The Changing Image of War according to the lyrics and imagery used by Iron Maiden

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1. Introduction

Iron Maiden is one of the most popular, enduring and genre defining British heavy metal bands in history. Their music is enjoyed by a broad audience across the globe and their impact in heavy metal music is easily observed in the many bands that consider them a major influence. Iron Maiden also receives admiration for their song-writing and musical approach. However, there has only been some research into their song lyrics. While there is much that is self-evident in the messages of their songs, they are also filled with interesting meanings and viewpoints which display to some degree a changing attitude in heavy metal music and also, possibly, in the greater culture at large.

Iron Maiden has produced 15 studio albums to date, as well as numerous singles, concert videos, live albums and other musical content. Its career stretches from the late 1970s to the present day and the band has a catalogue of over 150 songs. The songs are mostly composed by the band's founding member, bassist Steve Harris. In addition, a great deal of the band's material has been penned by singer Bruce Dickinson and guitarist Adrian Smith. The band's previous singers, Paul Di'Anno and Blaze Bayley have also contributed a great many songs, despite only joining the band for two albums each. Other members of the band have contributed in lesser degree and mostly in the musical compositions. One noted deviation is David Murray's series of songs about Charlotte the Harlot, consisted of four songs written between 1980 and 1990.

While the group had its start in the late 1970s, they released their first album in 1980. They were then considered part of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal Movement, a post-punk genre of heavy metal revival. After two albums with singer Paul Di'Anno helming the band, they switched to singer Bruce Dickinson for the album The Number of the Beast in 1982. Afterwards, they enjoyed massive mainstream fame, despite not receiving airplay due to the seemingly controversial nature of their songs. Their musical approach became more artistic and broad as opposed to the simplified musical approach of their first two albums released in 1980 and 1982, Iron Maiden and Killers. The band's popularity endured through the rest of the 1980s. Their commercial success began to wane in the 1990s, when Bruce Dickinson left the band for a period in 1993. The band began to regain its popularity with the return of Bruce Dickinson and Adrian Smith to the band for the album Brave New World in 2000. They have enjoyed steady success since through the 2000s. The band's success is also partly due to the steady roster of players. Despite heavy changes in their early years, the band's members have remained largely constant since 1983, with the entry of drummer Nicko.
McBrain. With the exception of Bruce Dickinson, most of the band's members lack substantial, formal education, although the band's members are known as avid readers, moviegoers and for having a great interest in history, which is often reflected in the subject matter of their songs.

I became interested in analysing Iron Maiden's song lyrics while writing my Candidate's Seminar and the resultant thesis. In honing down the particular aspect of analysis within Iron Maiden's catalogue, I mapped out the various themes that were discussed in their songs. They varied from broader areas like religion, spirituality, science fiction and war to more personal ones such as sex, love, dreams and individuality. Religion and war were the most frequently appearing themes. Religion being the subject of 26 and war the subject 21 songs, both either explicitly or implicitly. The religious aspects of Iron Maiden's music are very bluntly Judeo-Christian and feature common themes seen within the Western Christian cultural circle, which did not hold much interest for me. Therefore, I became more interested in how Iron Maiden approached the subject of war instead. In my Candidate's thesis, I contrasted six songs from Iron Maiden's sub-catalogue of war in order to display how the band's approach to war as a subject matter had changed across their career. The songs chosen for the analysis were picked to represent the major phases of their career and included the following songs: Invaders, Aces High, Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), Afraid to Shoot Strangers, Blood on the World's Hands and For the Greater Good of God. Although not a conscious decision at the time, these songs were all written by Steve Harris. What became evident from the initial analysis was that Harris's handling of the subject had changed from a more impersonal and glorified form to a more personal and critical form. I also noted that the element of historicity, using historical conflicts as the subject matter, had dissipated from these types of song over time.

In my Seminar Paper on Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), hence referred to as Alexander the Great, I focused my analysis on the historic and mythical elements within the song as well as the performance, building up the ideas of musical analysis from Frith (1983, 1988), Walser (1993) and Griffiths (2003). The song contrasted drastically from Steve Harris's other war-related songs since Iron Maiden's songs had at that point typically focused on an anonymous warrior of a British conflict, whereas the song in question was about a specific non-British conqueror. It did maintain consistency with other contemporary songs from the band in that it displayed war and combat as mostly glorious and good. However, it also introduced an element of commentary on war and what lasting effect Alexander's life had. It seemed to stand as an early example of the change that would occur some time later in Harris's writing.
My goal in this Pro Gradu thesis is to expand on my prior analysis of Iron Maiden's songs about war. This expansion will take the form of a more wholehearted analysis of their depiction and condemnation of military conflict in general. I will approach this analysis from three directions, the area of historicity and its absence as well as the stylistic choices used in Iron Maiden's war-related songs through their whole career as well as through imagological analysis of their songs, relevant promotional artwork and music videos. This will be achieved through close analysis of the lyrics of a limited set of corpus, but the findings are expanded upon to cover the occurrence of similar elements in the band's other songs of the contemporary era. Six songs will be used as the basis of this analysis and two songs represents a decade in the band's professional, recording career: the 1980s, the 1990s and the 2000s. A further criteria is their incorporation of elements common with songs of that contemporary era by the group, although comparisons with deviating styles will also be incorporated to give a broader understanding of the change in their song-writing. The individual songs chosen for close analysis are: Aces High, 2 Minutes to Midnight, Afraid to Shoot Strangers, Blood on the World's Hands, Paschendale [sic] and For the Greater Good of God. The elements considered for analysis are those of historicity and modernity, in relation to the sort of conflicts which are depicted. There is also a stylistic consideration of lyrics, metaphors, idioms as well as the performance of the songs. The imagological analysis will be focused on the visual components of the songs and the material surrounding and supporting it. These include the album and single cover-artwork of the analysed songs as well as the music videos.

The purpose of these analyses is to answer the central questions of how Iron Maiden's handling of the subject matter has changed through their career and, also, why. The analysis is designed to give precise answers to the former while a broader consideration of the band's members and their fan-base should provide some clarity to the latter. I feel the study of these song lyrics are important not simply from the viewpoint of the groups notability, but in order to establish some common, cultural viewpoints on the attitudes towards military conflict. Although, as will be discussed further in the thesis as well, this is not to be taken as a survey into popular opinion, but rather one example of thought on the subject matter and its commentary.

The contents of the thesis are carried out as such. In Section 2, Theory, I will introduce the concepts and approaches important to the analysis carried out in the thesis. In Section 3, Material and Analysis, I will outline the corpus and rationale for its choosing and conduct the analysis based on the relevant theoretical background. I will collect the major points of consideration of the thesis
with Section 4, Discussion, summarising the major points of interest and the consistency of the elements through Iron Maiden's career. I will conclude the thesis with this section where I will also outline thoughts for further analysis and reflection on Iron Maiden's material and study of heavy metal music in general.
2. Theory

In the following section, I will outline prior research on the field and methods that my analyses will be based on. There are six subsections to this section of the thesis. In the first, I will outline general theory about the analysis of lyrics as outlined by Simon Frith, David Walser and Dai Griffiths. This section is intended to give the reader a general idea of how the analysis of music is looked upon in the literature and also to explain my approach to the analysis of the lyrics. The second section discusses ideas of individualism and emancipation in heavy metal music according to Kemp and Weinstein, which is a vital point in the stylistic analyses of the songs. The third section expands on the ideas of authenticity suggested by Frith. This section prefaces the contrasting of historicity and modernity in the initial historical analyses. The fourth section discusses the element of nationalism, especially in regards to British heavy metal music. The fifth section discusses apocalyptic and destructive imagery in heavy metal music. These last two sections are intended to preface some of the stylistic analyses. The sixth section discusses the essential core theory and theory specific to this thesis in the field imagology, which will be important to the analysis of visual components in Section 3.

2.1 Analysing music according to Walser, Frith and Griffiths

As music is the principal component of my analyses, it is useful to consider what literature of this field considers to be important in the analysis of songs and their lyrics. Many sources warn about the pitfalls of simplifying lyrics to only their written form as plain text, without further consideration of their formation and writing. Walser (1993) goes so far as to say that the lyrics make up only a fraction of the actual meaning of a song (p. 26). He justifies his viewpoint with the comparison of spoken and written text and how, when represented in print, lyrics lose a lot of the inherent dynamic nature associated with them (p. 40). Walser's opinions are heavily influenced by his more technical approach to music and his far greater knowledge of music in played form compared to myself. In addition, Frith (1988) points out that when trying to judge the authenticity of lyrics, a song that tries to accomplish a realistic surface description does not necessarily sound genuine (p. 113). What is meant by this is that authenticity of a song's message has more to do with the component of performance. Both Walser and Frith agree that it is not necessarily the meaning of the lyrics which is important but how they are sung and performed (Frith 1988, p. 121). Frith does not deny that lyrics themselves hold meaning quite as readily as Walser. In my analysis, I will try to
take the performance of each song into account when doing the stylistic analysis under Section 3. Not having formal musical training, my musical assessment of the songs will be unquestionably simplified, but I will never the less endeavour to assess the performance if not from the viewpoint of strict musicianship then at least through simple performance artistry. What ultimately important in my view rather than precise and accurate documentation of melody shifts, is to consider how Iron Maiden achieves the message it puts forth. There is a risk that dramatisation may falsify the intended message, but this does not devalue the message's inherent importance and meaning.

Walser bases his ideas on those of Frith (1988), whose views are not quite as condemnatory towards the analysis of lyrics. Frith points out that music and lyrics depend on each other. Music itself makes lyrics come alive while lyrics give music a social use (p. 123). Frith (1983) also says that music is listened for pleasure and to hear passions expressed (p. 164-165), which is why the analysis of a song's lyrical meaning is important to understand it. Frith (1988) does point out that some of the common errors made in analysing music against the prevailing social condition is to assume that a song's lyrical meanings are transparent, which they are not (p. 107). Similarly Frith warns about making assumptions that the opinions expressed by the musician would be the same as the common popular opinion of the day, which they are not (p. 113). What Frith seems to be indicating is that it is important to consider the motivation of the performer himself, which will be discussed more in-depth in Section 4.0. This idea is also presented by Griffiths (2003) who also emphasises that when analysing lyrics, the performer has to be taken into account (p. 59). In Iron Maiden's case, the fact that most of the members are not formally educated and that they seem to write songs recognised for their subtext is worthy of note. Bruce Dickinson is the only one to have a formal degree in history. However, it goes without saying that considering the motivations and goals of the song helps to understand the more fundamental levels of meaning of a musical composition.

Griffiths (2003) presents a few important thoughts in his own essay about analysing the lyrics of pop songs. He considers the analysis of lyrics to be important but warns that overt dramatisation is not a reason for analysing lyrics of songs, but rather their content and style (p. 42). Griffiths feels that song lyrics are too frequently equated to poetry, while in his view they also display forms of prose and should be treated as such when analysed (p. 42-43). What he means by this is that songs feature narratives and protagonists, the same way as prose type stories do. This is also true for many Iron Maiden songs. These prosaic elements will form a big part of both the historicity and stylistic analyses. These sources make it clear that while analysing lyrics, it is important to also note the
style of performance, the performer themselves and to avoid making simplifying, sweeping assumptions about prevailing social conditions. It does not close out that the band wants to say something about condition of the world or that the song's writing does not reflect the era and conditions it was written in. On the contrary, these are all vital points while considering the meaning of the lyrics and will also be assessed when I present my corpus in Section 3. It is instead important to note that Iron Maiden is not speaking necessarily in the favour of country or nation, but frequently hold a strong individualistic viewpoint which is discussed further in the immediate following section.

2.2 Metal rebellion and individualism

Elements of rebellion and strong individualism are highly valued in heavy metal music and also reflect on the song-writing itself. Kemp (2006) argues that the exercise of one's free will is a core message of much heavy metal music and equally it scorns any form of self-denial. Kemp also notes that self-empowerment is a key motif found in most songs against the evil of collectivization (p. 39-40). This motif is also presents in Iron Maiden's music, including their songs about war. The perspective of their songs is often individualistic and the tone of combat is one of destruction and saddened resignation to one's fate, a lack of choice or choice taken away. Examples of this can be found in songs like The Trooper and Afraid to Shoot Strangers, which carry a personal perspective and it is also a central theme of the song For the Greater Good of God.

Individualism necessarily stands in opposition to an established body and in the case of heavy metal music this rebellion frequently has a masculine undertone. Weinstein (2009) notes that heavy metal popularly carries a strong image of violence, masculinity and misogyny. The masculine image of the music comes from its fandom being largely male and this often stigmatizes the genre and other forms of rock music as misogynistic or marginalising towards women (p. 17-18). However, Weinstein argues that the masculinity is actually just a form of youthful rebellion which is not intended antagonise but rather form of setting oneself against passiveness (p. 18-19, 28). The negative interpretations are rather massive oversimplification of the central themes and due to the inherent dualistic nature of masculinity, in opposition to femininity, has become associated with these meanings. These views clearly follow those of Kemp's views that despite extreme forms of expression, which are often misread by those unfamiliar with the music, their message is one of emancipation, personal liberty and free choice. In Iron Maiden's war-related songs, they will often serve as a counter-point to an underlying theme of nationalistic and patriotic thought, which carries
with it an assimilation to a larger entity and the fading of personal identity and importance which is discussed more in Section 2.4. These views can be considered somewhat outdated in a more postmodern world view which Iron Maiden also inhabits. The counterpoint is important to note so as to avoid a misinterpretation that Iron Maiden would be glorifying these old views, even though their early material uses elements of antiquity and often puts forth the image of war as a subject of awe, but notably of terror in their later song-writing.

2.3 Authenticity and historicity according to Campbell, Walser and Frith

The prevalence of historic combat in Iron Maiden's early song-writing necessarily means that this element of historicity should be analysed. In assessing the historicity of Iron Maiden's songs, there is a very obvious question to be asked about authenticity. Are Iron Maiden singing about the war specifically or is it just a superficial layer of narrative laid on top of a melody or merely masking another type of message? It is tempting to think that there is no real message being said in any of the historical lyrics in Iron Maiden's song catalogue, when considering Campbell's (2009) assessment of classical themes in the band's music. He argues that Iron Maiden chose Alexander the Great as their topic for his eponymous track in their 1986 album, because of the inherent gravitas that he brings to the song (p.121). However, Campbell also notes in his own essay how well the lyrics of the song were received, even though the song itself, as a combined musical and vocal performance, was not. I feel Campbell's views are justified in that there is always a strong imagological textile level to heavy metal music. Apart from the performance, themes and settings of song narratives are chosen deliberately to invoke a certain type of mood to the listener. However, Campbell and his examples also seriously undermine the musical importance of Alexander the Great, with its vastly changing melody shifts, tempo changes and Bruce Dickinson's exulting and dramatic vocal delivery in celebration of a great man, indeed "a legend 'mongst mortal men". There is power both in the composition as well as the words which should not be undermined as Frith and Walser argue.

The problems of authenticity brings forth an important point from Frith (1988) who notes that accurate surface description in songs is not what causes the emotional response to the song (p. 113). Frith is referring to the afore-mentioned importance of assessing the stylistic choices made by the artist. This approach seems to indicate that there is nothing inherent that Iron Maiden is trying to say about the past and that by removing the inherently obvious historical context, the historicity in their music loses all meaning (Walser 1993, p. 153). However, Walser points out that Iron Maiden
is reconstructing history in its music to illustrate something else (p. 154). He argues that they are specifically using the chaotic displacement of historical imagery is used to express the anxieties of the modern world, thus creating new meanings (p. 159-160). These views are shared by Bayer (2009) who argues that heavy metal music displays a post-modern fascination with nostalgia, which is being reacquired and reused to tell a different type of story (p. 191). In my view, Walser and Campbell assessment holds true for Iron Maiden and I will take it into account when assessing the historicity or the lack of it in the historical analyses under Section 3. Considering, Britain's long past of warfare, it seems obvious that there is a lot of nostalgic imagery that is being reused, but there might be other historical commentary that is going on which I think should not be overlooked as simple reinterpretation of something else. In addition, authentic and real images of destruction are an important point of communicating meaning, as discussed in Section 2.5.

2.4 Nationalism and faux-nationalism in British heavy metal music

When depicting historical warfare, strong nationalistic imagery tends to be a big part of it, especially in the case of Great Britain which has a long history of important battles and as a nation has frequently asserted itself through violence. Nationalism as an ideal was beginning to form in the 19th century in the aftermath of the Age of Enlightenment, according to Anderson (1991) due to the growing scepticism of individual uniqueness and the immortality of the human soul. This led to a crisis where it became more popular to imagine nations as immortal (p. 10-12). Bayer (2009) argues that British heavy metal has become increasingly popular in spite of the inherently British elements within it and not specifically because of them (p. 182). He suggests that while rock music supports the idea of a nation as an imagined community, such as a global fan-base, it runs counter to the ideas of sovereignty and control which are another part of the concept of a nation (p. 183). Therefore it becomes problematic to claim that British metal groups could be perceived as patriotic or nationalistic. Anderson (1991) states that patriotism is formed from the fear of the Other and conversely due to a strong sensation of love towards one's own nation (p. 141) and is formulated on the vocabulary of kinship, through words which identify people to belonging into a certain group or denomination (p. 143).

Bayer's argument makes sense in the context of Iron Maiden, who became renowned outside of the UK early in their recording career and whose fan-base is spread across many countries and continents. Iron Maiden's biggest concert, with an attendance of two hundred and fifty thousand, was during the Rock in Rio festival of 2001 in Brazil. Bayer (2009) also notes that Iron Maiden use
strong nationalistic imagery to apply to an individual. He refers to the story of the cavalry soldier in the 1983 song *The Trooper* as dying in a meaningless battle, which runs counter to Tennyson's original poem, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, which the song is based on (p. 187-188). In spite of this, Bruce Dickinson typically recites the first verse of the poem during concerts, wears the red cavalry jacket and waves the union jack during his performance. Even though these symbols do not have the same cultural meaning or context for their global listeners, they help get the audience in the correct state of mind. They exemplify what I would call a superficial "faux-nationalism" which has no real political or patriotic agenda. Bayer draws the conclusion that these sort of incongruous fusion of historical and cultural elements are meant to turn British heavy metal into a commodity (p. 190). In other words, Bayer rejects that there is anything truly nationalistic about Iron Maiden's music, despite some strong symbols used. Never the less, nationalism and the analysis of it is prudent and important and ignoring it would be lead to a severely simplified reading of their music. The component of nationalism seems bizarre and even counter to the individualistic ideal of heavy metal - but as will be demonstrated, Iron Maiden has exemplified some degree of patriotic ideals.

Finally, Anderson (1991) notes that a nation is an entity that people are willing to give their lives for which is meaningful when considering the depiction of war, usually fought between different nations. Despite the fact that a nation is often viewed as a "natural" entity, Anderson points out its quality as an "unchosen" factor which connects people within in (p. 143). Because of this, a nation can demand sacrifice from its people since itself is "interestless", an idea which justifies sacrificing one's life and achieving "purity through fatality" (p.148-149). This element of nationalism does play a part in Iron Maiden's music which, especially starting from the early 1990s, frequently problematizes the justification of war. How this is relevant is an important part of the historical analysis of the lyrics under Section 3.

2.5 Despair, destruction and social commentary in heavy metal – Taylor

Another point to consider in my background theory is the usage of images of destruction, especially those of combat. Taylor (2009) argues that the depictions of destruction and despair are not simply used as shock tactics by heavy metal bands, but in fact have underlying utopian ideals (p. 89). The destructive imagery comes from societies themselves and heavy metal music sets itself out to represent it and how it clashes with a utopian ideal (p. 90-91). In other words, the idea is to comment on war and dissect it for what it is. This kind of language and imagery is a prominent part
of Iron Maiden’s song-writing and there are clear changes of emphasis, depending on the song, on the explicitness of the actions as well as the explicitness of the violence which is depicted. This is not simply a shift from a more explicit to a less explicit depiction of violence and gore, but rather a change in the sort of detail that is expressed, from blood and guts to the roar of weaponry. The utopian ideal is important to consider because it helps to understand a lot of the inherent commentary within Iron Maiden's song writing, especially post-1980s. A simple surface reading does not necessarily give an accurate portrayal of what the band's intention is in writing the song, not a mere cataloguing and reporting of details, but also commenting. This is done, as demonstrated in the corpus, many times through dramatic song-writing and in some cases through hyperbole. In its simplicity, the band is saying ‘this is how things are, but they shouldn't be this way’. The songs inherently follow a premise where war and destruction are negative and terrifying forces.

Taylor (2009) also points out there is commonly held misconception that heavy metal music glorifies death and destruction (p. 104). What in actuality is happening, usually, is a misinterpretation of the sarcasm within the music. Iron Maiden itself incorporate such sarcasm in many of its songs such as 2 Minutes to Midnight and When the Wild Wind Blows. The songs do not offer solutions or relief to the issues discussed, since it is part of the message that heavy metal music conveys: discontinuity (p. 105). Sarcasm, in this instance, is the display of inherent hopelessness that individuals feel in the face of destruction. Both of the songs mentioned above deal with themes of nuclear holocaust and the fear of nuclear holocaust, through both explicit depiction and through a story suggesting the presence of destruction. They achieve the level of sarcastic approach differently. In the case of the former its desired effect is achieved through a joyous delivery of disgusting images and anti-government hyperbole. In the case of the latter, it's achieved through a prosaic story of people taking shelter from a false alarm and dying from contaminated rations.

This is especially important to consider when discussing Iron Maiden's songs from the 1980s. They are a prime example in which the band's outlook on war or violence in general can be misconstrued simply because images of horrific destruction are used as a stylistic device does not necessarily mean that glorification has happened. To interpret it as such is simplifying the reading, once again, to a shallow surface level. They may present a sense of awe and terror, which is necessary if the song is to have a desired impact. One part of the stylistic analysis will consider the type of destruction, language of destruction and possible metaphorical meanings of destruction.
2.6 Imagology, cover artwork and music videos

Imagology is the field of studying the significance and meanings behind images created by the various media from visual arts to text. Imagology has a heavy emphasis on national stereotypes and the images used to justify one’s belonging to a group, an autostereotype, and the definition of the ‘other’, the heterostereotype (Zacharasiewicz 2010, p. 12). It gained popularity in the 20th century due to the high level immigration, especially in the United States, which began to put into question nationally held self-images and forced people to re-evaluate them (p. 14). Europeans have also re-evaluated the heterostereotypes formed of them from the “misunderstandings of selective perception” (p. 15). In this thesis, I will also focus on the visual representations of war as shown by Iron Maiden. There is some emphasis on the nationalistic images, but on the whole the visual components have other and broader messages to convey. Apart from the imagery of the songs themselves, I will also take into account visual media born off the band to consider their approach to war. The strictly visual elements include album and single cover artwork and music videos.

Before considering the art specific to Iron Maiden’s work, it is important to consider the general views about military artwork. Charles and Tzu (2012) point to the most common use of military artwork is as a propaganda tool to glorify the victors of a conflict (p. 8-9). More critical viewpoints of war in art only started to become prominent from the 17th century onward as personal experience of conflict started to affect the artists depicting conflict (p. 10-13). Other common elements present in war artwork are their focus on a single leader figure, often a military commander, but also later the individual soldiers involved in conflict and frequently errors and anachronisms present within the work (p. 9-13). In the case of the latter, these are usually modern artists transplanting modern elements into depictions of historical conflicts, a habit which was particularly typical in the eras when accurate documentation of historical details was not widely available. This is referred to as “transculturation” of the subject. In the case of Iron Maiden’s artwork, it is important to consider the fact that they are meant for commercial usage and may not necessarily invoke the type of patriotic propagandistic sense as those commissioned by national agencies.

As part of the analysis also involves music videos and therefore it is important to note some basic facts about their composition and genre. Railton and Watson (2011) note that music videos are advertisement for the band or artist they are made for and secondary products by nature which often leads them to be ignored from the analysis of music. They note that the lack of analysis is counterintuitive as music videos have increased in prominence since the 1980s, while academic
interest in them has waned. They argue that music videos live "a life of their own" in television and internet repetition and are a visual art form based on representation and which have political implication due to the values they highlight (p. 2-9). As such, I feel Railton and Watson are arguing for a deeper understanding of the craft of music video making and not simply as a superficial side product of the group or artist they represent. The art of representation is also clearly evident in the visual narratives presented by Iron Maiden's music videos.

Railton and Watson (2011) also detail the types of genre classification for music videos. They note that there have been several attempts before and that none are completely accurate, due to the format being extremely fluid. Despite being problematic and disputed, according to them, categorisation is an ultimately useful tool for analysis as it leads to the identification of uniqueness within the medium (p. 41-43, 61-62). The genre division that Railton and Watson vouch for is the division of music videos into four major categories: pseudo-documentary, art music video, narrative and staged performance. To explain briefly the meanings of the four genres, a pseudo-documentary features what is called a "privileged viewpoint" of a band or artist back-stage and in other activities unrelated to the performance, intercutting to images of musicianship (p. 49-51), while an art music video can contain images entirely disjointed from the music and may employ techniques of surrealism and avant-garde (p. 51-55). Narrative music videos tell a story through the music video which may or may not be connected to the actual song. Narrative music videos can also be used to bring more specific context to vague or abstract song lyrics (p. 55-58). A staged performance simply refers to a lip-synced performance by the band, manufactured specifically to be used in a music video (p.58). Railton and Watson's classification system unfortunately does not give any specific mention to live-performances used as a music video or for promotional purposes, but this basic division still gives useful insight into the analysis of Iron Maiden's promotional videos. Railton and Watson's core idea is to look at the representation and how a performer's values are depicted within the context of the music and this will be very important when analysing the music videos in Section 3.4.3.
3. Material & Analysis

In these following sections, I shall present the research corpus and analysis of it. The six songs that will be focused on in the analysis sections are *Aces High, 2 Minutes to Midnight, Afraid to Shoot Strangers, Blood on the World's Hands, Paschendale* and *For the Greater Good of God*. These songs are all selected to represent the decade in which they appear in from the broader point of view of Iron Maiden’s recording career. Though not a selection criteria in and of itself, most of the songs were written by Steve Harris, the bassist and founding member of the group. As mentioned before, I will contrast them with other contemporary songs from the band in the actual analysis, so the simple lyrical analysis of the single songs is not the only focus. However, I have chosen each song intentionally as they contain elements very common to the songs of the particular era which they represent. Each introductory section will begin with the lyrics displayed, followed by the necessary background information, a general description of their content and then the actual separation of melodic units such as verses and choruses. There might be some interpretation of the corpus in these sections but no substantial analysis as that will be reserved for the relevant subsections. The visual corpus for the imagological analysis of Iron Maiden's depiction of war is handled differently due to the varied nature of the corpus. The rationale for its choosing and the individual visual components will be introduced in Visual corpus for imagological analysis section and the analysis is presented in the sections immediately following it.

After the introduction, I will present my findings for each song. The analysis is split into historical and stylistic analyses. This split is done to make the analysis of historicity and nationalism stand out as its own distinct element while the general stylistic analysis has more areas of consideration. The historical, nationalistic and general descriptions of war are analysed in the section immediately following each song's core information. This analysis is based on the theories of Bayer, Walser, Frith, Anderson and Kemp as outlined in the sections above. I will also use other background theory where applicable. The sections following these concern the stylistic analysis of the same songs. Each section will take into account the language, narrative, word choices and idioms as well as the precise content of the song. I will also take into account the performance style. For this section, the important background theory is that presented by Frith, Walser, Griffiths and Taylor’s ideas in the sections above.
In the case of both sets of analyses, I will point out by example, elements in other contemporary songs by the band to highlight the common elements appearing in the songs about war in that era. Equally, the purpose of also including the analysis and overview of other songs is to highlight the examples which deviate from these common elements. While the focus is on the individual songs is the primary focus of each analysis, the comparison with other contemporary material is done to achieve a broader understanding about the development of the group’s song-writing. In some sections this contrasting may be lighter to avoid repetition. I will also summarise and contrast my findings on a more general level concerning Iron Maiden’s career in Section 4.

3.1 Aces High

“We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender”

(Winston Churchill, July 4. 1940)

There goes the siren that warns of the air raid then comes the sound of the guns sending flack Out for the scramble, we’ve got to get airborne Got to get up for the coming attack.

Jump in the cockpit and start up the engines Remove all the wheelblocks there’s no time to waste Gathering speed as we head down the runway Gotta get airborne before it’s too late

(bridge:) Running, scrambling, flying Rolling, turning, diving, going in again. (repeat)

(chorus:) Run, live to fly, fly to live, do or die Won’t you run, live to fly, fly to live, Aces High.

(guitar solo)

Move in to fire at the mainstream of bombers Let off a sharp burst and then turn away Roll over, spin round to come in behind them Move to their blindsides and firing again

Bandits at 8 O’clock move in behind us Ten ME-109’s out of the sun Ascending and turning our spitfires to face them Heading straight for them I press down my guns.

(repeat bridge and chorus)

Aces High was written for Iron Maiden's fifth studio album, Powerslave from 1984, during the height of the band’s popularity. The early-1980s were also a time of great cold war anxiety, following a number of socialist uprisings of the 1970s and the still-present threat of Mutually Assured Destruction, an anxiety also present in the song 2 Minutes to Midnight from the same album. Powerslave is noted for its Egyptian art-style which formed a huge part of the promotional tour and was reflected heavily in the marketing material, while only the eponymous song from the album was the only one to concern the theme. The album was also the second featuring the five members of the group who are still members of the band, with the exception of Janick Gers who did not join until 1990. The song opens up the eight-track album and was also released as a promotional
single from the album along with *2 Minutes to Midnight*. The cover features a close-up of the band's mascot Eddie in the cockpit of an airplane while in flight. Broken pieces of the glass and falling airplanes indicate that this is the scene of a dog fight. While the album version does not include the opening quote from Winston Churchill, it was played in-concert before the actual song as well as in the beginning of the promotional music video. The track became a mainstay for the band and opened up their performances during the World Slavery Tour during 1984 and 1985, their longest global tour to date.

The lyrics display the preparation for the air combat with descriptions of the airplane's take off with the airplane crew hurriedly scrambling to get to the air. The second half of the song displays the actual actions taking place in the air and features descriptions of the battle. The structure of the song is simple: two sets of two verses consisted of four lines each separated by a guitar solo. Each pair of verses is followed by the bridge section leading to a chorus which features the manic and aggressive singing by Bruce Dickinson. The song has an instrumental introduction before the actual start which begins slow before speeding up to become the tempo of the verses. The instrumental finale slows down the melody and tempo for a final drum salute. The importance of these musical sections is detailed more in the Section 3.1.2.

### 3.1.1 Historical combat in *Aces High*

Since Iron Maiden first started writing about war in 1982 with the song *Invaders*, describing a Viking invasion of Anglo-Saxon Britain, a clear sense of historicity has been present in all their subsequent songs on the topic written during the 1980s. Although their first example is unclear in its setting, it alludes to Britain’s long history of war and combat. Britain’s past gives it a uniquely varied and vast variety of conflicts which it has taken part, from the Iron Age up to present day. Internal conflicts have been present during medieval times and Britain also has a long past of international conflicts, most significant amongst them the 100 Years War, the American Revolution and both World Wars.

The song *Aces High* is obviously about aerial combat. Ignoring for the moment the visual components of the single cover and the music video, the quote from Winston Churchill and the mention of the Messerschmitt Me-109, formally known as the Bf-109, makes it clear that the song is about British pilots fighting against the Germans in World War II. However, Bayer (2009) argues that despite these elements, the song is avoiding any specific national framework (p. 188). Bayer’s
assessment seems to turn these elements of historicity into simple decoration. He seems to be indicating that the song, one of the group’s most popular and enduring numbers, is popular in spite of these elements of what he calls “British national myth” (p. 187), a kind of idealised, heroic view of Britain. However, Bayer’s analysis is grossly oversimplifying the significance of the aerial combat elements of the song. He seems to be justifying how the song has become so popular despite representing a clear duality: the British versus the Germans. However, Iron Maiden has never hidden the historical context of the song which is evident from the promotional music video containing news reel footage from the war and their live show, where the Churchill quote was specifically played, rather than on the album.

It appears that Steve Harris decided to avoid depicting conflict as much as depicting the heroism of the anonymous fighter pilot taking to the skies. The song displays in rather vivid detail the scrambling of aircraft and then the actual combat itself. While these are mostly stylistic choices, they explain why the song is not hindered by its historicity. Bayer’s points are resonant though in considering the nationalistic aspect of *Aces High*. It seems that Bruce Dickinson is singing about the heroism of British pilots. However, once again, beyond the Churchill quote there is not an obvious explicit nationalistic overtone, though for a British audience there may be an implicit one. The vagueness of the lyrics, however, is what helped to make the song become so popular and, indeed, its nationalistic elements are clearly underplayed. The importance of the Churchill quote is more resonant no doubt to British listeners, as the quote comes from the time when Britain was preparing for war and was key to keeping the island morale up in the aftermath of the fall of France to Germany (Mackay 1999, p. 142-144). Therefore it works as a prelude to the song itself where the combat is now heavily present.

Still, the conflict depicted is very explicit and obvious in the way it draws heavy inspiration from Britain’s long past of warfare. The same style is repeated in almost every single theme about war and conflict at this point in Iron Maiden’s career. Apart from the 1982 song *Invaders*, these elements are also evident in 1983’s *The Trooper*. The latter was inspired by the Tennyson poem *The Charge of the Light Brigade* about the cavalrymen against Russian troops during the Crimean War. While its inspiration comes heavily from Tennyson, Bayer (2009) notes how the song has a more individualistic tone not in line with Tennyson (p. 187-188). Here we can perhaps see a conflict, much like *Invaders*, with a distinctly more explicit connection to British history, whereas *Aces High* has a more universal resonance due to being set in World War II. A noted difference between the nameless fighter pilot of *Aces High* and the nameless cavalryman of *The Trooper* is that the pilot
survives or his fate is left ambiguous. Neither song therefore fulfils the purity through fatality which
dying for one’s country would seem to require (Anderson 1991, 148-149), although in the case of
Aces High, due to the ambiguity of the song’s ending, it is in fact possible that the fighter gives his
life for his country, while the cavalry soldier dies but embittered by the meaninglessness of the
actual battle, evidenced by the line in the song: “In this battlefield no-one wins.” The viewpoint of
the narrator in Aces High, the fighter pilot, is also very focused on a single person's actions, but it
would be difficult to argue that the song has a strong individualistic tone, unless the pilots own
actions are taken into account as exercising individual choice in the dog fight.

In these prior examples, it is hard to distinguish whether Iron Maiden is using elements of
nationalism or faux-nationalism. Aces High seems earnest in its celebratory intent which seems to
indicate a strong nationalistic identity. While there is no flag-waving, such as in the live
performances of The Trooper, the clear duality of the song seems to deliberately glorify the British
fighter pilots. The Trooper’s faux-nationalism, as discussed in Section 2.3, is due to the song’s
individualistic approach which does not assign glory to the Britishness of the of cavalry soldier, but
rather decries the meaningless battle where the soldiers "comrades fall", a depreciation of the
collective (Kemp 2006, p. 40). Invaders is also incredibly vague in its nationalistic duality, only
calling the Vikings “the mighty Norsemen”. This leaves the question of nationalism vague, while in
both of the other afore-mentioned songs, there seem to be clear indicators to opposing ideas. The
few exceptions to this Britain-centric depiction of war are the songs Run to the Hills from 1982 and
Alexander the Great from 1986. The former concerns the conflict between Native Americans and
white settlers, although its depictions of battle are miniscule and the song focuses more on the
exploitation and massacring of the Native Americans. Alexander the Great, however, is a massive
shift from the prior war related songs as it is effectively a biography of the Macedonian conqueror,
detailing his life and several of the key battles of his life. In my Seminar thesis, I concluded that the
character must have had a strong personal resonance with Steve Harris in order for Harris to
dedicate an entire song to him. The only war-related song lacking a distinctly historical setting is 2
Minutes to Midnight which is focused on a general fear nuclear holocaust. However, it can be
considered a relatively minor deviation, though a much more condemnatory war song than what
Iron Maiden had done so far – using an extreme form of sarcasm and hyperbole in its language. I
will consider its importance more in Section 3.1.2.
3.1.2 The anonymous and glorious battle of *Aces High*

From the point of view of its language, *Aces High* is a very straight-forward song. There are no hidden meanings and the song is not interrupted by moments of contemplation or commentary. The language is action-oriented, focusing almost exclusively on the actions that the fighter pilot and his crew are doing to get the plane airborne in the first half of the song: "Jump in the cockpit and start up the engines, remove all the wheel blocks there's no time to waste". The second half then describes the actual air-combat: "Move in to fire at the mainstream of bombers, let of a sharp burst and then turn away". The most immediate strong mood of the song is a sense of urgency which follows the song's dramatic opening sections. As mentioned above, the song has a strong heroic feeling to it and its tone is almost more nationalistic and celebratory than individualistic. The airplanes take off is due to the team-work of people, while the battle shows more individual action. It regardless falls short of Kemp's (2006) or Weinstein's (2009) ideals.

Rather than the actual lyrics there appears to be more meaning behind the excerpt from Winston Churchill, although its purpose seems to simply set the mood for the song. However, the audio clip ends very decisively on the words “we shall never surrender”, which immediately kicks off the opening guitar riffs which starts off almost as a march. I would argue that the Churchill quote ends at this sentence as a point of dramatic punctuation. As mentioned before, the Churchill quote does have actual historical significance which is more readily appreciated by the British listeners and those more familiar with World War II. It adds the similar type of importance and gravitas as the subject matter of *Alexander the Great* (Campbell 2009, p.121) and also exemplifies a post-modern fascination with nostalgia, although perhaps in a more simplified manner than what Bayer (2009) had suggested (p. 191). I would argue that for the general listeners, it gives off a sensation of the past and that something glorious is about to happen. The immediate beginning of the song transfers the power of Churchill’s words to the power of the song. In addition, the connections to World War II are made obvious by the single artwork, promotional music video and by other telltale details. I would argue that the song's enduring popularity is both due to the universality of the concept of World War II as well as the song's stylistic choices. In this, I believe the views of Walser (1992) and Frith (1988) are true in that the performance style of the song has also been instrumental for its popularity (p. 121).

This gloriousness is also evident in the song’s chorus where Dickinson sings at a high register the words “live to fly, fly to live”. These words indicate that the fighter pilots have trained themselves
out of passion and now that passion is what is keeping them alive. The over-all mood of the song is a heroic one. In its simplicity, the song manages to convey a vivid and, at least to the common listener, fairly believable if dramatic image through descriptions: "Bandits at 8 O'clock moving behind us, Ten Me-109s out of the sun". There is suspense as the start of the song with Churchill’s quote, which turns to anxiety during the opening verses and the frantic bridge section and then finally to a celebratory tone in the chorus. It satisfies Griffiths’ (2003) sensibility of both prosaic and poetic elements within the song (p. 42-43). Just because the lyrics are simplistic does not rob them of a good narrative and in fact the song's popularity seems to be based on these breakneck dramatics which the band employs. It can argued that the approach is overtly dramatic, but it would seem that this was designed to make the band's concert open with an uplifting feeling, like an airplane about to take off.

It bears noting that some of the simplistic song-writing is possibly designed because of the rapid base melody. Aces High stands out from Iron Maiden’s general style of the time by being played at a generally faster tempo than what was typical of them. The few exceptions this kind of rapid songs include sections of Purgatory and Children of the Damned, but the only full song to share a similar breakneck tempo is Murders in the Rue Morgue. However, that song displayed more subtext heavy lyrics, which is almost entirely missing from Aces High. The rapid tempo also seems to have a level of audio association, where the rapid and aggressive drumbeat from Nicko McBrain and rapid bass-playing by Steve Harris produce a type of a metallic cacophony one would associate with an airplane engine. The simplicity of the lyrics could be partially to alleviate Bruce Dickinson’s difficulties of singing the actual song or they could be designed to be easily followed. Aces High was one of the promotional singles from the song and Iron Maiden has always traditionally chosen a simple, short and easy to follow song for this specific purpose. The song is also lacking the typically strong tempo-shifts heard in many other Iron Maiden songs, including the two other songs chosen for specific analysis in this thesis. The only real tempo-shifts are heard during the opening and closing, while the tempo remains constant even through the guitar solo-section following the first succession of verse, bridge and chorus. The rapid tempo is also indicative of the fact that the song was designed as a concert opener with the purpose of exciting the audience for the on-coming songs. A consistent tempo through the majority of the song is also typical of other album openers like Be Quick or Be Dead, Futureal and Wildest Dreams. This dramatic and extreme tempo gives immense vitality to the song without which its lyrical approach would seem impotent (Frith 1988, p. 123).
Narrative wise, *Aces High* is a typical example of Iron Maiden’s approach to war at this time. The narrator is anonymous and the battle is really only hinted at in the progress of the song. A similar, anonymous soldier is also the central figure of 1983’s *The Trooper. Invaders*, from 1982’s *The Number of the Beast*, also maintains an anonymity to the actual combat and the narrator seems removed from events entirely, noting only how the Saxons are forced to retreat from “the mighty Norsemen”. *Run to the Hills*, which depicts the conflict between Native Americans and cavalrymen, shows both sides of the conflict, beginning with the Native American point of view of deploring how “White man came across the sea, he brought us pain and misery” and then turning to the cavalrymen “chasing the red skins back to their holes”. In these instances, the personal involvement of the narrator's voice is clear and definite just as it is with *Aces High* and *The Trooper*. However, *Run to the Hills* lacks the individualistic viewpoint, although the cavalry soldier appears to revel in the suffering of the "Injuns". Even though agency and ethnicity are laid bare in all instances, the battles themselves, their participants and the personal point of view are still kept fairly anonymous. *Aces High* only mentions the German airplanes, while the other songs at least mention the specific sides of each conflict, whether they are English, Russians, Saxons, Vikings, Native Americans or American cavalry.

*Aces High* also displays a sense of glory to battle. The suspense and intensity of the song’s opening sections finally become released as a glorious ode to flying aces. Despite the fact that *The Trooper* ends with the death of its brave cavalryman there is a certain sense of glory to it, but mostly through the tragedy and decrying of the soldier who dies an otherwise meaningless fight. *Invaders* and *Run to the Hills* do not exalt the gloriousness of combat as readily, but there is clearly a sense of awe to the sheer desolation. The glorious depiction of battle is closer to 1986’s *Alexander the Great*, which lacks the anonymity of the other warrior narratives, but shows Alexander crushing his enemies effortlessly, hints at his taming of Bucephala with a Plutarch quote at the song’s beginning (Kurke 2004, p. 95), his destructiveness in cutting the Gordian Knott (p. 123-124) and finally describing him as “a god amongst mortal men”. The gloriousness comes from the strict determination of the fighter pilot being depicted and displaying a direct assault upon the enemy planes: "Heading straight for them, I press down my guns".

While the simplicity of the song’s lyrics makes it seem like a very superficial look at war, it is the element which has helped it become one of the band’s most popular songs and which is why it remains a part of their set-list. While it is not as substantial and also free of all subtext except that of the chosen and heroic few, it exemplifies the general mood of these types of song in Iron Maiden’s
catalogue in the 1980s. One major exception to this dominant style is *2 Minutes to Midnight*. Bayer (2009) refers to the song as anti-government (p. 188) and it could be considered one of Iron Maiden’s first songs to contain explicit commentary. *The Trooper* shows a clearer anti-war statement at the beginning of its second verse “The bugle sounds, the charge begins, but on this battlefield no-one wins”. Never the less, the commentary is present as it is in *Alexander the Great*’s few deeds not related to war. Even with the many accomplishments, Steve Harris draws attention to the fact that Alexander’s most long lasting effect on the world came after his death when he “paved the way for Christianity”. What can be seen in subsequent years is a shift towards on a more subtext laden type of song writing, away from the simplicity of *Aces High*. 
3.2 2 Minutes to Midnight

Kill for gain or shoot to maim
But we don't need a reason
The Golden Goose is on the loose
And never out of season
Blackened pride still burns inside
This shell of bloody treason
Here's my gun for a barrel of fun
For the love of living death.

(bridge:)
The killer's breed or the demon's seed,
The glamour, the fortune, the pain,
Go to war again, blood is freedom's stain,
Don't you pray for my soul anymore.

(chorus:)
Two minutes to midnight
The hands that threaten doom.
Two minutes to midnight
To kill the unborn in the womb.

The blind men shout let the creatures out
We'll show the unbelievers
The napalm screams of human flames
Of a prime time Belsen feast... YEAH!
As the reasons for the carnage
cut their meat and lick the gravy,
We oil the jaws of the war machine
and feed it with our babies.

(bridge)
(chorus)
(guitar solo)

The body bags and little rags
of children torn in two
And the jellied brains of those who remain
to put the finger right on you.
As the madmen play on words
and make us all dance to their song,
To the tune of starving millions
to make a better kind of gun.

(bridge)
(chorus)

Midnight, all night

As mentioned above, 2 Minutes to Midnight was also released as a single from the album Powerslave in 1984. The song is unconventionally long for a single, but is characterised by a chant-like chorus which made it into a popular song from the band, played repeatedly in concerts ever since. As noted above, the song is very different from the established conventions of Iron Maiden's war-related songs of the 1980s. The song does not present any coherent narrative, although part of the song seems to have taken place after some horrific calamity. The language is mostly descriptive and contains allusions to popular images as well as outright images of suffering and gore. It is the most explicit song that Iron Maiden performed which related to the fear of the nuclear holocaust and mutually assured destruction.

The song's structure is consisted of traditional repetitions of verse, bridge and chorus. There are three eight-line verses which are always followed by the a four-line bridge and finally the four-line chorus. The second and final sections of verse, bridge and chorus are interrupted by the guitar solo. The song was written collaboratively by Adrian Smith and Bruce Dickinson which in small part explains the lack of a narrative structure and much heavier emphasis on rhymes and melodic
progression. The title refers to the symbolic idea of the Doomsday Clock, which was used to exemplify how close the world at large was to nuclear war or midnight. The narrator is not identified but seems to serve as a witness to the terror while partially revelling in the destruction as evidenced with the inclusion of exclamations such as "YEAH!". This is further enhanced by Dickinson's enthusiastic delivery of the song's lyrics.

### 3.2.1 Elements of anti-establishment in 2 Minutes to Midnight

In the absence of truly notable elements of historicity, there instead is a much closer connection to established and well-known tropes and elements of popular culture. The elements of anti-establishment can be seen in the incongruity of deathly images intercut with more refined ones such as "glamour", "fortune", "feast", "meat" and "gravy". These elements which do not bring forth images of war, but rather high society, especially if "fortune" is thought of in the sense of wealth, as well as restaurants with the themes of feasting, it becomes clear that the message of the song wants to distort the images of fancy with images of horror.

Where the anti-establishment elements are most easily evident are in the song's sections which refer to "blind men" and "madmen". Their usage in proximity to such fanatical phrases such as "we'll show the unbelievers" and "make us all dance to their song" make it evident that Iron Maiden is singing about the evils of collectivisation (Kemp 2006, p. 40). There is a distinct lack of patriotism with no language of kinship formed (Anderson 1991, p. 141, 143). In fact, the song displays the most gruesome and unpleasant imagery of "children torn in two". Iron Maiden also takes clear pleasure in pointing out how the "madmen" in power exploit resources at the expense of the "starving millions", displaying a strong sense injustice. This anti-establishment theme is also evident in the song's bridge section which uses images of religion and spirituality. It puts forth the idea that the world leaders are borne from a breed of killers or the seeds of devils. The ambiguous line of "Don't you pray for my soul anymore" may be yet another example of saddened resignation of one's fate to the destruction which is about to come. This seems to be one of the most explicit depictions of world leaders as evil found in Iron Maiden's songs, the opposition being formed between the common man and the greedy, blind and mad rulers.

Some element of historicity is present in the term of "prime time Belsen feast". Belsen was the location of a Nazi concentration camp and the connection drawn between power-hungry leaders who feed their people to the slaughter seems most evident in this theme. It is also the most explicit
reference to war crimes and thus enhances the feeling of terror which the song tries to accomplish. As most of the images of terror, such as the "napalm screams of human flames" are also taken from reality, so the song does not seem to try to pretend or exaggerate the terror of war and conflict (Taylor 2009, p. 90).

The song may however be considered somewhat hyperbolic in its message. It is the most explicitly violent song that Iron Maiden had presented since Invaders from 1982, in which images of "severed limbs and fatal woundings [sic]" as well as the sight of "bloody corpses" laying all around are accompanied by the "smell of death and burning flesh". Even The Trooper does not contain as explicit detail about death in general. It is possible that since the images come from relatively recent material, for the time of the song, Iron Maiden attempted to depict them in as open a way as possible. However, the message is amplified by the puerile and childish elements such as that of the Golden Goose. This is in reference to the goose that lays golden eggs from the classic fairytale, but the obvious high value of gold, combined with the imagery it is surrounded with, is perhaps intended as an offensive on glory-hungry politicians who in their search for prominence end up causing more pain and suffering.

2 Minutes to Midnight can be considered the first instance of a song by Iron Maiden which brings to focus themes of the modern day. Although, it is represented in an overtly dramatic fashion, it stands in stark contrast to the way the band had approached war up to that point. The fear of nuclear war is a powerful motivator and for the listeners of the day, the fear that foolish politicians would cause the world to come to an end was very real. The song does represent, however, a heavy metal trope which became established around the time of the mid-1980s of the nuclear holocaust as a song topic. Iron Maiden therefore presented a traditional fearful depiction, while other heavy metal acts of the day such as Ozzy Osbourne took a different approach with Thank God for the Bomb in which the destruction of the world is enthusiastically welcomed by Osbourne as mankind is incapable of stopping its own wars. Similarly, Europe's Final Countdown gives a celebratory tone to the destruction of the world with humanity leaving the world behind. Iron Maiden instead focused itself on the destruction and did so in the theatrical but ultimately sarcastic manner in which the song's dark theme was supposed to awaken the social consciousness of its listeners to the state of world affairs, betraying the utopian ideal (Taylor 2009, p. 89, 91).
3.2.2 Images of terror and glamour in 2 Minutes to Midnight

2 Minutes to Midnight uses images of overt destruction as well as images of that seem oddly clash with the general sense of hopeless destruction. The opening lines "Kill for gain or shoot to maim, but we don't need a reason" seem to indicate an indifference by the narrator voice who joyously recounts the terrifying images of destruction throughout the song. This first verse section seems to perfectly incorporate the kind of sarcasm with its hyperbolic statements as indicated by Taylor (2009, p. 104). It could be easily interpreted as Iron Maiden celebrating the horrors of war and destruction, but instead the obvious over-joyousness of Bruce Dickinson vocal performance makes it clear that this is a twisted idea of havoc. The image that seems to present some incongruity is the fairytale character of the Golden Goose, but in combination with the following line "blackened pride still burns inside this shell of bloody treason" gives it a bit more of a context. Iron Maiden is attacking people in power as damning the world around them for their own gain, which in their wild goose chase for glory ends up causing more devastation. The message is definitely incoherent, buried under this imagery and uncharacteristic amount of symbolism from the band, but it is important to understand the very beginning of the song which helps put the rest of the lyrics into the proper perspective.

As discussed in the section above, the bridge section contains the elements of "glamour" and "fortune", which appear to clash with the general message of the song. Again, glamour and fortune seem to indicate the type of prestige that comes to a leader in a successful and victorious conflict. The line "Go to war again, blood is freedom's stain" seems to be the first and most obvious condemnatory line directed against war in Iron Maiden's song catalogue. However, it is not inherently obvious what the narrator is urging the listeners to gain freedom from or if "freedom" is simply the catch-phrase or goal of a politician or leader, such as the ones the song is attacking. The following line where the narrator tells the listener to no longer pray for his soul seems to indicate that the person is going to combat of his own free will and with no regrets. Combined with the lines which start the song, there is an inherent message of meaninglessness in relationship to violence. This appears to be in line with Taylor's (2009) interpretation of utopian ideals (p. 89) as the narrator's message shows through example why violence and aggression yield poor results and ultimately lead to the damning of the person involved.

In the following verse section, Iron Maiden's first immediate target seems to be established religion. The connection is easily made with the reference to "blind men" and "unbelievers". However, it is a
brief note to the general theme of the verse which has to do with dining and feasting. It also contains the one example of real life destruction in the form of a napalm attack. The presence of food is retained from the second to the sixth line of the verse section, which brings forth an image of gluttony and associates it with the people in power: "as the reasons for the carnage, cut the meat and lick the gravy". In this case "the reasons for the carnage" being the people of power. "Oiling the jaws of the war machine" instead implies the image of hard labour, indicating a sensation of class struggle, which actually has resonance of inequality in the traditional sense (Anderson 1991, p. 141, 148-149). This theme of food and feasting is also notable in light of the "starving millions" referred to in the song's final verse section, which points to inequality of the world at large, as well as in the song's immediate context can be seen as another exemplifier of duality between the people of power and the common, working people. The final line of the second verse section and the two opening lines of the third section refer to the killing of children. Feeding the war machine with the babies of the ones oiling it, indicates that the progeny of the working class are forced to forfeit their children to the pointlessness of war. While the baby metaphor is more general, the image of children mutilated by conflict has a more clear and immediate message of how innocents are ultimately the greatest sufferers in conflict.

The final verse section also makes a reference to dance and music. This image where the men of power or madmen "play on words and make us all dance to their song" seems to be the most explicit reference to politicians. When combined with the fact that madmen are doing this "to build a better type of gun", this seems like the most explicit reference to the nuclear arms race in the entire song. These final verses of the song point to the arrogance and short-sightedness of political decision makers and seems to be the most intensely critical section of the song in regards to the general state of affairs in the world. This makes it clear that the clash of prestigious and grotesque imagery is to bring forth a sense of duality and indeed seems the most clearest indication of the song's anti-establishment themes (Bayer 2009, p. 188).

As mentioned before, Iron Maiden's performance of the song is notably over the top with Bruce Dickinson singing the vocals in a joyous manner. The tempo of the song is mostly brisk throughout the song. Dickinson performs the chorus in the form of a chant, intended to be easy for the audience to join in and it consequently creates a sense doom. The only time during the song when the melody and tempo change significantly is during the guitar solo section after the second chorus and before the third verse section. The melody slows down considerably and this seems to be in order to allow Adrian Smith to perform the quiet solo in peace. However, the lowered tempo may also be a
statement on the lull of passiveness and the lack of action people will take in the world (Weinstein 2009, p. 28). This would seem intentional given how drastically the tempo shifts before the song eventually returns to its core melody.

*2 Minutes to Midnight* is an oddity from the group at the time, a relatively modern piece of commentary in the form of a song. Iron Maiden avoided doing similar songs in their future albums throughout the late 1980s and not until 1990's *No Prayer for the Dying* album, did the group present any other notable amounts of commentary in their songs, except for a few lines in *Alexander the Great*. The greatly reduced sense of tension in the Cold War might have contributed to this fact and, as will be seen in the following sections, the presence of modern conflict started to become more prominent only in the changed political atmosphere of the 1990s.
3.3 Afraid to Shoot Strangers

Lying awake at night, I wipe the sweat from my brow
But it’s not the fear,
’cos I’d rather go now

Trying to visualise the horrors that will lay ahead
The desert sand mound,
a burial ground

When it comes to the time
Are we partners in crime?
When it comes to the time
We’ll be ready to die

God, let us go now and finish what’s to be done
Thy Kingdom Come
Thy shall be done… on earth

Trying to justify to ourselves the reasons to go
Should we live and let live
Forget or forgive

But how can we let them go on this way?
The reign of terror, corruption must end
And we know, deep down there’s no other way
No trust, no reasoning, no more to say

Afraid to shoot strangers (repeat until end)

Afraid to Shoot Strangers was featured on Iron Maiden's 1992 album, Fear of the Dark. The song was written in the aftermath of Gulf War, the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war. It was a period which was marked by a shift of focus by western powers from the Soviet threat to the Middle-East. Fear of the Dark was the band's ninth studio album and the last one to feature singer Bruce Dickinson who left the band until the year 2000 in order to focus on his solo career. It was also the second album where the band played as a five-piece without Adrian Smith and with guitarist Janick Gers replacing him, although Smith made a notable guest appearance during their Live at Donington concert recording. This song remained in Iron Maiden's set-list for most of the 1990s and was also performed during the tenure of singer Blaze Bayley for which there exists a promotional live recording shot in Israel in 1995. The song is in the form of an inner monologue of a soldier and does not describe any actual physical events as such or depictions of combat. It tells about a soldier’s fears and inner struggle as he is trying to justify going to war. The lyrics contain a lyrical oddity with the incorrect usage of the word “shall” in “Thy shall be done” rather than the correct “will” in a section taken from the Lord's prayer. This appears to be a simple misunderstanding of the word’s meaning and has been repeated in the song’s live performances.

The structure of the song is also simple, but unorthodox for Iron Maiden, lacking a tradition structure of a succession of verse, bridge and chorus. There are two separate sets of verses with an identical number of lines played one after the other. The first two verses of three lines in both instances are played in a different melody to the third verse of four lines. The song does not have a strict chorus section, but the song's finale is comprised of repeating the line "Afraid to shoot
strangers" to the music, through a guitar solo section in the final part of the song and right to the finale of the song. There is a guitar and bass introduction to the song with the drums only joining in during the verses. The finale during which the chorus is sung goes from the quiet melody of the actual song to something similar to a march and eventually a more aggressive, fast-paced tempo during which the guitar solo also takes place. The melody slows down to the march for the final part of the song.

3.3.1 Move to modernity in *Afraid to Shoot Strangers*

Until 1992, Iron Maiden had not performed a song about a relatively recent conflict. World War II was the closest they had got to as a subject. *Afraid to Shoot Strangers* marks a shift towards a more sombre, modern look on war. The song’s inspiration was from the first Iraq War, the Gulf War, between the Iraqi forces of Saddam Hussein and a coalition of western countries, headed by the United States but also included Great Britain. The song is heavily mood-driven and therefore does not include much detail of action, the same way Iron Maiden’s songs from the 1980s did. The focus of the song is on the moral aspect of war, which I will explore more in Section 3.2.2. The song presented in a monologue form illustrates the mind-set of a soldier and his internal struggles about going to war and the possible eruption of violence which is signified by a noted tempo and melodic change in the song’s musical accompaniment.

There appears to be no explicit nationalistic or faux-nationalistic elements, though some implicit ones can be detected through a closer reading of the lyrics. “When it comes to the time, Are we partners in crime?” is one of the clearer examples of identifying agency in the conflict. If the song is to be taken specifically to be about the Gulf War, then this specific instance appears to refer to the United Kingdom’s allies in the conflict. On a deeper reading, the line seems to indicate a shared guilt over the moral agonising which the nameless narrator, the soldier, is experiencing. The subtlety of this reference would appear to conform to the distinctly simplistic style of the lyrics, which are sparing in their content in order to accompany a musical accompaniment of a sombre, slow tempo. There are also very few explicit details to give away the song’s context, the conflict in question. “The desert sand mound” is the most explicit reference to the general location of the conflict. “The Reign of Terror”, while vague refers most likely to Hussein’s persecution of Shiites and Kurds within his country (Yetiv 1997, p. 74). Beyond it, the song avoids any other specific mentions of conflict. However, this is an example where moral judgement or patriotic pride or prejudice could be assigned to one’s foe in a conflict. The narrator who is clearly struggling with
the morality of war and killing people insists that the “Reign of Terror, Corruption must end”. This indicates that there is a moral superiority to the actions, although the line “And deep down, we know there’s no other way” indicates a forced situation where the soldier has no choice in the matter. This can be interpreted as one of two ways, either as a nationalistic stance of the UK and its allies being superior and the Hussein regime being evil and corrupt or as a declaration that the actions of violence are inevitable. There appears to be no directly observable faux-nationalistic element to the song, unless one considers that the individualistic, inner-monologue style of the narration is at odds with a uniformed, nationalistic response to conflict as in *Aces High*. It can be considered that the soldier is giving up his choice in the matter to fight for a higher cause he has no comprehension over such as peace, religion or the interestless nation (Anderson 1991, p. 144). The sense of the song is of resignation, much like the cavalryman in *The Trooper* as the soldier is incapable of giving a reason for going to combat.

Most of the songs related to war written after *Afraid to Shoot Strangers* seem to follow a similar pattern of avoiding too many specific notes on conflict. These include songs like *Fortunes of War*, *Blood on the World’s Hands* and *The Aftermath* from 1995 as well as *Como Estais Amigos* from 1998, which was dedicated to both sides of the Falklands War from 1982. *Fortunes of War* and *The Aftermath* both concern the mental struggles of soldiers and especially the resulting problems of a soldier living outside war-time and how their experiences change them. *Blood on the World’s Hands* is loaded with commentary about conflict and human indifference to the struggles of others, where Iron Maiden abandons all patriotic notations to draw the listeners attention to the fact the global state of affairs. *Como Estais Amigos* abandons all mention of conflict in order to dedicate itself “for the deaths of those we don’t know”. Iron Maiden has therefore begun to focus on the display of real world horrors in an effort to wake their listeners to the terrifying realisation that war is real and its effects are truly devastating (Taylor 2009, p. 89-91).

However, historicity did not disappear entirely from Iron Maiden’s songs about war. Two songs from their 1990 album, *No Prayer for the Dying*, still have dedicatedly historical settings. *Tailgunner* is still set in World War II and with more specific references like the Enola Gay. The album in question was intended by the group as a return to their performance style from the early-1980s by simplifying their musical approach and removing synthesisers from the music, it therefore seems like an intentional regression in style, following closely the theme of *Aces High*. The setting of *Run Silent Run Deep* comes from submarine combat. Although the setting is not entirely certain, it too seems to have a historical sensibility to it, especially in language.
One thing that seems to have disappeared is a strong nationalistic identity with the battles still present in the 1980s. Afraid to Shoot Strangers holds onto it very loosely by the sheer virtue of Britain’s involvement in the conflict. None of the war songs from the 1995 album, The X Factor, include any specific national framework, except for The Heart of Darkness which, despite sharing its title with the novel by Joseph Conrad, sets itself in during the Vietnam War as it was obviously inspired by the movie Apocalypse Now. With Como Estais Amigos, Iron Maiden rejects any victorious, British overtones over the conflict reflected in the song’s title. The 1998 album’s, Virtual-XI, only specific historical conflict is depicted in the song The Clansman, which takes on the viewpoint of the Scots during The Scottish War for Independence. Historicity has therefore seemed to have subsided but not disappeared completely. However, Iron Maiden is no longer emphasising their own nationality, which can be considered as the band to considering the topic in a more serious and less fantastic fashion or possibly in a more faux-nationalistic sense for the benefit of the audience, just as with The Trooper's live performances.

3.3.2 Peeling back the psyche in Afraid to Shoot Strangers

Afraid to Shoot Strangers takes a more lyrically skewed approach to its presentation. Just as in examples of Iron Maiden's early war-related songs, this one is also from the perspective of an individual soldier. However, the word choices have little to do with conflict and there is now a problematisation of war that was never present before. Also, it displays the self-doubt of a soldier already evidenced in the opening verse of the song: "Lying awake at night, I wipe the sweat from my brow". The soldier would rather face his fears and attempts "to visualise the horrors that will lay ahead". The narrator is mentally preparing himself. There is immediately some similarity to the cavalry soldier from The Trooper who declares at the start of his march: "...in this battle-field no-one wins." All through the song, the soldier is looking for justification for going into battle which finally culminates in a definite statement: "The reign of terror, corruption must end. And we know deep down there's no other way." The song appears to be a form of inner monologue and, much like the musical approach during this section, is displaying the calm before the storm in the song's final parts.

Afraid to Shoot Strangers is a song that operates on two levels. As outlined by many of the word choices, the song has a clear individualistic tone. Steve Harris is attempting to show what kind of a trail of thought goes through a soldier's head as he's trying to justify his own actions. At the same
time, there is a broader and more universal level to the song. By openly showing this thought, Iron Maiden is removing the intimacy of the lyrics or possibly enhancing it, making it clear that this is what everyone, the listeners, thinks of the war. There are also a few elements that clearly tie the song to outside events. The description of the "desert sand mounds" as mentioned previously and "the reign of terror". Also, the narrator's question "When it comes to the time, are we partners in crime?", can be interpreted in one of two ways. If looked from a more universal level, as I discussed earlier, this part can be considered a sharing of guilt over the war effort shared by Great Britain and its allies. On a more personal level, this part seems to indicate that the soldier is looking for support from his fellow soldiers. The song land's short of the ideals of individualism as the soldier is uncertain of his choices and even resigns some of it to his "partners in crime", leading to a type of self-betrayal (Kemp 2006, p. 40). Shared guilt is important as this closes the first verse section where the soldier is still trying to visualise the battles and mentally prepare himself. His ultimate justification for the battle, ending a "reign of terror" also has a more universal tone. It is more readily easy to justify going into battle when one has chosen their enemy to be inherently evil. To the soldier's point of view, the battle might be entirely inconsequential, but trying to justify it as an act for the greater good, gives him the strength to go on. It is somewhat puzzling that the soldier decides to follow this conviction blindly as he goes on to declare that there is "No trust, no reasoning, no more to say". As discussed in the previous section, this seems to be the soldier resigning his choice to the interestless entity, a nation or something else, for whom he is throwing his life away (Anderson 1991, p. 144), another type of self-betrayal. There is a second distinct voice in the song, which declares the song's title loudly. The lack of a first person pronoun in the context of "Afraid to shoot strangers", indicates that this voice is coming from outside the soldier's mind, strengthening the idea that the lyrics operate on two levels.

We also see the presence of religion in the song with the lines "Thy kingdom come, thy shall be done on earth", giving the song a distinctly Christian tone. These lines, slightly altered and incorrect, from the Lord's prayer seem to promote the lack of confidence and the fear which the soldier is facing. Although it is tempting to consider that these lines are also promoting the superiority of Christianity against the atheistic, Soviet dictatorship of Hussein, it is probably more probable that Steve Harris chose these lines to be sung due to the universality of the prayer in Western, Christian tradition. It does present an inherent problem of where religion stands in relation war, since Christianity, like most religions, inherently carries a message of peace. Presenting a section of the prayer in this sense however, does present a certain degree of restructuring as it appears out of place from a more traditionalistic perspective (Walser 1993, p. 154), once again leading to the soldier's
self-betrayal and resignation of any choice to a higher being, order or reason. Interestingly, in the following verse, the narrator asks "Should we live and let live, forget or forgive". These lines are partially explained with the narrator's unwillingness to fight but can be considered valid moral questions, especially in such close proximity with the Lord's prayer. Notably, the soldier then abandons his Christian problem of war in the following final verse section where he can't accept the evils of the Hussein regime, ultimately casting aside his doubts in order to follow his orders. Harris has managed in this way depict the internal conflict of the soldier from a variety of angles.

Musically, the song is quite simple with a very quiet base-melody accompanying the song. This seems intentional as the quiet instrumental accompaniment is intended to highlight Bruce Dickinson's singing performance. The melody remains constant, backed by bass and rhythm guitar with the drum-beat joining the melody during the verse sections. The music only becomes the focus of the music after all the verse-sections have been sung. The tempo becomes slightly more pronounced and is joined by melodic guitar-playing. The beat is very steady and slightly indicative of a march, although not as explicitly as in Iron Maiden's other songs. Never the less, it seems to be indicating the soldier's march towards the inevitable battle. After a few repetitions of the song's chorus, the instrumental turns faster and more chaotic, suggesting the chaos of battle and war. The guitar solo also plays during this section. The melody returns to the calm march section for the finale which closes off the song. The music itself appears as a narrative devise as much as the lyrics and the song sections. Their effect is also heightened in the promotional live music video, where the instrumental sections of the song intercut with scenes of soldiers from Gulf War.

Afraid to Shoot Strangers marked the start of a new dominant style in Iron Maiden's war-related songs during the 1990s. Specifically, the 1995 album The X-Factor included two songs which all had a similar more introspective look at war and the mind-set of soldiers. Fortunes of War specifically focuses on soldiers suffering from the trauma that conflict has caused on them with the soldier-narrator admitting that "The vivid scenes and all the recurring nightmares" make him unable to sleep and that the insistence of others that "time's a perfect healer" are slowly making him go insane. The Aftermath, also from the same album, displays the gore and the desolate scenes of the battlefield before asking "After the war, what does a soldier become". This song, however, includes an element of historicity with specific mentions of "mustard gas", "barbwire" and "mud and rain" - indicating that the song is possibly trying to depict trench warfare in World War I. Also from the same album, Blood on the World's Hands presents a socially aware commentary conflict across the world, using real and current images of destruction to get its message through (Taylor 2009, p. 90).
It presents the most personal look on the conflict with a narrator decrying how no-one seems to be doing anything about the situation. Como Estais Amigos follows a more condemning look at war with its dedication to the soldiers dead on both sides of the Falklands War. The narrator in this song ponders "Will the wickedness and sadness, come to visit us again", while pondering if one should say a prayer for those they do not know, indicating an equal comradeship of all soldiers who have been buried in conflict. The meaninglessness of war also completely destroys any fear or concept of the frightful Other, the enemy, which patriotism and nationalism is built upon as well as the love of one's own nation (Anderson 1991, p. 141).

The stylistic divergent songs from the band in relation to war in this period include the more narrative-driven songs Tailgunner and Run Silent Run Deep from the 1990 album No Prayer for the Dying. These songs do not present the same moral dilemma of war and Tailgunner specifically seems to have a very glorious outlook on battle and war, though as mentioned previously this was an intentional stylistic choice for the album. No Prayer for the Dying was not entirely free of social commentary as it occurs to some extent in Public Enema Number One and Fates Warning, but on a very general level and not with any specific military aspects to it. Also, the 1998 song The Clansman shows the point of view of a Scotsman during the war for independence. It shows some introspective with the narrator saying how:

If our ancestors could hear what is happening now,  
they would turn in their graves,  
they would all be ashamed  
That the land of the free  
Has been written in chains

Interestingly, this seems to present a strong, nationalistic frame for the song, but one that is inherently Scottish. The song also seems to be intentionally inspired by the Mel Gibson movie Braveheart but without any specific mentions to the film other than the repetition of the word "Freedom" as the song's chorus, indicating the presence of faux-nationalism.
Sometimes it makes me wonder
Sometimes it makes me question
Sometimes it makes me saddened
Always it makes me angry but...
When you can see it happening
The madness that's all around you
Nobody seems to worry
The World seems so powerless to act...

(chorus)
It's out of control
Blood on The World's hands
Each day it goes on
Blood on the World's Hands (repeated 8 times)

Blood on The World's Hands was written by Steve Harris for band's 1995 album The X-Factor. The album is noted for its dark themes and lyrics as it was written soon after Steve Harris's divorce from his wife (Daniels 2012, p. 115). The album was also released during the band's least financially successful period. Heavy metal music was no longer as profitable in the mid-1990s, thanks to the growing prominence of the grunge movement. In addition, Iron Maiden had recently changed front men, from Bruce Dickinson to Blaze Bayley after Dickinson left to focus on his solo career. The decision for the replacement was not popular amongst fans. This song was one of several from the album which concerned war, though notably the song The Edge of Darkness took its inspiration largely from the Francis Ford Coppola movie Apocalypse Now.

The song is in the form of a monologue about a narrator who decries the horrors of the war and the world's incapability to do anything about it. The song is divided into three verse sections which are separated by a chorus section which changes slightly with each repetition. In the first two instances, the chorus is presented in three lines, with the third line altered. The first time it is presented as "Each day a new toll" and in the second instance as "Each day it goes on". The song ends on the third chorus section which is extended to seven lines, essentially repeating the chorus structure.
twice but with an additional line in the latter of the chorus melody repetitions. In addition, the song has a minute long bass-introduction before the actual melody starts. After the second chorus section there is a long guitar solo which ends on Bayley repeating the line "Blood on the World's Hands" eight times. The song ends abruptly on the line "Someone should" which appears to start the repetition of the line "Someone should know" from the same chorus.

3.4.1 Global disaster in Blood on the World's Hands

More so than in Afraid to Shoot Strangers, there seems to be a complete absence of any nationalistic viewpoint in Blood on the World's Hands. There is no language of kinship or purity through the ultimate sacrifice (Anderson 1991, p. 143-144) neither is there elevation of one's country or celebration of heroism. The song categorically uses war as an image of disaster. A notable aspect is that the World at large is now the subject, meaning that Iron Maiden has essentially stepped away from a simple, narrow and British perspective. In addition, like Afraid to Shoot Strangers, the song is written in a monologue style with a voice that could be interpreted as Harris's own. This seems particularly evident with the song's opening which contains expressions of extreme frustration at the state of things.

Depending on one's interpretation, the song can be considered a criticism of those in power, like 2 Minutes to Midnight, or it could be considered a more broader criticism of the world at large. The line "They say things are getting better" is a surprisingly neutral expression and leaves the person responsible for the action vague. Since there is no obvious clues to the presence of people in power anywhere else in the song, this could be seen as Iron Maiden presenting its criticism of decision makers once again. However, throughout the song, the object of criticism seems to be humanity at large. Especially in the light of such lines as "Nobody seems to worry" and "The World seems so powerless to act", it becomes more plausible that Iron Maiden's criticism is directed at collectivization (Kemp 2006, p. 40) of a world where the evils that happen outside one's borders are not of any concern.

In this case, the song does perhaps present a possible British connection through the idea of isolation. The narrator feels isolated from the world around him since he is worried about the terrors of the world, while the people around him are unconcerned of the terrors happening outside, despite the narrator's warnings that "one day it could be happening to us". The British isolation, as an island state, and its relative safety in the world creates an interesting viewpoint where the narrator wants
everyone to act and indeed makes his intentions clear with the line: "Someone should know." The narrator is clearly an agent working against passiveness (Weinstein 2009, p. 28) and the song displays a great deal of social anxiety at the state of things (Taylor 2009, p. 91).

The lack of a national framework and elements of historicity indicate how strongly Iron Maiden had moved to modernity in its songs. There at least appears to be an implicit cultural setting to the song although the target of its criticism is left vague, other than the world at large. The line "Somewhere there's someone laughing at us" is left vague as well but is a repeated lyrical trope in Iron Maiden's music, the idea of an outside agency laughing at mankind's suffering. This has taken the form of the gleeful narrator in 2 Minutes to Midnight or a possible madman's voice in other songs. In later songs, this theme alludes to spiritualistic aspects such as the idea that the devil or even possibly God is laughing at mankind's suffering. It is the one clear demonization of individuals who could possibly, cynically or nihilistically enjoy seeing mankind being ineffective and powerless.

3.4.2 Humanity's epitaph in Blood on the World's Hands

As discussed in the section above, the song opens with the narrator simply expressing his frustration. The lines that follow the four opening lines give the listener cause for his anger and anxiety: "madness that's all around you. Nobody seems to worry". At this point it is unclear what the narrator is angry about but his anger is directed at the people around him. The escalation of this language continues with the chorus: "It's out of control." Finally, in the second verse he begins to describe the horrors of the world through murder, starvation and raping. The narrator also presents an interesting global viewpoints with the lines: "Another assassination, the same day a new creation". These lines appear to incorporate the idea of raising one's children in a dangerous world. The use of the word assassination is particularly sinister in this context, not simply a random killing or premeditated murder, but an intentional act of violence done for one's own benefit. The narrator asks a very understandable question: "What are they coming into?" They, in this instance, meaning the new generations of people born each day.

Unlike with the prior 2 Minutes to Midnight there is not as much symbolism and the terrors described within the song also are taken from real life examples (Taylor 2009, p. 91). What appears to happen with the song is an anxiety of a post-Cold War world, where there is clearly wrongs in the world which are not being dealt with. For someone, who had lived under the influence of super power duality before and to whom the duality was clear with one side being presented as evil, the
fact that none of the current evils are being dealt with might be the core message of the song. Steve Harris is forcing the perspective to a more globally aware form, knowing that these calamities are being ignored. The song's themes do give away some of the utopian ideal where the world at large is shown in a disarray (p. 89, 105). The narrator feels that something needs to be done and that not doing so will lead to humanity's end, as he puts it: "It's our epitaph". The song ends on an abrupt note, with the repetition of the line "Someone should know" being interrupted as "Someone should". This leaves the listener with a lack of conclusion which is what the song attempts to make clear. It is not trying to raise hope but instead puts to focus what is wrong in the world.

The performance of the song is extremely passionate, with Blaze Bayley delivering the song with intent and serious note. He somewhat theatrically changes his inflections during the song, but there appears to be no over operatic quality to his performance, except during the end of the guitar solo after the second chorus section and the final verse section, where he dramatically yells "Blood on the World's Hands". This seems to be the most blunt statement about the core message of the song, how the people in power or people in general are responsible for the world's horrors but do nothing to stop it. The song opens to a minute-long bass introduction which seems to represent the infuriating lull which the narrator speaks of which is represented by a quiet and passive moment before the song will actually start. When it does, the base melody shifts immediately to a steady march which is only altered for the chorus sections and the guitar solo. The guitar solo, like the bass-played introduction has a calm, steady pace and is only broken by Bayley screaming the song's title. The repetition is similar to that used at the end of Afraid to Shoot Strangers except that this time it does not break the monologue style of the song quite as strongly.

The song's performance in style is intended to get everyone to pay attention. Its stylistic device is an impassioned monologue and unlike in Afraid to Shoot Strangers it is not broken by a possible second narrative voice which is the main difference between the songs. In Blood on the World's Hands, the narrator is actually trying to get people's attention which does not lead to a similar noted narrative break or shift, but it is also unclear if the song's sudden finale is an indication of the narrator being silenced, killed or possibly himself being left silent by some horrible event. The break can be considered one of the song's few blatantly obvious dramatic devices as the performance of the song is otherwise very straight-forward and impassioned (Frith 1983, p. 164-165), thus intended to seem genuine in its intent and message (Frith 1988 p. 121). As mentioned before, Iron Maiden no longer applied the similar theatrical style to its music as it had in the 1980s and Blood on the World's Hands continues to adhere to that stylistic choice. The band instead use
more even and calm melodies in a clear effort to make the song more coherent and the message more explicit. The effect is not to shock the audience, but instead to appear as a genuine cry for help. As explained in the examples above, Iron Maiden applied this technique on multiple occasions and it took until the early 2000s before band to altered its approach significantly.
3.5 Paschendale

In a foreign field he lay
lonely soldier unknown grave
on his dying words he prays
tell the world of Paschendale

Relive all that he's been through
last communion of his soul
rust your bullets with his tears
let me tell you 'bout his years

Laying low in a blood filled trench
killing time 'til my very own death
on my face I can feel the fallin' rain
never see my friends again
in the smoke in the mud and lead
the smell of fear and the feeling of dread
soon be time to go over the wall
rapid fire and the end of us all

Whistles, shouts and more gun-fire
lifeless bodies hang on barbed wire
battlefield nothing but a bloody tomb
be reunited with my dead friends soon
many soldiers, eighteen years
drowned in mud, no more tears
surely a war no-one can win
killing time about to begin

(chorus)
Home, far away. From the war, a chance to live again
Home, far away. But the war, no chance to live again

The bodies of ours and our foes
the sea of death it overflows
in no man's land God only knows
into jaws of death we go...

Paschendale was written for the band's 2003 album Dance of Death, which was the second album which the band released after both Bruce Dickinson and Adrian Smith returned to the band in the year 2000. The album was released during a revival of the band's popularity after the group suffered financial disappointment in the late 1990s. It was also released in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist strikes on the World Trade Center. Iron Maiden did not make any immediate references to it or the resultant "war on terror" in this album. Never the less, Iron Maiden seemed to continue on their
decisively negative trend of depicting war in a horrific fashion. The song was written collaboratively by Steve Harris and Adrian Smith.

The song is set in Passchendale, France and is set during the first World War. The narrator is a soldier in the trenches who is charged by his dying friends to "tell the tale of Paschendale". The song begins with the description of the dead soldier followed by descriptions of the conditions of the war as well as the general mood and atmosphere. The song also presents criticism of the war and eventually the soldiers also leave the trenches and head to battle. The final longer verse section describes the action on the battlefield where the soldier dies.

The song is divided into shorter verse sections of four lines, longer verse sections of eight lines and two chorus sections but there is not a clear pattern to their placement. In the printed album booklet, the lyrics are all divided into two lines with one line in the lyrics above representing two in the booklet. I have taken the liberty of dividing the lines according to the melody breaks. The eight-line verses can technically be considered two sets of four-line verses but in all cases there is an insufficient musical break to distinguish them which is why they are represented as one eight-line verse. In the lead-up to the first chorus section, the song starts with two shorter verse sections which are followed by two longer verse sections. However, in the lead up to the second chorus section which is also repeated, there is only one short verse section followed by two longer ones before one more short and long section. During this part, there are extensive instrumental sections after each section which breaks up any obvious melodic pattern even more. The song ends on a short verse section played in the same slower tempo as the first two verse sections.

3.5.1 Trench warfare and modern resonance of *Paschendale*

For the first time since Iron Maiden's 1980s songs, there is a clear identification of sides in a military conflict with the mentioning of allied troops and Germans, although in both instances, their presence is very limited, mostly to the sixth verse section of the song. There seems to be, for this time and period in the band's career, an unusual amount of vocabulary of kinship (Anderson 1991, p. 143) although once again limited to the a section where the soldiers mourn the loss of their comrades. The mention of the "German propaganda machine" seems to tie into the song's over-all theme of honesty. The song, told from the point of view of soldier who dies in the action, seems to have an over-arching theme of honesty and disclosure. The voice describes the horrible condition of the war bluntly and with a sense of resignation that the soldiers will die during the push from the
trenches. Long before the actual battle, the soldier also notes that "killing time" is "about to begin", which can be interpreted as waiting for the actual battle or literally as the time to kill.

The theme of disclosure is brought to focus in the song with the German propaganda machine, but as is now known, soldiers' letters from the front were censored also on the side of the allied forces. The German propaganda is brought to attention in the song, but I would argue because of its effectiveness as an image and not because it was distinctly German. World War I does not have as universal of a resonance in popular culture as World War II although many aspects of it are in public consciousness. Some of these include the ineffective battle strategies, the horrid conditions of the soldiers and the realisation of the brutality of war in general. In modern times, disclosure and transparency of information is also a strong and relevant theme. The song utilises perhaps a post-modern theme on an old battle (Walser 1993, p. 159-160) but it brings forth an important theme which still has resonance with modern listeners.

Iron Maiden also seems to have chosen World War I deliberately as the subject of the song due to its well-known brutality. A real-life conflict which was noted for its gruesomeness (Taylor 2009, p. 90-91) is the perfect example through which Iron Maiden displays the meaninglessness of war. In the face of the horrid details of the song, it becomes impossible to justify conflict in any manner, as the narrator of Afraid to Shoot Strangers attempted to do. However, nationalism or patriotism does not feature in the song to any great extent. The individual look at the war has taken fully hold. Setting the song in the trenches of World War I, however, does have the effect of creating a sense of heroism for the soldiers involved. This seems like a choice similar to Iron Maiden's earlier songs such as Aces High and The Trooper, if greatly expanded in detail and also covering a greater deal of these figures' personal experiences. Also, the awe of war and the sense of heroism is considerably lessened. In case of awe, the song rather accurately depicts the horror of the war which, as mentioned above, is what World War I has become noted for.

Paschendale is a relatively rare example of a song with a high degree of historicity and a theme of war in this part of the band's career. Some examples would still be seen in A Matter of Life and Death, but Iron Maiden seemed to be concerned with a more modern interpretation of conflict. As could be seen from the examples of their war-related songs of the 1990s, the lack of focus of an evil entity in a post-Cold War environment must have caused a more criticism to be pointed at powerful countries who would wage war for any reason. The choice of World War I as the subject matter may also have had a desired element of antiquity to it as it displays that, over a long period of time,
the meaningless military struggles do not solidify countries' influence, but rather make them incomprehensible to common people. The huge time-span between the present and the conflict depicted in *Paschendale*, makes this point all the more resonant.

### 3.5.2 The over-flowing sea of death in *Paschendale*

As mentioned before, much of the song focuses on the terror within the trenches of World War I. As the song's first long verse section begins the narrator draws the listeners attention to the "blood filled trench" and the "smell of fear". In addition, the narrator has resigned his fate by declaring he will "never see my friends again". The immediate sensation after the song's introduction is of terror and hopelessness. This includes a reference to the big push from the trenches: "soon be time to go over the wall, rapid fire and the end of us all". While the song uses some dramatic language, a notable portion of the song is consisted of details already widely known (Taylor 2009, p. 90) which seems to indicate that Iron Maiden chose the conflict in order to depict war at its most brutal. This becomes evident in the following long verse section which includes the grotesque detail of lifeless bodies hanging from barbed wire. The young age of the drafted soldiers is also referenced: "many soldiers, eighteen years" which additionally makes the senseless destruction feel equally disastrous. In fact, there's a surprisingly strong similarity to the theme of the sacrificed progeny from *2 Minutes to Midnight*.

We also begin to see the entry of religion into the group's war-related songs with the inclusion of references to God, crucifixion as well as angels. Here the song shares some common elements with *Afraid to Shoot Strangers* where God is also being asked to help by the soldier. However, here the soldier prays that some of his comrades may survive just so that the truth of the conflict can be told. In this sense, Iron Maiden is presenting a very traditional Judeo-Christian view of an omniscient God, as the song makes reference to how only he can know of the over-flowing sea of death of no man's land. The reference to crucifixion in the third long verse section is somewhat odd, since its context is not entirely clear: "Crucified as if on a cross". The indication of "as if on a cross" at least makes it explicit that the song is not discussing a literal crucifixion. It is possible that the song is discussing some horrible form of mutilation, resultant from some previous battle. However, more likely the image is probably a reference to martyrdom where a soldier's or, indeed more likely, the deaths of many soldiers is used as an example of a courageous and righteous death (Anderson 1991, p. 144). This focus becomes more evident with the following references to the German propaganda machine and the fear that the truth of the events will not be known by people who are not fighting in
the war. Here religion is depicted in a positive light in the eyes of the soldier. This is notable as Iron Maiden is known for more critical views of organised religion both in Montségur from the same album, in the earlier 2 Minutes to Midnight and the later For the Greater Good of God. However, more so than religion itself, human agency is the focus of this criticism which is directed differently in Paschendale.

The seventh verse opens to an admission by the narrator that soldiers from both sides contribute to the desolation of the war. The latter half of this verse then shows him in preparation for the big push. Notably, the anxiety seems to be gone and he has now accepted his fate. The army officers who send their soldiers to die are also referenced briefly in the following short verse section. Their presence is implied rather than explicitly stated. Earlier it takes the form of the whistles which signal the push. In the short eighth verse section, blood is shown raining from the sky as a result of the attack and the narrator claims that "sound of guns can't hide their shame". This overt and dramatic scene of death appears to be the only time when the grotesque horror is looked upon by someone of responsibility. This does not necessarily imply that the officers are to blame, but rather that they know the futility of the assaults and are still duty-bound to order them to take place.

In the ninth verse section, the action now moves to no man's land. This depiction is already familiar from Iron Maiden's previous war related songs. The anxiety amounts as the soldiers rush towards cannon fire and eventually are all killed, including the narrator. Interestingly, the song does not end with the narrator's death which implies that the story is being told by his dead spirit. The ninth verse section is still followed by the second chorus section and then the finale. The song also contains a rare example of actually depicting the narrator's death which had not really been seen in Iron Maiden's war songs since The Trooper. The death however is insignificant and does not carry with itself any amount of glory which the soldier is not interested in anyway (Anderson 1991, p. 144).

Performance wise, the song marks a noted change in Iron Maiden's approach to war. In their songs of the 1990s, the mood was often sombre and the melody reserved even in cases where the vocal performance was very impassioned and powerful. The Mercenary from 2000 did, however, have a slightly aggressive and powerful note but also adhered to a steady base-melody and rhythm. Paschendale is more akin to Iron Maiden's other songs of the period which included dramatic tempo shifts and melody changes. The song begins with a very quiet melody and a lone electric guitar accompaniment to the vocal performance on the first two verse sections. However, between these two sections there is an aggressive instrumental section where all the instruments play briefly,
indicating the base melody which will be heard later. The sudden explosion is very dramatic and may take the listener by surprise the first time before it is followed by the second calm verse section. After this, the base melody starts to play with loud guitars. The guitars subside but the melody remains as a steady march during the next few verse sections. However, at the finale of the fourth verse section the drums begin to beat more aggressively, creating a likeness to infantry fire. The chorus is performed in an elevated voice and mood, setting it apart from the loud and cacophonous nature of the rest of the music. This marks the end of the first half of the song which is very even and consistent despite sudden bursts of melody, making it akin to the waiting in the trenches, sudden fright and constant gloom punctuated by moments of peace.

After the sixth chorus section, the melody briefly reverts to the quiet opening melody which is then joined by more aggressive guitar playing and the steady march rhythm joining in. This makes it feel like the song is starting over. As this is followed by the descriptions of equal blame on the violence and the narrator preparing for battle, this might be considered a dramatic shift in focus. In a way, it could also represent the end of the long wait discussed earlier in the song or it marks a push forward in the internal time of the song. The longest guitar solo of the song comes after the seventh verse section. Its placement seems very similar to Afraid to Shoot Strangers where it represents the chaos of the battle with the drum-beat being uneven and the guitars playing almost independent of the drum-beat. The guitar sections intensify after eighth verse section before returning to the base melody for the following section, again creating a sense of urgency as the battle continues. This is then followed by the final chorus section and the final verse section which is played to the same quiet melody of the of the introduction. The dramatic and unequal melody shifts in the song's latter half appear to indicate the terror of the combat and the randomness of killing. The song parts also become a bit more even as a result.

Bruce Dickinson utilises two singing types throughout the song. The quiet melody is heard during the first, second and final verse sections and seems to be simply due to the quiet melody of these parts. The loudness of the music in the rest of the song forces him to sing loudly and at times as if he was screaming. However, this also appears to be an intentional choice and his singing style changes from melodic chanting to unfocused yells depending on the base melody. This gives the song a theatrical quality and seems very similar to the performance style which Iron Maiden employed in their 1980s songs. However, it does not make the song seem artificial as the musical and melodic choices seem to be made to enforce a particular sense of chaos (Frith 1983, p. 164-165). Iron Maiden may have chosen to revert back to a more theatrical style of performance in order to
better get its message through. There also seems to be a great deal of music imitating reality and the chaotic melodies are used to create the atmosphere of the song in order to promote its sense of terror. This similar to *Aces High* where the rapid melody was used to create the sense of urgency and fear.

*Paschendale's* usage historical settings while a traditional Iron Maiden trope, seems to perfectly fit Bayer's (1993) idea of a post-modern sense of nostalgia (p. 191) as well as restructuring history to depict the anxieties of modern times (Walser 1993, p. 154, 159-160). There is some amount of focus on the genuine terror of World War I, but the song also has sensations that should be resonant with modern listeners as well. The horror is what the song mostly focuses on, but the song also touches upon the themes of openness and disclosure and also, though to a much lesser extent, faith. Also, there is no longer a sense of glory or heroism as there previously was with songs like *Aces High or The Trooper*. The message is clearly the same as heard in *Blood on the World's Hands* as well as *Aftermath* and *Fortunes of War* from the band's 1990s material. However, an even more blatant shift was due to happen in the band's material as will be seen in the following section.
3.6 For the Greater Good of God

Are you a man of peace
Or man of holy war
Too many sides to you
Don’t know which anymore
So many full of life
But also filled with pain
Don’t know just how many
Will live to breathe again

A life that’s made to breathe
destruction or defence
A mind that’s vain corruption
bad or good intent
A wolf in sheep’s clothing
Or saintly or sinner
Or some that would believe
A holy war winner

They fire off many shots
and many parting blows
Their actions beyond a reasoning
only god would know
And as he lies in heaven
or it could be in hell
I feel he’s somewhere here
or looking from below
But I don’t know, I don’t know

(bridge)
And as they search to find
the bodies in the sand
they find it’s ashes that are
scattered across the land
And as their spirits seem to
whistle in the wind
A shot is fired somewhere
another war begins

And all because of it
you’d think that we would learn
but still the body count
the city fires burn
Somewhere there’s someone dying
in a foreign land
Meanwhile the world is crying
stupidity of man
Tell me why, tell me why

(bridge)(repeat)
(chorus:)
For the Greater Good of God  (repeated eight times)

(guitar solo) (repeat bridge and chorus)

More pain and misery
in a history of mankind
sometimes it seems more like
the blind leading the blind
It brings upon us more
famine, death and war
You know religion has
a lot to answer for

He gave his life for us
he fell upon the cross
to die for all of those
who never mourn his loss
It wasn’t meant for us
to feel the pain again
Tell me why, tell me why

For the Greater Good of God was released on Iron Maiden's fourteenth studio album, A Matter of Life and Death from 2006. The song was written five years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks which destroyed the World Trade Center in New York and started the “War on Terror”, which was followed by aggressive military action in the Middle-East to defeat Al Qaeda, a second Gulf War in Iraq and the imprisonment of Saddam Hussein. For the Greater Good of God is the longest song of
its respective album and one of several songs concerning war which was a strong running theme of the album. The album was the third to feature the band as a six-piece with the return of Bruce Dickinson and Adrian Smith to the band in 2000. The song is told by a nameless narrator whose identity is not inferred probably to lend an openness to the lyrics. There are only general and vague descriptions of actions, such as fighting and destruction. The song contains strong religious imagery and the style of the lyrics makes it seem similar to a monologue. The bridge sections have a voice requesting someone to show him what life, love and war are – either addressing the listeners or possibly God. It is possible that the narrator is a simple manifestation of the thoughts of Steve Harris and due to the opinionated tone of the lyrics, this seems to be a distinct possibility. There is a marrying of more serene lyrics in the opening two verses and the very final one with more aggressive and disparaging ones through the rest of the song.

There are seven eight-line verses that make up the majority of the song. The beginning and final verse are played to a slower tempo of a single guitar while the other verses are played to a full musical compliment. These latter sections are split by a four-line bridge section which plays after the third, fourth and sixth verses as well as after the guitar solo section. The actual chorus of the song is consisted of the repetition of "For the Greater Good of God" eight times. It is heard twice during the song, after the sixth verse and the accompanying bridge section and before final verse of the song.

3.6.1 Modern, moral ambiguity in For the Greater Good of God

Coming into the 2000s, Iron Maiden continued on a similar stylistic path with their songs about war, avoiding references to specific conflicts with very few exceptions. Their 2006 album, A Matter of Life and Death, heavily concerns itself with two of the band’s most frequently used song topics: war and religion. Four of the ten songs on the album concern war specifically. The album is notable in this regard that it seems to dissect the subject matters from multiple angles through differently styled songs. Only two of the album's ten songs do not have any explicit or implicit connection to these subject matters, the angst-ridden Different World and the nostalgia yearning Out of the Shadows. For the Greater Good of God seems to marry the themes of war and religion together. The song features practically no elements that would pin it down as being a depiction of any specific conflict. Shots are fired, corpses are immolated and general destruction is depicted in the song, but nothing pins the song down with any geographical context. Conversely, there is a strong cultural context with clear references, though indirect, to Jesus and Christianity or perhaps Judeo-
Christian religions in general. The song is again told by an unnamed narrator, of whom the listener only knows that he is questioning the fundamental human definitions of life and love as well as war. What has become evident is the viewpoint that Taylor (2009) has spoken of, where the horrific real-life desolation leads to a social-consciousness of one's actions which this song heavily demonstrates (p. 91).

The most definite message that the song puts forth about war is its uselessness and destruction. The song takes a stance that the battling side's represents "actions beyond a reasoning" which "only god would know". While the song's opening and ending seem to at least partially exalt the intentions of Christianity, the song also takes a decisively critical stance on religion and war. In the lone, fourth verse section between the first and second bridges, the narrator flatly says "you know religion has a lot to answer for". This is followed by the sort of rhetoric which echoes that heard in *2 Minutes to Midnight* where world leaders are being targeted as leading mankind astray with the words: "Sometimes it feels more like the blind leading the blind". The mentioning of holy war does seem to invoke the concept of Jihad, which seems to be the most specific reference to the general state of affairs in the post-9/11 world. It becomes difficult to hone the song into any specific cultural or nationalistic viewpoint and I would argue that Steve Harris's intent was specifically to show that violence, justified by religion, is no different whether coming from a Middle-Eastern, Islamic mindset or a Western, Christian one. I would interpret this as an extreme form of criticism towards the attitude of Westerner's and against a pervasive attitude of superiority, which to some extent was still present in *Afraid to Shoot Strangers*, and which again completely undermines and decimates any fear of the Other which one needs to justify one's hatred for an enemy and one's love for their own nation (Anderson 1999, p. 141). There is no vocabulary of kinship or bonding behind an interestless belief or entity by the narrator (p. 143-144), but he rather demonstrates that it is the one's blindly following that entity who are to be feared. For the first time, a voice condemning the collective is heard clearly in the song which affirms the song's individualistic nature (Kemp 2006, p. 40)

The more specific war-actions are used as a form of commentary on the horror and meaninglessness of war. Specifically the scene painted by the opening lines of the fifth verse make this clear. This verse begins with an operation of looking for bodies, possibly in the aftermath of a great battle for identification: "And as they search to find the bodies in the sand." Once again, the specific mention of sand would seem to bring to mind a Middle-Eastern, desert environment. However, the lines immediately following it prove this to be a misnomer with the revelation of "They find it's ashes that are scattered across the land." What I would agues is that the bodies of fallen soldiers have
become immolated and burned beyond recognition, leading to an unfortunate state of the body-scavengers not being able to identify their dead. The scene is entirely symbolic, but along with the rest of the destructive imagery is attempting to convey to the listener how utterly meaningless combat and human life becomes, when soldiers are denied the closure of a body bag or a casket. This horrific lack of conclusion is a trait used by many metal groups to draw the listeners attention and leaving a terrible situation unresolved provides the song with its necessary impact (Taylor 2009, p. 105). It therefore also becomes more clear to the listener, why a nationalistic flag-waving would be completely inappropriate and meaningless in this context.

A similar symbolic style of depicting war and even killing can be seen in most of Iron Maiden’s war themed songs in its albums released during the 21st century. The Mercenary, from their Brave New World album released in the year 2000, simply depicts the non-empathetic mind-set of a mercenary without any specific ties to any specific conflict. The song uses the language of brutality with lines like "Lose your skin, lose your skull, one by one, the sack is full" depicting the callousness of the trophy-collecting soldier of fortune who shows no fear or pain in his actions. Also from A Matter of Life and Death, the songs These Colours Don’t Run and The Legacy depict opposing mind-sets on war, a glorious and a darker view, but again without the context of a specific conflict. The former song depicts a more naive and heroic look on war as a possibility of adventure, denying fear and showing war as a generational process: "We sailed away like our fathers before". However, despite its title These Colours Don't Run lacks a specific nationalistic framework - but the strong implication of battles fought by crossing great oceans seems to at least implicitly indicate a British mind-set and even possibly colonial power, although this is not explicitly stated within the song in question. The Legacy shows the opposite hopelessness where soldiers die nameless and with their secrets revealed, decrying the stupidity of war in a similar fashion to For the Greater Good of God. When The Wild Wind Blows gives a slightly more specific depiction of conflict with nuclear war or the fear of nuclear war. However, this song from the 2010 album, The Final Frontier, only insinuates such a conflict taking place and uses it as an ironic narrative, where people taking shelter from a feared nuclear attack instead suffer a false alarm and die from contaminated rations.

While the majority of Iron Maiden’s songs about war seem to have abandoned historical settings, they are not altogether gone. The song Paschendale sets itself very specifically in the trenches of World War I. Similarly, the song The Longest Day, from the 2006 album, is set during the invasion of Normandy during the Second World War. These two are rather traditional examples of the sort of conflicts that Iron Maiden used to depict in its 1980s material. However, both songs focus on the
destruction and desolation with the former declaring how soldiers have "no chance to live again". The historical aspect here seems to focus on the fact that battle has always been destructive and meaningless, therefore fitting very well with the image put forth by *For the Greater Good of God* as well. Indeed, it seems that Iron Maiden has abandoned a simplistic or glorifying look upon war, focusing instead to display its brutality for the sake of laying bare any confusion or misgivings (Taylor 2009, p. 90-91).

### 3.6.2 Religion and destruction - *For the Greater Good of God*

As mentioned previously, *For the Greater Good of God* does not focus as strictly on physical conflict or description, but is also built as a type of monologue similar to *Afraid to Shoot Strangers*. As a huge change of emphasis from the prior example, this song now focuses on war from the perspective of religion. Religion is presented in the song both as an instigator of conflict, but the song also ponders on the paradox of justifying war with religion, which is very evident also from the contrasting musical accompaniments of the different verse sections. One noted change from *Afraid to Shoot Strangers* is the now utterly condemning approach to war. Whereas in the prior example, war was frightening but necessary with the soldier's inner monologue concluding that it was the only way to achieve any good, in the example of this song war is depicted as horrific and meaningless. Therefore we see all abandonment of any traditionally held views on patriotism and commodity (Anderson 1991, p. 141; Bayer 2009, p. 190) and a shift to individualistic thought and resignation to the world's desolation (Kemp 2006, p. 39-40; Taylor 2009, p.105).

The religious paradox of the song is already mentioned within the first two lines of the song which has the narrator asking the listener: "Are you a man of peace or man of holy war". This creates a distinction between the two. The first two verse sections focus heavily on how pointless spiritual warfare is regardless if it is motivated by "bad or good intent". Harris is taking the stance that anyone who justifies war as a necessity of one's faith is "a wolf in sheep's clothing" but recognises the support of this sort thought with "Or some that would believe, a holy war winner". This absurdity is finally realised with the lines "they're actions beyond reasoning, only god would know" or possibly "they're actions beyond reasoning only god would know". This follows the first real description of action within the song which is guns firing. Harris is now drawing attention that both sides are equally foolish. Due to the break in Bruce Dickinson's singing of the two lines, indicated in the first quotation between "reasoning" and "only", it is not inherently clear whether the narrator is speaking in hyperbole, indicating that "beyond a reasoning only god would know" or if the break
is intentional that god is the only one who knows the reasoning of their actions. This omniscience is not entirely out of place as Christian teaching itself, in comparison to an organised or mass waving the flag of the religion, is not what is being vilified by the song. The ending of the song makes blatant reference to Jesus who died on the cross "for all those who never mourn his loss", in reference to Jesus dying for all of humanity's sins. It draws attention to the paradox of placing one faith or any side up against another human opponent, the song's third and second to last lines stating clearly "It wasn't meant for us to feel the pain again".

One oddity of the album's religious aspects is its ambiguous attitude towards God and the Devil as entity. This reflects on the majority of the songs on A Matter of Life and Death and this song is also affected by it. After decrying the actions of the militants shooting each other, the narrator says:

Their actions beyond a reasoning
only god would know
and as he lies in heaven
or it could be in hell

What can be observed here is the fact that the album places both God and the Devil in roles of power, but not as distinctly one being. In fact, God is the only entity referred to by name which indicates that he could be in either heaven or hell. Taking away from this more literal reading of the lyrics, it may simply be vocalisation of the narrator's confusion about the situation. He seems openly at a loss with the verse ending lines: "But I don't know, I don't know". In the broader context of the album, this song seems to cast both God and the Devil in irrelevant light due to the power of human agency.

Human agency is targeted by the song as the key factor of war. In this regard, the fourth verse is the most crucial where Harris likens world leaders as "the blind leading the blind". This is the one section where the narrator exclaims: "You know religion has a lot to answer for." The line however, makes sense in how the paradox of religious war-mongering has already been decried by the narrator voice at the very beginning of the song. Amidst the descriptions of destruction and suffering, the chorus mightily declares that this has all happened: "For the Greater Good of God". This if anything makes it clear that the song is written in a post-9/11 environment. The song does not explicitly state that jihad is at the core of the text, but instead Harris turns our attention to the word which means the same thing “holy war”, warfare waged for the sake of religious mandate.
These elements represent how the core message of religion has become corrupt, through human agency and hatred, into a message of violence. Holy war will most likely bring to mind the Crusades, equally pointless and destructive as the Islamist terrorism of today. Harris equates all of it to the “stupidity of man”, both sides equally blind to the meaningless destruction that their actions bring. It also indicates the condemnation of self-denial and collectivisation as mentioned by Kemp (2006, p. 40).

The images of desolation and destruction are extremely prominent throughout the fifth and sixth verses of the song. There is the equation of a mass of immolated corpses to a desert in as discussed in Section 4.1.3, which helps to emphasise the hopelessness of the situation in which the world finds itself. There is even some resignation to the idea that destruction and desolation are now just a matter of cause with the anti-climactic statement: “A shot is fired somewhere, another war begins.” This indicates that, conversely to the rapid firing at the start of the song, we have become so used to the state of things that a single gunshot is all that is needed to restart the violence somewhere else. Harris also expresses his fatigue with the situation at hand, exclaiming that after years of violence “you’d think that we would learn”, yet the desolation continues unabated. Finally, the desolation is put in a global perspective at the end of the sixth verse with the last five lines, similar to how Iron Maiden drew the listener’s attention to global conflict in Blood on the World’s Hands.

There are in all four major and significant tempo changes throughout the song. The song begins with a quiet acoustic instrumental accompaniment for the first two verses of the song. The choice is deliberate as these sections are setting up the duality of amnesty with the corrupted message of hatred. With the third verse, the entire band joins with a chaotic marching accompaniment, signifying the chaos and destruction of the lyrics. This same accompaniment is continued all the way to the sixth verse and is only broken by the bridge sections. While the base tempo remains constant, the heavy guitar chords give off the appearance of chaotic cacophony. The melody and tempo change to an even marching beat for the chorus which is followed by the guitar solo. This shift in the chorus is meant to accompany the chant-like repetition of “For the Greater Good of God”, indicating how the hopeless destruction is now just a matter of course as if mankind is marching to its own damnation and nothing can stop it. The tempo and musical accompaniment changes back to that of the first two choruses for the seventh and final verse, heavily mirroring the message from the song’s beginning and tying it now closely to Jesus.
Iron Maiden seems to have taken a strictly condemning approach to war, abandoning any gloriousness that could be achieved from it. *These Colours Don’t Run* is a major exception, although it has a distinctly traditionalistic and naïve, glorious approach to war. In the larger context of the album it is featured on, the song seems to be a simple survey into an old-fashioned look at war, as its views are heavily refuted in *The Legacy, The Longest Day* and *For the Greater Good of God*. The band focuses on the desolation and meaninglessness of war in all of its songs related to written in the 21st century, most evident in *When the Wild Wind Blows* where the fear of war is enough to cause death. The use of religion to justify violence also presents itself in the 2003 song *Montségur* which focuses on the persecution of the Cathars by the Catholic Church, suggesting that Iron Maiden were also become increasingly more critical of religious institutions. The brutality and lack of glory in war is also presented in full detail in *The Mercenary*.

The external narrator is also a common device used by Iron Maiden at this point in the band's subcategory of war related songs. *These Colours Don’t Run, The Legacy* and *When the Wild Wind Blows* all exemplify the narrator who is technically removed from the events, although multiple voices of the narrator are used in a similar fashion to *Afraid to Shoot Strangers*. *These Colours Don’t Run* focuses on a non-personal look at the glorious courage required to go fight in a war, but the narrator only assumes this viewpoint in the chorus where he announces: “We sailed away like our fathers before.” The narrator of *When the Wild Wind Blows* also assumes a personal tone at the very beginning of the song "Have you heard what they said on the news today, have you heard what is coming to us all" thus personally addressing the couple who is killed in their safe bunker. However, for the rest of the song assumes an external role as a commentator and a story-teller, as he conveys the song’s tragic twist ending.
3.7 Visual corpus for the imagological analysis

In the imagological analysis of Iron Maiden my focus will be on relevant the images within the songs analysed in the prior sections as well as the album and single cover-art for these songs used in this thesis as well as the relevant music videos. The relevant theory is detailed in section 2.6. The selection criteria for the artwork and music videos chosen for this analysis is that it must somehow represent "war" in Iron Maiden's song catalogue. In order to achieve as broad of visual representation from the point of view of the artwork, I will also be analysing artwork not directly connected to the songs analysed because the corpus would otherwise be very limited. In addition, Afraid to Shoot Strangers does not have war-related artwork attached to it, neither does For the Greater Good of God have a singular piece of artwork explicitly connected nor a music video that could be used as a basis for analysis.

The consistent visual element and central figure of Iron Maiden's promotional artwork is its mascot Eddie the Head, commonly referred to as Eddie. Eddie is a zombified heavy metal fan who also appears during the band's live performances as a costumed stagehand to accompany various key musical numbers and, especially during the band's early touring years, the song Iron Maiden. The figure was created by illustrator Derek Riggs, who has also designed the cover artwork for numerous other heavy metal bands, although his work with Iron Maiden remains his most recognised. Riggs illustrated all of Iron Maiden's officially released material until 1992, but continues to work with the group intermittently. A common theme throughout the albums is to display Eddie assuming different roles from an axe-murderer to an Egyptian pharaoh and from a cyborg to the Grim Reaper. The illustrations are usually directly linked to a specific song from the album, with a few exceptions such as No Prayer for the Dying which simply shows Eddie escaping his own grave and The X-Factor which shows Eddie being tortured and dissected, these covers seemingly reflecting the musical and stylistic approach of the albums rather than any specific song.

The single covers relevant for analysis are those of The Trooper, Aces High and 2 Minutes to Midnight. I will not use the album cover artwork for Powerslave or Piece of Mind, which contains The Trooper, since neither contain imagery of war. All of these cover illustrations were created by Derek Riggs. The cover of Piece of Mind has a lobotomised Eddie in a padded room, chained and in a straight-jacket. Powerslave instead features a gigantic monument to Eddie as a dead pharaoh worshipped by crowds, an image inspired by the eponymous track from the album. The only album cover relevant for analysis is that of A Matter of Life and Death which was made by Tim Bradstreet,
best known as the cover illustrator for Marvel Comics' *Punisher*. The chosen covers are displayed in the Appendix of this thesis.

The covers chosen for analysis all show the band's mascot, Eddie, assuming the role of a soldier in some military fashion either as a 19th century cavalryman, a World War II fighter pilot or as the gunman of a tank. *2 Minutes to Midnight* only shows Eddie in flight jacket with an assault rifle with no obvious military role. Apart from the visual elements of the album covers, the imagological analysis will also consider their relevance to the songs in question and the imagery there. The cover of *The Trooper* places Eddie on the battlefield of the Crimean War, brandishing a bloody sabre and union-jack while wearing a red uniform and snarling angrily while being surrounded by bodies and broken cannons. On the cover of *Aces High*, Eddie is in the cockpit of a plane with scenes of a dog-fight, exploding airplanes and launched parachutes surrounding him. On the cover *2 Minutes to Midnight*, Eddie points to the viewer, wearing a flight jacket, smoking a cigarette and holding an assault rifle against a backdrop of national-flags in half-mast and a mushroom cloud. The cover for *A Matter of Life and Death*, has Eddie riding atop a tank following skeletal soldiers.

The music videos considered for this analysis are those of *The Trooper*, *Aces High*, *2 Minutes to Midnight* and *Afraid to Shoot Strangers*. There is no music video which directly refers to military conflict released by the band in the 21st century so imagological analysis of this decade in the band's catalogue will be focused purely on album cover artwork. *The Trooper* and *Aces High* music videos were produced the same years as the albums they were released on. Both videos show a recorded and mimed performance of the song by the band, intercutting with black and white stock footage. In the former's case, this is from a silent movie adaptation of *The Charge of the Light Brigade* and the latter featuring news-reel footage from World War II. *2 Minutes to Midnight* has its own self-standing narrative about a paramilitary group plotting to attack a private dinner. *Afraid to Shoot Strangers* was shot in 1995 as a live performance in Israel, when the band was helmed by Blaze Bayley. The live performance and recording is intercut with news footage relating in some way to the Gulf War.

### 3.7.1 Imagological analysis of the lyrics

Out of all the songs chosen for the primary focus of this thesis, *Aces High* and *Paschendale* contain the strongest and most obvious images for imagological analysis. The other songs are far more problematic for analysis due to their lack of implicit detail and imagery, but are also taken into
consideration in this section. The presence and the lack of presence of clearly observable auto- and heterostereotypes (Zacharasiewich 2010, p. 12) is in correlation with Iron Maiden’s change of emphasis in how they handle war as a topic and this also makes the imagological analysis of the lyrics heavily slanted in favour of their earlier material from the 1980s.

The language of *Aces High*, as already discussed in previous analysis sections is heavily action-oriented, focusing on the launch of the airplane and the ensuing dog fight. The scene has a strong feeling of awe for the war with descriptions of combat and the Churchill quote adding a strong sense of a distinctly British identity. The autostereotype is a heroic one, especially with the song’s chorus emphasising a patriotic willingness to die in combat (Anderson 1991, p. 144). The titular aces are not described beyond the single pilot who serves as the song’s narrator which leaves some degree of ambiguity although the style of the song is celebratory and reverend, especially in the exultations of the chorus: "Live to fly, fly to live, do or die" Displaying a clear exceptionality of courage for the pilots. Even though the song presents a clear duality with the Germans, their heterostereotypes remains anonymous, ambiguous and intentionally vague (Bayer 2009, p. 188).

Apart from an exaltation of the pilots and the awe inspired by the scenes of combat, there are no other specific strong stereotypes present. The similar depictions of heterostereotypes are also present in *The Trooper* and *Alexander the Great*, where the opposition is shown as fairly anonymous in the former and as fairly impotent and unimportant in the latter. *Run to the Hills* shows a more explicit negative heterostereotypes and, at a distance, autostereotypes of the Native Americans and the cavalry soldiers. Especially in the case of the cavalry, the negative images attached to the Indians as “cowards”, “tame” and as a brutal, “fighting them at their own game”, reflect the strong racist attitudes of the period which is made more obvious by the inclusion of the racial slurs of “red skins” and “injuns”.

The language of *Paschendale* is similarly explicit, but also much more focused on the horrors of war. The song goes into great detail to describe the horrible conditions of the soldiers and the fear-inducing environment of the trenches. However, the song does contain auto- and heterostereotypes in the form of the allied forces and Germans. Notably here, the Germans are mentioned only in the context of their propaganda machine, which in the context of the song is indeed one of the highest forms of evil for the disinformation and lies that are used to promote through it. It can also be argued that the slaughter which the soldiers face, leaving the trenches and heading to battle are perpetrated by the Germans as well. However, the language of kinship (Anderson 1991, p. 143) is only carried out in the single mentioning of allied soldiers mourning their lost comrades. The rest of
the song does not intentionally present images of heroism. The line "the sound of guns, can't hide their shame" seems to refer to the officers who must send their forces to die. As mentioned in the stylistic analysis section above, the stronger theme of the song is disclosure of the war and the Germans are presented more villainously in hiding this information. However, the fear of lies is also equally strong on the allied soldiers side who tell the narrator "to tell the tale of Paschendale". The final instance where any grouping seems to lose any meaning near the song's end where "friend and foe will meet again, those who died at Paschendale". This puts forth the image of death as the great equalizer, past which any sense of national identity is pointless, which seemed to have become Iron Maiden's core message in its war-related songs.

Auto- and heterostereotypes are in fact more prominently shown in 2 Minutes to Midnight. As discussed in the sections above, the images of feasting and enjoying a meal is shown next to images of hard labour and that of generations wasted to the "jaws of the war machine". Though 2 Minutes to Midnight lacks a cohesive narrative, it is a strong depiction of anti-establishment during the era of great nuclear anxiety in the early 1980s. While the narrator of the song does not identify with either group, there is a clear definitive clash of classes (Anderson 1991, p. 148-149). However, whereas it would normally cause great fear and distrust, the division is between the decision makers and the people below them or the common people. These could be considered as two heterostereotypes from the point of view of the narrator. However, the song is told in an intentionally sarcastic and over the top fashion which really depicts the common people in more sympathetic light, as they are forced to dance to the songs of the madmen playing on words. The end game is "to make a better type of gun" which shows the group's most immediate and targeted image of callous indifference being assigned to world leaders.

Afraid to Shoot Strangers presents strong descriptions of fear, nervousness and uncertainty. This is due to the song's monologue like structure which focuses on feelings and the mood of the soldier in question and lacks a similar cohesive narrative as Aces High. Its meanings are more implicit than explicit but it does present at least some degree of an autostereotype or, at the very least, an illusion of one. When the uncertain soldier is looking for confirmation from his fellow soldiers that "when it comes to the time, we'll be partners in crime". As discussed in the prior analyses, the soldier is looking for a group's justification for going to battle in order to ease his guilt of shooting other people. However, what makes this approach an illusion is that there is no unifying comradeship between the soldier and his peers. There is a distinct lack of a vocabulary of kinship to connect the soldier and his allies although this unfamiliarity is typical in that a soldier, the same as a person,
becomes naturally funnelled to a certain group rather the chosen to it (Anderson 1991, p. 143). Still, here the soldier's autostereotype is frail and poorly defined. Similarly, the heterostereotype of the enemy is almost entirely undefined. In *Aces High*, it was at least clearly implied that the narrator's enemies are the Germans, but in the case of *Afraid to Shoot Strangers*, it is necessary to gather this information from clues within the lyrics. As mentioned before the "desert sand mound" and "The Reign of Terror" seem to imply that the enemy are the Hussein regime's Iraqi soldiers, but there is no clear assignation to the fact. "The Reign of Terror" paints them in a demonized light but just as with everything else, the narrator of the song is unsure of this and never stops to ponder the extent of their terror, evil or even if they really are terrible or evil.

This type of ambiguity over the identity of the enemy became much more prominent in Iron Maiden's song writing in the 1990s. Even though songs like *The Aftermath* and *Fortunes of War* are more concrete with their descriptions of conflict, they all refrain from talking about a clear enemy and focus instead on the suffering of the soldiers themselves. This heavily displays Iron Maiden's growing social-consciousness which is evident in the more gruesome real-life examples of death and destruction (Taylor 2009, p. 90-91). The diminishment of auto- and heterostereotypes as a focusing point of duality in Iron Maiden's music can also be seen with songs like *Blood on the World's Hands* and *Como Estais Amigos* which both focus man-made disasters rather than their agency. Especially in *Blood on the World's Hands*, the song is more concerned with global indifference and the fight against the passiveness where the autostereotype is focused on the single person, the narrator, in his effort to make the rest of the world listen. Enemy agency is also strangely missing for *The Clansman* although from the context of the song, it can be deduced that the enemy are the English, although Iron Maiden give them an even more anonymous treatment as the Germans of *Aces High*.

*For the Greater Good of God* further complicates any simple interpretation of auto- and heterostereotypes since there is no clear duality presented between two groups. The song is concerned with pointless destruction and images of it such as gunshots, the bodies turned to mountains of ash and on the religious aspects. It presents a strong anti-conformist image where religious fanaticism is decried by the narrator as “blind leading the blind” (Kemp 2006, p. 40). As discussed in prior analyses, any enemy agency is considered insignificant at this point in the band’s career and blame is placed on those who instigate violence for their views. The only autostereotype that could be considered to be present is that the song decries those who use religion’s, more specifically Christianity’s, message of peace and use it as an excuse to wage war and thus points to
the righteousness of those who instead follow its message of peace. These sides are not given specific names or identities, suggesting a confusion which exists within groups of people. Despite its vagueness, this is still at least a lot more explicit of a divide than in songs like *Paschendale, The Longest Day* or *These Colours Don’t Run*, the latter two of which do not feature any enemy or duality. The one exception to the rule in the 21st century is *Montségur* which does feature duality between Catholicism and the Cathars in a case where Iron Maiden again point to the pointless struggling and bloodshed in the name of religion.

3.7.2 Eddie - The Universal Soldier

In this section, I will focus my imagiological analysis on the single and album cover artwork from Iron Maiden. An element which is common between all the covers chosen for analysis is the prominence of the group’s mascot Eddie as a central figure in some sort of military uniform. With the exception of the *Aces High* cover, Eddie is not directing violence towards anyone although at least on the cover of *The Trooper*, he is shown with blood upon his sabre, indicating that violence has already occurred. Interestingly, all the covers seem to inhabit elements pre-World War II style depictions of war with a strong stylistic emphasis on a leader figure (Charles & Tzu 2012, p. 9-13). However, it would be questionable to say that the artwork has any propagandistic qualities about it. All the covers do clearly demonstrate a degree of “transculturation” (p. 10-13), in this case, planting the character Eddie into distinctly historical settings such as the World War II dog fight, the Crimean battlefield and atop a tank on the cover *A Matter of Life and Death*.

There seems to be a considerable lack of documentary quality to the artwork more akin to World War II and later war art (Charles & Tzu 2012, p. 241), which is unsurprising as the covers seem to transform combat into a fantasy world where a zombie donning a grimace is joining the violence, although the military gear is not grossly inaccurate or even anachronistic. Eddie’s presence in each of the album covers seems to be two-fold: promotional and as a source of reaction. Promotionally, Eddie fulfils his duty uniformly on all Iron Maiden media he is a part of. Just as Snaggletooth the War Pig or the deaf, mute and blind Vic Rattlehead signify the presence of Motörhead and Megadeth, Eddie is simply the signature of the band who indicates their presence and the presence of their music. However, Eddie’s expressions and body language signify different reactions depending on the scenario in which he is planted. On both the covers of *2 Minutes to Midnight* and *A Matter of Life and Death*, Eddie’s expression is that of calm pensiveness, while on the covers of both *Aces High* and *The Trooper*, he displays an angry grin. The situations of the latter two are ones
of action, so Eddie seems to be reacting accordingly. There appears to be no glorification of the situation as in the instances where Eddie commits acts of violence while smiling, such as on the cover for the band's 1981 album *Killers*. The calm pensiveness of the other two instances are slightly more interesting.

It is questionable whether the artwork itself displays any critique of war (Charles & Tzu 2012, p. 10-13) but none of the artwork in question seems to display any glorification, with clear details of death and destruction evident, whether in the form of bodies, falling airplanes, a mushroom cloud or the desolate landscape in *A Matter of Life and Death*. At the very least, the albums all seem to display war as a terrifying entity, something which appears consistent with the band's lyrical take on war. One could argue that the cover of *The Trooper* would have some propagandistic use due to the prominence of the Union Jack in Eddie’s possession, but as discussed before, it seems to be present merely for audience convenience and possibly for identification. However, in this instance, its presence is so glaring that it could be argued that its presence is symbolic of British violence in particular. Its presence is mirrored by the stage performance of Bruce Dickinson, who dons a uniform nearly identical to Eddie's during concert performances. The artwork might be transferring the song's desolate message of meaningless conflict to the undead Eddie, but his angry presence lacks the solemnity of the song, thus creating a slight incongruity between the song and the relevant artwork. The cover image is of hopeless violence, the song is about tragic death and Dickinson's flag-waving is dramatic effect to get the listening crowd to join in on the music. However, Eddie's notably strong presence could be an indication of individualistic exceptionality (Kemp 2006, p. 40).

The pensiveness on Eddie’s face is particularly noteworthy on the cover of *2 Minutes to Midnight* where Eddie stands to the backdrop of national flags in half-mast and a mushroom cloud indicating the presence of nuclear war. Eddie also points his finger at the person viewing the artwork, assigning blame for what has transpired. He has no part in anything that has happened or even if he did, he can no longer do anything about it, other than wait for the nuclear destruction to take over. His fierce exterior is pointless in the on-coming desolation of the bomb. This image shows the futility of small fire-arms, like the assault rifle in the face of a bigger weapon, which is also at the core message of the song in question. The same pensive look is on Eddie's face in the cover for *A Matter of Life and Death*. Just as with the line of national-flags in half-mast, the scenery of dead soldiers marching ahead and alongside the tank which Eddie rides seems to be symbolic and abstract conception on the futility of war and possibly on the legacy of war, which is death. Here Eddie's pensiveness is that of a commanding officer or possibly a soldier simply resigned to
following orders and marching onward to the battlefield. The skeletons he's surrounded by act as if they were alive, such as one skeleton who is riding the tank and smoking a cigarette. It blends the image of death with an image of the living, perhaps also indicating that the soldiers are spiritually dead. This shows a more commentary style approach which can be considered extensions of the songs from the album as well as the single. Once again, there is some incongruity with Eddie's calm exterior on the cover of *2 Minutes to Midnight*, which instead uses very over the top rhetoric. However, Eddie's exceptionality shows again on the cover of *A Matter of Life and Death* which seems to show the collectivization of the dead soldiers (Kemp 2006, p. 40). Eddie therefore serves as someone who judges what he sees. On the latter cover, the tank also includes insignia and flags bearing Eddie's likeness, possibly Bradstreet's take on the condemnation of blind following on the path of war and death which is also present on the songs of the album.

3.7.3 War, then and now - Iron Maiden's music videos

Both *The Trooper* and *Aces High* music videos were directed by Jim Yukich and resultantly have a very similar style and delivery of their message. In both videos, black and white stock footage related to the lyrics is intercut to a performance video of the band playing. Technically both videos could be considered to fulfil the requirements of the staged performance video (Railton & Watson 2011, p. 58), as *The Trooper* was filmed intentionally for the video at Brixton Academy, while *Aces High*’s performance was recorded in front of a live audience in Poland. Regardless, a recorded version of the song plays over both versions. In the case of *The Trooper*, the video does presents a loose narrative (p. 55-58) of the cavalry soldiers' charge against the Russians in the Crimean War. The film and the lyrics are relevant to each other in theme but not from the point of view of narrative as the song takes the viewpoint of only one soldier. The cuts between the band and the film are done at least partially to accommodate the music and create a rhythmic alteration. *Aces High* does not contain a simple narrative as its black and white footage is of news and documentary films, showing planes flying in combat, anti-aircraft artillery as well as Churchill at the beginning. However, the video is edited to accommodate the music, focusing more on the band during the verse and first chorus cycle, but cutting increasingly to more stock footage during the guitar solo and in the latter half of the song. In both instances, Iron Maiden is achieving a similar effect which is to create a grandness and a sense of awe to the conflict. The use of black and white footage started most likely as a cost reducing method for producing many of their early videos like *The Number of the Beast* and *Run to the Hills*, which used stock footage in a humorous manner, but here there is no inherent sense of comedy present, indicating at least a moderately more serious approach.
While the band's performance style is aggressive and over the top, this slightly weakens the seriousness of the videos' tones and leads to an incongruity between the black and white stock footage and the lively, bright and colourful concert recording. However, the band's presence is intended to function as a marketing element (p. 2). Taken out of this context, the band's performance perhaps shows how uninhibitedly they stand behind their material, no matter how over the top their display of it may be.

*2 Minutes to Midnight* therefore presents a considerably different approach for visualising the message of the song. The video tells the story of missing nuclear missiles and a connected assault by hired mercenaries on a business meeting. The attack is ordered and paid for by a man donning Egyptian symbols. The only one to escape the assault is another older man shown identifying the symbols and deciphering them in a catacomb. Iron Maiden appear intercut with the story of the video in a concert recording. The video displays a clear narrative which is otherwise disconnected from the message of the song except for the presence of nuclear missiles (Railton & Watson 2011, p. 55-58). The narrative is self-standing and somewhat convoluted, but appears to display plots, assassination and the use of force to gain one's ends. In this sense, the song shares the theme of the song in that it seems highly critical and negative against the usage of power which leads to violence. The elements of Egyptian symbols and other semi-religious aspects, such as the presence of goat-heads in the video add a degree of surrealism to the video, though the video is not surreal enough that it could be considered altogether an art music video (p. 51-55). Instead, these elements seem to be taken directly from the *Powerslave* album in order to follow its general art-direction. As such, these elements are somewhat superficial. The video itself contains many powerful character-types, such as the businessmen who are emotionlessly stuck either tapping away at computers or staring at television screens, such as the ones surrounding the dinner-table at the meeting which the paramilitaries assault. The paramilitaries are shown to be a rowdy and infantile bunch, who rejoice at causing havoc after they have been paid by the Egyptian symbol donning man. Both groups display a distinct lack of individualistic action while the murderous paymaster and the old man watching the surveillance cameras are the only ones to escape the violence. Both display a personal cunning which both of the paramilitaries and the slaughtered businessmen lack (Kemp 2006, p. 40). Although it is managed through very caricature like interpretation of opposing agencies, the music video displays a clear commentary on conflict. Its stylistic methods are still intentionally overstated, just as with *The Trooper* and *Aces High*, but it displays a more precise isolation of these elements through simplified archetypes.
Much like *The Trooper* and *Aces High* videos, the *Afraid to Shoot Strangers* music video has a combination of narrative and staged performance music video elements. It combines footage of a live recording of the band, with Blaze Bayley on vocals, with images from the Gulf War of military action, civilians as well as Saddam Hussein and George H. W. Bush. While the reference to staged performance may seem unapt, as the recording is from a live concert performance, it functions as a similar intercutting point of the actual news footage that is used to tell the story. The news footage is cut in a way to show the preparation and some of the initial damage of the war, during the first verse sections and the opening of the song, as well as footage of the soldiers and Iraqis during the conflict. During the intense guitar solo section, the footage displays the firing of artillery and other weapons to coincide with the increased tempo and slows down again towards the end of the song to show images of desolation. There is a definite incongruity between the serious tone of the song, the serious news footage and the enthusiastic performance that the band is giving to the Israeli audience. However, it could be argued that this is simply passions being expressed (Frith 1983, p. 164-165), which of course is the song's primary purpose. This incongruity of emotion is most likely due to the positive energy and interaction between the crowd and the band. It may have the unintended effect of making war seem joyous or happy, but the intentional way in which the news footage is cut makes it clear that the video's underlying message is that of awe for the war. Iron Maiden also is not fabricating any war images, but instead they come from an actual conflict this time around (Taylor 2009, p. 90) which at least shows that the band does not want to seem disingenuous. Whether through staged or real footage, Iron Maiden's main message seems to be the awe and terror of war, although the music videos may not necessarily represent this viewpoint as well as their song lyrics.
4.0 Discussion

In this section, I will summarise my findings from the analysis section and provide explanation of what I think has been the general development of Iron Maiden's song-writing about war. The use of a broad corpus of songs, images and music videos have demonstrated that Iron Maiden employs a number of different approaches, but in the temporal aspect of comparing the song-writing, it is clear that changes and shifts have happened. The important question to ask is why this change has happened and what does it say about Iron Maiden in general.

From the nationalistic, patriotic and individualistic viewpoints, Iron Maiden's shift is obvious. In the 1980s, the band seemed to be concerned with depicting conflict in an awe-inspiring way and in a way which indicated exceptionality of conflict and soldiers. It is debatable if in this era Steve Harris was concerned with depicting individuality, although the songs were typically from the viewpoint of a single person. The employment of classical imagery, both in the songs and the promotional artwork displayed war as a somewhat distant thing and something that took place in the past. Steve Harris also clearly displayed his fascination with history, which also can be perceived from the choice of conflicts and the general mood of the song-writing. Harris's views on contemporary conflicts remained somewhat elusive and Iron Maiden seemed to steer clear of any obviously close conflicts such as the Falklands War which took place early in the band's recording career. Iron Maiden did not address the conflict until their 1998 song, Como Estais Amigos, by which time the awe of war was replaced by regret and solemn condemnation of war in general.

2 Minutes to Midnight despite its hyperbolic nature, was the only clear indicator of the band's view on war, through the intentionally gruesome depictions and rhetoric concerning nuclear war although it was written by Smith and Dickinson. The song is the most clearest critical view of war and, specifically, of the fear of nuclear weaponry. The choice to depict destruction in gory and grotesque detail seemed to be a bizarre choice at the time. It also seems to be the perfect example of Taylor's (2009) sarcasm used to depict utopian ideals (p. 89), as the over-the-top delivery and Dickinson gleeful performance is meant to satirise a nihilist who only enjoys the suffering which the common people endure. It is also an early instance of Iron Maiden criticizing men of power. However, the loosening tensions of the cold war during the late 1980s might have contributed to the fact that Iron Maiden did not attempt such harsh criticism for the rest of the decade, where Iron Maiden focused more or less exclusively on antiquity. Harris may had used the historical imagery of songs like The
Trooper, Aces High and Alexander the Great to express an exceptionality that did not present itself in modern times. These examples may also indicate that Iron Maiden did not have any real political agenda but were very appreciative of the courage of soldiers, which is why in the end message is often of praise. There are some problematic examples like that of Run to the Hills, although its song-writing seems to indicate that Harris trusted audiences to realise that the racist cavalry soldiers were not being heroic and that the message is that of blind hatred and stupidity turned to violence, also depicted in the intentionally comical music video for the 1982 single. This awe-inspiring approach to war can also be clearly heard in the musical approach, with fast-paced and powerful melodies and theatrical song performances.

Still, some commentary was present in Alexander the Great which contemplated on the positive developments that took place after the Macedonian conqueror's death. After the over the top destruction of 2 Minutes to Midnight, Iron Maiden's focus started to shift towards more contemplation with 1990s Public Enema Number One [sic] once again directing the anger at political decision-making. This preceded the eventual change which finally happened in 1992's Afraid to Shoot Strangers where the focus was now clearly shifted from the awe of war to the guilt and fear it would cause. Harris built the song as a monologue, though with some impersonal elements, in order to show how war can be justified either through common effort, religion or the intent to do good. While the condemnation of war was still fairly soft in this instance, the title of the song makes it clear that there is an inherent moral dilemma which soldiers must face, something which Iron Maiden had really only touched upon with 1983's The Trooper, where the cavalryman resigns his own fate to the meaningless combat. The shift to a more condemning and personal approach became more evident with the 1995 album The X-Factor. Whereas the monologue style of Afraid to Shoot Strangers still held back with the terror of going to war, the songs from the 1995 album depicted the terror of living in war and dealing with the aftermath and human desolation. In both cases, Iron Maiden had already taken to dealing with war in a decisively critical manner. Despite that historical elements continued to be present in songs like The Aftermath, Harris was now using darker allegories. Some of the darkened song-writing can be attributed to Steve Harris's divorce which according to him affected the tone of the album (Daniels 2012, p. 115), but the consistency of the serious and dark tone at which Iron Maiden continued to follow-up on war as a subject, makes it clear that there had been a shift in perspective. The Gulf War and the end of the Cold War must have had a huge impact as military conflict might have seemed utterly absurd without a noted adversary, like the Soviets.
This approach was also becoming evident in the musical style of the songs, which were slow, low-tempo and occasionally aggressive but no longer similarly powerful and fluid as those in the 1980s. Besides *Afraid to Shoot Strangers* it was also present in the lull used for dramatic effect in *Blood on the World's Hands*. Out of the war-related songs it most strongly exhibits elements of individuality (Kemp 2006, p. 39-40) with the single narrator feeling the isolation of the society around him which ignores the suffering of the world, infuriating the narrator and leading him to announce that "Someone should know" about the situation. The song focuses clearly on the meaninglessness of war and how people will choose not to face it when there appears to be no immediate threat. Iron Maiden had begun to show a clear social consciousness (Taylor 2009, p. 91) which they illustrate through a simplified but emotional musical approach (Frith 1988, p. 121).

While there were still individual examples of historical conflict and some borne from popular culture, like *Heart of Darkness* and *The Clansman*, Iron Maiden started to concern itself with more abstract ideas of war with songs like 2000's *The Mercenary*. The 2003 album *The Dance of Death* contained some songs about historical conflict like *Montségur* and *Paschendale*, which concentrated more on the meaningless slaughter of war than on the conflict and glory of battle. The attitudes of the band may have become more harsh due to the War on Terror which commenced in the aftermath of 9/11. While *Paschendale* seemed to mark the return of more dramatic and theatrical depiction of war, it clearly lacked the awe of heroism that had been present before. Instead the gruesome setting of the first World War seemed to be used as a means of reminding that horrors of war had not really changed over the past century, reflecting on modern anxiety by the use of conflicts past (Walser 1993, p. 154, 159-160).

The 2006 album *A Matter of Life and Death* finally focused on war from a multitude of angles, most of which focused on the condemnation and particularly the abuse of religious power to justify conflict, most notably in the case of *For the Greater Good of God*. For the first time since 2 *Minutes to Midnight*, world leaders are likened to the "blind leading the blind". Also the terminology of "holy war" is used, but whereas it would be easily misunderstood as a reference to jihad, the message instead shows that all religions are capable of causing pain and misery when human agency is introduced, again making the blind-metaphor feel more tangible. In fact, the song points to the inherent message of peace which most religions holds with its reference to Jesus dying on the cross and the lines: "It wasn't meant for us to feel the pain again." This points to the fact that people continue to misconstrue their beliefs as justification for violence, while blatantly ignoring the core message of their faith. This is reflected in the song also in the problematized relationship
between Devil and God. Once again, greatly dramatised musical approach is used. Steve Harris also indicated that the simple fear of war is enough to cause suffering with the 2010 song *When the Wild Wind Blows*, where the simple fear of nuclear holocaust leads to meaningless loss of life. Iron Maiden employed more dramatic musical approach in these songs about war than in the ones the band wrote during the 1990s. The styles were more similar to the ones employed during the 1980s, but with an emphasis dedicated to highlighting horror and destruction.

The visual imagery has also included destruction in a broader sense in their lyrical descriptions of conflict, from the blood and guts in *2 Minutes to Midnight* to the terror of World War I trenches in *Paschendale*. The imagery put forth in their promotional material on album covers and music videos has always had a sense of awe. However, especially with the music videos and concert performances, an incongruity may exist due to the positive energy that is often associated with the band's concerts. This incongruity is of course the result of huge fan appreciation and because of the passions expressed on stage (Frith 1983, p. 164-165). However, it indicates at least a powerful resonance and should not be confused with the central message of the music which is serious at its core. Iron Maiden itself represents them with the doom filled images of their mascot Eddie in uniform, in combat and even with him pointing his finger directly at audience, blaming humanity for the destruction on the single cover of *2 Minutes to Midnight*. In other words, Iron Maiden has always approach the darker side of war but what has clearly happened over time is that the group's attitude has changed to the point where war is a perversion of humanity and where there is no force that can justify it. The prevailing atmosphere post-Cold War and post-9/11 eras must have had their effect on the Harris and the band, where they became less concerned with waving a flag of heroism and instead wanted to make it clear that nothing good comes from war. War is a theme with great universality, but a band's approach can and most likely will change over time in relation to it. What I have demonstrated is one example from a British act and though notable is not entirely unique. There is room in my opinion for more comprehensive research into this topic and more to be understood not just from Iron Maiden but other bands as well.

Finally, I will note what other aspects of Iron Maiden's music are worthy of analysis and also, how my analysis will hopefully benefit those researching similar topics in the future. There is much room in Iron Maiden's song catalogue for further research. What I have attempted was a wholehearted survey of their war catalogue of songs, which while recurring and frequent still represents less than a quarter of their over-all catalogue. The band and Steve Harris have managed
to touch upon a variety of viewpoints and approaches to war, but they have equally employed a versatile lyrical approach to other significant events, historical persons and spirituality. There is regrettfully little research on the variety of narrative devices, such as the split in *Run to the Hills*, used by the band and there is also a strong antagonising of people in power and their repression of the helpless. What I have hopefully done is provide a variety of tools for further analysis of not just Iron Maiden but other heavy metal groups as well. The underlying theme of individualism is also something which would require more detailed analysis, especially considering that many heavy metal acts offer a variety of approaches, some through more extreme rhetoric than Iron Maiden. Also, war is a common theme found in many other heavy metal bands' catalogues and comparative approaches from bands of various eras would provide an interesting look into the over-all scope of views within the genre. The tools I have used in my analysis have been versatile and will hopefully give further researchers a possibility to look at alternative approaches to alternative themes within Iron Maiden's and other band's catalogues. The analysis of lyrics is only one possible approach but one that can be extremely helpful in understanding issues of real life. Iron Maiden also does not employ heavy symbolism which is again, something that comparative research with other metal bands would benefit from.
References


Communication and Society.


Appendix 1

Single covers for *The Trooper* (left) and *Aces High* (right), created by Derek Riggs, 1983/1984

Left: Single cover for *2 Minutes to Midnight*, created by Derek Riggs, 1984

Right: Album cover for *A Matter of Life and Death*, created by Tim Bradstreet, 2006