

**“Use me, don’t lose me” - anti-patriarchy in the lyrics of *Penis Envy* by
Crass**

Samu Pynttari
Bachelor’s Thesis
English language
Department of Language and Communication Studies
University of Jyväskylä

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Punkrock on rockmusiikin tyyliä, joka on tunnettu vahvoista poliittisista kannanotoistaan ja yksinkertaisista äänellisistä ominaisuuksistaan. Anarkopunk puolestaan on punkrockin alatyyli, jossa anarkistisia ideoita – feminismiä, veganismia, pasifismia, ja valtion vastaisuutta – tuodaan esille vielä normaalia punkrockia enemmän.</p> <p>Tämä tutkielma on feministinen diskurssianalyysi isobritannialaisen anarkopunkyhtye <i>Crassin</i> kolmannen levyn, <i>Penis Envyn</i> sanoituksista. Tutkielma pyrkii saamaan vastauksen siihen, millaisia teemoja levyn sanoituksissa on, ja millä kielellisellä tavalla se pyrkii tekemään sanomansa selväksi. Tutkielmassa analysoidaan levyn kappaleen sanoituksia kriittisen diskurssianalyysin näkökulmasta, tavoitteena löytää feministisiä ja antipatriarkalaisia teemoja.</p> <p>Albumin kymmenestä kappaleesta viidestä (5) löytyi feministisiä ja patriarkalaisuutta vastustavia teemoja. Löydökset jaettiin neljään eri teemaan ja ne analysoitiin kriittisen diskurssianalyysin näkökulmasta.</p> <p>Levyn sanoitukset antavat kuvan patriarkalaisesta yhteiskunnasta, joka vaatii muutosta. Feministisiä aiheita tuotiin esiin kielellisesti muun muassa satiirin, toiston ja suoran puhuttelun kautta, vaaten lukijalta huomiota ja jonkinlaista reaktiota.</p>	

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1. INTRODUCTION

Punk rock has been a highly controversial genre of music throughout its lifespan starting from the end of the 1970s due to its highly left-leaning political stances. It originally emerged as a counter to the hippy culture of the 1960s and as a result of disdain with right-wing politics of the 1970s and 1980s in Great Britain and the United States. The genre's defining features are its political, obscene, in-your-face nature, simple musical elements (with simplest songs using only three chords), fast tempo and distorted or otherwise heavily altered sound (Manion 2017, Ambrosch 2018). Ambrosch (2018) does state, however, that it is "crucial to understand that punk is not simply a genre of music, although music does play an integral role within it". Despite not being the most polished genre of music, due to the aforementioned altered sound and simple musical elements, one could argue that it has more in terms of meaningful messages than some more mainstream genres.

Crass was a British punk collective that was influential in the beginning of the anarcho-punk scene, which is a sub-genre of punk that has more overt, anarchist themes in its lyrics and imagery. As an anarcho-punk band, their songs mainly feature anarchist topics, such as feminism, veganism, pacifism, and criticism of capitalism and the state. While other punk bands also discuss the same themes in their songs, anarcho-punk bands and Crass especially pushed anarchist topics forward and focused on societal change in addition to writing and performing songs.

Crass and other anarcho-punk acts have been studied before (Ambrosch 2018, Dunn 2012, Webb 2016, Manion 2007, to name a few) but they were done from the point of view of how anarchism is apparent in the lives of the fans and artists, or what kinds of roles and attitudes men and women have in the music scene, for example. No one has, based on my research, done a discourse analysis on Crass's third record, *Penis Envy*, released in 1981, although it is known to be very feminist in nature. This study tries to find how and what kinds of feminist and anti-patriarchal messages are used in *Penis Envy* and how these messages are conveyed. I will be looking at the lyrics of *Penis Envy* and analyzing the lyrics that include feminist themes.

2. BACKGROUND

Ever since its “inception” at the end of the 1970s, punk rock has been a topic that has been studied extensively due to its overtly political stance that challenges societal norms around the world. Additionally, Crass as a band has been a topic of research due to their great influence on punk rock as a genre of music, and them basically being the reason that anarcho-punk exists. In this section I will be discussing previous research that has been done on Crass and punk rock overall.

2.1. The study of punk music

As stated previously, a large amount of research has been done on punk rock already. Ambrosch (2016), for example, discusses how gender, feminism and queer identity are visible in the punk subculture as well as analyzing sexism and patriarchy in the supposedly egalitarian punk scene. This is something that Manion’s (2007) article also features, besides feminism and some minor discussion about the lyrics of the movement. Punk lyrics themselves are also a topic whose research has been very prominent, such as Ambrosch (2018) and McDonald (1987), who, in their articles, focus mostly on analyzing the lyrical contents of different punk bands’ songs. They found that punk lyrics are often similar to ‘normal’ rock’n’roll, but feature more metaphors and allegories, as well as irony and satire. Metaphorical lyrics seem to be most prominent in British anarcho-punk and crust punk bands, as well as their focus on anarchism and peace. Irony and satire are more typical in American bands that have had influence from the Ramones (Ambrosch 2018, McDonald 1987).

Ambrosch (2018) found that, before the political hardcore scene of North America was born in 1981, British anarcho-punk bands such as Crass and Flux of Pink Indians already showcased songwriting themes that would be the foundation of hardcore punk: feminism, anarchism and animal rights were a major theme in anarcho-punk lyrics. Moreover, they featured more words per minute than other punk bands of the time, while simultaneously also cutting the length of a song in half: Crass’ *Punk Is*

Dead clocks in at 144,9 words per minute, while the Sex Pistols' *Anarchy in the UK* is considerably 'slower', it only has 44,86 words per minute (Ambrosch 2018: 201). American hardcore punk songs of 1985 also featured lyrics with anarchist topics as well as nuclear war and "subliminal propaganda" and followed similar bullet-fast speeds of the British 1980s anarcho-punk bands (McDonald 1987). Ambrosch (2018), mentions, however, that it would be too narrow to dismiss punk or any of its subgenres as short and fast rock'n'roll with angry lyrics, and instead gives their own definition for it: "Punk can be defined as a broadly counterhegemonic sociocultural movement in which musical-lyrical expression has a central role" (Ambrosch 2018: 25).

2.2. Anarchism and anarcho-punk

Anarchism or *anarchy* is a term that is crucial to punk and its communities, but because its usage in media and common speech paints it as something chaotic and violent, the term is often misunderstood. Kropotkin (1910) gives a thorough definition of it:

"[anarchism is] the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government-harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreement concluded between various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being" (Kropotkin 1910: 1)

To put it more simply, it is a political philosophy that rejects authority and hierarchy; an anarchist society is a classless one where everyone is equal and without leaders. Based on my own interpretation, it follows some Marxist principles and strives towards self-sufficiency and communality, and is thus anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist in nature, which is essential in punk's do-it-yourself attitude and criticism

of authority. Anarchism itself has different meanings to everyone and has different distinct schools of thought (as mentioned by Miller 1984), such as social anarchism, philosophical anarchism, and individualist anarchism, to name a few. These different schools of thought also have their own sub-branches: anarcho-communism, Christian anarchism, anarcha-feminism (not a typo), and anarcho-pacifism among others, all of which have a slightly different focus on anarchism, which can be deduced quite easily from their respective names: anarcho-pacifism promotes peace, anarcho-communism promotes communist ideas, and anarcha-feminism promotes feminism. Crass, for example, could be placed under anarcha-feminist and anarcho-communist banners, as written in their song *Don't get caught*: "The commie-anar-fems are at it again". Additionally, Crass could be placed under the anarcho-pacifist banner, based on an abundance of lyrics in their catalogue that promote anti-war and overall pacifist ideas. Despite the different branches, all forms of anarchism share the same anti-authoritarian attitudes, which is the basis of anarchism, as seen in Kropotkin's description of the theory above.

Anarcho-punk then logically, as Manion (2007) explains, refers to punk rock which promotes anarchist themes and ideas. The musical style is not important, it can range from avant-garde, experimental forms to bullet fast hardcore punk. Its lyrics are the main point, and they often "[attack] institutions such as capitalism, government, religion, and social problems such as war, sexism, racism, classism, and Third World exploitation" (Manion, 2007: 4). The defining features (and the only 'pre-requisite') are anti-authoritarian or anti-capitalist messages and a DIY attitude, all of which Crass are a good showcase of. All six of their records are self-published and distributed anarchist messages are abundant in them, from the liner notes - which are writings on the inner sleeves of the album - to the lyrics. The band themselves lived at (the drummer) Penny Rimbaud's Dial House, which was a communal 'open house' where anyone was free to come and stay for however long they wanted and then move on: "Penny Rimbaud once described Dial House as a place where people were free to drop in rather than to drop out [...]" (Berger, 2008: 27) Dial House being open to anyone is a good example of the anti-capitalist nature of anarcho-punk

which Crass promoted. Additionally, the liner notes of the band's fifth album *Yes Sir, I Will* (1983) summarize the anarchistic thought process of the band well:

*"You must learn to live with your own conscience,
your own morality,
your own decision,
your own self.
You alone can do it.
There is no authority but yourself"*

The line "there is no authority but yourself" was something that the band had done banners of and used as background imagery during their shows, which can be seen in some of the rare photographs of the band playing (Berger 2008, for example). The message above is not only the driving force of the band, but it also became the focus of the whole anarcho-punk movement, whose ambitions, as Cross (2010) puts it, are "anarchy, peace and freedom". Anarcho-punk is not a heterogenous movement, however, as Cross claims. Some bands and punks have different primary aims: some punks think the social focus should be on peace and anti-nuclear movements, while others think people should prioritize the fight against animal abuse. Based on analyzing a multitude of songs from the catalogue of Crass, their lyrics feature both topics, but they seem to lean more on the peace and anti-war side, since a large amount of their songs are directed towards then-prime minister Margaret Thatcher or as the result of and the Falkland Wars as well as the threat of nuclear war of the 1980s.

2.3. Feminism and feminist linguistics

Feminism is not the easiest of terms to explain due to its diverse nature and different approaches, and different meanings throughout its history. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as 'advocacy of equality of the sexes and the establishment of the political, social, and economic rights of the female sex'. However, Jule (2017)

claims that this definition does not explore the different, strong connotations surrounding the word *feminism* itself. Besides OED's 'problematic' approach, there are hundreds of different definitions to feminism, all with their own problems, as one will find when beginning to dive deeper into different articles. While it is admittedly very difficult to accurately define all of feminism, there are certain traits that are common to all of the different branches, such as the critique of patriarchy, misogyny and "disenchantment of some sort with an androcentric society" (Jule 2017: 5). The questions that feminist linguistics then deal with include patriarchy, sexism, misogyny, and the true equality of the sexes, analyzed from a linguistic perspective.

Cameron (1991) discusses how feminist linguistics is useful in the world of academics: in line with Jule (2017), they claim that the current mainstream paradigms of the society are androcentric, and thus "sexism must be eliminated because it detracts from objectivity; feminism is useful because it corrects present bias" (Cameron 1991: 61). Because language is ubiquitous, feminist language can thus be a great tool that will help with dismantling androcentric thinking, even outside the academic world. Cameron claims, however, that feminism is not automatically its own approach to different things: "there may not be a feminist science but there certainly is a feminist *critique* of science" (Cameron 1991: 60). The same can then be said about language. She states that whether an approach can be seen as feminist or not depends on multiple factors: epistemology, theory, and politics (ibid.), all of which have different points of view, depending on the person.

Feminism is usually concerned with relations between men and women, and often critique of power relations between men and women. Cameron states that "becoming aware of our differences is an essential precondition of productive dialogue about them" (Cameron 1991: 68). There are, however, different opinions on why women and men are unequal, and some would say that they are not. Cameron brings forth three different positions of feminism that give different insights on the similarities or differences of men and women. One of them, the 'difference position', states that women and men are *different*, but *equal*. According to this position, women and men

are equal, but their differences come in what their goals are in conversation: men talk to gain and maintain status, while women try to promote intimacy and connection (Cameron 1991: 64). Cameron explains these different goals by pointing out that the group which has access to power will naturally value status, while the group that does not have access to it will seek something else. From a critical point of view, this seems to be somewhat far from equality, to which Cameron agrees.

Another point that the difference position brings is that women men's norms are different due to "learning different conversational goals and styles in single-sex peer groups of childhood and adolescence" (Cameron 1991: 64). However, Cameron claims that the different conversational goals learnt in these single-sex peer groups are by no means arbitrary, but that "they quite clearly anticipate a traditional division of labour whereby males are destined for the competitive public sphere, females for support positions and for private domestic life" (Cameron 1991: 65-66). They state that gender is not self-evident and should not be used as the 'bottom line' in explanation. They state that even in its most minimal form, "feminism [...] is committed to the idea that gender roles are constructs, and must pose the question of how they are constructed" (ibid.) Both Bowden and Mummery and Cameron invoke the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir, who claims that "[...] it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature ... described as feminine" (1997: 24, cited in Bowden & Mummery, 2014: 6), and "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (Cameron 1991: 65). One of the main points of feminism, and thus feminist linguistics, can be understood as being critical of different discourses and their connotations.

Based on points mentioned above, it can be seen that language can be utilized in different human relations in a multitude of ways. Elshtain (1982) begins their article by stating that "language conveys a certain power" and that it is an instrument of domination, indicating that inequalities in the world can be traced back to language use. They also claim that revolutionary movements - including anarchist ones - "must break the hold of dominant groups over theory and must structure their own connections" (Elshtain 1973: 604). Moreover, they cite Rowbotham, who argues that

“language is part of the political and ideological power of rulers” and that “we can’t just occupy existing words. We have to change the meanings of words even before we take them over” (Rowbotham 1973, cited in *ibid.*). To achieve changes in society, certain discourses need changes, such as what it means to be a ‘woman’, for example.

Elshtain (1982) goes on to state that, while language can hold power, its users often hide behind a variety of masks. Feminist discourse, however, cannot operate honestly through different masks, but must instead be brutally honest and confrontational, which fits well into punk rock’s aggressive musical and lyrical style. However, some feminists prefer a less aggressive approach – such as liberal feminist Betty Friedan – which Bowden and Mummery (2014) claim to be counterproductive for the movement. They state that Friedan’s view of ‘feminine mystique’, with its “requirements for sexual passivity” – motherhood and submission, for example – “is no more than a giant ruse that prevents them from achieving freedom of choice, self-determination and dignity in an equal partnership with men” (Bowden & Mummery 2014: 15). In Elshtain’s view this kind of passivity does not achieve the goals that the feminist movement aims for. They state that “feminist thinkers must self-consciously and critically confront various traditions of political discourse”, be they feminist or non-feminist in nature (Elshtain 1982: 605). Discourse is a common term in linguistic analysis, but it has different definitions, so it should be explained here. In Baxter’s words discourses are “forms of knowledge or powerful sets of assumptions, expectations and explanations, governing mainstream social and cultural practices” (Baxter 2003: 7). Feminist discourse analysis naturally focuses on gender and different power relations regarding gender.

Feminism is tied to punk rock tightly because, even though the society we live in has moved to a more egalitarian direction over the years, sexism and patriarchy are still very much present. Manion (2007) begins their book by claiming that sexism is highly pervasive all around the world we live in, and that “it is manifested in various forms, such as sexual assault, honor crimes, sex trafficking, domestic violence, dowry violence, son preference, and lower wages for women” (Manion 2007: 1).

Additionally, Bowden and Mummery (2014) claim that, since the world is constantly moving, new problems will arise and there will always be new situations to consider in feminism (as in everything else). Thus, feminism and being critical of patriarchy – topics which will always go along with punk’s anti-hierarchical stance – will always be needed. Moreover, feminist linguistics is important for the punk culture because one cannot change the meanings of words instantly or by themselves. Social change needs time, as Elshtain (1982: 604) explains: “meanings evolve slowly as changing social practices, relations, and institutions are characterized in new ways”.

3. RESEARCH AIM & QUESTIONS

In my thesis I want to find out how feminism and anti-patriarchal messages (and anarchism overall) are apparent in Crass’ third full-length studio album *Penis Envy*. I want to study the album’s lyrics and find out what kind of feminist language is used in them: I want to study what types of linguistic features the lyrics have and the message they are trying to convey. My research questions are thus

- “What kind of language is used in the lyrics of the album *Penis Envy*?” and
- “How is feminism apparent in *Penis Envy*’s lyrics?”

4. DATA AND METHODS

4.1. Materials

The data consisted of lyrics from the album *Penis Envy*. This particular record was chosen because it is known to be lyrically very feminist, as well as being remarkably different sound-wise from the band’s previous two albums: instead of fast, hardcore-style singing by vocalist Steve Ignorant, the songs are slower and the only singers on this album are Eve Libertine and Joy De Vivre, the band’s two female vocalists.

Since my thesis was an analysis of lyrics of only one punk album, the amount of material I worked with was not that high or unnecessarily complex. The printed lyrics of the albums were used to ensure that the lyrics were as accurate as possible and how they were meant to be read: this was to prevent any inconsistencies that might have occurred if the analyzed lyrics were taken from a website that could be modified by virtually anyone. These websites could have presented everything perfectly but lyrics that come with the albums are naturally the most trustworthy. A pre-reading of the album's lyrics was made, and five songs were chosen to be analyzed: *Bata Motel* and *Systematic Death*, whose themes are sexism being rooted in our society, androcentrism, as well as subtle sexism, and *Berketex Bribe*, *Smother Love* and *Our Wedding*, all of which criticize the heteronormative man/woman division and marriage.

4.2. Data collection and method of analysis

My data collection process was simply gaining access to the physical copy of the record whose lyrics were then analyzed. Digital booklets could have also been used, but using physical copies eliminated the possible technological problems that could have occurred, such as the files corrupting or them ceasing to be available. The different songs were read through, and the ones deemed most suitable were chosen for further analysis. The songs were not naturally only about feminist topics, so only the parts that fit my research topic were presented. The lyrics that were not necessary for my thesis were simply disregarded. Some of the lyrics presented were made clearer to the reader: the lyrics in the liner notes of the album do not always use proper spacing or punctuation, so they were fixed to be more legible.

My method of analysis was critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is a form of discourse analysis. Blommaert (2004) explains that CDA is discourse analysis that has a focus on power, which includes dominance, discrimination, and control. In Denscombe's words: "[CDA] tends to add a political bite to the approach" (Denscombe 2010: 288). He discusses how "the researcher [...] needs to use *prior*

assumptions to analyse the data” (ibid.). This meant that prior knowledge of political and social ideologies of the time was used as aid to properly analyze the lyrics from a CDA point of view.

This thesis is about qualitative data, which Denscombe (2010) states “is predominantly concerned with the analysis of talk and text” (Denscombe 2010: 279). Besides being text, lyrics are additionally a form of discussion with the reader, where the discourses are the primary focus. Discourses in Baxter’s (2003) words, as mentioned in the literature review section, are forms of knowledge or powerful sets of assumptions, expectations and explanations. Additionally, Denscombe states that discourse analysis is “an approach to the analysis of qualitative data that focuses on the implied meaning of the text [...] rather than its explicit content” (Denscombe 2010: 287). They also state that the researcher’s aim of discourse analysis is to ‘unpack’ the text. While the written lyrics could convey one meaning, they were inspected more thoroughly to find hidden messages or other implicit contents.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In the album, five out of ten songs feature lyrics with topics that are clearly written with anti-patriarchy in mind. The themes in the lyrics were categorized into four different areas: women’s submissiveness, patriarchal standards, objectification, and heteronormativity and marriage. These areas will now be discussed.

5.1. Women’s submissiveness

The album’s first song *Bata Motel* has multiple different themes. It criticizes how women are thought, and even expected, to be submissive in society and allowing men to have their way with them sexually. Women are supposed to do anything to please men, since their ‘survival’ depends on them:

“You can do what you like, there’ll be no reprisal / I’m yours, yes I’m yours, it’s my means of survival”.

Men are the stronger party who have the power to do anything to women without having to care about the pain they might cause:

“Come on my love, I know you’re strong / Push me hard, make me stagger / The pain in my back just doesn’t matter / You force-hold me above the ground / I can’t get away, my feet are bound”.

The song also criticizes how society has established beauty standards and expectations for women. Women are supposed to dress and make-up themselves according to the patriarchal requirements – they need to be beautiful to men’s eyes:

“Well today I look so good / Just like I know I should / My breasts to tempt inside my bra / My face is painted like a movie star”.

Additionally, the following lines bring forth the idea that women use makeup to cover their “flaws” that men or the society have claimed they have to correct:

“I’ve studied my flaws in your reflection / And put them to rights with savage correction”.

The lyrics of *Bata Motel* corroborates Bowden and Mummery, who criticize Friedan’s view of ‘feminine mystique’ and “its requirements for sexual passivity” (Bowden and Mummery 2014: 15). In their mind, women should not stay passive and let men do what they please to them. The lyrics in the song (and many others in Crass’s catalogue) are written to be intentionally obscene; it creates clear visuals to shock the viewer and make them think, which is typical tactic used in punk songs that advocate for change (Ambrosch 2018).

5.2. Patriarchal standards, androcentrism

The song *Systematic Death* is a commentary on how the Western patriarchal, capitalist society systematically 'molds' women into a certain role. This systematic abuse begins right when one is born:

"System, system, system – the surgeon's knife [...] System, system, system – hacking at the cord / System, system, system – a child is born!"

The word 'system' is mentioned 63 times in the song, highlighting how, in Crass' eyes, the problem is the society and its ingrained values. The song shows how repetition is commonly used in punk lyrics, especially in early British punk, as Ambrosch's (2018) study found. The aim of repetition is to get the point clearly across, and in *Systematic Death's* case, the reader will most likely understand what Crass are trying to say.

The song's lyrics discuss how women are taught from to conform to traditional gender roles and to please men when growing up:

"System, system, system – They'll teach her how to cook! / System, system, system – Teach her how to look / System, system, system – They'll teach her all the tricks! / System, system, system – Create another victim for their greasy pricks".

The song echoes the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir, who claims that "[...] it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature ... described as feminine" (1997: 24, cited in Bowden & Mummery 2014: 6). Additionally, the lyrics are in line with Cameron (1991: 64), who criticizes the traditional division of labour that is learnt in childhood and adolescence.

The previous verses discuss the role of boys in the system: they are supposed to go to school and educate themselves, but they are punished if they are not up to the system's standards:

“Poor little schoolboy, poor little lad / They’ll pet him if he’s good, and they’ll beat him if he’s bad! / Poor little kiddy, poor little chap / They’ll force feed his mind with their useless crap!”

Although boys are made obedient through force-feeding “useless crap” and beating them if they do not behave, education is left unmentioned in verses that talk about women’s life or role in society. Women are therefore not meant to be educated but instead expected to stay home, cook for their husbands, and look good. This is additionally brought forth later in the song, where men are the breadwinners and women are staying at home:

“He’s selling his life – She’s his loyal wife, / Timid as a mouse, she’s got her little house”.

As Ambrosch states, punk lyrics are confrontational (Ambrosch 2018: foreword). The lyrics in *Systematic Death* confront the problem by explaining to the reader how women are molded into society’s standards. It additionally confronts the viewer to start thinking about these things and possibly advocate for change. If the society is the one that creates these problems, the society must then change to solve them. The confrontational nature is something that belongs to feminist discourse, since “[it] is too serious to become operational behind a mask” (Elshtain 1982: 604).

5.3. Women seen as objects

The objectifying of women is visible in multiple songs of the album. *Bata Motel* mentions how women are supposed to be used, and how women are actually willing to be used:

“Use me, don’t lose me”.

In the song they are likened to a bonsai tree, slowly rotting away while simultaneously trying to be pleasing to the eye:

“I’ll be your bonsai, your beautiful bonsai / Your black-eye bonsai, erotically rotting”.

The black eye that is mentioned is in line with Manion (2007), who, as previously mentioned in sectioned 2.3, states that “sexism is manifested in individual behaviors, such as [...] domestic violence” (Manion, 2007: 1). The black eye and other violent acts mentioned in the lyrics – “*slice my flesh*”, “*burn me out, twist my wrists*”, “*you force-hold me above the ground*” – indicate how women are kept submissive by domestic violence.

In the song *Berketex Bribe*, women’s objectification is clearly mentioned in the lyrics:

“The object unsoiled is packed, ready and waiting / To be owned, cherished, to be fucked for the naming”.

The lyrics indicate that women are packaged objects (not unlike the blow-up doll of the album’s cover) that are for men to be owned and something to open on their wedding night. Objectification is also visible in the song *Dry Weather*, although it has more to do with critique of the state instead of feminism. It discusses the dehumanization of people in the eyes of society:

“I know I’m only paper in a file / But couldn’t you treat me as a human for a while?”.

From a state’s perspective, humans are seen primarily as workers that keep the society going instead of individuals with their own needs and interests. While not explicitly a feminist topic, the lyrics indicate that both women and men alike are objectified instead of seen as the human beings they are, justifying the inclusion here.

5.4. Traditional man/woman division and marriage

Besides the other topics, Crass oppose the traditional heteronormative man/woman division, as well as marriage. *Berketex Bribe* highlights how, in the Christian tradition, in marriage there are always two parties, the husband and the wife:

"One God! / One church! / One husband... / One wife!"

The same song also explains how the Bible 'sets the rules' for this Christian traditional thinking:

"We're talking with words that have been used before / To describe us as goddesses, mothers and whores / Describe us as women, to describe us as men / Set out the rules of this ludicrous game / And then it's played very carefully, a delicate balance, / A masculine/feminine perfect alliance"

In *Smother Love*, Crass explain that marriage is pushed onto people everywhere one goes:

"The true romance is the ideal repression you seek / That you dream of, that you look for in the streets / That you find in the magazines, the cinema, the glossy shops / And the music spins you round and round looking for the props"

When everyone else is getting married and it is the norm to follow, one thinks that they should follow that norm too. People will always strive to be like others, to be 'normal':

"We can build a house for us, with little ones to follow / The proof of our normality that justifies tomorrow".

When one is married to a person of the opposite sex, and has children and their own house, they have achieved the 'normal' and are thus accepted by society. As well as the confrontational nature mentioned before, *Smother Love* shows punk's conversational nature: the lyrics are addressed directly to the listener(s). Talking straight to the listeners demands attention and tries to make them think about the topic, which is undoubtedly Crass's whole point.

The final song in the album, *Our Wedding*, seems like a happy wedding song by its lyrics and composition, but is actually meant to be a satire of cheesy love songs. Ambrosch states that satire is something that is commonly used in punk music among the other already-mentioned tactics, although originally it was more common to American punk rock acts like the Ramones (Ambrosch 2018). The lyrics criticize

marriage and how it restricts people to one person as well as women's submission to men:

"All I am I give to you / You'll honor me; I'll obey you / Rich or poor or come what may / We'll forsake all other love".

Crass fight the idea of marriage, which is just a token of repression and "another social weapon", as it is described in *Smother Love*. Moreover, the song states that without the need for marriage, one could still love whoever they wanted without being "owned" by the other:

"If we didn't have these codes for love, of tokens and positions / we'd find ourselves as lovers still, not tokens of possessions".

Sometimes fully understanding the lyrics of Crass requires more than the raw lyrics themselves. Ambrosch discusses punk rock's text-music reciprocity, how songs' "musical and lyrical elements become inextricably intertwined" (Ambrosch 2018: 64). Additionally, when interviewed about Crass, Trevor Thomas, a British anarcho-punk drummer, said the following: "If you just look at the lyric sheet to a Crass song, as it's written down, it can be said however you want to say it, but once you put music to it, it has a very distinct way of being said" (ibid: 65). *Our Wedding* is possibly the best example of the reciprocity: the lyrics are sung in a certain tongue-in-cheek falsetto tone. Moreover, the end of the song features wedding bells that become increasingly distorted and ominous until the song abruptly ends.

6. CONCLUSION

My research questions were as follows: "What kind of language is used in the lyrics of the album *Penis Envy*?" and "How is feminism apparent in *Penis Envy*'s lyrics?" My research found that there were feminist messages in five or six songs on the album, depending on one's interpretation. Feminism was apparent in the lyrics in the forms of

objectification, androcentrism, women's submissiveness, and critique of marriage and heteronormativity. Lyrical devices that were used to convey the meanings included satire, repetition, confrontation and intentionally obscene or shocking lyrics.

Even though half of the songs are feminist in message, I was expecting more. This can be explained by Crass being an anarchist band first and foremost, instead of the likes of Bikini Kill for example, whose focus is primarily on feminism. Crass writes songs on other themes in addition to feminism, while Bikini Kill has a bigger emphasis on solely feminism (see the lyrics of *Revolution Girl Style Now*, for example). As with all studies, this one also has its limitations. The biggest problem is its small scale; only one album, and only five songs were analyzed. Moreover, I did not manage to analyze every single line in the records that could have suited my needs due to time constraints and trying to keep the thesis in the instructed page range. In addition, Cameron (1991: 61) reminds that everyone has some standpoint – the researcher's own social and political positions influence how they do their study; should someone else have analyzed the same album, they might interpret things differently and thus come to different conclusions. However, feminist themes in the lyrics are quite clear, so the results should not vary that much from person to person. The study is not without its strengths, however. It shows how anarchist ideas can be conveyed with music or lyrics and gives an idea of what kind of lyrical content Crass as a band produced. Additionally, it showcases what kind of language is used in punk communities that try to make some kind of change to the world, and how one can use language as a means of persuasion.

Further studies could analyze other Crass albums or study lyrics from other bands from the anarcho-punk genre of music. Moreover, in addition to lyrical content, analyses of visual and multimodal elements used in (anarcho)punk's feminist messages could be a fruitful topic for further analysis. Additionally, a larger-scale study on *Penis Envy* could bring more insights on feminist language, perhaps even more if compared to other albums in the punk rock scene.

In conclusion, the lyrics in *Penis Envy* give an idea that the world we live in is not quite equal enough, and that sexism and patriarchy are rampant in society. These

themes seem to be still somewhat topical, especially within the politics of the United States, despite the album being over 40 years old. The lyrics feature multiple different lyrical devices that show what feminist language can be like and how language can be used to persuade others. Using language in the right way can have a big impact on the worlds, and the lyrics of the album are only one example of this: there is still plenty of room for further studies to work on this topic.

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