

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Dynamics of Sonic Knowledge in European Metal History

Heavy metal is a type of popular music that immediately elicits distinct mental images and associations. Kahn-Harris (2007, p. 1; also, see Hein, 2003; Roccor, 1998a; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000) rightly noted that metal has been successful in establishing its own cultural style: anyone confronted with the genre name immediately thinks of loud and aggressively distorted guitar sounds, long hair, black clothes, jewelry (Barratt, 2016), battle jackets (the '*Kutte*') (Cardwell, 2017), and band T-shirts (Höpflinger, 2014). These semiotics of 'metalness' work everywhere in Europe (Brown, Spracklen, Kahn-Harris, & Scott, 2016a). Metalness as an identity form has been developing since about 1970; it tells us who should be seen as a member and valued part of the metal scene as well as who is outside. After Weinstein's (1991) groundbreaking sociology of metal, Walser (1993) was the first to show how the musical sphere and the social world work together in metal in creating this scene.

Without a doubt, metal has successfully formed its own cultural and historical narrative (Weinstein, 2016). One might ask how this history should be told from the point of view of scientific history. When discussing metal's past, the 'new cultural history' (Burke, 2010; Hunt, 1989; Landwehr & Stockhorst, 2004; Pichler, 2017d), which trained cultural historians apply to their subjects today, uses a paradigmatic lens that is different from the ones in other disciplines. Despite significant modifications in the course of the 'cultural turn' since the late 1980s (Bachmann-Medick, 2016), history as an academic discipline still fundamentally relies on the 'historical method' in all its rigour in researching empirical sources and the construction of theoretically founded narratives (Howell & Prevenier, 2001; Iggers, Wang, & Mukherjee, 2017; Rüsen, 2013; White, 1973).

From such a cultural-historical perspective, moreover a transnational and a European perspective (Pichler, 2017d; Schmale, 2000), important questions have remained unanswered. Is (European) metal history strictly limited to the time and space of the

factual emergence of a phenomenon called heavy metal music in Great Britain about five decades ago? Historically, metal has integrated and ‘recycled’ a whole range of historical narratives, sounds, and images of past eras – from ancient history and the medieval era to modernity and post-modernity (Pichler, 2018b; Walser, 1993). Yet it has blended all these different historical ingredients into a new and distinct sonic form of sound culture (Berger, 1999, 2010; Elflein, 2010; Walser, 1993), what I call in this book the ‘sonic knowledge’ of metal in Europe (Pichler, 2018c). This distinctness justifies seeing the time since the beginning of the 1970s as the temporal framing of a European metal cultural history. The next question at hand would be this: What exactly defined metal’s newness, as such a sonic culture form historically, from a predominantly European and transnational perspective? We only have elusive answers at this point.

Reflecting on such queries we realise that though, thanks to the emerging discourse of metal music studies (for good introductions, see Bartosch, 2011; Brown, Spracklen, Kahn-Harris, & Scott, 2016b; Gardenour Walter, Riches, Snell, & Bardine, 2016; Heesch & Höpflinger, 2014; Hein, 2003; Wallach, Berger, & Greene, 2011; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000), we do already know a good deal about the past of this kind of popular culture. However, we do not know metal history in academically satisfying ways. We lack research that consciously applies the ‘historian’s gaze’ to heavy metal. There is a fundamental lack of scholarship by trained historians, especially from a European and transnational perspective (Pichler, 2017c, 2018b; Schmale, 2000).

In this book, presenting first explorations into this European cultural history, the analysis of this gap in scholarship forms my point of departure. Herein, I continue the research from my scientific blog on the topic (Pichler, 2014–20). My explorations into European metal history integrate some elements from this blog; predominantly my book consists of original texts. In these new texts, in order to help nurture an awareness of history in metal studies, I have tried to even more consciously take advantage of my experience as a cultural historian as well as my expertise in European cultural history and European integration history; fields in which I have published widely (Pichler, 2011, 2014, 2016c, 2017d, 2018b). However, this is only a first attempt and certainly not a complete history – as it is simply not possible at this stage of metal studies. Thus, I intentionally restrict myself to presenting a series of first explorations into the topic, held together by the concept of sonic knowledge in Europe.

Perhaps the debates surrounding metal music studies stand on the brink of becoming a full-fledged disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourse, at least a persisting independent field of study. As mentioned in any recent introductory text covering our field (Bartosch, 2011; Brown et al., 2016b; Gardenour Walter et al., 2016; Heesch & Höpflinger, 2014; Wallach et al., 2011), the pioneering phase in the 1990s (Berger, 1999; Gaines, 1991; Roccor, 1998a, 1998b; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 1991) was followed by a period of growing research intensity and publications in the 2000s (Baulch, 2007; Diaz-Bohne, 2010; Elflein, 2010; Hein, 2003; Irwin, 2007; Kahn-Harris, 2007). Since 2008 we have witnessed a steady increase, and in recent years even an explosion in the

number of monographs, edited volumes, articles, and scholarly events like workshops and conferences (Brown et al., 2016a). Today in 2020, we have a peer-reviewed journal called *Metal Music Studies* (Scott, 2014–20) and the globally operating learned society of the International Society for Metal Music Studies (ISMMS) (2020), both being significant structural signs of the emergence of an independent (inter)disciplinary discourse and its initial institutionalisation.¹

These collective projects – a journal and an academic organisation – are forms of group building, maybe even of ‘tribalism’ or ‘scene building’ within academia (Becher & Trowler, 2001). This stands in sharp contrast to Weinstein’s suggested conclusion that there is an ‘insularity’ when it comes to metal research (Weinstein, 2016; for a critique of Weinstein’s methodology, see Digoia & Helfrich, 2018). From a cultural historian’s point of view, such early institutionalisation is of great interest. Historically this implies that the birth and following development of the historical focus, namely metal culture itself since 1970, has recently been accompanied by intense academic community building in the field of metal studies. Metal studies scholars are developing a scientific community, which is centred on the topic of metal music. Interestingly, like metal itself, the ISMMS also originated in Great Britain (Brown et al., 2016a, pp. 8–11; Hickam, 2015).

It is possible that we can observe the on-going constitution of an epistemic community of metal researchers. Of course, in this community we are not merely neutral or bias-free researchers. Much more, we pursue our own interests in research, according to our biographies and living worlds (Huguenin Dumittan, 2014; Pichler, 2017a; Savigny & Schaap, 2018; Spracklen & Spracklen, 2018, pp. 1–8). One might suppose that this emerging academic community is about to develop its own ‘thought style’ (Fleck). This argument does not imply that metal studies is a discipline at this point; nonetheless, it is very much in the state of finding shared norms and epistemologies of research, so very likely a thought style (Fleck, 2012) of metal studies indeed.

Presently, this global and growingly digital community of metal studies is characterised by a rather fluid, not yet canonised theoretical discourse – also from a historical perspective (Hecker, 2014; Hickam, 2015; Kahn-Harris, 2016; Weinstein, 2016). Since the 1990s, the field was strongly influenced by female academics (Digoia & Helfrich, 2018; Heesch & Scott, 2016; Riches, 2015; Roccor, 1998a; Weinstein 1991, 2000) Today, metal scholars – predominantly male though – situate themselves more or less deeply involved in the culture of metal (Huguenin Dumittan, 2014; Pichler, 2017a; Savigny & Schaap, 2018). Such nuanced involvement forms of individually varying kinds should not be interpreted as a theoretical fatality leading to a lack of distancing from the focus of research. However, it follows that the histories of metal fans and metal studies are closely interrelated and cannot be separated from each other.

¹ The author is a member of the ISMMS and a member of the journal’s editorial advisory board. Hence, his narrative is a part of this discourse – written by a historian.

This inseparability is a given, and we must focus on the network-like co-development of the histories of metal and metal studies. Metal scholars like the ones engaged in the global community building of the ISMMS write such narratives of metal history. They are living the history and memory building of their scholarly community, which I suggest is on its way to being a distinct thought style (critically, see Brown, 2018; Kahn-Harris, 2016). Most remain practicing metalheads. In a nutshell, metal and metal studies cycle as a historical tandem, their evolution is a co-development – and this is how we should look at them.

'Presentness' and Ahistorical Scene Theories

In an important essay on the 'next steps in the evolution of metal studies', Kahn-Harris (2016) has claimed self-reflexive memory building by both the scene(s) and the academic community make up a key task of future metal culture and research. This is one of the aims of a concept he coined 'Metal beyond Metal' (2014, 2016). Until now, metal studies and its academic community have been dominated by theoretical paradigms from the disciplinary worlds of sociology, cultural studies, philosophy, and musicology (for introductory texts, see Bartosch, 2011; Brown et al., 2016b; Gardenour Walter et al., 2016; Heesch & Höpflinger, 2014; Hein, 2003; Nohr & Schwaab, 2012; Wallach et al., 2011; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000). Notwithstanding Kahn-Harris' call for reflexive memory and history building, up to the present day the history of metal has been written by sociologists, cultural studies scholars, philosophers, musicologists, and scholars from related academic fields.

Of course, this is not 'wrong'. These scholars initiated discussions. Nevertheless, sociologists write in the theoretical style of sociology, cultural studies scholars use their own theories, philosophers follow the philosopher's worldview, and musicologists analyse music itself. The result is a discursive situation in which there still is no history filling the gap, i. e. there is no satisfying (European) cultural history of metal, written by trained historians. Put provocatively, metal and metal music studies are a culture and an academic field, wherein it is accepted that they have a common (European) past and they want to share and 'memorialize' it (Brown et al., 2016a, pp. 1–8). We even must presuppose such aims when we take Kahn-Harris' claim seriously. Nonetheless, we are forced to tell it in a way that is unconvincing for historians because there is no scientific historiography of metal, i. e. one also created mainly by trained historians (Pichler, 2018b).

This is where my research comes in. As a trained historian I want to help incorporate the 'historian's gaze' into the field of metal studies. Historians ask their own questions. In the current discourse of metal research, in addition to the concepts of 'subculture(s)' and 'genre(s)' the notion of 'scene(s)', however polymorphically used in varying works and contexts, prevails in interpreting the history of metal since about 1970 (Baulch, 2007; Bennett & Peterson, 2004; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Straw, 1991; Wallach et al., 2011;

Weinstein, 1991). There is a mainly sociological bias, where the concept of the 'scene' is utilised in embracing metal only in a supposedly 'holistic' way (Kahn-Harris, 2007, pp. 9–26), meaning the music itself, its infrastructures, practices, economics, its times and spaces. Recently, scene theorising seems to be conceptually outgrowing subculture(s) and genre(s) (Baulch, 2007; Bennett & Peterson, 2004; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Straw, 1991; Wallach et al., 2011).

Hence, this terminology of scene(s) is constitutive of metal studies' current outlook concerning the object of enquiry. The notion grew into a successful and elementary theoretical tool, which captures how metal works in respect to scene formation in societies. However, from the point of view of historians, it suggests an analytical 'presentness' in theorising metal. It features a strict normative way of looking at the present spaces of scene(s), e.g. the isolated scene(s) of the 1980s (Fellezs, 2016; Straw, 1991; Zaddach, 2016). It can explain scene(s) only at their individual point in time, rather oddly isolated in history. Thus, the current paradigms of metal studies continue to contain a bias toward presentness, lacking a sophisticated sense of historicity, regardless the claim of reflexive memory building (Kahn-Harris, 2016, p. 5). Kahn-Harris (2007) moreover seems to not have acknowledged that already some years before his seminal study of extreme metal, which applies Bourdieu's theory on its subject, Diaz-Bohne (2010) had analysed the weaknesses of Bourdieu's structuralism.

From the point of view of a trained historian, metal research remains ahistorical in many cases (Pichler, 2018b). Metal is cut off from its deep roots in the broader contexts of the modern and post-modern cultural history of Europe. Context matters a lot. For example, much more than in current research, a historian would ask how 1980s metal culture in Europe was connected to the accelerating process of European political integration (Pichler, 2018b), the final phase of the Cold War (Spohr & Reynolds, 2016) and what Hobsbawm (1994) called the 'age of extremes'.

Three Examples of the Historian's Gaze

Let me give examples supporting my argument, from three constitutive phases of European metal history (Bayer, 2009; Christe, 2004; Cope, 2010; Hein, 2003; O'Neill, 2017; Roccor, 1998a; Schäfer, 2001; Wiederhorn & Turman, 2013). Until today, there has been an on-going debate centred on how the history of the 'birth' of heavy metal around 1970, with bands like Black Sabbath, Cream, Deep Purple, and Led Zeppelin, should or should not be told. Some scholars and popular writers emphasise innovations in the music industry (Weinstein, 1991, 2015), while others stress the eminence of the invention of the heavy metal guitar riff as the basic element, or a combination of both (Cope, 2010; Elflein, 2010; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Walser, 1993). Consistently, the epoch from the late 1960s to the early 1970s shines through as the era when heavy metal was 'born' – stemming from the counter-cultures of the 1960s (Poole, 2016).

Already here trained historians can bring in a fresh line of thought. Conceptual history, or in German *Begriffsgeschichte*, initiated by historians such as Reinhart Koselleck in the 1970s (Koselleck, 1979; Müller & Schmieder, 2016), teaches us to think of the history of linguistic concepts themselves as constitutive factors of historical realities. *Begriffsgeschichte*'s theory is not discursive constructivism, though it is closely associated with post-structuralist constructivism's interest in language and modes of speaking. Most influentially, Koselleck introduced the concept of *Sattelzeit*, explaining the breakthrough of modernity between 1750 and 1850 (Koselleck, 1972). The idea of *Sattelzeit* exploited the metaphor of a mountain saddle to reflect the transition of European history and supposed ascension from pre-modern to modern times. In this metaphor, Europe 'hiked' up over a mountain saddle, situated somewhere between 1750 and 1850.

In our context, critically drawing on *Begriffsgeschichte* leads us to ask where the linguistics of heavy metal actually came from historically (Poole, 2016), and how they were used in broader contexts in Europe around 1970. Doing so, we quickly realise that around 1970 the term 'heavy metal' did not predominantly refer to the heavy guitar riff. In fact, it was borrowed from chemistry and everyday language in the media. It would be highly ahistorical thinking to suppose that at the time heavy metal(s) generally referred to the heaviness of a new form of popular music. Before the notion appeared for the first time in an English book on chemistry, it was used to describe big guns, large calibre ammunition, or great abilities (Duffus, 2001; Walser, 1993, p. 1; Weinstein, 2000, pp. 18–21). In 1936, the chemical term heavy metal had its debut in English literature, in the translation of the third edition of Niels Bjerrums *Inorganic Chemistry* (Bjerrum, 1936; Duffus, 2001).

The digital Google research tool Ngram viewer, which searches an immense corpus of about five million digitalised texts on Google books, shows that the notion was already being used in 1750.² Then, since the years around 1936 there was a steady trend toward greater usage, and later there was a dramatic increase in frequency (see Fig. 1). Hence, from 1936 on, the term predominantly referred to toxic chemical elements such as mercury. Lead, another heavy metal, was used in gasoline until the 1980s and then banned due its toxicity. The medical and cultural use of mercury dates back to ancient Egypt. Thus, around 1970, heavy metal did not refer to the heaviness of Tony Iommi's gloomy and powerful guitar work but the toxicity and environmental damage caused by elements such as lead and mercury.

Begriffsgeschichte teaches us that heavy metal, during the time around 1970, was not a newly coined term to glorify Black Sabbath's riffs (Brown, 2015; Cope, 2010). In contrast to this common narrative, it is to be seen as a term born out of the need to describe some new obscure phenomenon in popular culture. To do so, popular discourse

² Using this methodology draws upon Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schmale's, University of Vienna, inquiries into the topic of European solidarity. Furthermore, I thank Prof. Schmale for collegial discussions on this methodology (see Schmale, 2017).



Fig. 1 The usage of the term 'heavy metal', 1750–2008 (source: Ngram viewer, 2018b).

embraced a chemical term – heavy metal – that brought with it all the history of the development of modern chemistry since the 18th century. We cannot cut off the term from its toxic roots in European history.

Informed by *Begriffsgeschichte*, we should suppose that people mentally connected heavy metal with the toxicity of mercury and lead by association, which are indeed negative connotations. We must assume that – right from the start – this new music had to struggle to rid itself of those toxic associations ... or use them in a constructive manner. It is telling indeed that Hein (2003, p. 44) speaks of a '*reputation sulphureuse*' (i. e. sulphurous repute) when describing Black Sabbath's 1970 image. Current research too weakly connects the chemical terminology to the toxic history of heavy metal (Bayer, 2009; Christe, 2004; Cope, 2010; O'Neill, 2017; Roccor, 1998a; Schäfer, 2001; Wiederhorn & Turman, 2013). Walser in his classic book, which follows a discourse-oriented approach, gets caught up in this trap (Walser, 1993, p. 1). He stresses that at the end of the 20th century heavy metal was a chemical notion, but on the same page, in sharp contradiction, he claims that heavy metal meant 'power and potency' (ibid.). Later in his book (p. 8), Walser does write of 'heavy metal poisoning' and the chemical discourse but still this is in contrast to his focus on power and potency. Historically, this is not convincing, somehow even weakening Walser's otherwise thoughtful analysis. Also, Poole's (2016) concept of heavy metal history as a 'palimpsest' cannot not explain this.

Here, consistently applying the historian's gaze would mean carefully and contextually reconstructing the use of the notion of heavy metal(s) around 1970 and asking how the decades-long chemical history of heavy metal also became a musical one. How did the history of the toxicity of lead, mercury, bismuth, and other elements moreover come to represent the glorious history of musical heaviness? This also leads to a first surprising, contextual cross-reference in European metal history. The years around 1970 were the years of the birth of the music. Moreover, they were the time of the birth

of environmental protection movements and green political parties, whose discourse was heavily centred on the toxicity of heavy metals which pollute our world (Guha, 1999; Hawken, 2007). Are there any broader connections between those histories around 1970? What has been the discursive interrelatedness between heavy metal as toxic music and heavy metal(s) as toxic polluters of our natural environment?

Let us discuss a second example, the history of heavy metal in the 1980s, which often is described as something like metal's 'golden age' (Kahn-Harris, 2007, pp. 1–5; Walser, 1993, pp. 11–16; Weinstein, 2000, pp. 43–45). Certainly, it is true that the history of metal in this decade was one of consolidation and growth for the genre(s) and culture(s). Erupting in the late 1970s, there was the 'New Wave of British Heavy Metal' (NWOBHM), which in turn was followed by the more extreme music of speed and thrash metal. The latter was developed by bands like Metallica, Slayer, and Exodus in the California 'Bay Area', and also in the New York metropolitan area by Anthrax, as well in Germany by Kreator, Sodom, and Destruction (Fellezs, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007, pp. 2–3, 102–103; Weinstein, 2000, pp. 48–52; 2015, pp. 235–237).

For a historian, the narrative of a golden age of metal in the 1980s remains unconvincing because it does not take the crucial links between metal culture and the broader contexts of European history in this era into account. Research already emphasises the crucial roles of the media, places of collective consumption, sales and promotion networks; in short, the construction and further development of a transnational scene in this decade. To a trained historian, this question of scene construction mechanisms is essential, but it is not enough to historically understand how metal could grow so vital in that crucial decade (Walser, 1993, pp. 11–16). To answer the question, we have to ask for contextualisation.

In European history, the decade of the 1980s was a very shifting and contradictory one. After the shock of the oil crisis in 1973 and economic decline on the old continent, Western and Central Europe moved on to a phase of accelerated political integration (Kaiser & Varsori, 2010; Pasture, 2015; Pichler, 2016c, 2018b). The 'old world' of Europe started its political and cultural 'continentalisation' (Lützel, 2007). After an initial enlargement in 1973 (with the accession of Denmark, Great Britain, and Ireland), the then European Community (EC, which developed into the European Union) saw two further rounds of enlargement in 1981 (Greece) and 1986 (Spain, Portugal). The Single European Act in 1986, as the first major revision of the European founding treaties in 1957 (Treaty of Rome, which founded the European Economic Community, EEC, which later became the EC), paved the road for the Maastricht Treaty and the foundation of the EU in 1992. The end of this decade brought the ending of bipolarity and the crumbling down of the Berlin Wall. In Europe, this was a decade of Europeanisation.

This broader history is also the backdrop for the history of heavy metal in Europe. We cannot make sense of 80s metal networks' history without historicising its golden age in this broad context, too. Applying the historian's gaze in this methodological manner, we see that the decade was also the time of the first major tours of genre-defin-

ing bands in the 'old world'. In 1984, on their 'Seven Dates of Hell' tour, supporting British band Venom, and then on the 'Bang that Head that Doesn't Bang' tour, Metallica played their first European shows. This was followed by their first shows in the 'Eastern Bloc' in Poland (1987) and Hungary (1988). Even before that, Iron Maiden played a gig in Warsaw in 1984. Similarly, the US band Slayer played their first European concert in 1985. Most strikingly, the self-proclaimed 'inventors of true metal', Manowar, called their first headliner tour in 1986 'Hail to Europe' (see chapter 12).

Giving it a basic definition, a tour of one or more metal bands is a diachronic series of concerts on a coherent trip through a single or a number of regions of the globe – in our case of Europe. The bands mentioned planned and took spatial movements through Europe in 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1988. This meant travelling through a continent that was in a period of intensifying regional integration – also in a 'metal' way. Here we have to understand European integration as a subcultural process of Europeanisation of now more than five decades, in which a today continent-wide shared inventory of metal knowledge was formed. Basically, every tour can be defined as the regular repetition of a single historical event, the concert (Diaz-Bone, 2010, pp. 304–310; Weinstein, 2000, pp. 199–235), over a period of days, weeks or months, and sometimes even years. The bands travelled from town to town and repeated their shows in intentionally ritualised ways. For a history of Europeanisation, a metal tour is a form of spatial and cultural integration of a geographic region through a ritualised historic event in the form of a concert. So, we can label all those tours as procedures and strategies of Europeanisation in metal. Astonishingly, such processes of European subcultural integration crossed the Iron Curtain as early as 1984 (when Iron Maiden performed in Warsaw, Poland), precisely twenty years before the EU's 'Eastern Enlargement' in 2004.

This raises serious questions not asked so far: Did the Europeanisation of metal history and broader European political integration interact in the 1980s? If yes, did Europe's 'metallic' integration favour a more unified image of Europe in metal culture than before? Did the intensifying political and cultural integration of Europe favour metal's scene construction processes or vice versa? What was the role of cultural contacts across the Iron Curtain in metal before 1989 and in the overall history of Europeanisation? The historian's gaze gives rise to such questions.

Thinking of a third example, we take up *Begriffsgeschichte* again. In his seminal book on extreme metal, Kahn-Harris (2007) presented the history of the subgenres of extreme metal music. As a trained sociologist, he uses Bourdieu's theory of social and cultural capital in exploring the construction of the global extreme metal scene since the 1980s. His narrative is thoughtful. Nonetheless it neglects one aspect, which for a historian seems quite simple to notice. Extreme metal emerged in the 1980s; in the 1990s and 2000s it was fragmented into a mushrooming spectrum of styles and semi-styles, of genres and semi-genres, as well as hybrid and fluid mixtures between them. This radicalisation of metal, its transgression from metal to extreme metal happened in the last decade of what is known to historians (and well beyond their disciplinary

framings) as the ‘age of extremes’ (Hobsbawm, 1994). Well-known British historian Eric Hobsbawm introduced this notion of the age of extremes to characterise and narrate the period from 1914 to 1991, in all its excesses of wars, genocides, violence, the Holocaust, the Cold War, nuclear warfare, and the rise of post-modern capitalism and neoliberalism. Following *Begriffsgeschichte* again, it is a rather evident historic thought that extreme metal could be interpreted historically as a product of the final phase of the age of extremes.

Discursively and narratologically, both notions use the concept of extremity. The emergence of death and black metal, in all their violent imagery, their musical extremes, their sheer will to transcend the established limits (Baulch, 2007; Chaker, 2014; Chaker, Schermann, & Urbanek, 2018b; Kahn-Harris, 2007; Patterson, 2016; Purcell, 2003), could be interpreted as a musical answer to the age of extremes, with a strong focus in Europe. Once more using the Google Ngram viewer tool (activating the case-insensitive search option), we gain an impression of the synchronic use of the terms ‘extreme metal’ and ‘age of extremes’ since 1970:

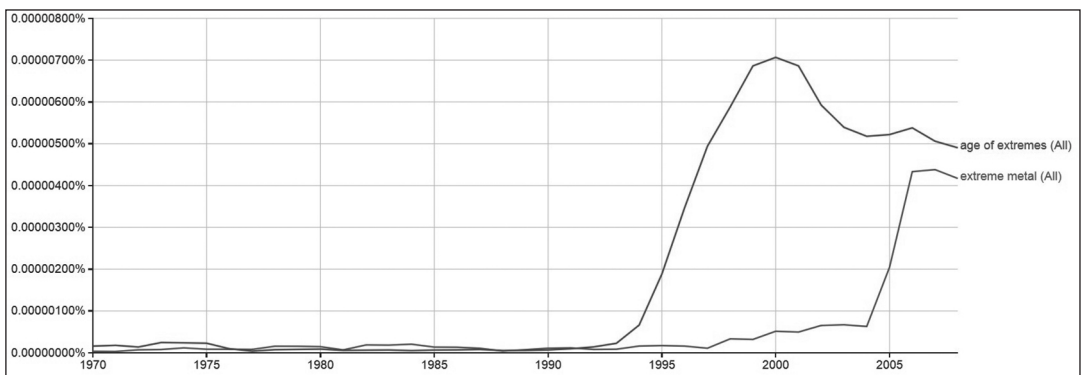


Fig. 2 The usage of the notions ‘extreme metal’ and ‘age of extremes’, 1970–2008 (source: Ngram viewer, 2018a).

This graph is no statistical proof of a causal interrelation, but it does show that for a large corpus of historical texts in our analysed period both terms tended to be more frequently used after 1994. That was the year when Hobsbawm introduced his narrative. This is no proof of a historic axiom. Nevertheless, we see in the years from 1994 until 2008 (the year when the analysis ends in Ngram viewer) both were present in texts more frequently. This result raises the question for a possible connection between the semantic fields.

Taken together, these three examples of fundamental phases in European metal history illustrate the author’s aim and direction of the research in this book. The intention is to rely on the new cultural history and take a fresh look at metal’s European cultural history over the past five decades since 1970.

Sonic Knowledge and the Cultural Dynamics of European Metal History

As mentioned above, historians ask different questions from the ones asked by sociologists, philosophers, cultural anthropologists, or musicologists. Historians ask questions according to their professional conditionalisation. I ask for metal in European history (Pichler, 2018b). The restriction of the chronological focus to the period since 1970 only applies to the history of the actual music discourse. Also, I consider metal's referential linkages to ancient, medieval, modern, and post-modern periods (Meller, 2018; Spracklen, Deeks, & Lucas, 2014; Swist, 2019; Von Helden, 2017). I believe that this new perspective can become a powerful and exciting enrichment of metal studies during its present phase of growing into its own (inter)discipline, or at least in terms of the lasting establishing as a distinctive and respected field of study. Above all, I assume that the perspective is an innovative and fresh addition to current metal studies discourse in its bias toward presentness and ahistorical scene construction theories, which often neglect historicity. Hence, in the present work, my discursive goal is to help introduce European (Union) cultural history into metal music studies and vice versa. As many historians and potential readers might not have a detailed understanding of metal history, I usually integrated a broad event history of 'basic' metal knowledge into the individual chapters.

On the one hand, such a European perspective already legitimises itself based on the events of the history to be told. With artists like Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Iron Maiden, and Judas Priest, the birth of metal and the following NWOBHM, metal had its primary genesis in Great Britain in Europe. Intentionally, I am avoiding a discussion of Britain's European status at this point – my readers will see later in this book on several occasions that already this phase of metal history was characterised by networks that integrated Britain and 'continental' Western Europe. We also have to take metal's American and global interconnections into account, as in the history of the emergence of speed and thrash metal (Fellezs, 2016; Kahn-Harris, 2007, pp. 2–3, 102–103; Weinstein, 2000, pp. 48–52, 2015, pp. 235–237). The fatalities of methodological Eurocentrism can be avoided when acknowledging that this European history and metal's Europeanness are not the 'best' or only history and identity of the culture. The Asian, North American and South American, African, and Australian histories and forms of scenic belonging are no less fascinating (Brown et al., 2016b; Wallach et al., 2011; Weinstein 1991, 2015, 2016).

On the other hand, there also are compelling theoretical reasons to reconstruct metal cultural history from a transnational and European perspective. In the decades in question, from the 1970s right up to the 21st century, Europe has been a cultural space of dense historical interactions, oscillations, conflicts, and pulsations. In the 1970s and 1980s, Europe was still the main stage for the Cold War, the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain forming its most obvious materialisations. From 1989 to 1991, communism collapsed, Eastern Europe 'returned to Europe'. That European space and time, all its

history of cultural contacts, entanglements, constructions, and also deconstructions of elementary boundaries, have likewise formed a key space and time in metal history. This already follows from our three examples discussed. Having this in mind, it is theoretically compelling to ask for a European cultural history of metal. In this respect, I take up Wolfgang Schmale's theory of a European cultural history, in which he treats Europe as a discursive construction (Schmale, 2000, 2008, 2016), and combine it with my deconstructive theory of European Union cultural history (Pichler, 2011, 2014, 2016c, 2017d, 2018b).

We have critically assessed the normative presentness in current theorising in metal studies. Usually, discourse only focuses on present scene building and disconnects metal from its deep historical roots in broader historical contexts. In this respect, I want to help in broadening the paradigms of metal research with a concept which I coined 'sonic knowledge' (Pichler, 2018b). The starting point is the recent research discourse of 'sound history' (Hendy, 2013; Paul & Schock, 2013; Schrage, 2011). In a special issue of *Studies in Contemporary History* on the sound history of the 20th century, Dominik Schrage wrote:

The musical mode of hearing enables us as subjects to experience comprehensibly the effects of sounds and rhythms, be it contemplatively or expressively – plunging into music or dancing to it. Like images, sounds cannot be transferred to linguistic meaning without fractures; but both are experienced as being in harmony with each other, corresponding with moods, affections, and emotions in the experiencing subject. Sounds, melodies, chords, and rhythms share a basic foundation across cultures, but in different musical cultures they are encoded, systematised and linked to harmony theories in different ways (Schrage, 2011, pp. 269–276).³

A fruit of the 'the new cultural history' (Burke, 2010; Hunt, 1989), sound history scholarship (Hendy, 2013; Paul & Schock, 2013; Schrage, 2011) opens up a more sophisticated approach to metal history. Sound-historical research analyses the ways acoustic sense making – i. e. hearing and listening – influenced cultural history. Sound historians examine how hearing and listening, as ways of sense making, changed over decade-long periods during the 20th century. They elicit the history of the 'cultural ear'.⁴ For instance, the dramatically changing acoustic worlds of big cities in the first decades of the 20th century, when the automobile conquered urban areas, immensely affected how people constructed their view of the new industrialised world (ibid.). Following this approach, I suggest that metal music also has a distinct sound history since around 1970 (Pichler, 2018c). In this perspective of the diachronic *longue durée*, I assume that the historically varying settings in which people have heard metal and listened to metal

³ Author's translation.

⁴ I would like to thank all the participants at the 'History' panel at the ISMMS conference in Nantes on 19th June 2019 for sharing their thoughts on this matter.

since the 1970s also affected how scenes were constructed. They affected the 'cultural metal ear' in Europe.

There is a well-known example. The cultural setting of hearing and listening in 1970, when Black Sabbath's self-titled debut was released, differed greatly from the one in 2013, when their last LP *13* was issued. In 1970, fans listened to music recordings on vinyl or on the radio. Nowadays, we listen to both the debut album and to *13* on the globally-available Spotify platform. Today, if we do not want to listen to Black Sabbath anymore, we can jump to Rihanna or Kanye West in a moment, or even to another audio-visual medium like YouTube. There is much more fluidity and there are many more cross-genre jumps. We are faced with so much more music to choose from, and it can indeed be overwhelming. Hence, in 2020, we experience very different forms of hearing and listening and have a very different cultural metal ear. These drastic changes need to be studied over periods of decades. From a sound-historical view, these changes also are the diachronic backbone of the development of scene communities.

Thinking along these lines, I introduced the notion of sonic knowledge to get a theoretical grip on such long-lasting processes (Pichler, 2018c). Sonic knowledge is the (intuitive) knowledge of the cultural concepts (i. e. the tour, the album, significant narratives, heaviness, the riff, loudness, speed, metaphors, idioms, etc.) that have characterised metal over the long term since around 1970. The notion is thought to capture the ways these concepts have changed or have persisted over long periods. The knowledge of these categories keeps scenes together in the *longue durée* (Berger, 1999, 2009; Diaz-Bohne, 2010; Elflein, 2010; Hein, 2003; Walser, 1993). All those categories are 'sonic' knowledge because they depend on the music and sound at the heart of the culture. In the extended temporal range, scenes are structured by the knowledge of these categories. They structure our culturally programmed ways of listening to metal and hearing metal. This concept should be read in the context of current discussions centered on 'metal knowledge' (Kahn-Harris, 2016; O'Boyle & Scott, 2016). The theory of metal as sonic knowledge is the basis of the interpretation of the cultural dynamics of metal history in Europe developed in this book.

The Book's Outline and Research Aim

This book consists of two major parts. In the first, entitled 'Theoretical Structures of Sonic Knowledge', theoretical matters are addressed. It contains sections on important prolegomena regarding such a perspective (chapter 2), on the use of narratives, narrations, and emplotment in metal history (chapter 3), on identities and identity practices (chapter 4), and on Europeaness, transnationalism, and entanglement (chapter 5). I proceed by defining 'the album' as the crucial temporal category of sonic knowledge (chapter 6). Then, 'the tour' is put forward as the spatial key concept (chap-

ter 7). In summary, my theoretical results allow to broadly conceptualise the historical notion of sonic knowledge as a pentagon of conceptual terms (chapter 8).

The second part of the book, entitled 'Albums, Tours, Events, and Practices: Empirical Examples of Sonic Knowledge in European Metal History', is comprised of ten chapters devoted to empirical examples of albums, tours, events, and practices in European metal history, chronologically arranged from 1970 to the present. All of them are empirically significant phenomena for their individual periods in European metal history; that is why they were chosen for more detailed examination. However, this selection is only a first and necessarily limited one.

I start by telling the histories of Black Sabbath's debut album in 1970 (chapter 9), Motörhead's 'classic' tours between 1976 and 1982 (chapter 10), and Iron Maiden's key album *The Number of the Beast* from 1982 (chapter 11) as major empirical phenomena of the 1970s and 1980s in Europe. I continue by looking at Manowar's Hail to Europe tour in 1986 (chapter 12), and give a 21st century reading of Slayer's seminal album *Reign in Blood* from the same year, from a European point of view (chapter 13).

The next sections are devoted to black metal and extreme metal as examples of sonic knowledge in Europe, from the 1990s until today. A chapter on the intriguingly rule-breaking career of the German band Pyogenesis since the 1990s is moreover included. In section 14, I examine Mayhem's 'cult' concert in Leipzig in 1990 as a crucial event in European black metal history. Section 15 looks at Pyogenesis' career as an example of how it was necessary to alter metal codes to historically 'survive' in the 1990s. The next chapter asks how 20th European century history is represented on Temple of Oblivion's *Traum und Trauma* album from 2014 (chapter 16).

The final, more experimental chapters are two essays on ego-historiography. First, section 17 relates the author's experience, as a cultural historian, at a newly established European extreme metal festival in his hometown of Graz, Austria in 2016. Finally, chapter 18 examines his experience of listening to black metal while hiking up to a medieval castle in the late summer of the same year. A summary recaptures the empirical results (chapter 19).

In the conclusion (chapter 20), I summarise my line of argumentation. Here, it is crucial to give a first description of metal as a discourse of sonic knowledge in 20th century European history. I end with an overview of open research questions, in light of the new insights into European metal cultural history.

In this book, my aim is not to give the definitive account of European metal history. At the present point in metal studies discourse, in its state of possibly becoming its own (inter)discipline and yet also having a rather ahistorical paradigm, this is impossible – and I think it will remain impossible. Nonetheless, one can give a narrative of first explorations into the history of sonic knowledge in metal music in Europe since 1970. Such a history helps in introducing the historian's gaze to metal music studies, hopefully broadening its epistemic core by building interdisciplinary linkages to scientific historiography and integrating new empirical events and options. My book is such

a first attempt at a European cultural history of metal – no more and no less. I do not want to reinvent metal studies. I want to enrich it by providing a narrative written by a historian trained in European cultural history and EU cultural history.