“ZOOROPA! MY ZOOROPA!”
U2’s Critique of Europe in the 1990s

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Tämän tutkielman aiheena on irlantilaisen U2-yhyeen Euroopan-kiertue Zooropa (1993) ja jossain määrin sitä seurannut PopMart-kiertue (1997). Zooropa-kiertueellaan U2 esitteli eurooppalaisia poliittisia teemoja, joihin yhtyeen jäsenet suhtautuivat varauksellisesti tai kielteisesti. Tutkielman tavoitteena on tunnistaa Zooropa-kiertueen Eurooppaan liittyviä poliittisia teemoja ja selvittää miten varauksellisuus niitä kohtaan ilmeni. Teoriapohjana on verbaalinen ironia. Sachi Kumon-Nakamuran (1993) mukaan verbaalisessa ironiassa on pragmaattista epärehellisyyttä eli puhuja ei aidosti tarkoita sanomaansa. Lisäksi puhuja käyttää alluusioita eli viittaa johonkin toteutumatta jääneeseen odotukseen, joka kuulijoilla on puheena olevasta asiasta.

Mr. MacPhiston, U2:n laulajan Bonon lavapersoonan, yksinpuhelut ovat tutkielmassa keskeisiä. Jokaisen yksinpuhelunsa jälkeen Mr. MacPhisto soitti lavalta jollekin tunnetulle henkilölle, esimerkiksi poliitikolle. Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan lisäksi muutamia sanoja ja lauseita, joita välähteli The Fly -kappaleen aikana suurilla TV-ruuduilla. Zooropa-kiertueen aikana Bosnia oli sotatilassa ja Sarajevo saarroksissa. Joistakin Zooropa-kiertueen konserteista oli satelliittiyhteys Sarajevoon. Satelliitin välityksellä kaupunkilaiset kertoivat tilanteistaan. PopMart-kiertue huomioidaan siltä osin kuin se jatkoi Zooropa-kiertueen teemoja. Zooropa- ja Please-laulujen sanoja tarkastellaan myös eurooppalaisuuden näkökulmasta.

Tutkielmasta käy ilmi, että Mr. MacPhisto käytti verbaalista ironiaa usein. Se oli hyvin havaittavissa hänen viihdyttävissä, mutta myös kärjekkäissä puheenvuoroissaan ja puheluissaan. Mr. MacPhiston puheet olivat liioittelevia ja usein selkeästi epärehellisiä eli hän ei tarkoittanut sitä mitä sanoi. Verbaalista ironiaa oli myös The Fly -kappaleen taustalla TV-ruuduilla näkyneissä sanoissa ja lauseissa. Satelliittiyhteys Sarajevoon kuvasti sekin U2:n varauksellista ja kriittistä suhtautumista Eurooppaan.Tavallaan Sarajevosta tuli koko Euroopan sekaannuksen symboli. Uusnatsismin nousun sekä ydinvoiman vastustaminen olivat niinikään merkittäviä teemoja, joita lähestyttiin osin ironian keinoin. Pohjois-Irlannin poliittinen kehitys oli yksi innoittaja Please-kappaleen sanoitukselle. Zooropa-kappaleen sanat kuvastavat hämmennystä siitä, mitä eurooppalainesuuteen liittyy. U2:n edellä joissakin konserteissa esiintynyt katuteatteriryhmä Macnas vastusti osaltaan uusnatsismia: heidän esityksensä kuvasi natsismin nousua ja tuhoa.

Asiasanat – Keywords	Verbal irony, allusional pretense theory, Europe, politics, rock, concert, U2
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1 INTRODUCTION

This pro gradu thesis will focus on an Irish rock group U2 and mainly their 1992 -1993 concert tour called Zoo TV, specifically on its European leg, Zooropa, which travelled across the continent in the summer of 1993. The following tour, PopMart in 1997, will be afforded some attention too as a few themes of the Zoo TV tour carried over to the next tour. This thesis will discuss a number of the political issues and/or themes the band raised in the shows and how they expressed those issues. U2 is one of the most famous contemporary rock groups who have become known for being a socially and politically aware group, a band that cares. This offers a fertile ground for analysis, especially in terms of the political content. The main emphasis will be put on how U2 expressed their views on European politics, in particular, on the Zooropa tour. This thesis will examine the use of verbal irony during that tour. U2 utilized verbal irony, for example, by employing a number of words, phrases, slogans and sentences, which flashed on numerous TV screens. In addition to looking at verbal irony, some attention will be given to other types of political content in the shows, especially with regard to European politics of the time. The main focus of analysis will be on the various ways in which the lead singer Bono expressed their views of European politics. He had two stage personas who conveyed the predominantly critical views towards European politics to the concert audiences. These flashy stage personas were known as The Fly and Mr. MacPhisto, one of whom featured at the beginning of the shows and the other came to life for the encores. One of the ways in which U2's views became apparent were the monologues of The Fly and Mr. MacPhisto during the Zooropa tour. The Fly mainly commented on the massive quantities of information available today after the song by the same name: "The Fly". Mr. MacPhisto featured during the first encore of each show on that tour. He held a monologue first and then made phone calls to politicians and other public figures but seldom had any luck getting them on the telephone. Nevertheless, he always had something devious to say. Another character preceded Mr. MacPhisto in the stadium tour of the United States. He was called The Mirrorball Man.

One of the goals of this thesis is to examine how verbal irony works in conveying political views in a rock concert setting. The major research question can be formulated as follows: how is the critique of Europe visible in U2's shows, especially during the Zooropa tour? I will be examining what forms the critique takes and what sort of attitudes towards the European affairs at the time were conveyed to the audiences through the use of verbal irony. I will also discuss how the views were presented and, to a degree, what the reception was like: how well the verbal irony was perceived and received by the audiences and the media. The reactions of the media will, for the purposes of this thesis, be mainly those of the printed media**.**

The concept of irony and its interpretations provide a theoretical framework for this thesis. Verbal irony will be the primary theoretical point of departure. The primary theory of verbal irony, the allusional pretense theory is introduced in Sachi Kumon-Nakamura's dissertation *What Makes an Utterance Ironic: The Allusional Pretense Theory of Verbal Irony* (1993). It was published a couple of years later in a more concise form with Sam Glucksberg and Mary Wilson and reprinted in *Irony in Language and Thought. A Cognitive Science Reader* in 2007. That article is also consulted for this thesis. Other views utilized as a theoretical backbone in this thesis are presented by Linda Hutcheon. In her book *Irony's Edge: the theory and politics of irony* (1994) Hutcheon sees irony as a result of interaction between the ironist and his or her hearers where the interpreter (hearer) has a central role (Hutcheon 1994: 11). Kumon-Nakamura attempts to address all types of verbal irony with the allusional pretense theory of verbal irony. Her theory is a hybrid of the traditional pragmatic theory and the echo/reminder theory. The allusional pretense theory proposes to expand the notion of "oppositeness" in verbal irony to a notion of what Kumon-Nakamura calls "pragmatic insincerity". Pragmatic insincerity requires breaking the pragmatic rules of discourse. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 23-24, 43.) Some other theories of irony will be reviewed briefly, too, where they relate to the main theories.

Numerous books and scholarly papers have been written on U2 and the lead singer Bono. The Christian side of U2, and Bono as an individual, has proved a big

inspiration in recent years. Authors, such as John Waters, Steve Stockman, Christian Scharen and Robert Vagacs have written books about U2 and Christianity. A collection of sermons based on U2's lyrics given by a number of priests have been collected together in *Get Up Off Your Knees: Preaching the U2 Catalog* and there is even a small educational booklet, *A Powerful Voice, The Story of Bono from U2* designed for religious education classes. Also, at least three theses have been written on U2 in Finland too. One of them, by Eeva Leinonen, deals with the Christian aspect in U2's lyrics and the two others are written from the viewpoint of arts and media studies. Only Eeva Leinonen's thesis was available to me as the other two are unfortunately not loaned out. One of them would have potentially been interesting as it deals with the *Zoo TV* tour like my thesis. It focuses on how media art became popular culture in U2's *Zoo TV* concert. The Christian aspect is not overlooked in this thesis either as one influences for the Mr MacPhisto character is the devil and as such it yields readily to the Christian interpretation too. My main viewpoint is a linguistic one as I am concentrating on the monologues of Mr MacPhisto, in particular, and also on phrases and slogans that were used during the Zooropa shows, especially during the performance of "The Fly". In order to achieve this, I will be looking at the whole concert but the main focus is on the encore and the second song of the set, "The Fly". I will be looking at five individual *Zooropa* concerts, three of which are among the seven shows I attended.

Originally the material used in this thesis was collected for purely personal enjoyment purposes rather than academic ones. This leads to an unsurprising flaw in terms of academic research: some of the material does not have all the background information that would be required by academic standards. For example, information on publishers is lacking in some of the material, page numbers are missing etc. In some cases it has been possible to track the lacking information, in others it has not. This depends on the availability of the article elsewhere, like on the Internet. The aim is to keep the use of material with insufficient background information to a minimum.

According to de la Parra's *U2 Live a Concert Documentary* (1994), the Zoo TV tour spanned 22 months from February 1992 to December 1993. The tour travelled from the United States to Europe and back before continuing to Australia, New Zealand and Japan. The individual legs of the tour, except for the first two and the last, had special names. The first American and European tours were just known as Zoo TV. The third leg, which was also the second US leg of the tour, was named Zoo TV Outside Broadcast, as it toured stadiums. The first leg had visited smaller venues, indoor arenas. The fourth leg in Europe was called Zooropa. The legs in Australia and New Zealand were called Zoomerang and New Zooland. The tour also briefly visited Japan and the shows were simply called Zoo TV Japan. (de la Parra 1994: 140-172.) However, fans often referred to those concerts as Zooshi.[1] Zooropa tour, the main focus of this thesis, spanned the summer months from May to August 1993. Additional, mainly visual, material from the Zoo TV (Europe), Zoo TV Outside Broadcast and Zoomerang tours will also be used in this thesis.

The civil war in the former Yugoslavia was going on at the time of the Zooropa tour. and the besieged city of Sarajevo got attention for a while in a number of the European shows. The siege of Sarajevo took place between 1992 and 1995, or 1996. The point when the siege ended varies slightly depending on the source. For example, Zoephel (1997) cites the ending as being in February 1996, when the Bosnian government declared that the siege of Sarajevo was over. This same time is given in the *Miss Sarajevo* DVD. However, King (n.d.: 271-272) points to an earlier date in September 1995 when the Serbs agreed to end fighting after a NATO bombardment. King (n.d., 235-236) claims that the civil war in Bosnia was due to the collapse of Yugoslavia. Sarajevo remained central in the fighting and it was the symbol of the war too, according to King (n.d.: 240). Partly its becoming a symbol was likely due to its being the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Curtis (2003: 246) points out that Sarajevo was also a tolerant city where the ethnic and religious groups lived together side by side: no faction could claim majority in almost any area.

[1] For an example, see U2 Exit - Wire Archives: http://www.u2exit.com/wire/1999/990116/0004.html

U2 took a stand on the siege of Sarajevo by realizing regular short transmissions from Sarajevo to a number of their shows via a satellite link. Some attention will be paid to them also. During the mid-show transmissions inhabitants of Sarajevo got a chance to address U2's audiences around Europe. The satellite linkups to Sarajevo became a feature of many of the European shows because the civil war in Bosnia was still raging and U2 wanted to remind their audiences of the harsh reality in the midst of their fairy tale show. The idea of a satellite linkup was brought up in conversations with an American aid worker turned reporter Bill Carter, who was staying in the wartorn Sarajevo. Carter acted as their middleman, organizing residents to come and talk in the shows. The idea was to highlight the plight of the people in Sarajevo whom the rest of the world appeared to have forgot. (U2TBOP 2003: 174.)

During the subsequent tours, the critique of Europe was not as evident as it was during Zooropa. PopMart in 1997 had an overall theme of commercialism and the mocking of it but the then ongoing peace process in Northern Ireland left its mark: for instance in the guise of the song "Please" from U2's album *Pop* (1997).
The Europe-orientated approach to U2's shows was chosen for several reasons. The reasons include the simple fact that I was able to follow the Zooropa tour through six cities and seven concerts around Europe. The shows I was at were in Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Scotland and Ireland. As mentioned above, I attended three of the five shows, which have been chosen for analysis. They took place in Copenhagen, Oslo and Dublin. The London show acquired much attention as the author Salman Rushdie made a guest appearance and his dialogue with Mr MacPhisto is interesting in terms of verbal irony too. The Australian show in Sydney was chosen as it is the only official visual record of the Zoo TV extravaganza, which bears much resemblance to the European shows. The personal experiences, newspaper articles, interviews etc. that were accumulated as a result provided a good starting point for the thesis. Europe also was and is a timely and appropriate topic.

The lyrics of two songs, "Zooropa" and "Please" will merit some closer inspection. The song "Zooropa" appears on the album of the same name, *Zooropa* (1993) and

"Please" is on *Pop* (1997). For example, snippets similar to those in "Zooropa" featured in the beginning of each show. The snippets from the opening sequence were coupled with video material of past events in Europe, including the Olympic Games of Berlin in 1936. The lyrics of "Zooropa" also deal with the mixed feelings of what it is to be European in the united, or perhaps not so united, Europe.

To sum up, this study aims at finding ways in which U2 shows their ambivalent view of Europe and also the European Union. The research aspires to illuminate how that view is realized in the Zooropa tour in particular, and to an extent the following tour PopMart (1997). Since U2 used irony as one of the means to convey their views, verbal irony, especially the allusional pretense theory introduced by Sachi Kumon-Nakamura, will be used as the primary theory. The reactions of the print media will serve as an indicator of how successful the use of verbal irony was and what sort of an impact it had.

In this thesis, I will introduce the rock group U2 and their *Zooropa* tour first, then move on to the theories of verbal irony. The core of the thesis will be the analysis of the five monologues of the character Mr MacPhisto. Another main focus will be on the phrases and slogans used during the song "The Fly", in particular. While the main focus is on the Zooropa tour of 1993, the subsequent PopMart tour of 1997 is included to a degree as the critique of and commentary on European affairs continued. Also, some lyrics are looked at for the same reason.

2 U2 AND THEIR ZOOROPA

It is fair to say that U2 are one of the world's most famous rock groups. U2 have a strikingly long career, which is rare today. They have been in the music business over thirty years. U2 have done a great job in bringing Ireland to the "world map of music". Their records sell by the millions and tickets to their live shows sell out almost everywhere they go. But of course success did not find them overnight.

Even though the focus of this thesis is on U2's Zooropa tour, it is appropriate to take a quick look at the cluster of shows under the common umbrella name Zoo TV that U2 catered to their audiences over a longer period of nearly two years. Between February 1992 and December 1993 the Zoo TV tour had seven individual legs and almost all had their own names too (e.g. de la Parra 1994: 139, 146, 151, 160, 171.) Next, a look at U2 and their career as well as the basic structure of the Zooropa tour.

2.1 U2: An Introduction

Their first single, "U2-Three", came out in 1979 (e.g. Chatterton 2001:253). U2 is the joint venture (these days a formidable business venture, too) of four men: vocalist Bono (Paul Hewson), guitarist The Edge (David Evans), bassist Adam Clayton and drummer Larry Mullen Jr.. They have put out thirteen albums between 1980 and 2009 and toured extensively. Their current tour is called the 360° tour and it is still ongoing at the time of writing. Information on the albums and tours is probably easiest accessible on U2's official website, U2.com. U2 have acquired name particularly as a political and socially critical band. That side of them can be seen and heard in their production and concerts, as well as in interviews. Naturally there is more to U2 than just social commentary, but that side of them seems to attract most attention, both good and bad. The Christian imagery in their lyrics has attracted attention to U2 as well.

U2 first started out in Dublin in 1976. The teenage boys who first formed under the name of Feedback were all still at school. (Bono, The Edge, Adam Clayton, Larry Mullen Jr, Neil McCormick 2006: 27, 30.) Later the boys decided to change the name of the band to The Hype and it continued to build up a reputation (ibid.: 37). The band entered and won a talent competition in March 1978. Around that time another change of name occurred. The Hype was switched to U2. (e.g. de la Parra, 1994: 6; Bono et.al., 2006: 44.) The name U2 has several meanings to it: there was an American spy plane called the U2 and also a submarine. Furthermore there's a pun involved: U2 can be "you too" or "you two". (Dunphy 1988: 120.) Bono mentions in an interview which was originally published in Hot Press on the 26th of October 1979 that the name was adopted for its ambiguity. He was already determined to go far and said that they would work very hard to achieve a position where the band would have artistic freedom and the possibility to affect people. (Stokes 1987: 24.) U2 put out their first single in September 1979 (e.g. Alan, 1992: 242) and that marked the beginning of their commercial career. It is unusual for a rock group to survive for decades like U2 has. Even more unusual is the fact that the U2 still has the original lineup intact: the original founding members are still in the band with no lineup changes.

The singer of U2 is known as Bono. He was born in Dublin on May 10, 1960 and christened Paul Hewson. His mother was a Protestant and his father a Catholic. A mixed marriage was a particularly controversial issue in Ireland in the 1950s. (Dunphy 1988: 6, 12.) Bono says later in an interview for the American music periodical *Rolling Stone* that his parents' relationship showed how ridiculous was the hatching of hatred between the two communities, the Catholics and Protestants. (Henke, 1983.) Bono had a circle of friends who did not want to conform to the rules of the society. They invented new names and roles for each other. Bono was named after a hearing-aid shop "Bonovox". (Bono et.al, 2006; 39.) So, originally he was known as Bono Vox (Good Voice). As a young man Bono belonged to a small Christian group called the Shalom group, so did all the other members of U2 but one. Eventually they had to make a choice between the band and the religious group and

they opted for the former. (Dunphy 1988: 167, 238.) Apart from singing, Bono writes most of U2's lyrics. He is the one who tends to be in the limelight more than the others, both for good and bad. This is due to the tendency of the media to focus on the lead singers of bands more than any other members. Bono has gained name for himself for his extracurricular activities too. He has campaigned extensively for debt relief for Africa, for instance.

The guitarist of U2 is known as The Edge. He was born on August 8, 1961 in London and his real name is David (Dave) Evans. His parents were originally from Wales and the family moved to Dublin when the boy was one year old. (Bono et.al.; 2006, 21.) One version of The Edge's nickname is that he got it because his facial features were so sharp. Also, he was never at the centre of things but rather on the fringe, observing. (Dunphy 1988: 103, 167.) Apparently he liked to walk on edges, like those of walls (Assayas 2005: 47). The Edge gives U2 their distinctive recognizable sound with his chiming guitars.

Both Bono and The Edge owe their nicknames to the circle of friends with whom they formed their own community they called Lypton Village. They had their own language in addition to giving each other new names. (Bono et.al. 2006: 39.) Unlike their bandmates, the remaining two members of U2 are both known in musical circles by their real names. In this thesis they will be referred to by their first names after the initial use of the complete name.

The drummer of U2, Larry Mullen Jr., was born in Dublin on October 31, 1961 (Bono et.al. 2006: 25). He is the founder-member of U2. In 1976 Larry had pinned a notice about forming a band on the notice board of Mount Temple Comprehensive School. (Bono et.al. 2006: 18, 27.) According to Bill Flanagan, Larry approached David Evans (later to be known as The Edge) about starting a band. Paul Hewson (Bono), Adam Clayton, and a few other kids turned up in Larry's kitchen with their sights set on forming a band. Before long membership was knocked down to the four characters who remain U2 today. (Flanagan, 1995: 15 - 16.) Prior to forming the

band Larry Mullen Jr. had played the drums first very briefly in the Artane Boys Band and then in the Post Office Workers' Union Band (Bono et.al., 2006: 25).

Adam Clayton, The bass guitarist of U2, was born in Chinnor, Oxfordshire on March 13, 1960 and his family moved to Dublin when he was five years old, having first lived in Kenya (Bono et.al. 2006: 11). Adam is the one who did not share the devotion to the Shalom group, although he respected religion (Dunphy 1988: 167, 218). Stockman suggests that having a skeptic among them was beneficial for the other band members: they needed to apply their faith to wider issues than if they had been "a naive, homogenous bunch of believers" (Stockman, 2001: 32). Adam has been the most rock star-like member of U2 at least if judged by the amount of the dubious publicity he has acquired in the media. For example, in 1989 he provided a field day for the Irish press by getting charged and convicted of possession of cannabis (Fay, 1989). In addition to being the "rebel" of the band, Adam has worked hard in keeping the band on track, for example he acted as the manager of the band in the beginning (Dunphy 1988: 142). He has since managed to put his life in order (Assayas 2005: 67).

The Christian faith may have acted as a kind of catalyst in forming the political side of U2 but, as Mackey (1983: 96) points out, it was the band's experience of Irish-American republican sentiment on their American tour that prompted Bono to write U2's first political song "Sunday Bloody Sunday". It addresses the massacre in Derry, which took place on January 30th, 1972 (Stockman, 2001: 37-38). "Sunday Bloody Sunday" in Dublin is on U2's third studio album *War* that came out in 1983. It was the band's experience of Irish-American republican sentiment on their U.S. tour which directly influenced its creation. Bono recalled a particular incident to Mackey (1983: 96-97):

> I walked out of the backstage door in San Francisco and there were about 30 or 40 people waiting for a chat and for autographs, and I was scrawling my name on bits of paper as they were handed to me. I got this one piece of paper and was about to write on it and something in me said 'hold on a second.' The paper was folded and when I opened it, there was this big dogma thing looking for signatures - I was about to sign my name on a petition to support some guy I'd never heard of, an Irish guy with republican connections. And I got worried at that stage.

> I mean as much as I'm a republican I'm not a very territorial person. The whole idea of the white flag on stage was to get away from Green, White and Orange, to get away from the Stars and Stripes, to get away from the Union Jack. I am an Irishman and we are an Irish group - stop! But I'm frightened of borders, frightened of restrictions on those levels, and I get scared when people start saying they're prepared to kill to back up their belief in where a border should be. I mean, I'd love to see a united Ireland, but I just don't believe you can put a gun to somebody's head at any time to make him see your way.

Waving the white flag was a regular feature during “Sunday Bloody Sunday” in the Eighties (Chatterton, 2001: 229). Bono said (Bono et al, 2005 139) that their idea was to be “militant for peace”. The idea of no borders and coexistence has followed U2 their whole career taking different forms. To illustrate the no colours, no borders idea, Bono occasionally ripped the Irish flag in three pieces in concerts, , so that only the white part is left (Kootnikoff 2010: 23). During the Vertigo tour (2005), while performing “Sunday Bloody Sunday”, Bono wore a white bandana adorned with the word “COEXIST”. In place of the letters C, X and T were the emblems of three major religions: the half moon for Islam, the Star of David for Judaism and the cross for Christianity. (*Vertigo 2005. U2 Live from Chicago, 2005.*)

Ten years after *War* U2 came up with their Zoo concept: first there was the *Zoo TV* tour of 1992 followed by the *Zooropa* tour and an album by the same name. As U2 has become highly profiled as a political and socially aware group, some music critics were surprised by the high-tech, computer-driven shows. They wondered what had become of the serious U2. O’Hagan puts it appropriately when he observed in *Arena* (93/94: 73) that “there was a time when U2 songs had titles like “War”. Now they have titles like “Lemon”. This is otherwise a good observation but *War* is not a title of a U2 song, it is their album from 1983. There was seemingly less politicized content in the shows than what was perceived as usual for U2. *Propaganda (U2 World Service Magazine)*, which was U2's fan club magazine between 1981 and 2002 touched on that issue. They (no credit is given to anyone for the interview) ask The Edge whether people who have perceived ‘“the latest Zoo incarnation of U2” as not really a political one are less comfortable with any political references in the show. The Edge answered that to have done the tour without making any points whatsoever would have been a real missed opportunity. (*Propaganda* 18: 9.)

The 1991 album *Achtung Baby* and the subsequent change in U2's public image came as a surprise to many, fans and critics alike. Bill Flanagan (1995) mentions jokes about U2 that were circulating in the music industry. They made it to the famous "light bulb" jokes, which can be found at large around the Internet. The question was: "How many members of U2 does it take to change a lightbulb?" The answer followed: "Just one: Bono holds the lightbulb and the world revolves around him." Flanagan continues by telling how Bono thought that something fundamental has changed, not just in the world's political structure, but in the way media has permeated the public consciousness. There was/is no longer a clear line between news, entertainment, and home shopping. U2 wanted to find a new way to represent the new reality once they went on tour (Flanagan 1995: 5, 13.) With Zoo TV they found the new way they had been looking for. Steve Stockman notes how "skillful disguise" became a trademark of U2's work (Stockman 2001: 16). Of course such "skillful disguise" was not only a matter of changing the image of the band but U2 utilized it to write about serious issues in their songs without saying what they wanted to say too blatantly. The new strategy for U2 involved going from the critics' caricatures to their own, imagined cartoon personas. (Stockman 2001: 105)

The name of the new album became such that it couldn't be taken too seriously: *Achtung Baby* is, according to Flanagan, a reference to *The Producers*, the Mel Brooks film about a pair of sleazy theatre swindlers who try to create the biggest Broadway flop of all time by staging a musical called *Springtime for Hitler*. Apparently the phrase was used frequently in Berlin by U2's sound engineer Joe O'Herlihy. (Flanagan 1995: 22.) In the video *Achtung Baby: the Videos, the Cameos and a Whole Lot of Interference from Zoo TV* (1992) Bono explains how the name of the album was a con. It is probably their most serious record and yet it has got the least serious title. Bono joked how the name fooled everyone. "They all thought we were in… You know… we'd lightened up. Which is totally untrue. We're miserable bastards!"

The members of U2 have been together since they were teenagers and their career spans five decades. Though Christian and political imagery and topics are a

significant part of U2's catalogue, it would be too simplistic to label them a Christian (or overly political) band, though of course at times these topics have been quite pronounced. This is likely to be one of the major reasons why U2 became seen as so serious and self-righteous. The serious image was cast aside with the arrival of *Achtung Baby* in 1991 and the subsequent tour, which followed the next year. As the Zoo TV tour, and its European leg Zooropa in particular, is the main focus of this thesis, I will now introduce the whole Zoo TV concept, which solidified the image change and showed the world a previously unseen U2.

2.2 The ZOO TV Concept

The Zoo TV extravaganza warrants an introduction as a whole, though the main focus and the corpus of material for the thesis is connected to a number of Zooropa shows. As previously stated, some material from the previous Zoo TV tours in the United States and Europe, from the summer of 1992, and the subsequent Zoomerang tour in Australia will be utilized too. Entire live shows on DVD from Sydney (*U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney*, 2006) and Mexico City (*U2 PopMart Live from Mexico City*, 2007) are primary sources. Other primary sources will include interviews, and other video material. The only commercially available DVD of the Zooropa tour is an Australian show from November 1993. However, compared to the seven shows in Europe, which I attended, the Australian show was similar enough to the European shows. So, its inclusion is appropriate for the purposes of this study. For example, Mr MacPhisto was still present on the Australian leg of the tour, whereas he had not been introduced to the North American audiences yet. Another primary source is a concert, which was broadcasted on the radio. It was the final show of the Zooropa tour in Dublin on August 28th 1993. Secondary sources include articles and books written about U2. A couple of U2 albums and album reviews are consulted.

The entire Zoo TV extravaganza had one common theme: chaos, or rather the fragmentation of the world in the present time. The theme became perhaps most

pronounced through the multiple TV screens and the huge video wall (“vidiwall”). The screens showed numerous pre-recorded clips and some TV feeds from the channels of the country the concert was taking place. The beginning of the Zooropa concert always featured fragmented news and film clips from past and more recent European events, such as the Berlin Olympics and Prince Charles and Diana’s wedding.

Next, a bit more detailed look at the predecessor of Zooropa, the Zoo TV Outside Broadcast.

2.2.1 The Zoo TV Outside Broadcast

The Zoo TV Outside Broadcast leg of the tour traveled through the United States during the autumn/winter of 1992 (de la Parra, 1994; 151-158). As stated earlier, the massive stage was quite similar to that of the Zooropa tour. The stage was dominated by huge “vidiwalls” and TV sets. Bono cracked jokes about the presidential elections that were coming up. He picked up a habit of calling the White House during the encores, asking for the then President George Bush Sr.. He made these recurrent phone calls in the guise of The Mirrorball Man, who was the forefather, or maybe the American cousin, to his European stage persona Mr. MacPhisto. All the major personas will be introduced later.

The Mirrorball Man was, as the name suggests, clad in a shiny silver suit somewhat reminiscent of mirror balls used in night clubs. He wore a large silver stetson too. Despite his continued efforts, The Mirrorball Man was unable to get hold of President Bush. Instead, while doing a radio interview, U2 got a call through to the studio from the then Presidential hopeful Senator Bill Clinton (“A Fistful of Zoo TV”, 2006).

2.2.2 Zoomerang: a general description of the show

The only Zoo TV show on a commercial video, the Sydney show in November 27, 1993, will act as an overall descriptive tool for the general framework of the show as it is similar enough to the Zooropa shows. The stage for the Zooropa shows was massive. It included two high steel towers which were equipped with red flashing warning lights for airplanes. On the left-hand side, seen from the audience's viewpoint, there was a big red lit-up text: "ZOO TV". The stage was filled with big screens and television sets of various sizes. These would flash slogans and images during the show. Early on in the show TV broadcasts via satellite were also projected onto the big screen as Bono zapped the channels with a remote control. A number of colourfully painted Trabant cars were hanging above the stage and their headlights acted as spotlights. The stage had what was referred to as a B-stage, another smaller stage at the end of a ramp, which reached into the audience. (*U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney,* 2006)

The Trabants were a common vehicle in East Germany. U2 featured them in a documentary clip made for their album *Achtung Baby* (1991) and one of the three videos for their single "One", which was shot in Berlin and directed by a Dutch photographer Anton Corbijn. Corbijn had also used the Trabant in the cover photography for *Achtung Baby*. For the documentary about the Trabants, the camera crew visited the closed down factory which once manufactured the cars and interviewed a man about their history. Anton Corbijn thought up the idea of using the Trabants as stage elements since they had already been used on the album sleeve of *Achtung Baby* and one of the videos for the song "One". He thought the Trabant was a playful visual element but it also stood for the fall of the East. ("Trabantland", 2006**)**

At the beginning of each show, and the Sydney show was no exception, a song called "Television, the Drug of the Nation" by a group called Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy was played. The words of the song fit to the concept of the show: "One

nation under God has turned into one nation under the influence of one drug. Television, the drug of the Nation. Breeding ignorance and feeding radiation...” (e.g. lyricsbox.com.) The big screens flickered and a fanfare filled the stadium telling people to pay attention. Imagery from the black-and-white propaganda film shot by Leni Riefenstahl at the 1936 Berlin Olympics fill the TV screens in fast succession. That film included two parts, part I “Fest der Völker” (Festival of the Nations) and part 2 “Fest der Schönheit” (Festival of Beauty). Clips from Riefenstahl’s documentary of a Nazi Party Congress in 1934, “Triumph des Willens” (Triumph of the Will) are shown too.[1] There were gymnasts and a close-up of a young Nazi boy beating his drum is one of the lingering main images. Then the images of Europe moved towards modern day, included are, for example the face of V.I. Lenin, a clip of Prince Charles and Lady Diana’s wedding. A cacophonic music mix accompanies the images and above them all a male and a female voice ask questions in English and French: “What do you want?” being the dominant question. Other words and questions, like “Warum?” (Why?), flash on the screen too. Towards the end of the opening sequence, the image the European Union flag appears on the left, as a projection of an intense blue background and twelve stars that start to fall off, one by one. Bono’s black silhouette appears against the blue projection of the flag as he’s hoisted up onto a ramp just above the screens that show the flag that keeps losing it’s stars. Then Bono starts to ”goose-step” in a similar manner as the German Nazi soldiers marched, and his left hand rises to make the Nazi salute while his right hand swiftly yanks it back down. The sequence ends with one proclamation: “Everything You Know Is Wrong”. (*U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney*, 2006.)

According to Stockman, (2001: 115) there were 36 televisions scattered across the stage, first fuzzy and flickering, then spewing out slogans and images very fast. The band was dwarfed in front of them. During “The Fly” a great number of words (some of which make up sentences) and slogans, such as Everything you know is Wrong flash up on the TV screens in very fast succession. The Zoo TV shows were

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1 http://www.leni-riefenstahl.de/eng/bio.html

hailed as the technical wonder of their time and four years later U2 outdid themselves utilizing even more advanced technology in their 1997 PopMart tour.

After the song “The Fly”, the character The Fly welcomes his audience to the show: “Welcome to Zoo TV y’all. The latest and greatest in software, hardware and menswear. We’ve got it all here.” (*U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney*, 2006.) The Fly praised the easiness of the TV age and the instant newsfeed etc. in many shows. De Curtis (1994: 210) gives one quote: “If you're watching TV and something serious comes on, you can just change the channel.” The PopMart shows picked up from where Zooropa left off by targeting commercialism and consumerism even more.

During “Bullet the Blue Sky” the TV screens show burning crosses that slowly twist into swastikas and the smaller TV screens show words such as “gun”, “Uzi”, (a submachine gun) “War”, “Ego” and “Soul”. In Europe Bono often shouted, as the crosses turned into swastikas, “Don’t let this happen again!”, “Must we let it happen again?” or something similar. This was followed by a particularly angry guitar solo from The Edge. The guitar clearly emulated the sound of a horde of fighter planes. That fits well with the lyric: “I can see those fighter planes!”

Another regular feature of the shows was that Reverend Martin Luther King got his say in film snippets from his *I see the Promised Land* speech (also known as *I’ve been to the mountain top* speech). The following excerpt and the accompanying film footage was featured at the shows:

> Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people will get to the promised land![2]

There was an interval between the end of the actual show and encore. During this interval, people at the European concerts were shown fish swimming around in an aquarium, complete with underwater sounds, on the big TV screens. Next some

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2 http://www.mlkonline.net/promised.html

“confessions” were shown to the audience. The confessions were a number of small video clips that the members of the audience could record by themselves earlier in a special “confession booth” that was set up in the stadium. The best video clips, as chosen by staff, were shown to the audience. The clips ranged from greetings to actual confessions of what a person had done and even marriage proposals.

In Europe Mr. MacPhisto simply strolled onto the stage at the beginning of the encore to the first bars of “Desire”. In Sydney “Desire” was replaced by “Daddy’s Gonna Pay for Your Crashed Car”, a new song from U2’s most recent album at the time, *Zooropa*. Sometimes Mr. MacPhisto was carrying something when he came on stage. For example in Munich (June 4th, 1993, personal recollection) it was raining and he donned an umbrella. He’d prance around a bit and start singing. In Sydney, the arrangement was a little different. There the screens started showing Mr. MacPhisto’s makeshift dressing room that was mainly red and appeared padded, with just one framed photo of the singer Mario Lanza on the wall. Mr. MacPhisto sat happily by his dresser and put on the last bits of red lipstick, while starting to sing “Daddy’s Gonna Pay for Your Crashed Car” to his own reflection in the mirror. There were still some remnants from the earlier Zoo TV shows on the stage. A couple of fancily painted and decorated Trabants whose headlights served as stage lights sway to the music and collide with each other above the stage. The last remnants of Eastern German glory, so to speak. Towards the end of the show, the Europeans got “Zoo Ecus” (the currency of the imaginary kingdom of Zooropa) showered onto them. In the Sydney show, it’s hard to tell if they got the Ecus too or just a shower of paper. As the song ends, Mr. MacPhisto applauds himself and then turns to his audience with yet another one of his monologues.

The war in the former Yugoslavia featured also in the Zooropa shows, though not in the Sydney show. The focus of the media was then in the fighting in and around Sarajevo, and Sarajevo was also the focus in Zooropa. At one stage during the tour U2 introduced a new feature to their show: a live satellite linkup with Sarajevo. They had become acquainted with an American adventurer and aid worker turned reporter, Bill Carter, who assisted in sending live (or prerecorded) messages from the people

of the war-torn Sarajevo to the U2 audiences across Europe. When making plans for the satellite link, Bill Carter explained to U2 in a fax why Sarajevo had become the particular arena for fighting. He characterized Sarajevo as the soul of Bosnia, the only place where all three warring sides came together, in other words lived peaceably side by side. They did not think of themselves as Serbs, Croats or Muslims but as Bosnians. It would be easy for the Serbs to conquer Bosnia if they managed to destroy the spirit of Sarajevo first. (Carter 2009: 233.) However, in England the satellite link met with so much criticism that the band dropped it from their concerts. Reasons for critique included exploiting the war situation. Carter, on the other hand, stressed the importance of the linkup to the people of Sarajevo in an article in U2's fan magazine *Propaganda* (18: 12). Even though the Sarajevo linkup was history by the time of the last Dublin show on August 28th, Sarajevo was mentioned there also. The song "One" was often dedicated to the people of Sarajevo. In Dublin the dedication included a rhetorical question "Have our politicians learned nothing in 60 years?" Another little remainder of Sarajevo came in a another form when the lyrics were changed to remind people of Sarajevo. "turn the key unlock the door" in "Bullet the Blue Sky" became " ... turn the key to Sarajevo door." (Zooropa. Live show, 1993).

The overall structures of all the Zoo TV shows had some similarities. Now that the general structure of a typical Zooropa show has been introduced, it is time to turn to verbal irony. First, there will be a brief look at earlier theories. Then Sachi Kumon-Nakamura's and Linda Hutcheon's theories and views on verbal irony will be introduced in more detail.

3 VERBAL IRONY AND ITS EDGE: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Verbal irony is the basic concept used in the thesis because irony was one of the devices employed to convey the critique of Europe especially in the Zooropa shows. Irony was most obviously present during the second encore when Mr. MacPhisto came to the scene. The character used irony to comment on a number of current issues in Europe and elsewhere. In this chapter the concept of irony will be discussed in a little more detail. The main theory, Sachi Kumon-Nakamura's allusional pretense theory of verbal irony, will be introduced in this chapter. First, a look at the preceding theories of verbal irony and the crucial role of the interpreter, presented by Linda Hutcheon.

Irony is a difficult concept to define due to the complex nature of the phenomenon (Muecke,1978: 8). One notion of irony is that it is simulation and dis-simulation. The ironist pretends to be what he or she is not and pretends not to be what he or she is. (Muecke 1978: 25.) Where irony is present, there is a contrast between a reality and an appearance. Thus "reality" and "appearance" in irony get their meanings from the ironist or the ironic observer. Irony itself can be vulnerable to further irony. (Muecke 1978: 30-31.) The five "basic features" of irony that Muecke presents are a confident unawareness, a contrast between appearance and reality, a comic element, an element of detachment and an aesthetic element (Muecke 1978: 48). In contrast, Linda Hutcheon states that not very many ironies are particularly "funny", and goes on to claim that one of the misconceptions that theorists of irony always have to confront is the combination of irony and humor (Hutcheon 1994: 5). Muecke defines verbal irony as "the irony of an ironist intentionally being ironical". Further, he writes that verbal irony might also be called behavioural irony as the ironist can employ other means of media. (Muecke 1978: 28.) Muecke points out that it is possible for a person to perform other ironical acts, like smile ironically or paint ironical pictures, in addition to speaking ironically. The aim of any behavioural irony is to convey a meaning and in that respect it can be regarded as linguistic. (Muecke,

1978: 49.) Verbal irony is mainly employed as a rhetorical device: the ironist asserts a “false-hood” in the certainty that the listeners will contradict it mentally by a counter-assertion. The counter-assertion is actually the real meaning that the ironist wants to convey. (Muecke, 1978: 63.)

3.1 Irony and the Interpreter

Linda Hutcheon (1994: 2) states that irony has an evaluative edge and manages to provoke emotional responses as much in those who “get” it as in those who do not. She continues that emotional responses are equally stirred up in the targets of irony. This is how Hutcheon differentiates irony from metaphor or allegory, which otherwise demand similar supplementing of meaning (ibid.: 12). She states that irony and its interpretation cannot be separated from each other. Irony isn’t irony until it is interpreted as such – at least by someone intending to be ironical if not by the intended receiver. Someone attributes irony; someone makes it “happen”, makes it a reality. (Hutcheon 1994: 6.) Hutcheon separates a series of elements that work together to make irony happen: its critical edge and its semantic complexity, the “discursive communities” that make irony possible; the role of intention and attribution of irony; its contextual framing and markers. Her focus is on how irony comes (or does not come) into existence for her as an interpreter. For Hutcheon the verb to “happen” describes irony best. Irony happens in all kinds of discourses (verbal, visual, aural). (Hutcheon 1994: 4-5.) She claims that irony needs both the said and the unsaid meanings to "happen" . The said and the unsaid coexist to the interpreter and they create the real “ironic” meaning together. The ironic meaning is not the same as the unsaid meaning, and the unsaid meaning is not always a simple inversion or opposite of the said. It is always different from the said meaning and it goes beyond it. (Hutcheon 1994: 12 - 13.)

Indirection makes people suspicious especially if power is thought to be associated with it. It is common knowledge that irony can be used as a weapon. Perhaps it is what Hutcheon calls the “edge” that irony possesses in its verbal and structural forms

that makes the stakes higher than, for example, in the use of metonymy. (Hutcheon 1994: 9.) The edge of irony, according to Hutcheon, becomes evident in the fact that irony favours the unsaid part of discourse. An evaluative or judgemental attitude is implied, either that of the person being ironic or that of the hearer who interprets irony. (Ibid.: 33.) Verbal and structural ironies seem to be either criticized or appreciated depending on how or in whose interest they are seen to operate. Hutcheon remarks that perhaps contrary to popular belief, irony has often been used to reinforce rather than to question established attitudes. (Hutcheon 1994: 9 - 10.)

The major players in the ironic game are the ironist and the interpreter(s). Hutcheon (1994) states that a popular notion of irony is that there is an "ironist" and his or her two audiences – the one that "gets" the irony and the other that misses it. She remarks that there are also unintended ironies that are still interpreted as such, and that there are ironies that which are not perceived contrary to the ironist's intention. Irony makes way for dynamic and plural relations among the utterance (and its context), the ironist, the interpreter, and the surrounding circumstances. These relations mess up such theories of irony that simply assign the interpreter with the task of uncovering some "real", hidden meaning behind the stated one. (Hutcheon 1994: 10 - 11)

Hutcheon (1994) stresses the interpreter's crucial role in an ironic exchange. She or he is the one who decides whether the utterance is ironic or not, and what particular ironic meaning the utterance might have. There is no guarantee that the interpreter will get the irony in the way that the ironist intended. Hutcheon argues that the interpreter "makes" irony rather than "gets" it because both attributing and interpreting irony involves an intentional act: inference. The ironist intends to set up an ironic relation between the said and the unsaid, but may not always succeed in communicating that intention. Interpreters either attribute irony where it is intended or they do not. For the interpreter irony is an interpretive and intentional task: it is the making or inferring of an additional meaning, different from what is said, together with an attitude toward both the said and unsaid meanings. From the

ironist's viewpoint, irony is the intentional communication of both information and evaluative attitude different from what is explicitly presented. Hutcheon claims that interpreting irony involves both semantic and evaluative inferences and that the semantic dimension of irony is difficult to treat separately. She states that irony would not seem to be a simple substitution of the unsaid for its opposite, the said which is set aside or partially erased, though this is what it is usually seen as being (Hutcheon 1994: 11-12.) Irony removes the security that words mean only what they say. Irony can also mock, attack, ridicule, exclude, embarrass and humiliate. (Ibid.: 14 - 15.) Sarcasm is another harsh mocking device. Sarcasm and irony are closely related but not interchangeable. There is no positive sarcasm.

According to Hutcheon, irony can trigger a wide range of emotional responses from anger to delight. It can account for various degrees of motivation and proximity (from distanced detachment to passionate engagement). This is because there is an affective charge to irony that cannot be ignored and cannot be separated from its use. Irony always has a "target" and sometimes also a "victim". Those who might not attribute irony where it was intended (or where others saw it) risk embarrassment or exclusion. Any violation of conventions, spoken or unspoken, can result in strong reactions with serious consequences. (Hutcheon 1994: 15.) Kumon-Nakamura (1993: vii) refers to this as losing one's face. Hutcheon (1994: 15, 35) states that irony transcendes ideologies. Irony can be both political and apolitical, both conservative and radical (ibid.: 35). Irony can be provocative when its politics are conservative or authoritarian as easily as when its politics are oppositional and subversive: it depends on who is using or attributing it and at whose expense it is seen to be (ibid.: 15). Hutcheon remarks that those whom an ironist opposes might attribute no irony and take the ironist at his or her word. Or they might make irony happen and thus accuse the ironist of being self-negating. She continues that those with whom the ironist agrees (and who know his or her views) might also attribute no irony and mistake the ironist for advocating what he or she is criticizing. They might simply see the ironist as a hypocrite or as making compromises with values they thought he or she opposed. Of course they might attribute irony and interpret it exactly like ironist wished they would. (Hutcheon 1994: 16.)

Hutcheon (1994: 17) states that irony explicitly creates, and exists within, a relationship between the ironist and his or her audiences: the one that is intentionally addressed (and actually makes the irony happen) and the other that is excluded. According to her, irony does not particularly create communities or in-groups. instead irony happens because “discursive communities” already exist and provide the context for both the usage and attribution of irony. Discursive communities make irony possible. People belong simultaneously to many discursive communities, and each of these has its own communication conventions as well as different experiential and discursive contexts. The multiple discursive communities involve beliefs, ideologies, and unspoken understandings. These communities form the basis of the expectations, assumptions, and preconceptions that people bring along when they use language. The more shared context discursive communities have, the fewer and the less obvious are the markers needed to attribute irony. Hutcheon argues that understanding of irony is at least partly a matter of different discursive communities rather than competence. (Ibid.: 18, 89.) She states that interpreting irony often involves a semantically complex process of relating, differentiating, and combining said and unsaid meanings. There is also an evaluative edge involved. Attributing irony, making it happen, is also a culturally shaped process. (Hutcheon 1994: 89.) Hutcheon states that the transmission and reception of intended ironies are enabled because some discursive communities the ironist and interpreter belong to overlap. (Ibid.: 20 - 21.)

In Hutcheon’s view the relationship between irony and humor is a vexed one, but it cannot be ignored in dealing with the politics of irony. Not all ironies are amusing and not all humor is ironic. (Hutcheon 1994: 25.) Hutcheon states that irony works through indirection instead of aiming at a direct expression of the speaker’s attitude. Many communicational models of irony are based on the necessity of there being an excluded audience that does not understand the ironist’s intention. According to such models no utterance is ironic in itself; it must be possible to imagine some other group taking it quite literally. (Hutcheon 1994: 43.) Irony illustrates the fact that we

don’t make meaning outside of particular situations. It always happens in a specific context. (Hutcheon 1994: 57.)

Hutcheon's views of the relationship between the ironist and the interpreter(s) of irony, especially how the interpreter makes irony happen will be used in this thesis as I will be looking at how the verbal irony was received by U2's audiences. Additionally, the audiences are essentially made up of various discursive groups, some of which are by definition more in-groups than others. In other words, some members of the audience possess more background information about the band and/ or the events being referred to etc. This naturally leads to different attributions of irony. Next, I will introduce the main theory, together with some earlier echo theories of verbal irony.

3.2 Echo Theories of Verbal Irony

Kumon-Nakamura (1993: 2-3) claims that verbal irony is generally viewed as saying one thing while meaning the opposite, and the traditional pragmatic theory contends that irony flouts the conversational maxim of quality (“be truthful”). The maxims introduced by Paul Grice. Wilson and Sperber (2007: 36), too, reiterate the same point that according to Paul Grice, the maxim of truthfulness (in other words, the maxim of quality) is flouted by the ironist who implicates the opposite of the literal meaning.

Paul Grice (1989: 28) introduced four maxims, those of quantity, quality, relation and manner in 1975. The maxim of quality, mentioned above, requires that speakers are truthful, the maxim of quantity refers to adequate amount of information, the maxim of manner requires speakers to be clear, unambiguous, brief and orderly in conversation. Lastly, the maxim of relevance, which at the time of writing was not quite clear to Grice, requires a speakers to be relevant. (Grice, 1989; 26-29.)

Negating the utterance's literal meaning does not always lead to the intended ironic meaning. There are cases where "the opposite" cannot be well defined. Ironists can also speak of the literal truth, when making an ironic understatement, for example. Although there is some contradiction between understatement and reality, it is not patently false and the opposite of what is said is unlikely to be the intended meaning. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 2-4.) Kumon-Nakamura goes on to remark that there are cases in which irony is accomplished without a blatant contradiction in the propositional content of the utterances. The pragmatic approach claims that irony is literally saying one thing while implicating the opposite, fails to give a plausible account for certain types of verbal irony, for example those that do not violate the maxim of quality. An example of this is when the speaker says: "You sure know a lot", to someone who is arrogantly showing off his or her knowledge. The Gricean approach provides neither a reason why a speaker should ever choose to say "the opposite" of what he/she intends to convey nor why an ironical expression should be preferred to a literal expression. It also fails to explain how the hearer would interpret such utterances as the above example as ironic, but also why he or she should start looking for ironic interpretations in the first place. (Ibid.: 4-5.) Wilson and Sperber argue that it would be patently irrational to say the opposite of what one means. Additionally, they note that Grice's account does not explain why irony is universal and does not need to be taught especially. (2007: 621.) Kumon-Nakamura (et al, 2007: 58) discuss why people use ironic expressions and how they are recognized. They make a distinction between situational and discourse irony. Situational irony does not require ironic language and vice versa. Both forms of irony involve failed expectations of some kind.

Sachi Kumon-Nakamura (1993) reviews previous theories of verbal irony and states that the most influential alternative theories to the are the echoic mention theory and the echoic interpretation theory, both of which were proposed by Sperber and Wilson. A third influential theory is the echoic reminder theory introduced by Kreuz and Glucksberg. According to Kumon-Nakamura, the primary claim of the "echo/ reminder theory" (1993: 5) is that an ironic remark echoes both an explicit antecedent utterance or event and a shared social norm or expectation, or someone's

thought, which can be either real or imagined. By echoing such an expectation or a thought an ironist expresses his or her negative attitude towards the echoed expectation and towards a person who holds such an expectation. According to her, this account explains why an ironist says things that he or she does not literally mean, and why positive statements about negative events are predominant when irony is used. The echoic mention theory attributes this to the fact that people generally hold more expectations about positive events than negative ones. (Kumon-Nakamura, 1993: 5-6.) Echoic mentions are often meant to show that the speaker has heard and understood what has just been said and to express the speaker's attitude toward the proposition being echoed. There are cases where a speaker echoes what she or he thinks was implied. A speaker may echo popular wisdom or received opinions. Echoic mentions are common in everyday conversation. (Ibid.: 9-10.) Kumon-Nakamura states that the revised echoic interpretation theory, which Sperber and Wilson introduced, claims that the speaker's thought is interpreted by his or her own ironic utterance and is itself an interpretation of someone else's thought. By interpreting someone's thought, the speaker also informs the hearers that the speaker holds an attitude toward that thought. Sperber and Wilson claimed that all ironic utterances are cases of echoic interpretation. (Ibid.: 11-13.)

Kumon-Nakamura (1993) mentions Kreuz and Glucksberg's claim from 1989 that the echoic mention (or interpretation) theory did not explain very well why an ironist would need to say something different from what he or she means. Kreuz and Glucksberg introduced the echoic reminder theory. Kumon-Nakamura states that the echoic reminder theory deals with sarcastic irony only. Sarcastic ironies involve the use of counterfactual statements to express disapproval, usually with the intent to be hurtful. Any proposition mentioned by a speaker serves as a reminder for listeners of antecedent events, social norms or shared expectations as well as a reminder of a discrepancy between what is and what should be. The speaker expresses a disapproving attitude towards the existing discrepancy. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 13.) The echoic reminder theory can also account for the asymmetry between the use of positive and negative statements in ironic utterances. Kumon-Nakamura claims that exclaiming "What a gorgeous day!" during a storm can be ironically said, even if

there is no antecedent event where a wrong prediction was made. She explains that the speaker is echoing a general expectation about good weather that people implicitly share in order to remind a listener of the expectation. She continues that while it is common to say "This is a beautiful day!" to convey the meaning "This is a terrible day!", it is less likely to say "This is a terrible day!" to convey the meaning "This is a beautiful day!" According to the echoic reminder theory, too, there exist implicit societal norms and expectations that are almost always positive. An ironist can echo them in order to remind the hearer of what was expected and how the expectation and the reality differ (this is, according to Kumon-Nakamura, called the implicit social norm hypothesis). Since negative statements cannot echo positive norms and expectations, they need explicit antecedents to echo. Positive statements uttered under negative situations are interpreted as more sarcastic than negative statements uttered under positive situations. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 14-15.)

The earlier echo theories have a number of problems. Kumon-Nakamura brings up the limited range of ironic utterances the echo theories can readily handle, assertives and counterfactual statements in particular. Ironically intended true statements, such as "You sure know a lot" when someone is arrogantly showing off his knowledge is an example of a different type of ironic utterance, as are ironically intended questions, such as "How old are you?" to a person who is not acting his/her age. Other problematic utterances for previous theories are ironically intended offerings, such as "How about another small slice of pizza?" to a person who has eaten an entire pizza by him/herself, or ironically intended overpolite requests, such as "Would you mind if I asked you to perhaps consider cleaning up your room". The pragmatic theory has no account for these examples because it is virtually impossible to define "the opposite of what is being said". The echo theories have trouble too: it is hard to identify "the echoed thought/expectation" that the ironist is trying to reject. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 15-17.)

Kumon-Nakamura points out that it is be possible to argue that there are expectations that listeners may be reminded of by ironic utterances but these ironic utterances do not seem to "echo" those expectations. Kumon-Nakamura (1993: 17) points to echo

theories, especially that of Kreuz and Glucksberg, when she contends that the purpose of the ironist is to express certain attitudes toward the source of the echoed expectation or thought. She continues that the source, either real or imagined, has to be identified before an utterance can be recognized as echoic. When confronted with an ironic question "How old are you?", the listener may be reminded of his or her age, and/or that he or she is not acting accordingly, because the utterance alludes to the general norm that an adult should act maturely, but it does not "echo" such a norm. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 17.) According to Kumon-Nakamura, the echo theories sometimes misidentify the target of irony. The echo theories claim that an ironic utterance echoes an expectation or a thought which turned out to be wrong or irrelevant, in order to ridicule or reject it and the person who would have entertained the expectation. However, this is not always the case. (Ibid.:18.) Sachi Kumon-Nakamura proposed the allusional pretense theory of verbal irony, which will be introduced next, in order to clarify further the use of verbal irony.

3.3 The Allusional Pretense Theory of Verbal Irony

The allusional pretense theory of verbal irony was proposed by Sachi Kumon-Nakamura in her dissertation (1993) in order to account for the full range of ironic expressions. Kumon-Nakamura makes four major claims. The first claim is that all ironic utterances involve "pragmatic insincerity" in that they violate at least one of the pragmatic conditions of utterances to be considered as truthful. (1993: 23, 40). The second one is that all ironic utterances make an allusion to an expectation that is in some way wrong or faulty (1993: 28, 40). The third claim is that using ironic expressions has a purpose of simultaneously fulfilling multiple goals: to express attitudes (either negative or positive), to be humorous or to be less face-threatening when conveying a negative message, etc. (1993: 32-33, 40.) The fourth claim is that the asymmetry observed in verbal irony is not an intrinsic characteristic of verbal irony itself. The asymmetry is a consequence of the nature of what is being alluded to as well as a speaker's politeness considerations (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 40-41). Underpolite utterances are seldom used ironically because they are not so easily

perceived as insincere, and they involve the risk of being considered rude. (ibid.: iii-iv.) Overpolite requests can easily be used ironically: although the speaker is sincerely making a request, he or she does not sincerely intend to express respect toward the listener. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 57).

Sachi Kumon-Nakamura's (1993) allusional pretense theory is a hybrid of the pragmatic theory and the echo/reminder theory. The pragmatic insincerity involved is not insincerity at the semantic or linguistic level, but it is insincerity involved in how language is used, i.e. at the pragmatic level. An ironist does not sincerely intend to communicate what his or her utterance is generally expected to imply. What is supposed to be implied by an utterance can be specified in terms of felicity conditions, and pragmatic insincerity can be specifically defined as violating the felicity conditions. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 23-25.) Next, Kumon-Nakamura discusses the felicity conditions, which were laid out by Austin and Searle in the 1960s and further defined by them in the 1970s. The felicity conditions are defined as conditions that every utterance should satisfy in order to be "a well-formed, smoothly functioning speech act" (Ibid.: 25). There are four subconditions: the propositional content condition; the preparatory condition; the sincerity condition; and the essential condition. The propositional content condition postulates, for instance, that requests or advice must be about a potential future act of the hearer. The preparatory condition requires, for example that when saying thank you, a past act by the hearer must have benefited the speaker and the speaker sincerely believes that the act was beneficial to him or her. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 25-26.) The sincerity condition entails that a speaker should sincerely hold a belief that what they say is true and have an intention to communicate that truth. If the speaker asks a question, he needs to sincerely be seeking an answer, for instance. (ibid.: 26). The essential condition determines whether or not a speaker's intention is actually perceived by a hearer. For example, a request should be interpreted as an attempt to get a hearer to do something. Pragmatic insincerity occurs when a speaker is perceived as intentionally violating at least one of the felicity conditions. All cases of ironic utterances involve pragmatic insincerity. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 27.)

Similarly, when Grice's are maxims are violated, that often, but not always, signifies verbal irony.

Kumon-Nakamura states that verbal irony should be distinguished from other forms of irony, such as situational or dramatic irony, or irony of fate. Situational irony or irony of fate refers to cases where the situation itself is ironic. Verbal irony refers to situations where that which is said is ironic. She continues that sarcasm should be distinguished from irony, too, and offers a definition of irony from the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1976) and there irony is defined as an "expression of one's meaning by language of opposite or different tendency, especially simulated adoption of another's point of view or laudatory tone for purpose of ridicule"; and sarcasm is defined as "bitter or wounding remarks; taunt, especially one ironically worded." (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 1-2) Irony is focused on how an utterance is phrased, while the focus of sarcasm is on the effect it has on hearers. Some ironic utterances have a sarcastic effect and some sarcasm may be communicated with the help of irony but this is not the case with all irony or sarcasm. (Ibid., 1993: 2.)

Kumon-Nakamura reminds her readers that all utterances that appear to violate felicity conditions are not to be understood as irony. She states that if an utterance is to be seen as ironic, it has to draw listeners' attention (allude) to a norm, thought, etc., that is either cultural or personal. Kumon-Nakamura calls this the allusive function of verbal irony. An ironist may allude to his or her own expectation, societal norms or to someone else's expectation or thought, either real or imagined. The goal is to remind the listeners that something has not transpired according to the expectation. The speaker makes an allusion to an expectation or a thought in order to express his or her attitude toward a failed expectation, the person who holds (or might hold) the failed expectation, the situation itself or the person who turned out to be different from the expectation. Verbal irony is not used to express a neutral attitude or position. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 28-29.) Also, if an utterance is to be interpreted as ironic, the speaker should appear to be insincere in some way. (Ibid. 1993: 43.)

Echoing is a special case of allusion. Echoing an expectation is one explicit way of alluding to the expectation. A speaker can call one's attention to (allude to) an expectation or a thought by echoing it, but a speaker can also call one's attention to the same expectation or thought without necessarily echoing it. The echoed expectation is overtly phrased in an utterance and it is easy to identify what exactly is being echoed. Kumon-Nakamura gives "What nice weather!" as an example. That exclamation echoes the expectation that the weather would be nice. When an utterance alludes to an expectation, the expectation is not necessarily directly paraphrased in the utterance. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 29-30.)

Echo theories claim that irony must always echo some prior event or expectation, as Kumon-Nakamura (et al) remark. In many cases it is not apparent that the speaker is echoes a specific unspoken thought or expectation. Irony can be used in true assertions in addition to counterfactual ones. Also, in questions, offerings, over-polite requests. All four ways of expressing irony allude to expectations or norms that have been violated. Thus Kumon-Nakamura (et al) claim that an allusion to a prior prediction, expectation, preference or norm is a necessary property of discourse irony. (Kumon-Nakamura et al. 2007, 60.)

Kumon-Nakamura's allusional pretense theory claims that involvement of pragmatic insincerity and the allusional function are necessary conditions for verbal irony. In addition, when a speaker has a motivation to use ironic expressions and when the motivation is successfully recognized by listeners, the expressions would be interpreted as ironic. (Kumon-Nakamura 1993: 39-41.) What makes an utterance ironic is not merely whether or not a speaker sincerely means what he or she literally says at the surface level, but rather whether or not a speaker sincerely intends to convey a pragmatic communicative intention(s) that the utterance would ordinarily convey. (ibid.: 58.) Kumon-Nakamura (et al) repeat the two major conditions for the use of irony. Firstly, ironic utterances are intended to be allusive: they are intended to call listeners' attention to a failed expectation. Secondly, pragmatic insincerity needs to be present. In addition to making counterfactual statements, irony can be present

in utterances that are neither true or false, instead they can be sincere or insincere. (Kumon-Nakamura et al, 2007: 62)

Linda Hutcheon's views of the crucial role of the interpreter will be highly useful in this thesis. It underscores the fact that an ironist's intentions are not always successful. The interpretation of irony, or lack thereof, is central as one of my goals is to see how U2 managed to convey their attitudes and critique of Europe to their audiences. Another point that Linda Hutcheon brought up is the notion of discursive communities as enablers of irony. U2's audiences naturally make up several differing discursive communities too, so their role in receiving the irony will be noted too.

The notions of pragmatic insincerity and allusional function, which are central in Kumon-Nakamura's allusional pretense theory of verbal irony, will be used in this thesis also. The idea that all irony does not readily lend itself to a simple reversal of meaning (finding the opposite meaning to that which is said) is useful too as Mr MacPhisto worked through indirection considerably much. Sometimes, for example, what he said could be literally true but the tone of voice gave away the underlying insincerity. Alluding to a number of expectations was also evident in Mr MacPhisto's monologues. Kumon-Nakamura, like Linda Hutcheon, brings up the fact that for irony to be understood, the speaker's intention (or motivation) to be ironic needs to be recognized by hearers.

4 MR. MACPHISTO AND FRIENDS

Next, a look at the central character Mr. MacPhisto and some other characters. Irony in the shows was arguably most clearly conveyed by the stage personas adopted by the lead singer Bono. Even though the first character, The Mirrorball Man, was not featured in the Zooropa tour, he will be introduced also as he was the predecessor to Mr. MacPhisto, who in turn played a significant role in the Zooropa tour.

4.1 The Mirrorball Man

The Mirrorball Man was a glittery, egotistic character that was featured in encores during the American leg of the Zoo TV tour called Zoo TV Outside Broadcast. The Mirrorball Man entered the stage dressed in a silver suit and a cowboy hat. Bill Flanagan (1995: 62, 228) describes him as an original American hustler with a southern evangelist's accent, a used car-salesman and a game show host. Flanagan goes on to tell that the character is based on the song "Desire", from the album *Rattle and Hum* (1988), where there is a line about a "preacher stealing hearts in a traveling show for love or money, money, money". After the song ended and fake dollars were showered onto the audience, The Mirrorball Man picked up a telephone and dialed the White House. (Flanagan 1995: 62). Steve Stockman writes that The Mirrorball Man was a shady rock star who could have been a cross between Jerry Lee Lewis and an infamous TV evangelist Jimmy Swaggart[1], whose name Stockman misspells as Swaggert. (Stockman 2001: 121) The Mirrorball Man carried a full-length mirror and looking into it kissed his reflection. Then he turned to the audience and told the people that they were "fucking beautiful" (e.g. "Fistful of Zoo TV", 2006). He had a

1 Jimmy Swaggart was a successful American televangelist and a minister for the Assemblies of God. In 1988 he became notorious as he was caught out with a prostitute. He apologized on a national television broadcast. Miller (2002) presents the ways with which Jimmy Swaggart attempted to redeem himself. (Miller, 2002; pp. 69-71.) Ultimately his efforts failed and he was defrocked. He was able to salvage some of his career and went on to preach nondenominationally. (Ibid., 2002, pp. 79-80.) He still has a ministry today. His website is Jim Swaggart Ministries (http://www.jsm.org/). According to the website he is a pastor of Family Worship Center now.

few things to say about his beliefs and during his speech more "Zoo dollars" fell on the audience. The speech in Yankee Stadium, New York either on the 29th or 30th of August 1992, serves as an example of the kind of monologues The Mirrorball Man launched into. The speech is on the second disc of *U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney* DVD (2006). It was originally filmed for a *Zoo TV Special*, which was broadcasted on TV around the world in 1992 (Chatterton, 2001: 212). In this prearranged situation, a Zoo TV reporter enters the stage at the conclusion of "Desire". He has got questions for Bono, the major one is: What do you believe in? The answer comes enthusiastically, The Mirrorball Man feigns the tone and deliverance of a preacher or a TV evangelist. His tone of voice betrays irony: it clearly brings said preachers and their stereotypical mannerisms into hearers' minds.

> I believe in love! Yes, I believe in love. Love! Money! Love! I believe in poetry! Electricity! Cheap cosmetics! I believe in the sky over my head and my silver shoes beneath me! I believe in Las Vegas! I've been there! I know that it exists! I believe in you! I believe for you! I have a vision! I have a vision! I have a vision! I have a vision! Television! Television! Television! Television! That's all folks!

It is pretty obvious The Mirrorball Man is making his proclamations ironically and he is conveying a negative attitude towards overly eager (and greedy) preachers and TV evangelists. Obviously these proclamations are, again, not simple cases of saying the opposite of what is meant. A TV evangelist might believe in poetry, electricity and (cheap) cosmetics to convey his message and to look good on TV. On the other hand, this shows how the "surface of things", appearance, and the medium might be more important than the message these preachers have. A touch of self-irony is probably not lost on the band themselves: in a manner a rock band believes in cosmetics, electricity and poetry (songs) too. They need those aids to convey their own message to the people also. The rest of the proclamations quoted above, made in a pompous manner, seem to suggest that TV evangelists really do not have much of a substance to their speeches: they believe in tangible things, like riches, they believe what they can see, their vision is limited to their own visibility and leaves much to be desired. The humorous way these proclamations are made underlines the frivolity of today's consumer culture of which the TV evangelists are a part.

The Mirrorball Man proceeded to phone the White House night after night. By the end of the tour the telephone operators at the White House knew who the frequent caller was but President Bush, Sr. never answered any of the calls. His constant refusal to accept calls was highly publicized in the press. During their interview at a radio show called *Rockline*, on the 28th of August 1992, there was an effort to call the White House from the studio but it failed to reach the President, as usual. Later on in the show the DJ suggested U2 should "give a little equal time to the other side" and call Governor Bill Clinton. The Edge suggested they could call right then. The other aspirant to the White House, Governor Bill Clinton seized the opportunity and chatted with U2. Clinton said that he was "doing a big job interview in America". Bono said: "Bono here. How do you want us to call you? Do you want us… Should we call you Governor or Bill?" Bill Clinton replied: "You can call me Bill", to which Bono joked: "Alright. And you can call me Betty". ("A Fistful of Zoo TV", 2006) Bill Clinton got to talk with Bono about the similarities between rock'n'roll and politics and how going round the country on a bus tour allowed people to ask him any questions unrehearsed. He said the US should alleviate suffering, promote democracy and prosperity in the world etc. and influence other countries through the UN. He talked about hoping to play a constructive role in bringing an end to the tensions in Northern Ireland. He said that "the world does not want America to try to run it. But the world needs a strong America to standing for the right things." (*Rockline*, 1992) He came across as very likable and diplomatic. In other words, the phone call was a great opportunity to reach a younger audience who had tuned in for U2. Flanagan (1995: 96-99) gives a very colourful account of how Clinton met up with U2 later, too.

A stage persona who was basically an exaggerated TV evangelist was a fitting choice for Bono as he has been known to criticize the TV evangelist phenomenon earlier, for instance during U2's 1987 *The Joshua Tree* tour. He used to speak during "Bullet the Blue Sky". One speech is included on the 1988 semi-live album *Rattle and Hum*, and the film of the same name. Bono proclaimed:

> … and I can't tell the difference between ABC News, Hill Street Blues and the preacher in the Old Time Gospel Hour stealing money from the sick and the old. Well, The God I believe in isn't short of cash, Mister!

However, it is easy to see why Bono created another character for the European leg of the tour. Europe does not have a similar tradition of preachers appearing on their own TV shows, though some of that has been imported. Similarly, Mr MacPhisto would have been probably too obvious a devil character for the American audiences to accept.

4.2 The Fly

The Fly was clad all in black and wearing virtually impenetrable black sun glasses. He came on stage at the beginning of the show. Like Mr. MacPhisto, The Fly also commented on things, mainly on the information overload thrown at people by television. His part of the show always included some TV program snippets picked up from the TV channels of the country in which the concert was being held.

Flanagan (1995) offers some insight into the leather-clad consummate rock star character, The Fly. According to Flanagan, Bono looked like a human fly in a black leather suit and big, bubble-eyed sunglasses. When U2 made the video for "The Fly" the first single off *Achtung Baby*, Bono decided he should dress like that for the tour too. The Fly's shades were almost like a mask: Bono went into character as soon as he put them on. The black leather suit, in turn brings up many similarities to rock legends from Jim Morrison to Iggy Pop. However, Flanagan thinks the suit is most clearly like the suit Elvis Presley wore in his 1968 TV comeback concert. (Flanagan, 1995: 31.) Stockman (2001:120), on the other hand, writes that The Fly, was an over-the-top hedonistic rock star, frivolous, rude and foul-mouthed, and he avoided the serious issues of life.

Bono talks to Flanagan about how he literally turned himself into, a "preacher stealing hearts in a traveling show." Rather than write about the character, he became

the character. Bono continues how he always felt like ‘The Fly’ was like a ”phone call from hell”, only... the guy liked it there! (Flanagan, 1995: 57.) In the video *U2 Achtung Baby: The Videos, The Cameos and a Whole Lot of Interference from Zoo TV* (1992), Bono offers slightly jokingly another reason for The Fly character:

> I'm not a hero. I'm a rock'n'roller. I'm just spoiled rotten and paid too much for what I do. I'd do it for nothing. You know? You know what I mean? It's like, you people, you need heroes. You know, the people want to… The media want to create heroes. But if I agreed to the job you'd kill me. So I'm backing out!

Bono is giving away some motivations for the character. He is being clearly ironic though he is not saying the opposite of what he means. Instead, Bono echoes the views of many people that rock stars are spoiled and indeed paid too much for what they do. He points out the inherent trait of the media of hoisting someone up just to bring them down. The media creates heroes and villains alike. The media can also turn on the hero they have created and “kill” him. Bono very likely speaks from experience too, he had seen enough caricatures and criticism - in addition to praise - during U2’s earlier career. So, now Bono is saying he will not play ball with the media the way they would expect him to.

John Waters writes how The Fly is not Bono yet he shows a part of him that was not visible earlier. At the same time Waters sees the character speaking for “me and you, too”. We all share the confusion, ugliness and contradictions of The Fly. Waters claims that U2 are not funny, that the irony and humour is a “jokescreen” to hide a serious purpose. (Waters 1994: 273.) It may be true that the funny part of Bono and his bandmates was not visible to all earlier but was buried beneath the serious and almost saintly image Bono and U2 had been assigned. I would argue that many U2 fans had seen the funnier side before. I, as a new fan in the late 1980s, was surprised to see the difference between U2’s serious image (which was partly of their own making) and how seriously funny the band members were in interviews. Jokes can be used to underscore a serious purpose but U2 were certainly also enjoying their new image, living the life of rock stars, which they had tried to shun previously. One reason was to poke fun at their earlier image. Bono often assumed The Fly character off-stage too. He donned the black sunglasses and liked to point out how he is

learning to lie. He told a female reporter in a little "interference" snippet on the *U2 Achtung Baby: The Videos...* (1992): "Listen, I'm learning to be insincere. I've had my bastard lessons. I'm… I'm getting it right. I'm finally… I could turn out cool!"

4.3 Mr. MacPhisto

Mr. MacPhisto was another stage persona adopted by Bono. Mr. MacPhisto, who appeared in the European shows, was akin to The Mirrorball Man in that he was also a man in a glittery suit, golden this time and he was also introduced during the encore. Who or what Mr. MacPhisto exactly was has been a subject of some debate, for example among U2 fans. He draws from several sources but the most obvious of them is the devil. Brown (1993: 31) portrays Mr. MacPhisto as a Gaelic parody of the devil. He appeared on stage in his gold-lamé suit, made-up face, and a pair of horns on his head. It is considerably easy to identify some major literary influences that Mr. MacPhisto's character is based on as there are a number of devil characters in literature, which carry a resemblance to Mr MacPhisto. An example of such an influence is C.S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters: letters from a senior to a junior devil* (1972). It explains at least one important aspect of the character Mr. MacPhisto. There is an obvious connection between Goethe's, Klaus Mann's Thomas Mann's and Philip Marlowe's devil character Mephisto(pheles). Klaus Mann also utilized the same devil theme in *Mephisto*. Common to all the above novels is an artist or a scientist who strikes a deal with the devil at a great cost to themselves. A musical play by William S. Burroughs, Robert Wilson and Tom Waits called *The Black Rider: the Casting of the Magic Bullets* (1990), featuring another devil character Pegleg, is among the influences for Mr. MacPhisto. Another portrayal of Mr. MacPhisto is given by Deevoy (1993: 65) who described him as being a 'show business casualty' who can be imagined to spend his time living in the past. The Edge added yet another dimension to the character. He claimed they wanted it to be a bit frightening and even sad rather than comedic. (Deevoy, 1993: 70.) He mused in hindsight that it was

> ...a really bizarre, kind of chilling feeling seeing Mr MacPhisto. It was very disturbing, very unreasonable, and nothing to do with entertainment. It was something much heavier. I thought

> the idea of the horns was over the top, [..] spelling it all out, but in fact it really worked." (Flanagan, 1995: 230.)

Mr. MacPhisto incorporated both the devil and the old pop star into his persona. Apart from appearance Mr. MacPhisto had another striking quality: a sharp tongue with which he slashed out to any direction he chose. He used irony that could at times be cutting. He was a weirdo who had more than one somewhat similar characters within himself. Mr MacPhisto could be interpreted as having been a devil most of all. A devil who pretends to be an ex-pop star (or vice versa). Contrary to what The Edge is quoted as saying, I find it is hard to see Mr MacPhisto as frightening. He is quite amusing but a certain kind of sadness, a melancholy, can be picked off of him. Mr MacPhisto is reveling in his past glory (as a rock or a cabaret star) and his appearance is asking: is this all?

Bill Flanagan (1995) offers a more detailed look at Mr. MacPhisto and the way he came to be. Bono needed a new but somewhat similar European equivalent to The Mirrorball Man who closed the 1992 shows. He started singing "Desire" in a voice that sounds like "an aging British music hall entertainer, or a faded Shakespearean actor". (Flanagan 1995: 228.) His attire included a hilarious pair of 1970s glittering gold platform boots. He was the last rock star. Gavin Friday demanded to know who The Mirrorball Man was really supposed to be and once he learned that the character was supposed to be the devil, Friday said that he should wear horns. Mr. MacPhisto's character was completed with a pair of horns, whiteface and lipstick. Mr. MacPhisto was the devil as the last rock star. Bono waved his arms around in circles to finish creating MacPhisto's character. (ibid.: 228.) Gavin Friday's real name is Fionán Hanvey (Friday, 2009) and he is Bono's longtime friend from the Lypton Village days and a type of advisor on a number of U2 tours.

Christian Scharen (2006: 53-54) writes that all the stage personas (The Mirrorball Man, The Fly and Mr. MacPhisto) were a way for Bono to mock his stardom, the consumer culture that produces rock stars and even the devil. So, perhaps a not entirely unintended irony emerged from the fact that Bono played the part of the

devilish Mr. MacPhisto so well. Many Christians thought that he had ”sold his soul to the opposition” as Stockman (2001: 121) put it.

The character of Mr MacPhisto is a caricature of the Devil, among others, and many literary devils share characteristics with him. Next, some major literary influences for Mr MacPhisto are discussed.

4.3.1 The devils in Mr. MacPhisto

Mr. MacPhisto has a number of literary influences as man’s encounters with the sneaky devil and the deals he tries to strike with him, mainly at his own peril, have intrigued many an author in history. The story of a man exchanging his soul for earthly knowledge, pleasure etc. has apparently particularly captured the imagination of authors from German cultural background based on how many German authors have written a variation of the story. Of course, the theme is widely known elsewhere too. One example of a similar storyline is Oscar Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Grey*.

The most obvious influence for Mr. MacPhisto is Mephisto(pheles). He is the “proto-European symbol of great art and temptation” (Flanagan 1995: 229) depicted in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Faust 1-2*, Thomas Mann’s *Faust,* Philip Marlowe’s *Doctor Faust* and Klaus Mann’s *Mephisto*). This influence is obvious starting with Mr. MacPhisto’s name. Flanagan mentions that Bono had taken ideas for Mr. MacPhisto from the devil character in a play called *The Black Rider: the Casting of the Magic Bullets* (1990). This musical play is a collaboration of William S. Burroughs, Robert Wilson and Tom Waits. Bill Flanagan describes Mr. MacPhisto as having “a ringmaster’s demeanor and the stiff-shinned walk of someone hiding a cloven hoof” (Flanagan 1995: 229). Flanagan sees Mr. MacPhisto utilizing Joel Grey’s character in the film Cabaret too as a reference point for the decadence which gave rise to fascism in Europe. MacPhisto is Satan as a mixture of Elvis, Sinatra, and a cabaret star from Berlin in the 1930s. (Flanagan 1995: 228-229). Bono remarks to

Michka Assayas (2005: 36) that rock'n'roll is often about finding a second skin, a mask, rather than putting one's skin on the table. When Assayas later suggests that U2 was perceived by many as a very earnest and intense group. Bono said that was the reason why some people who saw Zoo TV were confused and even concerned for the band. But for U2 it was a question of staging. They had been playing with theatrical constructs from the very beginning. Bono had a character called The Fool in the early days and it was the forerunner of The Fly. (Assayas 2005: 60)

The Black Rider: The Casting of the Magic Bullets, the musical play by Burroughs Waits and Wilson, premiered in March 1990 in Hamburg and it features a devil character by the name of Pegleg. *The Black Rider* is based on a German opera *Der Freischutz* (1821) by Carl Maria von Weber, which in turn is based on a German folktale. The basic plot of *The Black Rider* encompasses the familiar idea of making a deal with the Devil. This time a young man wishes to marry the object of his affections but he must first prove to the girl's father that he can hunt. The Devil appears to aid him by giving him magic bullets, which never miss their targets. The special silver bullet, which Pegleg kept for himself, kills his bride when the young man intends to shoot a dove.[2]

Another major influence for the character of Mr. MacPhisto came from C.S. Lewis's book *The Screwtape Letters* (1972), in which a demon named Screwtape corresponds with his inexperienced nephew Wormwood and gives him advice on how to win a "patient" - a young man - to their Lowly Father's (the devil) side, away from the clutches of the Enemy (God). *The Screwtape Letters* shows only the letters by Screwtape, Wormwood is an implied character in the book. So are humans who Screwtape likens to cattle. He also refers to a particular man that Wormwood is supposed to lead to Hell as "patient". (Lewis 1972: 11.) Screwtape's letters to Wormwood are to some extent ironical, especially the way in which he regards people is ironical.

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2 http://www.tomwaitslibrary.com/theblackrider-main.html

> All you have to do is to keep out of his mind the question :"If I, being what I am, can consider that I am in some sense a Christian, why should the different vices of the people in the next pew prove that their religion is mere hypocrisy and convention?" (Lewis 1972: 17)

Screwtape writes that even though numerous souls have been won by demons to their Father Below through pleasures, these are ultimately still the territory of the Enemy. All the demons can do is turn natural pleasures into something rather unnatural and ultimately less pleasurable. (Lewis 1972: 44) Screwtape tries to make his blundering nephew to realize that the patient shouldn't or even mustn't find any real pleasures in life such as reading a good book. This is because if man truly enjoys anything at all for its own sake with no regard to what others may think, he is best shielded from the finest attacks by the demons. (Lewis 1972: 59-61.)

U2 showed the transformation of Bono into Mr. MacPhisto a couple of years after the *Zooropa* tour had ended by releasing a cartoon video for "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me", which was recorded for the *Batman Forever* soundtrack (1995) and released as a single. In the video Bono, eagerly studying *The Screwtape Letters*, is run over by a deranged-looking Elvis in a big car. In the hospital Bono turns into Mr. MacPhisto, who later in the video confronts Bono's other major Zoo TV era stage persona, The Fly.

4.3.2 Mr. MacPhisto and his Zooropa

In the *Zooropa* shows MacPhisto first sang "Desire" and then introduced himself to the audience, exclaiming pretty much the same things every time. The introduction went along these lines: "Look what you've done to me! You've made me very famous. And I thank you for it. I knew you like your pop stars to be exciting, so I've bought these." (*U2 Zoo TV Live in Sydney*, 2006) He hoisted up one leg and displayed his platform shoes. A big close-up of the shoe appears on the Zoo TV screens. Later in the encore Mr. MacPhisto lost his horns (he usually exclaimed: "Off with the horns, on with the show!") but not his persona. The last song was Elvis' "I Can't Help Falling in Love with You". Elvis Presley's original version comes out of

the loudspeakers and MacPhisto walked slowly down the long ramp back to the main stage, and disappeared. Bono explained that “from the introduction of MacPhisto on, it’s all cabaret”. “MacPhisto is The Fly down the line. When he goes into falsetto on “Can’t Help Falling in Love”, it is the little boy inside the corrupt man breaking through for a moment”. (Flanagan 1995: 228 - 229.)

In addition to the recurring introduction of himself, Mr. MacPhisto’s part in the encore of Zooropa had some other fixed features too. These remained pretty much the same from one concert to another. For example, Zoo Ecus were showered over the audience. Mr. MacPhisto always started with a monologue that varied both in length and content from one concert to another. Mr. MacPhisto also made telephone calls from the stage like his predecessor The Mirrorball Man had done in the United States. Instead of calling one particular place repeatedly, he placed calls to various prominent European figures. Among them were the then German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, British Prime Minister John Major, Princess Diana, Swedish politician Ian Wachtmeister, who at the time was the leader of Ny Demokrati (New Democracy), a right-wing populist party. Others included Danish Uffe Elleman Jensen, the then minister of foreign affairs, and opera singer Luciano Pavarotti. Most of these politicians and other prominent figures had one thing in common: they were not available to speak with Mr. MacPhisto. Among the few who accepted the call were Luciano Pavarotti and the then Norwegian Minister of Fishery Jan Henri Olsen. Salman Rushdie’s surprise appearance on stage during one of their shows in London drew much media attention as he was, and still is, under fatwa issued by Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini and was mostly in hiding. Searching for the meaning of “fatwa” online brings up many explanations of how it is a formal legal opinion issued by a religious authority. Its employment as a death threat is apparently unusual but that is what it became for Salman Rushdie after his book *The Satanic Verses* was published in 1988.

In *The Screwtape Letters* (1972), Lewis sought to expose the cunning plans of the devil so people would be shocked into realizing how they were being duped and lied to and deceived. U2 took on this strategy too. The Mirrorball Man metamorphosed

into MacPhisto. In him Satan meets insincere rock star ego. Somewhere along the line he became Screwtape. Bono says:

> The whole encore section is kitsch, it's Elvis/secondhand car salesman/the devil, before I got into MacPhisto. That's what I saw him as: an Elvis-devil. It was about world-weariness, about being in a jaded, fat elvis period [...] But part of it all was 'stardom' and the decadence implicit in that supposed lifestyle. So we began with 'Money, Money, Money,' then 'Desire' and ringing up the president, whatever. It's the derangement of stardom. And we paint that kind of portrait until finally we come through to the soul of that with 'With Or Without You' and 'Love Is Blindness' -- the repentance. (Stockman, 2001, pp. 123-124)

The "derangement of stardom" is visible quite well a couple of years later in the cartoon video for "Hold Me Thrill Me Kiss Me Kill Me", where that idea is embodied by the Elvis character, looking like a maniac, who drives over Bono as he is reading *The Screwtape Letters.* Towards the end of the show, Mr MacPhisto almost becomes a self-portrait of Bono, just as much as he portrays any star on decline.

Mr MacPhisto is, arguably, the most interesting stage persona adopted by Bono. He has provided ample inspiration for various authors and fans alike. The varied and obvious (not least because of the horns) connections to the devil, or at least a lesser demon, have been intriguing and, to some, troubling.

Linda Hutcheon (1994) pointed out the necessity of there being two audiences, the one which gets the irony, or in her term, makes it happen, and the other who misses it. Any audience can be divided roughly into these two groups. In U2's case, an interesting detail is the rather large Christian contingent among the fans. Often it is them who pick Christian nuances and references from and in U2's body of work. More often than not the little hints, and often big signs, have been meant for the fans of the Christian persuasion. Bono explained to Bill Flanagan how the band had found different ways of expressing their faith [on the Zoo TV tour]. That the faith was there for those who want to find it but it shouldn't be there for those who are not interested in it. (Flanagan 1995: 480.) Another group that who did not always get the irony and other nuances in the Zooropa shows were the members of the media.

Hutcheon discussed different discursive communities that people, both ironists and their interpreters, belong to. She wrote that interpreting of irony is made possible by the fact that these various discursive communities overlap. U2's audiences in each of their live shows make up their own discursive communities, which interpret that which is said, done and shown on stage. The crowds at the shows are so big that there are by necessity people who "get" the band's meanings and those who do not. Also, the members of the audience interpret irony at various degrees. No one will "get" everything. This confusion was likely intentional as U2 bombarded their audiences with such vast amounts of information, both aural and visual, during their shows. Mr. MacPhisto proved to be a difficult character to understand. The several layers of meaning were easily missed especially if the literary background that Mr. MacPhisto leaned on was unfamiliar. Due to Mr. MacPhisto's close links to the European literary tradition, the character would not have worked in the United States just as The Mirrorball Man with his TV evangelist's grandeur would have seemed odd in a European setting.

Stockman goes on to refer to a story that Bono told to a few reporters, including Joe Jackson, of how he had encountered a concerned Christian girl who did not understand what the devil act was about:

> "One night I was doing my Elvis-devil dance on stage with a young girl in Wales, and she said, 'Are you still a believer? If so, what are you doing dressed up as the devil?' I said, 'Have you read The Screwtape Letters, a book by C.S. Lewis that a lot of intense Christians are plugged into? They are letters from the devil. That's where I got the whole philosophy of mock-the-devil-and-he-will-flee-from-you.' She said, 'Yes,' and I said, 'So you know what I'm doing.' Then she relaxed and said, 'I want to bless you.'" (Stockman, 2001: 121).

One of the sentences which appeared on the TV screens and vidiwall was: Mock the Devil and he will flee from thee. A similar sentiment, and the one quoted on the opening page of *The Screwtape Letters*, is originally suggested by Martin Luther. He wrote:

> "The best way of getting rid of the devil, if you cannot do it with the words of the Holy Scripture, is to rail at and mock him. He cannot bear scorn." (Michelet 1846: 332).

Mr MacPhisto was the most obvious messenger in the Zooropa shows to carry verbal irony as he never ran out of cheeky and devious things to say. In every city someone (usually a politician) received a telephone call, though most did not go through to the intended receiver. Often the subjects of Mr. MacPhisto's monologues were of national interest, as is the case with the Norwegian whaling topic. In addition to commenting ironically on European and other current issues, Mr. MacPhisto was the caricature of the devil, a way for Bono to mock the devil by being the devil. This function was of interest particularly to Christian fans and authors who sought to explain the character of Mr. MacPhisto.

5 MR. MACPHISTO'S MONOLOGUES

Below a few of Mr. MacPhisto's monologues will be discussed from the viewpoint of how he utilized verbal irony. The transcripts of the speech snippets can be found online on a website created by a fan. It is dedicated to Mr. MacPhisto and is called *MacPhisto Center Stage*. For the Norwegian show, July 29th, the entire discussion with the then Minister of Fishery was reported in *Dagbladet*, too. Naturally it was translated into Norwegian. The Dublin show, August 28th, was broadcasted internationally over the radio. The entire Sydney show is found on the DVD *U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney* (2006). I had the opportunity to listen to the Mr. MacPhisto's monologues used here, so at times what I heard was different from what is written on *MacPhisto Center Stage.* When there was a difference, I chose to trust my own ears.

5.1 "Togetherness in the EEC." Copenhagen July 27, 1993

The concert in Copenhagen was the second one I saw, so I already knew what to expect. The concert is chosen for closer inspection as Mr. MacPhisto praised the EU (or EEC as he insisted on calling it). The Danes were and are known to be critical towards it. Mr MacPhisto went on about things he loved. As far as the transcript goes, I am pretty sure what Mr MacPhisto said was "I love the Beatles" instead of "I love the beat" as he sang a snipped of Beatles' "Love Me Do" just prior to the quote below. This, however, does not have much baring on the analysis itself, except for underscoring the love and togetherness theme of the night's monologue.

> What a wonderful night! It's so good to be here. They thought the rain would keep us away but I say: never. I love the rain. It makes me feel at home. I love rock and roll. I love the beat, so catchy, and I love the feeling of togetherness: we're all here tonight! Pressing up against each other: it's fabulous! I love the feeling of togetherness.. it's like... It's like the EEC, isn't it really? ... No? Togetherness in the EEC, no? (MacPhisto transcript - 27th July 1993)

Here Mr. MacPhisto was being distinctively ironic. He likened the EU (EEC) to a happy family, perhaps, or any other group that is very close. Also, in a manner he

compared the concert audience to the citizens of the European union who, too, were very close to each other due to necessity. Later on, in Sydney (see below), Mr MacPhisto claimed the EU citizens were squabbling children before he came along. It is obvious Mr MacPhisto was, if not being completely insincere, at least playing with the Danish people's critical attitudes: many of them would not have seen EU as very close-knit community. He also toyed with the idealistic notion that the EU is (or is supposed to be) like-minded and seeing a common interest instead of nationalistic ones.

Mr MacPhisto then claimed he got a friend in Copenhagen: "Uffeman" (Uffe Elleman-Jensen, the then Foreign Minister of Denmark) whom he'd like to call. The next thing he said was a classic case of verbal irony:

> "Wonderful to have people to tell you what you want, isn't it really? Makes life so much easier." (MacPhisto transcript - 27th July 1993.)

Here Mr. MacPhisto is saying the opposite of what he means and is quite obviously being insincere. Most people would not appreciate being told what they should want, and Mr. MacPhisto was likely no exception. Mrs. Elleman-Jensen answers the phone and tells Mr. MacPhisto that her husband isn't in and he can call the next morning at his office. The audience is clearly unhappy because Mrs. Elleman-Jensen appears to be rather blunt. Mr. MacPhisto starts singing Steve Wonder's hit "I Just Called to Say I Love You" and the audience joins in.

This time Mr. MacPhisto's telephone call had an unexpected consequence, which is a case of situational or unintentional irony (as Muecke named it). Unintentional irony is not intended by the ironist, Mr. MacPhisto or Bono in this instance. A couple of days later papers reported how angry U2 fans were calling the Elleman-Jensen residence all night after the concert, apparently because they thought the lady of the house had been unduly rude. Mr. Elleman-Jensen was not too pleased and claimed his wife just does not know English very well. (Buckhøj M. and M. Poulsen: 1993) The Danish media was partly to blame for the fans' reaction as they reported how

Bono had got into a habit of reading out loud the phone numbers of the people he was calling while punching in the numbers, and also printed the Elleman.Jensen's phone number so it was easily accesible to callers who had taken offense on behalf of Bono. Not long after this incident Bono (Mr. MacPhisto) stopped the practice of reading phone numbers out loud, so perhaps the word had reached him too.

5.2 "Whales have done nothing for us." Oslo July 29, 1993

The concert in Oslo was among the shows that I attended. There Mr. MacPhisto poked his fork into the whaling issue, which was a hot potato. Nordvik and Håbjørg (1993) note in the Norwegian tabloid *VG* that it was not a surprise whales came up (p. 45). *Dagbladet* (Simonsen et. al., 1993) also ran a big story on the concert and concentrates on the telephone call to Mr. Olsen. The article in *Dagbladet* covered the conversation in Norwegian for the benefit of their readers. Both tabloids gave the Minister of Fishery a say, and noted that, from their point of view, the public was not swayed by Mr. MacPhisto and sided with the minister about the whaling issue.

Mr. MacPhisto started off with praises and called Norway's then Minister of Fishery Jan Henri Olsen.

> What a wonderful night. What a wonderful country you have here. So... Ah! The fjords, the wildlife is so wonderful here. And what's all the fuss about the whales? ... I mean, I don't understand it. What have the whales ever done for us, eh? They are unemployed, they don't pay taxes. And they take up a lot of room, don't you think?" (e.g. de la Parra 1994: 167.)

He received a mixed reaction from the audience, which is hardly surprising. Here Mr MacPhisto initially uses a polite approach, almost an overpolite one. Overpoliteness is, according to Kumon-Nakamura a sign of irony, though she discusses mainly overpolite requests. There was the element of exaggeration, which was familiar to those, like myself, who had seen more than one show already. He proceeded to talk about a friend of his again:

> I have a friend here. And he taught me all about the whale. His name is Mr. Olsen. I believe he's your Minister of the Fishery. Shall I give him a telephone call? Oh good. He's so macho. Ah. When you're famous everybody gives you their telephone number. Jan Henri Olsen, let me see. Zero, eight, three, four, eight, three, three, two. You can call him tomorrow if you like. (MacPhisto transcript - 29.July, 1993.)

To the surprise of the audience, and apparently of Mr. MacPhisto too, the Minister of Fishery took the call personally. Mr. MacPhisto said he was "jolly golly pleased" to get through to him. Mr. Olsen was in on the game and Mr. MacPhisto went on:

> "And, I must say... we all here agree...that the whales...all the fuss about the whales is just complete madness, and we'd just like to say to you that - we think that... whales have done nothing for us, and we should put a tax on them at least!" (MacPhisto Centre Stage.)

He managed to get a little statement from the Minister Olsen as they chatted about whales. The Minister thought whales shouldn't be hunted if they were threatened but otherwise they continue to catch them for food. Mr. MacPhisto received an invitation to come to dinner with Mr. Olsen the following day and have a whale steak. Mr. MacPhisto exclaimed: "I think you and I are going to get on just fine!"

The audience did not really know what to make of Mr. MacPhisto and his views as there are both cheering and booing: mixed reactions. This is in keeping with Hutcheon's view that the receivers make the irony happen. Also, there are the excluded audience too, which is necessary for irony. The Norwegian press loved to report the encounter between Bono (or Mr. MacPhisto) and their minister of fishery. The statement that Mr. MacPhisto made about whales was too pointed to be genuine. The rejection of the literal meaning of the stretch of speech and its substitution with the opposite meaning, is not a very viable option either: it would indicate, for instance, that the whales have done much for the people of Norway, or people in general, which is hardly the case. Alternatives are rather few, though. What is known about Mr. MacPhisto, it is not quite unthinkable that he actually means what he says. However, behind MacPhisto there is Bono who is unlikely to actually mean anything that he puts into MacPhisto's mouth, rather he means it to be seen through. So, it is assumed that MacPhisto (or rather, Bono behind the character) is using the common-sense definition of irony, saying one thing and meaning another, as defined by Muecke earlier. A decision based on Bono's supposed knowledge and beliefs is made

and this seems to point towards an ironic interpretation of the above stretch of speech. Thus the interpretation to be arrived at is that MacPhisto's speech was meant to be taken ironically, he does not despise whales, on the contrary he would rather that the Norwegians would not hunt them. The tone of MacPhisto's voice is also a giveaway sign of a possible interpretation contrary to what he said. However, this simplified interpretation, true as it might be, is faced with some serious pitfalls.

The concert in Oslo provides a good ground for inspecting the difficulty of getting the supposed ironical message across. The reactions of the audience were contradictory: there was laughing and cheering but also sounds of indignation in the audience. The audience seemed to be split among themselves about the issue of hunting whales. On the other hand some of them could not decide what to make of Mr. MacPhisto. To what extend was the message understood to be ironical? Or perhaps the things MacPhisto said were interpreted as Bono's opinions by some people. And how many of the people were laughing because they saw irony and how many because they agreed with MacPhisto? And vice versa.

Whale hunting is a sore point for the Norwegians. The Minister of Fishery was quoted in the press (Simonsen et. al., 1993**)** as saying that Europe has been misled into believing that whales are an endangered species, while they are not. Almost certainly the ironical dimension of MacPhisto's monologue – the fact that he was stating one thing pretending that it was said in earnest while meaning the opposite – was lost on some people. And there are always such people in the audience, in Oslo and elsewhere, who would like to see the return of the 'good old Bono' with straightforward opinions.

There is another dimension to interpreting irony, too. That involves the interpreter who is looking for ironical clues in MacPhisto's speech. How does the hearer make irony happen? There is the imminent danger of oversimplification. There is a distinction to be made between the first person (I) as narrator and the first person ("I") as character (Prince 1982: 14). In MacPhisto's case it is the character "I" who does the talking and it is arguable to what extent the "narrator" (ie. Bono) should be

taken into consideration while making sense of MacPhisto's messages. It can be argued that since hardly anything is known about Mr. MacPhisto, The person of Bono and what is known about him can be included in the interpretation. Otherwise it is likely that the only sense one could make of Mr. MacPhisto's speech is that it is nonsense. Mr. MacPhisto is partly Bono's own creation as opposed to a character someone else has written for an actor. Thus it can be supposed that Mr. MacPhisto is somehow meant to reflect Bono's attitudes to some extent. However, based on the background knowledge of Bono, it seems unlikely that the views expressed by Mr. MacPhisto could actually be shared by Bono. So, one arrives at the conclusion that Mr. MacPhisto was being ironical in Oslo as well as in most other places he appeared and gave one of his monologues.

5.3 "Do you get out and about much?" London August 11,1993

In the show at London's Wembley Stadium on the 11th of August, Mr. MacPhisto had a special surprise in store for the audience. He did not settle for the usual phone call but paraded a guest onto the stage: the author of *The Satanic Verses,* Salman Rushdie. The news seemed to be in every newspaper the next day. Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* was published in 1988. He acquired much unwanted notoriety and attention in 1989 when the late Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa against him because the book was viewed as Satanic indeed: an attack against religion and Islam in particular. At the same time the Islamic clerics were able to reinforce their view of the West (and the US in particular) as the "Great Satan". (Finney 2003: 185-186.)

Salman Rushdie joined Mr. MacPhisto on stage to the astonishment of the audience who had first believed that Rushdie was only speaking on the telephone with Mr. MacPhisto. (Cumbers 1993: front page.) It is probable that U2 had intended Rushdie's appearance as a joke on the pitfalls of celebrity, judging by the kind of dialogue Mr. MacPhisto and Rushdie were engaged in.

> Mr MacPhisto: Salman, it's been a long time! Tell me, how miserable are you these days?
> Salman Rushdie: Actually, I'm very well. And in fact I'm quite happy too, thank you very much.
> Mr MacPhisto: Do you get out and about much these days?
> Salman Rushdie: Oh yes, now and again. I have to be careful, of course. I have even more trouble with the critics than you do. (MacPhisto transcript - 11th August 1993.)

It is unusual to enquire someone how miserable they are. There is an allusion to the generally shared knowledge that Salman Rushdie is in hiding due to the fatwa and therefore he must be miserable. His reply may well be truthful yet ironic as it goes against the general expectation. As Kumon-Nakamura (1993: 4) pointed out, truthful utterances can be ironic too. In this exchange, Salman Rushdie is making an ironic, and again factual, observance that his "critics" cause him more harm than those of Bono's, or those of Mr MacPhisto's. In either case there are critics: Bono's critics are personal, perhaps due to his activist work or critics of the whole band, including actual music critics too. Mr MacPhisto's critics could be Christians, if Mr MacPhisto is seen predominantly as a demon.

There was more to Rushdie's guest appearance than just a joke. Rushdie's appearance can also be interpreted as statement for artistic freedom, which is exactly how Bono is explaining it. He says that Rushdie's appearance was about tolerance and freedom of expression (Bono et. al. 2006: 253). A number of reports of that show stated that Rushdie would have appeared especially in order to highlight the plight of the Bosnians (e.g. Kuttner, 1993). This was likely to be due to a satellite linkup with Sarajevo that was featured earlier in the show. However, the link between Rushdie and the Sarajevo-link, though possible, is not a very likely interpretation for Rushdie's appearance. The satellite link with Sarajevo was used in a number of other shows, too, besides the Wembley show.

Bill Carter recounts how he met Salman Rushdie after the massive backlash which met the satellite link-up with Sarajevo after the Wembley shows. Rushdie had said that the criticism had come from people who could not think outside the box. He felt the rock concert was perfect for highlighting the situation in Sarajevo. It might have been surreal but it was better than doing nothing. (Carter 2009: 324.) Bill Flanagan

also talked to Rushdie about the reaction to the Wembley show, and Rushdie discussed how he felt that while there was a painful aspect to the Sarajevo linkups, it was also a way of saying to the audience that “there are things that can’t be accommodated easily and that difficult and painful and awkward and you can’t just homogenize them into the rest of the world.” That it was the awkwardness that made it memorable. (Flanagan 1995: 309.)

At the beginning of the London show encore, Mr. MacPhisto hankered back to the glory days of the British Empire:

> Don't you miss the good old days? No talking back from Paddies or Pakis. No!" [MacPhisto wants to call Salman Rushdie because] "he's been taking my name in vain. Yes, all that bullshit about freedom of speech... haha... oh dear, oh dear, oh dear... I sent him into... I sent him into exile and I do have his number. (MacPhisto transcript - 11th August 1993.)

A chirpy voice answered the phone, saying he is Salman Rushdie. Mr. MacPhisto wished to know how miserable Rushdie was these days but Rushdie claimed to be happy. Mr. MacPhisto did not quite agree with Rushdie about him having more trouble with critics than Mr MacPhisto. Instead, Mr MacPhisto went on to boast about the fabulous evening they were having at Wembley Stadium. Salman Rushdie claimed he knew:

> I'm much closer to you than you could ever imagine! In fact I can see you now. You're wearing a ridiculous gold suit and you're standing in front of fifty thousand of the loudest people I've ever heard in my life. (MacPhisto transcript - 11th August 1993)

Mr. MacPhisto feigned surprise and egged Rushdie on to come out if he is not afraid. Rushdie arrived and claimed exuberantly that he was not afraid of devils and "I'm not afraid of you!" He continued by saying: "Real devils don't wear horns!". Mr. MacPhisto introduced Salman Rushdie to the stunned audience and exclaimed: "I bow to the superior man!" The next day their embrace adorned tabloid covers.

The irony in the dialogue between Salman Rushdie and Mr. MacPhisto can be detected in the fact that Rushdie is a very private and very public figure at the same time. He will have to stay in hiding due to the fatwa issued on him. However, at the same time he could hardly be more public as the mass media has turned him into a

celebrity whose every, no matter how few, public appearances are closely monitored. Everyone knows who Salman Rushdie is whether they have read his books or not. And there is hardly a more public place for Rushdie to appear than a rock concert – apart from a live TV programme – where he stood in front of 72, 000 people. The figure 72, 000 is cited in many reviews of this particular concert and was probably the capacity of Wembley stadium (e.g. Sky 1993). Smith (1993: 13) also noticed the irony in Rushdie's appearance when he writes that Rushdie is free to stand in a "born-to-it rock'n'roll embrace" with Bono but not free to walk the streets.

In the evening of 12th August 1993 Dublin's *Evening Herald* claimed that U2 had been warned not to meddle in Islamic affairs by a leader of Britain's Islamic community after the appearance of Rushdie on stage with them. The Islamic leader had claimed, according to the *Evening Herald*, that members of his religion had been upset because of Rushdie's appearance. The representative of the Islamic community expressed a wish that U2 would not meddle into things they know nothing about. (*Evening Herald* 1993: 3.) The reaction of the Islamic community seemed to give the 'Rushdie episode' even more significance than it would otherwise have had.

5.4 "Even the *Evening Herald* slacks me off." Dublin August 28, 1993

This time the ever-dramatic Mr. MacPhisto is rather sad, he is also making the devilish side of himself quite evident. He is the Devil himself, who gets the blame for everything. His monologue gets off to the usual brisk start. "Zoo Ecus" are falling on the audience as Mr. MacPhisto enthuses: "What a guitar player! What a night! What a show! What a city! Zooropa! Zooropa! My Zooropa!" Then after the song has finished asks:

> You know who I am? Well, I know who you are! I know you better than you know yourself. What a night. What a show. Zooropa, it's all over. So many have turned out to see us I don't know what to say. Thank you, thank you... (*Zooropa*. Live show)

Then Mr. MacPhisto takes on a more melancholy tone and continues to lament the absence of someone important:

> But you know, there's someone who used to come and see us all the time and who hasn't been around for a while. We used to be so close. People think I've forgotten about him but I haven't. I used to find him so inspiring back then. He invented me. I was his most magnificent creation. The brightest star in his sky. Now look at me: a tired old pop star in platform shoes. I tried to speak to him all the time but he won't take my calls. And I get blamed for everything: all the wars, all the famine, all trouble in the world, I get blamed for it. Even the Evening Herald slacks me off. Who can I get to help me make peace with him? Who will mediate for me? And shall I call the United Nations? Maybe they could help me. Off with the horns, on with the show. (*Zooropa*. Live show.)

Then MacPhisto proceeded to dial a phone number. There has been some confusion among fans as to who was that mysterious "someone" that Mr. MacPhisto was referring to. God is the most likely answer. Why? First, Mr. MacPhisto is the devil - the devil was once close to God, "his most magnificent creation". Also, the devil often gets the blame for all the evil that goes on in the world. Bono, in Mr MacPhisto's guise, appears to be poking fun at U2's reputation as a Christian band. He is also pointing to the views in some Christian circles how Bono has fallen from grace, so to say. Hence: "People think I've forgotten about him but I haven't." While Bono did not get blamed for everything, such as the famine, the press had written a number of negative stories, and apparently Mr MacPhisto was lamenting this too. This time Mr. MacPhisto phone call is not authentic. A prerecorded voice gives this nonsensical message:

> This is the office of the United Nations. I'm sorry, we're closed for lunch. But if you are a small third world nation facing genocide, please leave your name after the beep and we'll get to you as soon as possible. Thank you. (*Zooropa*. Live show.)

The political side of this make-believe message can be seen, for example, as a commentary on the crumbling influence of the UN on world affairs and the unsuccessful peacekeeping operations. The imaginary message in a similarly imaginary UN answering machine gets an eerie tone to it. A little play with thoughts: that the UN is closed for lunch can be thought of as a sign of resignation and/or laissez faire attitude of the UN in the face of the ever-growing instability of the world. One might even speculate that the message could also be a critique of the apparent inefficiency of the United Nations in finding solutions to crises, especially

the one that was right on its doorstep. And of course it also tries to underline the fact that the United Nations is no longer fulfilling its duties as a mediator: no more in the real world than between Mr. MacPhisto and God in the imaginary kingdom of Zooropa.

5.5 "Don't fear for I'll be watching you." Sydney November 27, 1993

The encore segment begins differently in Sydney, and it offers a glimpse into the backstage area, or rather Mr. MacPhisto's makeshift dressing room. Mr. MacPhisto is sitting by his dressing table and puts on the last bits of red lipstick, while starting to sing to his own reflection a newer song "Daddy's Gonna Pay for Your Crashed Car" (from their then latest album *Zooropa*, which came out in the summer of 1993). He has a red frilly shirt on. Two assistants come round to hand him his golden coat and then he sent them off with an impatient wave and starts towards the stage. He addresses his audience in the familiar manner: "Look what you've done to me. You've made me very famous — and I thank you". He bows to his audience and says "I know you like your pop stars to be exciting - so I bought these". Again he shows off one of his golden high-heeled boots, which is also magnified on the big screen behind him. Then he continues with his customary monologue. The whole dressing up scene highlighted Mr. MacPhisto's character more than the European shows had done. The make-up, frilly shirt and high heel shoes suggest a feminine side to the character. It also further underlines his affiliation with flamboyant cabaret artists. In Sydney, after the introduction, Mr. MacPhisto launches into his customary monologue similar to the ones he held in Europe.

> Now my time among you is almost at an end. The glory of Zoo TV must ascend and take its place with all the other satellites. Don't fear for I'll be watching you. I leave behind video cameras for each of you! So many listening tonight, I have a list. People of America. (Shush...) I gave you Bill Clinton. I put him on CNN, NBC, C-Span. Too tall to be a despot but watch him closely. People of Asia. Your time is coming. Without your tiny transistors none of this would be possible. People of Europe. When I came among you, you were squabbling like children. Now you're all hooked up to one cable. As close together as stations on a dial. People of the Former Soviet Union. I've given you capitalism. So, now you can all dream of being as wealthy and glamorous as me! People of Sarajevo. Count your blessings. There are those all over the world who have food, heat and security but they are not on TV like you are. Frank

> Sinatra. I give you MTV demographic. You're welcome. Salman Rushdie, I give you decibels. Good bye Michael... Good bye Squidgy1. I hope they give you Wales. Good bye all you Neo-Nazis. I hope they give you Auschwitz! (*U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney 2006*.)

The beginning of the monologue is not really ironic, instead the niceties paid to the Americans and Asians can be interpreted as being genuinely complimentary. Only the little joke about the then President Bill Clinton's height can be interpreted as slightly ironic. It alludes to a commonly held view that short men tend to become more authoritarian leaders, hence the phrase Napoleon complex. Next, the words to Europeans are more easily seen as ironic, which is in accordance with the whole *Zooropa* concept.

> When I came among you, you were squabbling like children. Now you're all hooked up to one cable. As close together as stations on a dial. (*U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney, 2006*.)

These words remind the audience, which at this point was a global one as the show was broadcasted internationally, of a basic idealistic notion behind the EU, the idea that Europe might be one big family. The reality has turned out to be something different, so there is a failed expectation at the root of these words. In a manner this observation of the European Union member states being as close together as stations on a dial echoes the words Mr. MacPhisto spoke in Copenhagen about the togetherness in the "EEC".

Some words were directed at the Russians: "People of the Former Soviet Union. I've given you capitalism. So, now you can all dream of being as wealthy and glamorous as me!". They are clearly ironic too. There is insincerity involved in the sentence, together with the allusion to a failed expectation that adopting the ways of the Western world and capitalism would automatically bring prosperity with it.

Mr. MacPhisto's parting words to the people of Sarajevo carry a heavy irony:

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1 Squidgy was a nickname for Diana, Princess of Wales, used by her childhood friend and alleged lover on a taped and leaked conversation from 1989. The incident became known as "Squidgygate". According to The Telegraph, the conversation was looped and leaked purposefully. (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1575117/Dianas-Squidgygate-tapes-leaked-by-GCHQ.html)

> People of Sarajevo. Count your blessings. There are those all over the world who have food, heat and security but they are not on TV like you are. (*U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney, 2006*.)

These are obviously insincere words and do not mean what is said but the opposite. It is hardly a joy to be on TV if it's a warzone the television is reporting from. Additionally U2 were using their own satellite link to Sarajevo earlier to highlight the plight of the inhabitants of Sarajevo. However, here Mr MacPhisto can also be see as slamming the current TV and celebrity culture where ordinary people want their fifteen minutes of fame by volunteering for all sorts of reality TV shows, such as Big Brother. In a roundabout way Mr. MacPhisto is reminding the international audience that being on TV is not always a privilege. What seems like a poke at the people of Sarajevo is actually a poke at everyone else and the general expectation that being on TV is desirable and glamorous.

Mr. MacPhisto says that tonight he won't be making a telephone call to the President of the United States, which Mr. MacPhisto never did. It was The Mirrorball Man who phoned the White House. Now he was going to call a taxi to go home. The taxi service operator is not amused by the request and hangs up. Mr. MacPhisto sings ruefully: "Show me the way to go home. I'm tired and I want to go to bed. I had a little drink about an hour ago and it's gone right to my head." Then "Lemon" starts and he quips: "Off with the horns. On with the show!"

Mr MacPhisto was not the only conveyor of verbal irony in the ZooTV/Zooropa shows. Numerous words, phrases and slogans were flashed at the audiences at varying speed. Many of them were haphazard, or rather appeared so as they were all carefully chosen. There were certain messages to be discerned from the cascade of words and they will be looked at more closely next.

6 BELIEVE EVERYTHING: THE MEDIUM BECAME THE MESSAGE

A number of the words, slogans and sentences that flew past on the TV screens and the vidiwall were partly ironic too. There were many positive sentences and individual words but also negative or ambiguous sentences. Originally many of them were not really meant for people to see, except the words and phrases that stayed on the screens for a bit longer or swished past slower. Many words and phrases were simply bombarded towards the audience at a very high speed to dazzle and bring home the point that vast information overload is drowning people's senses. Many points besides the information overload were still made with the slogans.

After the live video of the Zoo TV Sydney concert became available in 1995, it was easier to distinguish the individual words and sentences as the tape could be slowed down and stopped. The arrival of the DVD version in 2006 made finding meanings even easier. In the concert DVD the slogans and phrases used are easiest to see when the DVD is freeze framed but in an actual concert situation it was impossible to notice every one of them. That was the idea naturally, the audiences were not supposed to see every individual word and phrase. The words and sentences for this thesis are lifted from two performances of "The Fly": Manchester June 19, 1992 and Sydney November 27, 1993. Certain themes emerge when the slogans are grouped together. However, all possible combinations and meanings were probably not intentional.

The Manchester concert was known as Stop Sellafield as it tied in with a Greenpeace demonstration held at the Sellafield nuclear power plant grounds on June 19th 1992, the day after the concert. The aim of the demonstration was to prevent the opening of a second Sellafield nuclear plant. The members of U2 took part in it, defying a court injunction won by the British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. (BNFL) the company that owned the Sellafield power plants. Again much media attention ensued. The media had been writing about the demonstration, due to U2's participation, for days in advance

as well as after the demonstration. The whole situation surrounding the anti-Sellafield demonstration is ironic. It is a case of situational irony (Muecke). A rock group gets to educate people about the dangers of nuclear power, where it should really be the job of authorities. Bono is quoted in *The Sunday Times* (Howell, 1992) as saying that it is absurd but they had to it. Later Bono reminisced that it was "high comedy", which managed to make their point about a real danger to people. Eventually Sellafield was shut down, though this Greenpeace campaign did not reach that goal yet (Bono et.al, 2006: 238).

There were many words and slogans accompanying The Fly in the Manchester show which dealt with nuclear power and the threat it poses. The words whizzing by on the screen included “Chernobyl”, “Sellafield”, “Three Mile Island”, “cesium”, “critical mass”, “atom”, “fallout”, “radiation sickness”, “fission” and “fusion”. At the end of the song Bono tells the audience not to come to “the gates of Sellafield” as the planned public demonstration was cancelled. He said that the demonstration was cancelled due to the worries over public safety but continued that since “they” (BNFL) are “responsible for the deaths of innocent children, public safety does not come near them”. In other words, they really do not care about public safety at all. This quote is in de la Parra’s book (1994: 151) and a shorter form is on the *U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney* (2006) following the bonus track “The Fly”.This is what Bono says in the DVD version:

> "I wonder what they've got to hide? The whole farce has backfired on them. They've given Greenpeace more publicity that they could ever want in the last week. The way we look at it this is Even Better Than the Real Thing. So.. Enough of that bullshit. Here's some more different kind of bullshit: rock'n'roll!"

A string of words appeared to spell out an aggressive suggestion during the first American leg of the Zoo TV tour. This is one example of an unintentional meaning that occurred because of the high speed at which the words and sentences flew by on the television screens. The sentence, which according to a reporter spelled "Bomb Japan Now", caused some commotion. In fact the string of words, which seemed to spell out "Bomb Japan Now" appeared in a longer string of seemingly haphazard words, which in Sydney included “Bomb”, “Whore”, “Ultimately”, “Japan”,

“Chaos”, “I Want Everything”. According to a report in *The Calgary Sun* "I Want It Now" was originally in the string of words in place of “I Want Everything”. Substituting “I Want Everything” with “I Want It Now” could, when whizzing by at high speed, appear to spell the sentence that was deemed offensive. U2's spokesman denied any intentional anti-Japan messages. (“Rockers Defend Concert”, March, 19 1992)

The “Bomb Japan Now” incident is an example of the hearer (or viewer) making irony happen, as Hutcheon called it. And not only irony but other meanings too. Where a part of the Christian U2 fans failed to make irony happen with the Mr. MacPhisto's character, the Japanese saw too much meaning, ironical or even sarcastic, where it was not meant to be.

6.1 Some ironical sentences on the TV screens

As noted above, there were a big number of phrases, strings of words and short sentences spewed across the TV screens during the song “The Fly”. Many carried a positive idea or message (“Call Your Mother”) some were just clever strings of words that might, or might not, form an idea when put together (e.g. “Greed”, “Feed”, “Seed”, “Freed”, “Breed”). It is debatable how many of the sentences carry intentional messages. Some quite obviously did, while others can be seen to acquire their meaning from the surrounding words and the interpreter's own perceptions. Here Linda Hutcheon’s notion that the interpreter is crucial and ultimately makes irony happen is evident. Indeed any kind of interpretation can be seen as being in the eye of the beholder. It is likely that U2 played with subliminal messages a little too, in addition to highlighting the information overload. After all, there were actual messages, which might have made some people stop and think. Certainly U2 fans loved to collect all words and phrases as best they could. This is evident from the discussion threads on the Forum of Interference.com, which is a large U2 fan community. In this thesis some of the multitude of words and phrases that made an appearance on the screens and the vidiwall are discussed in more detail as they serve

as good examples of verbal irony. The words and phrases have been collected during two performances of “The Fly”, from the Manchester Stop Sellafield concert on June 19, 1992 **(**bonus track on *U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney, 2006***)** and from the Sydney concert, November 27, 1993 (*U2 Zoo TV Live from Sydney*, 2006).

(1) *Everyone Is a Racist Except You*

On the surface this sentence makes a sweeping generalization, which cannot be factual. It is obvious it simply is not just saying the opposite of what the reality is, that everyone is not a racist except the one person being addressed. Instead, the sentence alludes to the common way in which many people tend to see themselves. People like to see themselves in a positive light and different from, and preferably better than, others. Many people like to pride themselves as not being racist, whereas the sentence "Everyone is a racist except you" begs to differ. It calls the hearers' attention to the commonly held notion of not being like "the others" when something negative, and possibly face-threatening, is at stake. The sentence carries with it a negative attitude, which is one of the markers of irony.

(2) *Work Is the Blackmail of Survival*

This sentence has perhaps become a truism for many people, so they will agree with the sentiment. However, it can be claimed that the sentence is also ironical in the more traditional sense. The old work ethic, which used to be a widely held belief among people in past decades, suggested at its extreme that work is a joy or even the sole reason for meaningful existence. For people who lived for their work, it would have been very hard to see working as a survival method, let alone a form of blackmail. It can also be thought that there is an underlying idea that work shouldn't be just about surviving.

(3) *Celebrity is a Job* and *Death is a Career Move*

The suggestion that having a celebrity status is a job seems ridiculous. Especially in this day and age when being a celebrity is seen by many as a very desirable thing. To say that celebrity is a job (like any other) flies in the face of that viewpoint. The allusional function of verbal irony is at work: the sentence alludes to an expectation or understanding that celebrity is something to be reached for. This expectation is evident in the influx of reality TV shows that have taken up the airwaves in recent years. Ordinary people sign up for these programs in hopes of becoming famous. However, there's another side to celebrity. It can easily become a job (as in hard and opposed to a carefree existence) because of all the trappings, such as excessive interest by the general public, tabloids and members of the paparazzi, can turn being a public figure into an undesirable thing.

"Death is a career move" is on the outset another nonsensical sentence. Obviously death is not a career move for the celebrity who died. In that sense the sentence is ironical. However, death can be an indirect career move because a celebrity may become better known and richer after passing away. It just is not the celebrity himself or herself who gets to enjoy the fruits of posthumous fame.

(4) *Do You Believe Me*, *BeLIEve*, and *Believe Everything*

These sentences, with the exception of the question, are rather straightforwardly ironic as they are obviously saying the opposite of what is meant. There is an obvious insincerity involved too. It would be utterly ridiculous to suggest that hearers should believe everything they see or hear. The prevalent mood of our time is rather to question everything. So, it is easy to conclude that the sentence is ironical and meant as a warning against being too gullible and easily led. The word "believe" showed up on the screen in capital letters, as did other words and phrases too. Gradually the word faded leaving only "lie" in large red capital letters. Since the question "Do You Believe Me" was shown before the invitation to believe (a lie), it

also becomes ironic. Also, obviously, it is a visual reminder that there is a lie in “believe”. It is another reminder to not accept things too easily.

(5) *Rock and Roll is Entertainment*, *Enjoy the Surface* and *Watch More TV*

The sentence “Rock’n’roll is Entertainment” is in fact true. Rock music is a form of entertainment. An allusion to a different kind of belief can be seen, which makes the sentence ironic. Rock'n'roll was, and to an extent still is, seen as a means of changing the world and that is what this simple sentence negates. This view of socially conscious rock musicians was widely prevalent especially in the 1980s. There were many ways in which rock bands tried to make a difference from lyrics to charity events, one of which was Live Aid. It was organized by Sir Bob Geldof in 1985 to help starving Ethiopians and is perhaps the most widely known charity concerts. U2 practices a form of self-irony with the sentence "rock'n'roll is entertainment". They were and still are, after all, very much involved with the charity events and changing the world. It is possible to make the sentence ironic by focusing on the simple interpretation of irony: saying the opposite of what one means. This way the interpretation would be that U2 are indeed still saying that rock'n'roll is more than just entertainment, which in reality is still the case to this day. Bono was saying even during the Zoo TV era that they'd fooled everyone into thinking they'd lightened up by giving their then current album the seemingly nonsensical name *Achtung Baby*, when in fact it was a heavy record (*The Videos, the Cameos and a Whole Lot of Interference from Zoo TV*, 1992).

“Watch More TV” is another ironic suggestion as it would be silly to seriously tell people they should watch more TV. People already spend too much time in front of their television sets. The context in which the sentence is flashed at people makes it even more ironic: one of the goals of the whole *Zoo TV* concept was to criticize the information overload that engulfs people from every direction these days and shows no signs of slowing down. “Enjoy the Surface” is akin to the suggestion “Watch More TV”. It is another comment on the superficial existence that many people seem to lead today. On the other hand, it is that perceived superficiality that many people

criticize. The “surface” is frivolous and should not, or indeed cannot, be properly enjoyed. Here’s also another instance where U2 are pointing the irony at themselves, or rather their earlier serious image. They were in fact learning to “slide down the surface of things” as a line in “Even Better Than the Real Thing” suggests.

(6) *Evolution Is Over*

This sentence is ironic as it flies in the face of the popularly held notion that people (and other animate objects) are constantly, though naturally slowly, still evolving. People like to think of themselves (the mankind as a whole) and the current technological advances as the pinnacle of evolution, yet at the same time they seem to anticipate that the future will hold something better and greater. To effectively suggest that this is it seems ludicrous to many, excluding people who actually agree with the sentiment and those who do not believe in evolution at all. The idea that evolution has halted is in stark contrast with the idea of progress and man’s almost inherent need to always achieve better and bigger things. “Evolution is over” echoes another sentence, which also flashed across the TV screens in the Zoo TV shows: “Is This All We Get?”

U2 took the idea that evolution is over even further a few years later, during their PopMart tour in 1997 when they revisited the idea in a cartoon form during “Last Night On Earth”, a song off of their then new album *Pop* (1997).

(7) *It’s Your World You Can Change It* and *It's Your World You Can Charge It*

Many of the sentences flashed at the audiences were in fact positive and reinforcing, such as: “Do Not Accept What You Cannot Change”, “Change What You Cannot Accept”, “Remember What You Dream”, “I’d Like to Teach the World to Sing”, “Guilt is not of God” and “Tomorrow Belongs to Me”. In the case of “It’s Your World You Can Change It” and “It's Your World You Can Charge It”, the pair of sentences illustrate how a positive sentence can be turned almost upside down by changing just one word, or in fact just single letter in a word. The meaning become

pretty much the opposite of what the positive sentence is saying. The encouraging idea that you can change the world because it belongs to you is turned into the idea that the world would somehow be at your disposal at will. You can send a bill for whatever you do to the world and need not to worry about the consequences much if at all. Whereas the idea of changing the world is positive, the charging is ironic, as it is hardly an idea that would be sincerely put forward. Simultaneously it carries with it a negative attitude.

Similar words, phrases and slogans were used again during the *Vertigo* tour of 2005. Another strikingly different and almost haunting way in which U2 portrayed their discontent with the then current European events and politics was a nightly satellite linkup between whatever city U2 was performing in and the besieged Bosnian capital Sarajevo. It will be introduced next.

7 SATELLITE LINKS TO SARAJEVO

The satellite link-ups between the city hosting the show and the city of Sarajevo began in July in Bologna and continued for a few weeks. The European tour itself had begun in May. Because the satellite links underscored a grievous situation in the heart of Europe and U2's attitude towards those who did nothing was critical, it is justifiable to include them, though any obviously ironic content is not readily present. Unless the whole situation where a rock group is highlighting a problem that really should be handled by politicians is viewed as ironic. With the satellite link U2 gave voices and faces to some of residents of Sarajevo. This particular idea did not come from the band but from Bill Carter who is an American film maker and an author. At the time he was in Sarajevo working on humanitarian aid and shooting a documentary of the resilience of the Sarajevo residents. Every concert night Carter would risk snipers and bring someone or a few people to tell their stories via the satellite to U2's audience. (U2TBOP, 2003: 174)

The Zooropa extravaganza had a more evidently serious side to it too. For a few weeks U2 had a live satellite link beaming straight from Sarajevo to their concerts. It was a particularly sobering few minutes in the midst of a fantasy show. He caught a glimpse of a TV interview where a member of U2 had mentioned how much of the tour was about addressing the idea of a united Europe. That remark made Carter think of interviewing U2 about Sarajevo. He wanted to bring the interview tape to a TV station called Rat Art in order to remind the people of Sarajevo that not all public figures had forgot about them. Carter contacted U2 and their manager via a fax in which he explained how, among other things the Zoo TV concept seemed perfect for addressing Bosnia and a united Europe. Bill Carter got his interview and it was just the start to his co-operation with U2 in bringing the Sarajevo citizens' to the eyes and ears of the world. (Carter 2009: 200-221) He made a documentary, which eventually saw the light of day as *Miss Sarajevo*, which acted as an inspiration for a U2 song

published in 1995 by the same name. One of the videos for the song “Miss Sarajevo” included some footage from Carter’s documentary. (Carter 2009: 358.)

Bill Flanagan recounts how he heard on the radio about U2 leading a humanitarian effort to run the Serb blockade. Adam Clayton was speaking about the need to take the risk of getting these supplies past the Serbian guns . Adam later explained to Flanagan how U2 were involved in funding a caravan of supplies that’s going in, but they were not going themselves. (Flanagan, 1995: 200-2011.) Bono had different ideas. He was willing to go to Sarajevo if Bill Carter could arrange it (Carter 2009: 224). Then Bill Carter sent a lengthy fax stating it would be too risky for U2 to come to Bosnia. If people congregated to see the show, they would become easy targets for attacks. Bill Carter suggested something else they could do instead. He suggested a satellite linkup between the Zoo TV concerts and Sarajevo originally as a form of a jam session in a disco. It would be the reality versus the rock’n ‘roll survival. Bill Carter got help from Ned Hanlon who was executive producer for “vidiwall and digiwall” material (Zooropa’93 tour program) in U2’s organization, and managed to convince the European Broadcast Union (EBU) that he really had what was needed to make nightly broadcasts to stadiums full of people if the EBU will let him get on their satellite for ten or fifteen minutes (Carter, 2009: 232, 237-242; Flanagan, 1995:300, 303). Thus broadcasts featuring inhabitants from the war-riddled Sarajevo came to be.

The nightly satellite links played into all the old stereotypes of the self-righteous U2 using the rock stage to ”conduct social studies lectures”, as Flanagan (1995: 301) put it. According to him, U2 did not have any illusions about what was more important, a possible damage to their new-found image or the fact that the world was largely ignoring a massacre. Bono is quoted as saying “Watch what happens when we get to England. And wait for Dublin. Come and get another perspective. Come home for our beheading.” (ibid.: 301.) The fiercest critics of their Sarajevo satellite linkup came from the United Kingdom and after London they abandoned the linkups for the rest of the tour. Many members of media mentioned the Sarajevo link-ups in a negative light. Jane Kelly’s concert review in *Daily Mail* was one of them. She

described what she saw “one of the most grisly stunts in showbusiness” (Kelly 1993: 9).

Flanagan (1995) explains how the Sarajevo linkups more or less made Bill Carter and U2 heroes for the people of Sarajevo, with the conversations being broadcasted on local radio. It was tough on U2, their audiences and the press alike. The British press headed to Glasgow for the first UK show and got, according to Flanagan, lectured at by an angry Bosnian woman saying “We would like to hear the music too, but we only hear the screams of wounded and tortured people and raped women!” (Flanagan 1995: 307.) *The New Musical Express* (NME) published a long anti-U2 tirade, which Flanagan quoted as saying that he satellite link-up was in bad taste and insulting (ibid.: 308 - 309). Bill Carter also noted how negative the British press was and how their reactions hurt the people of Sarajevo too. He wrote that the idea of having a satellite link in the middle of a rock concert was to force people to see reality where they wouldn’t have expected it to be. (U2TBOP 2003: 177.)

According to Bill Carter, the Sarajevo satellite links had a dual purpose: U2 could use their technology to highlight to the European audiences the humanitarian crisis that threatened the fundamental human rights in Europe. The people of Sarajevo also got a chance to have their voices heard by the outside world. Carter also wrote about the tremendous importance that the satellite link had for the people of Sarajevo. He told of two occasions in which U2’s management had brought about a sort of family reunions via the satellite linkups. One of these occasions was during the Stockholm concert. (U2TBOP 2003: 176.) In the subsequent DVD release, *Miss Sarajevo* (1995), more precisely towards the end of the filmed satellite link segment between Bologna and Sarajevo, Bill Carter says that the most they could hope for was to get the young people to think and perhaps question the politicians. Next, that first satellite linkup will be looked at.

7.1 The link between Sarajevo and Bologna July 18, 1993

The satellite link from Sarajevo to Bologna was the first one featuring guests Bill Carter had brought with him. When Bono introduced the satellite link to Sarajevo, he talked about how hard it is to distinguish between adverts and news. How a viewer does not know what is real. Usually people can not ask televisions questions but Bono said since this is *Zoo TV*, they were going to ask the TV some questions. Then he introduced Bill Carter, who is in Sarajevo now. Bill Carter filled people in about what had been going on in Sarajevo. He talked about the general fear that was felt by the inhabitants of Sarajevo and how getting ordinary everyday supplies was becoming problematic. He also talked about up to fifteen thousand refugees who were being attacked by artillery and who had nowhere to go for shelter. He also mentioned a friend of his who had just died that morning. Then he introduced a friend whom he had asked what the hardest part of the war was for him. (Carter 2009: 256.)

The friend that Bill Carter introduced as Darko told the audience he had not been able to contact his wife and children and he had not been in contact with his parents either for a whole year, though they lived only a few kilometres away from him. Bill Carter introduced another friend, Vlado, who had been separated from his wife for seventeen months. The man's wife lived in Bologna and he said there was a chance she was at the concert, so he left her a very simple message: "Mia cara Mirita. Amore mio. Io ti amo. My darling Mirita. I love you and I miss you. I still alive and I feel good." (*Miss Sarajevo* 1995 and Carter 2009: 252-253, 256.)

The Sarajevo link-ups were the moments where a very harsh reality broke the fantasy of a rock and roll concert and showed U2's critical stance towards European political will, or lack thereof, to solve problems on their own doorstep.

7.2 The link between Sarajevo and London August 11, 1993

The concerts at London's Wembley stadium became the last shows where the satellite links with Sarajevo were used. Ned Hanlon had told Bill Carter how he should "pull all the stops" there as they were the biggest shows and London tended to be the hardest for U2 because they are Irish (Carter, 2009 p. 306). Bill Carter introduced three women who represented all three of the warring factions and they told their stories of being friends in Sarajevo. One of the women demanded to know: *"*What do you really do for us? Excuse me, I think nothing". (Carter, 2009: 308-309.)

By the time the next show in Cardiff rolled along, Bill Carter was informed U2 had decided to end the satellite link-ups due to the ferocious backlash in the media. The politicians and ordinary citizen were very angry too. U2 had done thirteen satellite link-ups altogether. (Carter, 2009: 309-310.)

Bill Carter explained later in U2's fan magazine *Propaganda* that the satellite link-ups had two purposes. One was to use U2's voice to talk to Europeans about the problem that was posing a threat to basic human rights and the other was to let the Bosnians' speak to the outside world. He went on to address the reporters who had attacked U2 for exploiting the war in the concerts. Carter concluded that those reporters never investigated how the project started and their criticism hurt the people of Sarajevo too. (U2TBOP 2003: 176 -177.)

The co-operation between U2 and Bill Carter continued beyond the Sarajevo satellite link-ups. Bono financed and named Carter's documentary "Miss Sarajevo", and U2 wrote a song by the same name. (Carter, 2009: 328-329, 358.) The approximately 30-minute long video depicts scenes from the wartorn Sarajevo and gives people the opportunity to tell their stories.

Larry Mullen Jr. discussed the contradictory nature of having a very serious real-life situation in the middle of a rock concert (DeCurtis 1994: 208):

> That's what makes Zoo TV so odd. On one hand, you can have Sarajevo, which is real, and then you have to continue on with the show. I mean, even for us, after the Sarajevo linkups we did, carrying on the show was incredibly difficult. People took it in different ways. People took it as "How can you have irony and then be serious?" But that is the point. [Bono interjects: That's TV!] That *is* TV. You can switch the fuckin' channel any time you want. So I think a lot of people missed the point. I understand and accept the criticism, but it's not meant to be easy. It's not like going to a theater show, where you've got a beginning, middle and end. It's a different journey. This is coming to a rock & roll show and watching TV and changing channels.

In addition to being a wakeup call to the audiences, or in its own way underscoring the fleeting nature of television reporting, which can switch from one mood to another as channels are changed. This is how Larry sees it. The Zoo confessionals that were recorded by members of the audience could be seen as the flip side of the Sarajevo linkups. The linkups from Sarajevo were understandably sober and standing there listening and watching them was quite emotional. The Zoo confessional clips, on the other hand, were mainly comical and whimsical as people could say just about anything. The staff members choosing the clips to be shown must have had fun at every show. It is safe to say that the two different “TV moments” were not originally meant to mirror each other, as the idea of the Sarajevo satellite links were introduced later in the tour. In the end, they contrasted each other. This worked to highlight one of the ideas of the Zoo TV concept, the confusing nature of the current media age.

Next, the concept of Zooropa as an imaginary state, and the lyrics to the songs “Zooropa” and “Please” will be discussed. Some features of the shows, which underscore the critical attitude towards Europe but do not merit a discussion of their own, will also be addressed. The critical attitude that U2 held towards certain aspects of European politics came through in the backdrop to the songs and in the lyrics.

8 ZOOROPA: THE KINGDOM OF CONFUSION

As has been mentioned many times earlier in this thesis, *Zooropa* is the name of the 1993 album, the tour and a song on the album. An obvious connection is that it refers to Europe. Zooropa is Europa. It is a clever word play but it, too, includes some more critical views of Europe. As Anthony DeCurtis writes in his album review of the album for the Rolling Stone magazine (*DeCurtis 1994: 202)*:

> Bosnia and Herzegovina. The resurgence of Nazism in Germany. Mafia terrorism in Italy. Escalating unemployment throughout the former Western Bloc. Zooropa indeed.

"Zooropa" includes the word "zoo", and thus it can be suggested that the various and diverse national states that make up the European Union are being likened to a zoo. It would be a zoo in the sense of being in confusion and disarray.

8.1. Zooropa the kingdom

Robert Vagacs (2005) analyses the lyrics of "Zooropa" and for him the European angle is not central. Instead, he sees the state of Zooropa as a Babylonian one (Vagacs, 2005: 46). He suggests that the consecutive albums *Achtung Baby*, *Zooropa* and *Pop* form a trilogy that describes the "consumerist wasteland of Western culture", where grievances are hid underneath irony and humour (ibid.: 47). Vagacs continues that the state of Zooropa is a graveyard, a soulless infrastructure where imagination is lost. It offers no fulfillment, certainty or hope, neither is there a compass, a map or religion. (ibid.: 53, 50) The lyrics Vagacs referred to are: "And I have no compass, And I have no map [...] And I have no religion".

The beginning of "Zooropa" on the album is reminiscent of the introductory segment of the Zooropa shows. The album came out in July 1993, in the middle of the

Zooropa tour. Over a slow beginning a din of voices can faintly be heard and as the first verse starts there are two questions in French and English: “What do you want?” ("Qu'est-ce que tu veux?") and "De quoi as-tu peur?" (“What are you afraid of?") repeated a few times. (Vacags 2005: 51) U2 painted their own version of the kingdom of Zooropa, of which their audience were a part of for the following two hours. The opening segment reveals, even though in a blurred and confusing manner, a certain critical attitude of the band towards Europe and the European Union. The confusing flood of images may underline the fact that Europe was, and still is to a certain extent, in a rather confused stage. As The Edge put it while discussing the political crisis in Europe, Europeans don’t seem to know who they are or who they want to be. He said:

> “They don’t know whether they want to be Europeans, part of the European community, or whether they should be fighting to protect their national and ethnic identities” (DeCurtis 1994: 207).

Hence also the multilingual questions: “What do you want?” This same duality or indecision is present in the European politics still.

Two more features of the Zooropa show that pertain to Europe and/or the kingdom of Zooropa can be discussed here. The first is the interval between the main set and the encore, which features on the *Zoo TV Live from Sydney* DVD too. The second was one of the opening acts that only featured in Europe.

Macnas, an arts group from Galway, Ireland was one of the support acts in the beginning of the Zooropa shows. They used giant caricature heads (including the heads of Bono, The Edge, Adam and Larry) in their twofold performance. The main performance was directed against the rise of fascism in Europe. (Woodworth 1993: 16.) There is an account of the Macnas’ involvement in U2’s Zooropa tour in the archive section of their official website (macnas.com). The subject matter of the performance is relevant to this thesis, and I saw some of the performances too. However, I have a rather vague memories of the performances and it would be impossible to include them without anything else to back them up. The relevance

comes from the fact that the performance was against Neo-Nazism and was painting a picture of what Europe might be like if Neo-Nazis got their way. The Macnas website archive entry was of great help in reliving the performance. I saw Macnas performing for the first time in Munich, Germany on June 4th. They did not receive a warm welcome. Interestingly, the website blog entry discusses the Munich show:

> By the time they [the volunteers] got down to the bottom [of stairs]– and it took a long time, longer than normal – the audience had twigged what this was about – fascism, Nazism – and then the bottles came…("Macnas and Zoporopa")

It is possible that at least part of the unfriendly reception was due to people finding the subject matter offensive. However, looking back, the performance in question seemed very long-winded, so perhaps those throwing bottles were just bored. Macnas changed the performance somewhat as the tour progressed and by the time I saw them last in Dublin, the performance flowed much better.

Macnas' performance was about trying to get rid of the wrong kind of people, the ones who did not fit the ideal, a plan that ultimately failed. The Macnas' performance included two massive vacuum cleaners ("Zuurs"), with a vacuum bag that unzipped to release helium balloons. People were guided into the Hoover and released from inside where they could exit off stage. Over one hundred large heads were modelled from clay and constructed from paper and resin. Other props included the doctors' and nurses' uniforms, oversized medical instruments and plinths. As soon as the victims entered the "Zuur", their heads were removed and placed on the stake at the top of the banner. The 50 volunteers holding the banners took their place between the barriers surrounding the stage. In the end the bad guys were defeated. (Macnas website) The reference to Nazism was deliberately obvious. The vacuum cleaners that swallowed up people are quite easily interpreted as the gas chambers used in Nazi extermination camps.

The second part of Macnas' performance was more lighthearted and this is where the big heads of the U2 band members were used as, perhaps, a comical release after all the seriousness. The Macnas website offers a further description of the U2 heads' part too. The roadies wheeled out a canvas laundry bag. Inside the bag was the big-

headed “Bono”. Then the rest of the “band” came onstage in the big heads.After strutting around the stage for a few moments to the strains of U2 over the PA system, the “roadies” returned, put the performers back in their boxes and wheeled them offstage. The introduction of the big-headed versions of themselves, U2 can be seen poking fun of their image once again. “Bono” is wearing black clothes and the fly sunglasses and thus they are nodding to their then current image. An ironic interpretation is possible. As Bono was still seen as a poseur by some, so he was being just that even more than in his usual rock star (The Fly) role. This time he had a big head to match his ego, as did the rest of the band members.

“Bullet the Blue Sky” has been a stable in U2’s concert repertoire for over two decades. It is on their 1987 album *The Joshua Tree*. The song was written after Bono returned home from his trip to El Salvador and Nicaragua. While Bono and his wife were on that trip with an aid group, they were shot at by a group of soldiers who, according to Bono, wanted to frighten the aid workers. (Bono et. al 2006: 177). The song is a reaction to their experiences and the feelings Bono had about the situation in the whole of Central America and the United States’ part in it. “Bullet the Blue Sky”, Niall Stokes (2009: 66) wrote, “howls with anger and with fear.”.

There is a passage in Bullet the Blue Sky that goes: “We see them burnin' crosses. See the flames, higher and higher”, which has in live situations been accompanied by images of burning crosses. This reminded people of the Ku Klux Klan. So the song became in an erie kind of way a statement against intolerance and racial prejudice. In the *Zooropa* shows another quite clearly anti-Nazism gesture was created when the huge images of burning crosses rose up on the screens and twisted into swastikas both in Europe and in Australia. That was also a statement against intolerance and the rise of Neo-Nazism in Europe. The swastikas were accompanied by a cry, such as “Must we let it happen again?!” or “Lass das nicht wieder passieren!”(“Don’t let it happen again!”), which obviously were warning the audiences about the rise of Neo-Nazism. The guitar solo in the song was at best really booming and powerful, bringing to mind the approaching roar of fighter planes.

The European theme is picked up during the interval too: a cartoon TV appeared on the screens showing a globe with the the familiar Soviet emblems hammer and sickle on it and the word “Zooropa” circling it. This can be seen as a slight towards Europe as the New Soviet Union, or a similar kind of super state. A sketched baby’s head (which is one of the symbols of the Zoo TV concept) in an astronaut’s helmet appeared and sang an old melancholy Russian folk song. His face became sad and distorted before he faded away. According to Flanagan (1995: 265), the baby astronaut represented the Soviet cosmonaut who was left up in space as the Soviet Union collapsed and it took weeks before he came back to Earth. Another nod perhaps towards the idea that the ”EEC” was becoming a kind of Soviet Union. There were such criticisms of the European Union turning into a super state presented in the media around that time too. U2 had adopted the old Soviet symbols the Hammer and Sickle as symbols for their imaginary kingdom of Zooropa. In a way it can be said that the EU had occupied the place formerly taken up by the Soviet Union and the then crumbling Eastern Europe. It is not possible to say whether U2 intended to suggest something similar. A fanfare sounded throughout the stadium again. It was an excerpt of “Fanfare” from an album Lenin’s Favourite Songs which was published by the Soviet music label Melodiya in 1961 (Zooropa album, liner notes) signifying the band’s return to the stage for the encore.

8.2 Zooropa the song

The lyrics of “Zooropa” feature various slogans, which are borrowed from large corporations’ advertisement campaigns. Vagacs lists the slogans and pairs them with the relevant corporations. He turned to a U2 fan community @U2.com for help as all the slogans were listed there. The “eat to get slimmer” line is seen coupled with the SlimFast diet plan in discussions about “Zooropa” and the slogans on fan sites. The slogan could just as easily be referring to any other diet plan, which includes the

consumption of shakes. Most of these explanations and couplings can be found in an unusually thorough Wikipedia entry on "Zooropa", the song.[1]

Zooropa... Vorsprung durch Technik (Audi)

Zooropa... be all that you can be (US Army)

Be a winner (lottery)

Eat to get slimmer (SlimFast)

Zooropa... a bluer kind of white (Persil/Daz)

Zooropa... it could be yours tonight

We're mild and green And squeaky clean (Fairy liquid dish washer)

Zooropa... better by design (Toshiba)

Zooropa... fly the friendly skies (United Airlines)

Through appliance of science (Zanussi)

We've got that ring of confidence...(Colgate)

An ironical touch can be detected in the slogans when they are grouped together to form the song lyrics. The slogans, which are usually seen separately, become humorous and may seem just a bit ridiculous too. The "eat to get slimmer" idea seems most absurd as people are used to thinking that they should eat little (in other words not eat) to get slimmer. Of course, there are diet plans, which concentrate on eating sensibly and through that one can eat to get slimmer. But this is not the approach the diet plans selling shakes and soups are advocating. Using the corporate slogans as a part of a song lyric can be seen as paving the way for the next album and tour, *Pop* and PopMart. The lyrics of "Zooropa" point towards PopMart, which tackled consumerism and commercialism more. The suggestion that "...it could be yours tonight" brings to mind the Bible passage where the Devil is tempting Jesus in the desert, Matthew 4: 8-9:

> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."[2]

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1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zooropa_(song)

2 Quoted Bible (NIV) passage from: http://www.biblegateway.com/

Another interpretation could be that the line “...it could be yours tonight” promises the hearer the “ownership” of the glittery Zooropa and all the fine technical advances it has to offer. But only for one night. There are some other ideas that arise from the slogans, which are organized into lyrics. It is an ideal (and faulty) image of Europeans: we have got confidence, we are winners, “better by design”, compared to the rest of the world. Perhaps it could be a reference to technological advances. That is also what “ Vorsprung durch Technik” (“Advancement through Technology”) implies. The line from Fairy liquid “ We're mild and green And squeaky clean” could, in a European setting mean green, natural values that Europe upholds, at least theoretically.

8.3 Please Get Up Off Your Knees

Another song worthy of a closer look is “Please”, which during the *PopMart* tour (1997) took center stage as a song which included European commentary. “Bullet the Blue Sky”, in turn, resumed an American angle once more with Bono donning clothes in the style of the Cuban leader Fidel Castro and waving around an umbrella with the American flag motif on it. “Please” is a song written about the situation in Northern Ireland and the then budding attempts at reaching peace. The principle video for the song depicts people, including priests and a bishop walking around on their knees while an old man is begging with a sign saying "Please" and Bono implores them to "get up off your knees". And the chorus does the same: “Please, please, please... Get up off your knees. Please, please, please...” (*U2 The Best of 1990-2000,* 2002.)

In the *PopMart Live from Mexico City* DVD, shot in December 1997, “Please” ties in with “Bullet the Blue Sky” and Bono ends “Bullet the Blue Sky” with "and the Irish run... into the arms of America." Then he asks the audience to say a prayer for their country (Ireland) before launching into “Please”. The song seems to address the men who were key players in the Northern Irish political field on both sides at the time:

Gerry Adams, Ian Paisley, David Trimble and John Hume. Their faces, coloured in a pop art fashion, adorn the single sleeve of "Please." Gerry Adams is the President of the Irish Republican Party, Sinn Fein and currently also Teachta Dála (TD), a member of the Irish Parliament. Ian Paisley was the leader of Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) between 1971-2008. David Trimble was the leader of Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) 1995-2007. John Hume was the leader of Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) between 1979 -and 2001.[3] Next a closer look at the lyrics.

> So you never knew love
> Until you crossed the line of grace.
> And you never felt wanted
> Till you'd someone slap your face.
> So you never felt alive
> Until you'd almost wasted away.
> You had to win, you couldn't just pass
> The smartest ass at the top of the class
> Your flying colours, your family tree
> And all your lessons in history.
>
> And you never knew how low you'd stoop
> To make that call
> And you never knew what was on the ground
> Till they made you crawl.
> So you never knew that the heaven
> You keep you stole.

The first two of these three verses appear to suggest that the people involved in the armed struggle in Northern Ireland, including their leaders on all fronts, only seem to know the language of violence. That somehow it is a positive thing if there is conflict. The leaders on both the Catholic and the Protestant side are well educated but all are very stubborn and will want to emerge as winners in the conflict. The third verse continues the same idea. The last observation could be seen as a question too. "So you never knew that the heaven you keep you stole". This interpretation carries the idea that, since both sides see themselves as being right and having a claim to heaven, they fail to see that they are effectually "stealing heaven" from others. What they have, or think they have, does not belong to them exclusively. Instead of continuing to parade as the keepers of that which is right, the people on both sides should learn top co-exist.

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[3] Information about the party leaders was retrieved from various online sources, see bibliography.

> Your Catholic blues, your convent shoes,
> Your stick-on tattoos now they're making the news
> Your holy war, your northern star
> Your sermon on the mount from the boot of your car.

The above verse could be addressing Gerry Adams the leader of Sinn Fein in particular but Bono told Neil McCormick that Please is written for a certain type of person, who is sympathetic towards the IRA paramilitaries, for a person who values ideas more than people (Bono et al. 2006: 269).

> So love is hard
> And love is tough
> But love is not
> What you're thinking of.

This verse is obviously saying that love and co-existence do not belong in the thoughts of a person who is very stubbornly holding on to their own ideas as being the only right ones. But it encourages the feuding parties to try to see the other point of view, though "love is hard".

> September, streets capsizing
> Spilling over down the drains
> Shard of glass, splinters like rain
> But you could only feel your own pain

This could be about a random bombing somewhere in Northern Ireland, which causes streets to "capsize" and leaves splintered glass behind. But the leaders were just too busy with their own agendas to pay attention. This song is a cousin of an earlier hit of U2's "Sunday Bloody Sunday" (which is on the album *War,* 1983). However, Bono remarks (Bono et al. 2006: 269) that these lines are about a bombing in London, which happened in the Docklands on February 10, 1996. The bomb blast ended a ceasefire by the IRA.[4]

> October, talk getting nowhere.
> November, December; remember
> We just started again.

This appears to be referring to the fact that time ticks away and the peace negotiations in Northern Ireland are not progressing. In the same breath the leaders

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4 http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/10/newsid_2539000/2539265.stm

are reminded that the negotiations have only just begun, so it is in no one's best interest to give up any time soon.

> So love is big
> Is bigger than us.
> But love is not
> What you're thinking of.
> It's what lovers deal
> It's what lovers steal
> You know I've found it
> Hard to receive
> 'Cause you, my love
> I could never believe.

At the end "Please" turns introspective: you know, I have always found it hard to receive love because I could never believe you, your message. On the other hand, it might be the very person for whom this song was written speaking. Perhaps the last verse is suggesting it is time to start receiving love. Towards the end "Please" reads more like a love song depicting difficult relationship. Such dual meanings, or even multiple meanings are common for Bono as a lyricist.

9 POPMART: THE EVOLUTION ENDS HERE?

PopMart was another massive U2 tour that trotted the globe in 1997 - 1998. In terms of size, it was even bigger than Zoo TV. There were not that many European references in the PopMart tour. It had a more American flavour and it also purported to make fun of commercialism. Hence the name PopMart and U2 even gave their press conference announcing the tour in one of the stores in the big supermarket chain K-Mart. According to The Edge, the band was aiming for further irony but Bono stated people did not get the joke. He mentions that some people talked years later that K-Mart was sponsoring the tour. (Bono et.al 2006: 270.) While PopMart carried predominantly American themes, it brought to a conclusion some of the themes introduced during the Zoo TV tour. That is why including it in this thesis is justifiable.

The PopMart stage was even more massive than the previous Zoo TV/Zooropa stage had been. U2 utilized the then latest stage-of-the-art technology in their huge screen or ”vidiwall” as it was, again, known. In addition to the huge vidiwall, a yellow arch commanded the stage. It was reminiscent of both a half of a MacDonald’s arch or the arch in the city of Saint Louis, Missouri, designed by Eliel Saarinen. The “vidiwall” was used in the similar manner as the screen and the TV sets during ZooTV and *Zooropa* tours: various images and colours were thrown at the audience through them. Fastened onto the yellow arch was the PA system, which looked more like a beehive than a usual sound system. On the right side of the vidiwall, seen from the audience, there was a random silly object: a giant olive on a stick, which acted as lighting too. Maybe it’s function was just to lighten things up and of course there was something commercial too about the olive: an olive on a stick is a snack and it also goes with a Martini. As does lemon, which was also a part of the stage paraphernalia. A giant silver lemon that acted as an electric disco ball and it transported U2 back onto the stage for the encore. The band emerged from the silver lemon, which opened up like an Easter egg. This stage also included a B-stage, which extended into the audience, just like the Zooropa stage. The huge MacDonald’s type arch, the

giant cocktail stick were supposed to be “poking fun at the earnestness of rock ‘n’ roll and ironically mocking the superficiality of pop culture”, U2’s manager Paul McGuinness said (Bono et al. 2006: 270).

A couple of notable stops on U2’s PopMart tour were Belfast and Sarajevo. During the *Zooropa* tour, U2 has focused heavily on the city of Sarajevo in Bosnia but their initial plans to play there were thwarted at the time. Now, a few of years later U2 were able make good on that promise and brought the PopMart tour to Sarajevo. The concert was broadcasted on the radio around the globe. The multi-national stabilisation force (SFOR) was brought out to handle the security. An article, originally published in New Musical Express and republished on Brian Eno’s website, recounts the ending:

> At the end of the gig, while U2 are in their dressing room, another perhaps even more meaningful exchange takes place as around ten thousand troops in the stadium stand and applaud the people of Sarajevo and the crowd reciprocate. Regardless of what you think of U2, the fact that they came and played here means more than any gig, however big or small, I've ever attended. For the people of Sarajevo, it's put their city back on the map. (Smith, 1997)

The concert in Sarajevo was a milestone as it put Sarajevo back on the map, as Smith (1997) put it. It was a sign of normalcy returning. For U2 it was significant also as Bono had made a promise that they would play in Sarajevo and they were able to do it.

The idea that evolution had come to a halt was suggested during the *Zooropa* tour. “Evolution Is Over” was the claim, which was projected onto the TV screens. Now the same idea was picked up again, now on the even bigger *PopMart* screen. During the song “Even Better Than the Real Thing”, the huge screen showed an animation where man's progress from an ape to contemporary human was depicted. The last man in the chain of human progression was a man walking upright, pushing a glowing shopping cart. The glorious evolution of man had reached its conclusion in a consumer. U2's stance appeared to be that as man is reduced to a shopper and consumer rather than a creator of new things, evolution is effectively over.

As the song “Last Night on Earth” begins, Bono asks rhetorical questions and then goes into a short speech by the way of an intro to the song.

> "How did we get here? How did you get here? I went looking. So much to see. I went looking… I went looking for spirit, I found alcohol. I went looking for soul and I bought some style. I wanted to meet God, they sold me religion." (U2 PopMart Live from Mexico City, 2007, DVD)

Here the sentences allude to failed personal, and to an extent societal, expectations. Also, they draw the listeners’ attention to the state of affairs, which is not quite what the speaker, Bono, would hope for. Of course, these words are not literally true. If a person goes to look for spirit, in the spiritual sense and not spirits, he should not find alcohol. Rather here are cases of failed expectations in the sense that the seeker finds hollowness and appearance where he would expect to find substance. Even spiritual and mental matters are reduced to something commercial and potentially addictive, like alcohol or certain forms of religion. Instead of finding the real thing, as it were, one finds a man-made substitute. The last sentence carries with the idea that man can meet God without interference from organized religion.

“Last Night on Earth” was accompanied by cartoon short film where a character says he's just going to pop down to the shops. He goes looking for bargains and never comes back home: because a shoppers' fight over a yellow rag results in one shooting the other. (“PopMart Tour Visuals Montage”, 2007). This was another rather startling inclusion that made it pretty clear what U2 thought about the ever escalating seemingly random violence in the United States. But not only the United States as U2 did not replace the footage with anything different for the European shows. The cartoon sequence can be seen as a commentary on how ultimately pretty meaningless things may have tragic consequences when people start valuing trivial things, such as a great bargain, over human life.

On the PopMart tour Mr. MacPhisto makes his final appearance during “Hold Me Thrill Me Kiss Me Kill Me”. A silhouette of Mr. MacPhisto’s face (black horns and slit eyes on a yellow background) are projected onto the huge screen several times, like Batman's spotlight in the Batman cartoons and movies. Some film footage of

Bono as Mr. MacPhisto smirked on the big screen too. Finally, Andy Warhol's pop art type pictures were projected on the screen and Mr. MacPhisto is there among the other big stars: Marilyn Monroe, Kurt Cobain, Elvis Presley, Bob Marley, John Lennon, Janis Joplin etc. Mr. MacPhisto joined the other big stars who have gone before.

10 CONCLUSION

This thesis has been about the Irish rock group U2's 1993 Zooropa tour and some themes that emerged from it. The discussion of the themes extended to the band's 1997 tour PopMart also. This thesis looked at what sort of political issues and themes, especially European issues, the band raised in the shows and how they expressed those issues. The goal was to find ways in which U2 showed their ambivalent and often critical view of Europe and also the European Union. The research aspired to illuminate how the critique of Europe was visible in U2's shows, especially during the Zooropa tour. One of the ways U2 employed during their Zooropa tour was irony, verbal irony, especially. Another goal of this thesis was to point out other means, besides verbal irony, with which U2's views of Europe and European politics came to light during the tour.

Going into this thesis, my goal was to find a slightly different angle to U2 and look through entire shows for certain themes. I settled on the European themes as it was well visible in many of the Zooropa shows (some of which were more critical of Europe than others). The fact that I was present at a number of shows made the choice even easier. I felt that the Christian side of U2 had been explored so thoroughly by others that, though it was also an option, it is doubtful I could have contributed anything new. Of course, U2's political side has been well researched too but I thought there was still more room for research.

The allusional pretense theory of verbal irony introduced by Sachi Kumon-Nakamura (1993), was used as the primary theoretical framework. The theory is a hybrid of the traditional pragmatic theory and the echo/reminder theory. Another theoretical view was introduced by Linda Hutcheon in her book *Irony's Edge: the theory and politics of irony* (1994) Hutcheon sees irony as a result of interaction between the ironist and his or her hearers where the interpreter (hearer) plays a crucial role. She also wrote about the need of there being two audiences: the one that gets the irony and another who is excluded.

The use of verbal irony was best evident in the stage personas adopted by U2's lead singer Bono, especially the devilish Mr. MacPhisto. Before him there was an American equivalent, The Mirrorball Man. The Mirrorball Man was a caricature of a TV evangelist for whom appearance and the medium seemed more important than the message. The silly proclamations he made underscored the frivolity of today's consumer culture and superficial way of life. Mr. MacPhisto had a number of literary influences, from Mephistopheles to Screwtape. Mr. MacPhisto made calls to various prominent European figures. His dialogues and phone calls were where verbal irony was used the most. The character was so convincing that many fans, especially Christians, were confused too.

In this thesis I analyzed a number of Mr. MacPhisto's monologues and phone calls in some detail. In Norway Mr. MacPhisto discussed whaling with the then Minister of Fishery and the use of verbal irony was well visible in the insincerity of his words. It was very easy to notice how the audience was confused.

The biggest media attention fell on the show where Salman Rushdie made a surprise appearance. There was irony not only in the dialogue between Salman Rushdie and Mr. MacPhisto but also in the whole situation. Salman Rushdie was not free to walk the streets normally and yet he managed to come on stage in front of tens of thousands of people. The visit, which was meant to make a stand for artistic freedom, acquired more significance as an Islamic leader warned U2 not to meddle in Islamic affairs. This reaction of the Islamic community caused Rushdie's appearance to have the most impact outside the framework of the concerts.

The other monologues and phone calls examined had a wider target than just European politics. They engaged the UN and its inefficiency to solve crises and nations outside Europe. However, one of the most pointed ironical utterances were directed at the citizens of Sarajevo. and through them Europe that couldn't help sufficiently. Also, nuclear power was blasted during the special Stop Sellafield show.

The phone call in Denmark, or rather its consequence, became an example of unintended irony.

Ironical words and messages were strung together during “The Fly”. Some of the messages were looked at for their ironical content. Many of them appeared random but some carried a considerably clear message, especially since U2 fans love to analyze things and the band are aware of this. An example of an ironical expression is Believe , which turned into a red "lie" when the rest of the word faded away. Ironical messages were stringed together during "The Fly". Sometimes the string of words caused unintentional confusion. “The Bomb Japan Now” incident is an example of how viewers making irony happen.

A striking way in which U2 portrayed their discontent with the then current European events and politics was a nightly satellite linkup from their shows to Sarajevo. The satellite link-ups continued for a few weeks. The satellite links underscored a grievous situation in the heart of Europe and U2’s attitude towards those who did nothing. The Sarajevo link-ups were moments of harsh reality in the middle of the concert and showed U2’s displeasure at the lack of European political will to solve problems.

Confusion of Europe was evident at the beginning of the shows too. The intro showed, even though in a blurred and confusing manner, a certain critical attitude of the band towards Europe and the European Union. The confusing flood of images may underline the fact that Europe was, and still is to a certain extent, in a rather confused stage. Europeans don’t seem to know who they are or who they want to be. The lyrics of "Zooropa" show confusion and a certain emptiness beneath technical advances and glitter. Other songs whose lyrics were looked at were "Bullet the Blue Sky", which acquired its European flavor from the burning crosses, which turned into swastikas on the “widiwall”, and “Please”. It addressed the the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Anti-Nazism, which was evident not only in U2's own set but in the performance of one of their support acts, the arts group Macnas, was a major theme. So was nuclear power, especially in the Stop Sellafield show but also in the words and phrases shown during "The Fly". The confusion and uncertainty of Europe and being European was another theme. This was seen in the lyrics of "Zooropa" as well as in the show. The most compelling theme that emerged was the conflict in Sarajevo, which was highlighted in a number of shows via the live satellite linkup.

Some themes introduced during U2's subsequent tour PopMart were also looked at briefly. The PopMart tour was mainly about mocking commercialism. How the seeker finds hollowness and appearance where he would expect to find substance. A violent cartoon sequence during one of the songs reminded the audience how meaningless things may have tragic and irreversible consequences. The idea that evolution had come to a halt was suggested during the Zooropa tour with the sentence: "Evolution Is Over" on the TV screens. During the PopMart shows an animation where man's progress from an ape to contemporary human, a shopper and a consumer with a shopping cart, was depicted. Mr MacPhisto made a final symbolic appearance too.

The focus on Europe has lessened during the subsequent U2 tours. They have a more global themes, such as co-existence. This is likely to be due to Bono's involvement in Africa and the current world affairs since the Zoo TV tour ended. The slogans returned to accompany "The Fly" a few years later during the Vertigo tour (2005). There are other potentially interesting themes in U2's tours and other work, such as lyrics. The political and Christian themes, though well explored, still yield more research material. U2 have done three more tours since PopMart and they may offer research material. It might be interesting to look at the differences and similarities between U2's recent shows, what recurring themes there are etc. U2 are also known for employing the latest technology in their shows. What does the heavy reliance on technology bring to the concerts or does it take something away? How about longevity in music business? Today's pop culture is churning out new stars all the time and they tend not to last very long. Many U2's contemporaries have called it a

day by now but a few survive. What are the secrets of those bands, like U2, who last for decades?

U2 have certainly proved to be force to be reckoned with in the music business. Not least because they have been around for over three decades and they are still going strong. With Zooropa, and the entire Zoo TV concept, including the 1991 album *Achtung Baby*, U2 reinvented themselves and stage shows that had not been seen earlier. Now, with their current 360° tour they continue down the same path.

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