, you're from
Rotherham
So get off the bandwagon, and put down the handbook
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[x4]

Get off the bandwagon and put down the handbook

Arctic Monkeys

Album: *Who The Fuck Are Arctic Monkeys* (2006)

Song: Who the Fuck Are Arctic Monkeys

We all want someone to shout for
Yeah, everyone wants somebody to adore
But your heroes aren't what they seem
When you've been where we've been

Have I done something to trigger
The funny looks and the sniggers?
Are they there at all, or is it just paranoia?

Everybody's got their box
Doing what they're told
You pushed my faith near being lost
But we'll stick to the guns
Don't care if it's marketing suicidal
Won't crack or compromise
Your derides or individes
Will never unhinge us

And there's a couple of hundred
Think they're Christopher Columbus
But the settlers had already settled
Here long before ya

Just cause we're having a say-so
Not lining up to be playdoh
Oh, in five years time, will it be
"Who the fuck's Arctic Monkeys?"

'Cause everybody's got their box
Doing what they're told
You pushed my faith near being lost
But we'll stick to the guns
Don't care if it's marketing suicidal
Won't crack or compromise
Your derides or individes
Will never unhinge us

[Instrumental]

(La la la la la, la la)
(La la la la la, la la)
(La la la la la, la la)

All the thoughts that I just said
Will linger round and multiply in their head
Not that mad to start with
I'm not angry, I'm just disappointed

It's not you it's them that are wrong
Tell 'em to take out their tongues
Tell 'em to take out their tongues...

It's not you it's them that are wrong

Tell 'em to take out their tongues
Tell 'em to take out their tongues
And bring on the backlash!

It's not you it's them that are wrong
Tell him to take out his tongue
Tell him to take out his tongue
It's not you it's them that's the fake
I won't mess with your escape

Is this really your escape?

Babyshambles

Album: *Down in Albion* (2005)

Song: Albion

Down in Albion
They're black and blue
But we don't talk about that
Are you from 'round here?
How do you do?
I'd like to talk about that
Talk over
Gin in teacups
And leaves on the lawn
Violence in bus stops
And the pale thin girl with eyes forlorn

Gin in teacups
And leaves on the lawn
Violence in dole queues
And the pale thin girl behind the checkout

If you're looking for a cheap sort
Set in false anticipation
Ill be waiting in the photo booth
At the underground station
Now come away, won't you come away
We can go to
Deptford, Digbeth, Tuebrook
Anywhere in Albion

Yellowing classics
And canons at dawn
coffee wallows and pith helmets
and an English sun

Reebok classics
And canons at dawn
Terrible warlords, good warlords
and an English song

But if you're looking for a cheap sort

Glint with perspiration
There's a four-mile queue
Outside the disused power station

Ah come away, won't you come away
We're going to...
Watford, Enfields
Anywhere oh

If you're looking for a cheap tart
Glint with perspiration
There's a five mile queue
Outside the disused power station

Oh come away, won't you come away
We're going to...
Anywhere in Albion

Babyshambles

Album: *Shopper's Nation* (2007)

Song: Deft Left Hand

You seem the types who follow the line
Went from cheery vagabondage
To cold blooded luxury in four years

No lick spittle or pick thack
From sycophant claw back flunky
Oh, I want to lay by your side
Oh, I will lay down and die if I can't lay by your side

Weakened vessel or better half?
That woman's tears
Could be the death of me, oh dear

You know when she's had a few
She'll be onto you, there's no letting up
But, I want to lay by your side
Oh, I will lay down and die if I can't lay by your side

It may happen too easily, the golden years
So don't despair, don't dismay dry your tears
Everything is for the best in the best of all possible
worlds

I, I had a blast off with the cast of a play on the radio
They were more liberal times
Destined to drone in monotone on your radio
It's a little dream of mine

Oh, but comments were less than complimentary

And the deft left hand it followed the right

I think about my happiest times
And one of them was, sat in bed
Watching a documentary on murderers
A bear cat, a mimosa and a view of arcady

Well, I want to lay by your side
Oh, I will surely lay down and die if I can't lay by your
side
I want to lay by your side
Oh, I'll surely lay down and die if I can't lay by your side

Oh, I want to lay by your side
Oh, I will lay down and die if I can't lay by your side
I want to lay by your side

Bloc Party

Album: *A Weekend In The City* (2007)

Song: Song for Clay (Disappear Here)

I am trying to be heroic,
In an age of modernity.
I am trying to be heroic,
because all around me history sings.

So I enjoyed and I devoured
flesh and wine and luxury.
But in my heart,
I am lukewarm;
nothing ever really touches me.

At Les Trois Garçons
we meet at precisely 9 o'clock.
I order the foie gras
and I eat it with complete disdain.
Bubbles rise in champagne flutes,
but when we kiss, I feel nothing.

Feasting on sleeping pills
and Marlboro Reds.
(so busy won't save you)

Oh how our parents
they suffered for nothing
Live the dream, live the dream, live the dream
Like the 80s never happened.
People are afraid, are afraid
To merge on the freeway.
Disappear here

Stroll the pier

into the magazine launch party.
I am handed a pill,
and I swallow with complete disdain.
Kick-drum bangs off the high-hat;
Remember to look bored.
We suck each others' faces,
and make sure we are noticed.
(Cocaine won't save you)
Because East London is a vampire,
it sucks the joy right out of me
How we long for corruption in these golden years.

Oh how our parents
they suffered for nothing
Live the dream, live the dream, live the dream
Like the 80s never happened.
People are afraid, are afraid
To merge on the freeway.
Disappear here [x4]

Bloc Party

Album: *Intimacy* (2008)

Song: Ion Square

Ion square, perspex swings
I breathe out, you breathe in
Permanent midnight
Our love, our love
How we've come to depend
On each other to the end
The space between us has disappeared
You finish my, you finish my words for me

I remember how it began
So many great days in a row
Barefoot on Bishopsgate
Trying to find Blake's grave
If we could stay like this in a silver foil
Trapped in amber for a life
Permanent midnight
Our love, our love

I carry your heart here with me
I carry it in my heart
I carry your heart with me
I carry it in my heart

Who said unbroken happiness
Is a bore, is a bore?
Who said it, my love? I don't mind it
Anymore, anymore
And I reach out a hand over your side of the bed
Pull that blanket over your shoulders exposed to the

night
And the hunger of those early years will never return
But I don't mind, I don't mind
'Cause I love my mind when I'm fucking you
Slowed down to a crawl
Years of crime and the bread line
Have not at all dimmed your shine
So let's stay in, let the sofa be our car
Let's stay in, let the TV be our stars
I found my dancing shoes but they don't fit
All the bright lights do is bore me
They bore me

I carry your heart here with me
I carry it in my heart
I carry your heart with me
I carry it in my heart

Blur

Album: *Modern Life Is Rubbish* (1993)

Song: Sunday Sunday

Sunday, Sunday here again in tidy attire
You read the color supplement, the TV guide
You dream of protein on a plate

Regret you left it quite so late
To gather the family around the table
To eat enough to sleep

Oh, the Sunday sleep

Sunday, Sunday here again a walk in the park
You meet an old soldier and talk of the past
He fought for us in two World Wars

And the England he knew is no more
He sings the songs of praise
Then he reads, but always falls asleep
For that Sunday sleep but he knows what he knows

Sunday, Sunday
Oh, that Sunday sleep

Sunday, Sunday here again in tidy attire
You read the color supplement, the TV guide
You dream of protein on a plate

Regret you left it quite so late
You gather the family around the table
To eat enough to sleep

And mother's pride is your epithet

That extra slice you'll soon regret
So going out is your best bet
Then bingo yourself to sleep
Oh that Sunday sleep

David Bowie

Album: *Earthling* (1997)

Song: I'm Afraid Of Americans

Uh-uh-uh uh, uh, uh-uh uh-uh-uh
Johnny's in America
No tricks at the wheel
Uh-uh-uh uh, uh, uh-uh uh-uh-uh
Nobody needs anyone
They don't even just pretend
Uh-uh-uh uh, uh, uh-uh uh-uh-uh
Johnny's in America

I'm afraid of Americans
I'm afraid of the world
I'm afraid I can't help it
I'm afraid I can't
I'm afraid of Americans
Johnny's in America
Uh-uh-uh uh, uh, uh-uh uh-uh-uh

Johnny wants a plane
Johnny wants to suck on a Coke
Johnny wants a woman
Johnny wants to think of a joke
Uh-uh-uh uh, uh, uh-uh uh-uh-uh
Johnny's in America
Uh-uh-uh uh, uh, uh-uh uh-uh-uh

I'm afraid of Americans
Uh-uh-uh uh, uh, uh-uh uh-uh-uh

Johnny's in America
Johnny looks up at the stars
Johnny combs his hair
And Johnny wants pussy in cars
Johnny's in America, uh-uh-uh uh, uh, uh-uh uh-uh-uh
I'm afraid of Americans

God is an American
God is an American

Yeah, I'm afraid of Americans
I'm afraid of the words
I'm afraid I can't help it
I'm afraid I can't

I'm afraid of Americans

Johnny's an American
Johnny's an American
Johnny's an American, uh-uh-uh uh, uh, uh-uh uh-uh-uh

Jamie T

Album: *Panic Prevention* (2007)

Song: Sheila

Sheila goes out with her mate Stella,
It gets poured all over her fella,
'Cause she's says, man he ain't no better,
Than the next man kicking up fuss

Drunk she stumbles down by a river
Screams calling London
None of us heard her coming
I guess the carpet weren't rolled out

(Oh when my love, my darling,
You've left me here alone.
I'll walk the streets of London
Which once seemed all our own.

The vast suburban churches,
Together we have found:
The ones which smelt of gaslight,
The ones in incense drown'd)

Her lingo went from the cockney to the gringo
Any time she sing a song,
The other girls sing along.
And tell all the fellas that the lady is single.
A fickle way to tickle,
On my young mans ting.

She's up for doing what she like,
Any day more like the night
She drowned drunk sorrows.
That she stole, bought, borrowed
She didn't like fights,
But at the same time understood that
Fellas will be fellas till the end of time.

(Good heavens you boys, blue-blooded murder of the
English tongue.)

Jack had a gang
That he called "The Many Grams",
He was known as smack Jack the Cracker Man
In life he was dealt some shit hands
But the boys got the back now

And Jay went the same way
As Mickey and Dan
Dependent mans upon the heroins
And man Lisa had a baby with Sam,
And now Jack on his own man,
Well done Jack, glug down that cider
Your right she's a slut
And you never fucking liked her
Not like what he stopped so shocked
'Cause it turns out the last dance
Killed the pied piper

Tough little big man friends
With your daughters
Only cos they drive him
To pick up all his quarters
Crawler, lager lout brawlers
Fall to the floor think they're free
But they ain't near the border

Too young gunned down by your hell fire corner
Always did a favour,
But never took a order,
Behave young scally wag,
A fine young galahad
Glad ragged up but only ever getting fag hags,

Hung on his shoulder, cheap price shop tag
Slag better understand
He came for the glamour
But this town's original
Superficial the issue
For one dear Jack,
there 35 doppelgangers

Sheila goes out with her mate Stella
It gets poured all over her fella
'Cause she's says, man he ain't no better
Than the next man kicking up fuss

Drunk she stumbles down by a river
Screams calling London
None of us heard her coming
I guess the carpet weren't rolled out

So this a short story 'bout the girl Georgina
Never seen a worse, clean young mess
Under stress at best, but she pleased to see ya
With love, god bless, we lay her body to rest
Now it all dear started with daddys alcoholic

Light weights chinking down, numbing his brain,

And the doctor said
He couldn't get the heart dear started
Now beat up, drugged up
She feeling the strain

She says in a rut
What the fuck I spose to do
Suck it up start stop keep running through,
True but you try ain't easy to do,
She been buckle belt beaten
From the back like a brat

Dunno where she goin
But she know where she at,
So Georgy its time to chain react,
But the truth is you know
She probably fought back,
Tears stream down her face,
She screamed away

When I fall, no one catch me
Alone lonely, I'll overdose slowly
Get scared, I'll scream and shout
But you know it won't matter
She'll be passing out

I say giggidibiggidiup just another day
Another sad story, that's tragedy
Paramedic announced death at 10:30
Rip it up kick it to spit up the views

Sheila goes out with her mate Stella
It gets poured all over her fella
'Cause she's says, man he ain't no better
Than the next man kicking up fuss

Drunk she stumbles down by a river
Screams calling London
None of us heard her coming
I guess the carpet weren't rolled

Sheila goes out with her mate Stella
It gets poured all over her fella
'Cause she's says, man he ain't no better
Than the next man kicking up fuss

Drunk she stumbles down by a river
Screams calling London
None of us heard her coming
I guess the carpet weren't rolled out

Kaiser Chiefs

Album: *Employment* (2005)

Song: I Predict A Riot

Watching the people get lairy
It's not very pretty I tell thee
Walking through town is quite scary
It's not very sensible either
A friend of a friend he got beaten
He looked the wrong way at a policeman
Would never of happened to Smeaton
An old leodensian

I predict a riot
I predict a riot
I predict a riot
I predict a riot

I tried to get to my taxi
The man in a tracksuit attacks me
He said that he saw it before me
And wants to get things a bit gory
Girls scrabble round with no clothes on
To borrow a pound for a condom
If it wasn't for chip fat they'd be frozen
they're not very sensible

I predict a riot
I predict a riot
I predict a riot
I predict a riot

And if there's anybody left in here
That doesn't want to be out there
Watching the people get lairy
It's not very pretty I tell thee
Walking through town is quite scary
It's not very sensible

I predict a riot
I predict a riot
I predict a riot
I predict a riot

And if there's anybody left in here
That doesn't want to be out there

I predict a riot
I predict a riot
I predict a riot
I predict a riot

Lily Allen

Album: *Alright, Still* (2006)

Song: LDN

Riding through the city on my bike all day
Cause the filth took away my license
It doesn't get me down and I feel OK
Cause the sights that I'm seeing are priceless

Everything seems to look as it should
But I wonder what goes on behind doors
A fella looking dapper, but he's sitting with a slapper
Then I see it's a pimp and his crack whore

You might laugh you might frown
Walkin' round London town

[Chorus]
Sun is in the sky oh why oh why ?
Would I wanna be anywhere else
Sun is in the sky oh why oh why ?
Would I wanna be anywhere else

When you look with your eyes
Everything seems nice
But if you look twice
you can see it's all lies

There was a little old lady, who was walking down the
road
She was struggling with bags from Tesco
There were people from the city having lunch in the
park
I believe that it's called al fresco
Then a kid came along to offer a hand

But before she had time to accept it
hits her over the head, doesn't care if she's dead
Cause he's got all her jewelery and wallet

You might laugh you might frown
walking round London town

[Chorus]
Sun is in the sky oh why oh why?
Would I wanna be anywhere else
Sun is in the sky oh why oh why?
Would I wanna be anywhere else

When you look with your eyes
Everything seems nice
But if you look twice
you can see it's all lies

Life, yeah that's city life, yeah that's city life, yeah that's city life
Life, yeah that's city life, yeah that's city life, yeah that's city life

[Chorus x2]

Sun is in the sky oh why oh why?
Would I wanna be anywhere else
Sun is in the sky oh why oh why?
Would I wanna be anywhere else

[x2]

When you look with your eyes
Everything seems nice
But if you look twice
You can see it's all lies

Morrissey

Album: *Viva Hate* (1988)

Song: Margaret On The Guillotine

The kind people
have a wonderful dream
Margaret on the guillotine
because people like you
make me feel so tired
when will you die?
when will you die?
when will you die?
when will you die?
when will you die?
because people like you
make me feel so old inside
please die
and kind people
do not shelter this dream
make it real
make the dream real
make the dream real
make it real

Morrissey

Album: *You Are The Quarry* (2004)

Song: America Is Not The World

America, your head's too big
Because, America,
Your belly's too big
And I love you, I just wish you'd stay where you is

In America

The land of the Free, they said
And of Opportunity
In a just and a truthful way
But where the President
Is never black, female or gay
And until that day
You've got nothing to say to me
To help me believe
In America

"It brought you the hamburger"
Well, America, you know where
You can shove your hamburger
And don't you wonder
Why in Estonia they say
"Hey you, Big fat pig
You fat pig, You fat pig"

Steely-blue eyes with no love in them
Scan The World
And a humourless smile
With no warmth within
Greets the world
And I, I have got nothing
To offer you
No-no-no-no-no
Just this heart deep and true
Which you say you don't need

See with your eyes
Touch with your hands, please
Hear through your ears
Know in your soul, please
For haven't you me with you now?
And I love you, I love you, I love you
And I love you, I love you, I love you

Oasis

Album: *Definitely Maybe* (1994)

Song: Supersonic

I need to be myself
I can't be no one else
I'm feeling supersonic
Give me gin and tonic
You can have it all but how much do you want it?
You make me laugh
Give me your autograph
Can I ride with you in your BMW?
You can sail with me in my yellow submarine

You need to find out
'Cos no one's gonna tell you what I'm on about
You need to find a way for what you wanna say
But before tomorrow

'Cos my friend said he'd take you home
He sits in a corner all alone
He lives under a waterfall
Nobody can see him
Nobody can ever hear him call [2x]

You need to be yourself
You can't be no one else
I know a girl called Elsa
She's into Alka Seltzer
She sniffs it through a cane on a supersonic train
And she makes me laugh
I got her autograph
She done it with a doctor on a helicopter
She's sniffin' in her tissue
Sellin' the Big Issue

When she finds out
No one's gonna tell her what I'm on about
You need to find a way for what you wanna say
But before tomorrow

'Cos my friend said he'd take you home
He sits in a corner all alone
He lives under a waterfall
Nobody can see him
Nobody can ever hear him call [2x]

Oasis

Song: Take Me Away

Just when it falls apart
And when it's time to start
Will you sit down here for another day
And when it's time to be
All the things that we
Are wishing away for another day

Cos in my soul we know where we're goin
We're goin where the grass is green,
the air is clean and the good times are growin'
So take me away
Just for today
Cos I'm sat here on my own
I'd like to be
Under the sea
Where they'd probaly need a phone

And just when it falls apart
And just when it's time to start
Will you sit down here for another day

Cos in my soul we know where we're goin
We're goin where the grass is green,
the air is clean and the good times are growin'
So take me away
Just for today
Cos I'm sat here on my own
I'd like to be
Under the sea
Where they'd probaly need a phone
I could be you
If I wanted to
But I've never got the time
You could be me
And pretty soon you will be
But you're gonna need a line

Need a line
Need a line
Need a line

Oasis

Album: (*What's The Story*) *Morning Glory*
(1995)

Song: Don't Look Back In Anger

Slip inside the eye of your mind
Don't you know you might find
A better place to play
You said that you'd never been
But all the things that you've seen
Will slowly fade away

So I'll start a revolution from my bed
'Cause you said the brains I had went to my head
Step outside, summertime's in bloom
Stand up beside the fireplace
Take that look from off your face
You ain't ever gonna bum my heart out

And so Sally can wait, she knows it's too late as we're
walking on by
Her soul slides away, "But don't look back in anger," I
heard you say

Take me to the place where you go
Where nobody knows if it's night or day
Please don't put your life in the hands
Of a Rock 'n' Roll band

Who'll throw it all away

Gonna start a revolution from my bed
'Cause you said the brains I had went to my head
Step outside 'cause summertime's in bloom
Stand up beside the fireplace, take that look from off
your face
'Cause you ain't ever gonna bum my heart out

And so Sally can wait
She knows it's too late as she's walking on by
My soul slides away
"But don't look back in anger," I heard you say

So Sally can wait
She knows it's too late as we're walking on by
Her soul slides away
"But don't look back in anger," I heard you say

So Sally can wait
She knows it's too late as she's walking on by
My soul slides away
"But don't look back in anger, don't look back in anger."

I heard you say, "at least not today."

PJ Harvey

Album: *Let England Shake* (2011)

Song: England

I live and die through England
Through England
It leaves a sadness
Remedies never were within my reach
I cannot go on as I am
Withered vine reaching from the country
That I love
England
You leave a taste
A bitter one
I have searched for your springs
But people, they stagnate with time
Like water, like air
To you, England, I cling
Undaunted, never failing love for you
England

Peter Doherty

Album: *Grace / Wastelands* (2009)

Song: Arcady

1,2,1,2,3,4
In Arcady, your life trips along
It's pure and simple as the shepherd's song
Seraphic pipes along the way in Arcady
In Arcady, In Arcady

Never saw I such a scene
Such maids upon such a molten green
They employ their holiday with dance and game
And things I may never name
In Arcady, In Arcady

You said he was your teacher
Taught you true and wise
But now you know more than your teacher
I see nothing but cool self-regard in your eyes
In Arcady

So you see how twisted it becomes

See how quickly twisted it becomes
When the cat gut binds my ankles to your bedstead
That ain't love, no that ain't love

Said he was your teacher
Taught you true and wise
Now you know more than your teacher
I see nothing but cool self-regard in your eyes
In Arcady, In Arcady

In Arcady (In Arcady)
In Arcady your life trips along
Pure and simple as the shepherd's song
Seraphic pipes along the way in Arcady
In Arcady, In Arcady, In Arcady, In Arcady

Peter Doherty

Album: *Grace / Wastelands* (2009)

Song: 1939 Returning

Captured Clandestine,
Crawled into the light,
Knew he was in for a shoe-in,
Just wasn't to be his night.

Dragged out of the frozen Rhine,
For the Motherland,
And the third reich,
Always good to be shoe in,

When it's not to be your night,
Your night.

Tred carefully,
So carefully,
On the drifting ice
Behind enemy lines,
In 1939,
For Germany,
He sacrificed his life,
Caught behind enemy lines,
In 1939.

Kids knee deep in rubble,
London urchins grey with dust,
Back of foot west in evacuation,
The farmers wives greeting pleasant lies,
Far from the doodlebugs.

Nana doll still remembers,
Leaving town in worn-out shoes,
Now she's back out west,
In sheltered accommodation,
Homes for the old,
Where pills aren't the only blues.

Tred carefully,
So carefully,
On the drifting ice
Staring blankly into the tv guide,
In 2009,
Oh how it hurts me,
I've only seen her twice
Since she went west for the second time
Since 1939.

Pulp

Album: *Different Class* (1995)

Song: Common People

She came from Greece, she had a thirst for knowledge
She studied sculpture at Saint Martin's College,
That's where I caught her eye.

She told me that her dad was loaded
I said, "In that case I'll have a rum and coca-cola."
She said, "Fine,"
And in thirty seconds time
She said,

"I want to live like common people.
I want to do whatever common people do,
I want to sleep with common people

I want to sleep with common people like you."

Well, what else could I do?
I said, "I'll see what I can do."

I took her to a supermarket
I don't know why but I had to start it
Somewhere,
So it started there.

I said, "Pretend you've got no money,"
She just laughed and said, "Oh, you're so funny."
I said, "Yeah?"
Well, I can't see anyone else smiling in here."

Are you sure you want to live like common people?
You want to see whatever common people see
You want to sleep with common people,
You want to sleep with common people like me.

But she didn't understand,
She just smiled and held my hand.

Rent a flat above a shop,
Cut your hair and get a job.
Smoke some fags and play some pool,
Pretend you never went to school.

But still you'll never get it right
'Cause when you're laid in bed at night
Watching 'roaches climb the wall
If you called your dad he could stop it all.

You'll never live like common people
You'll never do whatever common people do
You'll never fail like common people
You'll never watch your life slide out of view,
And dance and drink and screw
Because there's nothing else to do.

Sing along with the common people,
Sing along and it might just get you through
Laugh along with the common people
Laugh along even though they're laughing at you
And the stupid things that you do.
Because you think that poor is cool.

I want to live with common people like you,
I want to live with common people like you [etc..]

Sex Pistols

Album: *Never Mind The Bollocks, Here's The Sex Pistols* (1977)

Song: God Save The Queen

God save the queen
The fascist regime
They made you a moron
Potential H-bomb

God save the queen
She ain't no human being
There is no future
In England's dreaming

Don't be told what you want
Don't be told what you need
There's no future, no future,
No future for you

God save the queen
We mean it man
We love our queen
God saves

God save the queen
'Cause tourists are money
And our figurehead
Is not what she seems

Oh God save history
God save your mad parade
Oh Lord God have mercy
All crimes are paid

When there's no future
How can there be sin
We're the flowers in the dustbin
We're the poison in your human machine
We're the future, your future

God save the queen
We mean it man
We love our queen
God saves

God save the queen
We mean it man
And there is no future
In England's dreaming

No future, no future,
No future for you

No future, no future,
No future for me

No future, no future,
No future for you
No future, no future

For you

The Beatles

Album: *Rubber Soul* (1965)

Song: In My Life

There are places I remember
All my life though some have changed
Some forever not for better
Some have gone and some remain
All these places have their moments
With lovers and friends I still can recall
Some are dead and some are living
In my life I've loved them all

But of all these friends and lovers
There is no one compares with you
And these memories lose their meaning
When I think of love as something new
Though I know I'll never lose affection
For people and things that went before
I know I'll often stop and think about them
In my life I love you more

Though I know I'll never lose affection
For people and things that went before
I know I'll often stop and think about them
In my life I love you more

In my life I love you more

The Beatles

Album: *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967)

Song: A Day In The Life

I read the news today, oh boy
About a lucky man who made the grade
And though the news was rather sad
Well, I just had to laugh
I saw the photograph

He blew his mind out in a car,
He didn't notice that the lights had changed
A crowd of people stood and stared
They'd seen his face before

Nobody was really sure if he was from the House of
Lords

I saw a film today, oh boy;
The English army had just won the war
A crowd of people turned away
But I just had to look
Having read the book

I'd love to turn you on

Woke up, fell out of bed
Dragged a comb across my head
Found my way downstairs and drank a cup
And looking up, I noticed I was late

Found my coat and grabbed my hat
Made the bus in seconds flat
Found my way upstairs and had a smoke
And somebody spoke and I went into a dream

Ah I read the news today, oh boy
Four thousand holes in Blackburn, Lancashire
And though the holes were rather small
They had to count them all
Now they know how many holes it takes to fill the
Albert Hall

I'd love to turn you on

The Clash

Album: *London Calling* (1979)

Song: London Calling

London calling to the faraway towns
Now war is declared, and battle come down
London calling to the underworld
Come out of the cupboard, you boys and girls
London calling, now don't look to us
Phoney Beatlemania has bitten the dust
London calling, see we ain't got no swing
'Cept for the ring of that truncheon thing

The ice age is coming, the sun's zooming in
Meltdown expected, the wheat is growing thin
Engines stop running, but I have no fear
'Cause London is drowning, and I live by the river

London calling to the imitation zone
Forget it, brother, you can go it alone
London calling to the zombies of death
Quit holding out, and draw another breath

London calling, and I don't wanna shout
But while we were talking, I saw you nodding out
London calling, see we ain't got no high
Except for that one with the yellowy eyes

The ice age is coming, the sun's zooming in
Engines stop running, the wheat is growing thin
A nuclear error, but I have no fear
'Cause London is drowning, and I live by the river

Now get this

London calling, yes, I was there, too
An' you know what they said? Well, some of it was
true!
London calling at the top of the dial
After all this, won't you give me a smile?
London calling

I never felt so much alike [fading] alike alike alike

The Kinks

Album: *The Village Green Preservation Society* (1968)

Song: The Village Green Preservation Society

We are the Village Green Preservation Society
God save Donald Duck, Vaudeville and Variety
We are the Desperate Dan Appreciation Society
God save strawberry jam and all the different varieties
Preserving the old ways from being abused
Protecting the new ways for me and for you
What more can we do

We are the Draught Beer Preservation Society
God save Mrs. Mopp and good Old Mother Riley
We are the Custard Pie Appreciation Consortium
God save the George Cross and all those who were
awarded them

We are the Sherlock Holmes English Speaking
Vernacular

Help save Fu Manchu, Moriarty and Dracula
We are the Office Block Persecution Affinity
God save little shops, china cups and virginity
We are the Skyscraper condemnation Affiliate
God save tudor houses, antique tables and billiards
Preserving the old ways from being abused
Protecting the new ways for me and for you
What more can we do
God save the Village Green.

The Kinks

Album: *Arthur (Or The Decline And Fall Of The British Empire)* (1969)

Song: Arthur

Arthur was born just a plain simple man
In a plain simple working class position
Though the world was hard and its ways were set
He was young and he had so much ambition
All the way he was overtaken
By the people who make the big decisions
But he tried and he tried for a better life
And a way to improve his own condition
If only life were easy it would be such fun
Things would be more equal and be plenty for everyone
Arthur the world's gone and passed you by
Don't you know it, don't you know it
You can cry, cry all night but it won't make it right
Don't ya know it, don't ya know it

Arthur we know and we sympathize
Don't ya know it, don't ya know it
Arthur we like you and want to help you
Somebody loves you don't you know it

How is your life and your Shangri-la
And your long lost land of Hallelujah
And your hope and glory has passed you by
Can't you see what the world is doing to ya
And now we see your children
Sailing off in the setting sun
To a new horizon
Where there's plenty for everyone
Arthur, could be
That the world was wrong
Don't ya know it, don't ya know it
Arthur, could be
You were right all along
Don't ya know it, I hope ya know it
Now we know and we sympathize
We'd like to help you and understand you
Don't ya know it, don't ya know it
Somebody loves you, don't ya know it
Don't ya know it, don't ya know it

Arthur the world's gone and passed you by
Don't ya know it, don't ya know it
You can cry, cry all night
But it won't make it right
Don't ya know it, don't ya know it
Arthur we read you and understand you
Arthur we like you and want to help you

Oh! we love you and want to help you

The Kinks

Album: *Face To Face* (1966)

Song: Dead End Street

There's a crack up in the ceiling,
And the kitchen sink is leaking,
Out of work and got no money,
A Sunday joint of bread and honey.

What are we living for?
Two-roomed apartment on the second floor.
No money coming in,
The rent collector's knocking, trying to get in.

We are strictly second class,
We don't understand,
(Dead end!)
Why we should be on dead end street
(Dead end!)
People are living on dead end street.
(Dead end!)
Gonna die on dead end street.

Dead end street (yeah)
Dead end street (yeah)

On a cold and frosty morning,
Wipe my eyes and stop me yawning,
And my feet are nearly frozen,
Boil the tea and put some toast on.

What are we living for?
Two-roomed apartment on the second floor.
No chance to emigrate,
I'm deep in debt and now it's much too late.

We both want to work so hard,
We can't get the chance,
(Dead end!)
People live on dead end street.
(Dead end!)
People are dying on dead end street.
(Dead end!)
Gonna die on dead end street.

Dead end street (yeah)
Dead end street (yeah)

(Dead end!)
People live on dead end street.
(Dead end!)

People are dying on dead end street.
(Dead end!)
Gonna die on dead end street.

Dead end street (yeah)
Dead end street (yeah)
Dead end street (yeah)
Head to my feet (yeah)
Dead end street (yeah)
Dead end street (yeah)
Dead end street (yeah)
How's it feel? (yeah)
How's it feel? (yeah)
Dead end street (yeah)
Dead end street (yeah)

The Libertines

Album: *Up The Bracket* (2003)

Song: Time For Heroes

Did you see the stylish kids in the riot
We were shovelled up like muck
Set the night on fire
Wombles bleed truncheons and shields
You know I cherish you my love

But there's a rumour spread nasty diseases around town
Caught round the houses with your trousers down
A headrush in the bush
You know I cherish you my love
How I cherish you my love

What can you want now you've got it all
The whole scene is obscene
Time will strip it away
A year and a day
And Bill Bones
Bill Bones he knows what I mean

Yes it's eating no it's chewing me up
It's not right for young lungs to be coughing up blood
Oh it's all
It's all in my hands
And it's all up the walls

Well the stale chips are up and the hopes stakes are
down
It's these ignorant faces that bring this town down
Yeah I sighed and sunken with pride
I passed myself down on my knees
Yes I passed myself down on my knees

What can you want now you've got it all
The whole scene is obscene
Time will strip it away
A year and a day
And Bill Bones
Bill Bones knows what I really mean

There are fewer more distressing sights than that
Of an Englishman in a baseball cap
And we'll die in the class we were born
Well that's a class of our own my love
A class of our own my love

Did you see the stylish kids in the riot
We were shovelled up like muck
Then set the night on fire
Wombles bleed truncheons and shields
You know I cherish you my love
Oh how I cherish you my love.

The Libertines

Album: *Up The Bracket* (2003)

Song: Boys in the Band

You're walking like you never seen the light
You're walking like it every night
But I've never seen you dance,
and I've never heard you sing
So how can it mean a single thing
It's all so rudimentary

You're talking like your handy in a fight
You talk about it every night
But I've never seen your flowers,
in the barrel of a gun
All I've ever seen you do is run
It's all so rudimentary

So tell me baby how does it feel
I know you like the roll of the limousine wheel

And they all get them out for
(they all get them out)
The boys in the band
(only for the boys in the band)
They twist and they shout for
(twist and scream and shout)
For the boys in the band
(only for the boys in the band)

You're walking like you never seen the light
You're walking like it every night
But then I stop to think,

I ask my self why
One of those things that darling you must try
It's all so rudimentary

Now I'm jealous, I'm jealous of my own
I've no homestead but through these hearts I will roam,
yea

And they all get them out for
(they all get them out)
For The boys in the band
(only for the boys in the band)
Yes they all roll them out for
(twist and scream and shout)
For The boys in the band
Only for the boys in the band

Well tell me baby how does it feel
I know you like the roll of the limousine wheel

And they all get them out for
(they all get them out)
The boys in the band
(only for the boys in the band)
They scream and they shout for
(twist and scream and shout)
For the boys in the band
(only for the boys in the band)

The Libertines

Song: Hooray For The 21st Century

Every sweet little lie ever whispered to you now rings
true
No need to wake the sleeping dogs when they'll just turn
on you
I'll make my way instead to the foots of your ivory tower
But no love do I find there amongst the leaves and the
dying flowers

What became of the lover we knew?
Beat the swine black and blue
You and I, me and you
What became of the lover we knew?
What became of the lover we knew?

The Thames and the Mersey, the Thyme and the Wear
and the Clyde
They spew slums like gravey on the banks of the
poisonous tyde
They washed up the pale thin girl, alone in her ivory
tower
Scratching her skin with the thorns that grow on the

stems of the wild flower

What became of the lover we knew?
Beat the swine black and blue
You and I, me and you
What became of the lover we knew?

What became of the working class
Nike, Reebok, Adidas,
Scratch cards, pitbulls, ecstasy
Hooray fo the 21st Century (5x)

Living in a looking glass as the beauty of life goes by
You're going to be so oh, you're going grow so old
Your skin so cold

Hooray for the 21st Century

The Libertines

Song: Dilly Boys

My love wrote the words to the saddest songs
The songs that says that life's too long
And the moon is always blue, just because

I wish you'd sing me those other songs again
The songs that say life's worth the worry and the pain
The sun smiles through the rain, just because
Just because she's the sweetest girl, the sweetest girl in
the world

She's my moral guide, oh she does nothing at all
Smokes all of my bones and stares at the wall
Maybe she'll pace the room, howl at the moon
But still she's the sweetest girl
And he's the sweetest boy in the world

And me, I'm just a dilly boy
A fresh flower pressed Piccadilly boy
Hands on hips, pout on lips
Meat, rag-tag like a dilly boy
She's the sweetest girl, the sweetest girl in the world
In China Town, they all la la la la

Me, I'm just a dilly boy
A fresh flower pressed Piccadilly boy
Hands on hips, pout on lips
Meat, rag-tag like a dilly boy
She's the sweetest girl, the sweetest girl in the world

The Libertines

Album: *The Libertines (2004)*

Song: Can't Stand Me Now

An ending fitting for the start
you twist and tore our love apart
your light fingers through the dark
that shattered the lamp and into the darkness cast us...

No you've got it the wrong way round
you shut me up and blamed it on the brown
cornered the boy kicked out at the world...the world
kicked back
alot fuckin' harder now

If you wanna try, If you wanna try
there's no worse you could do (oh oh oh)
I know you lie (I know you lie)
I'm still in love with you (oh oh oh)

Can't take me anywhere (Cant take you anywhere)
Can't take me anywhere (wouldn't take you anyway)
I'll take you anywhere you wanna go

Can't stand me now (you can't stand me now) etc.

Have we enough to keep it together?
or do we just keep on pretending (and hope our luck is
never ending...)
You tried to pull the wool I wasn't feeling too clever,
you tool all that they're lending
until you needed mending...

If you wanna try etc
You can't stand me now

The Libertines

Album: *The Libertines (2004)*

Song: Narcissist

Professionally trendy in the glow of Claphams sun
There's life after work and it can be such fun
You see all your models in magazines and on the walls
You wanna be just like them
Cause they're so cool

They're just narcissists
Well wouldn't it be nice to be Dorian Gray?
Just for a day
They're just narcissists
Oh, what's so great to be Dorian Gray
Everyday?

We're living in a looking glass
As the beauty of life goes by
You're going to be so oh
You're going to grow so old
Your skin so cold

Well they're just narcissists
Well wouldn't it be nice to be Dorian Gray?
Just for a day
They're just narcissists
Oh, what's so great to be Dorian Gray
Everyday?

They're just narcissists
Well wouldn't it be nice to be Dorian Gray?
Just for a day
Just for a day

The Libertines

Album: *The Libertines (2004)*

Song: The Good Old Days

If Queen Boadicea is long dead and gone
Still then the spirit
In her children's children's children
It lives on

If you've lost your faith in love and music
Oh the end won't be long
Because if it's gone for you then I too may lose it
And that would be wrong

You know I've tried so hard to keep myself from falling
Back into my bad old ways
And it chars my heart to always hear you calling
Calling for the good old days
Because there were no good old days
These are the good old days

It's not about tenements and needles
And all the evils in their eyes
And the backs of their minds
Daisy chains and school yard games
And a list of things we said we'd do tomorrow
A list of things we said we'd do tomorrow

The Arcadian dream has all fallen through
But the Albion sails on course
So let's man the decks and hoist the rigging
Because the pig men found the source
And there's twelve rude boys on the oars

The Libertines

Album: *Anthems For Doomed Youth*
(2015)

Song: You're My Waterloo

You'll never fumigate the demons
No matter how much you smoke
So just say you love me
For three good reasons
And I'll throw you the rope

You don't need it
Because you are the survivor
Of more than one life
And you're the only lover I had
Who ever slept with a knife

But you're not Judy Garland
Oh just like me you've never really had a home of your
own
But I'm not Tony Hancock baby
Until the dawn
We'll stone the crows
We'll stone the crows

And you see I've brought you flowers
All collected from the Old Vic Stage
Well I've been sitting here for hours, baby
Just chasing these words
Across the page

Cause you're my Waterloo
Well I'll be your Gypsy Lane
I'm so glad we know just what to do
And exactly who's to blame

And you're my Waterloo
I'll be your Stanley Park
Well I'm so glad we know just what to do
And no one's left
Stumbling around
Tumbling around
Fumbling around
In the dark

Always in the dark

You're my Waterloo
I'll be your Calvary
Well I'm so glad we know just what to do
And everyone's gonna be happy
Everyone's gonna be happy
Everyone's gonna be happy

But of course

The Libertines

Album: *Anthems For Doomed Youth*
(2015)

Song: Heart Of The Matter

No one can hold a light to your misery
You're the number one
Being hard done
Hard done by
You'll get by with your smile
Wicked smile and laughing at the misfortune of others
Yelling at your kids
Kicking the pricks
Laughing as they pick up sticks
And old ladies walks on by
Trip up as they glide

With all the battering it's taken
I'm surprised it's still ticking
Yeah with all the battering it's taken
I'm surprised it's still ticking

Let's get straight to the heart of the matter
So glum, it's all on a platter
So what's the matter, what's the matter today?

I am no stranger to the cause
I carry them in my soul
They scorch my flesh and leave great holes
In the meaning of my life
But I get by, I get by
Just as crooked little smile
You'll get by, you'll get by

With all the battering it's taken
Well, I'm surprised it's still ticking
Yeah, with all the battering it has taken
I'm surprised it's still ticking
Let's get straight to the heart of the matter
So glum, it's all on a platter
So what's the matter, what's the matter today?
Oh let's get straight to the heart of the matter
Why so glum it's all on the platter
So what's the matter tell me what's the matter today?

So hold a light to my misery
But don't send it up in flames
It's only I who take the blame
But try me anyway
And you'll get by you'll get by

With your wicked little smile
You'll get by, you'll get by with your wicked little

With the battering it's taken
I'm surprised that it's still ticking
Yeah with all the battering it's taken
I'm surprised it's still ticking

Let's get straight to the heart of the matter
Oh why so glum, it's all on a platter
Oh what's the matter, what's the matter today?
Let's get straight to the heart of the matter
Why so glum, it's all on a platter
Oh what's the matter it's the glory hallelujah day
Straight to the heart of the matter
Why so glum, it's all on a platter
Oh what's the matter, what's the matter today?
Let's get straight!

The Libertines

Album: *Anthems For Doomed Youth*
(2015)

Song: Fame and Fortune

Seeking fame and fortune
We walk the streets of London
Looking for the crossroads everywhere
Holed up in squats in theatre bars
There's a slasher on the Holloway boulevard
Screaming, "Monkey, monkey, mon-key everywhere."

Like tin soldiers responding to the call
To Camden we will crawl
One and all
Oh, down to trash and lordie-lords
By icons we were lured
One and all

Seeking fame and fortune
All they say's, "come on then, I'll meet you in the
shadows by Rochester square."
The deal was done, the trade was rough
Dublins down for a double bluff
Dip your quill in your bleeding heart
Sign there and there and there

Like tin soldiers responding to the call
To Camden we will crawl
One and all
Oh, down to trash and lordie-lord
By icons we were lured
One and all

Oh, they were as boys, tell me what then did they know
What was it they learned and where did they go
Now listen to the voice of the city morning air
If you're looking for something that's never been there

If you're seeking fame and fortune
Walking the streets of London
Looking for the crossroads everywhere
Hold on to your dreams, however bleak it seems
The world they may not listen, but the devil may care

Like tin soldiers responding to the call
To Camden we will crawl
One and all
Oh, down to trash and lordie-lord
By icons we were lured
One and all