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Fedeli alla linea:
CCCP and the Italian Way to Punk

Punk in Italy has largely been overlooked as a research topic in the past, focussing instead on the scene in other nations. This article examines the Italian punk scene and its transition from classic to post-punk, focussing on its most famous and significant band: CCCP – Fedeli alla linea.[1]

After a short introduction to the historical and cultural background, the results of a qualitative textual analysis of CCCP lyrics using Algirdas Greimas' methodology for narrative semiotics (1983) will be presented. As the results show, CCCP's artistic production can be interpreted as a subversive and ironic parody of the collectivist traditions that were dominant in Italian politics and culture at the time (communism and Catholicism), and as a creative critical reaction to neoliberalism. The conclusion briefly discusses certain theoretical issues such as the relationship between punk and authenticity, and compares Italian punk with British and Portuguese punk.

Introduction

Punk has always been an expression of rebellion against capitalism, imperialism, the exploitation of the working class, materialism and the patriarchal society.

This artistic and cultural rebellion emerged in very different forms, and in different temporal and geographical contexts (Dunn, 2008). Its moral, subcultural and existential flexibility opened up an almost infinite process of differentiation\identification (Simmel, 1905), i.e. it allowed very different and unique punk identities to be created, representing different feelings and personal experiences. As a consequence, punk developed as a very individualistic movement (Guerra, 2014: 114), but at the same time also

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[1] For reasons of space, they will often be referred to in this article as CCCP.

promoted the self-valorisation of individuals, or what Dunn has described as the disalienation of subjects living in the age of neoliberalism[2] (2008).

As Georg Simmel has pointed out (2004: 155ff.), art provides individuals with a framework for representing every element of their lives, transforming and revolutionising their reality through stylization. In this sense, punk emerged as a demystification of mainstream culture, giving rise to alternative lifestyles and the rediscovery of subjectivity.

As a consequence, the birth of punk in Italy can be contextualised as part of the larger historical reaction to the turbulent transformation that was taking place in society. At the time, Italy was emerging from a long period of terrorism and experiencing the significant growth of youth movements (Melucci, 1984) together with the transformation of its traditional political cultures, namely Catholicism, which inspired the conservative Democrazia Cristiana movement (DC), and communism, represented by the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI). Italian punk can be contextualised as part of the global transition from a period of disruption to a postmodern search for authenticity. The following section explains how the cultural movement which began in 1977 played a crucial role in this transition.

1. The Historical and Cultural Background to Italian Punk

The first Italian punk bands were formed in 1977, in the medium-sized to large northern cities of Turin, Milan, Bologna and Pordenone. However, as was the case in other southern European nations (Guerra, 2014), punk did not become a visible subculture until the 1980s.

Between the 1970s and 1980s, Italy was undergoing a period of economic development and political transformation. Traditional political parties – such as the *Democrazia Cristiana* (Christian Democrats) and *Partito Comunista Italiano* (the strongest communist party in the Western world) – were losing support, while a new liberal-socialist party (PSI) had come to power (and was to govern for a decade), heralding the start of a short but intense period of economic growth and political corruption. Lifestyles were transformed: consumer-orientated subcultures, such as the yuppie culture, spread throughout the richer regions of the country, large areas of traditional agricultural land were transformed into modern industrial factories and, in 1979, commercial television was introduced.

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[2] The concept of neoliberalism used in this article refers to the definition by Harvey: "Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. […] State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum" (Harvey, 2005: 2).

In contrast with Great Britain during the 'classic' punk period of 1974--1978, Italy was experiencing a period of post-economic crisis, characterised by its emergence from a dark age of political terrorism and the gradual cultural acceptance of a neo-liberal way of life.

The music scene was mainly characterised by two completely opposite types of music: a mainstream pop genre called *canzone leggera* ('pop songs'), and a counter-cultural genre called *canzone di denuncia* ('protest songs').

The former had played a significant role in the development of the Italian music industry since the 1950s, having been heavily promoted by the major record labels (RCA and Ricordi), national television (Rai), and famous national festivals (*Festival di Sanremo*, *Canzonissima*). The latter emerged in the 1960s, together with the 1968 movement, and was inspired by Italian folk traditions including anarchist folk and protest songs from the fascist period.

This musical rivalry largely coincided with the political rivalry between the DC and the PCI. In contrast with these two strong musical genres, the rock scene was rather weak, featuring only a small number of bands. Its most significant groups were prog rock bands such as PFM and Area, who were in fact more popular abroad, and a few new wave bands, such as Litfiba and Diaframma who would become more successful in the 1980s and 1990s. In brief, the birth of punk in Italy took place within the context of the pluralisation of the musical landscape.

The early Italian punk scene was influenced by sub-genres (anarcho--punk, straight edge, and hardcore punk) which had been imported from around the world. Nevertheless, in its early days, Italian punk was strongly connected to a specific domestic movement: the *Movimento del '77* (M77). As Milburn suggested, "1977 was a year in which sections of youth in both England and Italy enjoyed explosions of creativity" (Milburn, 2001).

M77 came about in Italy as a product of the dissolution of certain left--wing extra-parliamentary groups, who formed a new political subject called Autonomia. Autonomia was a highly theorised political movement which proposed a new social paradigm as an alternative to Marxism. It countered the appeal to transcend ideas, contextualising its action in the concrete struggles of everyday life and stressing the autonomy of culture and politics in relation to the economy. Its cultural roots can be found in the philosophy of Antonio Gramsci, who also influenced the school of cultural studies.

M77 supported the early diffusion of underground culture in Italy and the first examples of counter-information, and encouraged the importation of punk into Italy, in particular Bologna, where the first punkzines and record labels were formed with the help of anarchists (Philopat, 2006). Like British

punk, M77 was influenced by avant-gardism, situationism and a political interpretation of the philosophy of Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes.

In the same period, the newly opened Faculty of Performance Studies (DAMS) at the University of Bologna played a growing role in the formation of the punk scene;[3] in fact, a number of DAMS students went on to form punk bands, such as Skiantos, CCCP, and Gaznevada.

It were also influenced by the intellectual circle associated with Radio Alice (Berardi, 1997), one of the richest expressions of the movement. Radio Alice was an independent radio station where many intellectuals, such as the semiologist Franco Berardi, created innovative forms of semiotic revolution. The aim of its cultural collective was to produce *subversive communication* with innovative language and forms of interaction, and the regular transmission of Italian punk songs contributed to the diffusion of a deterritorialised, translocal punk subculture in Italy.[4]

Another important contribution to the establishment of punk in Italy were the two squats, Traumfabrik in Bologna and Virus in Milan. They led to other occupations, and also to the establishment of *centri sociali* ("social centres"). Whereas squats were temporary occupations, *centri sociali* gradually gained public recognition and played a part in the diffusion of alternative subcultures in Italy.[5]

Punk subculture in Bologna emerged at the crossroads with the M77 subculture and produced the most interesting Italian example of the integration of global and local punk.

CCCP Fedeli alla linea was founded in this cultural background and their artistic production contains elements of subversive communication, situationism and avant-gardism. Lead singer Giovanni Lindo Ferretti was, in his youth, a member of *Lotta Continua*, one of the most important extra--parliamentary movements, but the band did not declare any affiliations with them; in fact, the first time they met was in Berlin where they were escaping the deteriorating Italian youth culture: "Crushed between the violence of the state and the violence of the Red Brigades, the space the movement had created was closed amidst a legacy of detention, mental illness and heroin addiction" (Milburn, 2001).

This is the first reason for focussing on their punk production. The second is their commercial success and cultural influence: CCCP are the only Italian

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[3] Art schools played an important role in the development of subcultures (See Frith and Horne, 1987).

[4] Even college radio had an important role in the formation of subcultures (see Kruse, 2003).

[5] On the peculiarity of *centri sociali* in the history of subcultures in Italy, see Mitchell, 1996; Wright, 2000; Magaudda, 2007.

punk band to have achieved substantial commercial success and significantly influenced the Italian alternative rock scene which emerged later. Thirdly, their lengthy music experience places them in the transitional phase between classic punk and the postmodern search for authenticity that characterised punk in the 80s.

The following section provides some basic biographical information and discusses the construction of their punk identity.

2. CCCP: Biography and Punk Identity

Punk encourages the appropriation and detachment of both visual and linguistic symbols and icons (Hebdige, 1979) from their original ideological, political and religious contexts in order to re-frame them in a different, transgressive sense. This was clearly the case with CCCP Fedeli alla linea – in English "USSR Faithful to the Line": the name is derived from the Italian mistranslation of the USSR acronym "Союз Советских Социалистических Республик", due to the incorrect transliteration of the Cyrillic letter C in the Latin alphabet.

The choice of name therefore expresses the phenomenon of translating Soviet aesthetics into popular folk culture, representing the appropriation of Sovietism in the daily life of the Italian working class (Hoggart, 1957). One well-known example of the symbolic dislocation of Soviet symbols comes from the early 1970s, when Malcom McLaren persuaded the New York Dolls to dress in red vinyl for their live performances and play under a Russian flag, using the situ-inspired slogan: "What are the politics of boredom, better red than dead!".

Unlike the USA and other areas where the redskin punk scene was to be found, communism was not strongly stigmatised in Italy at that time; in fact, at the end of 1970s Italy had the most powerful communist party in the Western world. In some areas, such as Reggio Emilia, the PCI had more than 75% of the vote at national and local level (Colarizi, 1988). In this cultural context, Sovietism represented three things: nostalgia for the USSR for the small, declining groups on the extra-parliamentary left; the quintessence of military discipline and oppression, which was considered the enemy for Autonomia; and an artistic utopian and ironic alternative to neoliberalism.

CCCP's choice of name did not therefore conform to the typical punk transformation of the negative and the profane into a positive force (Nehring, 1993: 232); instead it signalled a constitutive ambivalence. At the same time, Sovietism represented a voluntary 'conviction' – "Faithful to the line, even when there is no line" (a line from the song *CCCP*) – which

was both a source of salvation from capitalism and a source of voluntary oppression. This authentic inauthenticity (Grossberg, 1992) led CCCP to use irony in citing and reframing communist symbols. For instance, the title of their second album, *Socialism and Barbarity,* is a parody of Rose Luxembourg's dictum 'socialism or barbarity'*,* introduced in her classic essay *Juniusbroschüre* (1915).

CCCP was formed in 1981-82 following an encounter between Matteo Zamboni (guitarist) and Giovanni Lindo Ferretti (lead singer and lyricist). The band was completed by Umberto Negri (bass) and two other artists, Annarella and Fatur. The founding members (Ferretti, Zamboni and Negri) came from Reggio Emilia, a medium-sized city near Bologna, but first met in Berlin where they were influenced by industrial rock, punk and new wave.

In the period 1982-84 their live work was divided between Berlin and their birthplace, Emilia-Romagna – two polar opposites in the pivotal hybrid of genres and topics, reflecting an ambivalence between metropolitan cosmopolitanism and anti-materialistic provincial life.

Their live performances may simultaneously be considered counter--rituals, rituals of opposition and avant-garde performances. As with classic punk, CCCP's concerts were situationist performances designed to create confusion (Henry, 1984), disruption and audience denial. Situationist performance, rooted in the culture of M77, provided CCCP with the "necessary link in the avant-garde chain… between the original avant-garde and punk" (Nehring, 1993: 224) and provided a means of creating a new form of audience awareness (Johnson, 2014: 67). They defined their concerts as acts of *collective therapy*, "a sort of voluntary therapy invented and undertaken by an 'unwanted' generation" (Reddington, 2007: 12).

In 1984-1985 they released their first records (three EPs and their first full album) on the independent Attack Punk label.[6] The first two EPs were entitled *Ortodossia* (Orthodoxy) and *Ortodossia* II (1984), recalling the Soviet military and ideological orthodoxy, while the third was called *Compagni, cittadini, fratelli, partigiani.* [Comrades, citizens, brothers, partisans] – a title inspired by the first verse of the song *Per i morti di Reggio Emilia* by Fausto Amodei, dedicated to five workers killed by the Italian police during a rally in July 1960. This celebration of Sovietism is often connected with a nostalgic (but still parodic) celebration of old-fashioned Italian left-wing politics.

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[6] The label was created during the 1977 movement by Helena Velena, the transgender singer of a famous Italian anarcho-punk band called RAF (Rebel Anarchist Fraction). In the 1980s, Attack punk was the most important label for Italian anarchopunk.

Their first full album was entitled *1964-1985 Affinità e divergenze fra il compagno Togliatti e Noi, del conseguimento della maggiore età* [Affinities and divergences between Comrade Togliatti and Us, on reaching the age of consent], referring to the title of a letter sent from the Chinese Communist Party to the PCI.

The idea of parodying ideology was completely new in Italy. The Italian Communist Party, with its leftist associations, partisans, trade unions, and all the other sociopolitical subjects associated with the left had a very orthodox view of political songs, which were performed at parties, festivals and conventions. Yet CCCP even dared to ridicule the sacred status of the partisan in an ironic song (*Battagliero*). This is fundamental to understanding the semiotic difference in CCCP's use of Sovietism: for the Italian punk band, it was positioned in a precise historical and cultural context in which it already had the important everyday function of differentiation, both from communism and neoliberalism.

In addition to their ideology, even their sound and style of performance were completely new for the Italian music scene, and they were an immediate success. They played at festivals and their performances received some coverage on national television. This success led to them signing with Virgin Music in 1985 to release their next three studio albums: *Socialismo e Barbarie* (1987), *Canzoni preghiere danze del II millennio - Sezione Europa* (1989) and *Epica Etica Etnica Pathos* (1990).[7]

Although their first album was purely punk, the Virgin albums mix punk sounds with industrial hardcore, Italian folk music, world music, chamber music, and disco, producing a kind of Zappa-esque mix of genres and poetry.

In 1991 the band renamed itself C.S.I. (*Consorzio Suonatori Indipendenti – Union of Independent Musicians*). It was a way of signalling the end of the influence of the Soviet Union, which had collapsed, and marking their musical transformation into a less punk, more alternative rock sound, as well as introducing their new members.[8]

3. Methodological Approach

This study involved a socio-semiotic textual analysis of CCCP lyrics, using Algirdas Greimas' methodology of narrative semiotics (1983). Narrative semiotics is a textual approach that enables the implicit structures of meaning in large and fragmented corpora such as punk songs to be analysed.

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[7] Eng.: Socialism and Barbarity (1987); Songs, prayers and dance of the II millennium – Section Europe (1989); Epic Ethic Ethnic Pathos (1990).

[8] This article only focuses on CCCP lyrics and does not consider the CSI albums.

The corpus was composed of 52 song lyrics – CCCP's entire studio output.[9] On a technical level, the texts were first divided into "elements of sense", applying an *en-vivo* coding to the lyrics.

This was followed by a search for textual isotopies (semantic units), i.e., in Greimasian terms, recurrences of semantic categories in the text. The isotopies were constructed by looking at the different discursive levels of dialectic differentiation.

The following axes of differentiation were categorised:

a. The meta-discursive level, featuring 11 times in the lyrics, which consists of the following sub-dimensions: discourse on punk in terms of differentiation (6); discourse on punk in terms of identization (5);

b. The socio-political level – representing the largest isotopy, coded 81 times in the 52 sets of lyrics.[10] It consists of the following sub-dimensions: the objectification of social relationships (19); the celebration of Sovietism (14) and religion (23) as alternative sources of meaning, in opposition to the dystopian vision of present capitalism; the philosophy of history and politics (35);

c. The existential level, an isotopy which appears 37 times in the lyrics. It consists of the following sub-dimensions: the anomie of modern society (13); the psychological and psychiatric disorders of individuals (12); fatalism and boredom (10 poems); love and sexuality (7).

For reasons of space, I will only consider the most important examples in any given isotopy, synthesising the different forms of enunciation and subcodes.

4. Metadiscursive Level

In the CCCP lyrics the metadiscourse on punk enables them to differentiate themselves from what they consider to be spurious, insincere or outdated punk icons (e.g. the Sex Pistols) and to propose a proper, authentic form of punk. In a metadiscursive sense, CCCP's search for punk authenticity is driven by the need to construct a cultural autonomy for Italian punk, in contrast to the commercialisation of *canzone leggera*.

The most relevant example of this metadiscourse can be found in the song *Tu menti* (*You Lie*), which is a direct attack on the iconic Sex Pistols through an imagined conversation between the author and Johnny Rotten (who is not actually named in the song, but is nonetheless clearly

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[9] With reference to all the records mentioned before.
[10] The number of dimensions and sub-dimensions may be greater than the number of lyrics, for the obvious reason that a lyric can contain more isotopies and sub-isotopies.

identifiable). The leader of the Sex Pistols is described as a liar who is being used by the music industry for commercial purposes: "You lie, lie, lie, lie\ I know who you know\ I know where you go\ They've taken the piss out of you\ You've destroyed yourself\ You've been fucking cheated" *(Tu menti – You Lie)*.

In this song, as in many others, CCCP use a particular figure of speech: the parodic citation, i.e. the erudite inversion, transformation or confusion of the original meaning of a citation. It is a form of cynical irony (Bewes, 1997) used to denigrate enemies and affirm individual identity through differentiation. This parody references the Sex Pistols' song *Liar* and the lines: "Lie lie lie\ liar you lie"; "I know where you go\ everybody you know". On a metadiscursive level, verses which had been originally composed by the Sex Pistols, such as those *dissing* the New York Dolls, became a means of deriding them in turn. Rotten is described as an empty icon; he does not represent *sincere* or *authentic* punk but instead is represented as a stereo-typical member of a boy band acting out a persona in a show, without any ideological involvement: "They always say stuff like: \I am the Anarchy\ Here's another Anti-Christ\ But you were just pretty\ Oh so pretty\ Lazy and well-dressed\ Without blue jeans' *(Tu menti)*".

The last part of the lyrics is also a parodic citation of the Sex Pistols' song *Pretty Vacant* ("We're so pretty, oh so pretty"). In their continual defiance of conformity, CCCP also rejected the conformism of classic punk.

This attack on a symbol of punk purity coexists alongside an ongoing claim for authentic inauthenticity: "The world is rotten by the wish of purity. We are not pure. We never wanted to be pure" (Ferretti at Leoncavallo, Milan, 1st of May, 1985). One episode in particular reveals their problem-atic relationship with "anti-commercial authenticity": in 1985, on signing with Virgin Records, the band was strongly criticised by their fans, who saw this as a betrayal of their authentic anti-capitalistic and punk stance. The band responded by writing a song ironically entitled *Fedeli alla lira?* [Faithful to the Lira?].[11] Their semantic refusal of any punk authenticity was expressed in three ways: firstly, by the ironic replacement of the world *linea* (orthodoxy) with the world *lira* (money); secondly, by arranging the song as a *liscio*, a type of Italian folk music which was popular in Emilia-Romagna and the complete opposite of punk in terms of tempo and musical aesthet-ics; thirdly, by directly challenging the audience and inverting the giver\ \receiver relationship: "And then you want me to be faithful\ to your new

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[11] The lira was the official currency in Italy before the Euro.

cutting edge\ Adoring progress, fashion, modernity\ I have already grown enough, I can't take it any more\ I have grown even more, too much\ But what do you give me?" (*Fedeli alla lira?*).

In short, they made it clear that it was possible to be authentic despite commercial involvement in the music industry (Hebdige, 1979).

5. Sociopolitical Level

CCCP's criticism of the objectification of society and culture was strongly influenced by the sociopolitical situation in Emilia Romagna during the transition from the period of terrorism in the 70s to the consumerism of the 80s, and also by the 1977 social movement, with its emphasis on the rejection of compulsory labour.

This isotopy includes different subcodes:
- a discourse on the 'moral awakening' from false consciousness; a nostalgic search for the Original Land;
- a series of hetero-definitions of the self, expressed through the language of advertisements, common sense, politics and science;
- a sociological discourse on the effects of socio-economic development;
- ironic\critical use of the language of bureaucracy and marketing;
- a look back to Sovietism and Catholicism as sources of meaning;
- a discourse on war and peace.

The synthesis of these subcodes leads to one main distinction: desubjectification vs. grand narratives (Sovietism, Catholicism, peace) that can be interpreted as a typical feature of postmodernism (Lyotard, 1979).

5.1. Desubjectification

The CCCP songs address themes such as standardization, desubjectification, loss of creativity and false consciousness and call for creative revolt as the shared output of the different expressions of M77. The movement theorised the possibility of self-valorisation out of the logic of capitalism in a different way from both neoliberalism and the political activity of the Italian Communist Party. CCCP used punk music to create an ironic play on the two fundamental sources of meaning for Italian politics and civil culture in the early 1980s, i.e. communism and religion, in order to produce a moral discourse on subjectivity and disalienation (Dunn, 2008).

In the lyrics, the two symbolic universes have the same semantic functions: they are sources of identity, security, stability, and psychological relief, as well as a means of human aggregation and sociability, helping individuals to resist the human condition of loneliness, objectification and oppression.

One interesting form of linguistic revolt against desubjectivisation is the frequent use of *utterances of state*[12] (Greimas, 1983), whose rhetoric is more descriptive and poetic than narrative. Their lyrics seldom develop into a complex plot; on the contrary, through their songs CCCP defined a discourse on existence, the present day, and past and present models of development using general descriptions and presenting moral judgements.

In particular, they use hetero-attribution as the semantic anchorage for cultural objectification: the use of 'I am so' and 'I am not so' assertions aim to express the ambivalence between hetero-definitions of individual identity and the auto-determination of the self-valorised subject, reaching towards a postmodern interpretation of punk as the expression of an authentic inauthenticity (Grossberg, 1992).

The song *Sono come tu mi vuoi*,[13] which includes a series of slogans in the language of advertising, politics and common sense, is a perfect example of this is: "I'm not a throw-away bottle\ Nor an impossible stain\ Nor a registered trademark\ Nor a product on the market\ I'm not a point of reference \ Nor a basic reality\ Nor a fact\ Nor a concluded dispute\ Nor a completed file".

Other textual examples can be found in their nihilist indifference to self-attribution – "I may be a happy fool\ A pre-political man, or a drug addict" (*Emilia Paranoica*) – or the use of geological metaphors, associating the flatlands of the Pianura Padana (the Po Valley) with the moral flatness of the present: "sated and desperate land\ with or without TV\ flat and monotonous\ modern and well-equipped" (*Rozzemilia*).

5.2. Celebration and Parody of Sovietism

CCCP use different forms of enunciation to refer to Sovietism: autobiographical, Dadaist\surrealist, epic, sarcastic, emancipatory, and nostalgic. They celebrate the USSR's military, institutional, national and social aesthetics, but at the same time criticize the censorship, social control, political weakness and cognitive rigidity of the Soviet empire. They use a particular linguistic register even for Sovietism: parodic imitation or celebration of slogans and political discourse. Parody is often expressed through the mispronunciation\misspelling\distortion of classic Soviet references. One example of this can be found in a couple of lines from the song *Manifesto*: "The Soviets plus electricity\ do not make communism", an ironic inversion

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[12] Greimas defined *utterances of state* as enunciates which define a state or a property (for example 'the pen is blue'). On the contrary, *utterances of doing* include the transformation of objects and subjects (for example 'I gave you a blue pen'). The former are more descriptive and poetic, while the second are more appropriate in narrative and prosaic texts.

[13] Eng.: I am who you want to me to be.

of Lenin's famous slogan "Communism is the Soviet power, plus the electri-
fication of the whole country" (1920). Another example is the song *CCCP*:
"Pravda Rude Pravo\ Tribuna Ludu KGB KGB KGB\ Much more than
a new man: a new man\ Faithful to the line, even when there is no line".
The first part uses the rhetorical device of accumulation to ridicule Soviet
efforts to control information through intelligence, the secret services and
censorship. The second contains a parody of Soviet manifestos and an accusa-
tion of unaware and inauthentic discipline and conviction.

The celebration of Sovietism is contextualised in a historical discourse
on the Cold War. The song *Live in Punkow* presents a semantic opposition
between the two sides of the Iron Curtain: instability and loneliness on the
Western side, and stability and socialism in the East. It uses a variety of topo-
nyms to express this concept and connects the geopolitical division of the
world to the existential malaise of the citizens of Western countries: "I wanna
take refuge under the Warsaw Pact\ I want a five-year plan\ I want stabil-
ity!" (*Live in Punkow*). In a different way, *A ja lublju SSSR* (I love the USSR)
is a freely-inspired version of the USSR's national anthem which includes a
poetic celebration of the socialist practice of collective labour: "Honour the
arm moving the loom\ Honour the force moving the steel\ It exists, I know\
A ja lublju SSSR" (*A ja lublju SSSR*).

The Berlin wall, the quintessential symbol of the Cold War, is described
without any moral judgement, almost with a sense of indifference and
anomie: "I run near the Wall\ I don't know, I don't wanna know\ What
difference does it make?" (*Punk Islam*). This is probably the summa of
their aesthetic but not moral celebration of the USSR. In 1990, when the
separation of the USSR was clearly imminent, the band wrote a song using
metaphors to express the parallel between the withdrawal of the ex-Soviet
states from the Soviet Union and the tendency of individuals to withdraw
into their own private space: "One declares independence and leaves\ One
takes refuge in his intimacy\ The last proclaims total alienation" (*Depressione
Caspica* [Caspian Depression]).

5.3. Celebration of Religion
This isotopy is one of the most common in the lyrics analysed. Again, it is pre-
sented through various forms of enunciation and narrative registers: liturgical,
evocative, mythological, ascetic, emancipatory (religion as a force for change),
conflicting, and ironic-surrealist.

Religion is not always criticised, as in classic post-Crass punk, but is often
celebrated, like Sovietism, as a grand narrative (Lyotard, 1979) that saves
'lost souls' from neoliberalism. One key point in understanding CCCP's

punk is as a Freudian account of modernity as a relational void that can only be filled through motherhood, discipline and repetition.

With regard to linguistic register, CCCP draws a parallel between punk and religion on the basis of the repetition and reiteration of verses (Rossi, 2014). CCCP's punk as a religious chant uses recursive forms of poetry to induce a trance, a form of emotional and spiritual transport. For this reason, some of their songs contain parts of the Latin Mass or entire stanzas of Gregorian chants, assembling and using them as patchwork. The introduction to *Militanz,* for instance, includes a series of verses from the requiem mass. This celebration of psalmody is also associated with Islam: "Don't think, just repeat your psalms\ Islam punk, Islam punk, Islam punk und punk Islam" (*Punk Islam*).

In ascetic terms, religion represents a means of ascendance through mundane *askesis* (Sloterdijk, 2013), i.e. discipline, repetition and conviction: "Do not fear the terror of night\ You can ascend through a force that is descending" (*Tien An Men*).

The evocative terms are the best expression of the aforementioned relationship between religion and motherhood. The song *Madre*, in particular, extended CCCP's punk to the religious ode. Sacred maternity is denoted in *Madre* as a supreme source of motherhood and relief of the soul: "Mother of God and of his son\ mother of the fathers and of the mothers\ Mother, oh mother,\ my soul turns to you" (*Madre -Mother*).

In nostalgic terms, an idealized version of Catholicism is linked to a nostalgia for the Original Land. CCCP lyrics suggest an escape from industrialism and consumerism and a return to simplicity and traditional society, as exemplified in the following lines: "An emotion to travel through time\ To find my destination\ In the midst of too many men but no God\ \ Or an excess of gods but few men" (*E' vero – It's true*). The Catholic city is claimed to be the spiritually authentic utopian city – as in Moore and Campanella – while the modern metropolis is seen as the realm of industry, precariousness and inauthenticity.

Although CCCP fans saw Ferretti's religious conversion as a betrayal of the original philosovietic philosophy, in the elements considered here both symbolic universes have the same semantic function: they represent aesthetic repertoires, as well as frameworks for the re-signification of life and, once again, are a means of subjective authenticity.

5.4. Peace, War and the Philosophy of History

As depicted in Mayakovsky's *Mystery-Bouffe* (1918), war is fundamentally represented as a clash between two factions: the pure versus the impure,

the proletariat versus the bourgeoisie, the Soviets against the Americans. It is also used as a trope for developing a more general philosophy of history. Old and new conflicts are explored, highlighting analogies according to an implicit cyclic vision of history. The rhetoric of Sovietism and Catholicism allowed CCCP to draw a semantic distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity and to place themselves in the peace punk context.

The most frequent subcodes are: definition of the present, through its wars (*Trafitto*, *Tien An Men*, *Huligani Dangereux*, *Inch'allah ca va*); wars in historical cycles (*Aghia Sophia, Militanz, L'andazzo generale*); analysis of current conflicts (*Paxo de Jerusalem, Palestina 11/15/1988, Radio Kabul, Emilia Paranoica*, *Hong Kong* and *Manifesto*); the philosophy of history (*Guerra e Pace*, *U.N.*, *Militanz*); and a surrealistic and baroque discourse on different but overlapping historical conflicts. One example of this last category is the song *L'andazzo generale*: "I long for the Augustan ruins and for the airy collapses\ I love the guilt, the failures and the weakness\ I hate the bore of Hotel Clodio[14]\ And the young offspring". In these verses, as in many others, there is a clear opposition between a utopian representation of the past and a dystopian representation of the present. Wars have psychological effects on the individual, and the condition of individuals is metaphorically related to foreign affairs: "Europe has become lost in a trance, recently\ \ My friends too, my friends too" (*Live in Pankow*).

6. Existential Level
This discursive level focuses on the author's biography, self, emotions and psychological disorders. Unlike the preceding sociopolitical discourse, it entails a narrower view of subjectivity and the author's experience, and is expressed linguistically in an informal style. It includes five main dimensions: anomie, psychopathology, boredom, love and sexuality, and fatalism. For reasons of space, the main focus is on the first two.

6.1. Anomie and Alienation
The theme of the anomie and alienation of the modern citizen occurs frequently in the lyrics analysed. It is presented through the following forms of enunciation: lack of awareness of personal purpose, personal emotions, and the individual and collective meaning of life (5); the rejection of mainstream ideologies, values, political forms of participation and history (3); loss\ \confusion (3); impotence (2); voluntary isolation from social obligations and the labour market; media misinformation and an excess of available

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[14] A hotel in Rome which hosted important political meetings.

options (1). CCCP's discourse is consistent with Merton's theory of anomie (1938) and Simmel's theory of the condition of the *blasé* urban individual (Simmel, 1972) who reacts with detachment to an overload of stimuli.

The following lines provide a good example of this: "Do you know, what luck to be free,\ To be subjected to freedom, which seems infinite\ And not ever know what to wear\ Where to go dancing, who to telephone" (*Narko's*).

Concerning the issue of objectification, CCCP affirms a form of resistance to anomie, flaunting an attitude of voluntary non-participation that today would be defined as NEET (*not in education, employment or training*) or *hikkikomori*, as exemplified in the following verse: "I do not study\ do not work\ do not watch TV\ do not go to the cinema\ do not play any sport" (*Io sto bene*). Finally, in many of their songs there is a reminder of the individual inability to define emotions: "I feel good\ I feel bad\ I don't know how to feel" (ivi). Again, this can be read as a sign of objectification in Simmelian terms: the individual loses the *agency* to define himself and experience the tension between the personal and social expression of emotions in a world of *commercialised feelings* (Hochshild, 1983). Authenticity is implicitly theorised as liberation from this emotional objectification, which leads to a withdrawal from society and devotion to one's private life. This 'escape' corresponds to a phenomenon which was common in Italy after the end of the period of terrorism in the 1970s, labelled by the Italian press as *riflusso* (resignation). It has been defined as "an attitude and behaviour, produced by a climate of falling and disappointed expectations, and characterized by the return to values considered outdated and to a resignation to the private sphere, with a concomitant political and social disengagement." (Treccani, 2015: *Riflusso*).

Riflusso is a product of the Movement of '77 and a political outcome of the failure of Autonomia: the refusal to recognise their experience in the grand narratives of communism and neoliberalism led young people to focus on their own experiences and return to private life. It meant both the failure of political participation and a space for artistic creation.

6.2. Punk as Psychotherapy

Giovanni Lindo Ferretti's experience of working with psychiatric patients deeply influenced CCCP lyrics: their style of punk represents psychopathology as a central issue in the condition of the modern citizen. They often presented their performances and songs as psychotherapy sessions for mentally disturbed audiences, both in an individual and in a collective sense, and one of their songs is, in fact, entitled *Svegliami (perizia psichiatrica nazionalpopolare)* [Wake me up (national-popular psychiatric report)].

The most common subcode is a reference to a permanent state of agitation and despair that can be found in at least six songs. One of their songs is entitled *Valium Tavor Serenase*, the names of the three most widely used sedatives. The names of drugs are often mentioned in their lyrics, as a symbol of the commercialisation of psychotherapy. Psychiatric medication is seen as a commercial means of normalization (Goffman, 1961), while human care is seen as the authentic cure for modernity. Therefore, "medication vs. love and care" represents a new semantic axis for the polarity of authenticity vs. inauthenticity, which overlaps with the fundamental opposition of capitalism vs. humanism.

One example of this is found in the song *Curami*, in which the lover is expected to take care of the subject, to alleviate his suffering. The songwriter plays with the polysemic similarity between the Italian form *curami* ("take care of me") and *prendimi in cura di te*, which can also mean "take me into your care\ look after me". Love replaces medicine and psychologists: "I am lost and confused\ Hold me in your arms\ hold me tight\ Give me your days\ Your nights\ Today, tomorrow, again" (*Svegliami: perizia psichiatrica nazionalpopolare*). Again, CCCP's artistic production is a search for a new humanism, through which human potential can be realised (Marx, 1972 [1818]), in contrast to the alienation and objectification of social life.

6.3. Boredom, Love and Sexuality, and Fatalism

These three subcodes have an ambivalent relationship to the topics confronted by classic British punk. With regard to boredom, for instance, punk is seen as an alternative to the boredom of modern living: "Is it better being inert\ or having green hair?" (*VST*). Seven songs are devoted to the topic of love and sexuality. The earlier ones are consistent with the celebration of raw sexuality found in classic punk, while the later songs are more consistent with the humanistic philosophy that characterises CCCP's punk. One example is the song *Annarella*: "Leave me here, leave me now, leave me this way\ Don't say a word except words of love". The final existential component is fatalism, i.e. lyrics devoted to the meaning of life or death. The invitation to self-destruct and commit suicide, typical of classic punk, coexists contradictorily with the incitement to live a full, rich and free life, which is, in fact, closer to M77's manifesto: "Oddly enough, there is only one life" (*BBB*); "Death is unbearable for those who cannot live" (*Morire*).

Final Remarks

During the second half of the 1970s different Western countries encountered a similar cultural and economic crisis and punk was one of the most

successful artistic reactions to this situation. It represented a disruptive form of disalienation, as well as a source of self-valorisation for a growing community of people in different countries who situated themselves outside the mainstream culture.

In the case of Italy, punk emerged almost simultaneously with the United Kingdom, United States and other southern European countries, such as Portugal. At the time, some classic British punk themes (Worley, 2012), such as boredom, alienation and anti-materialism, were imported by Italian punk bands and interpreted from the perspective of a domestic critique of the conservatism of the Christian democrats, the reification of social life by the Communist Party, and the growing neoliberalism. Compared to Portuguese punk (Guerra and Silva, 2015), the feelings of denunciation, protest and demarcation were weaker in Italy, whereas an existential and philosophical revolt against the social order was more evident. This difference can be explained by the different political situations in the two countries. Whereas in the late 70s Portugal was experiencing the spread of the recent democratization and a "new sense of openness and empowerment" of youth (*ibidem*: 208), Italy was living through a time of cultural transformation and economic expansion which produced a growing sense of *anomie*.

The cultural reaction to this anomie gave life to the social movement called *Movimento del '77*. It deeply influenced the topics and poetry of CCCP lyrics. Its emphasis on autonomy and self-valorisation was interpreted by the band through its ironic celebration of Sovietism and religion. The mix of disruption and the search for authenticity places CCCP in the aesthetic transition from classic punk (1974 to 1978) to postmodern punk (1980 to the present). Their search for authenticity involved adopting a fluid political and aesthetic stance in which 'conviction' was valued in and for itself, regardless of the specific stance adopted. For these reasons, their artistic production reflected subsequent developments in DIY(do-it-yourself)/punk ethics.

As different scholars have suggested (see Guerra and Moreira, 2015 and Lewin and Williams, 2009), the search for authenticity, together with cultural hybridisation, were stimulating factors that favoured the development, global diffusion and longevity of punk. The success of CCCP can only be understood from the perspective of inauthentic authenticity (Grossberg, 1992), in terms of contradiction and irony. Moreover, the partial misunderstanding or misinterpretation of CCCP's portrayal of religion and Sovietism is, in fact, a reason for their enduring success. They spoke directly to an audience of young people who identified with the values of M77, but also to a larger audience of communist or leftist Italians who found a connection between CCCP's celebration of the USSR and their own values and

paid little attention to the contradictory aspects of their style of punk. This contradiction has emerged many times, from the 1980s to the present, whenever Ferretti has openly rejected his original leftist beliefs and embraced a traditional, righteous and conservative ideology. All these conflicts were caused by the same search for an authentic version and an authentic memory of CCCP. Nevertheless, punk cannot be authentic in any essentialist sense.

Revised by Sheena Caldwell

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Fedeli alla linea:
CCCP e o percurso italiano do punk

O *punk* em Itália foi amplamente ignorado enquanto objeto de estudo no passado, sendo que a atenção se centrou antes sobre a cena em outros países. O artigo examina a cena *punk* italiana e a sua transição do *punk* clássico para o pós-*punk*, tendo por referência o seu grupo mais famoso e representativo: CCCP Fedeli alla linea. Após uma breve introdução do contexto histórico e cultural do grupo, apresentamos os resultados da análise qualitativa textual das suas músicas, usando a metodologia da semiótica narrativa de Algirdas Greimas (1983). Os resultados mostram que a produção artística do grupo CCCP pode ser interpretada como uma paródia subversiva e irónica das tradições coletivistas dominantes na política e cultura italianas da época (comunismo e catolicismo) e como uma reação criativa crítica ao neoliberalismo. Na conclusão debatemos brevemente algumas questões teóricas, como a relação entre o *punk* e a autenticidade e comparamos ainda o *punk* italiano com o *punk* britânico e português.
Palavras-chave: Fedeli alla Linea: CCP; música italiana; música *punk*; produção artística; sociologia da música.

Fedeli alla Linea:
CCCP et le parcours italien du punk

Le punk en Italie a largement été omis en tant qu'objet de recherche par le passé, l'attention s'étant plutôt centrée sur la scène d'autres pays. Cet article se penche sur la scène punk italienne et sur son passage du punk classique au post-punk, prenant pour référence son groupe le plus fameux et représentatif: CCCP Fedeli alla Linea.

Après une brève introduction de leur *background* historique et culturel, nous présenterons les résultats de l'analyse qualitative textuelle des chansons du groupe CCCP en utilisant la méthodologie de narrative sémiotique d'Algirdas Greimas (1983). Les résultats montrent que la production artistique de CCCP peut être interprétée comme une parodie subversive et ironique de la tradition collectiviste dominante de la politique et de la culture italiennes de l'époque (communisme et catholicisme), tout autant que comme une réaction créative au néolibéralisme. En termes de conclusion, nous nous penchons brièvement sur quelques questions quant au rapport entre le punk et l'authenticité, et nous comparons le punk italien au punk britannique et portugais.
Mots-clés: Fedeli alla Linea: CCP; musique italienne; musique punk; production artistique; sociologie de la musique.