University of Glasgow

Wang, Yuan (2017) *Observations on the Chinese metal scene (1990-2013): history, identity, industry, and social interpretation.* PhD thesis.

Observations on the Chinese Metal Scene (1990-2013) - History, Identity, Industry, and Social Interpretation

Yuan Wang

Submitted to the University of Glasgow in fulfillment of the requirements for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Glasgow

2016

Abstract

This thesis examines Chinese metal of the mainland China as a contemporary cultural phenomenon, which consists of seven chapters. It begins with three premise chapters providing the necessary definitions and terminology about Chinese metal, reviewing the relevant literature, and explaining the multiple methodologies applied, respectively. Based on that, the following chapters explore Chinese metal from four perspectives, including the history, identity, industry, and social meaning. More specifically, Chapter 4 defines the history of Chinese metal as two waves, the heavy rock era (1990-1996) and extreme metal era (2000-2013). This overall trajectory had been moving forward with the country's economic growth, technological progress, and cultural liberalism, showing a unique U-shape curve: starting in the mainstream field in the early 1990s, declining in the late 1990s, booming underground in the early 2000s, and rising again in the 2010s. Chapter 5 illustrates that the development of Chinese metal underwent a tension between globalisation and localisation, which were reflected in the texts of the music, MV, cover art, and folk metal subgenre. Particularly, this tension resulted in an identity struggle of the current Chinese metal musicians, which was realised by a mechanism of original identity suspension, textual deconstruction, and identity reconstruction. Chapter 6 proposes that the Chinese metal industries made great progress driven by the country's rapid economic growth and cultural diversity, and a relatively maturely industrial system with different capitals and fields had been established by the 2000s, including the sections of labels, recordings, lives, media, merchandise, and a few peripheral activities. Chapter 7 argues that because of its essence of symbolic transgression, Chinese metal provided the musicians and audiences with a quasi-ritual catharsis to temporarily escape from the pressures of the reality. Meanwhile, Chinese metal presented a unique attribute of "pseudo-evil" as an intentional reaction against the general hypocrisy which is the most severe social pathology in the contemporary Chinese society.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 7 Multiple Social Interpretations of Chinese Metal

List of Figures

Chapter 1 Defining Metal

Chapter 3 Methodology

Chapter 5 Identities of Chinese Metal

Chapter 6 Industries of Chinese Metal

Chapter 7 Multiple Social Interpretations of Chinese Metal

Acknowledgements

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my supervisors, Prof Martin Cloonan and Prof Nicholas Pearce, for their guidance, advice, and encouragement over the course of the research, for their work of tackling a number of draft versions, and for always being willing to talk through the difficulties. My thanks also go to the other scholars and staffs of the music department at the University of Glasgow, who have made my time there a great studying and researching experience.

I should also like to thank my father, mother, and grandma for their financial support and spiritual comfort, without whom it would be unimaginable for me to complete the task. Especially, I dedicate this thesis and all my achievements to my mother who passed away on Feb-09-2017 after a fight against cancer for three years. May the peace and happiness be with her in heaven forever.

My thanks also to a lot of participants in the Chinese metal scene who helped make my research more practical, and in no particular order, as: Xiu Xiaowei, Zhang Cheng, Xiao Dai, Du Wei, Wang Xiao, Zhang Yun, Liu Lixin, Wang Zhou, Zhang Heng, Du Yu, Li Xinwen, Xiao Han, Zhang Yichi, Pen Pei, Qu Jianhua, Zhang Yu, and my previous bands *Grave Keeper* and *Vanished River*, as well as many friends who dispelled my loneliness as a foreigner, as: Wang Jing, Wan Shunhua, Hu Peng, Chen Gang, Jin Jing, Zhang Luyi, Wu Fan, Xiao Ran, Song Kun, and Liu Wenbo.

Finally……I should like to thank the rainy and cold weather of Glasgow which was perfect for a PhD and has kept me indoors most of the time so that I had enough time to read, think, and write. I should not miss the Kelvingrove Park which was a wonderful place for everyday walking and thinking. Also, Sophia Liu, thank you for giving me a colourful ending of my PhD journey!

Introduction

For over four decades, metal, as one of most distinct, influential, enduring, and controversial genres of popular music, has experienced great evolutions wandering between the mainstream and underground, from *Black Sabbath*, NWOBHM, thrash metal, extreme metal, NWOAHM, metal-core, to the more recently so-called modern metal, as well as numerous other subgenres. Particularly, with metal's massive spread since the 1990s, it is now becoming an inclusively global praxis and academic discourse. On the other side, with the recent three decades' development of China, the country is showing increasing global influences both economically and culturally. For example, it became the second-largest economy in the world since 2010 (The New York Times, 15th August 2010) and the Confucius Institutes (initiated in 2004) were established in 94 countries across the world by 2014 (Groenewegen-Lau 2014: 10). Thus, China becomes one of the most prominent attractive topics in contemporary academia.

Aims

The increasing importance of both "metal" and "China" is giving rise to a few new questions. For example, as a contemporary and transplanted cultural phenomenon, how was metal formed as a genre in China? What are the identity characteristics of Chinese metal? How to understand Chinese metal praxis as a cultural product in Chinese cultural industries? What are the significances of metal in modern society of the country? This research deals with these tasks and the central aims are:

·   Demonstrating a complete chronicle of Chinese metal's developing trajectory since its beginning in the rock background in 1990 to a mature genre in 2013, covering nearly all the important musicians, musical works, albums, subgenres in different eras.

·   Exploring the identity characteristics of Chinese metal in a context of globalisation and localisation, and further find out the regulation about what happened to Chinese metal as a transplanted culture in a global atmosphere.

·   Investigate the industrial model of Chinese metal as a cultural product to seek for an approach for the marginal musical genre to survive in current popular music industries.

·   Discussing social meaning and value of Chinese metal to the modern Chinese society, especially about the traditional aesthetics, catharsis, politics, and moral issues, by highlighting the genre's symbolically transgressive natures.

·   Developing forward more effective methodologies for PMS by combining data statistics, textual analysis, and field work.

· Attracting, hopefully, more (maybe non-academic) people's attentions to Chinese metal, both domestically and overseas, and promote the genre's future development.

Origins

This research is originated and conceived in a proper atmosphere with mainly three advantageous conditions: the rise of metal studies, development of Chinese metal practice, and personal experience as a metal musician in Chinese metal scene. First, metal has gradually become an increasingly significant and serious proposition in popular music and broader socio-cultural studies in the past twenty-five years. This general trend strongly inspired and facilitated my study. A quarter of a century ago, Weinstein's groundbreaking work "*Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology*" (1991) brought metal into the scholar scope, especially sociological. Two years later, Walser's writing "*Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*" (1993) preliminarily bridged the gap between the metal music *per se* and its sociological interpretations by musicology. After the new millennium, Kahn-Harris's monograph "*Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*" (2007) further extended the domain of the studies with covering the genre's more recent evolvement of extreme metal. In 2008, the first international academic conference on metal in Salzburg marked that metal study became a worldwide serious proposition. Eventually, the special issue of "*Journal for Cultural Research*" in 2011 (Volume. 15, Issue. 3) declared the formal establishment of metal studies as an inter-discipline.

Secondly, the past two decades witnessed a particular trajectory of Chinese metal's formation, evolvement, and participation in the global metal scene (as the key historical events listed below). More importantly, metal is not only an integral part of current Chinese popular music industries but also a prominent phenomenon with unique social significances and values.

· 1990. Chinese metal publically appeared in the mainland China for the first time by *Tang Dynasty*'s performance in *The 1990 Modern Concert*.

· 1996. *Overload* released the first Chinese thrash metal album and also indicated the end of the mainstream metal era and the underground metal branch.

· 2000. The two crucial local metal magazines "*Extreme Music*" and "*Painkiller*" were founded.

· 2000. The first Chinese death metal album by *Stable Corpse* was released by indie rock label So Rock! Records.

· 2001. The first local metal label, Mort Production, was established, by which the first episode of the series compilation album of Chinese extreme metal titled "*Resurrection of the Gods I*" was released.

· 2002. Two albums of *Purgatory*'s "*Dream of Moribund*" and *Martyrdom*'s "*Pagan's Hymn*" declared the emergence of Chinese black metal.

· 2006. The depressive black metal band, *Be Persecuted* signed Germany label No Clouds Records as the first local extreme metal bands signing an overseas well-known label.

· 2008. *Voodoo Kungfu* became the first Chinese metal band performing in Wacken Open Air.

· 2013. The thrash death metal band, *Suffocated*, performed in the 2013 New Year Concert on Guangdong TV as the first appearance of Chinese extreme metal on mainstream media.

Thirdly, I had been an enthusiastic metal musician in Wuhan city since 2001 to 2008, serving as the guitarist in the death metal band *Vanished River* and the vocalist in the

black metal band *Grave Keeper*. These experiences provide me with more credible and in-depth observations about the general praxis, as well as more opportunities to get into the whole Chinese metal scene and contact with scene members in my later research. After an identity turning from the musician to scholar in 2008, I have obtained multiple educational backgrounds relevant to the musicology, aesthetics, and popular music studies in Wuhan Conservatory and University of Glasgow.

All these factors above have been preparing for a Chinese metal study. Eventually, when I initiated my PhD project in 2013, that seemed like a destined task whatever regarding my subjective will or objective conditions. Meanwhile, after touching with many worldwide metal studies and scholars, I realised that academia would be an alternative way to continue my metal career and make a different kind of contributions. Moreover, my crossover identity may provide the project with both "research" and "reach" properties. Also, my multiple educational backgrounds make it possible to apply different methodologies to conduct a comprehensive investigation.

Significances

Perhaps, for many non-Chinese metalheads, the first formal impression of Chinese metal comes from the 10-mins video clip in the anthropologist Dunn's documentary film "*Global Metal*" in 2007. However, there has been no academic monograph on Chinese metal thus far (at least by 2016), expect for being peripherally mentioned (Weinstein 2000: 282-283; Dunn & McFadyen 2007; Kahn-Harris 2007: 71; de Kloet 2010: 54-60; Campbell 2011: 149-157; Wong 2011). This situation brings great difficulties to my research, but at the same time, also means an originality and opportunity to fill up such a theory blank. As the first academic research and PhD thesis on Chinese metal from a relatively comprehensive perspective (history, identity, industry, and social meaning), its primary significances contain five dimensions in addition to adding certain knowledge into the existing intellectual field.

First, this research is a contribution to the holistic metal studies. Theoretically, the current metal studies must be developed forward in two directions, the depth and breadth. The former refers to dealing with the relatively more general and universal metal theories. Instead, the latter considers every aspect of the certain specific metal scenes throughout the world. In this sense, this research undoubtedly extends the breadth of metal studies. Meanwhile, some of the conclusions may also be applied from individual to general, so that they would also deepen the metal theories.

Secondly, the current Popular Music Studies (PMS) is more often understood as a field in which different methodologies and ideas may coexist rather than as a single discipline. This research promotes PMS by logically linking the separate parts such as the history, identity, industry, and social meaning of Chinese metal as a whole. During this process, this research further extends the methodology of bridging the textual analysis and contextual interpretation of popular music (see Chapter 3).

Thirdly, this research serves as an important case study with a few creative ideas regarding the contemporary hot topic of cultural globalisation from the perspective of the identity issues. For example, this thesis first proposes that the phenomenon of agriculture metal should be understood as an attempt exclusively by Chinese metal musicians to reconstruct their identities in the global metal scene within the trend of cosmopolitanism (see Chapter 5.4).

Furthermore, as a cultural-industrial product and social phenomenon in contemporary China (from 1990 to present), this research uses Chinese metal as a perfect exemplification to explore the tension between the artistry and commercialism, as well as a series of relevant social involvements, such as the pioneering ideas of the authenticity criticism and pseudo- evil (see Chapter 7.4 & 7.5).

Finally, the great amount of "facts" such as the archive collections, data statistics, and interview information in this research will serve as a valuable and useful database for the scholars in further relevant studies.

Structure

This thesis is structured in seven chapters. More specifically, Chapter 1 discusses the relevant issues of the term and definition of metal and properly positions metal in the field of popular music. Then, the conceptual difference between "genre" and "style" is clarified, based on which I propose that metal should be better examined as a genre in this thesis. Finally, the Chinese metal scene is defined and understood in the unique Chinese contexts.

In light of there has been no academic monograph on Chinese metal thus far, Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature and studies from different fields that are closely relevant to my research, mainly including metal studies, studies on Chinese rock/pop, and the theories of traditional Chinese aesthetics, philosophy, and globalisation/ cosmopolitanism. These studies contribute to providing theoretical backgrounds and methodological models. The secondary literature including metal documentaries and magazines are also considered valuable information sources.

Chapter 3 explains the methodologies employed in the thesis, and how these different approaches are specifically applied in the corresponding sections. Examining Chinese metal as a genre calls for the equal importance of textual and contextual concerns. Thus, to investigate the genre's four aspects (history, identity, industry, and social meaning), the multiple approaches involving data collection, textual analysis, and personal fieldwork are necessarily required. At the same time, the expected outcomes and limitations of them are clarified.

Chapter 4 portrays the complete developing trajectory of Chinese metal between 1990 and 2013 (covering six periods, namely the Rock Background in 1978-1990, Origin of Metal in 1990, Heavy Rock Era in 1990-1996, Nu-metal Transition in 1997-Present, Formation of the Genre in 2000, and Extreme Metal-Era in 2000-2013), by focusing

on the relevant artists, musical works, subgenres, and social conditions. The chapter reveals that the evolvement of Chinese metal has been moving forward with the modernization process of the country, especially the economic growth, technological progress, and cultural awareness. Accordingly, the trajectory was not simply a duplication of the West but presenting a unique U-shape curve, starting in the mainstream field in the early 1990s, declining in the late 1990s, becoming underground in early 2000s, and rising again in late 2000s.

Chapter 5 investigates the identity issues of Chinese metal from four perspectives, including the participants, musical texts, globalisation/localisation, and the unique Chinese phenomenon of agriculture metal. The investigation starts with defining the identity characteristics of the participants within the Chinese metal scene as the elitism (the 1990s), populism (2000s), and multiplicity (2010s). After that, a series of textual analyses including the music, MVs, cover arts, and folk metal subgenre, suggest that the development of Chinese metal has been experiencing a tension of globalisation and localisation. Based on that, an identity-aesthetics mechanism of metal music is proposed. Finally, the case study of agriculture metal reveals a phenomenon of identity reconstruction in the trend of cosmopolitanism, which is realised by the process of the original identity suspension, textual deconstruction, and identity reconstruction.

Chapter 6 examines the Chinese metal industries with the theoretical framework of Adorno's "cultural product" and Bourdieu's "cultural capital" and "field", showing that the Chinese metal industries emerged around 2000 with the rise of local indie labels of pop-rock music and the increasingly global popularity of metal music. Mainly driven by the country's rapid economic growth, cultural diversity, and the internet boom in the 2000s, a series of statistics demonstrate a sort of prosperity of metal industries such as the number of metal labels, released albums, and local live business, but also many problems such as the regional imbalances and

professionalisation degree. The chapter further points out that the current Chinese metal industries are more based on the cultural capital accumulation more than the economic, and more idealistic ways of obtaining a balance between cultural and economic capitals between different fields need be explored.

Chapter 7 turns to focus on the currently social interpretations of Chinese metal. It first highlights the subversions of Chinese metal against the traditional aesthetics and then proposes that the essence of Chinese metal should be understood a symbolic transgression. In this proposition, its function as a social catharsis and its current relation with the politics are discussed. Moreover, the chapter moves forward into the discussion of Chinese metal's authenticity from a critical perspective, which also links to the dialectical relation between commercialism and anti-commercialism. Finally, in the atmosphere of the general hypocrisy of the modern Chinese society, the Chapter argues that metal praxis features a "pseudo-evil" as an intentional behaviour with an explicit stance of anti-hypocrisy. More importantly, metal could also contribute to the reconstruction of the current moral system of the country.

After addressing the aims, origins, significances, and structure, the thesis will begin with the first premise chapter that discusses a series of the defining issues of Chinese metal.

Chapter 1 Defining Metal

The term "metal" is like an umbrella which encompasses a set of musical subgenres that are known as metal music by common sense. Although grouped under the same term, these subgenres may differ in many aspects such as sound forms, aesthetic conventions, and social implications, particularly with its growth of globalisation. This trend may result in the conceptual ambiguity widely existed among fans, artists, and even scholars. Therefore, for any serious discourse on metal, the relevant terms must be cautiously defined in a given context. This chapter provides such preconditions for the further discussions in the thesis. It first examines the relevant issues of the term and definition of metal, and then properly positions metal in the field of popular music. Secondly, the conceptual difference between "genre" and "style" is clarified, based on which I argue that metal can be theoretically examined as both a style and a genre, yet this thesis will focus on the latter. Finally, the Chinese metal scene is defined in a specific consideration of Chinese context.

1.1 Terms & Definitions of Metal

1.1.1 "Heavy Metal" & "Metal"

"Heavy metal" was not initially used as a musical term but one for ordnance and poisonous compounds (Walser 1993: 8). It was an expression in the 19th century to describe firepower in warfare and to designate newly discovered elements of high molecular density in chemistry (Christe 2004: 10). In the field of art, it was first introduced to the public by William S. Burroughs's novel "*Naked Lunch*" in 1962, and for music, it originally appeared as the lyrics "heavy metal thunder" in the song "*Born to be Wild*" by *Steppenwolf* in 1967[1]. Gradually inspired by the new guitar techniques and sounds of those pioneering artists such as Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton, the rock bands in the late 1960s developed a musical language that used distortion, heavy beats, and sheer loudness to create music that sounded more powerful than any other (Walser 1993: 9), as heavy metal.

However, it is difficult to determine the exact time point of when heavy metal was born or who was the first heavy metal band. In a theoretic sense, this question can be linked with the whole western cultural history and traced back to 1250 B.C. at the Walls of Jericho (Popoff 2015). Practically, there have been different answers among musical historians, writers, fans, and musicians. For example, Bangs (cited by Gross 1990: 20) stated in the "*Rolling Stone History of Rock and Roll*", that heavy metal began in 1968 when a group named *Blue Cheer* made a hard rocking version of Eddie Cochran's 1958 hit "Summertime Blues"[2]. Obviously, *Blue Cheer*'s version was harder and faster, which also applied distortion to replace the acoustic guitar. In addition, the aforementioned band *Steppenwolf* was also credited as one of the inventors of heavy metal music mainly because of their overt expression of "heavy metal" in the lyrics (ibid). However, a number of heavy metal musicians tended to see

---

[1] Steppenwolf: Born to Be Wild, available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMbATaj7Il8
[2] Blue Cheer: Summertime Blues, available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kJONgWKFi0
Eddie Cochran: Summertime Blues, available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MeWC59FJqGc

Black Sabbath and their debut album in 1969 as the true start of the genre (Dunn & McFadyen 2005). Perhaps, "all of the music prior to *Black Sabbath*, such as *Blue Cheer*, *Steppenwolf*, and others were just a warm up for the real heavy metal" (Conner, Cited by Gross 1990: 20). Despite the debates, one thing is for sure is that heavy metal as a musical term began to be used in the late 1960s and early 1970s to designate an offshoot of rock. For instance, in the BBC documentary titled "*Seven Ages of Rock*" in 2007, heavy metal was displayed for a certain period of rock history.

It is important to realise that both the terms "heavy metal" and "metal" are widely used in the contemporary discourse of metal music with potential confusions. As Brown (2011: 220-221) observed, the term "heavy metal" was first used in academia in 1984, while the stand-alone usage of "metal" became frequent since 1990. Moreover, according to his statistic, "heavy metal" was used dominantly before 2000, while the both were almost equally used after that. One of the reasons may be that the old concept (heavy metal) had been too narrow to contain the increasing diversity of metal evolvements. For example, Weinstein (1991) used the term "heavy metal" in her pioneering monograph to refer to the phenomenon since the 1960s to 1980s. Fifteen years later, in Dunn and McFadyen (2005)'s documentary, the term was explicitly replaced by "metal" to cover a complete lineage of metal subgenres (and this lineage was used and further refined in their later documentary "*Metal Evolution*" in 2011).

Currently, it seems that there are mainly two different attitudes about using the terms. The first one sees "metal" as a broader concept than "heavy metal", and the latter refers to the particular styles, subgenres, and artists in the 1970s and 1980s as well as the current artists who keep embracing those elements, such as hard rock, glam metal, power metal, and NWOBHM. In this sense, "heavy metal" shares a similar implication with the terms such as "traditional metal" or "classic metal". Then, heavy metal becomes a subsidiary concept of "metal" at the same level with other specific

categories such as death metal, black metal, and so forth. For example, the Swedish band *Dream Evil* is classified as heavy metal and power metal[3], in which "heavy metal" is explicitly understood as a parallel concept as "power metal".

The second attitude equates "metal" with "heavy metal", or considers the former as simply an abbreviation of the latter. For instance, in Wikipedia, there is only the entry of "heavy metal", while "metal" is explained as its simple form. Moreover, the title of the significant publication "*Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music around the World*" (Wallach, Berger, & Greene 2011) clearly indicated the equity between the two terms. Similarly, in the recent edited book "*Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures*" (Hjelm, Kahn-Harris, & LeVine 2013) the term also referred to the whole lineage of the genre rather than a certain subgenre.

Perhaps, from the stance of fans or artists, the terminology is not that worth discussing. However, as a thesis focused on metal, it does matter because that every single term has its unique position in a given terminological system, and they are supposed to connect with certain implications. More importantly, when these terms were translated into Chinese and used in the Chinese metal scene, more variations and deviations may emerge. Thus, a determined and consistent terminology is necessary. In this thesis, "metal" will be chosen as the meta-concept and the subgenre lineage summarised in "*Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*" (Dunn & McFadyen 2005) with its full set of terminology[4] will be applied. Meanwhile, the term "heavy metal" is excluded.

---

[3] For more, see http://www.metal-archives.com/bands/Dream_Evil/1162

[4] In fact, the terms in this set of terminology are named with different standards, similar to the cases of Urban Dictionary. For example, "early metal" is mainly named by the time factor, "glam metal" is mainly named by its appearance factors, and "death metal" is primarily named by the subject matters and the ancestral band *Death*. However, these terms have been used in metal discourse as a kind of convention. Therefore, it may be not important to investigate whether an existing terminology has been named legitimately. Instead, it is more important to consider how to use such terminology legitimately and consistently.

Fig. 1.1 Lineage of Metal and Terminology in This Thesis (Source: Dunn & McFadyen 2005)
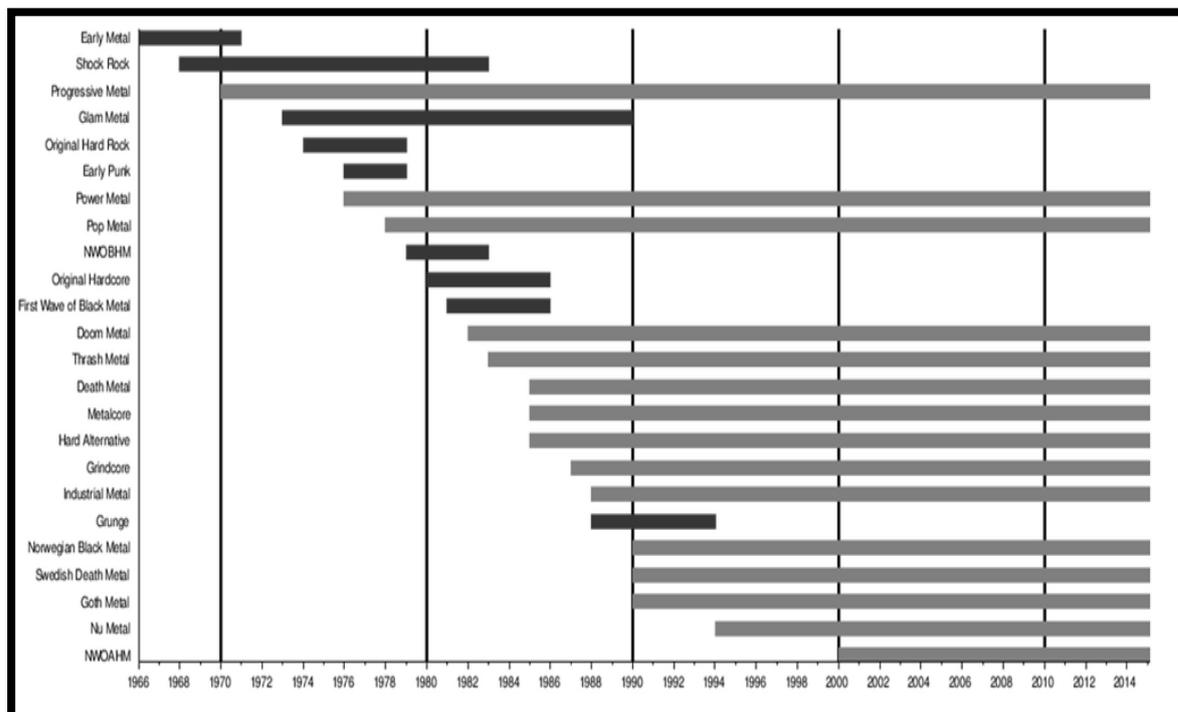
1.1.2 Defining Metal

Since its emergence in the 1950s, rock music has been encountering a defining chaos. For instance, Weinstein (2000: 11) asserted that "neither rock and roll nor rock has a standard definition". It was perhaps partly resulted from the ideas of postmodernism in many aspects, especially the end of the "international style" and the transition from universalism to relativism (Scott 2005: 126-127). However, another important reason may be the shift from elitism to mass culture, in which the artistic authority of cultural goods was broken, and everyone could be an expert in the community of mass consumption (Benjamin, cited by Frith 2007b: 67). In this environment, both the mass artists and audiences were legitimated to create their definitions or standards for new types of music. Then, one of the consequences would be that the previous certainty, autonomy, and objectivity of definition were replaced by uncertainty, intertextuality, and intersubjectivity. This situation may be a sort of ethical democracy to the artists and audiences, but a disaster to the scholars who therefore have to face a paradox that "everyone can define it so that it cannot be defined at all".

Metal has been undergoing a similar defining issue. The current situation of defining metal is unsettling: metal fans are keen to provide their concepts of metal but far from being satisfied; serious metal scholars tend to evade the grand narrative of the topic cautiously; metal artists may claim that they hate any definition that constrains their creativities. For example, akin to an online forum in Urban Dictionary, the public was encouraged to offer their definitions of metal[5], based on which a perfect definition was expected to be synthetically produced. However, the listed 91 candidate definitions showed a variety of perspectives and standards, such as the formal characteristics, subject matters, comparisons with other genres, representative artists, philosophical ideas, or even personal feelings. Finally, contrary to the original intention, the case, in fact, indicated the impossibility of defining metal. Besides, considering the definitions of metal in professional musical dictionaries, a clear simplification can be observed. For example, the subject entry of "heavy metal" (there is no entry "metal" therein) in The Oxford Companion to Music[6] merely mentions the phenomenon in the 1970s and 1980s with a brief description of the musical and subject characteristics. Although Walser contributes a better definition with more details in Grove Music Online[7], it actually refers to the phenomena mainly covering from *Black Sabbath* to the NWOBHM by the 1990s, so that many significant subgenres such as death metal, black metal, or doom metal are still excluded at all. Perhaps the entry of "heavy metal" in Wikipedia seems rather satisfactory involving the formal characteristics, etymology, and a relatively complete history (since the 1960s to present). However, it is more like a description of metal rather than a strict definition. Furthermore, with the globalisation and localisation process of metal, the genre has been widely transplanted in new cultural contexts. Then, the original genre may inevitably deviate in different aspects, so does the definition. This can be clearly

---

[5] The 91 listed definitions of heavy metal, available at
http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Heavy+Metal Accessed 08-05-2015
[6] The subject entry of "heavy metal" in The Oxford Companion to Music, available at
http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e3192?q=heavy+metal&search=quick&pos=2&_start=1#firsthit Accessed 07-05-2015
[7] The subject entry of "heavy metal" in Grove Music Online, available at
http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49140?q=heavy+metal&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit Accessed 07-05-105

observed in my fieldwork in the Chinese metal scene. For example, an interviewee (Zhang Cheng 2015) questioned me about whether *Tang Dynasty* should be seen as metal. Therefore, considering the genre's continuous historical evolvements and regional expansions, the conditions of what qualifies as metal are and will constantly be changing.

In this awkward situation, Frimodt-møller (in Irwin 2013: 76-86) introduced an insightful method to deal with the defining problem by applying Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's idea of "family resemblance". More specifically, in a family, it may be impossible to find one single trait that every member in the family shares. Some members of the family may be a little like someone else in the same family, who in turn have else traits similar to other members, and so on, thus forming a family resemblance (ibid: 81). In doing so, the family has been self-defined by such resemblance mechanism without necessary or sufficient conditions of traits for being a member of this family. Similarly, considering metal as a family, then there could be no specifically necessary and sufficient conditions for being metal. Instead, all the bands categorised as metal share an overlapping chain of characteristics. In this case, Frimodt-møller (ibid: 76) regarded *Black Sabbath* as the prototype of metal family and argued that "a particular kind of connection to *Black Sabbath* is what qualifies a band as metal. A true metal band must be either inspired by *Black Sabbath* or be inspired by other bands that are inspired by *Black Sabbath*". Meanwhile, he specifically illustrated that how a series of subgenres such as thrash metal, death metal, progressive metal, power metal, and so on were connected with *Black Sabbath* (ibid: 82-83). Frimodt-møller indeed puts forward some insightful ideas on defining metal, but he has not completely solved the problem. The question merely shifted from discussing the necessary and sufficient conditions of being metal to searching for the proper prototype of metal: 1 considering the current lineage of metal whether there is a prototype for each subgenre? 2 considering the globalisation and localisation of metal whether there is a prototype in each scene? Perhaps, it is better to see metal as

relatively inclusive and continuous concept rather than exclusive and stable; a tool rather than a rule. Defining metal is theoretically a trap. Nevertheless, the scholars still have to do so constantly even though they know they may never make it, because that the defining process constitutes the definition *per se*.

1.1.3 Positioning Metal in the Field of Popular Music

An unclear relationship among concepts usually results in understanding confusions. It is necessary to determine the position of metal in the general sense of popular music. This thesis draws on Regev (2013: 17)'s reviews, defining[8] popular music, pop, rock, and metal as (see the relational diagram below):

·   **Popular Music**: in relation to the lighter forms of music since the mid 19th century, as the all-encompassing concept covering both pop and rock.

·   **Pop**: a generic term was used since the 1950s initially adopted as the umbrella name for a special kind of musical product aimed at the teenage market in the context of the cultural industry.

·   **Rock**: as the more authentic or artistic section of pop music.

·   **Metal**: as an offshoot of rock since the late 1960s.

---

[8] The "defining" here only aims to clarify the relationship between different terms applied in this thesis, rather than making the definition for each of them in the strict sense. In addition, Wang (2009: 238-239) used the similar standard to differentiate popular music and pop music, but he did not further refer to rock or metal. Notably, this inclusion relationship also explains that why certain previous studies on Chinese popular music, pop music, and rock music could be still applicable to metal.

Fig. 1.2 Relationship between Popular Music, Pop, Rock, and Metal in This Thesis
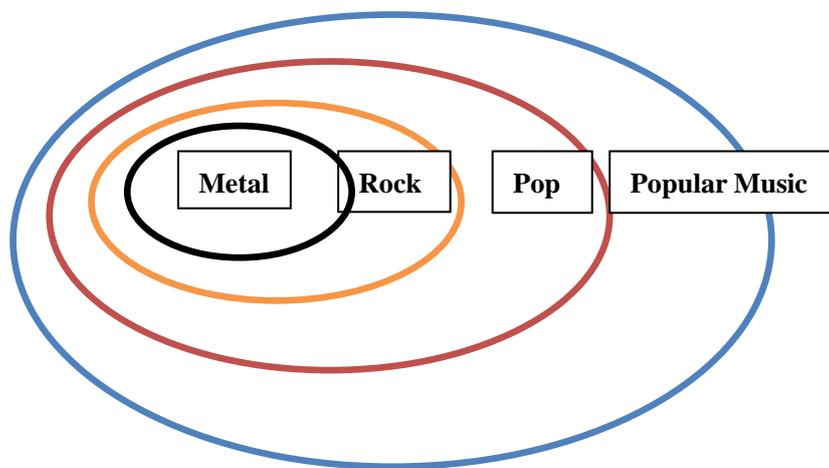
1.2 Genre & Style in Metal Studies

Perhaps, one of the biggest issues of defining metal locates in the confusion between the concepts of "genre" and "style". In cultural discourse, both of them are terms concerned with ways of establishing categorical distinctions and identifying the similarity between different pieces. However, there are also fundamental differences which results in the different usage of the terms in popular music studies (PMS).

1.2.1 Differentiating Genre & Style

The concept of "genre" can be traced back to Aristotle who was keen to classify things into categories. Etymologically, "genre" was derived from the ancient Greek word "genós" and Latin word "genus" with the connotations of "type" or "a kind of". While this term may have experienced different usages in the history[9], this thesis only takes into account the definitions in contemporary musical and cultural studies. By examining the existing definitions listed below (ordered chronologically), the necessary elements of being a genre are summarised as both sounds and human beings, both musical and social factors, and both textual and contextual concerns. In other words, when researching a musical genre, the investigations will not be referred only to the music, but also to the minds and bodies of particular groups of people who share certain conventions (Holt 2007: 2). Thus, "genre" has been suggested as a more inclusive and comprehensive concept than "style".

· A musical genre is a set of musical events (real or possible) whose course is regulated by a definite arrangement of socially accepted rules, including five essential rules of the term: formal and technical, semiotic, behaviour, social and ideological, and economic (Fabbri 1981: 52; 1982: 136).

---

[9] For more on the development of the term's usage in the history, see Fabbri, F. (1981), "Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications" and Holt, F. (2007), Genre in popular music, Introduction and Chapter 2.

· Genre is an interaction between social constructs and musical content, offering a framework that a listener may use by which to orient themselves, procedures to interpret the music, and a set of expectations (Hanks 1987: 670).

· A genre is a set of rules for generating musical works. In each temporal and spatial context, there are certain genre definitions that are relevant and used by the most important groups of actors in the musical fields: musicians, producers, marketers and audiences (Fornäs 1995: 111).

· A genre necessarily constructs a set of codes and expectations and therefore may be understood as something that is imposed upon music by musical cultures, influencing the way in which music is written (Beard & Gloag 2005: 72).

· Genre can be defined as a category or type, involving: the context of their historical roots, society and politics; musical and non-musical stylistic traits; the primary audience; the durability and subsequent influence (Shuker 2008: 119-121).

The subsequent question is that how to understand the difference between using genre and style in PMS. According to Fabbri (1982: 136), while the daily use of style had been confused with the idea of genre, style is not sufficient to define a genre. Walser (cited by Moore 2001: 439) also subsumed style within genre as its formal aspect, proposing that genre was socially constituted, while style was formally autonomous. Moreover, Moore (ibid: 441-442) further specifically distinguished the two terms in four aspects. First, style refers to the manner of articulation of musical gestures and is best considered as imposed on them, rather than intrinsic to them. Genre refers to the identity and the context of those gestures. Secondly, genre, in its emphasis on the context of gestures, pertains most usefully to the aesthetic, while style, in its emphasis on their manner of articulation, pertains most usefully to the poetic. Moreover, in

terms of constituting meanings, genre is normally socially constrained. Style, on the other hand, in its emphasis on technical features outside the social factors with a degree of autonomy. Finally, style itself operates at various hierarchical levels, from the global to the most local. Genre as a system operates different hierarchy, with the distinction of "subgenres" covering an entire genre territory. Thus, genre shows a particular connection with authenticity, while style may be easier to replicate. For instance, a famous video clip titled "*10 Genres of Metal in 3 Minutes*"[10] on YouTube demonstrated different subgenres of metal in a consistent piece of music, including glam rock, heavy metal (in fact traditional metal), power metal, folk metal, black metal, death metal, thrash metal, melodic death metal, progressive metal, and metalcore. However, what were presented were only musical traits of these subgenres, or in a strict sense, the ten different styles of metal. The table below comprehensively illustrates the key differences between genre and style in the discourse of PMS.

Table 1.1 Key Different Tendencies of Using Genre and Style in PMS

Genre	Style
Methodological priority in socio-cultural studies, such as ethnomusicology and PMS Sociological methods	Methodological priority in musicology Textual analyses
Aesthetic aspects (What?)	Technical aspects (How?)
Contextual identity of musical gestures	Imposed musical traits
Meaning-Social constrained	Meaning-Artistic autonomy
Authenticity	Replication
Genre and subgenres	No sub-styles

Notably, it should be very cautious to simply subordinate "style" to "genre". Rather, it is better to realise the overlaps between them, and at the same time, recognised the theoretical advantages of the latter. In fact, in PMS (or contemporary music studies), "genre" is being used more dominantly than "style" (Moore 2001: 432-433). With the tendency of socio-cultural context replacing artistic autonomy in the twenty century, the scholars tended to believe that "musical meanings were not labels arbitrarily thrust

---

[10] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpZ18recO9A

upon abstract sounds", instead "these sounds and their meanings originated in a social process and achieved their significance within a particular social context" (Scott 2005: 127). Hesmondhalgh (2005: 32) summarised genre as a more satisfactory starting point for a theorization of the relationship between particular social groups and musical styles than previous notions widely applied in PMS such as subculture, scene, or tribe.

1.2.2 Applications in Metal Studies

Theoretically, metal can be examined from the perspectives of both style and genre with inconsistent conclusions. For example, the comparison between the two songs "*The End of Human Race*" by *Dark Funeral*[11] and "*Forsaken*" by *Slechtvalk*[12] can very well illustrate the difference. Considering the musical forms, there is a clear similarity in the aspects of tremolo picking technique, blast beating, double bass drumming, distorted timbre, riff-organised structure, fast tempo, chromatic chords, tritone, and screaming vocalisation. These shared musical techniques, formal traits, and sound effects may encourage the observers to classify the two songs into the same category (style). Nevertheless, taking into account the socio-cultural dimensions beyond the music, they are totally different. *Dark Funeral*, as Swedish black metal band, has been well-known for their overt Satanism ideas and antichrist stance, while *Slechtvalk* obtained their reputation as being a un-black/Christian metal band. Thus, their subject matters, lyrics, and broader cultural implications are opposite. In this sense, the two songs must be categorised into different subgenres. As the ex-vocalist of Norwegian Christian band *Antestor*, Kjetil Molnes, claimed that "we identify ourselves as black metal as a music style, not black metal as an ideology or belief"[13]. The metal covers provide another typical example. The German metal band *Atrocity* released two albums titled "*Werk 80*" and "*Werk 80 II*" in 1997 and 2008 which

---

[11] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZGD04mB_Ic
[12] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtYku1P8ggk
[13] "*MusikkOpp-ned oppnedkors*", Morgenbladet (Norwegian), Oslonett, 1995-02-06, archived from the original on 2008-01-01, cited in Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antestor

consisted of the cover versions of a few popular hits in the 1980s. Also, they released a single (included in their album "*Gemini*" in 2000) covering the 1960s hit "*Sound of Silence*" by Simon & Garfunkel in 2000. Technically, all of these songs were adapted into *Atrocity*'s own musical language (as industrial, gothic, and symphonic metal), while the titles and lyrics were maintained. However, it is unsure to declare that whether the original meanings of these songs altered in the metal versions. For example, as a song released in 1966 when metal had not emerged yet, can "*Sound of Silence*" be connected with metal ideologies? In other words, whether these cover works can be understood as a certain metal subgenre or only extraneous things that played in a certain metal style?

These cases suggest that it could be problematic to employ genre and style at the same time in metal studies. Particularly, when the socio-cultural is concerned, "style" may seem incompetent and often result in confusions. However, it does not mean that stylistic/formal dimensions of metal are not important. Therefore, metal will be examined as a "genre" in this thesis, comprehensively involving the textual and contextual dimensions, in which the essences of "style" are combined into the "textual dimension". This is also echoed by the multiple methodologies introduced in Chapter 3. Meanwhile, it is reasonable to propose that, fundamentally, a piece of music composed with typical sounds of metal cannot be seen as the genre (or subgenre) of metal unless it is created, produced, performed, appreciated, and understood in a corresponding culture of metal.

Considering all the factors above, metal is defined in this thesis as a dynamic concept with three key dimensions: 1 it is a musical genre essentially determined by the prototype of *Black Sabbath*; 2 it features a set of stylistic characteristics mainly including distorted timbre, power-chord and palm mute technique, riff-based structure, and overall loud and massive sound; 3 it ideologically refers to a symbolic transgression against the hegemonic social norms.

1.3 Defining the Chinese Metal Scene

1.3.1 Mapping the Chinese Metal Scene

"Scene" is a relatively loose concept that first came to be linked with popular music during the 1950s referring to jazz music (Cohen 1999: 239). The term was introduced into the popular music academia by Will Straw in the early 1990s as an attempt to overcome the rigidities of the previous "subculture" by Dick Hebdige's (Negus 1996: 14-24). Fundamentally, subculture theory links certain communities, styles, and relevant activities to certain counter-hegemonic resistance against dominant ideology, but it largely lacked empirical investigations on the subcultural members' roles in their lifetime or their real attitudes towards the subculture they were associated with (Widdicombe & Wooffitt 1995; Muggleton 2000). In addition, many important populations and genres were ignored, such as the females (Miles 1998) and metal music (Brown 2003). In this context, Straw (1991: 273) defined scene as a "cultural space in which a range of musical practices co-exist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization". In a scene, a variety of social divisions and specific boundaries were established, in relation to class, race, gender, age, and so forth. Recently, scene has been increasingly applied in popular music studies as well as metal studies, especially with the trend of globalisation.

Based on Straw's definition, Kahn-Harris (2007: 15) further developed "scene" into an effective concept to approach extreme metal phenomenon, referred to both a public space and a more general ways of living of the members involved. In doing so, it allows scholars to produce work that is empirically grounded in specific contexts yet is open to connections with other pieces of research and everyday language (ibid: 21). For instance, the extreme metal scene was defined by Kahn-Harris (ibid: 22) as "a global music scene that contains local scenes within it and other scenes based on the production and consumption of particular forms of extreme metal genres".

When being applied in this research, scene is understood as a spatial concept both geographically and socio-culturally. The former makes the investigation concentrated on a specified territory, while the latter ensures that the investigation will not be isolated from the associated social contexts. First, Chinese metal scene must be strictly located within China (in this thesis as the mainland China) and metal genre. Secondly, it is more important to consider the interaction of that how Chinese social, cultural, and economic life impact on the scene, and how the latter contribute to shaping the former. Thirdly, it would be impossible to discuss the topic without the basis of the western metal and Chinese rock culture. Finally, the Chinese metal scene should also be an integral part of the global metal scene. One practical question of applying "scene" is how to determine its boundaries, or in other words, how to differentiate the "insider" and "outsider". Given that scenes could usually be expanded or narrowed, and different scenes are possibly overlapped, the boundaries of scenes should be better defined relatively rather than absolutely. This thesis proposes three main axes for mapping the Chinese metal scene, namely geographic, social, and musical, as the table showed below.

Table 1.2 Mapping of Chinese Metal Scene

Axes	Insiders and Relevant Factors
Geographic	All regions in the mainland China;
Social	Artists, Producers, Promoters, Managers, Critics, Scholars, Fans;
	Popular music industries, Chinese rock tradition, Western metal culture;
	Associated philosophical/aesthetics ideas;
	A part of the global metal scene
Musical	The complete genealogy of metal genre;
	Stylistic characteristics;
	Specific works

1.3.2 Understanding Chinese Metal in Three Contexts

This thesis defines the term "mainstream" in the Chinese context, as indicating that the artists or musical works concerned were embraced by the public with relatively

high album sales, social influence, and media exposure. In contrast, "underground" refers to those artists or works which have yet to be accepted and which are marginalised by the hegemonic cultural and commercial system. These two terms do not signify any specific genre/style or clear artistic standard, but an industrial status and aesthetic attitude. Thus they are both relative concepts because that the acceptance criteria of the public is always changing over time. Therefore, different periods may witness different mainstream/underground genres and a certain genre may be seen as mainstream or underground in different times.

As a non-native musical genre and cultural phenomenon, metal was initially transplanted into China around 1990. In practice, the two dimensions of the genre (textual and contextual) were not accepted and developed evenly. Therefore, the understandings of Chinese metal have roughly experienced three different contexts, including 1990-1999, 2000-2013, and after 2013[14].

In the 1990s, metal had yet to be a clear concept but tended to be treated as more or less an equivalent to rock. One of the main reasons was that after the country's Reform and Opening-up Policy in 1978, a plenty of foreign music genres came into China dispersedly in different ways such as the borrowing and copying of cassettes brought into China by foreigners, Chinese travelers returning home, and visiting overseas Chinese (Brace 1991: 45). However, the mainstream ideology of the time was not open enough to operate the cultural discourses of these new western arrivals.

As a consequence, although a few artists started playing metal by learning and copying the formal characteristics of the western metal, they admitted that they were in fact confused with what rock or metal was. For example, the lead guitarist of the band *Black Panther*, Li Tong, stated in an interview that "at the time that Chinese rock began, there were people who thought that only heavy metal could be rock" (Wong

---

[14] These three phrases here were made in terms of how to understand metal in China, while in Chapter 4 the evolving history of Chinese metal will be examined more specifically by six periods.

2011: 67). Similarly, the fans did not have a clear understanding about metal either. As the manager of 666 Rock Shop, Wang Xiao (2015), recalled that "in the mid-1990s when I began to touch with rock music such as Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, *Guns n' Roses*, *Metallica* and *Nirvana*, I had no idea about the differences between them. We simply called all of them as 'English songs'. Because that there was limited information about metal culture, it took me a long time to accumulate the knowledge and gradually figured them out". Even worse, the few articles in the public media about metal with full of mistakes might have deepened such confusion. For instance, Wang Xiaofeng and Zhang Lei had begun to publish a series titled "*A Conversation with Rock*" since 1992 in the magazine "*The World of Audio-video*". In the article of its 1995-issue featuring an introduction of death metal[15], they translated grindcore as death metal by mistake and further criticised it as morbid and ugly. In another two later articles in the magazine "*Heydey of Rock*" and "*Free Music*", *Iron Maiden* and *Motörhead* were mistakenly introduced as death metal bands[16]. Moreover, in the pioneering monograph on the development of Chinese popular music between 1978 and 2003, Wang (2009: 71, 139, 199) merely referred Chinese metal in the discussions of the rise of rock, development of rock, and new trends of rock, respectively.

Since 2000, metal has begun to be widely understood as an independent genre with its lineage of subgenres (see Chapter 4. 5) but marginalised by the mainstream. At the same time, the concept of Chinese metal and the Chinese metal scene were established, including the multiple identities of participants, a set of musical characteristics and aesthetic conventions, a series of socio-cultural connotations, as well as a its own industrial infrastructure of record labels, promotion and distribution channels, specialised media, discussion forums, and festivals.

---

[15] The early back issues of the magazine is not available online, but the original article can be viewed at: http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-music-44571-1.shtml

[16] The information is cited from Zhang Yun's article in the online forum of "*DeathArea*", available at http://www.areadeath.net/forum/viewthread.php?tid=15625&extra=page%3D1&page=1

After 2013, Chinese metal became a more maturely cultural- commercial product. There was also evidence showing the tendencies that Chinese metal was beginning to approach toward the mainstream. For example, the thrash death metal band *Suffocated* performed in the New Year Concert on Guangdong TV in 2013 as the first appearance of Chinese metal on mainstream media. The deathcore band *Four-Five*, nu-metal bands *Yaksa* and *Tomahawk* signed with the biggest mainstream indie label in China, Modern Sky, in 2014 and 2015[17].

---

[17] *Four-Five* signed with Modern Sky http://yue.ifeng.com/news/detail_2014_03/18/34856823_0.shtm
Yaksa signed with Modern Sky http://ent.qq.com/a/20150212/024085.htm
Tomahawk signed with Modern Sky http://ent.takungpao.com.hk/music/q/2015/0305/2935557.html

Summary of Chapter

Acknowledging that the definition of metal should always be open and dynamic, this chapter clarified the terminology ("metal" and its lineage) applied throughout this thesis. Moreover, it argued that Chinese metal must be understood as a genre more than style, which indicated the consideration would be both located in and beyond the music *per se*. Based on these preconditions, the Chinese metal scene was portrayed in four dimensions, including geographical, social, musical, and time.

After defining these key terms, the thesis is moving forward to the existing literature in which I will explain the current situation and ideas about Chinese metal in the academia, and propose that what need to be questioned, improved, and established.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Chinese metal has been almost absent in the academia for long. There has been no academic monograph on Chinese metal thus far, expect for being peripherally and preliminarily mentioned by very few researchers (Weinstein 2000: 282-283; Dunn & McFadyen 2007; Kahn-Harris 2007: 71; de Kloet 2010: 54-60; Campbell 2011: 149-157; Wong 2011, Wang 2015). Moreover, many conclusions of them are not applicable to the contemporary situation of Chinese metal. For example, Wong (2011) examined the earliest and most famous Chinese metal band, *Tang Dynasty*, highlighting their expression of masculinity in the Chinese society of the 1990s. However, *Tang Dynasty* may be not truly representative of the genre in the present. In an interview, the band (2013) explicitly reaffirmed themselves as a progressive rock band[1]. Meanwhile, the most prominent concern of today's Chinese society may be not the issues of gender or masculinity but a series of social pathologies (see Chapter 7.5).

Similarly, the more or less 10-mins video clip from Dunn & McFadyen (2007)'s metal documentary indeed provided a preliminary impression of Chinese metal to the world by highlighting a handful of key figures, yet it did not (and could not) display the whole image. Even worse, these highly limited and selective presentations may have twisted and misled the views about Chinese metal. In fact, the main body of metal praxis in China is more developed collectively by semi-professional musicians rather than a few superstars (see Chapter 5.1).

Moreover, the particular traditional Chinese culture such as the Confucianism may bring different views and status of metal compared to the West. The natures of metal music are not consistent with the central Confucian principles (see Chapter 7.1.1).

---

[1] Tang Dynasty talking in "*Star*" on 30-October-2013, Available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-nT26qyIj4&spfreload=10%20Message%3A%20Unexpected%20end%20of%20input%20(url%3A%20https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D2-nT26qyIj4)

Then, why can metal still be accepted and embraced by a certain group of people in China, and is there a common identity or archetype[2] for these people and music? Furthermore, how do these deviations and transgressions determine metal's values and significances in the Chinese society?

These examples indicate a set of unanswered questions. To provide a more reliable, comprehensive, and updated understanding of Chinese metal, I will cautiously consider this research in a proper position among the existing studies and literature from different fields. First, this research cannot be conducted out of the discourse of metal studies (mainly dominated by the western scholars), such as the general conclusions, theoretical frameworks, and methodologies. However, at the same time, their applicability should always be reconsidered due to the great geographical, cultural, and social differences, such as the different identity characteristics between the US and China (see Chapter 2.1.4 & Chapter 5.1). Secondly, because that Chinese metal was derived from Chinese rock, and now is an integral part of pop music industries of the country, a few existing studies on Chinese rock/pop must be taken into account. Nevertheless, metal does not equal rock or pop, so the primary task is to point out its unique values and meanings. Finally, to obtain more insightful perspectives, the research needs to be linked with broader fields, such as the aesthetics, philosophy, and globalisation/ cosmopolitanism. The following sections address that how these studies apply to my work and point out the problems that need to be improved or reconsidered. Also, the relatively less academic contributions such as magazines and documentaries of metal are also included, which serve as the secondary literature with a lot of important first-hand information.

---

[2] Archetype is an important concept used by Carl Jung. It can be mainly understood in four aspects. First, archetypes are inborn tendencies which shape the human behaviour. Secondly, they are represented by the themes in the fantasies, dreams, delirious ideas and illusions. Thirdly, an archetype is empty, purely formal, nothing else but a pre-shaping possibility or an innate tendency of shaping things. It cannot be recognised as such until manifesting in intention or action. Finally, it shares both psychic and material aspects. For more, see Carl Jung, 1991, "*The archetypes and the collective unconscious*".

2.1 Metal Studies

The earliest academic attention on metal could be traced back to the West of the late 1970s and early 1980s when there was a conceptual ambiguity of transiting from hard rock to heavy metal (Brown 2011: 224-225). The scholars in this period often tended to treat metal simply as a particular form of rock (Straw 1983; Frith 1983). In fact, the development of studying metal was slow, with substantial studies not appearing until the early 1990s (Spracklen, Brown, & Kahn-Harris 2011: 209) when two groundbreaking writings (Weinstein 1991; Walser 1993) initially formed the cornerstones in the academia. Subsequently, as a serious proposition, the discipline of metal studies was proposed in the late 2000s when a few events began to bring metal scholars together, such as the first Heavy Fundamentalisms conference in Salzburg in October 2008 (Kahn- Harris 2011: 251) and a series of followings[3]. Eventually, the concept of metal studies was formally proposed and discussed in the special issue of "*Journal for Cultural Research*" in 2011 (Volume. 15, Issue. 3), in which Weinstein (2011: 243) defined the nature of metal studies as a multi-discipline comprehending the fields of musicology, sociology, cultural history, political science, economics, literature, communications, and social psychology.

The existing discourses on metal mainly consisted of five themes, including the historical observation, textual analysis, psychology, socio-cultural study, and global metal[4]. It is notable that these subjects may interweave with each other rather than

---

[3] Academic conference can be seen as a significant mark of metal being taken seriously within academia. Following the first conference in 2008, there were a few noteworthy, including "*An International Conference on Heavy Metal and Gender*", "*The 2nd Global Conference on Heavy Fundametalisms: Music, Metal and Politics*" in 2009; "*The 3rd Global Conference on Heavy Fundametalisms: Music, Metal and Politics*" in 2010; "*Heavy Metal And Popular Culture International Conference*" in 2013; "*The Heavy Metal Music and The Communal Experience Academic Conference*", "*Metal & Marginalization: Gender, Race, Class and other Implications for Hard Rock and Metal*", "*Metal and Cultural Impact: Metal's Role in the 21st Century*" in 2014; "*Modern Heavy Metal: Markets, Practices, and Cultures International Academic Research Conference*", "*Mind over Metal: Metal Music and Culture from a Cross-Disciplinary Perspective*" in 2015.
[4] Here, "global metal" primarily refers to the metal phenomenon or praxis in the regions outside the traditional scope such as the UK or US, rather than indicating any theory of globalization in the strict sense.

maintaining clear boundaries. In practice, many researchers may concern not only one but some of, even all of these subjects.

2.1.1 Historical Observation

Mainly from a historical perspective, Purcell (2003) portrayed a brief history of death metal from the genre's beginning 1983 to 2002; Moynihan & Soderlind (2003) represented the musical and the relevant social movements in Norwegian black metal scene; Christe (2004) provided a complete history of metal since the 1970s to 2000s; Tucker (2005) exclusively concentrated on the era of NWOBHM (The New Wave of British Heavy Metal). All of these monographs have constructed a set of "realities" of metal, particularly forming a series of common sense and defining the essential terms in metal discourse. Histories should be better considered a starting point and footstone for deeper socio-cultural issues. Thus, my investigation of Chinese metal will be started with and structured on the historical observations.

Notably, Peterson (1990) has introduced a paradigm of associating popular music evolvement with cultural industry developments. He defined 1955 as the moment of rock music's advent, by displaying the six constraints of cultural productions involving law, technology, industry structure, organisation structure, occupational career, and market, instead of the angles of the music *per se* or the famous artists (ibid: 98). In the traditional views before Peterson, 1955 was not remarkable in modern civilisation compared to those significant timings, such as 1929, 1939, 1945, or 1968 (ibid: 97). Peterson's study indicates that the music and musicians may only present a part of the truth, while the associated social events, especially the music industry, present the rest. This paradigm will be employed in the historical and industrial examinations of my research. For example, I will argue that the formation of Chinese metal as a genre happened around 2000, inspired and marked by a series of social conditions (see Chapter 4.5).

2.1.2 Textual Analyses

There have been two opposite viewpoints in popular music studies as "music and nothing else" and "everything except the music" (Tagg, cited by Bennett 2014: 342). Tagg might indicate a methodological contradiction between textual (traditional musicology) and contextual analysis (ethnomusicology). Meanwhile, as Shuker (2008: 93) refined, the text of popular music consists of graphic (with an emphasis on album cover art), musical (with particular reference to issues around musicology and the analysis of song lyrics), and music video. Thus, the concept "text" is broader than "music", and musical analysis should be seen as an integral part of textual analyses.

Textual analysis and musicology have not been widely embraced by metal (or popular music) scholars, partially due to the influences from the critical musicology (UK), new musicology (US), ethnomusicology, or anthropology which emphasised on the context issues more than the text (Moore 2003: 219). Brown (2011: 220)'s statistics showed that the proportions of musicological works of metal studies in different periods were only 6.2% (1978-1988), 19.5% (1989-1999), and 21.8% (2000-2010), respectively. Walser (1993)'s pioneering work may be the most prominent monograph in this field, in which he applied a synthetic methodology combining music analysis and cultural criticism to bridge the textual characteristics, performances, and social interpretation of classic metal. Based on that, he concluded the social meanings of the music as an implication of cultural contradictions in masculine power and control. Another significant contribution of Walser was that he added a guitar tablature[5] to the traditional staff notation in the analysis so that more details of guitar playing could be possibly illustrated in addition to the chords, melodies, rhythms, and orchestrations (ibid: 91). Walser's approach will be used as a part of my methodology (see Chapter 3.2.1).

---

[5] The guitar tablature is a kind of notion indicating the figuring and technique to be used for guitar playing. For more details and explanations, see "Tablature Explanation and Definition for Special Guitar Notation" (Walser, 1993: 91).

After Walser, there was no monograph on metal music analysis but a few academic articles, including Pieslakl (2007)'s research on the rhythmic factors of Swedish progressive metal band *Meshuggah*, Ecker (2009)'s acoustical examination on the vocalisations of death metal, Moore (2010)'s investigation on the application and function of flatted supertonic note in metal music, and Hainaut (2012)'s exploration of the minor chord progression at intervals of the third in black metal.

Lyrics is another often discussed topic in textual analysis, which is more embraced by non-musicologists perhaps because that the professional musical background is not necessarily required. In her groundbreaking writing, Weinstein (2000: 35-42) divides the lyrical themes of metal into two different categories, namely "Dionysian" and "Chaotic". The former involves the themes such as "sex, drugs, and rock and roll", and focuses on the forms of physical gratification and ecstasy; while the later rebels against social norms and reveals a fascination with conflict, violence, and death. Similarly, Harrell (1994) summarises the themes that usually absent in death metal, such as women, sex, love, peace, romance, beauty, hope, pleasure, deliverance, freedom, cars, school, and work, as well as the themes frequently used, including war, destruction, decay, disease, disillusion, death, pain, torture, vengeance, murder, blood, anarchy, corruption, through power, confusion, chaos, darkness, isolation, insanity, monsters, and weapons (1994: 93). Based on that, he interpreted death metal as an unofficial expression of industrialism's emotional isolation and violence (ibid: 91).

However, there is an assumption which makes these conclusions valid, that audiences are supposed to grasp the lyrics and take them as seriously as Weinstein and Harrell did. In other words, it is debatable that whether the audiences actually can and will catch the same messages by listening as what scholars achieve via lyrical analyses. For example, many vocalisations of extreme metal make the lyrics hardly be followed, and a lot of Chinese metal fans do not understand the lyrics due to the linguistic barrier, but they still enjoy the music (see Chapter 7.1.2). Thus, it is important to

know the fans' real attitudes to the lyrics by deeper fieldworks, besides the analysis *per se*.

Kahn-Harris (2003) accessed lyrics from another angle. He took the lyrics of the song "*Fucked with a knife*" by the death metal band *Cannibal Corpse* as an example to reveal that the scenic practice and scenic texts could be disengaged. In other words, "for most scene members, there is a dramatic gulf between the transgressive texts that they produce and consume and their everyday practice" (ibid: 89-90). Nevertheless, he did not further clarify the relation between the texts and everyday practice. Another potential problem is that in what degree Kahn-Harris used the term "texts", as mere lyrics or as the aforementioned broader concept defined by Shuker? Notably, he also noticed that the lyrics of death metal are almost indecipherable without a lyric sheet, because of the particular vocal style (grunted and screamed), the fast and dexterous musical backing with complex tempo changes, and highly distorted guitar sounds (ibid: 84). Thus, it may be more significant to explore how lyrics are expressed and conveyed, instead of merely analysing the semantic meanings.

On the contrary, specialised visual analysis has rarely been discussed in metal studies, but peripherally mentioned. For example, when talking about the metal media, Weinstein (2000: 161-174) mentioned the MTVs, videos, and movies of the genre. Her primary aims, however, were to illustrate the promotions and influences of new media on the spread of the metal culture rather than investigating the utilisation and functions of those visual elements. Likewise, Kahn-Harris (2007) employed a series of images such as bands' publicity photos and live posters to show the characteristics of different scenes and subgenres of extreme metal. Unfortunately, he did not answer that how these imagery elements construct the natures of a certain scene or subgenre. A more recent publication (Dome & Popoff 2013) portrayed a whole metal history (covering the original period, NWOBHW, hair metal, and a set of later subgenres of extreme metal) by 400 selected images of album covers, flyers, posters, and the

standard issue t-shirt. This descriptive work could be still valuable as a database for further analyses.

In a strict sense, the visual factors involve the artworks of album covers, conventional costumes, musical videos, stage visual effects, live posters, and logo designs. In my research, on the one side, they are integral components to illustrate the historical evolvement of Chinese metal (see Chapter 7.1.3). On the other side, the artistic pursuit of a genre can be effectively revealed by examining the coherence or symbolic connection between the visual presentations and musical expressions. Thus, this thesis will focus on the music videos, logo designs, and album cover artworks of Chinese metal to explore the genre's identity (see Chapter 5.3).

Recently, Phillipov (2013: 209) appealed for more attentions on textual analysis and the relevant utilisations in cultural studies, arguing that it "can offer creative ways to articulate experiences that would otherwise be inaccessible to empirical research methods, and that the use of text-based approaches can improve, rather than weaken, our understanding of popular media and culture". By considering the methodological models of the previous studies, a more comprehensively analysis will be applied in this thesis, involving musical, lyrical, and visual analysis (see Chapter 3.2).

2.1.3 Psychology

Metal music initially drawing academic attentions was largely derived from the psychological concerns inspired by a series of adolescent suicides in the 1980s. For instance, reports showed that two young men shot themselves after listening to *Judas Priest*'s album "*Stained Class*" in 1985 (Litman 1994: 494), and in the same year the song "*Suicide Solution*" by Ozzy Osbourne was condemned as the inducement to another young man's attempted suicide (Wright 2000: 370-371). Subsequently, these cases have given rise to two opposite standpoints.

Critics claim that there is a causal relation between the genre and adolescents' psychological problems and negative behaviours (Copley 2011), such as substance abuse, anti-social, Satanism, sexual promiscuity, or depression (Gardstrom 1999: 208). The psychologist, Dr. Howard Shevrin (Cited by Litman 1994: 495), alleges that youth suicide is a direct consequence from metal music. His subliminal theory explains that the subliminal messages contained in a certain piece of metal music can be conveyed to the listeners unconsciously and potentially serve as a direct cause of their suicidal behaviours. This condemnation is echoed by another investigation which asserts that the exposure to metal lyrics results in aggressive behaviours (Mast & McAndrew 2011: 64). These arguments may have influenced on the general prejudice of the public against the genre.

In contrast, many scholars see the effect of metal music on its audiences as positive. Blessing and Donhauser (2007: 149) applies Aristotle's cathartic theory to argue that metal can purge the listeners of their negative emotions and prevent them from committing suicide. This idea is shared by the "Drive Reduction Theory" which stresses that metal effectively releases the difficult feelings of its audiences (Gardstrom 1999: 212). Similarly, Hill (2011: 149) shows the therapeutic effects of metal music by examining the fans' self-perception in which the music enables them to cope with pre-existing depressions and get through difficult times. Besides, Purcell (2003: 114)'s research on death metal indeed illustrates a high rate of depression and alienation among the fans. However, she argues that the death metal scene draws people who have already been depressed and tend to seek relief for their hard feelings, rather than causing such feelings to its members. More importantly, she has described a possible mechanism of "depression relief" in which "metal is not about qualities that one is born with like a beautiful voice and a beautiful face; Instead, it is about qualities that one controls and is able to develop in oneself, even the harsh vocals attest to this" (ibid: 115). In this sense, metal could be psychologically positive by providing its scene members with relief and hope.

It is a simplification to judge the effects of metal music on its listeners as negative or positive. In fact, the methodologies of psychology themselves could be problematic in a historical perspective, since it is impossible to make use of psychology which is the product of observation carried out currently to interpret the actions and emotions of the men of the past (Febvre, cited by Matt 2011: 117). Moreover, the mental factors of metal should not be simply treated as a biological or individual, but social and collective. In other words, a genre could be negative, positive, or both in various conditions. For example, the Norwegian black metal scene used to be considered notorious for its actual violent actions, such as the arsons and murders (Moynihan & Soderlind 2003; Phillipov 2011), while such situations were rarely seen in other black metal scenes, especially in China. Therefore, this research will not engage in individual psychological investigations. Instead, it more focuses on the collective and socio-cultural considerations when exploring the identity characteristics and social interpretations of Chinese metal.

2.1.4 Socio-cultural Studies

Socio-cultural studies have constituted the main body of metal studies, which treats metal as a cultural phenomenon with particular identities, functions, values, and meanings. Generally, most of the early scholars tended to look at metal issues by referring to the ideas such as subculture, youth, rebellion, or alienation (Arnett 1993, 1996; Epstein & Pratto 1994; Harrell 1994; Tsitsos 1999; Roccor 2000; Purcell 2003), or identifying metal fans as hopeless, hostile, and anti-social (Purcell 2003: 116). In these studies, identity was usually a keyword, and metal was interpreted as a form of a subculture that represented the expression of post-industrial alienation and despair of white working-class youth. In her cultural sociology, Weinstein (1991, 2000) viewed metal primarily as a subculture of youthful rebellion, power, pleasure, and fantasy. The genre functioned as a kind of "nostalgia for centricity" for white, heterosexual, blue-collar young men who felt threatened and disempowered by their experiences of

socio-economic and socio-cultural de-centering (cited by Phillipov 2012: 56). Christenson and Roberts (1998: 103) also concluded the demographic identity of metal fans as white, male, middle class, and adolescent. Nevertheless, these natures may vary with the ageing of the previous youth class or in different societies with the genre's global spread. For example, most of the central identity characteristics in the arguments above are hardly observed in Chinese metal. Instead, Chinese metal emerged alongside the dramatically economic and industrial rise of the country, and its audiences referred to a more complex structure of age and class status. Meanwhile, the constitutional guarantees of free speech (such as the First Amendment of the US), as one of the necessary conditions for any non-hegemonic culture's survival, has been absent throughout the whole history of Chinese metal. Thus, simply considering Chinese metal as a subculture or anti-culture of mid-class youth against the hegemonic culture could be problematic. Therefore, a new reconsideration outside the western context is necessary.

New arguments emerged with the expansion of researching scope and the evolvement of the metal itself. Kahn-Harris (2000; 2004) extended his investigation into wider regions (such as Brazil and Israel) and turned to the newer subgenre of extreme metal. In his monograph on extreme metal (2007), the central arguments mainly referred to three keywords: "transgression", "cultural capital", and "reflexive anti-reflexivity". First, Kahn-Harris defined transgression as the fundamental nature of extreme metal, and summarised its three corresponding types as sonic, discursive, and bodily (2007: 30-49). Further, he argued that scene members oriented their practices both towards the experience of transgression through the body and towards the mundane experience of community (ibid: 7). Secondly, he employed the concept of "capital" from Pierre Bourdieu to examine how different cultural capitals interacted within the scene, and between the inside and outside of the scene. In doing so, he defined two principal forms of capital as mundane subcultural capital and transgressive subcultural capital (ibid: 121). Finally, he proposed a particular reflexive anti-reflexivity of the extreme

metal scene. It could be understood as the anti-reflexivity practised by members who are capable of producing reflexive practice within the reflexive space of the scene (ibid: 145).

Meanwhile, "scene" became one of his seminal concepts and theoretical paradigm. Recently, the use of the concept of scene has been increasingly criticised within popular music studies due to its innate ambiguity of being both a geographic and cultural space (Hesmondhalgh 2005: 29). However, the validity of Kahn-Harris's observations was not limited in one certain geographic or cultural space but more holistically associated with the entire genre, and the scene in his concerns was not something closed or static. More importantly, only within such holism can a Chinese metal/extreme metal scene be possibly mapped (see Chapter 1.3).

Considering the marginalisation, Kahn-Harris (2000: 124) pointed out a kind of "double marginality" of Israeli extreme metal scene, from both Israeli society and the musical scene. Most peripheral metal scenes may share this situation. Besides, he explicitly listed Chinese as one of the most marginalised ethnic groups of extreme metal praxis without further explanations. The marginal status of Chinese extreme metal was an outcome of a series of factors, referring to the ideology, aesthetics, commerce, and globalisation. However, there has been still an unexpected prosperity behind such general impression of marginalisation, which I will reveal in the industrial examination (see Chapter 6).

Politics has usually been another key theme for many cultural studies on metal which "are so often structured by political concerns means that the aesthetics and affective specificities of these genres are often sidelined by an approach that judges music for its reactionary and progressive representations and meanings" (Phillipov 2012: 133). In this sense, the metal may be seen as less academically significant because of its relatively inactive or nihilistic attitude towards the politics. However, Phillipov

criticises this viewpoint by underlining the genre's "listening pleasure" or "experience" out of the political reference. "Rather than simply fostering oppressive social hierarchy, metal's conventions of musical aggression, technical skills, and reflexive anti-reflexivity can instead be seen as offering experiences of disequilibrium, power, and intensity that cannot always be evaluated as simply 'progressive' or 'reactionary'" (ibid: 68). For example, in the case of death metal, the conventions of the genre[6], in fact, indicate that the political meanings cannot readily be predicted in advance or simply comprehend from musical and cultural pleasure (ibid: 133). In fact, the politics have been not a central theme of Chinese metal. Instead, I will show a new kind of negotiation between them (see Chapter 7.3).

Another common concern of metal is the issue of the ethics and religion, especially for the countries where religion is a central criterion for ethical values. Purcell (2003: 169) summarises the functions of anti-religious factors in death metal as the aesthetic appeal, fantastic allure, venting of anger, expression of personal philosophy, confrontation of nihilism, and attempts to shock. On a deeper level, such factors may serve as a challenge to the existing ethical system of society, by encouraging a reassessment of the personal and cultural values. Purcell's further explanation is based on the concept of "ethical ground zero" which signifies an ultimate ethical value one can achieve via disowning all culturally-imposed values for a purer ethical system discovered by himself (ibid: 168). In Purcell's research of death metal in the US, such culturally-imposed values are primarily referred to the religion. Then, the sacrilegious elements of death metal can "help to reduce life and its values to a nearly absolute minimum", and, "encourages the exploration and redefinition of ethical values" (ibid: 169). This argument is not directly applicable but illuminating to researching Chinese metal. On the one hand, China has been a non-religious country so that the religion is neither a sort of culturally-imposed values nor a popular theme embraced by Chinese

---

[6] Phillipov summarised five conventions of death metal as: 1. the displacement of the singing voice as an identificatory locus of listening; 2. the disruption of conventional melodic expectations; 3. the adoption of non-narrative song structures; 4. the transgressive lyrics; 5. the reflexive anti-relfexivity.

musicians. On the other hand, the recently rapid development, especially economic, of the country has brought in new forms of culturally-imposed values in many aspects of mundane life: the over utilitarianism and money worship. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesise that Chinese metal artists may tend to employ a series of alternative transgressive elements (such as ancient, horror, mystery, or porn) instead of sacrilege to express their pursuit for the "ethical ground zero".

2.1.5 Global Metal

The term "global metal" here does not refer to the certain discipline, subject, or methodology relevant to the theory of globalisation (which will be discussed later). Rather, it refers to a recent academic tendency of expanding metal studies into broader regions throughout the world over the traditional central areas such as the UK or US. This trend was largely inspired by the genre's increasing popularity and its worldwide spread. The anthropologist Dunn's documentary film "*Global Metal*" in 2007 sketches a few peripheral regions of metal, such as Brazil, Japan, India, Indonesia, Iran, and China. In addition, there were also a range of sporadic researchers focusing on different regions, such as Avelar (2003) on Brazil, Kahn-Harris (2000, 2007) on Israel, Baulch (2007) on Indonesia, LeVine (2008) on Islam, Hecker (2005, 2010, 2012) on the Middle East , Weston (2011) on Basque countries, and the latest collected publication titled "*Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music around the World*" (Wallach, Berger & Greene, 2011),

Within this global metal context, the studies of global metal are not unified on any specific subject, perspective, or methodology, but a consensus that metal should not be seen as the same "thing" located in different regions of the world. Rather, the "thing" would vary in different social contexts. In a strict sense, on one can assert that what metal truly means until every metal scene of the world has been examined. Meanwhile, the validity of the previous conclusions based on a Western perspective

needs to be re-evaluated within others, so is the situation of this research of Chinese metal.

2.2 Studies on Chinese Pop/Rock

Chinese metal has been almost marginalised in local rock/pop studies. For example, the well-known popular music critic, Li Wan (2009: 164) defines the whole history of Chinese rock as six eras, including formation era (1979-1989), rock era (1989-1996), punk era (1996-2002), fashion era (1997-), electric era (1998-), and experimental era (1999-), in which metal was not mentioned. However, metal should be seen as an integral sector of pop music industries, commercially, as well as a significant offshoot of rock, culturally. Thus, Chinese metal cannot be understood separately outside the holistic praxis of Chinese rock/pop.

This section provides a brief review of existing studies on Chinese rock/pop relevant to my research, mainly including a pioneering research of Chinese popular music (Wang 2009), two local and insightful doctoral theses (Fu 2008; Zhou 2013), and two publications from the perspective of western scholars (de Kloet 2010; Chow & de Kloet 2013). At the same time, the ideas of cultural product and capital from Adorno and Bourdieu will be applied to investigate the Chinese popular music industries.

2.2.1 Overview of the Studies

Since the Open Door Policy in 1978, China had been increasingly engaged in the global process of modernization. In this period, rock gradually became a common art to illustrate the cultural conflicts and the interaction of social forces of the country. Thus, the politics and identity became inevitably central concerns (Brace & Friedlander 1992; Andrew 1994; Pekacz 1994; Baranovitch 2003; Wong 2005; Matusitz 2009; de Kloet 2010). However, since the mid-2000s, re-considerations and criticisms against those early thoughts had emerged (Huang 2001, 2003; Stokes 2004; Yan 2005, 2006; Rong 2007; Wang 2007; Qu 2012). The core argument was that the relationship between Chinese rock and the politics might have been exaggerated and

misunderstood by many Western scholars who tended to project their ideas and imaginations into a different Chinese phenomenon (Qu 2012: 75-77). The situation was partly inspired by the consciousness of Western-centralism (in which things are explained and understood in Western paradigms), and their aspiration of returning to the dreamy 1960s (which might reoccur in China of the 1908s). In fact, the simplistic focus referring to the political dimension of Chinese rock especially inspired by the student democracy movement of the late 1980s had already been replaced by a multiplicity of musical styles and artistic praxes (Huang 2003: 199). Therefore, Stokes (2004: 44) concluded that "until we can comprehend the notion of a non-Western modernity (or post-modernity), our attempts to analyse Chinese rock music, and any field of Chinese popular culture is condemned to continue to be reproductions of Western ideas of modernity". In addition, there were also a few investigations of Chinese rock/pop from other perspectives, such as historical (Kloet 2005a; Xu 2008; Campbell 2011), cultural (Moore 2005; Fu 2008; Kloet 2010; Tuohy 2011; Zhou 2013; Groenewegen-Lau 2014), and industrial (Friedlander 1991; Kloet 2005b; Xu 2006; Ren 2012; Richard 2013; Ke 2014).

As the first annalistic examination on Chinese popular music phenomenon after 1978 (reform and opening-up), Wang (2009) examines the features, functions, and the interaction between popular music and the social-cultural environment based on the historical observations. By dividing five stages of the development of popular music between 1978 and 2003 (involving the beginning in 1978-1985, the 1st peak period in 1986-1988, adjustment period in 1989-1992, the 2nd peak period in 1993-1996, and new development period in 1997-2003), he explained the process that why the older styles and attitudes had constantly been replaced with the newer ones. For example, in the early 1980s, a new type of female vocal technique influenced by Hong Kong and Taiwan was criticised as demoralisation and an inferior imitation of the Western capitalism (ibid: 13). However, it became popular throughout the country and was widely applied by the female artists in the following decade, as a consequence of the

deepening of reform and opening-up.

More significantly, Wang (ibid: 273-279) pointed out three types of interaction between popular music and social environment: causality, reversibility, and selectivity. Specifically, the causality describes how the social changes impact on the advent and evolvement of popular music, while the reversibility refers to how popular music exerts reactive influences on the social progress. Outside this process, the selectivity serves as an intentional encouragement to or suppression against certain genres/subgenres by the nation forces such as politics, economics, cultures, laws, and educations. Notably, metal was slightly mentioned under the name of Chinese rock when discussing the development (ibid: 71-77) and the new trend of rock (ibid: 199). In a genealogical sense, Chinese rock and Chinese metal did share a similar ideology, identity, and economic situation in the early 1990s. Although Wang's study helps to establish an environment of Chinese metal in its early time, it is problematic to comprehend metal simply as "a form of rock". Rather, metal had been subsequently separated from rock as an independent genre with unique musical styles, aesthetic pursuits, industrial patterns, and social meanings.

2.2.2 Two Significant Local Academic Theses

Apart from Wang's study, another two Chinese doctoral theses are significant, including Fu (2008)'s *"The Ceremony of Catharsis: Anthropological Study of Rock Music in Mainland China"* and Zhou (2013)'s *"Researching Chinese Popular Music in a Cultural Perspective"*. More specifically, Fu describes the whole rock praxis in the mainland China as a quasi-religion phenomenon with "rebellion" as its "basis of faith". Particularly, the live of rock is seen as an analogy of a cathartic ceremony with a system of meanings, consisting of a series of symbols of perception (2008: 80)[7]. In the live, the performer, audience, stage, and auditorium stand for the God, believer,

---

[7] According to the author, the "symbols of perception" refer to all the perceptual forms involved in the rock praxis, such as the music, lyrics, performers, audiences, and venues.

altar, and temple in the ceremony (ibid: 82), respectively. By examining the Beijing International Popular Music Festival in 2007, the author argues that the collectively fanatical behaviours in the rock live (such as stage diving, waving lighters, raising the middle finger, or pogo) are ritualised and symbolised. When the ordinary behaviours are endowed with extraordinary meanings, both the performers and audiences would successfully transcend and deconstruct the "selves" of the reality (ibid: 83). Fu's view is well echoed with the philosophical interpretation of Greek tragedy in which "the artist loses himself in the characters as he writes the play, and the audiences lose themselves in the characters as they watch the play" (Knepp, in Irwin 2013: 100). Furthermore, Fu defines the four social values of Chinese rock as aesthetics, cohesion, catharsis, and commerce (ibid: 89-91).

Most of Fu's insights of Chinese rock could be shared with Chinese metal. However, there are still a few questions. First, the term "rock" has become increasingly ambiguous covering too many subgenres. The studies around "rock" today may usually result in a simplification of assuming that the subgenres of rock are essentially similar. For example, the performance of folk music and metal are quite different in many aspects (such as the music *per se* and audience) although they often appear in a common rock festival (such as Midi Festival). Secondly, the cathartic function of popular music (even the arts) is not anything new. The question is that whether such cathartic process is always the same with different conditions? In other words, it is important to clarify that in a specific time, space, and certain social circumstance, which subgenre functions as a catharsis to which group of people in which way and with what effects. Finally, the author sees the function of rock as a deconstruction of the audiences' "selves". However, it may be necessary to answer a further question that what are reconstructed in such process. Thus, based on Fu's work, I will improve and deepen his conclusions by specifically focusing on a piece of extreme metal live (see Chapter 7.2.2).

Zhou (2013) explores the innate values of popular music in the contemporary Chinese society, particularly the ideology and aesthetics. First, popular music should be seen as both a social and an aesthetic ideology (2013: 101), and its commerciality is not a "sin" (ibid: 112). In fact, popular music has already become a dominant cultural phenomenon in the mainstream society of China. Secondly, Chinese rock has been experiencing a self-adjusting to enter the "mainstream market" and "mainstream ideology" (ibid: 116). It can be exemplified by the local rock star Wang Feng who has been successfully keeping a balance between the identity of artistry and commerce, pioneer and mass, rock and pop. Thirdly, when discussing the aesthetic modernity of Chinese pop, Zhou (ibid: 129) argues that the "kitsch" has gradually become a common public aesthetic experience. "Kitsch" here is a term referring to the music that primarily embraces the entertainment and commercial profit, regardless of ethical and moral norms.

Zhou's study has pointed out a dilemma in most Chinese contemporary arts, namely the fundamental contradiction of Chinese traditional aesthetic pursuits and modern industrial/commercial civilisations. This contradiction gives rise to a set of questions around Chinese metal: how does Chinese metal contribute to the country's formation of modernity? Whether there is also a kitsch tendency in Chinese metal? Particularly, in term of extreme metal, how should we understand the paradox between the genre's anti-commercialism stance and its inevitably commercial involvement?

2.2.3 Examining Chinese Pop/Rock from Western Perspectives

Based on a long-term fieldwork in mainland China, de Kloet (2010) made a great contribution to the contemporary Chinese popular cultural studies. Although the main concerns of his work were more concentrated on the youth culture of China, there were a few insightful points around metal issues. He first used a concept "Chinese rock mythology" to provide Chinese rock with a set of criteria from the current

western perspective (ibid: 26). For example, authenticity was seen as the central factor of the mythology, which also settled the barrier between rock and pop. Moreover, he illustrated a brief development of Chinese metal as a part of Chinese rock (ibid: 54-60), in which he insightfully pointed out a contradiction existed at the beginning of Chinese metal. For instance, in the case of *Tang Dynasty*, the band was labelled as authentic for their exploration of "Chineseness" in metal music, but at the same time, such practice was perhaps less an ideological stance than a mere marketing device (ibid: 60). Unfortunately, de Kloet did not go further with this topic, and the authenticity issues of Chinese metal should not be only linked to the stances of commercialization but the coherence of the artists' attitudes and behaviours (see Chapter 7.4).

More recently, a new proposition has been brought in by Chow and de Kloet (2013), that how rock and pop music have influenced on and helped to construct a new form of "Chineseness" in China's late-socialism period. By examining Hong Kong's in-between identity and its popular music praxis, the authors argue that the Chineseness has been changing and became an increasing paradox. For example, as a musical or lyrical juxtaposition of traditional Chinese elements with trendy global pop styles, the China Wind phenomenon in Hong Kong evokes Chineseness but also undermines it by articulating something quite different from Chinese traditional value and culture (2013: 77). The similar paradox and struggle of identity can also be observed and further examined in the acculturation of Chinese metal (see Chapter 5.3).

Although Chow and de Kloet's work hardly focused on metal or mainland China directly, it is still insightful in three aspects. First, the metal studies in China can be put forward to ask that how this relatively new genre (since 1990) has impacted on the evolvement of Chineseness and unique ethos of the nation. Secondly, Chinese metal itself is an outcome of acculturation. In the clash of Chinese and western cultures, it is

important to clarify what has been eliminated and generated. Finally, the in-between identity could be a good starting point to examine the cultural industries in different cities with different development levels.

2.2.4 Popular Music Industries in China

The whole consideration of Chinese metal industries will be based on the sociologists Adorno (1990) and Bourdieu (1989)'s ideas and theoretical framework of cultural product, cultural capital and field, which will be specifically explained in Chapter 6.1.

Metal praxis is an integral component of popular music industries. Given that this research on Chinese metal mainly focuses on the period from 1990 to 2013, the situation of the popular music industries in such period must be considered a background. First, the idea "industry" was replaced by "industries" (Williamson & Cloonan 2007: 314-320). The former used to be merely referred to the recording industry, while the later indicates a range of industrial praxes around music. Secondly, the traditional recording industry was largely replaced by the digital. Thirdly, a variety of music streaming services has risen recently. Despite that Chinese popular music and metal industries might not experience an asynchronous development with the West, these changes have inevitably influenced on the producing, distributing, and consuming in many aspects.

In the case of the mainland China, Ke (2014: 123) divided the development of popular music business into three stages. The first lasted from 1978 to the early 1990s, when popular music gradually became a mainstream cultural phenomenon and a number of popular music recording companies were established. The second was from the early 1990s to 2000, marked by the completely traditional recording-dominated industrial chain, including production, publication, distribution, authorization, and consumption. The final stage was from 2001 to the present, when the traditional industrial chain was

intensively shocked by digital music and TV reality shows. For example, 2003 saw the peak of the recording and video industry in China with the gross sales of 2.755 billion RMB, and a general decline began after 2004 (Wang 2006: 23). Generally, from 1990 to 2013 (overlapping the period of my research), there was a clear tendency of moving from the singular recording industry to multiple entertainment industries.

Piracy is another serious issue of Chinese popular music industries. According to Ren (2012), the value of the music market in the mainland China was about 50 billion RMB in 2000, while the legitimate income was only 1.4 billion. The statistics of IFPI in 2005 also showed that 85 percent of the whole music products in the country's market were piracy (ibid: 40). This situation was largely caused by the imperfections of the original copyright law[8]. At the same time, the free downloading technology in the internet era was also directly causal (ibid: 41). Then, I will answer the question that how Chinese metal adapted itself with different industrial models of popular music in different periods? As a non-mainstream genre, whether the metal industries have experienced similar or different situations compared to the mainstream ones, and how these industrial situations would impact on the genre's development?

Recently, a few studies (Florida 2012, 2014; Blistein 2014) attempted to reveal the relationship between metal's prosperity and a nation's wealth. By drawing a world map which tracks the number of metal bands of per 100,000 residents according to the data from *Encyclopaedia Metallum*, Florida (2014) argues that "the genre holds less sway in the ravaged post-industrial places of its birth (such as the US or UK), but remains insanely popular in Scandinavian countries known for their relative wealth,

---

[8] More specifically, according to the Article 43 of the Copyright Law of the People's Republic of China in 1990, "a radio station or television station may broadcast, for noncommercial purposes, a published sound recording without seeking permission from, or paying remuneration to, the copyright owner, performer and producer of the sound recording". In its 2nd version in 2010, the Article 43 was revised into "in broadcasting a published work of another, the radio or television station may be allowed to acquire no license from the copyright owner. However, it shall pay compensation thereto".

robust social safety nets, and incredibly high quality of life"[9], and "though metal may be the music of choice for some alienated working-class males, it enjoys its greatest popularity in the most advanced, most tolerant, and knowledge-based places in the world". Similarly, Blistein (2014) highlights the proportional relationship between socio-economic factors and metal music, stating that the wealthier nations do not only have the media outlets and consumers necessary to make a genre thrive, but also provide young musicians with the tools necessary to become competent players. As an intentional exploitation by a few mainstream labels who tried to seek business opportunity by transplanting metal into China from the West, Chinese metal experienced a temporary prosperity in its early time in the 1990s. While since 2000, Chinese metal has mainly stayed underground, walking on the edge of popular music culture and industries. Geographically, Chinese metal presents an extreme imbalance of popularity and prosperity in different areas with different social wealth and economic level of the country. In this logic, portraying an integral image of Chinese metal industries could further discuss this innate contradiction of metal praxis, namely anti-commercialization against pro-commercialization.

---

[9] For more about the rank of the national welfare, see
http://www.economist.com/news/21566430-where-be-born-2013-lottery-life

2.3 Theories from Other Relevant Fields

From a holistic perspective, Rice (2003: 166) has defined four metaphors of music as art, social behaviour, a symbolic system, and commodity. It implies that the contemporary studies of music (particularly popular music) usually span different fields and disciplines. Thus, apart from the studies mentioned before, this research also refers to a few theories and methodologies from a broader field, such as traditional Chinese aesthetics, philosophy, and globalisation/ cosmopolitanism.

2.3.1 Chinese Traditional Aesthetics

The aesthetics was not a common theme in the existing metal studies. However, it is an important medium bridging the text and context of the music. For example, most aforementioned metal studies tended to illustrate either the "genre *per se*" (such as the textual analysis and history) or its "effects" (such as the socio-cultural interpretation). However, the relation between the two has been ignored. Why the sounds of metal are considered transgressive, and what the coherence between the sounds (as a physical/acoustic being) and transgression (as a cultural idea) is? On the one hand, psychological results may help to demonstrate an individual's response to the metal sounds, on a biological level. On the other hand, the human perceptions were formed in and by histories and practices. Thus, a comparison between traditional Chinese aesthetics (particularly the aesthetic ideas of music) and metal aesthetics could be one of the key points to reveal the meanings and values of metal in the contemporary Chinese society (see Chapter 7.1.1).

Zhao (2006: 22) defines the traditional metaphysics of China as a "moral metaphysics" compared to the "natural metaphysics" of the West. That means traditional Chinese aesthetics have more emphasised on ethical and moral concerns. As the most dominant school of thoughts in China, Confucianism has been heavily influencing on

traditional Chinese aesthetics, particularly the views of music (Cai 1981, 1986; Jiang 1984; Xiu 1986; Chen 2003). As one of its essential criteria of musical aesthetics, Doctrine of the Mean primarily emphasises on the ethical attribute and formal moderation of the music (Xiu 1986: 88-90). In other words, the themes, lyrics, and artists' appearances must obey certain moral and ethical norms of the society. At the same time, the musical factors need be properly limited. For example, the pitch should be not too high or low, the tempo is neither too fast nor slow, and the music is not too emotional to be out of the rational control (Cai 1986: 12-14). For more than two thousand years, these notions had constituted and may be still a part of the collective unconsciousness (Jung 1991) of Chinese aesthetics. However, metal shows its fundamental subversions against the aesthetic conventions of moderation by pursuing musical extremity and heaviness. Thus, Chinese metal can be seen as a natural but symbolic rebellious and radical against social norms.

2.3.2 Existentialism

Philosophical ideas also play an important role in comprehending metal. This type of study is usually accomplished collectively by the scholars with a variety of philosophical paradigms or approaches, targeting a certain artist, subgenre, or phenomenon (Irwin 2007, 2012; Pattison & Richardson 2012). It may be difficult to exactly judge that whether they are employing philosophical theories to explain the metal phenomenon, or using the latter as examples to explain certain philosophical ideas. These studies still give rise to an extra significant dimension of discussing metal as an object of metaphysical thinking, apart from as cultural production and artistic creation.

Among the different philosophical ideas, existentialism might be the most applicable to metal music. According to Irwin (2013: 4)'s interpretation, existentialism is understood as a universal worldview that "reacts to an absurd or meaningless world

by urging individuals to overcome alienation, oppression, and despair through freedom and self-creation". By the case study of *Black Sabbath*, he highlights three central aspects of the existentialism's applications, including facing the absurdity, maintaining the authenticity, and making sense of the world. More specifically, while the fundamental attitude of existentialism is not wallowing but overcoming the absurdity, in reality, the artistic creativity can be a proper response to the pain and difficulty in life (ibid: 7). Moreover, man is nothing but that which he makes himself be so that one should always prevent from losing himself as a free individual by opposing the conformity (ibid: 8). Finally, man needs to make sense of a world that does not make sense (ibid: 9). These essential ideas are echoed by a few scholars in another case study on *Metallica* (Wisnewski 2007; Lindholm 2007; Fosl 2007; Sotos 2007).

Existentialism can be fittingly used to understand Chinese metal in the current society. China has been experiencing a series of great social upheavals with the country's modernization since the late 1970s when the old value systems collapsed and new ones established. The great changes resulted in a dramatic imbalance between the material and spiritual civilisation. In these transitions, the old sense of the world (especially for the youth whose worldview was being formed) became ambiguous and even absurd[10]. Metal, very likely, symbolically provides an alternative approach to understanding the world and self- expression.

2.3.3 Globalisation and Localisation

Finally, for any discussion of the current cultural phenomenon, the considerations of globalisation and cosmopolitanism are inevitable. Chinese metal initially emerged in the early 1990s, inspired by the genre's globally spreading process. Unlike many

---

[10] An exemplified consequence of this pervasive sense of lost and absurdity is the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. Notably, it is still a controversial and taboo topic in mainland China today for politic reasons.

European countries or the US, the whole development of Chinese metal has happened in a tension of globalisation and localisation. Thus there are questions must be answered: how Chinese metal was formed and influenced by the West; how the local factors were added into the genre and contributed to a particular Chinese identity or say Chineseness; what role is Chinese metal playing in the contemporary global metal scene?

Regev (2013: 5) summarises the concept of cultural globalisation as a three-way circuit:

· Cultural materials that originated in the West flow into non-western countries as models of modernity;

· The non-westerns selectively adapt elements and components from those materials and merge them with indigenous traditional materials;

· The non-western cultural products created in such way flow back to the West with some influences and inspirations.

The result of this process is an "aesthetic cosmopolitanism" by which he stresses on the similarities more than differences of the modern popular music praxis in the global context, such as the "Pop-rock". According to Regev, the term refers to the "music consciously created and produced by using amplification, electric and electronic instruments, sophisticated recording equipment, by employing certain techniques of supposedly untrained vocal delivery, mostly those signifying immediacy of expression and spontaneity, and by filtering all these through sound editing, modification, and manipulation devices" (ibid: 17). On the one hand, the term illustrates the common characteristics among almost all the modern popular music genres and subgenres, including hip-hop, R&B, electronic dance, metal, punk,

alternative/indie, progressive rock, and new folk, *etc.* (ibid: 32, 84). On the other hand, the term tentatively evades the difficulty of defining rock and pop. In doing this, he (ibid: 160) argues that there is a growing habitual familiarity of pop-rock, shared by the individuals across the world. Moreover, as the same expressive materials of pop-rock have been increasingly applied to produce the experience of cultural uniqueness of different national formations, the cultural overlap between these formations has been enhanced and intensified (ibid: 178). As a direct consequence, the aesthetic cosmopolitanism has been eventually formed along with the shrink of the mutual sense of otherness between different national or ethnic formations, on the one hand, and the expansion of the proportion of shared aesthetic perceptions, on the other.

Regev's conclusion very well explains why a universal similarity of global metal (such as the musical features) can be formed and shared in the Chinese metal scene. However, if we acknowledge that the cosmopolitanism is necessary, then what happened in that process? This question can be only answered by examining the mutual assimilation between the original metal centres (western countries) and the peripherals (non-western countries), centres and centres, and peripherals and peripherals. Since the whole history of Chinese metal perfectly reflects the aforementioned three-way circuit of globalisation, I will argue that in the cosmopolitanism process, there is inevitable identity struggle which may bring about the weird phenomenon such as Chinese agriculture metal (see Chapter 5.4).

Another noteworthy concept is geo-musicology, as an inter-discipline combining the geography and musicology. Geo-musicology is still a relatively new subfield of cultural geography, with its methodologies and theoretical approaches having yet to be firmly established. In his pioneering work, Krims (2007) examines the relationship between music and urban geography, demonstrating how the geography of urban spaces influence the way music being experienced, performed and consumed, and

how the music depicts the city. From a similar angle, Harrison (2010) reveals the relationship between the industrial geography of Birmingham and the advent of metal. By examining the city's intense industrialisation and growing market of youth culture during the post-war period, he argues that physical and social surroundings were what gave birth to a new place-specific form of music, and metal music could only have been born out of the industrial terrain of Birmingham (ibid: 153).

Both Krim and Harrison's ideas of city-determinism are effective to explain why certain metal scenes have been formed in specific areas, such as the thrash metal scene in the Bay Area, death metal scene in Tampa and Gothenburg, and the black metal scene in Norway. They can also be employed to understand the different metal praxes in different areas of China. However, these conclusions could be problematic when considering the globalisation, because that the cities were treated as isolated spaces, and new musical genres were assumed to be generated inside these spaces regardless of other external impacts. Moreover, they fail to explain why metal can be located in the cities with completely different natural and social surroundings such as the US and Islamic areas. In fact, China is not isolated, and Chinese metal has never been "generated from the inside" but more "spread from the outside" Therefore, what matters is that how the Chinese cities and metal adapt mutually, rather than what the cities have generated or determined.

2.4 The Secondary Literature

In this thesis, Chinese local metal magazines and a series of metal documentaries are considered the secondary literature. Compared to the studies above, they may be relatively less academic in both forms and contents. Nevertheless, given that Chinese metal has yet to be widely concerned in academia, this literature will be crucially significant as an archival resource containing plenty of original data as well as the initial understandings or even misunderstanding about Chinese metal.

Although the majority of the metal documentaries do not directly focus on Chinese metal (except "*Global Metal*"), they indeed contribute to define and structure the holistic metal discourse and its various subgenres. After all, it is impossible to discuss Chinese metal separately outside such holism. More details about how they are employed will be clarified in the next chapter of methodology. A full list of the secondary literature is provided in Appendix 1.

Summary of Chapter

Chinese metal has been almost absent in the existing studies. This situation brings huge difficulties but also the innovativeness and potential academic significance to my research. As a contemporary and transplanted cultural phenomenon, how was metal formed as a genre in China? What are the identities of Chinese metal? How to understand Chinese metal as a cultural product in contemporary cultural industries? What are the meanings and values of metal in such modern society? All these questions will be answered in this thesis for the first time. To fulfil these tasks, I properly placed my research in a multi-dimensional academic position by considering a range of existing studies. Specifically, metal studies serve as a direct resource of the knowledge, theories, and methodologies; Chinese rock/pop studies establish a broad local cultural and industrial background; the theories of aesthetics, philosophy, and globalisation provide expanded perspectives of identity examination and social interpretation. The following chapter will address the issues of methodologies to explain how I will approach the answers to those proposed questions.

Chapter 3 Methodology

The central aim of this research is to comprehensively understand the metal music as a cultural phenomenon in the contemporary mainland China, involving its histories, identities, industries, and social meanings. Multiple methodologies are necessarily required to accomplish the tasks, mainly including data collection, textual analysis, and personal fieldwork.

This chapter explains that why the approaches are chosen and how they are applied in the corresponding sections throughout the thesis. As the first overall study on Chinese metal, the primary task is to demonstrate a series of "fact" by data collection, based on which the further discussions and examinations can be possibly made. Therefore, the first section explains how to obtain such necessary information from online resources and secondary literature. As clarified in Chapter 1, this research examines Chinese metal as a genre, which means that the textual and contextual concerns are equally significant. The second section introduces that how the textual analysis was conducted. Notably, the textual analysis in this thesis refers to subject matters, graphic elements, and videos, in addition to the traditional concerns of music. Besides this deskwork, the third section explains the design of the fieldwork, including where to hold the fieldwork, whom to speak to, in which forms, and what questions to be asked. After that, the expected outcomes and limitations are clarified.

3.1 Data Collection

Data constitute the most crucial basis for portraying the histories, identities, and industries of Chinese metal, based on which further socio-cultural interpretations can be made. Unfortunately, there has been no existing official archival resource to apply directly. Thus, collecting data to represent a relatively complete image about Chinese metal becomes the primary task of this research. In practice, three approaches were employed to obtain the data, including online resources, local magazines/fanzines, and personal interviews (will be discussing in the fieldwork section).

3.1.1 Online Resource

In this research, the online resources first refer to the local websites themed metal and the affiliated forums,[1] mainly including:

- *Encyclopaedia Metallum* http://www.metal-archives.com
- *Paranoid* http://www.paranoidmetal.com
- *Under FM Black Narcissus* http://www.underfm.com
- *So Silent* http://www.sosilent.com
- *Metal Sonata* http://www.metalsonata.com
- *Metal Hub* http://metalhub.org
- *China Doom Metal* http://www.moldbody.net
- The metal forum in *Area Death* http://www.areadeath.net/forum/index.php
- The metal forum in *Guitar China* http://bbs.guitarchina.com/forum-91-1.html

By accessing into all of these websites, the historical records, interviews, and other directly relevant materials were collected, which would play a crucial role in forming

---

[1] In fact, there were more metal-associated websites yet have been already closed now. Their particular historical values will be discussed in the later chapters in this thesis. However, they are not mentioned in methodology since they could not be directly used as available data resource for this research.

the Chinese metal history in Chapter 4. For example, there was a specific section

called "exclusive interview"[2] in *Area Death* which listed a few interviews of local

metal bands and labels conducted by the website's editors. At the same time, a

discussion about the development of Chinese extreme metal was proposed in *Area*

Death's metal forum[3], in which a lot of rare information from metal artists, fans, and

cultural observers were involved.

In addition, *Encyclopaedia Metallum* served as a reference standard of translation to

avoid potential misunderstandings (between Chinese and English). Specifically, the

appellations in this thesis such as label name, band name, and album/single title

would be kept consistent with the translations used in *Encyclopaedia Metallum*, if

applicable. For those not included in *Encyclopaedia Metallum*, this thesis applied its

translations.

Secondly, the online social media of the individual metal artists and bands were

considered. It is notable that most of the common worldwide-used online media such

as Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube are blocked in the mainland China by the country's

controversial policy of the internet censorship named "The Great Firewall of China"

to control the security of public speech[4]. Instead, Sina microblog (usually called Sina

Weibo) and Douban are the most used online social media in the country. Sina Weibo

(http://www.weibo.com/) is the biggest social media in China today, which, as

reported, had over 167,000,000 active users per month by the September of 2014[5].

For the local metal artists and bands, Weibo is one of the most effective and

frequently used platforms for self-expression, such as introducing new albums,

---

[2] See, http://www.areadeath.net/main/list.php?c=interviews&s=date&w=desc&o=&p=&d=0
[3] The discussion was originally proposed by the Chinese metal writer, Demogorgon, in 2011, and it is still ongoing now, see http://www.areadeath.net/forum/viewthread.php?tid=15625&extra=page%3D1
In some sense, it could be seen as a clue and an informal archive of Chinese extreme metal. However, many arguments therein need to be re-checked before applying.
[4] For example, the Chinese government blocked access to Facebook across the entire country in July 2009 in a response to the unrest aroused by dissident information. For more, see Stone's report in 2014 http://news.sky.com/story/1206329/the-great-firewall-blocking-facebook-in-china and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Websites_blocked_in_China
[5] "The report of development of Sina Weibo users", see http://www.199it.com/archives/324955.html

promoting lives, doing reviews about other artists' music, or other general topics. Meanwhile, the responses from their followers and fans are also noteworthy. The outcomes obtained from Weibo mainly included: 1. the real everyday life of the scene members; 2. the past events and news about metal; 3. the various attitudes towards metal of different artists and fans; 4. the association between metal participants and the general public. This information was selectively used when considering the local metal scene and identities of Chinese metal in Chapter 5.

Douban (http://www.douban.com/) is the most effective self-promotion media for the artists and bands to establish a network with other people who share the same interests, including news, events, photos, tracks, videos, *etc*. Almost every local bands and labels have their Douban homepage, which ensures that the basic information of them is always available. At the same time, one can create a Douban Group focusing on certain subjects to share information among the members. For metal-related groups, live and album are usually hot topics. Thus, it is possible to produce a series of detailed statistics in different aspects of the local metal industries. More specifically, by visiting the homepages of all the local metal labels, the total number of the released recordings was obtained. In addition, in those big metal groups (with over 1,000 members), many important local lives and other activities such as "Metal Cathedra" and "Heavy Metal Convention" could be traced. In doing this, both a quantitative and qualitative observations of Chinese metal industries was conducted. These observations were further comprehended in the theoretical frameworks of Adorno and Bourdieu's "cultural product", "cultural capital", and "field" in Chapter 6.

Thirdly, in addition to Sina Weibo and Douban, there are three important live promoters with more complete and reliable data about the situation of the overseas metal bands performing in China, including:

- *Mort Productions* (Label) http://www.mort-prod.com/show/show.htm

- *Painkiller* (Magazine) http://www.painkillermag.com/mag/

- *Dragon Shout* (Live promoter) http://www.dragonshout.com/

The data from these websites helped to evaluate the significance of the metal live industry in China. The numbers of these lives by overseas bands in different periods may reflect the development of the local metal live market. More importantly, the different subgenres reflect the musical preference of Chinese audiences. To a certain extent, it could also demonstrate the interaction between Chinese and global metal scene.

Finally, the online audio-visual resources were necessarily considered. For example, the recently established online metal radio *Metal Sonata*[6] presented 41 programs during December 2013 and May 2014, a big proportion of which were spot interviews with newer local metal bands. By going through all these programs, the useful information was picked for structuring the recent Chinese metal scene. Overall, there were mainly three types of video data in this research: interviews, music videos, and live videos. The interview videos were more relevant to data collection, while the latter two were mainly used as samples for textual analysis. Since that YouTube is not legally available in the mainland China, one of the consequences is that many audio-visual resources that have been officially banned in China are available on YouTube (it will be explained later)[7]. Therefore, YouTube was, in fact, playing a very important role in this research, especially for the metal works containing controversial topics such as the politics.

---

[6] See: http://www.metalsonata.com/

[7] In practice, it is still possible to use YouTube in mainland China by applying a variety of VPN software. But, such behaviours are theoretically illegal. Fortunately, this research has been conducted in both mainland China and the UK, so the video analysis of YouTube was/is not a problem.

3.1.2 Local Magazines/Fanzines

The local metal magazines and fanzines are also important archives in providing information. Given that there are few Chinese metal bands enjoying a truly long career and worldwide reputation[8] (so be considered representative), the whole history of Chinese metal cannot be portrayed by merely emphasising on certain famous or long-lived individuals. Instead, the history is collectively constituted by different levels of participants in periods. Then, the potential problem is that many important participants (especially those more underground artists) who used to play important roles in Chinese metal praxis may have already ceased their careers. However, their works, attitudes, and activities at that time were the integral parts to represent the corresponding historical periods. Fortunately, many of such information were preserved in a few local metal magazines (see Appendix 1). The most long-lived local metal magazine "*Painkiller*" is primarily significant, which has been witnessing the whole Chinese metal history since 2000. After reviewing its 50 volumes from 2000 to 2013, 64 noteworthy articles were collected including the interviews with local metal artists, introductions of local labels and albums, and reports of the local live industry.

As discussed in Chapter 1, metal is defined as a genre in this thesis. Thus, the different contexts of metal such as New Wave of British Heavy Metal in the UK, Bay Area thrash metal in the US, or black metal in Norway are important to obtain a whole understanding of the genre. In this sense, a few documentaries were taken into account, such as "*Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*" (Dunn & McFadyen 2005), "*Get Thrashed: The Story of Thrash Metal*" (Ernst 2006), "*Heavy: The Story of Metal*" (Warren 2006), "*Until the Light Takes Us*" (Aites & Ewell 2008), "*Heavy Metal Britannia*" (Rodley 2010), and "*Metal Evolution*" (Dunn & McFadyen 2011).

---

[8] Although the local well-known bands such as *Tang Dynasty*, *Black Panther*, *Suffocated*, *Narakam*, and *Tomahawk* had relatively long careers of more or less twenty years, some of them (such as *Tang Dynasty* and *Black Panther*) could be seen as metal only in their early periods, and the others (*Suffocated*, *Narakam*, and *Tomahawk*) have been merely focusing on one certain subgenre of metal exclusively in their whole career.

Notably, "*Global Metal*" (Dunn & McFadyen 2007) was the only one directly referring to Chinese metal. The interviews with five key figures of Chinese metal (involving Kaiser Kuo, *Spring and Autumn*, ex-*Tang Dynasty* guitarist; Nong Yong, *Ritual Day* vocalist; Wang Xiao, 666 Rock Shop Manager; Yang Yu, *Painkiller* editor; and Zhang Feng, MIDI School Principal) were considered when discussing the Chinese metal scene in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

3.2 Textual Analysis

Textual analyses accounted for a considerable proportion of this research, not made merely for the sake of analysis but for interpreting meanings. There was not a separate chapter of "textual analysis" in the thesis. Instead, each analysis was clearly connected to specific discussions in relevant chapters throughout the whole thesis (mainly referred to Chapter 5 and Chapter 7). Moreover, this thesis also attempted to bridge the long-standing methodological gap between musicology and social-cultural studies, as Tagg described "music and nothing else" and "everything except the music" (cited by Bennett 2014: 342). On the one side, there is certain information that cannot be observed in the contexts but is only decoded from the texts. For example, the exploration of the identity of Chinese metal encompasses various participants such as the artists, managers, promoters, fans, as well as the musical works *per se*. In this case, the textual analysis will be necessarily applied. On the other side, the results from the textual analysis are more descriptive than interpretive before being understood in further contextual concerns. For example, the textual analysis may reveal that a lot of Chinese traditional elements are employed in metal music. Then, these conclusions should be interpreted in a broader cultural environment, such as a manifestation of the tension between localisation and globalisation.

Exploring music meanings by a musicological method usually suggest a pre-assumption that the musical communication is one-way, with musical meanings flowing from the composer, through the transparent medium of the performer, to the listener (Duffy 2005: 678). What is lacking is music as a dialogic agency in a meaning system. Theoretically, the meaning of the musical text is referred to semiotics and structuralism which primarily concern the meanings of signs in a given system (Longurst 2007: 150-179). In any given analysis, according to Keat and Urry (1975: 124), the system should be understood as a set of interrelated elements (such as the musical and identity characteristics of Chinese metal are mutually affected), and

individual elements such as the music, lyrics, cover art, and performance are not isolated but forming the meaning collectively. Inspired by Shuker's (2008: 93) re-definition of the text of popular music, this thesis examined the "text" of metal in four dimensions: music, subject matters, graphs, and videos. The interconnections between these different dimensions were also taken into account. The following paragraphs explain the aims of each analysis and the corresponding chapters/sections they were applied, the selection of the samples, and how the analyses are conducted, respectively. A table categorising the use of different textual analyses is provided at the end of this section.

3.2.1 Musical Analysis

Many scholars have pointed out the problems and difficulties of employing traditional musicological methods to deal with popular music text (Tagg 1982; Middleton 1990: 103-107; Moore 2003). Longhurst (2007: 152) summarises these critiques as five key points:

· There is a tendency to use inappropriate or loaded terminology.

· There is a skewed focus. Traditionally, musicology is good with pitch structures and harmony, much less good with rhythm, poor with timbre, and this hierarchy is arguably not congruent with that obtaining in most pop music.

· The "notational centricity" tends to equate the music with a score, which leads to an overemphasis on features that can be notated easily (such as fixed pitches) at the expense of the others which cannot (complex rhythmic detail, pitch nuance, sound qualities).

· Musical meaning is equated with an idealised image of the "work",

contextualised process turned into an abstract product.

· Listening is monologic, which means that what the analyst hears is assumed to correlate with "the music", and the possibility of variable aural readings is ignored.

In this climate, new approaches have been being explored and discussed (Walser 1993; Middleton 1993; Tagg 1987; 2003; Moore 2012, Appen, 2015), especially the newer popular musicology (Hawkins 1996; Scott 2009). However, it is important to realise that there still has been no unified methodology for analysing popular music thus far (maybe never will be). Instead, the approaches would be highly determined by the specific objects and purposes.

Musical analysis needs to be used cautiously, as Walser (1993: 20) warned that "the danger of musical analysis is always that social meanings and power struggles become the forest that is lost for the trees of notes and chords. The necessity of musical analysis is that those notes and chords represent the differences that make some songs seem highly meaningful and powerful and others boring, inept, or irrelevant". The aim of musical analysis in this thesis was to explore the musical identities and stylistic evolvements of Chinese metal (in Chapter 5). It contains five pieces of metal works of different periods, including "*No Place to Hide*" by *Black Panther* in 1991; "*The Shadow of Ancestor*" by *Overload* in 1993; "*Nobody Looks up to You*" by *Twisted Machine* in 2001; "*Ritual Day*" by *Ritual Day* in 2003; "*Darkness Falling before Eyes*" by *Narakam* in 2008. Also, the album "*Nine Treasures*" by the folk metal band *Nine Treasures* in 2013 was used to investigate the issues of globalisation and localisation. The unique phenomenon of agriculture metal was revealed by the analysis of "*Everything Dies*" by *Yunmbi*.

The musical analysis was primarily focused on the core riffs[9] of these samples. In terms of general popular music styles, "*New Harvard Dictionary of Music*" (Randel 1986: 708) defines riff as "a brief, relaxed phrase repeated over changing melodies". It often serves as "a refrain or melodic figure[10], often played by the rhythm section or solo instruments that form the basis or accompaniment of a musical composition" (ibid). Furthermore, Middleton (1990: 29) sees riff as a feature derived from blues which later became a staple of hard rock and heavy metal music. In my interviews with local metal artists, riffs were frequently mentioned as a key element in their talks around music. As an indie metal musician, Zhang Cheng (2015), stressed that "riff is the most fundamental and structural unit of a piece of metal music, indicating a certain pattern of melody, a certain type of rhythm, and a certain chord progression, as well as timbre. The repetition of riffs constitutes and determines the whole song, and they are the central factors of metal". As a result, it is reasonable to assume that the riffs can represent most of the essential musical characteristics of a metal song.

Following Walser's (1993) approach, this thesis applied the notation that combined the guitar tablatures[11] (more practical) and traditional staffs (more theoretical). Guitar tablature has been widely used in pop-rock music, especially for the guitar-based genres. It clearly demonstrates the details of what and how to play the guitar or bass. In contrast, melodies, chords, and rhythms are more effectively presented by the staffs.

---

[9] In fact, "core riff" may be a vague concept with different defining criteria. For example, superficially, it could be the most repeated one throughout the whole song. Logically, it could be the most primitive motivation deriving other riffs. Meanwhile, it could be the most well-known one. It may refer to a complex question that to what extent a riff or a few riffs from a song can determine or identify the song *per se*, and how. For example, in the video titled "*100 Guitar Riffs*", these riffs are so identifiable that actually become the representatives for each song. However, this question is beyond the scope of this thesis, and all the aforementioned criteria may be employed in different samples.
For more about "*100 Guitar Riffs*", see
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7Iteq2iBtc
[10] For explanation of the term "melodic figure", see:
http://www.sings.ca/MusicLessons/The-Melodic-Figure.html
[11] For more details about how to read guitar tablature, see
http://www.songsterr.com/a/wa/howToReadTab
Notably, the tablatures and staffs were very well fit Walser's samples mainly because that his objects were those metal music works heavily influenced by classical music especially Baroque tradition which had used to be notated by staffs. The musical samples in this research referring to a variety of subgenres or styles with no clear relationship with classical music illustrate that the notation could be applied in a wider range of analysis.

Considering the both advantages, as the notation example shown below, the guitar tablature shows all the chords are played as power chords[12], and all the single root notes played with P.M. technique[13], while the staff specifies the chord progression in the four bars as A5, C5, A5, and E5, the rhythmic pattern, as well as the tempo.

Fig. 3.1 Example of the Riff Notation

Given that there is no so-called officially published notation or standard edition of my samples, all the notations were produced with the software Guitar Pro (version 5.0) by myself. To avoid potential errors, all the riffs were marked with their precise positions in the songs where they were excerpted, by providing the corresponding timings and durations. It is also necessary to acknowledge that there would be no perfect notation that includes all the details of a piece of music. Listening perception is always important even in the analysis.

3.2.2 Subject Matter analysis

The themes or subject matters of popular music often present particular ideologies, attitudes, preferences, or tastes of the artists, so that explicitly or implicitly indicating certain information of identity and socio-cultural reference. For instance, Laing (1985:

---

[12] In guitar music, a power chord means a chord that merely consists of the root and the fifth note. They are a key element of heavy metal music commonly played with distortion.

[13] Palm muting is a standard and idiomatic playing technique widely used in heavy metal, particularly in thrash, speed and death metal.

For playing demonstration in metal, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cipkgu9EA0

27) concluded that punk focused more on social, political, and sexual matters while less on romantics, through a comparison of subject matters between punk and Top 50 pop songs. Similarly, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Weinstein (2000: 35-43) used the terms "Dionysian" and "Chaotic" to distinguish the themes of metal, referring to the identities of physical indulgence and complex affirmation of power. By examining the themes frequently used and absent in death metal, Harrell (1994: 91) described the genre's identity as an expression of industrialism's emotional isolation and violence. Methodologically, Ball and Smith (1992: 21-22) suggested that the analysis of subject matters could be conducted in six steps: 1 selecting a topic and determining a research problem, 2 selecting a documentary source, 3 devising a set of analytic categories, 4 formulating an explicit set of instructions for using the categories to code the material, 5 establishing a principled basis for sampling the documents, and 6 counting the frequency of a given category or theme in the documents sampled.

The subject matter analyses in this thesis were first served as a complement of identity examination in Chapter 5 in addition to the musical analyses. Moreover, the results are also used as a basis for the discussion of social meaning in Chapter 7. The sample involves the 92 works in the eight episodes (from 2001 to 2013) of the Chinese metal compilation album "*Resurrection of the Gods*" by Mort Productions. They were contributed by 72 eminent local metal bands, covering a relatively complete genealogy of metal's subgenres. First, the subject matters were unscrambled from the titles (of both songs and albums) and lyrics of the samples. Secondly, the general relevance of these themes was classified, such as the real live, fantasy, religion, or politics. Then, their attitudes toward the social mainstream value were defined as positive, negative, or neutral. Finally, they were specifically categorised into ten groups, including self-reflection, evil, hero, hope, destruction, pessimism, romantic, war, carnality, and critical realism. Based on that, three proportional statistics were made, as well as further implications.

There were two full lyrical analyses used exclusively to demonstrate the relationship between Chinese metal and the politics in Chapter 7.3, including "*New 8 Honours and 8 Disgraces*" by *Ordnance* in 2008 and "*Dumbass*" by Ai Weiwei in 2013. Notably, both of them have been officially banned by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television in the mainland China due to their overt political involvement[14]. Thus, these two case studies may very well illustrate the current opposition and new negotiation between the metal praxis and political authorities of the country. Based on the analyses, three questions were interrogated: if it is necessary for metal to be involved in the politics; if the metal is an ideal approach for the artists to express their political appeals; and what are the consequences?

3.2.3 Graphic Analysis (Logos and Cover Artworks)

Since the beginning of metal in the late 1960s, cover arts have been playing an important role in forming the genre's aesthetic conventions. However, they were rarely concerned seriously by metal scholars. For example, the recent publication by Dome and Popoff (2013) exhibited a number of historical images but lacked in-depth discussions. Theoretically, there are three types of value in cover arts, including the aesthetic, historical, and semiotic. The first treats the cover arts as no more than the painting art. They tend to be appreciated as beautiful or ugly in the aesthetic sense, without actually being connected to the music. The second places the cover arts in the history so that they carry extra information about the evolvement of the genre. The last, as the most important, sees the covers arts as signs to be decoded in different semiotic systems. Therefore, the analyses in this thesis emphasised on the semiotic values. Specifically, the graphic elements of the cover arts of "*Resurrection of the Gods*" were analysed to reveal the connotations of an intentional expression of Chineseness in the tension of globalisation and localisation (in Chapter 5.3.2). All the image samples were obtained from the official website of Mort Productions.

---

[14] For more, see http://freemuse.org/archives/6021 and
  http://gbtimes.com/life/ordnances-heavy-metal-music-banned-china

In addition to cover arts, band logos were taken into account as well. It is strange that many fans and artists showed great interests in logos, while the topic has not been discussed in academia. For example, there has been a weekly quiz named "*Completely Unreadable Band Logo of the Week*" on the website of *Metal Sucks* since 2007[15], in which readers are invited to recognise different band logos that are almost unreadable, for fun. However, band logos contain more serious symbolic significances. Specifically, twelve selected logos of the representative bands in three different periods in Chinese metal's history including heavy rock era (1990-1996), nu-metal era (1997-2000), and extreme metal era (2000-2013) were analysed to illustrate the transition from "text" to "image" with an indication of symbolic transgression.

3.2.4 Video Analysis

The research on the connection between musical meanings and music videos has been developed since the 1980s. For example, Kaplan (1987: 33-34) defines two fundamental factors of music videos as, first, music videos break the conventions of traditional narratives, such as the causality, continuity, or time and space; secondly, music videos are a sort of autonomous self-reflection. One of the consequences is that as Longhurst (2007: 165) argues, music videos texts often present a postmodernist style disrupting the realist illusion that we are watching a familiar world. Therefore, music videos may serve as a supplementary to enhance the musical expressions, while sometimes work independently with extra functions beyond the music.

In this research, the objects referred to both music videos (MVs) and live videos (LVs) of Chinese metal, and all the samples were available on YouTube. First, when discussing the identity issues in Chapter 5, three MVs of Chinese metal, including "*A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty*" by *Tang Dynasty*, "*No Place to Hide*" by *Black*

---

[15] For more, see
http://www.metalsucks.net/2007/04/12/completely-unreadable-band-logo-of-the-week/ and
http://www.metalsucks.net/?s=completely+unreadable

Panther, and The "*Shadow of Ancestor*" by *Overlord*[16] illustrated that how traditional Chinese elements were maintained and blended into the western metal orthodox.

Secondly, given that Chinese metal has been developing in an underground status since 2000, official MVs were not commonly produced. Instead, a huge number of unofficial LVs were made by the metal artists themselves, labels, or fans. Although these videos are not produced professionally with lower artistic and technical qualities, they could be more factual or authentic. In Chapter 7.2.2, the performances of the artists and the reactions of the audiences in *Zuriaake*'s live in 330 Metal Festival in 2015 were examined to reveal a quasi-ritual and cathartic function of the Chinese metal.

To sum up, all these types of textual analyses can be described as Tagg (1982; 1987)'s term as Hermeneutic-Semiological Method whose principle is to create a cycle of meaning interpretation of popular music, as illustrated below:

Fig. 3.2 Model of Hermeneutic-Semiological Method by Tagg

"*No Place to Hide*", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-I9W5toBdzc
"*Shadow of Ancestor*", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcnPZvK96fM
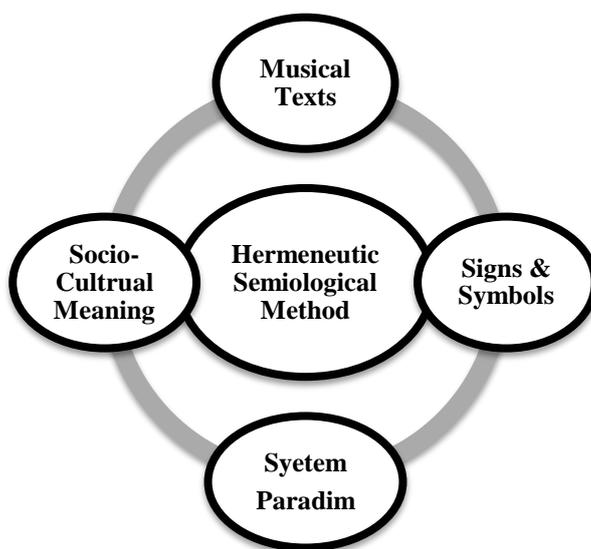
Table 3.1 Summary of the Use of Textual Analyses in the Corresponding Chapters

Chapter	Type of Analysis	Samples
Chapter 4 History		
Chapter 5 Identity	Musical Analysis	"No Place to Hide" by Black Panther "The Shadow of Ancestor" by Overload "Nobody Looks up to You" by Twisted Machine "Ritual Day" by Ritual Day "Darkness Falling before Eyes" by Narakam
	Musical & Lyrical Analysis	"Nine Treasures" by Nine Treasures "Everything Dies" by Yumbi
	Video Analysis (MVs)	"A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty" by Tang Dynasty "No Place to Hide" by Black Panther "The Shadow of Ancestor" by Overload
	Graphic Analysis (Cover Arts)	The Cover Arts of 8 Episodes of Compilation Album "Resurrection of the Gods"
Chapter 6 Industry		
Chapter 7 Meaning	Subject Analysis	8 Episodes of Compilation Album "Resurrection of the Gods"
	Lyrical Analysis	"New Eight Honors and Eight Disgraces" by Ordnance "Dumbass" by Ai Weiwei
	Graphic Analysis (Band Logos)	Tang Dynasty, Black Panther, Overload, Again; Yaska, Miserable Faith, Twisted Machine; Ritual Day, Narakam, Hyonblud, Purgatory, Grave Keeper.
	Video Analysis (LVs)	The clip of Zuriaake's live in 330 Metal Festival in 2015 "Dumbass" by Ai Weiwei

3.3 Fieldwork

The comprehension of the metal phenomenon in China should also consider the various participants in the scene. In practice, they are obtained via the fieldwork, especially personal interviews. As Seidman (1998: 3) stated, "at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience". Given that I had been a metal musician in Chinese metal scene since 2001 to 2008, the advantage would be that I can effectively access into the local scene and contact with the scene members. However, there may be an inevitably presupposed and subjective stance by the interviewer. Therefore, those preconceptions should be cautiously avoided from the interviews (ibid: 31), and an open mind must be maintained throughout the fieldwork. This section explains why, where, with whom, and how the interviews were conducted. Also, how to deal with the obtained data is clarified.

3.3.1 Determining the Cities

Beijing has been the centre of Chinese metal. In the 1990s almost all the well-known metal artists resided in Beijing, such as *Tang Dynasty*, *Black Panther*, *Again*, *The Face*, and *Overload*. Although metal has gradually become a more nationwide practice since 2000, Beijing is still relatively dominant. For instance, the two most significant metal magazines "*Painkiller*" and "*Extreme Music*" (initially founded in Nanjing, later moved to Beijing in 2004) were located in Beijing. Meanwhile, nearly one-third of the local indie metal labels were established in Beijing between 2001 and 2013. As the drummer of the band *Skull Crasher* (from Wuhan), Pen (2015), stated that "Indeed, there have been many small domestic metal communities in a few cities, but the famous band such as *Arch Enemy* only plays in Beijing, not other cities. I usually go to Beijing to watch the lives by those big overseas bands by train, while my band plays more regularly in Wuhan. The centre of metal in China is still

definitely Beijing". Those were the main reason why the city was depicted as the representative of Chinese metal in the documentary "*Global Metal*" (Dunn & McFadyen 2007). Considering above all, Beijing was confirmed as the first city of all my fieldwork destinations.

Wuhan has been a significant region regarding underground and indie music of Chinese, especially the live music industry. For example, according to *The Report of Livehouse Business in China 2014* (Beebee Pop 2015a), Wuhan was ranked the No.1 of the city by holding the most live events in mid-south China, and the fifth of the whole country. In these shows, metal accounted for a considerable proportion. Although famous overseas metal bands have rarely performed in Wuhan, most of the local bands always include Wuhan in their domestic tour. Considering that I had been a metal musician in Wuhan for nearly eight years, it would be a good start point for the research, and my acquaintance of the Wuhan metal scene may help to make the interviews in-depth.

Unfortunately, due to the restrictions of time and researching budget, there were two relatively remote cities I could not visit in person, including Urumchi (Xinjiang province) and Xining (Qinghai province). However, metal did exist in these areas in spite of being a less developed level. The investigations in these two cities are also an integral part of the whole research. On the one hand, the identity of Chinese metal is not single but multiple, so that these peripheral areas should be taken into account to make a holistic consideration. On the other hand, a comparison of metal's situation between the centres and peripherals may demonstrate the genre's survival conditions of the country. Therefore, I did online interviews with the local metal musicians in Urumchi and Xining.

3.3.2 Determining the Interviewees

There were a number of existing interviews available from the metal magazines and websites. Although they indeed provide useful data for this research (as mentioned in data collection), one potential problem was that the majority of these interviews were concentrated on the artists or musicians. However, art should be understood as a collective action, in which the participation does not only refer to artistic productions but also other various non-artistic activities (Becker 1974: 767-768). Thus, different types of participants in the Chinese metal scene must be considered, such as metal journalists/writers, label managers, live promoters, live house managers, *etc*. These roles were covered intentionally in addition to the musicians when determining the interviewees.

The interviewees in this research were relatively senior practitioners with at least ten years of being in the scene, and most of them enjoyed a great local reputation. To a certain extent, they were expected to provide deeper observations as well as more valuable opinions. The table shows the brief information of the interviewees (a more specific list will be provided in Appendix 2).

Table 3.2 List of the Interviewees' Information in This Research

Name S/F	Resident	Occupation	Role in Metal Scene	Interview Form	Time
Ben	Wuhan	Teacher	Vocalist	Face to Face	28-02-2015
Du Wei	Wuhan	Civil Service	Vocalist, Guitarist	Face to Face	28-06-2014
Du Yu	Xining	Trainman	Vocalist, Guitarist	Online	12-06-2014
Guo Shuobo (Female)	Chong-qin	College Professor	Academic Observer	Face to Face Online	15-07-2015
Li Meng	Beijing	Café Manager	Guitarist	Face to Face	09-03-2015
Liu Lixin	Beijing	Live House Manager	Guitarist, Manager of 13 Club	Face to Face	11-03-2015
Kou Zhengyu	Beijing	Metal Musician	Guitarist, Live Promoter	Face to Face	09-03-2015
Pen Pei	Wuhan	University Administrator	Drummer	Face to Face	28-02-2015
Sui Xiaowei	Beijing	Salesman	Ex-Editor of "Extreme	Face to Face	09-03-2015

			Music", Journalist	Online	11-12-2013
Wang Brutal	Jinan	Unknown	Label Manager	Online	11-03-2014
Wang Xiao	Beijing	Record Shop Manager	666 Rock Shop Manager, Label Manager, Journalist Founder of "DeathArea"	Face to Face	11-03-2015
Wang Zhou	Wuhan	Company Manager	Drummer	Face to Face	16-06-2014
Yan Xinwen	Urumchi	Unemployed	Bassist	Online	04-03-2015
Zhang Cheng	Wuhan	Teacher	Bassist	Face to Face	11-02-2015
Zhang Heng	Wuhan	Company Manager	Guitarist	Face to Face	16-06-2014
Zhang Yichi (Female)	Wuhan	Tour Guider	Band Assistant	Face to Face	08-03-2015
Zhang Yun	Beijing	Company Manager	Editor of "Dragon Land", Journalist	Face to Face	10-03-2015

Two issues about the interviewees need to be clarified. First, the "Occupation" was defined differently from the "Role in Metal Scene", while the former particularly meant the way of making a living. In this list, Kou Zhengyu was the only one who was able to make a living as a professional metal musician. Secondly, there was no "Fan" in the "Role in Metal Scene", since that all the interviewees involved were undoubtedly metal fans. More importantly, the fans were participating in forming the Chinese metal scene in different ways and degrees. Thus, it would be difficult (even impossible) to define a single identity of "fan" who was self-claimed as a metal fan but had nothing to do with the metal practice.

3.3.3 Designing the Interview Questions

There are two opposite principles in designing the interview questions, namely giving the maximum freedom to the interviewees to express their opinions and maintaining the interviewees' responses relevant to the research topics. To keep a balance between the freedom and relevancy, semi-structured questions would be the most appreciate

approach. All the questions were designed closely around the four aims of the research (history, identity, industry, and meaning). A standard template of core interview questions includes:

· Personal information, the role in the local metal scene.

· When and how you came into contact with metal music initially, and your favourite subgenres.

· What the main difficulties were/are of being a participant (can be different roles) in the Chinese metal scene.

· How to balance your real life and metal activity, the profession and interest.

· How you see the development of Chinese metal had happened between 1990 and 2013.

· How you see the main obstructions of the development of Chinese metal.

· How you see the different identities of the metal musicians and fans in your city.

· How you see the application of traditional Chinese elements.

· How you see the anti-commercialism attitude of many underground metal bands.

· How you see the situation and future of Chinese metal industry in current global music industrial climate.

· How to define the role/function/value of metal music in your life.

Since that different information was expected to be obtained from the individuals with different roles, extra questions had to be specifically arranged for each interviewee. For example, with the journalists or writers, the questioned were emphasised more on the socio-cultural observations; with the label and live house managers, the topic was more relevant to the industrial aspects; with the musicians, their personal experiences and understandings about metal were primarily concerned. At the same time, the interviewees were also encouraged to make any supplementary opinion or comment not mentioned in the questions. The face-to-face interviews were initially recorded in forms of audio recordings in Chinese, while the online interviews were directly collected in Chinese texts. Both of them were converted and translated into English before applied in the thesis.

3.4 Expected Outcomes and Limitations

These approaches were cautiously chosen and designed according to the purposes of the research. Hopefully, a series of fruitful outcomes could be expected. Meanwhile, the limitations should be clarified.

Main Expected Outcomes

·   Via collecting the data from the local metal websites, online social media, secondary literature, and personal interviews, the relatively complete chronicles of Chinese metal between 1990 and 2013 will be exhibited.

·   Via the musical and graphic analyses, the multiple identities of acculturation and aesthetic conventions of Chinese metal will be illustrated.

·   Via the statistics obtained from the official websites of indie metal labels, live promotion agencies, and Douban, the industrial image of Chinese metal will be presented.

·   Via the subject matter, lyrical, graphic, video analyses, and personal interviews, different social functions and meanings of Chinese metal will be interpreted.

·   A methodological attempt of metal studies (as well as popular music studies) that combines textual analysis and contextual interpretation will be explored.

Main Limitations

- As a pioneering research, a direct difficulty was that it necessarily referred to a great number of raw information from the internet where many comments and arguments were highly subjective or sometimes illogical. Even more, to a certain extent, the reliability of some resources could be questioned. However, they still need to be taken seriously before being proved wrong, so that some observations might be based on the wrong premises. However, this research still contributed to the first step to approach the truth.

- In terms of textual analysis, the selected samples were effectively illustrative more than necessarily representative. It was impossible to cover all the cases so that the exceptions against my conclusions were possible. Furthermore, when linking the results of textual analysis to the socio-cultural discussion, it was, in fact, a semiotic process in which the understandings of the signs (the results of textual analysis) were highly determined by the corresponding meaning systems and perspectives. The choice of these systems and angles would be inevitably influenced by the personal stance of the researcher. For example, the pentatonic scale in a piece of metal music would be understood as a connection with Chinese traditional music in this thesis, while it could be primarily linked to blues music by a western scholar.

- Considering the time and budget limitation of the fieldwork, this research did not cover more interviewees and regions but only a few centres. This might reduce the validity and representativeness of the conclusions. At the same time, all the interviews were initially made in Chinese then translated into English. Inevitably, this process could also bring about slight meaning deviations. Hopefully, the comments and critics from the scholars who can speak both English and Chinese can be essentially helpful.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter explained the approaches applied to achieve the corresponding aims of the history, identity, industry, and meanings, including data collection, textual analysis, and fieldwork. Specifically, the data collection was mainly obtained by online resources and local magazines/ fanzines. The textual analysis was comprehensively involved musical, thematic, graphic, and video. The interviewees of the fieldwork were intentionally designed to cover different roles in addition to the musicians in the Chinese metal scene to provide relatively complete understandings.

After the previous chapters of defining the terminology, reviewing the relevant literature, and explaining the methodologies, the thesis is moving forward into the first theme of this research, the history of Chinese metal.

Chapter 4 Histories of Chinese Metal

As noted earlier, while metal music has existed in China for more than 20 years, there has been no academic research focused on its history thus far. To fill the gap, this chapter investigates the complete development of Chinese metal from 1990 to 2013, by examining the relevant artists, musical works, subgenres, and social events. This chapter contains six sections: 1 Rock Background in 1978-1990; 2 Origin of Metal in 1990; 3 Heavy Rock Era in 1990-1996; 4 Nu-metal Transition in 1997- ; 5 Formation of the Genre in 2000; 6 Extreme Metal Era in 2000-2013.

The first section reviews the social background of Chinese rock and sees Chinese metal as a consequence of Chinese rock's development of the late 1980s. The second section regards 1990 as the origin of Chinese metal (as a style) marked by *Tang Dynasty*'s performance in the 1990 Modern Concert and argues that although the band declared the prelude of Chinese metal, they should not be seen as representative. Section 3 defines the first wave of Chinese metal (1990 to 1996) as heavy rock era when there was a general confusion about the understanding of metal. This era mainly featured a pop metal trend in the mainstream, as well as the sprout of underground and experimental natures of Chinese metal. Section 4 illustrates the ear of Nu-metal after the first wave of Chinese metal faded away in the late-1990s. It was significant as a particular transition of Chinese metal praxis between its heavy rock and extreme metal (since 2000) eras. Then, the thesis proposes that 2000 was the time of the formation of Chinese metal as a genre, which witnessed the foundation of "*Extreme Music*" and "*Painkiller*", website Guitar China in the trend of internet boom, Midi Modern Festival and 330 Metal Festival, and release of the first compilation album of Chinese metal "*Resurrection of the Gods I*". The final section examines the extreme metal era (2000-2013) by mainly highlighting the subgenres such as death metal, black metal, grindcore, thrash metal, folk metal, and metalcore.

This chapter reveals that the overall development of Chinese metal had been accompanying by the country's economic growth, technological progress, and cultural liberalism. Therefore, as a transplanted genre from the West, the trajectory of Chinese metal was not a simple duplication but presenting a particular U-shape curve, starting in the mainstream field in the early 1990s, declining in the late 1990s, becoming underground in early 2000s, and rising again in late 2000s.

4.1 A Social Background of Chinese Rock: 1978-1990

A retrospect of western rock history illustrates that the rise of rock required particular conditions such as a relatively liberal politic environment, a dramatically ideological change, or intense socio-cultural agitation (as what happened in the 1960s in the US and UK). These conditions had come about in the mainland China from the late 1970s inspired by the ending of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 and the implementation of Reform and Opening-up Policy in 1978[1]. Subsequently, a huge number of modern artistic, sociological, and philosophical thoughts were translated and brought into the country from the West, such as the ideas of Nietzsche, Freud, and Sartre, as well as the arts of Picasso and Dali (Wang 2009: 19). The overall local culture and art in the 1980s mainly presented the responses to the trauma resulted from the Cultural Revolution, such as Scar Literature which attempted to relieve the pain caused by the revolution (Wang 2009) and Xungen (seek for the roots) Movement that searched for the new direction for the country by re-recognizing its early history (Wu 2005). In terms of pop and rock music, the increasing exchange between the West and China established an informal channel of their early dissemination, involving the borrowing and copying of cassettes brought into China by foreigners, Chinese travelers returning home, Chinese visiting overseas (Brace 1991: 45; Huang 2001: 3), as well as the widespread piracy (de Kloet 2010; Street *et al* 2015). With these exchanges, the decade from 1979 to 1989 witnessed the initiation of Chinese rock as well as the establishment of its core themes and essential natures which would later consist of the contextual background of Chinese metal's birth in 1990.

According to Zou (2009: 39), the ideological trends in China's post-Cultural Revolution era can be divided into three stages: the new enlightenment (1979- 1989), cultural diversity (1990- 2009), and new trend (since 2009). Chinese rock should be

---

[1] The process of Reform and Opening-up Policy is often defined in two stages, 1978-1989 and 1989-1992. Interestingly, the first stage coincided with the formation era of Chinese rock. It may suggest that Chinese rock phenomenon was a direct result from the economic and cultural development inspired by Reform and Opening-up Policy.

seen as an artistic and cultural component of the "enlightenment"[2] more than just entertainment. In other words, it did not initially emerge only as a new musical form, but more importantly, as a mission of cultural awakening and social liberation of the country.

4.1.1 A Brief Overview of the Origins of Chinese Rock

A famous Chinese rock critic, Li (2009: 164), defines the whole history of Chinese rock as six eras from a typological perspective, including formation era (1979-1989), rock era (1989-1996), punk era (1996-2002), fashion era (1997-), electric era (1998-), and experimental era (1999-)[3]. Instead of looking at the whole history of Chinese rock, this section only considers its formation era and interrogates that how it shaped the background of Chinese metal's birth in 1990.

The first recorded Chinese rock band was *Wan Li Ma Wang*, formed in 1979. The name of the band came from the family names of the four members. In a strict sense, it was a loose group more than a band, in which the members shared similar musical interests and covered the songs of famous rock artists such as The Beatles, The Bee Gees, and Paul Simon. In the following five years, increasing numbers of overseas students continually brought "new music" into China, and a few of them became real rockers by forming their bands, such as the well-known *Mainland* (later as *ADO*) initially formed by three American students in Beijing. Under these influences, local rock fans showed their positive responses, such as *Seven-Players* (Cui Jian as one of the founders) and *Tumbler* (Ding Wu, later vocalist of *Tang Dynasty* as one of the

---

[2] This "enlightenment" can be seen as an extension of the May 4th Movement in 1919, featuring self-reflections and radical ideas of westernization. It was mainly represented in three pursuits, humanitarianism, democracy, and the spirit of scientism. For more, see: Cheng, 2002; Zou, 2009, and the documentary "*Elegy of the River* (He Shang)" (Xia, 1988), available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrdI2UgTU9o&list=PLnAxHcTvLOVLELEj3iYYZmhRRj5NAZOqH&index=1

[3] Notably, these were also other ways to define the stages of Chinese rock history. For example, Huang (2003) used the terms "past" and "present" to distinguish different socio-cultural references of Chinese rock in different periods.

founders) formed in 1984. However, between 1979 and 1985, most of the bands tended to perform cover versions, but original material was still absent, except for "*Go Away*" by Liu Yuan (1984) and "*Not That I Don't Understand*" by Cui Jian (1985). This tendency also resulted in a hidden danger of "copying behaviour" in the later Chinese rock and metal development.

As a Chinese response to the first World Peace Day, a concert titled "*A World Filled with Love*" featuring 128 local singers was held at Beijing Worker's Stadium on 9th-May-1986. The show was a milestone in Chinese pop/rock history, in which the most noteworthy moment was that Cui Jian performed his magnum opus "*Nothing to My Name*"[4]. For the first time, the rock appeared in front of the Chinese public. This song also meant that Chinese rock had entered a conscious creating stage (beyond covering and copying) and its ideological characteristics and aesthetic conventions began to form. Moreover, a new type of subculture featuring critical realism and rebelliousness was proposed, and the different pursuits between rock and pop music were clarified. Finally, the expression "We" (which used to be widely employed in song writings) was replaced by "I" in Cui Jian's lyrics, indicating an initial, but crucial ideological shift from the nationalism to individualism. That was why there were western scholars who understood Cui Jian as a cultural symbol of rebellion (Matusitz 2009: 487). At the same time, the critics against Chinese rock also emerged and existed in the later history. Therefore, 1986 is regarded as the first-year of the Chinese rock era. One year later, the lyrics of "*Nothing to My Name*" were published in the official media *China Youth Daily*, which confirmed the status of Chinese rock as a serious cultural discourse and Cui Jian as its "godfather".

During the next a few years up to 1990, the youth (age between 14 and 25) population of the country reached its first peak around 1987. According to the report (Wang 2009:

---

[4] The live clip, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ytz6EoFIs-w
For an English translation of the lyrics and more information about the song, see:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nothing_to_My_Name

42), the corresponding figures were 90 million in 1949, 137 million in 1966, and 282 million in 1987. As a voice of youth culture (or subculture), Chinese rock experienced a rapid development. A number of bands emerged in this period and many of them later became the backbones of Chinese rock, such as *ADO* (formed in 1987), *1989* (1989), *Respiration* (1989), *Cobra* (1989, as the first full female Chinese rock band), *Bronze* (1989), and *The Face* (1989), as well as two important ancestors of Chinese metal, *Tang Dynasty* (1988) and *Black Panther* (1987). A few dramatic developments of the popular music industries of the country in this period greatly promoted the development of rock. For example, in 1985 the New China News Agency announced that China had an estimated ten million guitarists (Manuel 1988: 233). By 1988, there were more than two hundred and forty record companies in China distributing a broad spectrum of pop music (Friedlander 1991: 68). Thus, this period also saw a tendency of Chinese rock moving towards the mainstream. For instance, in 1989, Cui Jian attended Salem Music Awards in March, London. In April, Cui Jian and *ADO* performed in Printemps de Bourges, France. Domestically, *Respiration* successfully held their debut concert in April, Beijing. *Cobra* made their debut performance in July in Chengdu. The table below illustrates the important bands and artists in pre-1990s.

Table 4.1 List of the Influential Chinese Rock Bands and Artists in Pre-1990[5]

Name	Time	City	Remarks
Wan Li Ma Wang	1979	Beijing	The admitted first rock band in Chinese rock history.
Allis	1981	Beijing	The first disclosed photo of rock performance in China
Mainland	1982	Beijing	The first rock band formed by the overseas student.
Seven-players	1984	Beijing	Cui Jian's first band.
Tumbler	1984	Beijing	The first Chinese band employing electric instruments to play popular music
Cui Jian	1985	Beijing	The father of Chinese rock
ADO	1987	Beijing	Cui Jian and other overseas artists, introducing Reggae, Jazz, and Blues into China.
Black Panther	1987	Beijing	One of the ancestors of Chinese metal.
Tang Dynasty	1988	Beijing	The acknowledged first band of Chinese metal.
1989	1989	Beijing	

---

[5] For more information and photos about the Chinese rock bands before 1990, see:
http://www.vchale.com/kanjianyinyue/202112996_1_2565128fb70fda309100c03bcdad35eb.html

Respiration	1989	Beijing	Gao Qi's first band, who later became the vocalist of the first Chinese thrash metal band *overload*.
Cobra	1989	Beijing	The first female rock band in China.
Bronze	1989	Beijing	
The Face	1989	Beijing	Later became the representative of Chinese hard rock.

Notably, the whole early practice of Chinese rock was almost centred in Beijing mainly because that as the capital city it was more economically developed and touched with the newer western culture earlier. However, this does not mean that there was no rock in other regions of the country, but they were less influential and had yet to be recorded.

4.1.2 Essential Natures and Core Themes of Chinese Rock

De Kloet (2010: 26) proposed the term "rock mythology" and defined Chinese rock as "a set of narratives which produce rock as a distinct music world that is, first and foremost, authentic, but also subcultural, masculine, rebellious and (counter) political". As its later important offshoot, Chinese metal inherited many of these natures. Similar to the West, Chinese rock was born with two core natures, the rebelliousness and idealism (Guo 2008: 126-127). The rebelliousness can be understood in two aspects: it was against both commercial pop music and broader mainstream socio-cultural values[6]. However, the rock would inevitably attach to the popular industries, which made the rebelliousness against the mainstream eventually a kind of self-negation and would result in endless debates around authenticity (see Chapter 7.4).

The idealism shows an appeal to spiritual freedom against the nihilism of those who were forced to adapt themselves to the great social changes with the country's modernisation process. First, the post-cultural revolution era experienced a

---

[6] In the later development of metal, the rebelliousness would be concreted as a transgression as a more radical subgenre both musically and ideologically.

collectively spiritual gloominess, emptiness, and chaos, when the previous utopian ideal had been proven no more than an illusion and the masses had no idea about the future direction (Yan 2010). Rock emerged in this circumstance very well reflecting such overall mental symptoms, and, more importantly, as a positive attitude to prevent the country from falling into nihilism. For instance, in the compilation album titled "*Red Rock*" produced by Hou Muren in 1992, the early revolutionary (red) songs were adapted to rock styles to advocate idealism in modern society.

Secondly, after Deng Xiaoping's South Inspection Speech[7] in 1992, the significances of economic reform and opening up were reasserted. "To get rich is glorious" became a new common pursuit inspiring a wave of personal entrepreneurship that constantly drove the country's economic growth. Nevertheless, it also resulted in a long-term consequence that while material civilisation was dramatically developed, the spiritual aspects lagged far behind. Then, rock served as an expression of struggling for a life-freedom out of the material desires, such as the works "*Commodity Society*"[8] by Zheng Jun and "*Garbage Dump*"[9] by He Yong.

Thirdly, the modernisation of the country brought about a complex sense of alienation combining industrial civilisation, foreign cultures, non-native youths (rural young people living and working in big cities), and new urban fashions. In many pop music songs, love as the dominated theme often masked such sense of alienation. However, now it was perceived and widely exposed by rock artists, such as "*Know without Being Told*"[10] by Zhang Chu.

In the West, rock/metal initially emerged as a rejection against commerce by which it obtained its cultural meanings. However, as an economic and cultural globalising

---

[7] For more, see the section "Resignation and 1992 southern tour" , available at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deng_Xiaoping#Resignation_and_1992_southern_tour
[8] Available at: http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=186846
[9] Available at: http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=92203
[10] Available at: http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=186096

outcome, rock initially arrived in China as a commodity then gradually achieved its cultural meaning. Therefore, if the western rock witnessed an enlightening function in its society, such impact on the Chinese society was much weaker. That is also one of the reasons why Yan (2005) saw the enlightenment of Chinese rock as no more than an illusion.

4.2 The Origin of Chinese Metal: 1990

1990 witnessed not only the prosperity of Chinese rock[11] but also the debut of Chinese metal. In the 1990 Modern Concert which featured six local bands, including *Brother Baby*, *ADO*, *Cobra*, *1989*, *Respiration*, and *Tang Dynasty*, *Tang Dynasty* performed two songs, "*Everyone Hopes*" and "*Pink Mist*" (later re-titled as "*The Sun*" and included in their 1992 debut album). Most core characteristics of the 1980s' classic metal were applied in their music and performance, such as the distorted guitar timbre, power chords, palm-muted technique, riff-based structure, virtuoso solos, long hair, leather, and wild stage performance.

Tang Dynasty was founded in 1988 by two Chinese locals and a Chinese American overseas student, and their debut album "*A Dream Retune to Tang Dynasty*" in 1992 was seen as the greatest metal album in China, both commercially and artistically. The band was also honoured as "the most noteworthy cultural phenomenon of Asia in 1992". It is impossible to show the precise figure of the album sales because of the serious piracy in the country, but as reported 700,000 copies at least in the domestic market and more than 1.5 million across Asia (Campbell 2011: 104)[12]. That made them the first Chinese metal band obtaining academic attention. For example, Wong (2011) saw them as an expression of masculinity in Chinese society in the 1990s. Chen (2010) focused on the band's compositional factors, such as melody, rhythm, structure, harmony, vocalisation, and orchestration to reveal its artistic, commercial, and social values. The significances of *Tang Dynasty* are embodied in two aspects. They introduced a completely new musical style to the Chinese audience. More

---

[11] For example, Cui Jian made his tour to promote the Asian Games in Beijing, Zhengzhou, Wuhan, Xi'an, and Chengdu; The Spring of Shenzhen Concert was held in May with *Black Panther* headlining as well as other four local rock bands supporting; The 1990 Modern Music Premiere was held in Shanghai illustrating the development of rock in south China.

[12] In Chinese metal music context, the "sales" might be not so significant as it were in the UK or US, such as the sales statistics on Billboard. In the recording era in the 1990s, the figures were rarely accurate due to the serious piracy behaviour throughout the country. After the mid-2000s, the recording piracy situation became alleviated but the recording industry began to be replaced by digital industry, in which "sales" became less and less important (Ren 2012: 38-40). Therefore, the sales as a parameter in Chinese metal should be only seen as a peripheral reference.

importantly, they initiated to combine western metal and Chinese culture.

Tang Dynasty's success was of both contingency and inevitability. First, they represented the common ideas and aesthetics of Chinese rock in that generation, such as idealism, heroism, knight image, legendary, and cultural refinement. Secondly, the pop metal (lite metal or glam metal) such as *Bon Jovi* and *Guns N' Roses* were experiencing a global popularity and finally reached China around 1990. To a considerable extent, *Tang Dynasty* took advantage of this trend. Thirdly, the album "*A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty*" was co-composed, produced, and promoted by the professional Taiwanese label, Magic Stone, who ensured the band with sufficient funding to achieve world-class quality in composition, recording, promotion, and distribution. Even MTV also began to use as an important promotional method. Finally, the whole period of the late 1980s and early 1990s has experienced a resurgence of the country (from the suffering caused by World War II and Cultural Revolution), permeating a widespread emotion of "cannot afford any lose again". In this sense, the phenomenon of *Tang Dynasty* was a collectively artificial myth that declared to the world that Chinese musicians were able to play metal music, as well as the West did.

Therefore, *Tang Dynasty*'s success was an outcome of Chinese traditional culture, modern business operations, global metal popularity, and particular social emotion of the country. Therefore, they are not typical for Chinese metal but a very special case. Even more, the latter works of the band were not truly metal, and they recently defined themselves as art/progressive rock in the online TV program "*Star*" in 2013[13]. Musically, their compositional characteristics had not been widely inherited by later metal artists[14]. Commercially, the history of Chinese metal showed that their success

---

[13] Tang Dynasty talking in "Star" on 30-October-2013, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-nT26qyIj4&spfreload=10%20Message%3A%20Unexpected%20end%20of%20input%20(url%3A%20https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D2-nT26qyIj4)

[14] A later band named *Spring Autumn* showed an overt similarity both musically and aesthetically with

could be hardly replicated. Thus, *Tang Dynasty* declared the prelude of the history of

Chinese metal, but they could not be the representative.

Tang Dynasty. However, the reason was that the founder of *Spring Autumn*, Kou, was the ex-founder of *Tang Dynasty*. Nevertheless, it does not indicate that *Tang Dynasty* could be regarded as a typical template of Chinese metal practice.

4.3 Heavy Rock Era: 1ST Wave 1990-1996

In the early period of Chinese metal, "metal" was not an independent and clear concept but a heavy form of rock or more simply as rock music played with a distorted guitar. Thus, it is important to realise that although the bands in this period can be categorised in different metal subgenres from a present perspective, they tended to be marked as rock by fans and media at the time. For example, *Overload* is known as the first thrash metal band in China, while in the early 1990s they were defined as a rock band since that the concept of thrash metal had yet to be widely accepted. The guitarist of *Black Panther*, Li Tong, recalled that "at the time that Chinese rock began, there were people who thought that only heavy metal could be rock" (Wong 2011: 67). Similarly, the guitarist of *Suffocated*, Kou Zhengyu, also argued that there was a wrong introduction about metal in its early time, that everything under the name of rock was metal (cited by Campbell 2011: 99). In addition, among the interviewees of my field work the relatively older ones (who were born in the 1970s and contacted with metal in the 1990s) tended to use the term "rock" when talking about metal, while the younger ones (who were born after 1980 and contacted with metal after 2000) tended to use "metal" or more specific terms of subgenres. Therefore, it may be inaccurate to simply describe the praxis at the time as "rock" or "metal". Rather, it was a sort of metallised rock or "heavy rock".

From 1990 to 1996, almost all the metal praxis was conducted in the name of rock, and, at the same time, a few specific subgenres of metal began to sprout therein. As a result, this thesis defines this period as heavy rock era with three characteristics. First, Chinese rock was experiencing a mainstream status in the early 1990s, so was metal. Secondly, metal artists often presented a variety of musical interests in their creations rather than focusing on one certain genre/style. Thirdly, the cultural self-awareness and commercial speculation were very well incorporated. Specifically, the heavy rock era consisted of mainstream pop metal, a symptom of underground metal, and artistic

avant-garde metal.

Table 4.2 List of the Metal Bands and Artists between 1990 and 1996

Formed in	Band/Artist Name	Debut Album/Single	Remarks
1987	Black Panther	"Black Panther I", 1992	Pop metal with the best commercial success
1988	Tang Dynasty	"A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty", 1992	Cannot-be-repeated miracle but not representative of Chinese metal
1989	The Face	"The Instinct of Fire", 1995	
1991	Overload	"Overload", 1996 "The Shadow of Ancestor", in "Rock Beijing I", 1993 "Crush", in "China Fire II", 1996	The first thrash metal band
1991	Again	"Creation", 1995 "The Flames of Yangzhou Path", in "Rock Beijing I", 1993	The first pop metal band performing on CCTV
1991	Wazu	"Warrior", 1995	
1992	The Heaven	"Infancy", 1994	
1992	Tomahawk	"Pass Away", in "Rock Beijing II", 1994	The first death metal work, but the subgenre was not understood at the time
1992	Narakam (Hades)	"The Crazy Love", in "Chinese Original Rock", 1994 "The Nightmare Is Going On", in "Rock Beijing III", 1997	
1993	Iron Kite	"This Summer", in "China Fire II", 1996	
	Jin Wulin	"Paradise Lost" 1995	The first experimental music album with metal elements

4.3.1 Pop Metal in the Mainstream

The mainstream pop metal mainly referred to *Black Panther*, *Again*, *The Face*, *Wazu*, and *Iron Kite*, in which metal elements from the 1980s' western classic metal were widely embraced, as well as a diversity of other musical elements. Objectively, they further increased the popularity of metal style after *Tang Dynasty* and inspired the next generation of Chinese metal. Nevertheless, most of them turned to pop music or disbanded after the mid-1990s.

Black Panther formed in 1987 were/are the most commercially successful Chinese rock/metal band, whose debut album in 1992 was sold 1.5 million units (without counting a huge number of piracy copies). Immediately, they reached their career climax. For example, the album as well as the single "*Don't break my heart*" (a popular love ballad) both hit the No.1 on the Hong Kong Popular Music Chart in 1992. Different from *Tang Dynasty*'s spectacularity and heroism, *Black Panther* defined a particular style of pop metal by combining metallic sound and love ballad, which made them praised as the "new beginning of Asian popular music" (Hong 1998: 22). In 1994, the band signed the Japanese label, JVC, and released the second album in which the music became less metal while the themes became broader and more realism involving ethics, love, environmental protection, anti-war, and social concerns. Since the late 1990s, with the division of mainstream pop metal and underground metal (will be discussed later), *Black Panther* had been gradually absent in Chinese metal discourse. After several times of personnel changes, the band is still active and released their sixth album "*Whom We Are*" in 2013. Although they are rarely mentioned as metal but a pop/rock superstar or a legendary rock predecessor nowadays, they were influential in the early stage of Chinese metal, especially the works "*No Place to Hide*", "*In the Eyes*", "*Don't Tangle Me*", and "*Experience*" from the debut album.

Table 4.3 Debut Album of Black Panther "Black Panther I" in 1991

Track Titles	Styles/Musical Elements
Don't Break My Heart	Popular love ballad
Take Care	Popular love ballad (acoustic guitar)
Don't Tangle Me	Traditional heavy metal
Close to Me	Popular love ballad
Mask	Pop/Rock
Don't Wanna See You Cry	Pop/Rock
Experience	Traditional heavy metal
No Place to Hide	Traditional heavy metal
In the Eyes	Traditional heavy metal
Don't Go Spoiling	Pop/Rock

Another significant pop metal band *Again* was formed in 1991 by five young professionally trained musicians[15]. The vocalist Wu Tong graduated from Central Conservatory of Music major in Chinese folk music, while the lead guitarist Zhao Wei and bassist Zhou Xv had their educations in the same conservatory studying western classical music. Thus, the band showed a high artistry and inclusiveness in their first album "*Creation*" in which a variety of musical styles were applied besides metal. For example, "*Angles and Demons*" and "*Creation*" were composed in the traditional metal style of the 1980s (such as *Skid Road* and *Mötley Crüe*). "*The Flames of Yangzhou Path*" was added by Chinese classical literature and traditional instrument (Gu Zheng). Meanwhile, their lyrics were more poetic than realistic. However, similar to *Black Panther*, there were a few love ballads that had nothing to do with metal, such as "*Love*" and "*I Have Been Sad These Days*". When talking about such diversity, the guitarist Zhao Wei recalled that "the debut album was learning and imitating stage of the band and all of us were more or less influenced by metal music such as *Aero Smith*, *Metallica*, and *Guns N' Roses*. At the same time, each member had their musical preferences. Therefore, the album was, in fact, a combination of all of these, and it was also a real reflection of our thoughts and understandings at the time" (Liu 2007: 77).

---

[15] A relatively professional musical education background was a common identical characteristic of the rock/metal artists in heavy rock era, in contrast to the non-elitism in extreme metal era, see Chapter 5.

Almost the whole career of *Again* was in the mainstream field. For instance, the band's first single "*The Flames of Yangzhou Path*" hit the best Chinese pop/rock single of 1993. Later, the debut album was sold over 250,000 copies in 1995. More importantly, they became the first Chinese metal band ever performing in 1999 New Millennium Celebration on CCTV (China Central Television). Since their second album in 1997, the band had increasingly turned to folk music, and metal elements were hardly included. Eventually, in 2004, Wu Tong left *Again* and launched his personal career as a folk-pop musician and a well-known sheng (a Chinese traditional reed pipe wind instrument) performer, while the rest members with the new vocalist continued their success as a pop/rock band. Unfortunately, both of them would not be discussed in metal discourse anymore.

Table 4.4 Debut Album of Again "Creation" in 1995

Track Titles	Styles/Musical Elements
Angles and Demons	Traditional heavy metal
Love	Popular love ballad
The Flames of Yangzhou Path	Traditional heavy metal (Chinese folk music)
The Harvest of Loneliness	Traditional heavy metal
The Sunset	Pop/Rock
I Have Been Sad These Days	Popular love ballad (folk music)
Creation	Traditional heavy metal
Cannot Keep Silent	Pop/Rock (folk music with blues)
The Abyss of Wisdom	Traditional heavy metal

In addition, the bands such *The Face*, *Wazu*, and *Iron Kite* could also be classified as pop metal, although unlike their contemporaries above, they only experienced a very temporary success and disbanded after releasing the first albums in the mid-1990s. *The Face* and *Iron Kite* were reunited in 2006 and 2012, but self-marked as hard rock and alternative rock.

The short prosperity of pop metal came from its particular textual characteristics and social demands. Regarding the music, first, most works in this period were clearly based on major or minor scales, and the melodic factors were more emphasised than

rhythmic. Secondly, high pitch and irritating vocals were widely used, but in most cases, they were tonal and melodic. Thirdly, guitar solos were catchy in the sections of prelude, interlude, and coda of the songs. Moreover, the tempo was relatively moderate as typically 120 BPM (compared to *Metallica*'s *Kill 'Em All* of 220 BPM), and the double bass drum was not applied yet. Finally, the majority of the songs were structured on basic patterns of popular music chords progression, such as I-IV-V-I or I-vi-ii-V. These factors made the pop metal the heaviest and the most transgressive version of Chinese rock at that time compared to the traditional Chinese folk music, Hong Kong, or Taiwanese pop music. At the same time, the music had not gone too far to disobey the general aesthetic conventions and the mainstream musical tastes of the country.

New social changes often tend to positively seek for new appropriate forms of expression, such as the alienation and nervousness brought by commercialization and urbanisation that were exemplified by aforementioned "*Commodity Society*", "*Garbage Dump*", and "*Know without Being Told*". Pop metal presented new and more exciting music which was very well consistent with the general social trends at the time. For example, when being asked about the success of *Black Panther*, the vocalist (third) of the band, Qin Yong, explained that "the early 1990s saw a strong rock wave in the country, and the society happened to embrace such new sounds. However, it was more like a fad, easy come easy go, we were just lucky to catch up with that good time" (Hong 1998: 23). However, in his historical writing of Chinese rock, Campbell (2011: 106) commented that these mainstream successes did pave the way for the metalheads that followed, but the real metal culture was still underground at the time.

4.3.2 Precursors of Underground Metal

In this general mainstream situation, there were still a few bands such as *Overload*,

Tomahawk, *Narakam*, and *Vomit* who had reached deeper into the roots of metal and heralded the later underground era of extreme metal in the 2000s. They did not only share the overall popularity of Chinese rock at the time, but also begun to transcend that general rock/metal and touched with more specific metal subgenres, such as thrash metal, Nu-metal, and death metal. It is necessary to clarify that these terms were not widely used by fans or artists themselves at the time so that they were just generally mentioned as metal. After all, a clear understanding of metal classification or genealogy did not exist until 2000 (see 4.5 Formation of the Genre).

Overload as a thrash metal band was formed in 1991 but currently have become a pop music band. Their debut single "*The Shadow of Ancestor*" was included in "*Beijing Rock I*" in 1993 and the second one "*Crush*" in "*China Fire II*" in 1996. They first introduced thrash metal style into the country as a newer, heavier, faster, and more aggressive sound compared to the contemporaries such as *Tang Dynasty* or *Black Panther*. In 1996, *Overload* released their first self-titled album in which the tracks covered a range of musical elements because that it was composed in ten years and reflected the different stages of the band. In an interview (*Painkiller*, Vol. 17: 48-51), the vocalist, Gao Qi, recalled that he was influenced by the metal artists such as *Black Sabbath*, *Iron Maiden*, *Metallica*, *Overkill*, and *Kreator*, but he had never been really into extreme metal. In fact, he always pursued an integration of musicality and passion. Therefore, although *Overload* was honoured as the earliest Chinese thrash metal band, they had never limited themselves to the single style exclusively.

After the first album, Overload turned to pop music by applying a variety of fashionable elements, especially electronic music and rap, while metal elements became less prominent. As Gao Qi explained, "the true metal music only took a small share in the Chinese popular music market, and the primary concern of most artists was always about making a living. At the time, it would be difficult for metal bands to access the mainstream market" (ibid). Although metal would not be the band's future,

they were still an essential part of the puzzle in the situation that the mainstream metal trend was fading away and everyone was wondering where Chinese metal would move on (Campbell 2011: 150). Particularly, the influences of the band's early works on the metal music composition should not be overlooked. First, most of the works featured the key of E-flat which was a typical convention in metal composition but had yet to be widely used by other bands at the time. Secondly, they preferred more complex chords progression instead of the common pop music chords progression, and the songs were more logically structured on riffs. Finally, the vocals in many songs were non-melodic which would be more common in the later more extreme subgenres.

Table 4.5 Debut Album of Overload "Overload" in 1996

Track Titles	Styles/Musical Elements
Cornered in the Moor	Thrash metal
Lonesome	Thrash metal
Human Earth	Thrash metal
Haunted by Dreams	Pop/Rock
Sensation	Pop/Rock
Poetry of Life	Thrash metal
Distance	Pop/Rock
Fill the Night with the Flame of Love	Thrash metal
1999	Thrash metal
Memory of The Nine	Pop/Rock
Untitled Track	Instrumental

In the strict sense, *Tomahawk* was the very first death metal band in China. As early as 1994, their single titled "*Pass Away*"[16] included in the compilation "*Beijing Rock II*" featured a series of formal characteristics of death metal, especially the heavy riffs and death growling vocals. As the vocalist of the band, Zhang Yanqing (*Painkiller*, Vol. 2: 68) recalled that the resource of metal music in the early 1990s was rather limited. In addition to *Tang Dynasty* and *Overload*, they also listened to foreign artists such *Metallica*, *Megadeth*, *Overkill*, and *Slayer*. After a period of imitation, they

---

[16] This single was used as the ending song of the horror film "*New Tenant*" in 1995, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcbBmTdaVG4

eventually chose to make their music death metal. Unfortunately, as mentioned before, the concept of death metal had not been accepted and understood at the time, so that *Tomahawk* did not obtain the deserved reputation as the first Chinese death metal band.

After 1995, the band started making a transition toward Nu-metal. As Zhang (ibid: 69-70) explained, "Our previous music was too superficial full of imitations and copies. It was far away from our real lives and rarely creative. So we tried to free ourselves from a certain fixed style (death metal), combining different elements such as folk, blues, Jazz, flamingo, classic, and soul music. The subject matters were also broadened, including the description of personal emotion, feelings about the social lives, and depression of the modernity. Thus, we were not death metal anymore although there were still a few components of death metal maintained in our music. I have no idea about how to define our music now, maybe Nu-metal, maybe something else, but after all, we are metal." Until 2001, *Tomahawk* released their debut album "*Dead City*"[17] which became one of the seminal works of Chinese Nu-metal.

Another pioneer of extreme metal was *Narakam.* The band was formed in 1992 with the name *Bell of Death* which was changed to *Hades* one year later and disbanded in 1999. In 2006, the band was reformed with a new English name as *Narakam* (the Chinese name was maintained). By the time, all the original members of *Hades* had been replaced. However, the band *Narakam* is still regarded as a continuation of the original *Hades* in the Chinese metal scene.

The first single of *Narakam* titled "*The Crazy Love*" was included in the compilation "*Chinese Original Rock*" in 1994 (*Painkiller*, Vol. 4: 35). From a current angle, the composition seemed naïve and crude, but it showed the band's pioneering exploration of thrash metal in the general atmosphere of pop metal. In the following years, the

---

[17] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2cEs5p9_LY

band gradually transformed from thrash metal to death metal, inspired by *Morbid Angel*, *Sepultura*, and *Napalm Death*. Eventually, the single "*The Nightmare Is Going On*" included in "*Beijing Rock III*" announced the establishment of their style. The excerpt of "*The Red Lantern*" (Beijing Opera) in the intro of the track and the use of traditional instrument Sheng showed the initial exploration of the extreme metal's localisation. When interviewed by the website *AreaDeath*[18], the founder of the band, Zhou Hongfei, stressed that they had been trying to combine Chineseness with foreign musical forms, and the employment of Beijing Opera and Sheng symbolised certain political and religious stance, respectively. Although first disbanding in 1999, a self-titled album including their important works in the past decade was released in 2002 by Mort Productions as a tribute to the band. After reforming in 2006, *Narakam* released two albums "*Waken the Dark Fire*" and "*Burning at Moment*" in 2007 and 2008 on the same label, both representing the top level of Chinese death metal at the time. The band was also invited to record the famous documentary "*Metal: A Headbangers' Journey*" in November 2006, which confirmed their status in the history of Chinese metal and brought them into a worldwide level (*Painkiller*, Vol. 24: 41).

Finally, *Vomit* must be mentioned, as the only earliest extreme metal forerunner not from Beijing. The band was initially formed in 1990 with the name of *News Team* as a grunge band in Tianjin. Subsequently, influenced by the bands such as *Brutal Truth* and *Napalm Death*, the band turned to death metal and grindcore with a new name *Vomit* in 1994. In 1998, *Vomit* finished their first EP including nine early works but not released immediately. In 2001, their work "*Sand Storm*" was included in the compilation album "*Resurrection of the Gods I*". Two years later, the band began to prepare for their debut album titled "*Grateful*". Unfortunately, the album has never been released for unknown reasons. Even so, they still had made a reputation in Chinese metal scene via their constant performances.

---

[18] Available at: http://www.areadeath.net/main/page.php?id=43&pg=1

More importantly, *Vomit* illustrated a particular response of a few people to the great changes of the country in the early 1990s. As mentioned before, in this period China was experiencing a considerable economic growth. One of the main side effects was the overall worship of money, in which many spiritual pursuits of human beings such as independent judgment and critical thinking were ignored or lost. The founder of *Vomit*, Wang Kaige, was a successful businessman when he started his music career. He described his experience as "I have earned a lot of money, while I lost out a lot as well. I became confused after having seen too many disgusting things around money, so I need 'vomit'. Now it is possible to be only concerned about my music out of commerce, something purely spiritual. I am trying to give a strike to the material world with my attitude with the heaviest sound (death metal)." (*Painkiller*, Vol.4: 63). In fact, he also indicated a significant argument that there was a certain value in the music represented by keeping a distance from the commercial world. Unfortunately, it may be impossible to balance the commercialisation and underground status in the contemporary musical industry (see Chapter 7.4).

Notably, *Vomit* was the first Chinese metal band having a female member, Zhan Ximei, as the bassist from 1990 to 2005 (she is also Wang's wife). In Wang's opinion (ibid), "men and women are created equal, so that, undoubtedly, a woman can also be a warrior of metal music". In fact, Zhan's first role was a drummer before playing bass.

4.3.3 Avant-garde/Experimental in Metal

In addition to pop and underground, the third dimension in the early development of Chinese metal hardly mentioned before was avant-garde. Jin Wulin is now known as an outstanding pop/classical music producer and composer who had cooperated with many Chinese pop superstars such as Faye Wong, Na Ying, Han Hong, and Ding Wei. However, his debut album "*Serious Music: Paradise Lost*" in 1995 has been largely

overlooked in Chinese popular music discourse[19]. Serious music, in the popular music context, implies that the music composed by professional musicians with classic musical influences, and may be less popular but more artistic and academic. Jin's album was truly complex and ambitious that the tracks referred to various musical vocabularies, such as symphonic music, Peking opera, folk, artistic rock, punk, R&B, as well as metal. For example, metal elements were applied in "*The World*", "*I Am Sung by You*", and "*Pm 11: 30*". In particular, the track "*Return to Life*" was mainly composed in metal style. Perhaps for the same reason, such musical complexity made the album difficult for the general audiences to understand or appreciate. Even in the rock or metal scene, it was rarely mentioned.

However, regarding the development of Chinese metal, Jin's "*Paradise Lost*" was significant in three aspects. First, it introduced an attitude of seriousness into the popular music industries (involving metal), which appealed that entertaining functions should not replace the serious artistry of popular music. Later metal musicians particularly accepted this attitude and developed it into an anti-commercialism stance. Secondly, it highlighted the musical dimension of rock. From Cui Jian to heavy rock era, Chinese rock had been stressing on emotional expressions and ideological matters over musical forms. Potentially, it also brought a sort of experimental attitude and inspired the later diversity of metal styles in the 2000s. Thirdly, it indicated that the temporary mainstream period of pop metal would be sooner or later replaced by an underground status because that there seems an innate connection between metal music and the sense of minority, artistry, and elitism. As expected, in the 2000s a majority of metal musicians positively accepted and even were proud of that sort of minority status and underground value.

---

[19] For more, see the entry "Jin Wulin", available at:
http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=CClIM95NaeLroTWph6jemPLLchybnTDz6xoVKJta_pNoqcx5am81o
L1c7zqHz6PLStEoPY-ZzKzAbxnPOHcsdq

4.4 Nu-metal Movement: 1997-

The overall status of Chinese pop music of the later 1990s was described as "new development era" featuring the diversity, innovation, new media, and international exchange (Wang 2009: 176). Similarly, the New Wave of Chinese Rock was marked by some new artists, such as British pop including *Sober*, *The Catcher In The Rye*; punk including *Flower*, *Underground Baby*, *New Pants*; electronic including *Super Market*, *Fly*; and the more underground such as *No* and *Ancient*. As a result, Chinese rock was mixed with different new natures, becoming more aggressive, plain, and fashionable. In terms of metal, with the quit of the forerunners in the first generation, the prosperity of heavy rock and pop metal had been experienced a decline since 1996. Most aforementioned heavy rock/pop metal artists such as *Tang Dynasty*, *Overload*, and *Again* gave up metal and turned to other more popular genres/styles, while some of them such as *The Face* and *Wazu* disbanded. In this circumstance, the Nu-metal movement beginning in 1997 filled this vacancy of metal praxis as a transitional role in Chinese metal's development.

4.4.1 Background of Nu-metal Movement

The advent of Nu-metal in China resulted from a series of factors including the prosperity of punk, the foundation of the Bad Head label, Tree Village, and the New Wave of American Heavy Metal (NWOAHM). They provided Chinese Nu-metal with the punk aesthetics, underground attitude, personnel basis, and musical model, respectively.

The first flourished time of Chinese punk was in the late 1990s, marked by "*Wuliao Contingent*" (literally meaning an army of boring people). The term was understood in three levels. First, it was the title of a self-released punk fanzine in 1997, which devoted to introducing the latest punk bands in Beijing. Secondly, "*Wuliao Contingent*"

was later used to describe a group of punk bands who usually gathered at a club named Scream Club. Instead of being boring, they showed truly youthful vitality, passion, imagination, and creation. Thirdly, it was the title of a compilation album of Chinese punk released in 1999 featuring four seminal bands: *69*, *Reflector*, *Brain Failure*, and *A Jerks*. As the first generation after the One-Child Policy (launched in 1978), this group of artists showed more self-consciousness and concerned more about their individual experiences and reflections than the grand narratives of the earlier rock such as society, family, or so-call future. Compared to their pop contemporaries, they brought a simpler, more straightforward, and aggressive expression form, musically, as well as an indie and hardcore spirits, aesthetically. These factors would have great influence on Nu-metal.

Another important factor inspiring Nu-metal movement was the foundation of Bad Head label (as a subsidiary of Modern Sky label) in 1999. In the same year, the label released four pioneering albums, including "*The Lost Master*" by *No*, "*The Fly I*" by *Fly*, "*I Am Fucking Happy*" by *Chen Dili*, and "*Everyone Has a Small Stool; I Won't Bring Mine to 21st Century*" by *Hu Mage*. Although none of them showed a direct musical relationship with Nu-metal, they first declared an artistic pursuit of underground against the existing mainstream rock by applying a series of experimental, heterogenic, and subversive elements. In doing this, the meanings of underground had been extended to idealism, creativity, and cultural heterogeneity, which were widely assimilated by Nu-metal. Also, all of these artists were from non-Beijing cities, which indicated that the dominant status of Beijing in Chinese rock was beginning to be shaken. This tendency would be increasingly obvious in the Nu-metal movement and later history of Chinese metal.

The idea of "Underground Rock" in Chinese context[20] highlights a suburb area near Beijing named Tree Village[21] and describes it as the Holy Land of Chinese rock. The place was located in the north suburb of Beijing where the living costs were much lower so that hundreds of young rock players from different regions of the country tended to settle there for starting their rock dreams. As the vocalist of *Miserable Faith*, Gao Hu (cited by Groenewegen-Lau 2014: 24), recalled "I have fond memories of Tree Village. Musicians are getting together to exchange ideas, watch independent films, listen to music. But things went downhill when we moved to an apartment flat in Huoying, that was between 2002 and 2006". Although it is difficult to identify the first group of residents there, Tree Village had become the true cradle of Chinese rock since the mid-1990s. For example, a few current well-known bands such *Muma* and *Tongue* initiated their rock careers in the village. Particularly, most of the residents in the village were focusing on hardcore or Nu-metal[22]. In this sense, Tree Village provided Nu-metal movement with rich human resources.

Finally, a more directly musical influence derived from NWOAHM (New Wave of American Heavy Metal) which was a metal music movement that originated in the US during the early 1990s to mid-2000s. Broadly, the movement included a wide variety of styles, such as melodic death, progressive metal, metalcore, groove metal, alternative metal, stoner/sludge metal, industrial metal, as well as Nu-metal. With Kurt Cobain's death in 1994 and, hence the decline of grunge, Nu-metal that combined the elements of grunge, alternative rock, funk, Hip-Hop, and thrash metal emerged and began to rise in popularity in 1997. Later, the bands such as *Linkin Park*,

---

[20] For more, see the entry "Underground Rock", available at:
http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=eB9VCcYIyuRiajabiFs9qAxcy63abDtbJrFY4rg-0KX0-uJeooVF8sxdu
Sa1Zzymk3dEmgH4AJC8WGPS0QtpiK
[21] There are two indie documentaries more specifically featuring the musicians' lives in Tree Village, "*Post Revolutionary Era*":
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFk88zCSruM
"*On the Edge of Freedom*":
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DC1qZdxKdJs&list=PLCRvpENpzeO3S7TcHTCJn3YOVFtVyAn
aT&index=4
[22] See "*Beijing Underground Music and Tree Village*", available at:
http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/cn_zgwh/2006-01/24/content_78439.htm

Limp Bizkit, *Korn*, *Slipknot*, and *Rage Against The Machine* introduced Nu-metal into China, injecting new vitality to the development of Chinese metal.

4.4.2 A Brief Retrospect History of Nu-metal's Development

The development of Nu-metal in China covers three stages: the early period (1997-2001), developing period (2002-2006), and mainstream period (after 2006). The whole early period mainly featured four precursors, *Yaska*, *Miserable Faith*, *Twisted Machine*, and *Tomahawk* (transformed from death metal to Nu-metal) with their seminal works. Musically, they applied simple, highly repetitive, but powerful rhythms, catchy chords and melodies. The down-tuned guitar and seven-string guitar began to be used to create a lower, heavier and more intense atmosphere. The lyrics expressed anger[23] against social injustices, rebellion against traditional ideologies, and provide a catharsis to the hopelessness in lives (*Painkiller*, Vol. 31: 62). In addition, different from the pop metal, Nu-metal added the roles of DJ and rap into the music, providing it with a particular fashionable and provocative nature which made the genre rather appealing to youth. As the bassist of *Twisted Machine*, Yang Lei summarised that "the strong rhythm of the music is both cathartic and fashionable, the costume, stage appearance, speech, and behaviour are really cool" (ibid).

Table 4.6 List of the Precursory Nu-metal Bands and Albums in 1997-2001

Formed in	Band Name	Debut Album/Time
1992	Tomahawk	"Dead City", by Scream Record, in 2001
1995	Yaska	"Freedom", by Scream Record, in 2000
1998	Twisted Machine	"Twisted Machine", by Scream Record, in 2001
1999	Miserable Faith	"This Is a Problem", by Scream Record, in 2001

In this period, the label Scream Records played a crucial role. It was founded by Lv Bo in 1999 as a subsidiary label of Jingwen Music Company[24], and gradually became

---

[23] Notably, the pronunciation of "Nu" in Chinese can be understood as the word "anger" rather than "new". This may indicates the Chinese way of understanding the subgenre.

[24] The predecessor of Scream Records label is the aforementioned Scream Club which was closed down in 1998. The official website of the label Scream Records, available at: http://site.douban.com/screamrecords/

an integral part of Chinese indie rock industry. For example, there were nearly 70 albums being released by the label from 1999 to 2005, covering a diversity of rock subgenres and styles, especially involving almost all the important Nu-metal albums at the time, such as the list above and a historic Nu-metal compilation album titled "*Scream Hard Rap Selection*" in 2002.

From 2002, Chinese Nu-metal was developed joined by many new bands coming throughout the country, such as *Sick Pupa*, *Tongue*, *Black September*, *T9*, *AK-47*, *Oxygen Can*, *Voodoo Kungfu*, *Asura*, and *Beijing Boys*. Maintaining the essential characteristics defined by the elder generation, they further expanded the diversity and inclusiveness of the music. For example, *AK-47* mixed industrial music elements and was later honoured as the best industrial Nu-metal bands of the country (*Painkiller*, Vol. 20: 68-69). Besides the music, the unified costumes and stage performances in the lives enhanced the subgenre's charisma. *Oxygen Can* originally employed Chinese traditional drums and gasoline cans as a part of the percussion set in their concert. *Voodoo Kungfu* applied more dramatic and creepy audiovisual effects, involving poetic chant, Mongolian long-tune, and paganism ritual. In addition, there were also bands attempting to develop in a more mainstream route and gradually having nothing to do with Nu-metal, such as *Asura* who comprehensively used pop, hard rock, electronic, and even classic music to express less anger or rebellion but more sentiments about their lives. Similarly, after signing with the mainstream label China Record Cooperation in 2003, *Beijing Boys* changed their style and eventually became a pop idol group.

At the same time, most of the bands of the early period finished their new works with remarkable progress. For example, *Yaska* released their second album titled "*Fuck Fuck Fuck*" in 2003. Musically, the instrumentation was greatly improved with more Hip Hop and Techno elements combined into their consistent intensity and brutality. Lyrically, compared to the previous works, they showed more serious thoughts, such

as social responsibilities and self-lost in modernity. In the same year, *Twisted Machine* brought their second album "*Return Underground*" that consolidated their status as the most fashionable Chinese Nu-metal band. Some guest players (such as the vocalist of *Yaska*, DJ of *CMCB*, MC of *Hidden*, *etc.*) endowed the album with a particular diversity. According to the statistics from the band's official website, the album was sold more than 100, 000 copies within half a year after released[25]. In 2006, the new album of *Miserable Faith* was released, in which the vocalisation became less aggressive but more melodic, and the acoustic guitar was used more frequently instead of distorted so that the popularity of the band was largely increased. In general, the period between 2002 and 2006 saw the most rapid growth of Chinese Nu-metal and the tendency towards entering a mainstream status.

Table 4.7 List of Nu-metal Bands and Albums in Developing Period 2002-2006

Formed in	Band Name	Debut Album/Time
1997	Tongue	"This Is You" by Warner Music, in 2002[26]
2000	Black September	"You Are the Next" by Scream Records, in 2002
2000	T9	"Fix This" by Scream Records, in 2002
2000	Sick Pupa	"Let Me Go" by Warner Music, in 2002
2000	AK-47	"Start Off" by R.H.C, in 2006
2001	Oxygen Can	"All Things Change" by Modi, in 2005
2003	Voodoo Kungfu	EP Self-released, in 2006
1995	Yaska	"Fuck Fuck Fuck", by Scream Records, in 2003
1998	Twisted Machine	"Return to Underground", by Jingwen Records, in 2003
1999	Miserable Faith	"No", by Scream Records, in 2006

After the mid-2010s, the trend of NWOAHM began to fade away on a global scale. In China, Nu-metal was gradually less discussed in metal discourse but became a part of the mainstream pop and rock music, with almost all the seminal bands began to make their music less heavy, aggressive or provocative as used to be. For example, *Twisted*

---

[25] Available at: http://site.douban.com/twisted-machine/
[26] This was Tongue's second album and their debut album "*Chick out Shell*" was released by Modern Sky in 1999. However, compared to the debut, the second one showed more relationship with Nu-metal.

Machine released an EP in 2006 including a song "*In the Mirror*"[27] that was composed by combining Nu-metal and pop elements to appeal a considerable number of general audiences. By this strategy, their third album "*X X X*" in 2010 consisted of nearly half Nu-metal tracks and half pop songs further increased their popularity. The band explained that they were intentionally trying to find a new direction for their music, and they gradually realised that their essences of rock such as rebellion and resistance could be expressed in more acceptable ways, not have to be always metal (*Painkiller*, Vol. 37: 50-52). Although the third album "*You Aren't the Loser*" (in 2010) of *Yasak* was almost kept in the original style, the similarly popularised tendency could be still observed in the song "*I Wish to Follow*". Just one year later, the fourth album "*Over the Mountain*" declared that the band finally began to embrace the mainstream.

In contrast, the new albums of *Miserable Faith* titled "*Don't Let Me Stop the Music*" and "*Bloom*" in 2008 and 2010 had nothing to do with Nu-metal (or metal) anymore. All the tracks in the albums composed and played in typical popular ballad forms with clean vocal, acoustic guitar, and synthesiser, in which distorted guitar and metal vocalisation were thoroughly abandoned. When being asked about this, the vocalist Gao Hu claimed that the changes happened very naturally if the artists were following the hearts. The Nu-metal with anger and resistance were over, but their music would never be stoppable[28] (*Painkiller*, Vol. 32: 65). Moreover, he also self-reflectively admitted that "in the past, I had a prejudice against good melodies, but nowadays they are the core of our songs" (cited by Groenewegen-Lau 2014: 25).

Perhaps, many subgenres of metal have the chance to access into the mainstream with greater popularity and commercialisation. Nevertheless, being more mainstream may, at the same time, indicates a decline of deviating from the original stances of the

---

[27] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QNIEmgrhko
[28] Notably, this statement may bring about a further consideration of the authenticity issues of Chinese metal, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.4.

subgenre (see the case of *Miserable Faith* in Chapter 7.4). Therefore, with the mainstreaming of Chinese Nu-metal, its initial transgressive significances were lost and would be taken over by newer subgenres. In fact, since the mid-2000s, the central position of Nu-metal in Chinese metal history had been already replaced by extreme metal that arose in the early 2000s.

Table 4.8 List of Prominent Nu-metal Albums since 2006

Band Name	Album/Time
Twisted Machine	EP "In the Mirror", in 2006 "X X X", in 2010
Yaska	"You Aren't the Loser", in 2010 "Over the Mountain", in 2011
Miserable Faith	"Don't Let Me Stop the Music", in 2008 "Bloom", in 2010

4.4.3 Significances of Chinese Nu-metal

For nearly two decades, the Chinese Nu-metal movement had experienced a process from rising to falling. In terms of subject matters, the movement was mainly developed in the name of rock. Stylistically, it was the representative of Chinese metal in a certain period. Especially in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it played an important transitional role between the first and second wave of Chinese metal. Although it is not dominant in the current metal scene, its values and influences in the metal history of the country should not be overlooked.

First, there was no strong root of metal culture in China, such as blues, hard rock, or classical metal, so that Nu-metal was the real starting point of accessing metal for a number of Chinese metal fans (particularly the newer generation in the late 1990s and early 2000s) and then possibly going into other subgenres. For instance, as the guitarist and drummer of the black metal band *Grave Keeper*, Zhang Heng and Wang Zhou, recalled in the interview (2014) that although they became well-known as a black metal band, Nu-metal was the first metal subgenre they touched with and tried

to be in 2001. From a historical perspective, when the first wave of Chinese metal faded away in the late-1990s, it was Nu-metal that continued the metal praxis in the country.

Secondly, it seems that there was a naturally close relationship between Nu-metal, rock, and pop. According to a recent report of the popularity of different metal subgenres provided by Spotify (Buskirk 2015a), Nu-metal takes the No.2 position among the top 25. In the report, Nu-metal was described as "a form of alternative metal combining groove metal and thrash metal, with elements of grunge, hardcore, hip hop, funk, and industrial" (ibid). In other words, it can be seen as a hybrid based on metal and synthesising any element as long as they are modern and fashionable. Because of such inclusiveness, Nu-metal would be relatively easier to accept by the general audiences with different preferences, so that it had effectively expanded the general metal fan base in China.

Finally, a variety of elements of Nu-metal were inherited and employed by later metal artists. For example, its vocalisation is widely applied by current metalcore bands such as *The Falling*. It also can be added with traditional elements then become a unique Chinese folk metal such as *Ego Fall*. As Lv Bo (*Painkiller*, Vol. 31: 65) summarised that there was never fixed pattern or model in Nu-metal so that it could always be changeable with different possibilities. In this sense, it inspired the development of Chinese metal with an inner driving force and vitality.

4.5 Formation of the Genre: 2000

As discussed in Chapter 1, both textual and contextual factors are necessary to define metal as a genre. In the case of Chinese metal, these factors are mainly of relevance to a set of musical and aesthetic conventions, the background knowledge about the origin and history, a preliminary industry or network, and the participation within the global metal scene. Notably, Peterson (1990)'s examination on the advent of rock and roll revealed that the occurrence of a certain cultural phenomenon was often determined by a series of associated social events, in addition to those directly involved artists.

Almost all the interviewees of my fieldwork have mentioned that Chinese metal became quite different in many aspects after 2000. For example, Zhang Yun (2015) argued that it was the magazine "*Extreme Music*" that ensured Chinese metal resetting the correct direction. In contrast, Wang Xiao (2015) considered the internet boom the key force of driving the development of Chinese metal. In fact, more factors should be taken into account. This thesis proposes that Chinese metal becoming a genre occurred around 2000 marked by the foundation of two professional metal magazines, the rapid growth of the internet and the website *Guitar China*, the success of Midi Festival and 330 Festival, and the establishment of the first local metal label Mort Productions and its seminal compilation of Chinese extreme metal "*Resurrection of the Gods I*".

4.5.1 Metal Magazines

Weinstein (2000: 174) considers magazines as one of the crucial transmitting media of metal. Similarly, Kahn-Harris (2007: 86) stresses the importance of magazines and fanzines in the formation of European extreme metal scene. Thus, the core function of the metal magazine can be concluded as an approach to dissemination and promotion

of the music and its culture. In the Chinese metal scene, an extra significant function was providing a "past" history of metal. Given that metal was a completely new and foreign culture to China, such a "past", as described by Cohen (1985: 99), was a crucial element of making metal a collective praxis in the country.

When metal music was initially imported into China in the early 1990s, its textual dimension was first introduced and accepted, but for a long time, the relevant culture had been seriously lacking. For example, as Pen Pei (2015) admitted that when he was first into metal music, he tended to make decisions simply by the cover arts when purchasing records, since he had no idea about the artists, genres (subgenres), styles, or other relevant information. In another online interview, Sui Xiaowei (2013) observed that "in the early stage of Chinese metal *Tang Dynasty* were definitely great, but they did not fundamentally clarify what metal was or should be, because that they did not have enough knowledge to do that, of course neither did their followers, let alone the general audiences". Similarly, Zhang Yun (2015) added that "there was no professional metal magazine before 2000 except occasionally metal-relevant stuff on pop music magazines. Unfortunately, few of them were valuable, while many were misleading or even completely wrong". The fundamental change of such situation happened with the foundations of "*Extreme Music*" and "*Painkiller*" in 2000.

"*Extreme Music*" was founded in June 2000 by Wang Xiao, Zhang Yun, and Hou Liming. It was the first magazine that exclusively focused on underground extreme metal throughout the world, covering biographies of bands, interviews with artists, introductions of the latest releases, as well as the news of local metal scene. The manager of the magazine Wang Xiao (2015) stressed that *Extreme Music* was strictly positioned in the authentic metal[29] so that it had been relatively limited in a few readers (with about 1000 copies for each issue) and it would be hardly commercially

---

[29] It may be difficult to define the term "authentic metal", because the answer could be highly personal and relative. However, in the context of Sui's argument, it primarily refers to those more underground and raw, less mainstream and commercialised artists and works.

successful. After the 30th issue in 2011, the magazine was formally transformed from the traditional format as a printed version to online digital version with a new title as "*XmusicK*"[30], due to the better spread efficiency and lower costs of online media.

In September of the same year, "*Painkiller*" was founded by a group of metal fans, initiated by Chen Xi who is also now the manager of the label Mort Productions. The magazine was issued irregularly in its early years, and bi-monthly after 2005. Unlike "*Extreme Music*", "*Painkiller*" did not strictly limit in the so-called "authentic metal" but various kinds of heavy music, such as Nu-metal, hard rock, and even hardcore punk. Thus, the magazine was relatively more popular and commercial. According to the magazine's official website,[31] it sold on average 5,000 to 7,000 copies of each issue and 20,000 in its peak time in 2003. Even so, the editor Han Ning (cited by Campbell 2011: 151-152) admitted that maintaining the magazine was quite difficult at the beginning, but they still continued for its educational mission in Chinese metal scene. More importantly, the magazine established long-term collaborations with a few famous international labels and record companies, such as AFM Records, Nuclear Blast, Century Media, Wacken Records, *etc*. Since 2008, "*Painkiller*" has begun to sponsor an annually local metal band competition titled "Metal Battle", officially authorised by Wacken Open Air Festival. The winner was awarded a chance to perform in Wacken Festival.[32]

The direct contribution of the magazines was that they introduced the necessary knowledge of metal to China and then constructed the context so that Chinese metal became more as a culture than merely a certain form of sound. Meanwhile, they were important media to connect the Chinese metal praxis with the global metal scene. In doing so, the symbolic boundaries of belonging could be legitimised and a certain

---

[30] The official website of *XmusicK*, available at: http://magazine.xmusick.com/
[31] The official website of *Painkiller*, available at: http://www.painkillermag.com/mag/
[32] Specifically, the previous winners of Metal Battle were *Voodoo Kungfu* (2008), *S.A.W* (2009), *Raging Mob* (2010), *Die from Sorrow* (2011), *The Falling* (2012), and *Nine Treasures* (2013), respectively.

metal community formed (Spracklen & Lucas 2014: 49). Furthermore, they facilitated the establishment of the local metal industries (see Chapter 6.5).

4.5.2 The Boom of Internet & Guitar China

The internet first came into China in 1994. The annual reports of China Internet Network Information Center[33] (CNNIC) support that there was a steady and rapid development from the late 1990s. As the table below shows, the period between 1999 and 2000 saw the greatest proportional growth of the number of the users and second greatest of the registered websites, which indicates that the country began to be heavily influenced by the internet until 2000. Undoubtedly, the internet has greatly impacted on almost all the aspects of contemporary popular music. In the case of Chinese metal, it was primarily significant as a new approach for local artists and fans to obtain the resources.

Table 4.9 Statistics of the Users and Websites in Mainland China 1997 to 2012

Time	User	Websites	Time	User	Website
1997	0.62m	4,066	2005	111m	2.59m
1998	1.17m	9,415	2006	137m	4.11m
1999	2.1m	29,045	2007	210m	11.93m
2000	16.9m	99,734	2008	298m	16.83m
2001	26.5m	128,362	2009	384m	16.82m
2002	45.8m	293,213	2010	457m	8.66m
2003	79.5m	340,040	2011	513m	7.75m
2004	94m	432,077	2012	564m	13.41m

In the trend of the internet boom, the website *Guitar China*[34] was founded in 2000. It is currently the most influential platform for disseminating and promoting the culture and commerce of guitar in China, covering nearly every aspect of guitars such

---

[33] China Internet Network Information Center is a non-profit administration and service organization set up on June 3rd, 1997. The English version of its official website is available at: http://www1.cnnic.cn/

[34] The official website, available at: http://www.guitarchina.com/ The English version of the website is available at: http://www.chinaguitar.com/ However, it just contains a part of contents translated from the Chinese version.

as the artists' videos, guitar teaching resources, news in global guitar scene, online instrument stores, and various forums. The data from the official website illustrates that by August 2011, the number of registered membership had reached 820,000, and the daily simultaneous visitors exceeded 10,000. Given the strong connection between guitar and metal music, the foundation of *Guitar China* promoted the development of Chinese metal in many ways.

In terms of the hardware, *Guitar China* boosted and expanded the consumption and marketing of guitars as well as the associated musical equipment, such as the effects, amps, and accessories. As the biggest promotional network of guitar in the country, the website contained a section called Online Chinese Guitar Stores[35] covering 37 (the figure is still increasing) local guitar stores from different cities. Besides, its affiliated second-hand market forum[36] helped the users to purchase instruments from other individuals, second-hand stores, or overseas purchasing agents. According to the data from the official website, the average daily posts were over 5,000, the highest was 10,890, which made *Guitar China* one of the most visited and credible online second-hand platform. For metal musicians, more types of instruments became available, at the same time, the costs were efficiently reduced.

Regarding the software, two sections of the website are noteworthy, namely *Metal Forum*[37] and *Guitar Tab World*[38]. Compared to other local online metal forums, *Guitar China*'s good reputation made its affiliated *Metal Forum* much more widely visited and an important metal medium for resource sharing. In particular, it was more accessible to the general guitar fans and probably offered them a new access into metal music via guitar playing. In addition, a huge number of metal tablatures (tab for short, a certain form of guitar notation for metal music) were shared in the *Guitar Tab World*. For most metal players the tabs or scores are usually very important for

---

[35] Available at: http://www.guitarchina.com/musicstore/
[36] Available at: http://bbs.guitarchina.com/index.php?gid=40
[37] Available at: http://bbs.guitarchina.com/forum-91-1.html
[38] Available at: http://bbs.guitarchina.com/forum-58-1.html

learning, practising, and improving skills. Although more channels such as the well-known *911tabs* are available to obtain tabs now, *Guitar Tab World* was one of the few approaches to doing so in the early 2000s. Since its foundation in 2000, *Guitar China* has been playing a crucial role in promoting the development of Chinese metal and such impacts are still going on in metal industries. For example, its affiliated live promoter agency *Dragon Shout* is the current biggest live music promoter of metal in the country (see Chapter 6.4).

4.5.3 Midi Modern Festival & 330 Metal Festival

The Midi Modern Festival, commonly known as the "Chinese Woodstock", was the earliest and largest annual underground rock music festival. It initially derived from an illustration of the teaching quality of Beijing Midi School of Music. The first festival was held in 2000 lasting for two days. Most of the performers were the current students or graduates of the School. Nearly 1,000 audiences attended the event daily. The festival constantly developed in terms of both scale and influence and soon obtained foreign media attentions. For example, BBC (UK) and ABC (Australia) broadcasted the festival live to the whole world in 2002. The recent one was held in Shanghai in May 2013. In this three-day event, there were three main stages including Vans-Tang Stage, Qing Stage, and Yuan Electronic Stage. Over 70 bands and artists from across the world performed in the festival and the daily audiences were over 10,000. According to the latest report (Beebee Pop 2015b) in the past 16 years, the aggregate number of audiences was over 200 million, and artists from 51 different countries have performed in the festival.

Metal accounts for a large proportion of the festival. For example, some local famous metal bands such as *Tomahawk*, *Yaska*, *Twisted Machine*, *Miserable Faith*, *AK-47*, *Voodoo Kungfu*, *Suffocated*, and *Ritual Day* had played the final shows of the events. By 2015, among the top 10 of the most frequently performed bands, half of them were

metal (ibid). In addition, well-known overseas bands were involved, such as *Soulfly*, *Shadows Fall*, *Finntroll*, *Loudness*, and *The Agonist* in 2010. Overall, the considerable influence of Midi Modern Festival provided Chinese metal with a platform to touch with more general audiences, communicate with overseas artists, and increase the popularity.

In 2001, another relatively small-scale (compared to general music festivals) but exclusively metal festival was initiated and organised by the guitarist of *Suffocated*, Kou Zhengyu. As Kou (2015) recalled the festival was originally his birthday party on 30th March 2001 in which he had invited several metal artists and friends to perform in a little bar for a celebration. The party was so unexpectedly acclaimed that Kou and a few colleagues tried to make the birthday party an annual event named 330 Metal Festival. In the following years, the festival had been held and developed constantly. In March 2014, the thirteenth festival was held in Beijing, featuring nine local metal bands, covering different subgenres such as classical metal, folk metal, thrash metal, melodic metal and so forth. Considering the significances of live music in contemporary music industries (Page 2007; Frith 2007a; Cloonan 2011), the success of 330 festival showed the growth of Chinese metal live industry, including a group of professional artists and relevant practitioners, a stable fan base, competent hardware facilities, and a certain scale of market demand.

4.5.4 The Compilation Album "Resurrection of the Gods I"

After the first local metal label, Mort Productions, being founded in 2001 (see Chapter 6.3), the first episode of the historic series compilation album of Chinese extreme metal titled "*Resurrection of the Gods I*" (ROG I)[39] was released. This album

---

[39] As a series compilation, the back episodes of ROG were released in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, and the latest (8th) episode was just released in November 2013. It is notable that ROG was the earliest but not the only collection of extreme metal in China. Following ROG I, many compilations were produced and they tended to more specifically focus on certain subgenres. For example, "*Blooding China*" in 2004 was the first death metal compilation; "*Bastards Fall in Fucking Love*" in

consisted of twelve songs from twelve local bands, covering those more underground subgenres of metal, especially death metal, thrash metal, and black metal. These subgenres/styles were completely different from the previous pop metal and Nu-metal, and later dominated the Chinese metal praxis of the 2000s. A few bands included in ROG I became the mainstays of Chinese metal in the following decade, such as *Suffocated*, *Ritual Day*, and *Narakam*.

Table 4.10 Compilation "Resurrection of Gods I" in 2001

Track Titles	Bands	Cities	Styles/Subgenres
Tales of the Ancient	Gate of Meditation	Beijing	Power Metal
Collapse	Suffocated	Beijing	Thrash Metal
The Omen Is Coming	Ritual Day	Beijing	Melodic Black Metal
Join Us	Beeline	Beijing	Death Metal
Sand Strom	Vomit	Tianjin	Death Metal
Being Alive	Immolation	Beijing	Thrash Metal
Journey of the Empire	Seraph	Beijing	Power Metal
My Satan's Gift	Purgatory	Kunming	Raw Black Metal
Destruction	Cankered Corpse	Xi'an	Brutal Death Metal
Messy	Crimson Flag	Beijing	Thrash Metal
Bloody Orgasm	Endoputrescence	Beijing	Brutal Death Metal
The Nightmare Is Going On	Narakam	Beijing	Death Metal

ROG I is significant in three aspects. First, it indicated that extreme metal began to be produced, distributed, and consumed in an "overground" way, as a formal section in the popular music recording industry. The album also preliminarily brought extreme metal from the underground status to more public audiences. Secondly, ROG I contributed to the gathering of the dispersive metal practices from different regions into an integral Chinese metal scene. For example, the bands included in the compilation came from Beijing, Tianjin, Kunming, and Xi'an. Thirdly, the ROG series has gradually become a symbol of honour and social capital, since only the best bands of the time would be included. Potentially, it inspired new bands and artists to improve themselves and then upgrade the overall level of Chinese metal.

2005 was the first brutal death metal compilation; "*Black Battle Corps I*" was the first one of black metal.

In summary, it would be reasonable to argue that Chinese metal as a genre was formed around 2000 when: 1 metal cultures and relevant background knowledge were widely understood and shared by artists and fans within a Chinese metal scene; 2 there was a relatively whole genealogy of metal subgenres with a set of musical and aesthetic conventions; 3 a preliminary metal industry including recording and live was established; 4 Chinese metal began to engage in global metal praxis.

4.6 Extreme Metal Era: 2nd Wave 2000-2013

The success of the first wave metal bands in the mainstream represented by *Tang Dynasty* and *Black Panther* paved the way for the metalhead successors. As one of the founders of *Painkiller* Yu Yang (cited by Campbell 2011: 106) declaimed that the real metal culture had always been a sub-cultural thing outside the mainstream. The history witnessed the rise of a new wave of extreme metal[40] in 2000. Perhaps, the background of this change referred to three important events. Considering the inner impetus, with Chinese metal as an established genre, the artists had obtained a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of metal compared to their predecessors. Necessarily, they tended to seek a more orthodox form of metal inspired by their new acquisitions. Regarding the external influence, extreme metal was experiencing its global popularity (so was in China) at the time, especially marked by the UK gothic black metal superstar, *Cradle of Filth*, signing to Sony[41] in 2000. Also, pirated CDs and illegal downloading MP3s became worldwide issues, such as the battle between *Metallica* and Napster in 2000[42] (Marshall 2002). Such piracy behaviours were more common and serious in China, but they also facilitated the distribution and promotion of extreme metal in the country.

Akin to the difficulty of defining metal, extreme metal is also a loosely defined umbrella term for a number of related metal subgenres with variously stylistic characteristics that have developed since the early 1980s inspired by *Venom*. In his seminal work on extreme metal, Kahn-Harris (2007: 2-5) defines it as a kind of

---

[40] Notably, in the fieldwork of this research, many interviewees tended to claim this extreme metal era as "the revival of Chinese metal". However, this argument is not truly reasonable. First, considering the understanding and acquisition of metal knowledge and skills, the artists in the 2000s were greatly beyond their predecessors. Secondly, in terms of both the ideologies and musical forms, extreme metal in the 2000s showed considerable differences from pop metal in the 1990s. Thirdly, although extreme metal had experiencing a constant growth of popularity, it had never been comparable with the same commercial success as pop metal made in the 1990s. Therefore, naming the period as "the 2nd wave" would be a more appreciate.

[41] An interview of *Cradle of Filth* about their signing with Sony, available at:
  http://www.chroniclesofchaos.com/articles.aspx?id=1-579

[42] For more about the event, see: http://ultimateclassicrock.com/metallica-napster-lawsuit/

transgression against given cultural, artistic, social or aesthetic boundaries, involving death metal, black metal, doom metal, grindcore, and a series of their derivatives and fusions. It is necessary to clarify that defining the period as extreme metal era does not mean there were not other metal subgenres at the time. Instead, a variety of metal subgenres coexisted, including thrash metal, folk metal, as well as pop metal and Nu-metal. This section examines the extreme metal era by highlighting its three dominant subgenres[43], namely death metal, black metal, and grindcore. Meanwhile, thrash metal, folk metal, and metalcore are also discussed.

4.6.1 Death Metal

Although the embryo of death metal in China can be traced back to the 1990s marked by *Tomahawk*, *Narakam*, and *Vomit*, the first official recording did not come about until 2000 when *Stale Corpse* released their debut (also the only) album "*Sound of Prison*" on So Rock! Records. Because of this, they were also honoured as the creator of Chinese (brutal) death metal.

The band was formed in 1998 as a thrash metal band and later transformed to death metal influenced by *Morbid Angel*, *Cannibal Corpse*, *Vader*, and *Dying Fetus*. In September 1999, they made their first EP titled "*The Sound from Underground*" including all the works they had at the time. Immediately, they were embraced by a group of extreme metal fans with over 200 copies sold online in one month. In August 2000, the band created their English homepage Http://stalecorpse.yeah.net (as the first professional website ever for a Chinese metal band). In September, after watching the band's performance, the manager Olaf Firmer and producer Petr Hejtmanek of Morbid Records (Germany) decided to release the overseas edition of their album in 2001 (*Painkiller*, Vol. 2: 71). Unfortunately, soon after the debut album, *Stale Corpse*

---

[43] Notably, doom/stoner/sludge metal is an important component of extreme metal, but this subgenre was rarely observed in Chinese metal scene between 1990 and 2013. For example, the very first and only one doom metal album was "*Evil Straw Warts Live EP*" by *Never Before* in 2013. Thus, it was not examined in this thesis.

disbanded in 2003. However, the curtain of Chinese death metal had been officially opened.

Although there was still an obvious gap between *Stale Corpse* and famous overseas artists regarding the composition, producing, and playing, the band was certainly influential. In particular, they attempted to combine Chinese traditional culture with death metal. For example, the lyrics of the track "*Fuxi*" were based on the Twenty-Four Solar Terms[44], while the music was composed in typical old school death metal style. Despite being at a preliminary level, it declared the beginning of a conscious localisation of extreme metal (see Chapter. 5.3).

In the following years, Chinese death metal experienced a rapid development with a number of new bands appearing from different areas across the country. Eventually, in 2004, the first Chinese death metal compilation "*China Runs Blood*" by Mort Productions announced the first climax of the subgenre. Compared to "*Resurrection of Gods I*", the works included in "*China Runs Blood*" presented a general progress in terms of playing, recording and producing qualities. More importantly, the local artists showed a deeper understanding and mastery of the subgenre. For example, the double bass drumming and growling vocalisation became more orthodox and sophisticated. In particular, the mysterious band *Evil Gang* applied the typical American hardcore elements and the pseudonyms relevant to violence and murder as an imitation of the famous but controversial Mexican- American grindcore/death metal band, *Brujeria*[45]. This indicated an important social significance of Chinese metal, namely "pseudo-evil"

---

[44] *Fuxi* was one is one of the ancestors of Chinese nation and culture, see:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuxi
The Twenty-Four Solar Terms is a kind of lunisolar calendar that matches particular astronomical events or signifies some natural phenomenon. It was invited by ancient Chinese and used to be widely applied in the country, especially crucial to agriculture. Now, it is gradually becoming a symbol of tradition. For more, see: http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/focus/solar-term.htm

[45] Brujeria is a Mexican-American extreme metal band formed in Los Angeles, California in 1989. Their music is focused on Satanism, anti-Christianity, sex, immigration, narcotics smuggling, and politics, particularly a Mexican image with a heavy anti-American stance. More interestingly, all the band members perform under pseudonyms and portray themselves as drug lords, concealing their identities due to being wanted by the FBI.

(will be specifically discussed in Chapter 7.5).

Table 4.11 Compilation "China Runs Blood" in 2004

Track Titles	Bands	Cities
This Is Just a Beginning	December	Beijing
Throat Cutting	Cankered Corpse	Xi'an
Castration	Regicide	Beijing
The Pain of Parturition	Operating Table	Nanchang
Necrosis Fat	Hyonblud	Beijing
Burned Soul	Deadly Sins	Shanghai
The Mirage	Narakam	Beijing
Being Suffered	Vomit	Tianjin
The Slaughter	Cut at Waist	Xi'an
The Rebirth of Butcher	Endoputrescence	Beijing
The Endless Sin	Cause of Death	Beijing
Gathering All the Evil	Evil Gang	Unknown

At the end of 2004, another historic compilation titled "*Unforgotten Past - In Memory of Chuck Schuldiner*"[46] was produced by AreaDeath Productions as a tribute to the "father of death metal" Chuck Schuldiner who died of brain cancer in 2001. The compilation consisted of 14 covered songs of *Schuldiner*'s band *Death*, contributed by 13 extreme metal bands from different countries (including 6 Chinese bands). For the first time, Chinese death metal appeared with overseas artists on the same platform. In this way, the local bands benefitted from the collaborations and comparisons, and China also began to be known in the global death metal scene.

From 2005 to 2010, a few new indie labels focusing on death metal such as Area Death Productions, Bastard Records, and Brutal Reign Records were founded. Subsequently, a number of outstanding local recordings led Chinese death metal into a more mature stage[47]. These artists developed the subgenre into more specific

---

[46] For more details of the compilation, see:
http://www.discogs.com/Various-Unforgotten-Past-In-Memory-Of-Chuck-Schuldiner/release/4720547
[47] Mainly including "*Maniac Euphoria*" (2005) by *Cankered Corpse*, "*Ulcerate Compulsorily*" (2005) by *Lingchi*, "*Extreme Intent Fetal Effect*" (2006) and "*Spiritual immolated*" (2009) by *Regicide*, "*Dead Wind Rising*" (2006) and "*World of Confusion*" (2010) by *Suffocated*, "*Waken the Dark Fire*" (2007) and "*Burning at Moment*" (2008) by *Narakam*, "*Hyonblud*" (2008) by *Hyonblud*, "*Dead Bodies*

offshoots, such as old school death metal, brutal death metal, and melodic death metal. In addition, many overseas death metal albums were re-issued by AreaDeath Productions. The included artists such as *Necrophagia* (US), *Nun Slaughter* (US), and *Thanatos* (Netherland) were usually not famous at their times, but with a legendary underground reputation. The label's manager Wang Xiao (2015) explained that these resources were integral parts of the overall death metal history. However, they were usually so underground that out of the Chinese metal fans. Therefore, the reissues of them did not only provide local labels with more frequent cooperation with overseas counterparts but also greatly enriching the domestic metal market.

Since 2011, with the further diversification of extreme metal, death metal became less dominant and moved into two different directions. First, many artists tended to make their music more melodic and easier listening. For example, the albums "*Lord of Twilight*" by *Fearless* and "*Paradox of Ridiculing*" by *Frosty Eve* in 2012 mixed traditional thrash metal, Swedish death metal, and classic music. In doing so, their riffs contained both strong rhythms and pleasant melodies. Even more, *Frosty Eve* adapted a famous pop hit "*Don't Wanna Grow Up*"[48] into a melodic death metal version, which indicated the band's attitude of narrowing the gap between extreme metal and pop music to make themselves more popular. Moreover, "*Journey of Sadness*" by *Die from Sorrow* in the same year was also "pop" due to the frequent application of acoustic guitar and clean vocal. Notably, keyboards or synthesisers that were previously rarely used in death metal were commonly added into the instrumentation by all of these bands, making the music "softer" and more acceptable for general audiences.

Everywhere" (2010) by *Septicemia*, "*Disembowelment*" (2009) by *Corpse Cook*, "*Polar Night*" (2009) by *Frosty Eve*, "*Sell My Soul*" (2010) by *Thallus*, "*Relic of Disobedience*" (2010) by *RenChei*, "*Creating Light in the Darkness*" (2010) by *Norcelement*, *etc.*
[48] The original version of the song by *S.H.E*, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KV17QLB2BJs
The covered version by *Frosty Eve*, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Clli9un_Jc0

Another direction was towards extremity, mainly led by Brutal Reign Records founded in Xuzhou in 2009. It was well-known for exclusively promoting brutal death metal in China. After releasing the compilation of Chinese brutal metal "Brutal China" in 2009, the label produced a series of works of the subgenre with local bands such as *Make You Hopeless* and *Corpse Cook*, Taiwanese bands such as *Gorepot* and *Guttural Corpora*, as well as *Genital Putrefaction* from Germany. Compared to melodic death metal, brutal death metal celebrated an abnormal pleasure, including the complex and obscure musical texture in the fast tempo, images of dissection and organs in the cover arts, and bloody guts relevant lyrics. All of these were hardly acceptable for general audiences. However, the label manager of Brutal Reign Records, Wang (2014), stated that there were always people preferring special kinds of music for whatever reasons. Although brutal death metal might account for the smallest proportion of the fan base or market share, it was still an indispensable component of metal music. In fact, these two directions of death metal can also be observed in other metal subgenres, as the tension of becoming mainstream (ordinariness and commercialism) or maintaining underground (extremity and anti-commercialism) in which constantly stylistic and generic metabolism were generated (See Chapter 7.4).

4.6.2 Black Metal

Black metal is another prominent subgenre in the Chinese extreme metal era. The earliest Chinese Black metal made its formal debut in front of the public in 2002 by two albums of *Purgatory*'s "*Dream of Moribund*" and *Martyrdom*'s "*Pagan's Hymn*". They introduced an unprecedented raw black metal with a set of new musical forms, ideologies, and aesthetic conventions. First, the typically formal characteristics of black metal such as tremolo picking, screeching vocal, and highly distorted guitar timbre were widely employed. Secondly, the subject matters were mainly concerned with paganism, death, and some antichristian elements, such as the inverted cross

designed in the band logo of *Purgatory*[49]. In fact, both paganism and anti-christianism are crucial components of true black metal ideologies[50]. Finally, these two albums were intentionally recorded and produced in a low and raw quality which was also a commonly aesthetic attitude of black metal. Perhaps, due to the stress of ideology and lack of musicality, black metal had not been widely embraced by Chinese metal fans like death metal in its early time.

It was *Ritual Day* who greatly increased the popularity of black metal in the country. Inspired by a few Nordic black metal artists such as *Dissection*, *Samael*, *Emperor*, and *Burzum*, *Ritual Day* formed their unique style as melodic black metal. Although the band was named "*Ritual Day*", their lyrics did not engage in religious subjects. The vocalist, Nong Yong, explained that "I would not be against any form of religion, but our music is all about our personal ideas (*Painkiller*, Vol. 3: 35), and for me, black metal is to present the dark side in the depth of my heart, it is not necessary to carry a certain religious or cultural thoughts" (*Painkiller*, Vol. 6: 70). The band's debut album "*Sky Lake*" released in 2003 on Mort Productions was not only available in the domestic market but also promoted overseas, such as Taiwan (by Rock Empire), Hong Kong (by Trinity Records), Europe (by Morbid Records), and US (by Nuclear War Now Productions). With a wide acclaim, the band made another split album in collaboration with Italian black metal band *Frostmoon Eclipse* later in the same year.

Soon, *Ritual Day* became one of the best representatives of Chinese extreme metal with a worldwide fame. For example, in a program about Chinese music of Chicago Rock Radio, the DJ praised the band as "the hope of Chinese metal in the new age" and even "the most expected metal sound from the East"[51]. Moreover, the well-known French metal label, Legion of Death Records, re-issued a vinyl version of "*Sky Lake*"

---

[49] The band logo of *Purgatory*, see: http://www.metal-archives.com/bands/炼狱/11924
[50] The term "true black metal" here primarily refers to Norwegian black metal praxis in the 1990s, for more see Phillipov (2011: 152-156).
[51] "Ritual Day signs with North Shore Records", available at:
http://ent.sina.com.cn/p/p/2004-08-12/1614471486.html

in the European market in 2004, making them the first Chinese extreme metal band with such achievement[52]. Unfortunately, since 2005, *Ritual Day* have not published any new work except for a live album in 2009 because of personnel problems. In 2015, the band reformed and prepared for their second album.

2006 witnessed two influential events in the development of Chinese black metal. First, two local black metal labels Pest Productions and Funeral Moonlight Productions (FMP) were founded in Nanchang and Shanghai. From then on, most of the local black metal albums were produced and released by the two labels. In particular, FMP described its only mission as "to support and spread the true black metal music on the worldwide scale" on its official website[53]. The statistic also showed that by 2012, the label had already produced more than 60 black metal albums with the artists from more than 18 countries. The second event was that the depressive black metal band, *Be Persecuted*, signed Germany label No Clouds Records[54]. That was for the first time a local extreme metal band signing an overseas well-known label. The band's breakthrough inspired many new bands to join the black metal army.

In the next a few years, a majority of Chinese black metal artists showed special interests on raw black metal, depressive black metal, and ambient black metal. The common features of these subgenres were constructing the music with a dark, obscure, and depressive atmosphere. The primary difference was that raw black metal was truly fierce, while the latter two were often played at a slower tempo with synthesiser to create a sense of beautiful gloominess. However, in most cases, playing techniques and skills were relatively ignored compared to other subgenres such as trash metal, death metal, or progressive metal. This made them easier to grasp by those primary

---

[52] "The breakthrough of Chinese rock, *Ritual Day* released overseas vinyl album", available at: http://ent.sina.com.cn/p/2004-08-06/1256466068.html

[53] The official website of Funeral Moonlight Productions, available at: http://www.douban.com/doulist/1511493/

[54] The exclusive interview with *Be Persecuted* in 2010, included in the Fanzine "*Under Fm*", available at: http://site.douban.com/ncmetal/widget/notes/526391/note/58828091/

metal musicians, and might also explain that why there were quite a few albums of these subgenres produced in this period (for specific statistics see Chapter 6.3) but few were remarkable.

Considering the subject matters, the idea of Satanism became increasingly employed. For example, the guitarist of the raw black metal band *Illusion of Dawn* was self-proclaimed that he was the member of Lucifer's legion. Another band *Evilthorn* overtly declared themselves as satanic and misanthropic on their website[55]. In a strict sense, China is not a religious country so that such religion-involved statements did not cause, in practice, seriously social problems or moral panic as a few artists did in the Norwegian black metal scene in the early 1990s (Moynihan & Soderlind 2003; Phillipov 2011). Instead, it often functioned as a kind of shocking gimmick appealing to a few fans. In addition to Satanism, naturalism was also embraced, particularly in ambient black metal. For example, in *Zuriaake*'s 2007 conceptual album titled "*Afterimage of Autumn*", all the tracks featured different natural sceneries with highly poetic lyrics[56] and created a soundscape of autumn.

Since 2008, *Terminal Lost* released "*Volume I*", which brought a new subgenre of symphonic black metal in which essential elements of black metal were combined with an orchestral background. One year later, the debut album "*Eclipse of the Dark Lunar*" by *Screaming Saviour* further developed symphonic black metal into a higher level. Compared to the previous black metal artists, these two bands showed more musicality, playing skills, and a much better recording quality. In fact, it also indicated an identity transformation of extreme metal artists, from amateur to semi-professional (see Chapter 5.1).

---

[55] Available at: http://site.douban.com/evil-thorn/
[56] More specifically, "*Afterimage of Autumn*" consisted of 9 tracks including "*Whispering Woods*", "*River Metempsychosis*", "*Afterimage of Autumn*", "*Forest of Twilight*", "*Desolated Mountain*", "*Sirius*", "*Return Journey*", and "*Moon of Forest*". The album is available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwWP1sj6L2I

4.6.3 Grindcore

Grindcore may be one of the most extreme forms of music. Originated in the 1980s, it drew inspiration from a variety of the most aggressive-sounding music genres, such as death metal, thrash metal, and hardcore punk. The artists *Napalm Death* and *Brutal True* are often credited as the initiators of grindcore's stylistic characteristics, such as the fast tempo, heavily distorted timbre, down-tuned guitars, overdriven bass, blast beats drumming, and vocals mixing both growls and screeching. Its subject matters mainly refer to socio-political concerns, gore (goregrind), and porn (pornogrind).

In the Chinese metal scene, grindcore was seen as a close relative to brutal death metal in the early 2000s. For example, when *Cankered Corpse* released their first album in 2005, the band was trademarked as both grindcore and brutal death metal by the label. Moreover, many local labels exclusively focused on the two subgenres at the same time, such as Limbo Grind Productions and Bastard Records. In fact, the two subgenres share quite similar stylistic characteristics, while the main differences are that grindcore work is usually very short as less than 2-minutes and the appearances and attitudes of the band members show a closer relationship with punk.

Chinese grindcore was initiated in 2005 when Bastard Records released a 6-ways split album titled "*Bastards Fall in Fucking Love*"[57] that included three local grindcore bands *Deranged Shit*, *Naked Incise*, and *Entamoeba Histolyca*. In the following two years, the label released another six grindcore albums, before becoming inactive after 2007. Since 2008, Limbo Grind Productions became the primary producer of grindcore, such as the two significant splits "*Insulator*" in 2008 and "*The Decay of Human Nature, the Decay of Dick*" in 2013. At the same time, the subgenre further evolved into more offshoots, especially goregrind such as "*Hunt in a Kindergarten EP*" (2010) by *Psycho Killer* and pornogrind such as "*Slaughter of Love in Hogpen*" (2008)

---

[57] More about the album, see:
http://www.metal-archives.com/albums/Visceral_Suture_-_Cuntshredder_-_Naked_Incise_-_Excruciate/Bastards_Fall_in_Fucking_Love/351004

by *Rammish Succus*. In 2013, a new founded local grindcore label, Hepatic Necrosis Productions, issued five albums in succession. Although almost every year since 2005 had witnessed new albums, grindcore never obtained the equal popularity as death metal or black metal did in the Chinese metal scene. Perhaps, this was primarily due to its more abnormal pleasure and aesthetic pursuit.

4.6.4 Other Important Subgenres

In addition to extreme metal, there were still a few simultaneous metal subgenres in this period, such as thrash metal, folk metal, and metalcore. This illustrated that the trajectory of Chinese metal was not a mere repetition to the West. Instead, it highly depended on that what kind(s) of metal subgenres the local metalheads contacted with in certain periods rather than the original situation in the western history. For instance, in the West, thrash metal was the most influential subgenres in the 1980s and played a crucial role as the ancestor that inspired and bred almost all the later offshoots of extreme metal. In contrast, this process did not happen in China. After *Overload*'s short thrash career in the early 1990s and *Heresy*'s inexperienced attempt in 2000, there were rare outstanding thrash metal bands until 2005 when *Explosicum* was formed. Still, most elements of thrash metal had been using by other subgenres, such as death metal and black metal. Although an increasing number of local artists were interested in thrash metal subsequently (see the table below), the subgenre had never been dominant in the extreme metal era.

Table 4.12 List of the Main Local[58] Thrash Metal Albums between 2000 and 2013

Band Name	Album/Time
Heresy	"Hymn", in 2000
Penetration	"The Wolf of Ancient Tomb", in 2006
Che Lie	"Rotten", in 2007
Raging Mob	"Raging Mob", in 2008
Explosicum	"Conflict", in2008
Lacerate	"Journey", in 2008 "Return of the King", in 2011
Excite Insects	"Hellraiser", in 2010
Explosicum & Chaotic Aeon	"Night of Darkness" Split, in 2011
Moonless Acheron	"Moonless Acheron", in 2012

The application of traditional Chinese materials in metal can be traced back to *Tang Dynasty* and *Again* in the early 1990s. This tendency was continued in Nu-metal such as *T9* as well as extreme metal such as *Empylver* and *Deep Mountain*. In a broad sense, all of these practices could be regarded as folk metal, since they more or less contained folk-relevant elements. However, in a more strict sense, folk metal only refers to those bands explicitly self-marked as so and comprehensively applied ethnic instruments, narratives, costumes, and conventions in their music, lyrics, appearances, and performances. As a relatively new subgenre, folk metal exploded into prominence in the early 2000s, primarily represented by a group of Finnish artists such as *Finntroll*, *Ensiferum*, *Korpiklaani*, *Turisas*, and *Moonsorrow*.

As a multi-ethnic country, China consists of 56 different ethnic areas. Mongolian was the most prominent in the rise of Chinese folk metal in the late 2000s. Most folk metal bands came from Inner Mongolia, and they provided the music with a special ethnic flavour by widely employing the traditional instrument Morin Khuur[59] and the unique vocalisation Khoomei[60], such as *Ego Fall*'s[61] debut album "*Mongolian Spirits*" in

---

[58] Notably, in this period there were also a number of albums of overseas thrash metal bands re-issued by local labels such as AreaDeath productions.

[59] For more on Morin Khuur, see: http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00068

[60] The video introduction of Khoomei, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hV8EJOvvPvY

[61] *Ego Fall* is self-defined as folk/metalcore because that they combine metalcore and Mongolian music. More notably, they were the first Chinese metal band who made a European tour in January 2016 headlined by *Therion*. For more, see

2008 and *Tengger Cavalry*'s "*Blood Sacrifice Shaman*" in 2010. Until 2011, another Inner Mongolian band *Nine Treasure* was formed and greatly developed forward the subgenre. In their debut album "*Arvan Ald Guulin Hunshoor*" in 2012, Morin Khuur almost replaced the guitars and became the leading melodic instrument, and the lyrics were completely written in Mongolian. Moreover, the band members always dressed in their traditional costumes when performing on the stage.

Perhaps, the prominence of Mongolian elements in Chinese folk metal is mainly because that both its musical traditions (such as the musical scales, instruments, and rhythms) and ethnic spirits (such as fierceness, horse, and conquest) are quite similar to the Nordics and Vikings who initially made the subgenre's rise. Due to a sort of exotic natures, Chinese folk metal often received more attentions and acclaims from overseas media. For instance, *Tengger Cavalry* was applauded by *Billboard* (US) as a "grand and exotic flavour", and *The Guardian* (UK) praised the band as "they created expressive foreign culture"[62]. At the same time, this unique style also illustrated a process of the localisation of metal in China (see Chapter 5. 3).

Metalcore can be defined as a broad fusion genre of extreme metal and hardcore punk. After its formative stage in the 1990s, metalcore started to gain increasing popularity in the early 2000s, with many big metal labels such as Century Media and Metal Blade beginning to promote the subgenre. Soon, it reached a considerable commercial success[63] and became one of the most mainstream metal subgenres. With this trend, metalcore became fast-rising in China in the late 2000s. According to a statistic from

---

http://metalshockfinland.com/2015/11/18/therion-announce-european-headline-tour-in-january-2016/
[62] Cited from the excerpts on the personal website of Tengger Cavalry, see:
http://site.douban.com/tenggercavalry/
[63] For example, *Killswitch Engage*'s "*The End of Heartache*" positioned at number 21 on the Billboard Album Chart of the year 2004, see:
http://www.billboard.com/artist/305863/killswitch+engage/chart
Underoath's fifth album "*Define the Great Line*" peaked at number 2 on the Billboard 200 in 2006, see: http://www.billboard.com/artist/303442/henry+gonzalez/chart.
In 2008, Bullet for My Valentine's second album titled "Scream Aim Fire" made number 4 on the same chart, see: http://www.billboard.com/artist/298519/bullet-my-valentine/chart

the United CN Metalcores[64], there were more than 60 professional and active local metalcore bands by 2010. Similar to Nu-metal, the popularity of metalcore is primarily due to its inclusiveness and inventive nature without rigid paradigms so that different artists (not merely metal) could find their ways of expression therein. Various fashionable elements being freely employed also makes metalcore appeal to more general audiences.

Since 2008, the biggest Chinese indie metal label, Mort Productions, had begun to promote Chinese metalcore and released a number of important albums, such as "*Mongolian Spirits*" (2008) by *Ego Fall*, "*Insistence*" (2008) by *Institutional Crush*, "*Cube*" (2009) by *Survival*, "*The Core of Metal*" (2009) by *Dark Cosmos*, "*Your Head Smells Good*" (2010) by *Beyond Cure*, "*Precipitation*" (2011) by *Why Lazy*, "*Dagon Power*" (2011) by *Dagon Power*, "*Fight for Fate*" (2012) by *Wu Zheng*, "*12.21*" (2012) by *Nightmare*, and "*Nower*" (2013) by *Nower*. In addition, a new label exclusively focusing on metalcore, DIME Records, was founded in 2010 with three releases later, including "*Youth Resist*" (2010) by *S.A.W*, "*Inner M*" (2010) by *Ego Fall*, and "*Be Citizen*" (2011) by *Ordnance*[65]. Eventually, *Four-Five* signing the biggest Chinese mainstream indie label Modern Sky in 2014 formally declared that metalcore entered the mainstream field[66] and consolidated the subgenre's prominence in the early 2010s.

---

[64] United CN Metalcores is an unofficial online group focusing on information and resources around Chinese metalcore. It was founded in 2010, joint by nearly 1300 members by 2015, see: http://www.douban.com/group/china-core/

[65] *Ordnance* is a highly controversial metalcore band due to the explicitly political contents in the lyrics and protest actions. Notably, the guitarist of the band, Liu lixin, is also the manager of the label DIME Records. The political issues will be specifically discussed in Chapter 7. 2.

[66] *Four-Five* signed with Modern Sky http://yue.ifeng.com/news/detail_2014_03/18/34856823_0.shtm

Summary of Chapter

This chapter has examined the complete development of Chinese metal between 1990 and 2013. Beginning with a consideration of the social background of Chinese rock (Chinese metal was initially an important offshoot of Chinese rock), the chapter has then focused on the praxis of three significant periods, including the first wave of heavy rock era (1990-1996), the transitional Nu-metal movement (1997-), and the second wave of extreme metal era (2000-2013), respectively. Meanwhile, the two historic timing of 1990 and 2000 has been highlighted as the emergence of metal style and formation of the metal genre of the country. The former was marked by *Tang Dynasty*'s performance in The 1990 Modern Concert, while the latter a series of relevant events such as the foundations of local metal magazines, the boom of the internet and the rise of the website *Guitar China*, the promotion by Midi Modern Festival and 330 Metal Festival, and the release of the first compilation album of Chinese metal, "*Resurrection of the Gods I*". The examination has revealed a unique U-shape curve trajectory (starting within the mainstream field in the early 1990s, declining in the late 1990s, becoming underground in early 2000s, then rising again in late 2000s) moving forward with the country's modernization process, especially the interactions of the economic growth, technological progress, and cultural liberalism, which was quite different from that of the West.

Instead of merely providing a descriptive "story" of Chinese metal's history, this chapter serves as a "fact" dimension based on which further discussions around other aspects of Chinese metal are possibly launched, including the identities, industries, and social meanings.

Chapter 5 Identities of Chinese Metal

The ancient Greek philosophical metaphor known as "Ship of Theseus" or "Theseus' Paradox" questions that when the Ship of Theseus was rebuilt over the centuries as wood rotted and broke, was it still "that" ship, or at what point did it stop being the original one and become something else? More abstractly, the question can be proposed as that whether an object after having had some or all of its components replaced remains the same object? It has been a fundamentally ontological question of identity for more than 2,000 years. Particularly, it became the subject of increasing political argument and theoretical debate throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Negus 1996: 99). Even recently, for example, Yanofsky (2013) still started his exploration of the existence of individual identity with referring to the conundrum.

The same interrogation can also be applied to metal phenomenon. First, who defined the so-call original metal, or say the archetype of metal (see Chapter 1.1.2 and Popoff 2015)? Temporally, with the diversification of the metal subgenres in its evolving history, what has kept the current metal still like the original one? Spatially, with the increasingly worldwide spread, metal inevitably underwent a variety of localisations, then, what has kept, for example, Chinese metal still original metal? Indeed, these philosophical questions are so complicated and abstract that they are better to be temporarily suspended before more specific questions having been answered.

According to Duffy (2005: 677)'s observation, recent studies on the role of music in the constitution of identity mainly refer to two categories namely the studies that focus on either the diffusion of musical styles and genres or the ways in which textual elements, such as music, lyrics, and images create a sense of connection to particular identity. Thus, this chapter aims to investigate the identity issues of Chinese metal in four sections: the participants, musical texts, acculturation, and a uniquely Chinese

phenomenon of agriculture metal.

The chapter starts with defining the identity characteristics of the participants within the Chinese metal scene as elitism (the 1990s), populism (the 2000s), and multiplicity (the 2010s). Then, the identity of Chinese metal is further examined by a series of textual analyses including the music, MVs, cover arts, and subgenre of folk metal. The analysing results illustrate that the development of Chinese metal had been experiencing a tension between globalisation and localisation in different degrees, which can be understood as an inevitable process in any case of cultural transplanting phenomenon. Furthermore, this chapter proposes an identity-aesthetics mechanism and argues that Chinese metal cannot be truly inscribed into a general "metal" until the Chinese identities are aesthetically and artistically represented in certain genres (subgenre) and styles. Finally, a case study of agriculture metal reveals an identity struggle and reconstruction phenomenon in the process of cosmopolitanism, which is realised by original identity suspension, textual deconstruction, and reconstruction. The observations of this chapter will be an integral part of the current global metal studies, and it may also facilitate the discussion of the Theseus' Paradox from a metal angle.

5.1 Identities in Participants

A scene is created by its participants or say scene members and their activities. Therefore, the identity characteristics of the participants partly determined the identities of the scene. In the strictly industrial sense, the participants should refer to craftsman, showman, entrepreneur, functionary, in addition to musicians (Peterson 1990: 108). However, this section is primarily concerned with the musicians. Considering the over twenty years history of Chinese metal and the social changes, the identities of the participants should be seen as dynamic with time rather than stable. Based on the historical observations and stage divisions in Chapter 4, this section highlights three identity characteristics of Chinese metal musicians in three periods, including the elitism in the 1990s, populist and semi-professionalization in the 2000s, and the current identity multiplicity. The discussion of the participants will inevitably engage with industrial factors. However, to keep the logic of the whole thesis, they will be discussed in the next chapter.

5.1.1 Elitism in the 1st Wave

Oxford Dictionaries Online defines "elite" as a select group that is superior in terms of ability or qualities and often has more power and influence than the rest of a group or society. The term "elitism" here refers to the majority of metal artists of the first wave with relatively better social conditions, such as coming from wealthy families or receiving professionally musical educations. From a Marxist perspective, people's social, cultural, and economic statuses are always connecting with each other, in which the last one serves as the basis.

In the West, *Black Sabbath* initially provided metal with particular symbols of identity as white, youth, and working-class. These characteristics have been changing and extending with the constantly globalising process of metal. For example, Chinese

metal was begun by the population of relatively higher stratum. As Friedlander (1991: 71) observed, at the beginning of Chinese metal, electric guitars, drum sets, and musical amplification equipment were found only in the large department stores of major urban centres. He also pointed out that the price of electric guitars was similar to the fact of America, but the average national wage in China was much lower (ibid). At the same time, there were not many professional studios, and they were also usually quite expensive. According to my personal experience, I spent 1,500 RMB on my first local-produced guitar in 1999 when the price of a Gibson Standard made in the USA was over 8,000 RMB. As a reference, during that period my average living cost was about 500 RMB monthly. Therefore, the economic costs of being a metal musician in the mainland China was considerably high in the 1990s. Since the 2000s the conditions had begun to be gradually improved, which became one of the crucial factors of the identity changes in the second wave (will be discussed later).

The cultural and artistic level also played a significant role. As mentioned in Chapter 4.1, in the late 1980s and early 1990s Chinese rock presented a nature of cultural pioneer more than commercial production, even with a certain sense of enlightenment. For example, although the country's authorities criticised Cui Jian's behaviours and ideas in his early career, the artistry and musicianship were never denied (Wang 2009: 72-73). In this circumstance, most metal artists were also of relatively high artistry and musicianship such as compositional skills and playing techniques which were often obtained by certain educational or family background (see the table below). These backgrounds provided them with more opportunities to contact with and understand new musical genres and styles from the West and personally participated into the praxis.

Table 5.1 Background of Important Chinese Metal Artists in the Early 1990s

Name	Band	Role	Educational/Family Background
Ding Wu	Tang Dynasty	Vocalist Guitarist	Craft Art School of Beijing, (later) College of Art Design of Beijing University of Technology
Dou Wei	Black Panther	Vocalist	Youth Light Musical Troupe of Beijing
Zhao Mingyi	Black Panther	Drummer	Art Troupe of Chinese Army
Wu Tong	Again	Vocalist	Central Conservatory of Music
Zhao Wei	Again	Guitarist	Central Conservatory of Music
Ou Yang	The Face	Bassist	Troupe of General Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army
Gao Qi	Overload	Vocalist Guitarist	Musical family, his parents were both professional musicians

In the early 1990s, the resources of learning metal music were highly limited and usually dominated by few central figures or groups, so that metal was unlikely to be something common. For example, in the commencement speech of a guitar school in 2006, Liu Yijun[1] (the ex-guitarist of *Tang Dynasty*) recalled that at the time he started playing guitar, textbooks were extremely scarce, but he was lucky because that Ding Wu (the vocalist of *Tang Dynasty*) had one[2] that he could share. Both Liu and Ding became legendary guitarists in the later Chinese rock/metal history. By a people-to-people sharing approach, the textbook also benefitted a few local guitarists.

These conditions resulted in a fact that being a metal participant at the time was difficult, which also distanced metal musicians from metal fans or general audiences. Meanwhile, such distance ensured an identity of stardom. In other words, if one failed to become a metal star signing a big label, he could not truly stay in the scene. For instance, "*A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty*" by *Tang Dynasty*, "*Black Panther I*" by *Black Panther*, and "*Overload*" by *Overload* were released on Magic Stone Records; "*Pass Away*" by *Tomahawk* and "*The Instinct of Fire*" by *The Face* were released on BMG; "*Creation*" by *Again* was released on China Record Corporation. An indie-status did not exist since there had yet to be the so-called DIY approaches of

---

[1] For more about the speech, see http://news.guitarchina.com/article/1990.html
[2] The textbook was called "*Electric Guitar Classroom by Katsumi Kobayashi*". Until 1995 it was first officially translated and republished in mainland China. Before that, it was treated as the bible of guitar learning by early Chinese electric guitarists.

producing or distribution. This also echoed the aforementioned mainstream status of Chinese metal in the 1990s.

5.1.2 Populism in the 2nd Wave

5.1.2 Populism in the 2nd Wave

In chapter 4.5, a series of events around 2000 were highlighted, which inspired the deeper development of Chinese metal in its second wave. One of the notable consequences was the identity change of metal participants from the elitism to populism. The term populism here does not simply mean the popularity but implying a certain situation therein more ordinary people can participate in metal praxis with a semi-professional status. Frith (2008: 170) differentiated the terms professional and amateur as the "musicians whose careers and livelihood depend on music making and those for whom it is a leisure activity, a hobby, something done for its own sake". The term semi-professional here indicates a status between the two. In this decade, my personal experience as an underground metal musician could be a footnote or exemplification to illustrate such populism and semi-professional.

My band, *Grave Keeper*, was defined as melodic black metal, formed in 2003 and disbanded in 2008. The band was located in Wuhan, one of the first-tier cities in the central China. All the five members of the band were from middle-class families. During its active period, the band made a good reputation as one of the best metal bands ever of the city by a lot of live shows and two self-released EPs[3] but had never formally signed any label. In a certain degree, *Grave Keeper* could be seen as a representative of a huge number of underground Chinese metal bands of the 2000s, reflecting the characteristics of populism, semi-professional, and DIY.

---

[3] In 2006, the band signed the famous indie label Area Death Productions to release a complication album with another two local black metal bands. Unfortunately for some unexpected reason, it did not happen so that the band did not have any official release. Nevertheless, there is still a homepage for the band on the official website of the label, available at:
http://www.areadeath.net/forum/forumdisplay.php?fid=40

First, the career of the band was relatively short and completely connected to a status of university/college student. This status is also typically exemplified by the local metal organisation Metallatem (the Chinese name is the Metal Alliance of Chinese Universities) which was initially founded by a few students of Beijing University of Chemical Technology in 2011, aiming to promote metal culture in universities. Since 2012, a series of metal concerts in the name of *Forged Alliance* began to hold twice annually. All the performers and organisers were students. In 2015, Metallatem released a compilation album titled "*Metal Movement*"[4] contributed by eighteen local metal bands from the universities across the country. By the end of 2015, the organisation had expanded to include dozens of universities and 20 student bands.

The Poster of the 7th Forged Alliance by Metallatem in 2015
Image obtained from
http://www.weibo.com/p/1001603904035072699589?from=page_100505_profile&wvr=6&mod=wenzhangmod

---

[4] For more about the compilation and bands information, see
http://music.douban.com/subject/26373774/

However, the student status also indicates that when some central or all of the band members graduated, the band would be hardly maintained. Having a job often means not having as much free time as the students do, and also sometimes means moving to other cities. For example, the two ex-members of *Grave Keeper*, Zhang Heng and Wang Zhou became the managers of a media company in 2008. In the interview, they (2014) stated that "the end of student status actually declared the end of our band. The economic and family pressure made us have to get a formal job rather than the so-called indie artists. For many years we have been planning to reform the band, but it was extremely difficult considering the time and energy. Now we set a few types of equipment in the office, but only for fun". In fact, I experienced the similar pressure as they did, which was also the main reason why I changed myself into a scholar of metal from a musician. As far as I am concerned, there were at least seven metal bands in Wuhan in the mid-2000s, but all of them disbanded around the late 2000s for the similar reason like *Grave Keeper*.

Secondly, the musicianship and skills of the band members were semi-professional. For example, among the five members of *Grave Keeper*, only the bassist was studying in Wuhan Conservatory with a formal background in music. The rest members only learned the compositional knowledge via listening to and imitating our favourite bands. In other words, our practice was more empirical-guided than theoretical. When differentiating the folk music and art music, Regev (2013: 22) associated "notated forms" with a sense of sophisticated, vice versa. Such lack of notation ability was typical in my band. Different members had their ways to remember their parts, and they usually did not quite clear about others'. In terms of the skills, a professional instrumentalist may be supposed to be able to deal with a lot of different musical styles. Instead, we were only good at metal style and even our own music. Even when covering songs such as *Master of Puppet* by *Metallica* we had to simplify a few sections, especially the solos due to the lack of professional training skills.

Thirdly, the whole musical activity was increasingly conducted in DIY approaches. In 2005, my band recorded one demo in an indie studio operated by one of my friends. The cost was relatively low which was roughly equivalent to my monthly living fee as a university student (about 800 RMB). The post-production was completed by us together. However, when we had the chance to collaborate with the label AreaDeath Productions, the manager required us to reproduce the song since that the quality was too low for publication. Similarly, when preparing for gigs, we settled all the relevant stuff, including building a simple rehearsal room, designing and printing the posters and tickets, negotiating with the live house managers, *etc*. In most cases, the incomes could not completely cover the costs, so that we had to share the losses to keep the band going on. From an industrial perspective, this mechanism was unhealthy, but we still accepted it as long as we can afford. However, at the same time, it made us fail to find a better operational mode to become a truly professional band.

To sum up, with the economic and cultural developments of the country, the costs of participating in the metal praxis were dramatically decreased, so that a huge number of metal fans had a chance to become metal musicians, as *Grave Keeper* did. On the one hand, it greatly facilitated the popularity of metal in the country. On the other hand, it blurred the boundary between the status of amateurs and professionals. These two tendencies presented the primarily identity characteristic as populism of the second wave of Chinese metal. Although the "stardom" still existed in this period, such as a few most prominent artists mentioned in Chapter 4.6, the main body consisted of "populist".

5.1.3 Current Identity Multiplicity

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the overall development of Chinese metal showed a U-shape curve, starting in the mainstream field in the early 1990s, declining in the late 1990s, becoming underground in early 2000s, and rising again in late 2000s.

Since the late 2000s, the Chinese metal participants have been featuring an identity multiplicity. Taking the interviewees of my fieldwork (see Chapter 3.3.2) for example, this multiplicity is mainly reflected in three dimensions.

First, different levels such as amateurs, semi-professionals, professionals, and superstars of metal artists are co-existing, and they are generally labelled as metalheads. Secondly, metal is not limited to any single identity. Instead, it is embraced by fans from different cities with different educational degrees, occupations, or more generally social statuses. Thirdly, although metal is becoming increasingly popular in China, it has yet to be a section in the mainstream popular music industries. Moreover, with the industrial transition from traditional recording to digital, even the mainstream artists are encountering difficulties in maintaining their careers. Because of these, there are a lot of artistically professional metal musicians who have to take extra jobs to make a living. In this sense, the identity multiplicity also exists in individual levels.

This observation is supported by a few statistics in the "*Survey of Musician Living Situation in 2013*" conducted by an online media Musician Guide[5]. Although the survey was focused on broadly pop-rock musicians rather than metal, it still relatively reflected a general trend of the current situation. For example, among the 614 surveyed Chinese pop musicians, 49.76% of them did extra jobs which had nothing to do with music, 29.36% had other jobs relevant to music, and only 20.88% were truly professional musicians. Moreover, 35.4% of them had never signed any label, 46.49% were seeking to sign one but not yet, and only 9.3% were in the situation of contracts. Regarding the educational background, 45.69% of the surveyed rock musicians were completely self-taught, 37.50% were not major in music but with educational experiences in training institutions, and only 16.81% had a formal musical education.

---

[5] For the full report, see http://vdisk.weibo.com/s/HpKqg

In general, the characteristics of the identity of the participants in the Chinese metal scene experienced three transitions, including the elitism in the 1990s, the populism in the 2000s, and multiplicity in more recent 2010s. More significantly, these transitions were directly associated with the industrial development of Chinese metal and popular music, and they should be further understood as a reflection of the economic and social progress of the country.

5.2 Identities in Musical Texts

Ultimately, metal must be considered as music work, the actual sound. Thus, musical characteristics are an integral dimension of the identity of metal music. More importantly, the musical analysing outcomes will inspect that whether the contextual conclusions are indeed reflected in or conform to the musical facts. Given that the topic has rarely been discussed so far, this section fills this academic blank by analysing five pieces of Chinese metal works (as the table shown below).

Table 5.2 Samples of Musical Analysis

Name of Work/ Artists	Time	Subgenre
"No Place to Hide" by Black Panther	1991	Pop metal
"The Shadow of Ancestor" by Overload	1993	Thrash metal
"Nobody Looks up to You" by Twisted Machine	2001	Nu-metal
"Ritual Day" by Ritual Day	2003	Black metal
"Darkness Falling before Eyes" by Narakam	2008	Death metal

It is necessary to clarify that the samples were selected out of numerous works mainly according to three principles[6]. First, they can illustratively reflect the evolving process of Chinese metal history. Secondly, they refer to the prominent subgenres discussed in Chapter 4. Thirdly, the bands should be of great reputation and popularity in Chinese metal scene (so that relatively representative). Moreover, the analysis in this section will not target on the whole musical works but a few core riffs from them (for more specific explanations about the musical analysis and the notations of the sample, see Chapter 3.2.1). The parameters that are taken into account mainly refer to melody, harmony, rhythm, tempo, timbre, as well as playing and vocal techniques. At the same time, the timing in the parentheses showed each example's position in their original works.

---

[6] Notably, *Tang Dynasty* is not included in the sample list, since this thesis sees them as a special case of Chinese metal rather than the representative (see Chapter 4.2). Chen (2010)'s master dissertation examined Chinese rock phenomenon by a case study on Tang dynasty, in which the second chapter was exclusively focused on their musical characteristics from a musicological angle.

5.2.1 Musical Analysis

Sample 1 "*No Place to Hide*" by *Black Panther* (Pop Metal)

Excerpted from Album "*Black Panther I*", 1991, Track No. 1

ISRC (CHINA): CNA509600060

The track is available at http://music.163.com/#/song?id=357279&userid=3715867

Example 1 (0':01"- 0:09")

Example 2 (2':59" - 3':15")

The key of the song is F Major, and the main vocal melody is based on G Dorian mode. The holistic tempo is moderate as 120 BPM. The whole music is driven by both riffs and chord progressions. For example, the song begins with the repetition of Example 1 (0': 01''- 0': 16''), while when the vocal joins, the song turns to follow a harmonic pattern as Dm- C/ Dm- C/ Gm- Bb/ Gm- Bb- A/ (0': 33''- 1': 04''). Especially, the refrain is accompanied by Dm- Am- Bb- C (2': 41''- 2': 58'') which is a widely used chord progression in pop music. These two impetuses indicate that the structure features metal and pop music styles simultaneously. The vocal is melodic, powerful, high-pitched, and plain, which shows a similarity to the common vocal style of Chinese rock of the early 1990s, such as Cui Jian. The guitar timbre is between overdrive and distortion, and slightly closer to the former[7].

More specifically, two essential playing techniques of metal, power chords and palm mute can be observed in Example 1. Example 2 shows that the interlude solo of the song is based on a pentatonic scale (D minor), which quickly reminds the listens of those solos in traditional metal works such as "*Paranoid*" by *Black Sabbath*. In addition, the instrumentation of leading guitar and rhythm guitar was also typical to most metal bands before 1990s such as *Guns N' Roses*, which was, however, hardly applied in later extreme metal. The use of the keyboard (synthesiser) in the background also easily reminds the listeners of some pop group of 1980s such as *Europe*.

As a result, these details suggest that Chinese metal in the early 1990s, to a large extent, was a formal imitation to 1980s and 1970s' traditional metal. Meanwhile, the music presented an innate multiplicity of metal, rock, and pop, which supports the argument of the "metallised rock" and "pop metal" in Chapter 4.

---

[7] Undoubtedly, timbres are distinctive factors for different genres or styles. Generally, overdrive is usually more linked with rock, while distortion tends to be of more relevance to metal. However, it has never been a strict rule in practice. For more about overdrive and distortion, see (Hunter, 2004) and http://www.gibson.com/News-Lifestyle/Features/en-us/effects-explained-overdrive-di.aspx
For more about differences between rock and metal, see:
http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-rock-and-metal/

Sample 2 "*The Shadow of Ancestor*" by *Overload* (Thrash Metal)

Excerpted from Compilation "*Rock Beijing I*", 1993, Track No. 9

ISRC (CHINA): CNC029330800

The track is available at http://music.163.com/#/song?id=5282084&userid=3715867

Example 3 (0: 01" - 0: 16")

Example 4 (0': 31"- 0': 46")

Example 5 (3': 00"- 3': 10")

Example 6 (1': 20"- 1': 35")

This track is likely the very first recorded thrash metal work in China, which shows a more complex structure of tonality than most other contemporary pop music and rock works. For instance, the prelude is based on E minor (Example 3), then turns to G major (Example 4). The verse part is in A minor (1': 20"- 2': 17") and refrain in C minor (2': 18"- 2': 41"), with the interlude solo modulating to D minor (3': 00"- 3': 48"). Overall, the keys change with riffs. Even more, in Example 6, the tonality becomes unclear with the progression of the root notes moving between A- G- A- Bb and A- G#- G- F. This frequent modulation and tonal vagueness suggest that the whole work is more built and articulated by riffs than chord progressions.

The interlude solo (Example 5 shows its first phrase) is of typical thrash metal style

with a fast tempo at 180 BPM. Moreover, the melody is almost atonal out of the chorus background's constraint. Also, more sophisticated techniques such as sweep picking are used, which echoes Walser (1993: 57)'s argument of heavy metal's virtuosity. At the same time, the vocal of the song should be better defined as semi-melodic because that the refrain is sung melodically while the verse is closer to a sort of shrieking. Besides, the percussion features a considerable intensity and speed although those more extreme techniques such double bass[8] and blast beat[9] had not been applied yet.

Therefore, all of these factors made this work of much less relevance to pop music at the time but more to the later extreme metal, in which riffs serve as the basic unit and central coherent force for the whole work. The sophisticated composition and playing skills also confirm the professional identity of the first wave metal artists. Notably, the whole prelude (Example 3 and Example 4) is composed on the pentatonic scale, showing an apparent Chinese sense. It may imply that Chinese metal was starting transiting forward from imitation to creation.

---

[8] Double bass is a drumming technique as an integral part of many genres of metal music. The artists such as Carmine Appice, Ian Paice, Cozy Powell and Tommy Aldridge were among the double bass pioneers in metal music. Especially, the drummer of American thrash metal band Slayer, Dave Lombardo, was honored as "the godfather of double bass" by *Drummer World*, see: http://www.drummerworld.com/drummers/Dave_Lombardo.html
[9] Blast beat is a drumming technique originated in jazz, which is now more utilised in many different subgenres of metal, especially extreme metal, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blast_beat

Sample 3 "*Nobody Looks up to You*" by *Twisted Machine* (Nu-metal)

Excerpted from Album "*Twisted Machine*", 2001, Track No. 2

ISRC (CHINA): CNA010035800

The track is available at http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=368793&userid=3715867

Example 7 (0': 01"- 0': 05")

Example 8 (0': 21"- 0': 30") and (0': 31"- 0': 40")[10]

---

[10] These two examples are structured on the same root notes and rhythmic pattern but playing in different ways. Thus, the similarity can be easily identified by listening.

Example 9 (1': 22"- 1': 30")

Structurally, this piece of work is quite simple that only consists of three core riffs. The key is fixed in E minor (as the most frequently used in metal)[11]. The whole song is nearly constantly repeating the root notes as E- G- A- Bb, played by their corresponding power chords with syncopation, as Example 8 shown. Moreover, the solo is thoroughly abandoned and replaced by a new section called breakdown[12] (Example 9), where the aforementioned melodic line is taken over by the bass. Finally, the vocal of this song is neither melodic singing (like in pop metal) nor growling or shrieking (like in extreme metal) but an intensified version of rap. On the one hand, this vocalisation facilitated the clarity of the lyrical expression. On the other hand, it extended the concept of metal vocalists so that one can still participate in metal praxis as a vocalist with a good sense of rhythm but without a perfect voice in a traditional sense.

As a result, such melodic and harmonic simplification and rhythmic stress, in fact, suggested a transformation that Chinese metal relied less on professional music background (such as the theories of harmony usually learned by normal educations) but was becoming increasingly practical (such as certain rhythmic patterns usually grasped by practices). In overall, the musicianship was declined compared with pop metal. Meanwhile, one of the potential significances was that the elitism of Chinese metal participants in the early 1990s had transited to the populism in the late 1990s.

---

[11] Indeed, the truly most frequently used key in metal music is E-flat minor. However, that key is obtained by merely tuning down all the guitar strings by a minor second interval. Thus, the composition, notation, and playing fingering are maintained as the same as those used in E minor.
[12] A particular section widely used in punk, Mu-metal, and metalcore, often featuring a strong, dynamic, and repeating rhythmic loop based on a single chord or simple chords progression.

Sample 4 "*Ritual Day*" by *Ritual Day* (Black Metal)

Excerpted from Album "*Sky Lake*", 2003, Track No. 1

ISRC (CHINA): CNE549499800

The track is available at http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=377645&userid=3715867

Example 10 (0':01"- 0': 08")

Example 11 (0': 27"- 0': 39")

Example 12 (0': 40"- 0': 46")

Example 13 (1': 45"- 1': 51")

Example 14 (2': 43"- 2': 46")

This is a typical melodic black metal work with almost all the necessary stylistic characteristics. First, it is clearly structured on six repeating riffs, in which the solo (2': 50"- 3': 02") is largely shortened functioning as a bridge more than an illustration of virtuosity.

Secondly, all the riffs are composed in E harmonic minor (the first two bars of Example 10 and Example 13) and E diatonic minor scales (the latter two bars of

Example 10 and Example 13), which is common in metal composition as mentioned before. However, unlike Nu-metal, these riffs stress both melodic/harmonic and rhythmic factors. For instance, in Example 14, three different rhythmic patterns are used accompanied by four chords within two bars. Notably, the minor second interval (or say diatonic semitone) and tritone occupy a prominent position throughout the work, such as the accents (the last notes in bars) G and F# in the first two bars of Example 11. Moreover, the eighth bar features another two pairs of the minor second interval as G- F# and B- A#. Meanwhile, the A# and the riff's keynote E constitute a tritone. In doing so, these dissonant intervals[13] provide the music with a particular atmosphere of evil, fear, and darkness which are very well fitted to aesthetics of black metal.

Thirdly, given that the overall tempo of the song is 160 BPM with a sixteenth note, the song is played in really high speed in most of the time. In such circumstance, tremolo picking technique[14] is widely applied as shown in Example 12. Regarding drumming, both double bass (0': 40''- 1': 06'') and blast beat (0': 01''- 0': 27'') are employed almost throughout all the riffs. Finally, the iconic vocalisation of black metal, screeching, is used proficiently. This reflected two fundamental aesthetic changes in extreme metal: 1 the traditional relationship between voice and music as "Sing" and "accompany" in popular music was replaced by the relationship as equal

---

[13] In Western tonal music theory, the consonant and dissonant intervals are usually classified into four categories, as below:
Perfect Consonances: perfect unison, perfect fifth, and perfect octave;
Imperfect Consonance: minor third, major third, minor sixth, and major sixth;
Diatonic Dissonances: perfect fourth, minor second, major second, minor seventh, and major seventh;
Chromatic Dissonances: tritone and any other augmented or diminished interval.
It is also necessary to clarify that the concepts "consonant" and "dissonant" are highly context-related rather than hearing-based. For example, different temperaments may have different standards, given that equal temperament that has been widely used in Western music is not accepted universally. Even more, in atonal music, consonance and dissonance in fact make no sense anymore.
[14] Tremolo picking is a continuous run of fluctuating downward and upward guitar picking strokes at a high speed over a single note. Its use could be traced back to surf musicians, such as Dick Dale, The Ventures, and The Surfaris. Since the mid-1980s, death metal had experimented with tremolo picking over the years. However, the technique became truly well-known by black metal, in which tremolo picking created extremely fast and hollow sounds that perfectly matched the creepy atmosphere and shrieked vocals. A playing demonstration of tremolo picking, see:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PndcEzkxdrU

parts; 2 in terms of the lyrics, there was a transition from semantic meanings to semiotic significances (see Chapter 7.1).

It is reasonable to argue that this work, in 2003, reflected a certain maturity of black metal in China. Meanwhile, musically, it had very little to do with pop music, which also indicated that there had been an autonomous field of extreme metal distant from the mainstream popular music.

Sample 5 "*Darkness Falling Before Eyes*" by *Narakam* (Death Metal)

Excerpted from Album "*Burning at Moment*", 2008, Track No. 4

MORT 027

The track is available at http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=367761&userid=3715867

Example 15 (0': 01''- 0': 16'')

Example 16 (0': 17''- 0': 25'')

Example 17 (1': 06''- 1': 20'')

Example 18 (3': 01''- 3': 35'')

This is a mature work of Chinese death metal, in terms of both the playing techniques and producing quality. Most stylistic characteristics of death metal are involved, such as the fast, heavily distorted and low tuned guitars (from E to D), frequent applications of palm muting technique, aggressive and powerful double bass drumming, chromatic chord progressions, and solo with total ambiguity.

The most prominence of the work is presented in two aspects. First, the song is structured by certain logic rather than simply a pile of riffs. More specifically,

Example 15 serves as the seminal riff which settles the core patterns of melodies (E Phrygian scale), chords progression (E- F), and rhythms (stress on the weak beat and syncopation) for the whole song. Those more complex riffs such as Example 16, Example 17 and even the solo (Example 18) are different variations developed from it. Moreover, it also serves as hooks or bridges between different parts of the song to maintain a structural coherence. This song reflects the deeper level of understanding and grasp of the compositional skills (from superficial features to inner structure) of death metal by Chinese metal musicians.

Secondly, although *Narakam* is well known as one of the earliest extreme metal explorers who combined traditional Chinese opera with death metal (see Chapter 4.3.2), there is no apparent Chinese element applied in this song. This illustrates two interactive trajectories of how Chinese metal musicians develop the metal genre: they have been learning an authentic western metal sound; and at the same time, they have been attempting to create the so-called Chinese metal.

5.2.2 Analysis Implications

The musical analyses suggest five significant implications. First, the development of musical styles of Chinese metal has been based on the tension of globalisation and localisation, in which Chinese metal musicians both constantly learned the western metal styles and intentionally combined traditional elements. Secondly, the early Chinese metal showed a gradually deepening grasp of the style, especially from a pop-like chords progression based structure to a metallic riff-based structure. Thirdly, the musical vocabularies reflect the musicians' identity, such as the aforementioned identity transition of the elitism in the 1990s to populism in the 2000s. Furthermore, the populism era saw a music change from simple (such as Nu-metal) to complex (such as black and death metal), which indicated that local metal musicians were becoming increasing mature and sophisticated, such as their comprehension from the

external musical characteristics to internal structure. Finally, the copy or imitation might be inevitable in the development of Chinese metal, yet there were always creations which did not only refer to musical inventions but also implying a construction or reconstruction of the identity of Chinese metal (see Chapter 5.4)

5.3 Identities in Acculturation (Globalisation & Localisation)

Theoretically, the cultural acculturation contains three processes: 1. Cultural materials that originated in the West flow into non-western countries as models of modernity. 2. The non-westerns selectively adapt elements and components from those materials and merge them with indigenous traditional materials. 3. The non-western cultural products created in such way flow back to the West with some influences and inspirations (Regev 2013: 5). The previous section mainly illustrated how the first process (from the West to non-western) reflected in the music of Chinese metal throughout the last two decades. In contrast, this section pays more attention to the second process, that how Chinese elements were merged in metal in three aspects, including the MVs in the early 1990s, cover arts in the early 2000s, and folk metal subgenre in the early 2010s.

5.3.1 MVs in the 1990s

With the economic growth and the development of popular music industries in the mainland China, music televisions (or music videos)[15] first emerged in the late 1980s as both a new promoting strategy of popular music and a new artistic form (He 2002: 21-22). In this trend, a few mainstream Chinese metal bands in the heavy rock era (see Chapter 4.3) began to produce MVs, which intentionally featured certain local elements, such as "*A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty*", "*No Place to Hide*", and "*Shadow of Ancestor*". The meanings of these MVs can be understood from a semiotic angle.

---

[15] The western scholars tend to use MV, while in the 1990s the term MTV was more used in mainland China. In fact, there was no substantial difference between the two terms. Currently, MTV has been less used and gradually replaced with MV.

"A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty"

Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ba4jXBnkLvo

Wong (2011: 64, 82) concluded that *Tang Dynasty* animated a particularly Chinese identity image of heroism and masculinity, as "Wen and Wu". In English, this means a combination of cultural refinement (Wen) and martial ability (Wu). Their official MV of "*A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty*" very well demonstrated this combination and nominated for the Best MV of Asian in April 1993 (Chen, 2010: 8). The table below shows how Wen and Wu are reflected in the MV.

Table 5.3 Chinese identity Characteristics in MV "A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty"

Position in MV	Scenes	Identity
0': 01''- 0': 14'' 0': 36''- 0': 41'' 4': 58''- 5': 15''	Figure of Buddha	Wen
0': 15''- 0': 20'' 0': 28''- 0': 30'' 1': 55''- 1': 57''	War Horse	Wu
0': 23''- 0': 24'' 4': 18''- 4': 20''	Battlefield and War Flag	Wu

Figure of Buddha (5': 03'')

War Horse (0': 15")

Battlefield and War Flag (0': 22")

Buddhism is the oldest foreign religion of China. Gradually, it has already merged with native Daoism and folk religions and become a representative and local cultural symbol[16]. According to the report of The Global Religious Landscape (Pew Research Centre 2012: 32), 18.2% of the whole Chinese population were Buddhists by 2012. In the MV, it symbolised Chinese culture (Wen). On the contrary, the recurring scenes of

---

[16] For more on Chinese Buddhism, see http://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/buddhism.htm

the war horse, battlefield, and war flag are explicitly associated with the military (Wu). Also, the backgrounds in the MV constantly switch between the desert, mountain, temple, and performing stage. In doing so, the natural sublimes and mortal wisdom of the country are combined into an artistic expression (on the performing stage).

"*No Place to Hide*"

Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-I9W5toBdzc

As another prominent band in the heavy rock era, *Black Panther* made MVs for their debut album as well. The masterpiece titled "*No Place to Hide*" and its MV became the most well-known magnum opus of the band[17]. Different from *Tang Dynasty*, this MV features the identity characteristics of rock in the Chinese context, as the table shown below.

Table 5.4 Chinese Identity Characteristics in MV "No Place to Hide"

Position in MV	Scenes	Identity
0': 01"- 0': 30" 2': 58"- 3': 04" 3': 12"- 3': 15" 4': 21"- 4': 40"	The Great Wall and Red Flag	Rebellion
0': 39"- 0': 51" 0': 56"- 1': 02" 3': 25"- 3': 26"	Tiananmen Square Tiananmen Temple	Rebellion
1': 52"- 1': 54" 2': 17"- 2': 19"	Alleyway	Rebellion
2': 24"- 2': 54"	Rooftop	Freedom
1': 36"- 1': 40" 1': 44"- 1': 48"	Street	Freedom
Rest Time	Performing Stage	Combination

The Great Wall and Red Flag (0': 15")

---

[17] For more about the song, see
http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=zEze_TaBhQcCiT7cMz_VAxYiLUnC-KNv56K6CaKjC_6A8jzMUQ30TE3DtrdDn2DlxIh6jiFC3mj-PRb4goCJuCIdaBjnMchdhtVBMOGCazi

Tiananmen Spare and Temple (0': 57")

Alleyway (1': 54")

Rooftop (2': 28")

Street (1': 46")

This MV typically displays the essential identities of Chinese rock in the early 1990s (see Chapter 4.1.2). Specifically, red flag, Tiananmen Square, and Tiananmen Temple can be read as the symbols of the Communism and Chinese authorities. Meanwhile, the Great Wall and alleyway metaphorically represent to the nation's histories and traditions. Then, the provocative performing gestures of the band members indicate a transgression against them, by which a rebellious posture is manifested. Moreover, walking freely on the street and singing on the rooftop declare a pursuit of freedom both physically and spiritually.

In addition, there were two particularly noteworthy scenarios. The first (1': 39"- 1': 40") featured that the five members of the bands were walking across a road in a row, which was an explicit imitation of the cover art of *Beatles*' album in the 1969 "*Abbey Road*". Given that *Beatles* has been seen as one of the greatest labels of rock, *Black Panther* used this imitation to conform their rock identity in the Chinese context. The second (3': 03"- 3': 11") displayed a negotiation between the band members and a traffic policeman. Although there was no description about their dialogues, other associated scenes in the MV's context might imply a tension between the street walkers and traffic regulations, and, further, the rockers and Chinese traditional society.

"*Shadow of Ancestor*"

(Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcnPZvK96fM)

As the previous musical analysis shown, the melodies of this song were largely based on Chinese traditional pentatonic scales. The lyrics were the narrative around the glory of a fictional emperor in the past. Thus, the dimensions of music and lyrics were absolutely "Chinese". However, the MV of the song simply featured the whole performance of the song on the stage (but not live), without particular local scenes or scenarios involved. Instead, most aspects of the performing followed a western metal standard or convention, especially the costume of leather jacket and headbanging. This case very well illustrated that the "localisation" only selectively occur in some dimensions of musical text rather than holistically.

There are three tendencies of negotiating with the localisation reflected in these MVs: 1 adding Chinese ideologies into metal (*Tang Dynasty*); 2 replacing metal in Chinese context (*Black Panther*); 3 maintaining the orthodox of western metal (*Overload*). In other words, although there could be different degrees of localisation, a thoroughly Chinese metal would never exist.

5.3.2 Cover Arts of ROGs in the 2000s

In addition to music videos, local elements were also employed in cover arts of albums. This can be exemplified by the eight episodes of ROG released in 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2013, by Mort Productions (see Chapter 4.5.4). The cover arts shown below explicitly conveys a sense of traditional Chinese, including Buddhism (Episode 1, 2), traditional Chinese architecture (Episode 3, 6), ancient warriors (Episode 4), Chinese traditional landscape painting (Episode 5), Chinese paleography and calligraphy (Episode 7, 8), and Chinese Dragon (Episode 8).

Episode 1

Episode 2
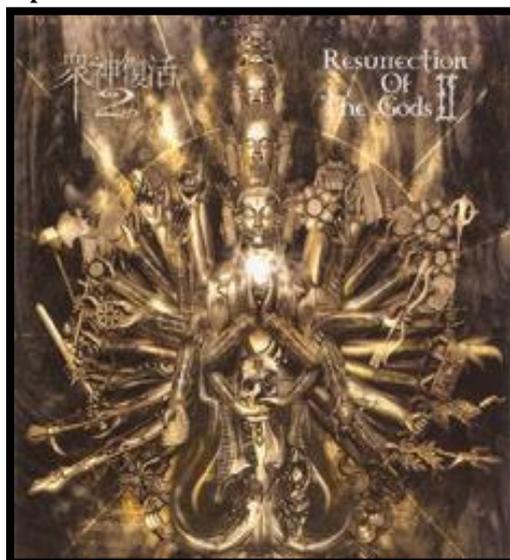
Episode 3

Episode 4
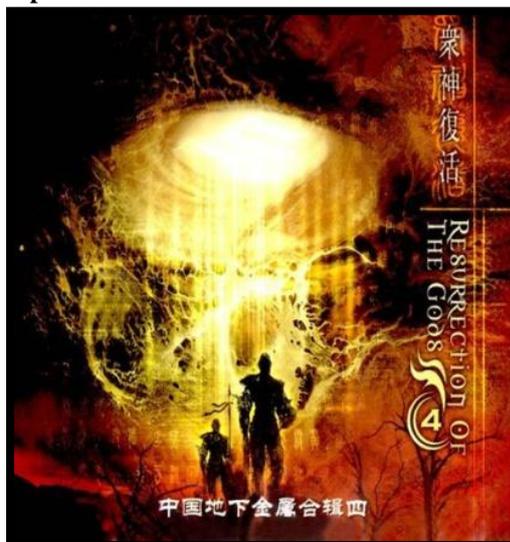
Episode 5
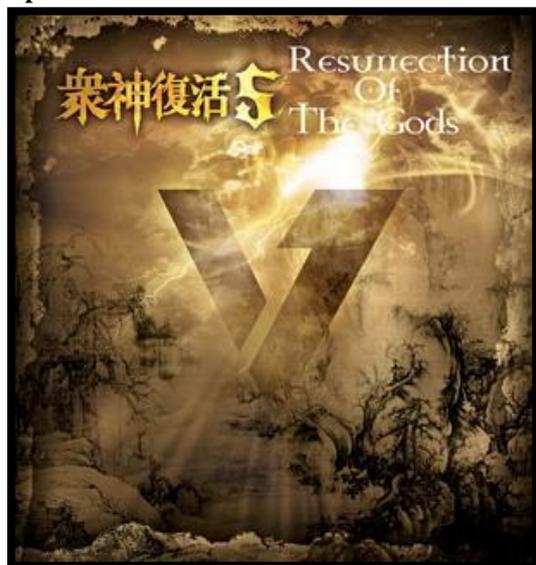
Episode 6
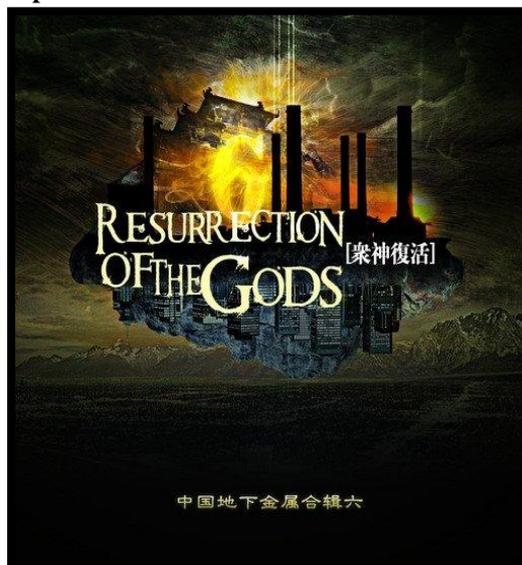
Episode 7
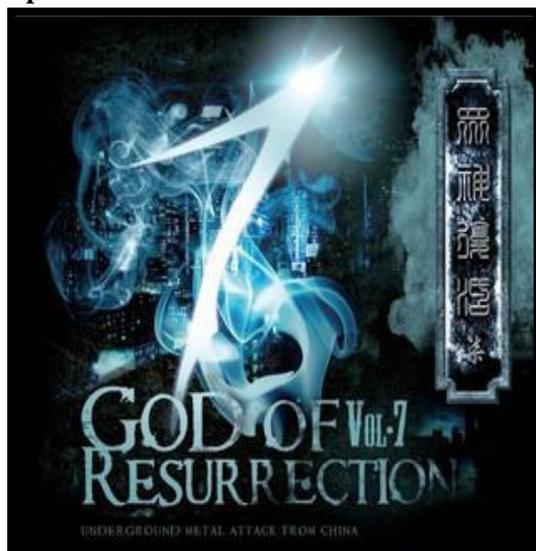
Episode 8

The Cover Arts of the Eight Episodes of ROG
Images obtained from http://www.mort-prod.com/release/release.htm

As discussed before, Buddhism serves as an integral component of Chinese identity, so do the religious architectures such as the temples. Moreover, the traditional painting and calligraphy played a significant role in the history of Chinese culture and art. Furthermore, the dragon is the totem for the nation for more than thousands years. Therefore, from a semiotic perspective, all these elements become cultural symbols referring to a sort of Chineseness[18], especially the ancient.

---

[18] In academia, Chineseness has been ambiguous. This thesis uses it as a relatively general and

More specifically, the significance of these symbols is understood in three aspects. First, although Chinese metal had to imitate the foreign metal styles in the 2010s, it presented an intentionally and stronger national consciousness. This consciousness might be not directly reflected in the musical texts but other forms around them, in particular, the cover arts. In doing so, a set of the traditional aesthetic conventions would be involved to produce a particular sense to Chinese metal. Secondly, the use of these traditional elements connoted that the glories of the nation had been lost and could be only celebrated by referring to the fantasies of the past. Thus, it might have expressed the Chinese metalheads' dissatisfaction and transgression against the contemporary social situation. Thirdly, these elements provided the different artists with a unified, abstract, and local identity, by which a united Chinese metal scene was consolidated.

5.3.3 Folk Metal Subgenre Nine Treasures in the 2010s

Perhaps, the highest form of metal localisation is marked by Chinese folk metal, such as the recently formed inner Mongolian metal band[19], *Nine Treasures*. Their debut album "*Arvan Ald Guulin Honshoor*" was awarded as the top three on the Chinese Rock Charts in 2012. One year later, the band won the champion of Chinese Metal Battle of 2013 and then performed in Wacken Open Air in Germany[20]. With a good overseas reputation, *Nine Treasures* has become one of the most prominent and

inclusive terms referring to traditional Chinese factors. Perhaps, it is impossible to make a scientific and objective definition for the term due to many issues that are difficult to clarify. For example, the Chinese (Han) civilization had much more profound influences on the whole eastern Asia in the history than the China as a modern country today. Then, whether those cultural heritages kept by the nowadays countries such as Japan, Korea, or Vietnam should be seen as a part of Chineseness? Moreover, the big population of the overseas Chinese may hold quite different views about what Chineseness is. However, with the continuous upgrade of the China's economic strength and international status in the recent decades, Chineseness became more often used by the western scholars to observe the stuffs relevant to the country as an object of "other".

[19] It is necessary to stress that China is a multi-ethnic country which consists of Han and other 55 ethnic minorities including Mongolian. Although Mongolian is focused on in this chapter, all the bands featuring different ethic elements should be included to discuss the issues of the Chinese identity, theoretically.

[20] For more details about the band's experiences, see
http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=Mg0Xtbxa5ElslDDB6YRM95O5Wmkv1FGKZtq2d6qom2xkXu3IrXu
wKpP2WLG4P-DjBzJtGS2y3j960opK86q1Z

representative Chinese folk metal bands. Different from those artists who selectively employed local elements, they almost presented their ethnic identity characteristics in every aspect of their music, such as the musical vocabulary and instrument, lyrics, logo and poster design, and costume. In doing so, the Chinese identities were more expressed as an organic whole.

Hao (2006: 62) defines the primary feature of traditional Mongolian music as the use of pentatonic scale. Many contemporary Mongolian musicians preferred to compose their melodies on the base of nature minor pentatonic scale[21], as the sample below shows. This scale was widely used throughout *Nine Treasures'* music creation. For example, all the tracks of their second self-titled album "*Nine Treasures*"[22] featured this scale.

In addition to highlighting the traditional musical scale, the band also employed the unique traditional instrument, Morin Khuur (see the image below) as a core part of the instrumentation. In the same album, almost all the melodic parts were played by Morin Khuur except the vocal parts. On the contrary, the distorted guitar more served as rhythmic parts.

---

[21] The most famous examples may be Tengger's "*Heaven*" and "*Mongolian*", available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBquB6L_Zk8
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZM1sjzH7KE
[22] This was self-released album by the band in 2013, whole album is available at:
http://music.163.com/#/album?id=3086315

Nine Treasures Playing Morin Khuur in the Performance
Image obtained from http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_583807af0102vhl0.html

Considering the lyrics, all the songs of the band were written and sung in Mongol. The unique Mongolian vocalisation technique, Khoomei, was occasionally used such as in the track titled "*Sonsii*". Moreover, the subject matters were usually about the histories and cultures of Mongolia (as the track titles indicate in the table below), such as the ancient hymns, horses, cavalries, and natural landscapes.

Table 5.5 Track Titles of the Album "Nine Treasures"

Track No.	Title	Remarks of Theme & Contents
Track 1	Intro	Instrumental
Track 2	Black Heart	The warrior riding on the Mongolian steppe
Track 3	Tes River's Hymn	A river in the band's hometown
Track 4	Sonsii	A traditional Mongolian fable
Track 5	Fable of Mangas	A traditional Mongolian fable
Track 6	Praise for Fine Horse	A hymn for horses
Track 7	Azalea	A famous flower of hulun buir
Track 8	The Dream about Ancient City	Instrumental
Track 9	Three Years Old Warrior	Traditional Mongolian tale

Finally, Mongolian elements were also presented by the band's logo and poster designs. The first image below shows the logo of the band. The signs are written in traditional Mongolian script, standing for the nine sacred items in Mongolian religion. The second image is the poster of the band's tour in South China in 2015, in which the bands intentionally underlined their local identities including the Mongolian grassland, traditional customs, and instruments. Instead, those common elements of metal were absent.

The Logo of Nine Treasures
Image obtained from http://site.douban.com/ashan/

The Poster of Nine Treasures' Tour in South Chinese in 2015
Image obtained from http://www.haokoo.com/else/2361014.html

5.3.4 Tension between Globalisation and Localisation

As discussed before, a scene should be understood as a field both geographically and culturally. Thus, the local identities play a crucial role of the cultural dimension of

Chinese metal scene. The analyses of the MVs, cover arts, folk metal subgenre, as well as music in the previous section reveal that the overall history of Chinese metal has been undergoing a tension between globalisation and localisation, embodied in a variety of aspects with different degrees. The general trend can be summarised as moving from singularity towards multiplicity. At the same time, the localisation conveys three-fold meanings: 1. it is an inevitable process in any case of cultural transplanting phenomenon; 2. it is positively treated as an artistic pursuit or challenge by many Chinese metal musicians; 3. it could be a commercial strategy, especially for the Chinese musicians entering into the global metal scene.

The further question refers to the metaphor of "Ship of Theseus" I proposed at the beginning of this chapter. Theoretically, the term "Chinese metal" by itself could be contradictory. If metal was not initially Chinese, how it would be still metal when Chinese elements had been engaged, especially after a plenty of the original identities of metal being replaced by Chinese identities? Perhaps, this paradox can be explained by an identity-aesthetic mechanism with two links (see the diagram below). For example, in the cases of death metal of Tampa (US), black metal of Norway, folk metal of Finland, *etc.*, all of them had pushed metal forward by merging their unique identities into it. Culturally and musically, these identity elements were transformed into a kind of aesthetic innovations in new subgenres and styles. With these subgenres and styles gradually became the integral components of the general metal, those original identities were naturally and imperceptibly inscribed in the general metal as well. For instance, the discourse of Norwegian black metal refers to both the particular identity characteristics of the northern European country and the unique musical style with associated aesthetics. Therefore, this mechanism keeps metal always being metal after new identities constantly join in, as long as those identities are transformed into and expressed in an aesthetic way. At the same time, this mechanism also ensures the sustainable progress and vitality of metal genre by embracing newer subgenres and styles.

Fig. 5.1 Tow-Links of the Identity-Aesthetics Mechanism

Identity Characteristics	→	Aesthetics: Subgenres and Styles	→	(New) General Metal Music
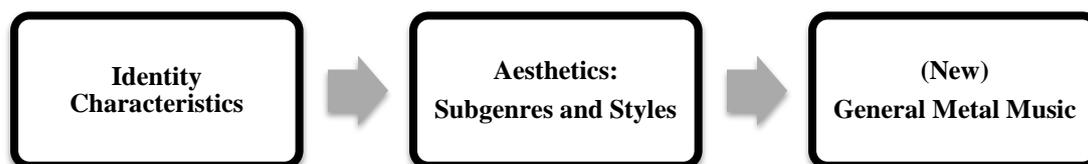
In practice, although Chinese metal bands have increasingly appeared in a worldwide scale since the late 2000s, its distinct identity has not yet formally established in the global metal scene. Perhaps, the current appeal of Chinese metal to many western countries also partly due to a heterogeneity of Chinese identity or a sort of "simplistic celebrations of geographical diversity and remoteness" (Connell & Gibson 2004: 342). Moreover, there was no evidence suggesting that Chinese metal had had great influences on the general metal or contributed to create new styles or subgenres. In other words, the links between the identity and aesthetics in the mechanism have not been connected. Nevertheless, some recent tendencies may indicate new issues around identity, which tend to struggle for an identity reconstruction of Chinese metal after the long-term tension of globalisation and localisation, such as the phenomenon of agriculture metal.

5.4 Identity Reconstruction: A Case Study on Agriculture Metal

One of the potential results with the deepening of the process of metal localisation is an identity reconstruction, such as the phenomenon of agriculture metal. As a recent informal concept with a sense of humour, agriculture metal was first used exclusively by Chinese metal fans (it does not exist in western or global metal scene at all[23]). It is indeed an odd and even weird but unique phenomenon in Chinese metal scene. However, instead of being merely a spoof, it more likely reflects certain attitudes of Chinese identity in the modern and global context. Given that the topic has never been seriously discussed in academic writings before, this section first explores the origin of the term in its relevant contexts. After that, the deeper meanings and motives behind the phenomenon are revealed via a textual analysis of an exemplification titled "*Everything Dies*" by *Yunmbi*. The main argument is that agriculture metal should be understood as a deconstruction of the influences from the traditional Chinese, mainstream Chinese popular, and western metal culture, by which the artists are able to (perhaps unconsciously) reconstruct a new identity of Chinese metal.

5.4.1 Coining the Term

The term "agriculture metal" was coined around 2010 by a few Chinese metal fans but it is impossible to clarify who was the creator exactly. Immediately, it was widely spread by the force of the internet. The problem is that as a collectively folk creation, its definition has been vague. Even worse, the term was often used for fun outside a serious consideration. Still, a few aspects of the term can be summarised.

---

[23] For example, there is no result available when searching the term in English on Google, while a few relevant but informal resources are obtainable by Baidu (the most used search engine in mainland China, as a Chinese equivalent to Google).

1. It is a mocking expression referring to a few local mainstream popular songs on the internet, especially the pop group *Phoenix Legend*[24]. These songs were usually highly easy listening with catchy melodies, rhythms, and the latest fashionable elements that widely accepted and embraced by the general public, particularly in rural and town areas. Due to the considerable popularity, they tend to be despised as "low taste", "rustic", and even "stupid" by a certain group of youths who are interested in relatively alternative genres. In such situation, metal fans expressed their disdains in a funny way, so came the term of agriculture metal. Subsequently, the term was expanded to involve all the inferior products of popular music. There was evidence showing that the term has spread nationwide, and its derogatory connotation associated with inferior cultures was widely realised. For example, in an interview when being asked about their attitude of being marked as agriculture metal, Zeng Yi (one of the members of *Phoenix Legend*) felt insulted and responded angrily to the reporter that "What do you mean? What is agriculture? What is metal?" (*Yangcheng Evening News*, 29-Oct-2012)[25].

2. The term can be understood as a self-ridiculing as a counterpoint to the term industrial metal in the western metal scene. Given the innate nature of China in its 5,000 years history as an agricultural country and the prominent roles of peasantry class in the foundation of New China (PRC) in 1949 and later socialism movements, agriculture had possibly become a symbol of Chineseness or standing for that most native stuff. The connotation of self-ridiculing mainly lies in the different levels of productive forces between the agriculture and industry in modern society from a Marxist perspective, which admits that China is still less developed or advanced

---

[24] *Phoenix Legend* is a popular music duo in mainland China, consisting of female vocalist Yangwei Linghua and male rapper Zeng Yi. Their music mixes Chinese folk music with rap and hip hop elements and has a wide appeal with fans all over. It was reported that by 2012 *Phoenix Legend* had sold more than 6 million copies (album) in China since 2005, and 10 songs from four of their albums had recorded one billion online hits (China Daily, 17-May-2012), see:
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/entertainment/2012-05/17/content_15320888.htm
Their most representative works include "*Above the Moon*", "*Fly Freely*", and "*The Most Dazzling Folk Style*", see:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ynypvs5s75Y
[25] For the full interview, see:
http://www.ycwb.com/ePaper/ycwb/html/2012-10/29/content_1523206.htm

compared to the West. In this sense, the term may be not necessarily of relevance to metal music. For example, when searching "agriculture metal" (in Chinese) on YouTube, no real metal songs are involved in the results but a few pop music with locally folk elements and relatively low quality, less musicianship, or outdated fashion.

3. Agriculture metal was the title of a local pop single by *A Bao & Mountain Flower Band* in 2014. A Bao is a grassroots artist who grew up in a rural area of Shanxi province. After winning the champion of the CCTV singing contest *Star Boulevard* in 2005, he has gradually made fame as a popularised original ecological folk singer. To a large extent, his success was obtained based on a unique indigenousness or authenticity of his rural identity of north-west China. In 2014, when this identity encountered metal music, an unexpected result came about as a hit titled "*Agriculture Heavy Metal*". The music featured many central stylistic characteristics of metal such as distorted guitar and power chords[26]. The lyrics explicitly contained the verses such as "I love heavy metal" and "the grooves of agriculture heavy metal make me feel so good"[27]. In practice, it had little to do with metal when considering metal as a genre. Nevertheless, it objectively created a link between the term "agriculture metal" and the real metal-style music among general audiences. At the same time, the artist announced an attitude that he was proud of his identity of rustic indigenousness.

---

[26] Notably, these metal elements are only used in the audio version, available at:
http://music.163.com/#/song?id=28524124
In contrast, in the official MV of the song all the accompaniment parts are produced in a midi or electronic form, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0hOWPn63Hk
[27] The whole lyrics is translated (by myself) into English as below:
"You love fried chicken, while I love roast sweet potatoes/ You love R&B music, while I love heavy metal/ You love playing Facebook, while I love playing Chinese poker/ You have your online media, while I have heavy metal/ Who can be more rustic than agriculture metal/ Such grooves make me feel so good/ Who can be more rustic than agriculture metal/ It prevails everywhere from alleys, streets, rural areas and towns/ Who can be more rustic than agriculture metal/ Such grooves make me feel so good/ Who can be more rustic than agriculture metal/ It occupies everywhere, including the public square dancing by grannies".
The original text in Chinese is available at:
https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/阿宝、山花乐队/农业重金属

4. Another more apparently metal-related inspiration might come from a German metal band *Farmer Boys* whose name has already indicated an explicit link with agriculture. More importantly, although the band was not unusual of combining groove metal (such as *Machine Head*) and gothic metal (such as *Paradise Lost*), the lyrical matters in many of their works extraordinarily referred to animal husbandry from an abnormal angle, such as bestiality in "*Farm Sweet Farm*", torture of animals in "*When a Chicken Cries for Love*", suicide in "*Relieve the Tension*", and slaughterhouses in "*When Pigs Fly*"[28]. With the trend of Nu-metal and later metalcore, *Farmer Boys* became known by a few Chinese metal fans who informally mentioned the band as farmer metal or agriculture metal.

5. The general atmosphere of using the term is ironic and intentionally absurd. For example, an explanation titled "*Encyclopaedia of Agriculture Metal*" was posted in July 2009 on Douban.com[29] in which the author declared that "The 21st century will be the era of agriculture metal. As a rising force, it is replacing traditional music." Meanwhile, agriculture metal was defined as "A new metal style/subgenre that uniquely derived from China, based on traditional heavy metal, melodic death metal, and melodic black metal, combined with the elements from Chinese opera, folk songs, and ethnic minority music". Moreover, the stylistic characteristics were summarised as "the melodies come from folk tunes with an amount of electronic effects; the percussions imitate the sounds of agricultural equipment; the bass timbre sounds like cattle, and the guitar like horse, occasionally with cockcrow and quack; the vocals are similar to extreme metal; the headbang is often highly fast reaching 360 times per minute; the riffs are structured on a weird logic usually with atonal solos". Finally, when showing the relevant representatives, a few pop and rock artists such as Leehom Wong, Bob Dylan, *AC/DC*, *Farmer Boys*, Vitas, *etc.* were listed. Most of these explanations were, in fact, nonsense but for fun. Similar arguments were found in the entry of agriculture metal in a widely visited Chinese online encyclopaedia,

---

[28] For more about Famer Boys, see: http://www.last.fm/music/Farmer+Boys/+wiki
[29] Available at: http://www.douban.com/group/topic/7468934/

BaiduEncyclopedia[30]. The difference was that it clearly admitted that the term, in most of the time, was created and used non-seriously and even meaninglessly. However, it also proposed that it could be potentially developed into a term of more seriousness in future to mention those metal bands applying local, indigenous, or original ecological elements.

6. Recently, agriculture metal has been gradually become a particular music style preliminarily normalised by an underground compilation album titled "*Shi*"[31] in 2012. The record label was self-claimed as *Agricultural Civilization*, and the style was self-marked as agriculture metal despite not all the songs being composed of metal elements. Specifically, the complication consisted of 18 songs from 12 bands and artists, which could be hardly appreciated in normal aesthetic ways of either pop or metal music. For example, the track No. 4 "*Home Again without You*" was a cover version of a famous love ballad by Sandy Lam in 1990, while the new version was adapted into a hotchpotch in which various styles including metal were optionally mixed. The track No. 12 featured the whole melody of "*Lake of Fire*" by *Meat Puppets* in 1984 (or maybe the more well-known cover version by Nirvana in 1994), replacing the original lyrics with a repeating verse of "Every time I touch my nipples". More ridiculously, the track No. 1 began with merely one sentence collaged from a Chinese cartoon songs "*Black Serjeant*", followed by a set of meaningless and non-melodic voices. In general, these works collectively reflected and exemplified a set of stylistic characteristics and aesthetic attitudes of agriculture metal, including disorderly structure, illogical lyrics with dirty language, a collage of existing works, inferior singing technique, the pursuit of absurdity, and ideology of modern cynicism.

---

[30] Available at: http://baike.baidu.com/view/1588194.htm

[31] Notably, the title of the compilation was written in Chinese phoneticize rather than character. However, the pronunciation of "Shi" explicitly means the "shit", which indicated a sort of intentional poor taste and absurdity. In addition, the song titles (such as "*Every Time I Touch My Nipples*", and "*Fuck with the King of All Creatures*") and band names (such as *Laced Papa* and *Wild Monkey & Wild Boar*) also echoed to those attitudes. There were still a few bands whose names were hardly translated from Chinese into English because they were semantically meaningless or merely consisted of dirty words. The full album is available at:
http://music.163.com/#/album?id=510595

Notably, the most noteworthy tracks in the complication were contributed by *Yunmbi* which will be specifically discussed in next section as a case study.

In summary, agriculture metal is still a forming concept from its initial funniness towards seriousness, so that it may be difficult to predict that what it will eventually become. Currently, at least, the core ideas of the term can be defined as 1. it is a uniquely Chinese phenomenon; 2. it is associated with metal; 3. it refers to certain musical features and aesthetics; 4. it reflects both a collective memory of peasantry of the People's Public of China and a new establishment of Chinese identity.

5.4.2 A Textual Analysis on "Everything Dies" by Yumbi

Yumbi was initially an ordinary rock band formed in 2009 in Beijing. The two original founders came from the Tungus ethnic minority[32], so they named their band in Tungusic language as "Yumbi" which signified "inclusiveness" or "drowned". After becoming tired of the so-called "serious" rock, they began to play music with a sarcastic attitude and postmodern techniques of playfulness and parody. In the strict sense, there might be no behaviour of "composition" in their music but methods of collage and montage. Their materials cover a big range of almost all kinds of popular music (in a broad sense) throughout the world. Anything of them could be used and mixed into a sound background of punk, metal, or grindcore. Eventually, they became increasingly well-known after the two singles included in the compilation "*Shi*" and the self-released album titled "*The Works of Yumbi*" in 2014[33]. Another noteworthy phenomenon of *Yumbi* is that they have intentionally kept a mystery about their true identities. In the most online media relevant to the band, the real names of the members never appeared, and their activities were also described in a metaphorical

---

[32] Tungus is one of the ethnic minorities in mainland China, for more see:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tungusic_peoples
[33] For example, the number of followers of their official website on Douban was over 16,000 by 2015 which was almost doubled than many other famous metal bands, see:
http://site.douban.com/abayumbi/
The album was available at: http://music.163.com/#/album?id=2875205

way (which will be discussed later). "*Everything Dies*", as a magnum opus of the band, very well illustrates how their songs were created (or more exactly, made), the interpretations of which can be revealed by musical, lyrical, and graphical analyses. The sample is excerpted from the compilation "*Shi*" in 2012, track No. 18 (available http://abayumbi.milepub.cn/).

Regarding the music structure, the song consists of three main parts (see the diagram below). The first part is a complete copy of the intro section from a famous World Music work "*Alive*" by Sa Dingding[34]. Notably, the titles of the two songs also show an overt opposition, because that in Chinese they literally refer to "everything is alive" and "everything is dead", respectively. The second part features an original metal riff. The rhythmic syncopation and short melody based on Phrygian mode make the part a particular exotic flavour. As the main body of the song, the third part is a musical adaptation of the aforementioned pop hit "*The Most Dazzling Folk Style*" by *Phoenix Legend*, in which the main tunes, harmonic progressions, and basic rhythmic patterns are maintained but rearranged in a different structure and played in a metal style, such as power chords, distorted guitar, even double bass (3': 01''- 3': 08'') and blast beat (3':09''- 3':14''). At the same time, the vocal is quite close to a punk style featuring untrained, rough, aggressive, and off-key.

Fig. 5.2 Structure of Musical Collage in "Everything Dies"

The 1st Part	**Intro Prelude** (0': 23''- 0': 51'') "Alive" by Sa Dingding World Music	The 2nd Part	**Prelude** (0': 01''- 0': 22'') Original Metal Riff	The 3rd Part	**Main Body** (0': 52''- END) "The Most Dazzling Folk Style" by Phenoiex Lengend Pop

---

[34] Sa Dingding is a contemporary well-known female World Music musician and singer. "*Alive (Sanskrit Mantra)*" is one of her best hits released in 2007, available at:
 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8Z8gpoF4x8

The lyrical materials are excerpted from different hits and stacked together like a montage collage. Although all of these lyrics are slightly changed, the corresponding original songs are still highly recognisable. As the table shown below, there are 30 songs involved, referring to 30 different artists, eight regions, at least 15 genres/styles. It is important to point out that there is no clearly semantic logic or coherence among these lyrical fragments. Instead, they are tended to be arranged randomly with rhyme being taken into account in a few connections.

Table 5.6 Lists of Relevant Original Songs and Their Positions in the Collage

The Position	The Relevant Original Songs/Artists/Regions/Styles
00': 52''- 01': 05''	"Alive", Sa Dingding, Mainland China, World Music
01': 06''- 01': 20''	"Because of Love", Eason Chan and Faye Wong, Hong Kong, Pop
01': 21''- 01': 23''	"Poker Face", Lady Gaga, US, Pop
01': 23''- 01': 27''	"Nobody", Wonder Girls, South Korea, Dance K-Pop
01': 28''- 01': 30''	"Gee", Girls' Generation, South Korea, Dance K-Pop
01': 31''- 01': 33''	"Baby", Justin Bieber, US, R&B Pop
01': 34''- 01': 37''	"Sorry Sorry", Super Junior, South Korea, K-Pop
01': 38''- 01': 40''	"Stubborn", Mayday, Taiwan, Pop Rock
01': 41''- 01': 44''	"Love You Till I Die", Shin, Taiwan, Pop Rock
01': 45''- 01': 47''	"Simple Little Love Song", Soda Green, Taiwan, Pop
01': 48''- 01': 51''	"Give Me Back My Future", Reflector, Mainland China, Punk
01': 55''- 02': 01''	"One Night in Beijing", Chen Sheng, Taiwan, Pop
02': 16''- 02': 22''	"Encounter", Stefanie Sun, Singapore, Pop
02': 23''- 02': 25''	"Far Away", Jay Chou and Fei Yuqing, Taiwan, Pop
02': 26''- 02': 29''	"Wu Ha", Wilber Pan, Taiwan, R&B Hip Hop
02': 30''- 02': 33''	"Where Did You Sleep Last Night", Nirvana, US, Grunge
02': 34''- 02': 36''	"Wake Me Up When September Ends", Green Day, US, Punk Rock
02': 37''- 02': 39''	"No Women No Cry", Bob Marley, Jamaica-US, Reggae
02': 40''- 02': 43''	"Don't Cry", Guns N' Roses, US, Glam Metal

02': 44''- 02': 46''	"Death to All but Metal", Steel Panther, US, Glam Metal
02': 47''- 03': 00''	"Fade to Black", Metallica, US, Thrash Metal
03': 01''- 03': 07''	"Carry on the flag", The Casualties, US, Hardcore Punk
03': 08''- 03': 14''	"God Save the Queen", Sex Pistols, UK, Punk
03': 34''- 03': 37''	"Baby", Deserts Chang, Taiwan, Indie Pop
03': 38''- 03': 40''	"Goodbye Jack", Miserable Faith, Mainland China, Alternative Rock
03': 41''- 03': 44''	"MR Van Gogh", Li Zhi, Mainland China, Folk
03': 45''- 03': 47''	"Song of the Aged Artistic Girls", Shao Yibei, Mainland China, Folk
03': 48''- 04': 30''	Yumbi, Original
04': 31''- 04': 34''	"Springtime", Wang Feng, Mainland China, Rock Pop
04': 35''- 04': 38''	"Fish in Room", Happy Avenue, Mainland China, Alternative Rock
04': 39''- 04': 41''	"The Most Dazzling Folk Style", Phoenix Legend, Mainland China, Pop
04': 42''- 04': 45''	Yumbi, Original

Graphically, as the photos showed, the Band's logo design, stage performance, and appearance were highly metallic (or more precisely, extreme metal), but never thoroughly followed the metal standards. As the graphs and a recent live video[35] illustrated, the appearances of the vocalist and bassist can be seen as typical metal, while the other members show no direct relations. In addition, the band's logo may be easily mistaken for extreme metal, especially black metal, because of its linear features, structural symmetry, and illegibility[36].

---

[35] The recent performance in 2014, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LVblsK-rEQ

[36] Illegibility is usually seen as one of particular traits of logo designs of most black metal bands, which has become an aesthetic convention of the subgenre. More importantly, it should be of more profound semiotic or symbolic significances. Unfortunately, this issue has not been discussed in depth in metal studies thus far. For a demonstration of the illegibility of black metal logos, see: http://www.nme.com/photos/31-illegible-black-metal-band-logos/289103#/photo/1

The Logo of Yunmbi
Image obtained from http://www.paigu.com/a/22327/25757370.html

The Vocalist of Yumbi in Performing
Image obtained from http://www.mask9.com/node/166165

5.4.3 Suspension, Deconstruction, and Reconstruction of Identity

The results of the musical, lyrical, and graphic analyses illustrate a confusion of identity of the band and their music in the name of agriculture metal. However, such confusion has in fact brought about a sort of identity reconstruction. In this sense, instead of being simply treated as a spoof, agriculture metal should be understood as one of the exemplifications of Chinese metal artists' ambition and struggle for a unique identity in the global metal scene (no matter successfully or not). Specifically, this process of the reconstruction consists of three stages: suspension, deconstruction, and reconstruction.

In the first stage, the personal identities of the band are hidden by using nicknames and ironic biographies on their official website (on Douban) and most online media. Moreover, the musical identities of the band are also ambiguous due to that "*Everything Dies*" refers to so many works of different genres or styles that they cannot be exactly defined as any existing genre or style. Furthermore, it is nearly impossible to find out what ideas, attitudes, or meanings they try to convey because that the whole lyrics are illogically collaged, in which the ideological identities are lost. It is important to realise that all these identity ambiguities are made intentionally so that this behaviour results in a suspension of self-identities.

In the second stage, all the works used in the song are dissociated from their original contexts. For example, the intro part has no more reference to Tibetan Buddhism and ritual functions as it used to in its original version. The quotations of "*Where Did You Sleep Last Night*", "*God Save the Queen*", and "*Fade to Black*" are not relevant to *Nirvana*, *Sex Pistols*, *Metallica*, or the connotations of those corresponding genres as grunge, punk, and thrash metal. The drumming techniques of double bass and blast beat are not applied in accordance with the conventions of extreme metal. Therefore, much evidence suggests that all these materials have already been deconstructed into

meaningless sounds, words, and behaviours[37].

The process of suspension results in a subject with no identity (empty subject), while the process of deconstruction produces empty objective materials with no clear meanings (empty object). In these conditions, when *Yumbi* made the song they were simultaneously making an identity reconstruction (see the diagram demonstrated below). In the reconstruction, *Yumbi* weakened their two previous identities, as Chinese who were inevitably impacted by Chinese traditional ideas and as Chinese metal artists who were seen as followers or imitators of the West for a long time. Then, a new Chineseness was introduced into the contemporary cosmopolitan metal scene[38].

Fig. 5.3 Process of Identity Reconstruction in Yumbi's Creation
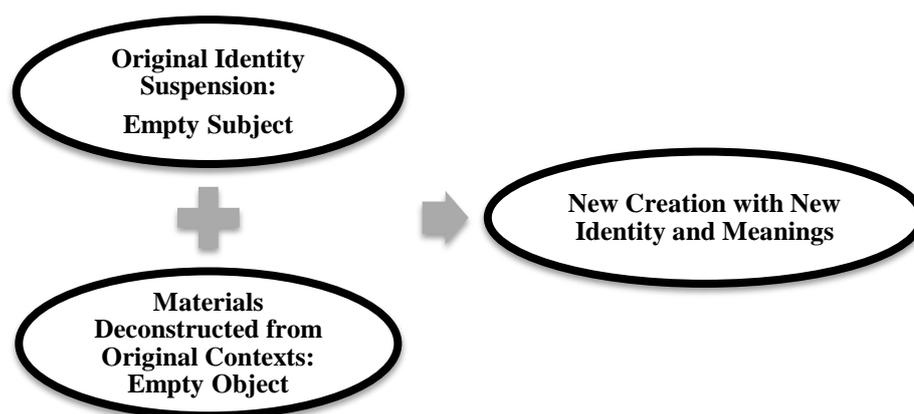
In his recent publication, Regev (2013: 9) called for a concept of aesthetic cosmopolitanism to describe that in the current globalising world there is an innate force generated from the tension between globalisation and localisation to unify different artistic praxes into a "one", such as what has happened in Pop-rock. However, this tension of globalisation and localisation could take place between two

---

[37] The "meaningless" here should be understood as that these materials do not possess their meanings derived from the original contexts anymore, rather more an absolute meaninglessness. Meanwhile, they will become meaningful as soon as being rearranged and interpreted in a new context.

[38] Frankly, it may be arguable about the artistic level of *Yumbi* or if they are a good representative of such new identity. However, the key point here is that they have indeed illustrated the motivation of identity reconstruction.

relatively equally developed regions, as well as one developed and another less developed. The latter situation was not discussed in depth by Regev, which is, however, well illustrated by the case of *Yumbi* and Chinese metal. In the beginning, Chinese metal started with learning from and imitating the West. Then, it gradually evolved, joined by increasing local elements. After long time accumulation and development, it had had truly well understandings of western metal culture, and the general Chinese popular music level (both economic and artistic) became relatively comparable with the West. Eventually, at a certain moment, Chinese metal must declare its own identity in the global metal scene as a "Chinese metal" rather than a "West copier". Therefore, the process of reconstruction exemplified by *Yumbi* and agriculture metal demonstrate a mechanism of popular culture's globalisation and cosmopolitanism. At the same time, the case may also suggest that the approaches towards the aesthetic cosmopolitanism are varied in different social conditions.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter has focused on the identity issues of Chinese metal in the aspects of the participants, texts (including the music, MVs, cover arts, and the subgenre of folk metal), and agriculture metal phenomenon. It has first defined the participants' identity characteristics within the Chinese metal scene as elitism (the 1990s), populism (the 2000s), and multiplicity (the 2010s). After that, the textual analyses have demonstrated that the development of Chinese metal had been experiencing a tension between globalisation and localisation in different degrees. Then, an identity-aesthetics mechanism has been tentatively proposed to discuss the Theseus Paradox in the case of Chinese metal. Finally, the chapter has examined an exclusive phenomenon within Chinese metal scene, agriculture metal, revealing an identity struggling process (consisting of the original identity suspension, textual deconstruction, and identity reconstruction) in the context of cosmopolitanism.

In addition, when discussing the identity issues of popular music, Negus (1996: 99) proposed an insightful question that "do we have a core personality or 'nature' that remains unchanged over time or do we take on, acquire or simply make up and adopt new characteristics throughout our life?". He, in fact, pointed out that the widely used identity labels such as Chinese metal could be problematic since that there was and would be no absolute stability and fixed coherence between certain social groups and particular musical sounds (ibid: 100). In other words, identity should be better considered both ascribed and inscribed,[39] something which is not essential, given, and fixed but understood from the more dynamic perspective as actively constructed and always open to further change (Negus 1996: 133).

---

[39] The expression of both "ascribed and inscribed" is borrowed from Middleton (2006: 206) when he defined the nature of authenticity.

Chapter 6 Industries of Chinese Metal

The terms "cultural industry" and "cultural product" were formally proposed by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in the 1940s to describe that the cultural items which were being produced in a way that had become analogous to how other industries were involved in manufacturing vast quantities of consumer goods, rather than being independent of industry and commerce (Cited by Negus, 1999: 21). Later, Pierre Bourdieu (1989) further introduced the concept of "cultural capital" which has been widely accepted and applied in contemporary popular music studies. These theories reveal the fact that popular music does not only refer to a musical style, genre, or culture but also inevitably a product referring to the capital regulations and even social powers.

In the second half of the 20th century, the so-called music industry mainly consisted of the recording industry, the music publishing, and live business, in which the recording industry tended to hold a relatively superior position in the more broadly defined music industry (Galuszka & Wyrzykowska 2016: 24). However, this view has become increasingly inapplicable to the contemporary reality with the constant changes of music industrial models. That is the main reason why Williamson and Cloonan (2007: 314) proposed their re-definition of popular music "industries" instead of "industry". Following this new definition, this chapter uses the term "industries"[1] to cover a series of sectors mainly including labels, recordings, lives, publishing, media, merchandise, and more generally relevant activities.

In China, the term "cultural industry" was first formally proposed instead of the previous notion "cultural institutions" in the Fifth Session of the Fifteenth Party

---

[1] Notably, in the context of Chinese academia, "cultural industry" is more understood as a cultural and theoretical concept that is directly linked to Adorno, while "cultural industries" refers to more economic and practical issues and usually equivalents to "cultural business" (Ren 2012: 37). For more on the Chinese cultural industry, see (Cai & Wen 2006: 4-5).

Congress in October 2000. This illustrated a recognition that the contemporary culture consisted of a range of commercial activities in the contexts of commercialisation and globalisation. Furthermore, the *"Plan on Reinvigoration of the Cultural Industry"*[2] issued by General Office of the State Council in September 2009 officially proposed to accelerate the reinvigoration of cultural industry and give full play to its significant role in the country's contemporary society. One of the results was a more positive socio-cultural atmosphere both for the artists and entrepreneurs, which also impacted on the Chinese metal industries.

Industries constitute an integral dimension of the values and meanings of Chinese metal. This chapter examines the relatively complete system of Chinese metal industries of the period between 2001 and 2013[3] in six sections. More specifically, the first two sections provide Chinese metal industries with a theoretical background of Adorno's "cultural product" and Bourdieu's "cultural capital" and "field", and a historical background by briefly reviewing the overall development of the Chinese popular recording industry. Then, the following sections move forward to investigate the labels, recordings, lives, media, merchandise, and a few peripheral activities, respectively, and further illustrate that how different capitals flow and make exchanges between the different sections therein. These observations reveal that the overall industries of Chinese metal were/are structuring on the cultural capitals more than economic. Moreover, behind a seeming prosperity reflected by the statistics, there were still serious problems, especially the regional imbalance and the musicians' survivals. Therefore, exploring more effective approaches to control a balance between cultural and economic capitals would remain an important task for future metal entrepreneurs and scholars.

---

[2] For the whole document, see http://www.gov.cn/jrzg/2009-09/26/content_1427394.htm
[3] The major events such the label, recording, and live in this chapter are focused in such period, while there are still a few events such as the peripheral activities may refer to a later period by 2016 .

6.1 Understanding Metal as a Cultural Product and Capital in Field

In contemporary society, arts including metal music illustrate a duality of artistry and commerciality. In other words, they need to be understood as cultural products and cultural capital in Adorno and Bourdieu's paradigms, by which economic phenomena are discussed in cultural discourse.

6.1.1 Metal as Cultural Product

In 1941, in a short article titled "*On Popular Music*" Adorno (1990: 301-314) elaborated his ideas about seeing popular music as being a product in the cultural industry. He defined two central characteristics of popular music as standardisation and pseudo-individualisation. The former indicates that both the general structure and specific details of a popular music song tend to be standardised in certain fixed models, such as "the rule that the chorus consists of thirty-two bars and that the range is limited to one octave and one note" (ibid: 302). Such crystallisation of standards is mainly driven by the nature of the economics, such as the Fordism. When one particular hit scores a great success, hundreds of others spring up imitating the types and details of the successful one (ibid: 306). Due to the standardisation in both the music creation and appreciation are pre-determined by certain established models, one of the logical consequences is pseudo-individualisation, yet the musicians and audiences often fail to realise that (ibid: 308). Thus, the individual freedom in the practice of popular music is no more than an illusion. In general, unlike the organic totality of serious music (such as Beethoven), Adorno saw the components of popular music as substitutable as the cogs in a machine.

Indeed, Adorno's notion of cultural product may have exaggerated the pacifying impacts of industry upon popular music practice and underestimated the actual creativities therein. However, his ideas are still instructive when considering many

Chinese contemporary metal issues. For example, how a style and its relevant conventions (as an artistic standardisation) are formed by both individual creativity and economic regulation? This may also explain why different local metal labels usually share certain similarities (as an industrial standardisation), but at the same time, employ different operational strategies.

6.1.2 Metal as Cultural Capital

Cultural capital was first proposed and elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu (1989) and has been increasingly applied by popular music scholars, particularly those relatively non-mainstream genres (Hibbett 2005). The whole paradigm of Bourdieu's sociology is primarily structured on "field" and "capital". A field is a setting in which agents and their social positions are located, in which the position of each particular agent is a result of the interaction between the specific rules of the field, agent's habitus and capital (Bourdieu 1984). In other words, the field is a structured but dynamic space in which different types of capital flows and interacts with each other. Bourdieu defined three types of capital as economic capital, social capital, and cultural capital, in which cultural capital is ''a form of knowledge, an internalised code or a cognitive acquisition which equips the social agent with empathy towards, appreciation for or competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artifacts'' (cited by Johnson 1993: 7). Furthermore, cultural capital is presented in three subtypes, including embodied (such as educational level), objectified (such as cultural products), and institutionalised (such as academic credentials or qualifications) (Zhu 2005: 118). There are two significances when applying the concept in metal.

First, although both cultural and social capitals do not directly connect with money, in certain circumstance they can be potentially transformed into economic capital. For instance, in the case of teachers making money by teaching, the cultural capital (as intellectual ability and knowledge) is successfully transformed into economic capital

(as tuition fee) via the activity of teaching (certain circumstance). However, according to Zhu (ibid: 121)'s interpretation, cultural capital has a nature of tending to conceal the fact of such cultural-economic transformation to keep its cultural purity. However, this purity effectively facilitates the accumulation of cultural capital which in fact potentially exchanges for more economic capital. Therefore, the so-called cultural purity should be seen as no more than a pseudo-anti-utilitarianism. In the case of metal, especially those more marginalised subgenres such as raw black metal, the artists usually pursue a purity of being underground which earns a reputation from the metalheads as well as an accumulated cultural capital, while the true motivation may still aim at the economic profits. More importantly, this phenomenon may be not due to the dishonesty of the artists or fans but determined by the nature of cultural capital.

Secondly, cultural capital flows among different fields. Theoretically, every field has its own orthodox culture which functions as the fundamental principles to differentiate the agents and their statuses within the field (ibid: 118). Thus, the same cultural capital may present different values with its constant flowing. For example, in the field of Chinese popular music, extreme metal has been out of the mainstream, so that it is a kind of cultural capital reacting against the hegemonic culture. Instead, in the field of Chinese extreme metal, the same capital facilitates the maintenance of its own hegemonic status. Also, when considering the metal industries in a series of components such as labels, recordings, lives, media, and merchandise, it is necessary to clarify how the cultural and economic capitals mutually interacted.

Taking "cultural product" and "cultural capital" into account takes the examination of Chinese metal industries beyond the limited economic reports and statistics into the potential disclosure of the cultural, power struggles as well as a reflection of the social structure behind the industrial activities.

6.2 Reviewing Chinese Music Industries

Examining popular music from the economic and business perspectives has been marginal within Chinese academia. This situation has been slightly improved since 2000 but still lacks in-depth examination (Li 2010: 12). Akin to the situation that Williamson and Cloonan had observed (2007) in the western academia, most of the Chinese scholars have focused mainly on the recording industry when looking at the popular music industries (Xv 2005; Ge 2004, 2008; Ren 2012: 38-43). For example, Ren (2012: 38) argued that "the recording industry of popular music is the integral component of contemporary Chinese cultural business, and it involves the essential links such as recording, producing and distributing". Moreover, the term audio & video industry as an expanded version of popular music industry was often used when discussing the issues of the more general cultural publishing business, involving both audios (such as SP, LP, cassette, and CD) and videos (such as film, TV, MTV, video tape, VCD, and DVD) (Wang 2006: 22; Zhou 2006: 8-9).

In fact, the term popular music industries and its entire sections have not been widely considered by Chinese scholars thus far, in particular, the live music section was hardly mentioned. In this case, this brief review of the Chinese music industries is inevitably based on the recording section, aiming for providing a pre-history as well as a social-economic context of the Chinese metal industries.

6.2.1 A Retrospect of Chinese Recording Industry since the Early 1900s
The history of Chinese recording industry can be traced back to the early 20th century when Shanghai became the most important city in China with the emergence of phonograph and records. For example, Victory Talking Machine Company and Columbia Records had extended their businesses to Shanghai as early as around 1905,

and the first truly "made in China" record[4] was produced in 1917 (Ge 2004: 54). The period from 1917 to 1930 saw a dramatic rise of three local records enterprises (the Chinese Big Three). The first one was Pathe Freres Phonograph Company. As the earliest Chinese local recording company, it was founded in 1908 and started producing records in 1917. In 1934, the company was acquired by the British company EMI, with its Chinese name "Baidai" maintained. The second was Da Zhong Hua (Great China) Records, established in 1917. As an initial Sino-Japan joint venture company, it became a completely local company in 1927. The third was Shanghai RCA Victor Records, formed by Radio Corporation of America in 1930. The recordings of these companies covered a variety of different types of music, such as Peking Opera, other traditional operas, traditional instrumental music, Chinese folk art forms, and more modern popular songs influenced by the West (Xv 2005: 21-63). As Ge (ibid: 56) concluded, Shanghai became the centre and foundation of Chinese recording industry with a prosperous era (but short) enjoyed by the Big Three and a few dozens of smaller companies before the Anti-Japanese War in 1937.

In the following four decades, a few major events including the Anti-Japanese War, the Chinese Civil War, and the Cultural Revolution resulted in a restriction of the Chinese music industry. Until the late 1970s, the Reform and Opening-up Policy brought in a new prosperity of popular music. The rapid economic growth of the country greatly stimulated the public demands and consumptions of the entertainment industries. Meanwhile, the relatively liberal political environment made the musical theme turn to emotional expressions of life and love from the previously propagandistic functions. In this climate, Pacific Audio & Video Corporation as the first popular music recording company in the mainland China was established in 1979, and the main carrier transformed to cassettes instead of previous SPs and LPs.

---

[4] In fact, the initial concept of "made in Chinese" record meant the raw materials recorded in China but the post producing abroad. Thus the true "made in Chinese" record stresses that the whole process should be finished in China.

The 1980s and early 1990s saw a high growth in terms of the Chinese recording industry, when a lot of new recording institutions were founded, such as Shanghai Audio & Video Corporation in 1981, China Record Corporation in 1982, Guangzhou New Era Film & Music Corporation in 1984, China Musician Society Publishing in 1985, and Guangzhou Swan Music Publishing in 1988. Notably, the recording business at the time was highly profitable. For instance, as a business insider (Cited by Ren 2012: 39) recalled that in the mid-1980s "the cost of recording an album was around 30,000 RMB, while the price was about 10 RMB per unit and the sales could easily reach one or two million copies". It seemed that Chinese recording industry was entering a promisingly golden age. It also explains that why the first wave of Chinese metal thrived in this period as a mainstream trend.

Considering the industrial scale, according to Wang (2006: 23-25)'s statistics, in the whole country between1997 and 2004, the annual sales of cassette were over 100 million copies, while the figures of CD were 11.7 million in 1997 and reached 49.2 million in 2004. By 2005, there were 332 audio & video publishing companies with publishing license, 168 cassette producing corporations, 127 CD producing corporations, 464 and 551 production lines of CD-ROM and CD-R with annual production capacities of 2.3 and 2.9 billion, more than 1,000 issuing companies, and over 100,000 retailers (ibid). These data suggested that a huge cultural industrial system (involving popular music) in mainland China had been established in the mid-2000s.

Nevertheless, the increasingly serious piracy issues made such potential golden age a false prosperity. One important reason was the legal loophole in the Article 43 of the Copyright Law of the People's Republic of China enacted in 1990. The article declared that "a radio station or television station may broadcast, for non-commercial purposes, a published sound recording without seeking permission from, or paying remuneration to, the copyright owner, performer and producer of the sound

recording"[5]. This directly resulted in the out of control of piracy. Although in its second version in 2010, Article 43 was revised into "a radio station or television station that broadcasts an unpublished work created by another person shall obtain permission from, and pay remuneration to, the copyright owner; a radio station or television station that broadcasts a published work created by another person may do without permission from, but shall pay remuneration to, the copyright owner"[6], the recording industry and market had been seriously damaged and would be difficult to restore. Another important factor was the new technologies. As a double-edge sword, they drove music producing into a new era, but at the same time, it objectively facilitated the piracy activities especially with the poor copyright law system in China. By 2005 as the IFPI report of the year showed, the biggest piracy market was in China where nearly 85 percent of the total sales of music products were piratical. According to a local observer (ibid), the true situation could be more pessimistic with the figure of 97.2 per cent. The consequence was that when the incomes could not cover the costs, the businessmen and musicians had to reduce their inputs or sought for other ways of making money besides music. As a result, the overall producing quality and artistry of popular music of the country decreased. However, this situation has begun to be improved by the changing copyright policies of the country (Street, Zhang et al. 2015).

In the global perspective, the Chinese recording industry has also impacted by the global decline of the traditional recording industry in the 2000s, shocked and challenged by the newer digital technology, especially the internet and file-exchange servicers. For example, music sales in the US fell from US$ 12,325 million in 2002 to US$ 4,481 million in 2012 (cited by Galuszka & Wyrzykowska 2016: 27). Similarly, 2009 witnessed the worst situation of Chinese recording industry, when the total sales were US$ 6.3 billion and were reduced by 13 percent compared to 2008 and only a

---

[5] For the full document of 1990, see
https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Copyright_Law_of_the_People%27s_Republic_of_China_(1990)
[6] For the full document of 2010, see http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/cn/cn031en.pdf

half of 1999 (Ren 2012: 41). However, the transformation of the industrial model is a global crisis rather than Chinese, and the new digital era indicates both challenges and opportunities to the whole music industries, which should be considered dialectically.

6.2.2 The Rise of Indie Rock Record Labels in the 1990s

Indie has been a complex and inclusive concept in different contexts, such as a mode of distribution, a genre, an ethos, and a mode of critical assessment and judgment (Fonarow 2006: 26). In the narrow sense, it refers to a certain initial punk-rooted genre which is now attached to British pop (Hesmondhalgh 1999: 35). More broadly, it can be understood as an aesthetic genre, a method of social differentiation, and a marketing tool (Hibbett 2005: 55). Moreover, indie art tends to indicate a lack of popularity for its value, and require specialised knowledge for a full appreciation (ibid). According to a music careers expert McDonald[7], an indie label means a record label that is independently funded and not connected to one of the major labels. Indie labels range from home based hobby labels to highly profitable, large businesses. In the 1990s, the line between indie labels and major labels began to blur somewhat, and now some large indie labels are distributed by the major labels.

Furthermore, the relationships between "indie", "mainstream", and "underground" must be clarified. On the one side, there is no necessary contradiction between being indie and mainstream at the same time, since the two terms are defined both aesthetically and industrially. In this sense, a musician could be entirely indie or mainstream, aesthetically indie but industrially mainstream, or vice versa. However, the underground has to show a holistically opposite status against the mainstream. On the other side, all of these terms are dynamic and relative, which means that an indie artist could become the mainstream with the increasing acceptance of the public or by signing a mainstream label. Meanwhile, different historical periods may feature

---

[7] For more, see: http://musicians.about.com/od/musicindustrybasics/g/IndieLabel.htm

different standards of indie, mainstream, and underground.

This chapter uses "indie" in its broad sense. In the Chinese context "indie label" is more specifically understood in three aspects. First, the indie labels' ownerships are not national or collective like the majority in the 1980s and 1990s but usually established by one or several individuals. Secondly, they are greatly inspired by "Do It Yourself" (DIY) spirit and often started on a small scale and with limited funding. Thirdly, they also reflect certain non-mainstream aesthetic attitudes, so that their audiences are of relative minority. The first generation of indie labels featuring rock in the mainland China emerged in the 1990s with the prosperity of the recording industry, such as Modern Sky, Newbees, Scream (see Chapter 4.4.2), So Rock!, and Cornfield (Wang, 2002). The variety of their developing trajectories and operating modes reflected the explorations of Chinese indie music[8].

Modern Sky[9] was formed in 1997 by Shen Lihui whose initial motivation was just to found a label to release the music of his own band *Sober*. In the beginning, the label primarily focused on Brit Pop and then covered a number of more alternative and underground genres, such as the releases of its subsidiary label Bad Head (see Chapter 4.4.1). In the late 2000s, Modern Sky moved forward into a comprehensive entertainment company involving music publishing, artist management, and live promotion. As the data on its official website showed, in the past decade, the label had signed about 60 artists and released over 150 albums. The artists and music referred to both mainstream (such as Maggie Cheung's urban folk) and underground (such as *Four-Five*'s deathcore) genres. More importantly, the Strawberry Festival initiated by Modern Sky in 2009 has become one of the biggest and most successful annual festivals. In 2015, its live music business first reached Europe (Helsinki) and America

---

[8] Currently, indie labels have become quite common in Chinese popular industries. For example, an online incomplete statistics listed the most famous ones (nearly 70) referring to different genres, see: http://www.douban.com/note/139987200/

[9] For more about Modern Sky, see the official website of the label: http://www.modernsky.com/

(New York)[10]. Recently, the label and its operating model have been more and more discussed as a successful case to explore the strategies of making survival in contemporary Chinese music industries (Yang & Zhen 2008; Peng 2015).

Newbees was formed by Hong Feng in 1998. The most well-known achievement of Hong was signing a teenage rock band named *The Flower* and making them truly superstar by resourceful promotion. The teenage status of the band, as a good stunt, was supposed to obtain more public attentions, and it did. Moreover, Hong introduced a new style called punk-pop (Wang 2002: 11) which can be seen as an effective approach to bridge rock music (punk) and general audiences (pop). At the same time, Newbees presented a stronger DIY tendency, since almost all the music producing was finished by Hong himself. He preferred to self-claim as an explorer of Chinese indie music, who might be not successful like Modern Sky but whose different experiences would be useful for the successors (ibid).

So Rock! Records was a record label affiliated to one of the earliest Chinese rock magazines "*I Love Rock Music*". This monthly magazine was founded in Shijiazhuang in 1999, which was regularly accompanied by a cassette (later became CD) containing a dozen of selected rock songs (usually not common) of a variety of genres[11]. In her master's dissertation on Chinese rock magazines, Sun (2012: 9) concluded that instead of focusing on the music itself, the magazine more aimed at a sort of ideological enlightenment by disseminating the living ways, perspectives, spirits, and values of rock. So since its establishment in 2000, the label has begun to release local underground music in forms of albums, compilations and demos. Those demos of relatively low quality and costs were usually issued for free as the attached CDs of the

---

[10] The Strawberry Festival enters Europe:
http://www.modernsky.com/index.php/Festival/ticket/id/418.html
The New York Modern Sky Festival:
http://www.modernsky.com/index.php/News/info/id/1722.html
[11] This could refer to copyright issue when the selected songs were from the publications under protection of copyright. There was no evidence showing that the magazine had agreements or negotiations with the content parties. It also indicated that at the time when copyright consciousness had not obtained enough attention, piracy indeed benefited many businessmen.

magazine[12]. In fact, many currently famous rock bands made their first demo albums in this way, such as *Second Hand Rose*. Notably, the first formal album of death metal in mainland China, *Stale Corpse*'s "*Sound of Prison*", was released by the label in 2000. Now the magazine has been transformed into an online fanzine in new media form[13], and the label is no longer active.

Cornfield was founded in 1996 by Song Ke and his friend Gao Xiaosong (as a celebrity with big fame at the time). In its early time, the label created a new genre named campus folk whose subjects were mainly about the love and sadness of the youth in their college or university period, such as the first and classical album "*Youth with No Regrets*" in 1996. However, in contradiction to the indie labels mentioned before, Cornfield had been aiming to find the way towards the mainstream. In an interview, Song explicitly stated that what we had been doing was what a mainstream label should do (Gong 2005: 68). Soon, the label launched its collaboration with the major Warner and changed the name into Warner Cornfield in 2000. Four years later, it was again renamed as Taihe Cornfield after the new collaboration with Taihe Entertainment[14]. From a commercial perspective, the label may have been moving in the right way, but at the same time, its indie aesthetic status had lost since 2000.

6.2.3 The Background of the Advent of the Chinese Metal Industries

The year 2000 can be seen as the beginning of the Chinese metal industries. It witnessed the advent of Chinese metal as a true genre (see Chapter 4.5), the release of first metal album outside the mainstream field (*Stale Corpse*'s "*Sound of Prison*" by

---

[12] For example, in one of the issues of the magazine in 2005, the attached CD included one of my band (*Vanished River*)'s work titled *Attila*. The song was recorded and produced by our own and we just had an informal agreement with the label to use the song for free, which meant that the actual costs of the label could be very low. However, at the time it was still an important platform for underground artists to promote their works.

[13] Available at http://chuansong.me/account/sorockmag

[14] For more of the history and development of the label, see:
http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=zOy2Dr7jlmGys6JdDiHtAV8QdAKi3wLIhysmTlORpxiDYZ1E3tLPh
YzvPVofGUIoLaUuh3tofkt2k8qIvl7vT_

So Rock!), and the establishment of the first metal label Mort Productions one year later. Starting with the recording, the overall industries extended to other sectors (from industry to industries in Williamson and Cloonan's sense) in the following years. The retrospect of the Chinese popular music industries and indie labels portray a background image of the rise of the Chinese metal industries.

First, by the late 1990s, there had been a considerable scale of mainstream Chinese popular music industries mainly driven by the country's economic growth, political liberty, and public demands. Meanwhile, popular music was increasingly showing its functions of entertainment and self-expressions in various ways instead of merely serving as political propaganda, which dramatically promoted the diversity of different musical styles and genres/subgenres.

Secondly, Chinese metal recording industry had undergone serious piracy issues. For the mainstream, it was undoubtedly a disaster for breaking the normal market and eventually destroying the ecology of the recording industry. In contrast, considering the underground status of Chinese metal, the negative influences, side-effects and even benefits from the piracy need to be re-evaluated.

Thirdly, unlike many mainstream media supposed, non-mainstream music or indie music had proved their corresponding audiences and certain market demands. Shen (cited by Wang 2002: 14), the manager of Modern Sky, claimed that "the artists of Modern Sky such as *New Pants* have better sales than a lot of artists of the mainstream labels. In fact, the general public has already accepted the so-called indie music, but the media like CCTV failed to realise that truth, and the appreciation ability of the public was often underestimated".

Finally, in the 1990s and 2000s, there were examples illustrating the possibility and approaches for indie labels to survival within Chinese popular music industries. These

successful indie labels brought in the DIY spirit as well as a variety of operational models. Between the tendencies of maintaining the underground status and moving towards the mainstream, there might be an idealistic balance point, theoretically. However, in practice, it would be more often to see a swing back and forth between the two sides, which were often reflected in metal industries.

6.3 Metal Labels & Recordings

Traditionally, record labels are defined as the organisations that contract artists to make recordings that they hope to market in some way to the public. In China, the term "label" has been less widely employed by scholars than in musical practices. For example, when searching the keyword "musical label" on CNKI (the biggest online journal resource website in China http://epub.cnki.net), only ten articles were obtained, and none of them was academic in the strict sense. Thus, the term "label" is loosely defined with different personal understandings by artists and businessmen. According to an online interview with a few label managers in 2014[15], label was argued as "a recording organisation centered on a certain genre", "a special institution between the levels of record companies and individual organisations", or "just a free and personalised team engaging in various musical activities, not necessarily focusing recordings".

One of the most significant contributions from the Chinese metal labels was a huge number of records. Unfortunately, because that the second wave of Chinese metal had been largely marginalised as underground, the majority of these records were not exposed in the mainstream field. Even more, some record information could be only available on their label's websites. For most metal fans, musicians, and scholars an overall consideration of Chinese metal records was never made. Given that they are integral components to the Chinese metal industries, this section mainly takes into account the record labels and the recordings of the second wave of Chinese metal. First, a series of statistics and observations are presented. Then, the imbalance of metal's development between different regions raises the more general question of the relationship between metal music and social wealth. Finally, three local labels are employed as examples to illustrate the different operating strategies and the relationship between different capitals.

---

[15] For the whole interview, see
http://musicianguide.cn/music-label-ultimate-raiders-in-the-end-what-is-the-brand

6.3.1 Statistics & Observations of Labels

By collecting the data from two websites Encyclopaedia Metallum and Douban[16], a complete list of Chinese metal labels between 2001 and 2013 was produced, as shown in the table below.

Table 6.1 List of Chinese Metal Labels between 2001 and 2013

Label Name	Founded	City	Mainly Genre/Subgenre[17]
So Rock！Records	1999	Shijiazhuang	Rock, Metal
Scream Records	1999	Beijing	Rock, Metal
Mort Productions	2001	Beijing	Metal
Dying Art Productions	2001	Beijing	Extreme Metal
Lie Records (Closed)	2002	Hefei	Metal
RHC International Records	2002	Beijing	Refers to Metal
Limbo Grind Productions	2003	Xuzhou	Grindcore Brutal Death
Keysmet Productions	2003	Chengdu	Black Metal
Shang Records	2003	Qingdao	Extreme Metal
Time String Records	2003	Xi'an	Refers to Metal
Area Death Productions	2004	Beijing	Metal
Black Iron Records	2005	Nanchang	Metal
Bastard Records	2005	Beijing	Grindcore Brutal Death
PEST Productions	2006	Nanchang	Black Metal
Funeral Moonlight Productions	2006	Shanghai	Black Metal
Beautiful Doomsday Productions	2006	Shanghai	Doom Metal
Vampire Factory Productions	2006	Changsha	Extreme Metal
Pilot Records	2006	Beijing	Rock, Metal
Dying Empylver Productions	2006	Xi'an	Black Metal
Darkness Across Entertainment	2007	China/Korea	Black Metal
Moves Restlessly Records	2007	Wuhan/Fuzhou	Rock, Metal
Ghostdom Records	2007	Zhengzhou	Black Ambient
Divine Massacre Records	2008	Tianjin	Extreme Metal
Sparrow Cross Productions	2008	Beijing	Black Metal, Dark Wave
Red Stone Water Productions	2008	Zhengzhou	Rock Metal
Autumn Floods Productions	2009	Jinan	Black Metal
Cold Woods Productions	2009	Changsha	Extreme Metal

---

[16] *Encyclopedia Metallum* as a worldwide online archive of metal contains a section of Chinese metal label information. Although some information was not correct, incomplete, or un-updated, it was still useful as a clue. See http://www.metal-archives.com/

Then, *Douban* as the most used online promotional platform, I eventually found more specific and updated information about almost all the Chinese metal labels. See http://www.douban.com

[17] This factor only roughly indicates the particular preferences rather than a strict restriction of the different labels.

Psychedelic Lotus Records	2009	Beijing	Metal (Vinyl)
Brutal Reign Productions	2009	Xuzhou	Brutal Death Metal
Rotting Development Productions	2009	Tianjin	Brutal Death Metal, Grind
DIME Records	2010	Beijing	Metalcore
Apocalypse Productions	2011	Hong Kong	Metal
Brutal Slam Guttural Productions	2011	Shenyang	Brutal Death Metal
Stress Hormones Records	2011	Nanchang	Extreme Metal (Vinyl)
Dete Nenavister Productions	2012	Xiamen	Black Metal
Thanatology Productions	2012	Beijing	Death Metal
Thanatopsis Records	2012	Beijing	Death Metal
Soul Cleanliness Production	2013	Beijing	Metal
Hepatic Necrosis Productions	2013	Jinan	Grindcore Brutal Death

Overall, there were 37 indie metal (or directly relevant to metal) labels founded between 2001 and 2013 in mainland China[18], besides two earlier rock (but partly relevant to metal) labels So Rock! Records and Scream Records founded in 1999. Also, Lie Records is the only one that has been officially closed.

Considering the temporal factors, as the line graph shown below, there were six labels formed in the peak time 2006 and only one in 2004 and 2010. A fact is that there was at least one label founded in each year, which may suggest that the recording industry of Chinese metal had seen a relatively sustaining development.

Fig. 6.1 Numbers of Labels Founded in Each Year between 2001 and 2013

---
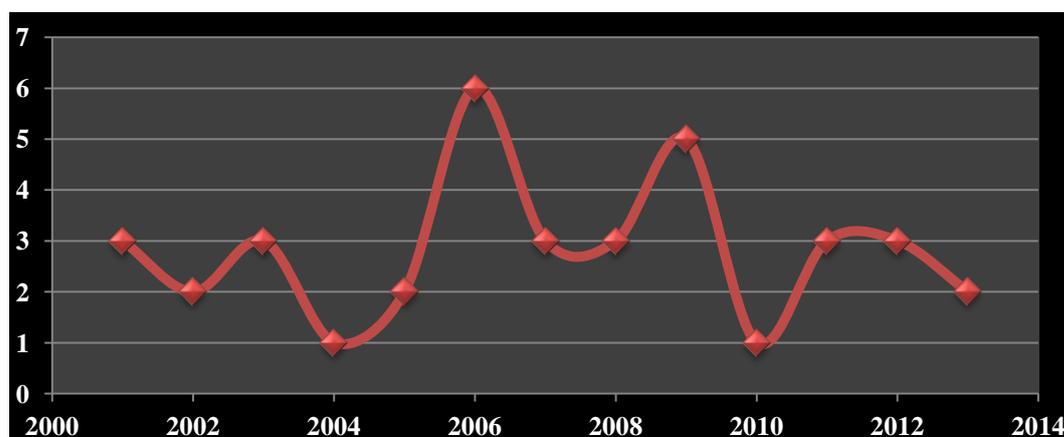
[18] It is necessary to clarify that Apocalypse Productions was founded in Hong Kong outside the mainland China, but all the records released by the label came from the bands in the mainland. In this sense, the label was included in this list.

In the spatial terms, as the chart illustrated below, indie metal labels had already appeared in 14 cities across the country, where Beijing accounted for nearly one-third of the whole followed by Nanchang (only about 8%). This indicated that Beijing was still the centre of Chinese metal, but not as dominant as it used to in the first wave of the 1990s. One of the reasons may be that the rapid spread of the internet had effectively collapsed the territorial barrier, so that the cooperation between bands and labels could be easily operated online, as well as the distribution. This also indicates that the Chinese metal scene in the 2000s was structured culturally more than geographically. Notably, all the cities shown in the statistic are provincial capitals including Beijing as the country's capital. Considering these cities are relatively more developed both in culture and economics, such situation implies a certain relationship between the underground music and social wealth (will be further discussed in Chapter 6.3.3).

Fig. 6.2 Numbers of Metal Label in Different Cities between 2001 and 2013
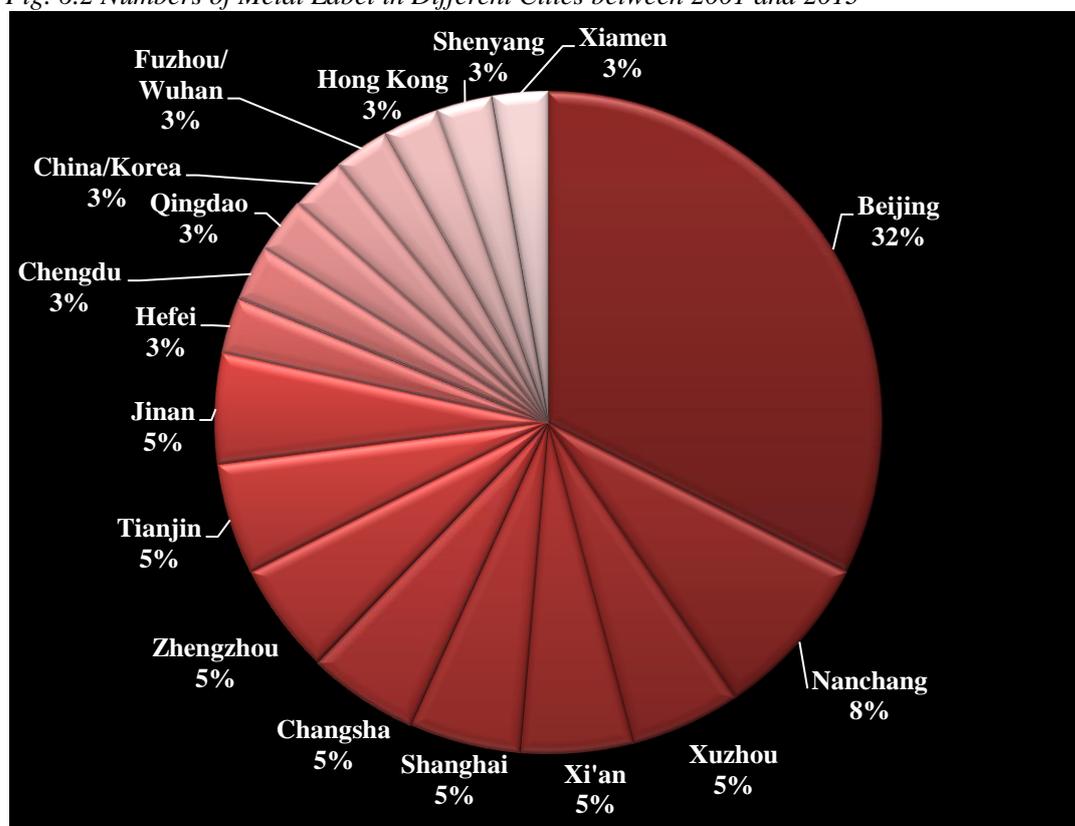
Finally, taking genre into account, there was an overall tendency of moving towards specificity with the time. For example, the earliest two labels in 1999 including So Rock! Records and Scream Records focused on rock music involving metal as only a peripheral offshoot. Between 2001 and 2005 the labels tended to concentrate on metal as a general genre such as Mort Productions and Area Death Productions, and occasionally more specific subgenres such as Limbo Grind Productions and Keysmet Productions. After 2005, the majority of the labels preferred to produce only one subgenre exclusively. Gradually, almost all the subgenres of metal were covered, declaring that Chinese metal had become a mature and complete genre during its second wave. Besides, Psychedelic Lotus Records and Stress Hormones Records were the only two labels exclusively producing vinyl records. In the digital era, vinyl has been increasingly linked to a particular sense of connoisseur (McCourt, 2005: 249) which implied a depth of metal's understanding and appreciation in China.

6.3.2 Statistics & Observations of Records

The further examination of all the websites of above metal labels (on Douban) shows that about 660 recordings were released in this period. They mainly consisted of a majority of the works from Chinese bands and a part of re-issues of overseas bands, in a variety of forms of albums, compilations, splits, EPs, and demos, mainly including the carriers of CD, cassette, and vinyl.

As the table and line graph below illustrated, there were three peaks of releasing records in 2006, 2010, and 2012, respectively. The most dramatic increase (of nearly five times) happened between 2004 and 2006. As a clear watershed, 2006 should be seen as the most remarkable moment of recording industry of Chinese metal in the second wave, echoed by that the year was also the peak time of label's establishment. As mentioned before, the 2000s witnessed a global recession of recording industry, which also occurred in China. However, the statistics below suggest that the Chinese

metal recording industry did not follow that decreasing trend, but opposite. Perhaps, this phenomenon can be partly explained by the higher loyalty of metalheads that revealed by a recent report by Spotify[19] (Buskirk 2015b). More significantly, it is necessary to realise that the rules or conclusions obtained from the mainstream industries may not always be applicable to the underground cases.

Table 6.2 Amount of the Records in Each Year (2000 and 2013)

Time	Records Released	Time	Records Released
2000	5	2007	60
2001	7	2008	66
2002	12	2009	67
2003	18	2010	79
2004	13	2011	63
2005	21	2012	90
2006	75	2013	87

Fig. 6.3 Amount of the Records in Each Year (2000 and 2013)
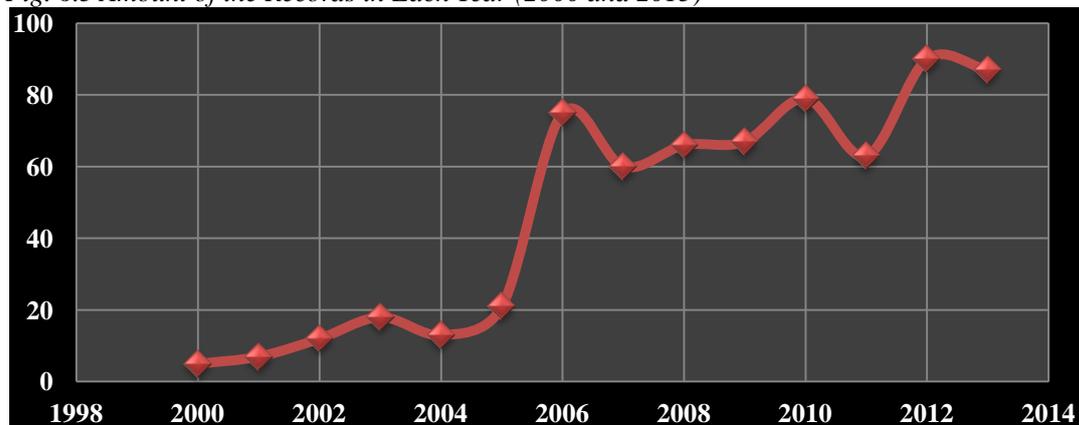
A further consideration of the records and specific labels reveals an extreme imbalance of Chinese metal recording industry. As the chart illustrated, five labels including PEST, Mort, Funeral Moonlight, Area Death, and Dying Legion accounted for more than 50 percent of the whole production. In contrast, the label such as Red Stone Water, Soul Cleanliness, and Rotting Development had only one release. In

---

[19] However, this loyalty referred to many aspects, and more suggested a lasting musical interest or taste. It might but not necessarily lead to the result that the fans' conscious behaviours against the piracy and illegal downloading. Thus, loyalty could be a positive factor to recording industry, but to what extent the effect works has yet to be clarified.

addition, different labels usually presented different attitudes, pursuits, and operating models, which in fact reflected the flows of different cultural capital (will be discussed in Chapter 6.3.4).

Table 6.3 Proportion of the Records of Different Labels[20]

Label	Records Released	Label	Records Released
PEST	**89**	**Divine Massacre**	**6**
Mort	**85**	**Scream**	**6**
Funeral Moonlight	**67**	**D.A.E**	**3**
Area Death	**63**	**So Rock!**	**3**
Death Legion	**37**	**Black Iron**	**3**
Cold Woods	**35**	**Dete Nenavister**	**3**
Limbo Grind	**23**	**Thanatopsis**	**3**
Autumn Floods	**23**	**DIME**	**3**
Shang	**18**	**Thanatopsis**	**2**
Moves Restlessly	**16**	**Brutal Slam Guttural**	**2**
Psychedelic Lotus	**16**	**Thanatology**	**2**
Stress Hormones	**13**	**Vampire Factory**	**2**
Keysmet	**12**	**Manjusaka**	**2**
Ghostom	**11**	**Pilot**	**2**
Sparrow Cross	**10**	**Red Stone Water**	**1**
Dying Empylver	**9**	**Rotting Development**	**1**
Lie	**9**	**Soul Cleanliness**	**1**
Bastard	**8**	**Overseas Labels**	**6**
RHC	**7**	**Self-Release & Non-Metal Label**	**51**
Hepatic Necrosis	**7**		

---

[20] The table shows the complete data, while the graph only highlights those with figures exceed 10.

Fig. 6.4 Proportion of the Records of Different Labels
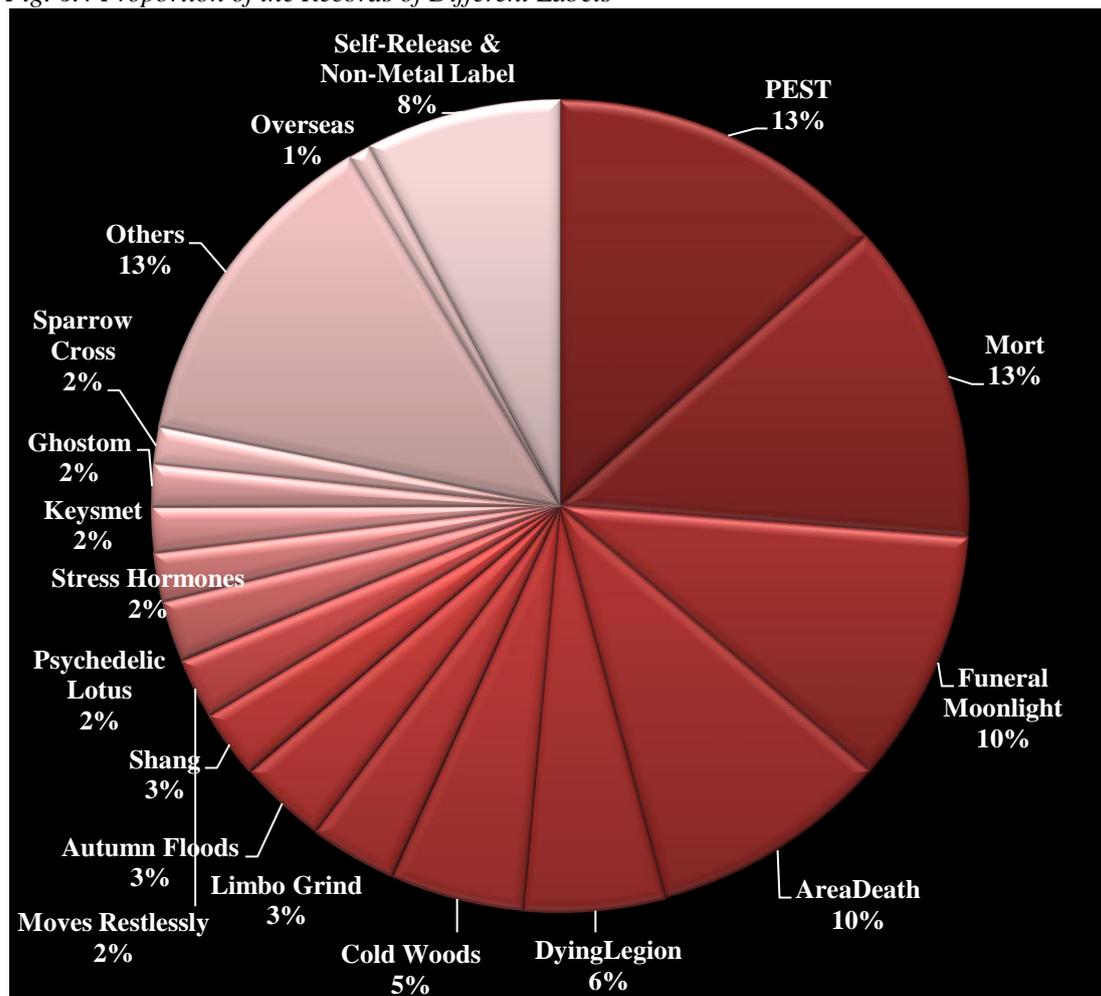
In addition to the 37 local metal labels, there were a handful of Chinese bands (about 1%) releasing records on overseas labels. For example, the depressive black metal band *Be Persecuted* signed the well-known German label, No Clouds Records, in 2006. As the founder of the band, Wu stated in an interview in 2010[21] that, as for the first time a Chinese extreme metal band signing a big overseas label, this was a kind of recognition to the Chinese metal from the global metal scene. At the same time, a part of records (about 8%) were self-released such as EP albums or released by non-metal publishers such as a few Nu-metal records. This reflects a deeper implement of DIY spirit in the Chinese metal scene. Given that both indie metal labels and self-release meant relatively low sales, the overall market value of Chinese metal

---

[21] Exclusive interview of *Be Persecuted* by Under FM, available at:
http://site.douban.com/ncmetal/widget/notes/526391/note/58828091/

recording industry was still limited even though the gross of records in this period seemed productive.

Moreover, the distribution of Chinese metal was nearly marginalised outside the mainstream, mainly by means of the internet, magazines/fanzines, and lives but never appeared on the official radios or TV programs before 2013. Since 2000, the internet has been increasingly popular and almost every band has operated their personal websites. Meanwhile, the online social media such as Douban, Weico, QQ Group, WeChat were widely used for promotion. Moreover, the magazine "*Extreme Music*" (as an online magazine "*XmusicK*" after 2011) and "*Painkiller*" contained a particular section that introduced the latest local albums. Finally, the gigs were usually another effective promotional and distributional platform, where the audiences could purchase the albums after watching a performance. The main reason of such distributional marginalisation may be, as Richard (2013) argued, that any officially distributed record within the mainland China has to obtain the imprimatur of the Culture Ministry, censored by a series of strict principles[22]. Considering both the music and subject matters of metal music especially extreme metal, it is very difficult for most metal musicians to obtain such an imprimatur and then access into an officially distributional channel. For example, Murk, the manager of Dying Art Productions, recalled in an interview in 2013[23], that he had contacted six publishers before *Martyrdom'*s debut album (black metal) was eventually issued in 2002, since the formal five publishers concerned that the work would not pass the censorship. The dilemma was always that self-releasing seemed an effective way to circumvent the

---

[22] According to the criteria of the Cultural Ministry in 2013, these principles included: 1. it must not violate the basic principles of the Constitution; 2. the unity of the nation, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity must not be threatened; 3. no state secrets must be divulged, national security must not be imperilled and no harm must be caused to the honour and the interests of the state; there must be no incitement to national hatred or discrimination, solidarity between nationalities must not be undermined and the country's customs must not be infringed; 4. there may be no promotion of a religion or a superstition; public order must not be disrupted and public stability must not be threatened; 5. obscenity, gambling, violence and crime must not be promoted; the rights and interests of others must not be insulted, slandered or infringed; 6. public ethics and popular cultural traditions must not be threatened; 7. content forbidden by law, regulations or state provisions may not be circulated.
[23] Exclusive interview with indie dark label Dying Art Productions by Wujie, available at: http://www.wooozy.cn/archives/18391

country's censorship, but at the same time, the chance of joining the mainstream distribution was lost. Recently, streaming media became a new means of distribution, such as Douban FM, Xiami FM, and Netease Cloud Music. However, no evidence has illustrated that whether, how, and to which degree those musicians benefited from them.

6.3.3 Metal Development & Social Wealth in Case of Labels

A few recent studies of musical geography (Florida 2012, 2014; Blistein 2014) have revealed a connection between metal's prosperity and a nation's wealth. For example, Florida (2014) argues that "the genre holds less sway in the ravaged post-industrial places of its birth (such as the US and UK), but remains insanely popular in Scandinavian countries known for their relative wealth, robust social safety nets, and incredibly high quality of life"[24], and "though metal may be the music of choice for some alienated working-class males, it enjoys its greatest popularity in the most advanced, most tolerant, and knowledge-based places in the world". Similarly, Blistein (2014) confirms that positive relationship between socio-economic factors and metal music, stating that the more wealthy nations do not only offer the media outlets and consumers necessary to help such a genre thrive, but also provide young musicians with the tools necessary to become competent players.

To a certain extent, these arguments match the results of the previous surveys of Chinese metal with a precondition of further understanding the term "wealth". First, it must refer to not only the economic capital but also cultural. Indeed, all the local metal labels in 2001 and 2013 were established in capital cities which usually mean better cultural and economic environment[25]. Nevertheless, Beijing, the city with the

---

[24] For more about the rank of the national welfare, see
http://www.economist.com/news/21566430-where-be-born-2013-lottery-life
[25] For example, Chinese cities are divided into six tiers by a set of parameters such as GDP, per capita income, educational level, and so forth. According to the latest data from *CBNweekly* in 2015, the majority of the capital cities were included in the first-tier and second-tier lists. For more, see

most metal labels has never been the highest rank of GDP or per capita income[26] during the last decade. In this case, the economic gap is made up by cultural capital, especially the musicians, fan base, and the understanding of the genre as an important heritage from the first wave of the 1990s. These advantages of cultural capital along with its good economic condition (though not the best) made Beijing the best city in China of metal development. However, it is also necessary to clarify that indie labels could sometimes be resulted by a simply personal or individual behaviour. It is possible for one to found a metal label just because of his/her wealth and interest, such as the Roots Records[27] founded in Wuhan in 2011. The label became inactive in the same year after holding only one gig and without any release. Therefore, economics is a significant but not the only factor that determines the development of metal.

Secondly, the social welfare plays a crucial role in operating a metal (or other indie) label. As a part of my master's programme of the University of Glasgow in 2013, I undertook a music industries placement with a Glasgow located dubstep indie label named Mungo's Hi Fi[28]. During this placement, it became apparent that the social welfare heavily influenced on the indie label. For example, the general manager, Douglas, needed to support a big family with two children, while his income from the label had been relatively low for the decade since 2000. Although the label had developed steadily with better economic conditions and reputation, his average income by 2013 was still less than £1,000 monthly. However, in such situation for a long time, Douglas had dedicated himself to the label and the music he loved, and at the same time, experienced a happy family life. All of these were in fact supported by an effect social welfare system of the UK, particularly the financial aid for raising

---

http://baike.baidu.com/view/11734050.htm

[26] For example, Beijing only ranked ninth on the list of per capita income and second of GDP (following Shanghai) of 2013, see
http://bbs.cnhubei.com/thread-3366983-1-1.html
http://www.elivecity.cn/html/jingjifz/2296.html

[27] The website of the label on *Douban* in 2011, see http://site.douban.com/roots/

[28] For more about the label, see http://www.mungoshifi.net/

children and house rent, as well as the NHS (National Health Service) from the government. Thus, the necessarily individual responsibilities of Douglas as a husband, father, and indie label manager were greatly shared by the social welfare.

Unfortunately, a similar welfare system did and does not exist in the mainland China. The direct consequence is that the managers of Chinese indie labels have to take all the family and career's responsibilities by themselves. These overmuch concerns caused them limited economic and time inputs for labels affairs. For example, in an interview, the manager of Brutal Reign Productions, Wang (2014) described a compromised status of his manager career, that "it is really difficult to run an indie metal label in China, and even more difficult to make money with it. Instead, I have to take another job and work hard to make a good living. Then, I put a part of the income and free time into the label stuff. It is not solely about business but love". The relatively worse social welfare is one of the main predicaments that Chinese managers have to face compared to their western counterparts and results in the overall gap of metal labels between China and the West. These observations suggest that the development or prosperity of indie metal labels is primarily determined by three conditions, including economic foundation, cultural capital, and social welfare.

6.3.4 Different Operating Models & Different Cultural Capital Forms

Because that both Chinese underground metal music and Chinese metal labels have not been experiencing an ideal socio-economic environment with above conditions, they had to explore different strategies to keep surviving. From the perspective of Bourdieu's field, these strategies illustrated different forms of cultural capitals which exchanged with economic profits in different ways and degrees. This section discusses this issue by considering three local labels: Mort, Area Death, and PEST, as the top three productive labels during 2001 and 2013 (see Chapter 6.3.2) and well-known across the Chinese metal scene.

Mort Productions is known as the biggest, most commercialised, and influential local metal label so far. Its success is mainly due to the effective use of the cultural capital in four aspects. First, it is located in Beijing, possessing a variety of advantages that inherited from the Chinese rock of the 1980s and mainstream metal of the1990s, especially the human resource and social network. For example, the label manager Chen Xi was also the founder of the magazine "*Painkiller*", as well as the front man of two influential bands *Narakam* and *Spring Autumn*. These roles offered Chen the possibility to integrate and utilise different resources in musical producing, promotion, and distribution, and stronger discursive power such as musical criticism in the local metal scene. Secondly, Mort built a positive relationship with European labels such as the famous German label Morbid Records. Considering the less developed status of Chinese metal compared to the West, this helped Mort establish its global reputation and this reputation again consolidate its domestic influence, like a positive cycle. Thirdly, Mort was claimed as a metal label instead of focusing on any specific metal subgenre, so that it could maximise the potential consumers when the market was still relatively small. Then, one of the positive results was that the label could flexibly shift the focus among different subgenres following the global trend, such as brutal death metal in the early 2000s, folk metal in the late 2000s, and metalcore in the early 2010s. Finally, the successful series of "*Resurrection of the Gods*" brought a continual accumulation of attention and reputation for the label (see Chapter 4.5.4). In particular, signing Mort became a goal for many local young metal musicians. In general, the key idea of Mort' strategy can be understood as making non-mainstream music in a mainstream way.

Similar to Chen, the label manager of Area Death Production, Wang Xiao, also had multiple roles in the Chinese metal scene, including the founder of *Extreme Music* in 2000 (as the chief editor since 2003 and the later *XmusicK* after 2011), the founder of the metal online media *Area Death* since 2001, and the boss of 666 Rock Shop since 2006. However, Area Death Productions as another Beijing label showed a quite

different model compared to Mort. As Wang (2015) recalled in the interview, in the early 2000s, he found that there were many outstanding local bands that failed to sign with Mort. He thus planned to found another label focusing on less fashionable but more rooted subgenres, such as old school doom metal (*Hyponic*) and thrash metal (*Explosicum*). In the history of Area Death, the majority of the releases (about 95%) of the label were reissues of the overseas bands such as *Nunslaughter* (US) and *Thanatos* (Netherland). These bands usually had an important reputation in the West but were not very well known in China at the time. Wang (ibid) explained that, although metal had seemed more and more popular in the country, a huge number of old and historic musicians who played an important role in the genre elsewhere had not been introduced to local fans. Similar to the purposes of "*Extreme Music*", Area Death also aimed to serve as a music guide to Chinese metal fans. Thus, while Area Death was not as commercially successful as Mort, Wang still gradually obtained a status of one of the key figures in Chinese metal scene[29] and metal connoisseur. Then, he put this cultural capital into another retail business, the 666 Rock Shop. The shop mainly sold metal records from all over the world and a series of merchandise products. Currently, this becomes the major source of Wang's income. Considering the capital flow, Wang ran a label with less economic profit but more cultural capital which later realised the transformation into economic capital in another way.

Differing from Mort and Area Death, there were labels that insisted a more thorough underground stance, such as PEST Productions. For the manager, Deng Zhang, the original intention of founding the label was just to help his friend release an album, while after a few years it became a worldwide famous metal label[30] (Shi 2015). In an interview with *Musician Guide* in 2013, Deng[31] stated that "different from most local

---

[29] This status can be very well exemplified by his participation in the documentary "*Global Metal*" as one of the handful interviewees in the Chinese episode.

[30] Notably, PEST has extended to a more inclusive label covering a variety of non-metal genres with its two branch labels, namely Weary Bird Records (including post rock and experimental rock) and Midnight Records (including neo folk and industrial noise).

[31] For more about the whole interview, see:
http://musicianguide.cn/exclusive-music-from-the-perspective-to-understand-the-independent-label-mu

labels, PEST was more well-known overseas than in the mainland China. We had very good reputation in the European and American underground metal scene, and the productions even drew attentions of many mainstream metal magazines, but our sales in the domestic market were truly bad". An important reason was that Deng insisted on producing the music according to his personal preference, such as raw black metal, depressive black metal, and ambient black metal which were too extreme both artistically and ideologically and beyond many local metal fans' acceptance. Another reason was that when setting the label in 2006 Deng had been clearly aware of that he could not make a living relying on the domestic market. Thus, the major market had been overseas, and the profit was just enough to maintain the label[32]. With the accumulation of the overseas reputation (as an important cultural capital) for years, PEST's local influence has been greatly increasing. For example, in 2015, *Zuriaake*'s new album *Gu Yan* was released by PEST, which became one of the most infusive events in the local metal scene.

These three cases illustrate the main strategies of survival employed by local metal labels. The key point is always that how to make the exchange between cultural capital and economic profit in different fields. Mort has been more rooted in the local metal scene and focused on metal genre as its broad sense, so the cultural capital directly exchanged with economic profit in the field of the recording industry. Area Death has been based on both local and overseas metal scene, and the cultural capital was transformed into economic profit by crossing the fields from recording industry to retail and merchandise. More heavily rooting in the overseas metal scene, PEST first obtained its economic profit as well as cultural capital in a more advanced field (the European and American recording industry), then put these capitals back into the

---

sic-market-pest-productions-weary-bird-records
[32] It can be exemplified by that the label's official website is in English only, see:
http://www.pest666.com/
The main promotional online media are *Facebook* and *Twitter* which are both officially banned in the mainland China. At the same time, the overseas market is usually more profitable than the domestic since the prices of the same album are different in these markets. For example, *Afterimage of Autumn* by *Zuriaake* is priced 69 RMB (about $ 10 in China and $16.99 outside China.

local market, to realise the capital transformation again.

6.4 Metal Lives

Live music has always been, described by Frith (2007: 1), an essential part of the contemporary music industry's strategies of making a profit. The data from *Statista* and *IFPI Annual Reports* showed a global trend of popular music industries shifting from recording industry towards live industry since 1999 (Promogogo 2015). For example, in the UK, the economic value of live music exceeded that of the recorded music in 2008 and 2009, and there is evidence that the economic dominance of the recording sector had already been replaced by live[33] (Cloonan 2011: 77-78).

The annual reports "*China Performance Market Annual Report*" by China Association of Performing Arts (CAPA) since 2011 illustrated that in the last four years the overall performing market value (popular music live as a sector involved) had seen a steady growth in a high level, with the figures as 23.3 billion RMB in 2011, 35.5 in 2012, 32.3 in 2013, and 43.4 in 2014, respectively (CAPA 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015). They also pointed out a dramatic rise of live house business and festivals. This section examines the development of the metal live in the mainland China between 2001 and 2013, by highlighting the primary factors that inspired the current prosperity of metal live, including the concerts of the overseas metal bands, the rise of local live house business, and the important festivals referring to metal.

6.4.1 Metal Shows by Overseas Bands & Rise of Local Live Promoters

It is very difficult to estimate the exact figure of how many local metal gigs have been held in the second wave of China metal, since the relevant specific statistics had been not available until the mid-2010s with the rise of a few social networking sites (SNS) such as *Beebee Pop*, *Youyi Rock Chart*, or *Musician Guide*. Meanwhile, according to

---

[33] Perhaps, a more dialectic view was as Page (2007: 8) added that "ultimately live and recorded music have a symbiotic rather than competitive relationship which means they should continue to be able to derive value from, rather than take value away from one another.

my personal experience and observations as a metal musician in the scene, these gigs covered a big range of different levels from amateur to professional. Instead, considering the major impacts on the local metal live industry, the performances by world-famous metal artists in China usually were of more importance than gigs by local artists. Thus, it is more fruitful to start the examination of the Chinese metal live industry via a study of the shows by overseas bands.

By collecting the official data from the two biggest metal live promoters in the 2000s "*Painkiller*" magazine and *Guitar China* website, there were at least 90 metal concerts by overseas bands held in this period. As the line graph shown below, the trend was first initiated in 2003. The following years saw a general steady growth by 2010 and a dramatic increase after the short fluctuation in 2011. This general trend is echoed by Zheng (2016: 99)'s statistics between 2004 and 2015. Notably, she further detailed a full data for every gig during the period (ibid: 164-170).

Fig. 6.5 Numbers of the Overseas Bands Performing in Each Year between 2001 and 2013
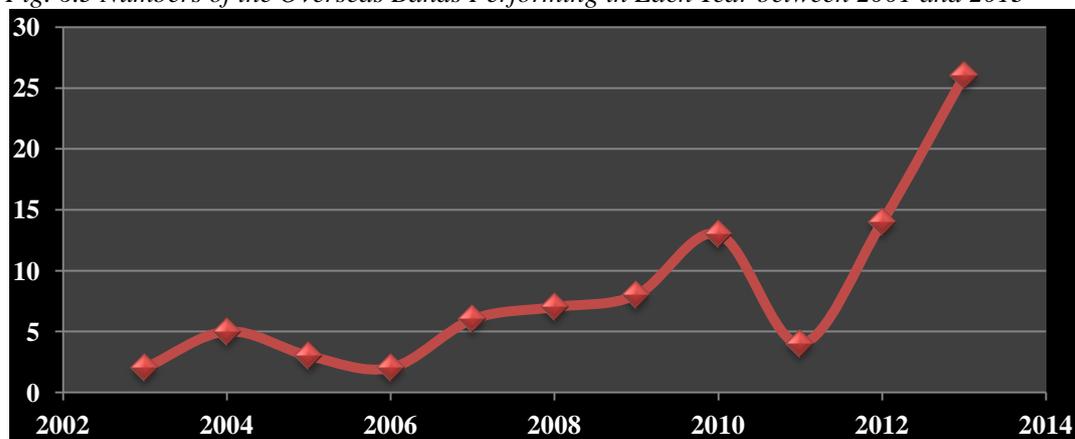
In the strict sense, the first concert in 2003 might not be considered metal since it was a guitar concert performed by the ex-guitarist of *Megadeth*, Marty Friedman. However, although since leaving *Megadeth* Friedman had turned himself into a more diverse musician rather than concentrating on thrash metal, he remained a metal idol to many Chinese fans. Thus, the concert, in fact, consisted of the new works of Friedman and *Megadeth* classics. This event was held by *Guitar China* whose initial

focus was more on guitar culture rather than metal. In the following two years, more guitar concerts were held involving the artists such as Joe Stump, Neil Zaza, Angelo, Steve Vai, Goncalo, Nuno, Paul Gilbert, and so forth, all of whom had more or less association with metal. Since 2006, *Guitar China* has changed its direction to metal bands. In contrast, the other promoter, "*Painkiller*", showed more direct interests in the metal at the beginning, initially promoting *Labyrinth*'s (Italian symphonic power metal) concert in 2004. In the following decade, these two promoters held almost all the important metal shows.

Taking a further consideration to the subgenres, most bands performing in China featured the relatively more popular subgenres of metal, such as symphonic power metal (*Labyrinth* in 2004, *Nightwish* in 2008, *Symphony X* in 2009, *Stratovarius* in 2009, *Rhapsody* in 2010, *Dark Moor* in 2013), progressive metal (*Edguy* in 2006, *Dream Theater* in 2008), gothic metal (*Lacrimosa* in 2009), and melodic death metal (*Dark Tranquility* in 2008, *Amon Amarth* in 2009, *In Flames* in 2010, *Amorphis* in 2013). Those more extreme subgenres such as black metal or brutal death metal were much less prominent and did not become popular until the later 2000s with the arrives by the big stars such as *Behemoth* in 2008, *Marduk* in 2010, *Cannibal Corpse* and *Dark Funeral* in 2010). This illustrates that the live industry is ultimately an economic activity so that the costs and profits are always the primary concerns. Thus, in the field of metal, the economic capital also tends to flow towards the subgenres with higher popularity. Logically, the majority of these concerts were held in Beijing and Shanghai as the cultural and economic centre of the country, respectively.

Dragon Shout[34], as the currently biggest metal live promoter of the mainland China, was established in 2010 as a subsidiary live section of *Guitar China* to deal with the live business exclusively. Besides the superficial information shown by the statistics, deeper facts can be revealed via a closer case study of Dragon Shout and its manager

---

[34] See: http://www.dragonshout.com/

Jiang Wei. First, the promotion of concerts by overseas metal bands is unprofitable and often loss-making. In his personal blog on Sina, Jiang (2008) exposed a list of the costs and benefits of *Dark Tranquility*'s concert in 2008 and argued that the profit was impossible at all (see the table below). Theoretically, the sales of 80 VIP (399 RMB) and 500 standard tickets (average 200 RMB) would balance the costs in the condition of ignoring the appearance fee of the band, but the reality was that only 50 tickets were sold because that a lot of musicians and fans tended to obtain free entrances for the show by their personal relationships. In another interview with the magazine "*So Rock*" in 2011[35], he stressed that Dragon Shout had hardly made money since being a live promoter and he had only prayed for the less loss.

Table 6.4 Expense List of the Concert of Dark Tranquility in 2008

Cost Items	Amount (RMB)
Travelling: six band members, two assistants, one sound technician, one band manager	60,000
Visa Fee: 2, 100 RMB per person	21,000
Accommodation: 10 standard rooms (400 RMB) for 3 nights	12,000
3days food (average 2, 000 each)	6,000
Venue Rent	20,000
Equipment Rent and Transport	3,000
Band Bus: 3 days	3,000
Tickets and Posters Printing	2,000
Approved Documents of the Concert	5,000
Appearance Fee	Confidential
Total	Nearly 130,000

Secondly, there is a lot of interference from governmental agencies at various levels. According to Jiang's experience, the concerts in the the stadium of 8,000 (or over) audiences must be approved by Ministry of Culture of the country by a complex process including checking the background of the band as well as the samples of their music, lyrics, and video. Instead, those of 1,000 audiences in the big live house only required the permission from Bureau of Culture with an easier process. Moreover, the

---

[35] For the whole interview, see: http://news.guitarchina.com/article/8295.html

concerts with less than 1,000 audiences in medium and small live house may often sidestep the censorship. This explains that why the black metal bands such as *Behemoth* and *Marduk* performed in relatively small venues even though they are of superstar class.

There was also interference with unclear reasons. For example, when *Cradle of Filth* were banned from performing in mainland China in 2013, the official statement of the band claimed that "Unfortunately at this time the Cultural Section of the Chinese Government have decided that *Cradle of Filth* are unsuitable to play in Mainland China and so we are currently banned from playing there. Therefore the show on 30th April in Shanghai MAO Live House has had to be moved to Hong Kong".[36] Because of this, Jiang could not do anything but accept and bear the loss. Ironically, the black metal band *Behemoth* who was banned by the US and many other European countries for the religious reasons had no problem in performing in China twice in 2008 and 2013, which may indicate that the censorship policy of the country was truly immature and inconsistent.

Facing such obstacles, why Jiang still continued the unprofitable business? One reason may be that he is an idealist who truly loves metal music. More importantly, his work again shows the importance of capital exchange. As Jiang (2011) explained in the interview with "*So Rock*", Dragon Shout serves as a part of *Guitar China*'s whole business. The former brought considerable cultural capital accumulation for the latter, especially inspiring the profits of the online instrument stores and commercial advertisings so that the overall business of *Guitar China* was still profitable. In this process, the transformation of economic and cultural capital was fulfilled. In other words, as Jiang (2009) explicitly clarified that "I have a budget of 30,000 to 50,000 RMB for loss in live promotion every year. However, for me, it is not a loss but in fact investment". Perhaps, this is the most effective strategy in the current metal live

---

[36] For more, see: http://www.metalstorm.net/events/news_comments.php?news_id=19292

market in China. In contrast, a failed example was "*Extreme Music*" magazine which promoted the *Napalm Death*'s show in 2007. Although it was indeed an exciting and influential event in the local metal scene, "*Extreme Music*" underwent a long period of the economic plight afterwards due to its lack of ability to transform the cultural capital it gained from the event into economic profit.

6.4.2 Historic Concert by Metallica

Metallica's 2013 concert in Shanghai was described by the SVP of the Asian area of AEG Adam Wilkes[37] as the milestone in the country's metal live music industry. This concert was promoted by AEG Live China[38] and was held at Mercedes-Benz Arena Shanghai on August 13th and 14th 2013. The tickets included four classes with the prices of 480, 980, 1,280, and 1,680 RMB. More significantly, further understandings are obtained by looking at this event from a few different angles.

From the mainstream media's point of view, the event was truly successful. First, the original plan was only one show on the13th, but the tickets were unexpectedly sold out within half an hour after being available. Thus, one more show on 14th was added after the negotiation between the organiser and band in order to meet more fans' demands[39]. Even so, there were tickets whose prices were pushed up to nearly 10,000 RMB, as image showed below. It was reported that over 20,000 tickets were sold for the two concerts[40]. Besides, there were a large number of local pop and rock celebrities in the audiences, such as Zheng Jun, Chen Yvfan, Song Ke, Hao Yun, Li Yanliang, *etc*., which illustrated the considerable popularity of (mainstream) metal in the Chinese popular music scene. Such response might optimistically suggest a

---

[37] "Metallica Come to Perform in China for the First Time", see:
http://music.yule.sohu.com/20130815/n384245513.shtml
[38] For more details and the setlist of the concert, see:
http://www.guitarchina.com/metallica/
http://www.setlist.fm/setlist/metallica/2013/mercedes-benz-arena-shanghai-china-3bc63050.html
[39] "Unexpectedly Good Box Office, Metallica Added One More Concert", see:
http://www.hitfmfans.com/news/tour/27567.html
[40] For more, see http://sh.eastday.com/m/20130807/u1a7575023.html

vibrant market for metal live in China and suggest that metal (at least some subgenres and superstars) has achieved a great mass popularity.

The Ticket of Original Price of 1,680 RMB Pushed to 9,000
Image obtained from http://bbs.guitarchina.com/thread-1571493-1-1.html

However, there could be other interpretations which were closer to the real situation. Because that Dragon Shout was one of the main ticket agencies, Jiang Wei had participated in the whole event as an insider with inside information. For example, the tickets sales were not as amazing as the media claimed. The fact was that the first concert was almost full, and the second was only 60 percent full (Jiang 2013). The main season was that the tickets scalper hoarded amount of tickets to seek exorbitant profits, which made the organiser overestimate the potential attendance and decide to add one more concert. This also explains that how the tickets were sold out just in half an hour.

According to Jiang (ibid)'s observation, the real figure of the ticket sales was around 14,000 of which there were about 2,000 audiences bought the tickets for both days. In other words, the true attendance of the concerts was more or less 12,000. This figure

could be used as a reference to the effective population[41] who directly contribute to the economic profits of the live industry in current Chinese metal scene. In this sense, the consumer group is still quite small.

Similarly, many popular stars watching *Metallica*'s show might not truly mean a mass popularity of metal. On the one side, *Metallica* had gradually transformed to a popular superstar in the mainstream since the remarkable "*Black Album*" in 1991, so that being a *Metallica* fan nowadays does not guarantee to be a real metalhead. On the other side, *Metallica* was one of the most prominent and influential artists to the Chinese youth when the varied western culture first swarmed into China in the late 1980s. Thus, for many of them, this event was more like a celebration of their youth memories without too much relevance to metal *per se*.

In addition, the concert being held in Shanghai but not Beijing, in fact, represents the outcome of a negotiation between the political censorship and cultural industry of the country. In an online discussion[42], a relatively coherent view argues that although Beijing shares a similar economic market as Shanghai, the censorship of Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and requirements of public security are much stricter than the latter. Thus, obtaining the approval of performing in Beijing is more difficult and may cause extra higher costs, especially for overseas artists[43]. Considering all these conditions, a compromise solution is that holding the show in Shanghai.

In summary, in the period of 2001 to 2013 overseas metal artists played a crucial role in the live industry of Chinese metal to inspire a great progress of the local metal live business, such as the rise of the live house.

---

[41] The effective population here does not simply equate to the headmetals or metal fans. Rather, it refers to those metal fans are, in practice, able to afford and willing to pay a certain amount of money for a metal show. Considering *Metallica*'s strong appeal in China, the attendance of their concert may generally reflect the capacity of effective population. It is also an important parameter that should be taken into account by local live promoters.

[42] For more, see: https://www.zhihu.com/question/31345440

[43] "*Metallica* Obtained the Approval from China's Ministry of Culture", see http://ent.sina.com.cn/y/2013-05-28/18033931123.shtml

6.4.3 Boom of Local Live House

The live house is still a relatively new phenomenon within the Chinese live music industry, which was gradually more popular following the emergence of the first modern live house, Star Club, in Beijing in 2006. Before that, the Chinese rock only witnessed a small number of performing venues affiliated to bars, or restaurants mainly gathered in Beijing. They functioned similarly to live house, such as Maksim Restaurant in the early 1990s, Club X in the mid-1990s, Scream Club and Get Lucky Bar in the late 1990s, and 13 Club and Yu Gong Yi Shan in the early 2000s. Even the currently famous live house VOX[44] used to be known as VOX Bar and was formally transformed into a live house in the late 2000s. Recently, live houses have been experiencing a boom, something which contributed to facilitating the development of local metal lives. For example, it was reported that there were 6,786 gigs held in 137 live houses throughout the country in 2014 with nearly 4,963 musicians and bands engaged, one-tenth of which (about 700) were metal (Beebee Pop 2015a).

Musician Guide[45] is the first online medium that exclusively focuses on the popular music industries information. It includes a section introducing the local live houses. The collected data shows that there were 86[46] live houses throughout the country involving 28 cities and provinces by 2014. In general, the live house was a nationwide trend of the live industry and presented a relatively even development in the country. The majority (about 60%) of them was of a medium scale with the audience capacity of 300 to 500, and very few were over 1,000 (see the figures of geographical and capacity distribution shown below). Recently, the live music industry was examined by an ecological approach to illustrate that how the different sectors in it affect

---

[44] For more on VOX, see https://site.douban.com/voxwuhan/ and https://www.facebook.com/voxlivehouse/

[45] The official website, see: http://musicianguide.cn/

[46] Notably, 86 is not the exact number but only those who information being included on the platform of *Musician Guide*, so the actual number could be higher such as figure of 137 shown in the previous report by *Beebee Pop*. One reason for the statistical difference may be caused by how to define a live house, in other words, many performing venues included in *Beebee Pop* were not regarded as live house in Musician Guide. However, the data from *Musician Guide* still provide a basic picture of the live house business of the country.

mutually (Behr *et al.* 2016: 19). For example, a loss of small venues might affect the viability of larger venues. This idea suggests that the different levels of Chinese metal live house such as the sizes and regions should be better considered as correlative factors and find out their coefficient result on the overall metal live industry.

Meanwhile, these live houses were applicable to different musical styles and genres, in which only about 20 of them were particularly suitable for metal performances, mainly including Nuts Club in Chongqing, On the Way in Hefei, VOX and Coastline Bar in Wuhan, On Stage in Shanghai, King of Live in Nanning, MAO, 13 Club, Yu Gong Yi Shan, and Star Club in Beijing, Aperture Club in Xi'an, 46 Livehouse in Changsha, B10 in Shenzhen, Black Iron in Nanchang, and SD in Guangzhou.

Fig. 6.6 Geographic Distribution of Live Houses in China
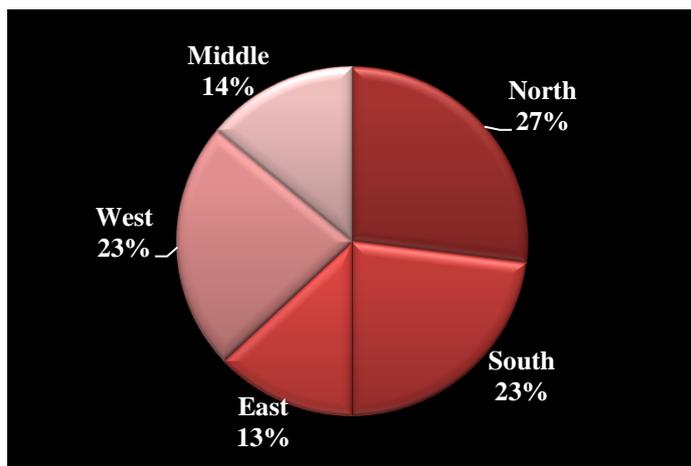
Fig. 6.7 Capacity Distribution of Live Houses in China
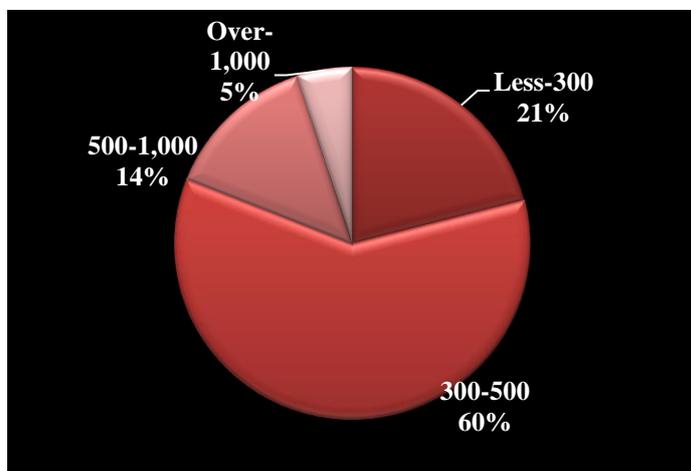
University/college students are not only a big personnel base of Chinese metal musician (see Chapter 5.1) but also constitute the major audiences of metal gigs, who often have a passion for metal music, enough free time, and certain consuming ability. As the manager of the 13 Club (Beijing) Liu Lixin (2015) stated in the interview, according to his over 10-years experience, the best location for a live house must be close to universities or colleges because that the main audiences were students, and they need be concerned with the travelling costs for a show. At the same time, this is also a key factor to metal live industry, since the "student" will always be available from one season/year to another.

Although the live house phenomenon in China is still in a start-up stage with a variety of problems rather than a mature business (Sohu 2011), it mainly has benefited the local metal live industry in four aspects. First, these professionally equipped venues provide metal musicians with better performing environment and quality, which helped to improve the overall live performance level of local metal. Secondly, the live houses have served as another effective promotional approach and helped to make a wider spread of metal. For example, in the early 2000s the gigs of one of the most famous local metal bands, *Suffocated*, were almost entirely held in Beijing, but by 2012 they were able to make a tour of eight cities[47] and in 2015 their tour entitled "*Dangerous*" covered 17 cities throughout the country[48]. Thirdly, live houses became a supplement to the stadium concerts and greatly enriched the local metal live market, due to the lower costs, easier operation, and flexibility. In other words, live houses were more malleable for those less mainstream and more underground artists with different identities, levels, or musical genres. Finally, live houses, particularly those of small and medium scales, often provided metal artists with the more liberal creative environment because of the weaker censorship from the authorities when compared to releasing albums or appearing in more official platforms. In doing so, more authentic, provocative, transgressive expressions or behaviours of metal could be maintained.

---

[47] For more, see http://www.douban.com/event/15735644/
[48] For more, see http://ent.qq.com/a/20150402/013462.htm#p=1

However, the boom of live houses and the seeming prosperity of live market did not substantially improve the income situation of musicians. For example, the average ticket price of a metal gig was 72.6 RMB with an average attendance of 200 (Beebee Pop 2015a) and the most common distribution model was that the artists took 70% of the box office income and the live house 30% (Sohu: 2011). If a gig consists of four bands including about 20 musicians, then the actual income for each of them is no more than 500 RMB.

6.4.4 Metal in Rock Festivals & Metal Festivals

Rock festivals play an important role in modern popular music industries: maintaining and expanding their audience base, legitimating particular forms of traditions, and giving its performers and fans a sense of shared communal identity (Shuker 1998: 122). The change of the China's cultural policy in 2000 (from cultural institutions to cultural industries) resulted in a middle ground where the officials, entrepreneurs, and musicians negotiated. Inspired by this, some large-scale rock festivals have been supported by the government bodies or individual investors. For example, according to Groenewegen-Lau (2014: 7)'s survey in 2011 there were 51 festivals around Labor Day, 17 of which were large-scale (involving audiences of 5,000 or more); 33 in the last week of August, 8 of which were large-scale; and 76 around National Day (October 1st), 40 of which were large-scale.

However, in many cases, rock festivals have become an additional means for local governments to establish a brand or "city name card" (ibid: 8). For example, the Jing Wave Festival in Mentougou city near Beijing left a loss of about 5 million RMB which was shared by the local government and Beijing Finance and Commerce Association. Neither the government nor investors truly cared about the loss because their main goal was to promote the tourism of the city (ibid: 18). Similarly, my band *Vanished River* (death metal) participated in a 7-days festival titled Luohe City

Festival in September 2011. The festival was completely free admission, but the performing bands still received good payments from the organiser. Later, we learned that the festival was no more than a commercial advertisement made by a local property company who had no idea about our music or metal at all, nor caring about our performing quality. The main reason why we were invited was the loudness that would, they thought, attract more people to come. In fact, the majority of the audiences came out of curiosity. In other words, music was not the primary concern of many of the festivals.

As side effects, the overflow of such festivals brought metal music to more public audiences and provided indie/underground musicians with better ways of making money. As *Rock Heaven*[49] revealed, in 2014 the appearance fees of a few famous local metal bands such as *Twisted Machine* and *Yaksa* have reached by about 120,000 RMB. In other words, performing in one festival guarantees each member an income of 20,000 to 30,000 RMB. However, when the models of festivals have descended to such a standardisation described by Adorno, the passive impacts on the metal music could be more serious in the long term, since these festivals have gone too far towards the "commercial investment", while "cultural creation" was ignored. The music critic Yan Jun strongly criticised that "a lot of festival organisers organise a festival that loses three million, but because they can get ten million from the local government they still make a profit. What the fuck does that have to do with music? This kind of festival can't possibly be any good, maybe they can exist for a long time, but eventually, they lack the real thing, the music" (Cited by Groenewegen- Lau 2014: 19).

Relatively, the two best-known local rock festivals Midi (since 2000, see Chapter 4.5.3) and Strawberry (since 2009) have had the most important effects in terms of promoting the culture and expanding the market for the Chinese metal live industry.

---

[49] See http://www.aiweibang.com/yuedu/22957261.html

For example, Strawberry began to set up an exclusive stage for metal music in 2010, and about 20 local metal bands have performed annually afterwards[50]. In addition to the metal music in festivals, 330 Festival (see Chapter 4.5.3) has been the only one Chinese metal festival so far. As an indoor event with as maximum as about ten bands and 1,000 audiences, the scale may be not big enough to be qualified as a festival in the strict sense. However, it well presented the functions of a festival as Shuker (1998: 122) defined, especially forming a communal identity in which the conventions of metal were confirmed and shared by fans and performers.

Notably, the 330 Festival in 2015 was accidentally interrupted by the local police and eventually stopped after a failed negotiation, which caused a loss of nearly 13,000 USD. As the organiser Kou Zhengyu explained in the interview[51], the reason for the cancellation was that the attendance (over 1,300) greatly exceeded the capacity (600) of the venue, which could cause safety problems. Kou (ibid) admitted that he did not expect for so many audiences and also had no idea about the capacity limitation of the venue. This case indicates that the metal audience in China had been increasing even beyond many promoters' expectation. More importantly, when the scale of metal live industry gradually transformed from the previously family workshop model (such as gigs in small bars) to a more standard festival model, the practitioners in this business had yet to be well prepared or experienced. In other words, a mature operational model of the metal festival has not been truly established thus far. Notably, a new collaboration will happen in the Midi Festival of 2016 in which 330 Metal Festival takes one of the main stages named the Warring States featuring 23 metal bands[52].

---

[50] The data were collected from the performer lists of Strawberry Festival in past years, see
2010 http://blog.163.com/special/00124C9J/caomei.html 2011 http://www.mosh.cn/topics/2011caomei/
2012 http://ent.163.com/special/2012cmyyj/ 2013 http://ent.163.com/special/2013strawberry/
[51] The interview was made by a social networking site named *Metallatem*, see
http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?__biz=MjM5MDI1MDc0MA==&mid=204130050&idx=1&sn=efd7abf09a
1be6f109f328982f556cd2#rd
In addition, a short documentary of the festival in 2015 also partly refers to the cancellation, see
http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?__biz=MzAxMjAwMzkzMg==&mid=405444351&idx=1&sn=6622f612b1
ce15e1cabcb7ea796b6567&scene=0#wechat_redirect
[52] For more about the festival and included metal bands, see
http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?__biz=MzAxMjAwMzkzMg==&mid=2652928052&idx=1&sn=703994e3b

6.5 Metal Media & Merchandise

6.5.1 From Magazine to SNS

Weinstein (2000: 145) defines two types of media as "mass" and "specialised". When facing a new cultural form which is not compatible with the hegemonic culture, the former tends to either exclude it or transform it according to its own codes, while the latter adopts itself to the codes of the new culture. Moreover, considering the metal media from an industrial perspective, it more serves as an articulation between other industrial sectors as well as a transformer between different kinds of capitals. Chinese metal media formally emerged in 2000 and was marked by the two magazines "*Extreme Music*" and "*Painkiller*" (see Chapter 4.5.1). In the 2000s, the local metal media was almost dominated by a few magazines (as the table shown below). The contents of them were usually introductory, mainly focusing on the history and development of the metal genre, as well as news of local metal scene. However, their influences in the country were quite limited considering the small circulations. According to my personal observation, all of these magazines were hardly available in general book retail stores but by mail-order purchase. Meanwhile, the general readers usually showed no interest in them.

Table 6.5 List of Chinese Local Metal Magazines

Title	Period	Issues	Remarks
Extreme Music	2000-2011	Vol.1- 30	Later as the e-magazine XmusicK
Painkiller	2000-	Vol.1- 54 (by 2015)	
Dragon Land	2003-2011	Vol.1- 4	Later as the e-magazine Demogorgon
Total Thrash	2011-	Vol. 1- 5 (by 2015)	
Metal Music E-Magazine http://www.guitarchina.com/metalmusic/	2008-2010	Vol.1- 6	More as a commercial derivative of Guitar China focusing on metal

Changes took place around 2010 with the traditional press gradually being replaced by online media. Metal magazines became less important, for example, *Extreme*

Metal, *Dragon Land*, and *Metal Music* discontinued. At the same time, a lot of e-magazine of metal on the various social networking sites emerged, such as *XmusicK* (from *Extreme Music*), Demogorgon (from *Dragon Land*), *EnjoyMetal*, *Musician Guide*, and *Heavyroad*, *Metallatem*. They updated more frequently and were more available for both metal and general readers. For example, the average circulation of *Extreme Music* was 1,000 per issue, while one article posted by *XmusicK* could have over 2,000 viewers. More importantly, besides the introductory information and news as the previous magazines used to offer, these individual media contained more insightful and debatable views about metal culture and professional opinions on metal business. In doing so, increasing number of metal fans and general readers were possibly engaged in a metal discourse, which might indicate the progress that from learning metal culture to interpreting metal culture in Chinese metal scene.

6.5.2 Online Radio

Unlike the crucial role of the radio in rock and metal's early development from the 1960s to 1980s in the West (see Weinstein 2000: 149-161), this medium had little to do with metal music's development in China. Although radio used to be an important carrier of popular music's dissemination in the mainland China in the 1980s, local metal music had not emerged yet at the time. After 1990, however, radio had been almost replaced by television (Ren 2012: 67). Unfortunately, television in China has always been a mainstream medium being officially controlled and censored by the government, within which metal music was completely marginalised. Until the mid-2000s, a few metal songs (relatively popular subgenres) began to appear in TV sports programs as background tracks. The most well-known example was "*Total Soccer*", one of the most watched sports programs on CCTV5, who used the song "*Day of Your Beliefs*" by Finnish folk metal band *Amorphis* as its ending music. However, these handful appearances of metal in TV programs were still potentially influential to the spread of metal due to the huge amount of audiences. For example,

one of my interviewees Zhang Yichi (2015) admitted that the first metal music she had heard was that from "*Total Soccer*" when she was immediately attracted and became really into metal later.

Perhaps, it was the internet and smartphone that brought radio back in the 2010s, but not as dominant as it used to in the 1980s because that its original functions such as news broadcasting and entertainment had been shared by many other carriers of communication. However, in terms of the more indie or underground genres, online radio had the potential to be a supplement for their absence in the mainstream media. This especially included many private radios based on the streaming media such as Douban FM, Xiami, Netease Cloud Music, and Ximalaya FM. Within this trend, Metal Sonata[53] was the first and only online metal radio by early 2016. It was established by a group of metal fans in Beijing 2013, and 58 episodes had been broadcast by January 2016. Each episode focuses on a specific topic such as a subgenre, a famous label, or an exclusive interview with the local band, accompanied by a relevant music playlist. According to the data of Netease, the average number of the listeners of each episode was about 1,500. In fact, as the program was also available on other streaming media platforms such as Lizhi FM and Ximalaya FM[54], the actual number of audiences could be much bigger.

In December 2014, I was invited to Beijing to record the 28th episode talking about academic studies of metal[55]. I learned that the studio was operated by five members, including one manager, one technician, one journalist, and two editors (also as announcers). What surprised me was that the radio was unprofitable and privately sponsored by the manager's friend, which meant that the interest and enthusiasm for metal were the major impetuses to operate the radio. As the manager told me, the

---

[53] The official website of Metal Sonata, see http://blog.sina.com.cn/u/3254192425
The program list on Netease, see http://music.163.com/#/djradio?id=161
[54] Metal Sonata on Lizhi FM, see http://www.lizhi.fm/36199/p/2.html
and on Ximalaya FM, see http://www.ximalaya.com/zhubo/1999378
[55] For the program, see http://music.163.com/#/dj?id=657026&userid=3715867

radio station would continue as long as the sponsor was available, and the desirable result might be being acquired by a big media company. He also argued that the scale of Chinese metal market was still so small that it was difficult for them to realise the exchange between the cultural capital and economic profit.

6.5.3 Merchandise

Theoretically, merchandise such as T-shirt selling is a significantly supplementary means of money making in the contemporary popular music industries (Colletti 2013), particularly regarding metal whose fans show a considerable loyalty (Buskirk 2015). As the promotion director of Relapse Records, Bob Lugowe (cited by Abbruzzese 2015) stressed that "heavy metal fans have a propensity to spend big on their favourite artists. Metal has benefitted from the revival in vinyl sales and the popularity of bundles that combine T-shirts, albums and other paraphernalia that can be sold at a premium".

By browsing a few well-known European online stores such Relapse Records' merch sector, EMP, Heavy Metal Online, Extreme Metal Merchandise/Rockmania Online Shop, Back Street Merch's metal sector[56], the metal merchandise includes a variety of commodities such as clothing, bags, caps, patches/stickers/badges, greeting cards, posters, and accessories in addition to CDs, vinyl, and cassettes[57]. The average prices are reasonable to the European consuming level. For example, the band T-shirt costs around £15, long sleeve £25, and hoodies £40. Unfortunately, there has been no academic research or specific statistics on this subject so far, so it is still difficult to evaluate the actual role and precise proportion of metal merchandise in the holistic

---

[56] Relapse, see https://relapserecords.bandcamp.com/merch
EMP, see http://www.emp-online.co.uk/
Heavy Metal Online, see http://www.heavymetalonline.co.uk/
Extreme Metal Merchandise, see http://www.extrememetalmerchandise.com/
Back Street Merch, see https://www.backstreetmerch.com/genre/metal
[57] It is more reasonable to classify CDs, vinyl, and cassettes into recording category, and the merchandise should refer to other non-music commodities, so that the recording and merchandise can be examined as different industrial sectors without too much overlaps.

metal industries. However, evidence from some artists' personal experiences may suggest that it did not successfully increase artists' income as expected[58].

One more certain fact is that the metal merchandise in China has been a less developed business than it is in the West. As one of the local metal merchandise shops with the best reputation and longest history (over ten years), 666 Rock Shop's revenue is still relying on selling records, while other merchandises only occupy a small proportion (Wang Xiao 2015). This case is illustrative of the current situation. First, most of the commodities of 666 Rock Shop are "officially imported" from the Europe or the US, so that the price is relatively higher than the consuming capacity of many domestic cities, except for a few metropolises such as Beijing and Shanghai. Meanwhile, many wealthy fans may prefer to directly make a purchase from the overseas stores online because of the greater choices. Secondly, although there are a huge number of local metal bands, the local metal scene still lacks the superstars with great commercial value and appeal. Even the label like Pilot Records (with the famous bands such as *Suffocated* and *Twisted Machine*, as well as the brand of 330 Festival), its official merchandise shop[59] is not prosperous (see the image below). Finally, it is true that metal culture is still celebrated by the minority in China. It seems that such scale of consumers has yet to be strong enough to sustain a complete industrial chain of metal music.

---

[58] See the examples of the balance sheets of tour by metal bands in 2010 and 2016, http://www.metalinjection.net/its-just-business/bands-money-touring and http://www.metalinjection.net/its-just-business/detailed-breakdown-of-how-much-a-band-earns-spends-playing-to-500-people-a-night

[59] For more specific sales status, see https://roofo.world.taobao.com/search.htm?spm=a312a.7700824.w4002-8972115670.30.tMhCGe&_ksTS=1453461061493_404&callback=jsonp405&mid=w-8972115670-0&wid=8972115670&path=%2Fsearch.htm&orderType=hotsell_desc

Selling Status of Pilot Records' Online Store of Taobao
Image Obtained from https://roofo.world.taobao.com/

6.6 Peripheral Activities

When understanding Chinese metal "industries" in a more cultural context instead of money making, a few peripheral activities are included, such as the Metal Cathedra and Heavy Metal Convention. Both of them are not only a sort of promotion method but more importantly express the attitude of "taking metal culture seriously".

The Metal Cathedra was an event launched in Beijing 2013 (see the photos below) by the university-based metal organisation Metallatem in addition to its other two events the gig *Forged Alliance* and compilation "*Metal Movement*" (see Chapter 5.1.2). The topics in the cathedra were mainly referred to metal history in a wide range of aspects such as the genres/subgenres, artists, and playing techniques. The lecturers involved many insiders with different identities in the Chinese metal scene, such as Sui Xiaowei (ex-editor of *Extreme Metal*, editor of Metal Sonata), Plutoth (manager of Kurong Records), Wang Xiao (manager of Area Death Productions and 666 Rock Shop), Li Nan (guitarist of *Evilthorn Deathpact*, and *Heavyduty*), Kou Zhengyu (guitarist of *Suffocated* and *Spring Autumn*), and Zhang Kai (manager of Phoenix Percussion Teaching).

In the interview, the lecturer Sui (2013) praised the non-commercial nature of this event because that "its organisers and participants were all students so that it had less to do with commercialism but more about sharing and promoting the music and culture their liked. Perhaps, it was for the first time that metal was taught and discussed in a Chinese classroom, which made the event especially novel and appealing". Furthermore, Sui (ibid) also stressed on the positive effects of the event, that "as far as I am concerned the audiences consisted of both metal fans and those who had never heard of metal before, but all of them could make interactions from different angles in that atmosphere. It was a very good popularisation and promotion for metal culture in China. In fact, the number of audiences has been increasing, that

is encouraging".

The Founders, Organisers, and classroom of the 1st Metal Cathedra in 2013
Image obtained from http://www.douban.com/note/307834991/

The Heavy Metal Convention was initiated by Wang Xiao in 2011, co-organised by Area Death Productions, *XmusicK* Magazine, *Total Thrash* Magazine, *Dragonland*

Magazine, and 666 Rock Shop. According to Wang (2015)'s explanation, the activity was inspired by the Japanese Heavy Metal Salon in the 1980s, whose aim was to provide a chance for metal fans to make a face-to-face communication instead of online chat. In the event, the participants were encouraged to introduce and play their favourite tracks followed by a group discussion around the music. In the fourth convention in 2013, a session of demonstrating the latest Albums/EPs of local bands was added. Different from the Metal Cathedra, this event was designed as a small community for relatively more senior fans with the average attendance around 50.

The Poster of the First Metal Convention in 2011
Image obtained from http://www.douban.com/event/15254645/

Notably, these peripheral activities were completely unprofitable but played a unique role in the metal industries. In addition to being as a promotional method, they more

significantly contributed to forming communities based on different identities of the fans with the same theme of metal. In doing so, the Chinese metal scene was expanded and consolidated like a chain reaction. Taking the ideas of capital and field into account, they could also potentially facilitate the communications of capitals in different fields.

Summary of Chapter

In the theoretical framework of Adorno's "cultural product" and Bourdieu's "cultural capital" and "field", this chapter has demonstrated that a relatively complete industrial system of Chinese metal was formed during the 2000s. This system presented a multiple-layers structure, including the labels, live music, magazines, online radios, merchandise, cathedra, and convention, in which the cultural capital and economic profit were exchanged between different sectors. Although a series of statistics suggested a sort of seeming prosperity of Chinese metal industries, the scale of consumers and consuming capacity of the scene were still not big enough to sustain a mature market as the metal industries in the West. In addition, a few problems were pointed out, especially the regional imbalances and the fact that very few local metal musicians were able to make a living by merely being a metal musician. In summary, Chinese metal industries are still experiencing a situation of "best game no one played", which means that the current industries were built more culturally than economically so that more effective ways of obtaining a balance between cultural and economic capitals need be explored.

In contemporary cultural industries, no artistic form can escape from the duality of the commerciality and artistry. Commercially, for instance, the difference between Chinese metal and the so-called mainstream music may occupy the different proportions of cultural and economic capitals. In contrast, the artistry must be understood with broader social factors, such as the aesthetics, politics, functions, values, *etc*. in the next chapter.

Chapter 7 Multiple Social Interpretations of Chinese Metal

Music is never simply a set of sounds or texts but referred to a series of social practices. Peter Manuel (cited by Brace & Friedlander 1992: 125) defines popular music as "an active participant in the mediation and expression of broader conflicts". This may explain that why both rock and metal studies were initiated in the sociological considerations in the academia (Frith 1978; Weinstein 1991). For a long period, the socio-cultural perspective has formed the main body of metal studies (see Chapter 2.1.4). Based on the previous discussions of history, identity, and industry, the social interpretation constitutes the final but also the significant dimension of the examination of Chinese metal.

This chapter first focuses on the subversions of Chinese metal against the traditional aesthetics and understands it as a symbolic transgression. Then, Chinese metal's social function as a catharsis and its current relation with the politics are examined by three case studies of *Zuriaake*, *Ordinance*, and Ai Weiwei. After that, the issues of Chinese metal's authenticity are discussed from a critical perspective, including the dialectical relation between commercialism and anti-commercialism of metal. Finally, this chapter moves more deeply into the country's social pathologies, arguing that in the atmosphere of the general hypocrisy, Chinese metal praxis presents an explicit stance of anti-hypocrisy by way of "pseudo-evil".

7.1 Symbolic Transgression of Chinese Extreme Metal

In the Oxford Dictionary, transgression is defined as "an act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct; an offence". In metal studies, Kahn-Harris (2007: 29) defines transgression as a term that "implies a sense of testing and crossing boundaries and limits", which is also seen as the fundamental nature of extreme metal distinguished from other genres/subgenres in the aspects of sonic, discursive, and bodily (ibid: 30-49). This transgressive experience enables the fans to go beyond their mundane lives. Given that extreme metal constituted the main body of more recent Chinese metal praxis in the 2000s, by focusing on its subversive factors relevant to the traditional aesthetic conventions[1], vocalisations, and logos, this section understands extreme metal as a formal or symbolic transgression in the context of Chinese society instead of acting against any actual and practical rule. In the same process, the particular conventions of extreme metal are formed.

7.1.1 Subversion against Traditional and Popular Aesthetic Ideas

As the most dominant school of thoughts, Confucianism has been heavily influencing on Chinese philosophy and aesthetics, particularly the traditional ideas of music (Cai, 1981; 1986; Jiang, 1984; Chen, 2003). One of the essential principles of Confucian aesthetics is the musical moderation (Xiu, 1986: 88-90) which requires that the formal parameters such as the pitch, intensity, duration, and timbre of a piece of music to be properly limited[2]. For instance, the register should be cautiously chosen to ensure the pitch of the melody not too high or too low, the tempo is neither too fast nor slow, and the music is not too emotional to be out of the rational control (Cai, 1986: 12-14).

---

[1] "Aesthetic convention" is a term employed by Becker referring to the identification of regularities, patterns, and innovations which make up the unique characteristics of each style of music. Meanwhile, it refers to "creative", for example, new genres/subgenres may emerge over time if other artists begin using the new aesthetic elements and if there is some support for the new styles (cited by Friesen & Epstein 1994: 3).

[2] These conventions are very well demonstrated by Qin music as an important traditional Chinese instrumental music form, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6HNj6f8xTw

Since the early 20th century, especially after the Reform and Opening-up Policy, new western culture had begun increasingly impacted on and changed many aspects of Chinese society. On the one hand, many traditional elements such as the particular tune, instrument, and aesthetic interest have been applying in the new music genres (Shen 2008; Shen 2012), such as the current China Wind phenomenon (Chow & de Kloet 2013: 59-77). On the other hand, these new genres altered the traditional views of the music of China. More specifically, pop music widened and broke the hegemonic artistic principles by creatively mixing classical, modern, local, foreign and other elements. Meanwhile, it also changed the people's aesthetic ideas and appreciating habits. For example, a person with a hoarse voice could still make a famous singer, such as Yang Kun[3]. In addition, pop music greatly influenced on people's behaviour and way of life. In this interaction, new popular aesthetic conventions of modern China have been formed, and the process is still going on (Lei 2014).

Quite different from the musical moderation, the key formal characteristics of metal are usually summarised as common sense as:

· Electric guitar and amplifier with high loudness and heavy distortion.

· The emphatic and complex rhythm.

· A wide range of tempos from 60 (quarter note = 60 beats per minute) to 350.

· Power chord with additional low-frequency sounds.

· Complicated chord structures with the wide use of dissonant harmony.

· Over-emotional appreciation with headbanging and arms thrust.

Extreme metal shares the most characteristics listed above and even develops them to a higher level. Neither similar to the traditional nor current popular aesthetic conventions does extreme metal show its fundamental subversions, namely pursuing

---

[3] A contemporary male singer of mainland China, who is well-known by his unique hoarse voice, for more see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yang_Kun

musical extremity and heaviness rather than moderation. In this sense, no matter what themes or subjects are referred, Chinese extreme metal will be symbolically rebellious and radical. This issue can be more specifically discussed in the cases of vocalisations and logos.

7.1.2 The Vocalisations: From Semantic to Semiotic

In metal music, the tone of voice is often more important than the actual articulation of particular lyrics (Frith, cited by Weinstein 2000: 26). Kahn-Harris (2007: 32) also observes that "extreme metal takes vocal distortion further than heavy metal by abandoning practically all elements of melody in the voice. Instead, the vocal is screamed or growled in ways that make lyrics impossible to decipher without the aid of a lyrics sheet". With extreme metal became the main part of Chinese metal practice in the 2000s in China, the question is that whether the lyrics of the music are really important to the Chinese fans in light of that, the vocalisation styles make the lyrics hardly be followed. The further question is that what the implications are in such case of a semantic absence.

In the everyday talk of extreme metal, many informal adjectives have been used to describe its vocals, such as yelling, growling, screaming, snarling, shrieking, screeches, guttural, brees, gargling sounds, harsh vocals, big squeal, and so forth. In fact, the vocal styles of extreme metal can be roughly classified into three types as yelling, growling and screeching[4]. Specifically, yelling is produced by projecting one's voice out of the top of the throat, which may be the most widely applied technique in extreme metal. In practice, yelling could often sound different due to the different natural voices of the vocalists. The representative bands featuring this style

---

[4] I use "growling" and "screeching" instead of "death growling" or "black metal screeching", because that both these two types are not used exclusively in death metal or black metal. For example, Fenriz from *Dark Throne* (as one of the most influential black metal bands) usually employs yelling or growling more than screeching. Moreover, some vocalists also used both at the same time to make more dramatic effects, such as Denial Filth from *Cradle of Filth*.

include *Death*, *Dismember*, *Slayer*, *Entombed*, and many contemporary metalcore bands such as *Lamb of God*. In contrast, growling is an incredibly deep, guttural, animalistic, nearly the lowest vocal register producible by humans, which is usually preferred by death metal vocalist such as George Fisher of *Cannibal Corpse*.[5] The voices produced in this way are thoroughly distorted with no melodic sense. Thus, many scholars would not see growling as a sort of "sing" (Weinstein 2000: 51; Christe 2003: 239). The third is screeching, another completely distorted and non-melodic voice but in a high-pitch register compared to growling, which is more widely used by black metal bands such as *Burzum*, *Immortal*, *Satyricon*, *Emperor*, and *Dissection*. In addition, the syllables in screeching are usually extended to a relatively long duration, which makes this voice less rhythmic but more effective to create a gruesome ambient.

In my master research (Wang 2013), I undertook an examination of the relationship between the extreme metal vocal styles and the lyrics among Chinese metal fans, by an online survey including nine questions[6]. At the end of the survey, 281 replies were collected from different areas of the mainland China. The results showed a common contradiction that many extreme metal fans self-claimed that the lyrics were very important, yet they hardly understood them. In fact, the vocalisations were regarded as the primary obstacle that made the lyrics difficult to follow, but at the same time,

---

[5] It has never been an official taught course like operatic style in conservatories, but there is still some online guidance. For example, "How to perform a death metal growl", see:
http://www.wikihow.com/Perform-a-Death-Metal-Growl and
"How to do harsh death metal vocals", see:
http://www.wikihow.com/Do-Harsh-Death-Metal-Vocals

[6] This survey was a part of my master research and dissertation of Popular Music Studies in University of Glasgow. The questionnaire contains the questions 1. How long you have been a fan of extreme metal? 2. Among all the extreme metal songs you have heard, in how many of them do you understand the lyrics? 3. Why can't you understand the lyrics in extreme metal music? 4. How often do you try to understand them by other methods, for example, by using a dictionary or consulting lyric sheets or online resources? 5. If the vocal styles indeed hinder the understanding of lyrics, you believe that the vocalist should try to improve or change their vocal style in order to make lyrics clear or the vocals could be seen as one of the aesthetic conventions of extreme metal? 6. How do you define the degree of the importance of lyrics in your appreciation of extreme metal? 7. In your opinion, where are the meanings of extreme metal primarily derived from? 8. Which vocal style of extreme metal do you like best? 9. Do you have any thought or comment on the relationship between vocal styles and lyrics of extreme metal?

those vocal styles were seen as one of the most crucial characteristics of the subgenre. Therefore, this indicated that the audiences concerned with "how to express by vocals" more than "what is expressed in lyrics". These observations bring about a further discussion in two aspects.

First, the vocalisations of extreme metal can be understood as subversion against the traditional notion of "sing". Grove Music Online defines "singing" as "a fundamental mode of musical expression. It is especially suited to the expression of specific ideas since it is almost always linked to a text; even without words, the voice is capable of personal and identifiable utterances. It is arguably the most subtle and flexible of musical instruments, and therein lies much of the fascination of the art of singing"[7]. In popular music, singers tend to be loosely categorised according to the musical styles, such as jazz, pop, blues, soul, country, folk, rock, and so forth. Most of these singings share a few common characteristics, including the clear lyrics, melody line, and the timbre of human voice, which are opposite against extreme metal's non-lyric, non-melodic, or distorted timbre. Thus, the essential parameters in the singing of popular music such as the duration of the notes, the pitch interval deviation, and tonal centre deviation (Larrouy-Maestri & Morsomme, 2012) become less significant in extreme metal. For example, there is no strictly fixed score for the vocals, which means the vocalists usually have the freedom to determine the duration of a syllable (if not a note). Moreover, there is neither clear pitch nor tonal centre in the vocals. Thus they have nothing to do with tonal deviations. In this sense, extreme metal should be seen as a sort of subversion[8] of the traditional vocals of popular music.

---

[7] For the whole explanation, see http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25869?q=singing&search=quick&source=omo_gmo&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit

[8] The "subversion" also indicates an invention of new vocal techniques, the ways of appreciation, and particularly, the corresponding aesthetic criteria. These techniques are often shared and exchanged in informal ways among fans and artists. For example, there are many personal guides online, where some well-known vocalists demonstrate their techniques and experiences to the fans via texts or videos. However, these techniques have not attracted much academic attention yet.

Secondly, the vocals of extreme metal change the way of interpreting the meanings of a song (with lyrics, not absolute music), namely from "word" to "sound", in other words, from the semantics to semiotics. Frith (2007: 209) acknowledges that for a long time, the sociology of popular music has been dominated by the analyses of the song words. However, musical meaning could be independent from the words as a different kind that "song words work as speech acts, bearing meaning not just semantically, but also as structures of sound that are direct signs of emotion and marks of character. Singers use non-verbal as well as verbal devices to make their points, emphases, sighs, hesitations, changes of tone" (ibid: 229)[9]. Thus, from a semiotic perspective, language (or linguistics) could also be regarded as a certain set of signs used in a certain meaning system (Heaney 2002: 113), which means music is not different from any language in being able to convey meanings. The significances of different genres are usually conveyed in different ways. For example, the rebellious message of folk may be more explicitly expressed by the lyrics, while in extreme metal musical factors often get more involved in the rebellion with symbolic references such as the tritone[10].

In summary, the vocal styles of extreme metal cause the absence of the lyrical meanings, at the same time, highlight the referential meanings of the music, and eventually result in a symbolic transgression[11].

---

[9] Roland Barthes (1977: 179-189) also has a very insightful understanding about the relationship between word and music, arguing that the "grain" of the voice in the vocal music emerges when the voice is in a dual posture, a dual production of language and music. For the full article, see http://www.gregsandow.com/BookBlog/grain_of_the_voice.pdf

[10] "Tritone", in the acoustic sense, is no more than a certain interval as B-F with a particular sounding. This interval is widely used in classic and popular music, as the core interval of the dominant seventh chord (as G-B-D-F). However, it also has a more significantly symbolic meaning as the "devil's sound" in the Catholic culture.

[11] Notably, this conclusion was logically obtained by the survey in Chinese fans, which means that it is still unclear whether it can be applied to the extreme metal phenomenon in other countries or globally.

7.1.3 The Logo Design: From Text to Image

The symbolic transgression of Chinese metal is also reflected in logo designs. Given that a trademark is always crucial to a company, commodity, or even an artist, they are usually designed according to two basic principles. First, it should be distinctive to ensure that one stands out from the crowd. Second, it should be easily recognisable by the public. As the trademark of metal bands, the logo designs may also usually contain extra significance, aesthetic pursuit, and value. This section compares a few Chinese metal band logos in heavy rock era (1990-1996), Nu-metal era (1997-2000), and extreme metal era (2000-2013) (according to the historical divisions in Chapter 4) to illustrate a process from text to image with a symbolic transgression.

The Logos of Heavy Rock Era[12]

Perhaps, the importance of logo had not been fully realised and utilised by the early metal artists in the heavy rock era. As the logos of four best well-known bands of the time shown below, all of them were presented in an artistic font without sophisticated design. The primary similarity of these logos was that the designers only slightly altered the forms of the original Chinese characters (shown in the parentheses) to create a plain artistic and aesthetic effect, while at the same time the meanings of the characters were clearly identified. Thus, they can be defined as textual logos.

Tang Dynasty (唐朝)

Black Panther (黑豹)

Overload (超载)   *Again* (轮回)

---

[12] Images are obtained from
Tang Dynasty http://ent.sina.com.cn/y/2008-04-29/14002008466.shtml
Black Panther http://post.iask.ca/canadameet/topic/632905
Overload http://peiwqu.com/index.php?app=news&mod=Index&act=detail&id=2370
Again http://blog.udn.com/amlink/6366833

The Logos of Nu-metal Era[13]

Differently, the bands of the Nu-metal era began to combine designed images into the original characters in their logos, as shown below. In doing this, the meanings of the bands' names were completely presented by the texts (in Chinese, English, or both). The images did not only serve as a brief interpretation of the texts but also express additional connotations and certain aesthetic attitudes of the artists. Thus, they can be categorised as image-text logos.

Yaska (夜叉)

Miserable Faith (痛苦的信仰)

Twisted Machine (扭曲机器)

---

[13]   Images are obtained from
Yaska http://tieba.baidu.com/p/2135298295
Miserable Faith http://ent.sina.com.cn/y/2006-02-22/0252993100.html
Twisted Machine http://www.weibo.com/u/2473272147

The Logos in Extreme Metal Era[14]

A further transition from the "text" to "image" was finished by extreme metal bands' logo designs. In the five logo samples below, there was no clear boundary between the text and image anymore. In other words, the characters (in Chinese) or letters (in English) were designed and twisted into an image. In such process, the text became ambiguous and difficult to recognise even unreadable at all. At the same time, many relevant ideological elements were creatively added into the image, such as the thorn shape, inverted cross, or pentagram, which constituted an integral part of extreme metal's aesthetic convention.

Ritual Day (施教日)

Narakam (冥界)

---

[14] The images are obtained from
Ritual Day http://www.metal-archives.com/bands/%E6%96%BD%E6%95%99%E6%97%A5/9876
Narakam http://www.guitarchina.com/article/2008/0108/article_2899.html
Hyonblud http://www.kaixin001.com/repaste/13791715_2239849174.html?stat=orrecn_out
Purgatory http://www.metal-archives.com/bands/%E7%82%BC%E7%8B%B1/11924
Grave Keeper http://i.xiami.com/tombguardian?spm=a1z1s.6639397.471965889.1.lYfEap

Hyonblud (血腥高潮)

Purgatory (炼狱)

Grave Keeper (守墓兽)

In the interview, the guitarist of *Grave Keeper*, Zhang Heng (2014) recalled that when the band designed their logo, the primary consideration was that it must look beautiful and truly "black metal"[15], while whether the logo could be read was not important. Somehow, an unreadable logo could be even more fascinating. There has been more evidence indicating that the logos play a significant role in the extreme metal practice, such as the weekly quiz named "*Completely Unreadable Band Logo of the Week*" on the online metal medium *Metal Sucks* since 2007. However, this subject is only preliminarily discussed in this chapter. A series of key questions have not been answered thus far, such as "how the logos contributed to form and evolve the aesthetic convention of metal", "what are the factors influencing on the changes of logo designs", "how to understand the functions of a logo to a metal band", *etc*.

Therefore, the logos discussed in the three eras can be defined as text, image-text, and image, respectively. Accordingly, the development of logo design from heavy rock, Nu-metal, to extreme metal era saw a process in which the literal meanings of the text were gradually enriched and even replaced by the aesthetic meanings of the image. Akin to the case that the vocalisations of extreme metal make the word into sound, the logos make the text to image. Both of them bring about a change of moving from content to form, in which the symbolic transgression is generated.

The symbolic transgression first means that the Chinese extreme metal artists do not have actual transgressive behaviours, which was supported by all my interviewees of this research. Meanwhile, it also means that once one embraces extreme metal, he chooses a particular form with its corresponding aesthetics and an inevitable transgression beyond the mundane identities. Perhaps, it is one of the reasons that, in the current Chinese society, extreme metal tends to be more preferred by the youth who try to establish their identities by opposing against a hegemonic one, the people who have difficulties to obtain their identities in everyday life, or the artists who

---

[15] It is necessary to clarify that different people may hold different ideas about what truly black metal is, so here only mentions Zhang's personal understandings of black metal.

attempt to intentionally create a new identity of Chineseness.

7.2 Functions of Escapism & Catharsis

Wang (2009: 248-249) summarised the central functions of Chinese popular music as cognitive, educational, and aesthetic. Fu (2008: 89-91) further defined the functions of Chinese rock as aesthetic, cohesive, ritual, and commercial. Instead, this section particularly looks at Chinese metal and the functions derived from its transgression. According to Victor Turner (1974, cited by Kahn-Harris 2007: 29), the key function of transgression serves as a "practice allows people to escape power and authority, if only for a time". In this sense, the symbolic transgression of metal creates a temporary escapism which works as a catharsis that helps people release their living pressures and negative emotions in the virtual world, after which they will return to the real world and face the real lives again. This section supports such ideas by first examining the subject matters of the eight episodes of ROG (see Chapter 4.5.4 and Chapter 5.3.2) to argue that Chinese metal works are more focused on fantastic themes than reality. Then, a case study of *Zuriaake*'s live video is analysed to illustrate how a virtual ritual is made and how the catharsis is produced both by the artists and fans in the metal live.

7.2.1 Escapism in Subject Matters

The subject matters or themes of music are often used to explore particular ideologies, attitudes, preferences, or tastes of the artists. At the same time, they can be classified into categories from different angles with different criteria. For instance, Weinstein (2000: 35-43) employs the terms "Dionysian" and "Chaotic" to distinguish the themes of heavy metal referring to a physical indulgence and a complex affirmation of power, respectively. Instead, by analysing the themes that frequently used and absent in death metal, Harrell (1994: 91) describes the genre as an expression of industrialism's emotional isolation and violence. Methodologically, the themes of the music can be literally observed in the titles and lyrics.

By analysing the themes of all the 92 works of ROGs (eight episodes), two statistics are shown below. In terms of the general relevance, the majority of the themes refer to fantasy, while nearly one-fourth refers to real life. In contrast, religion is much less popular and the politics is hardly mentioned. More specifically, these works can be mainly categorised into ten themes, according to the proportion, as self-reflection, evil, hero, hope, destruction, doom, romantic, war, carnality, and criticism. Similarly, except for self-reflection and criticism, all the rest can be seen as fantastic.

Fig. 7.1 General Relevance of the Themes
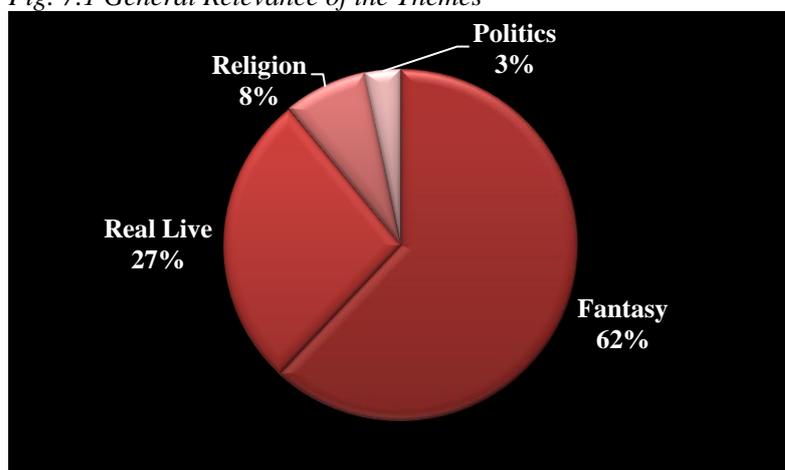
Fig. 7.2 Specific Category of the Themes
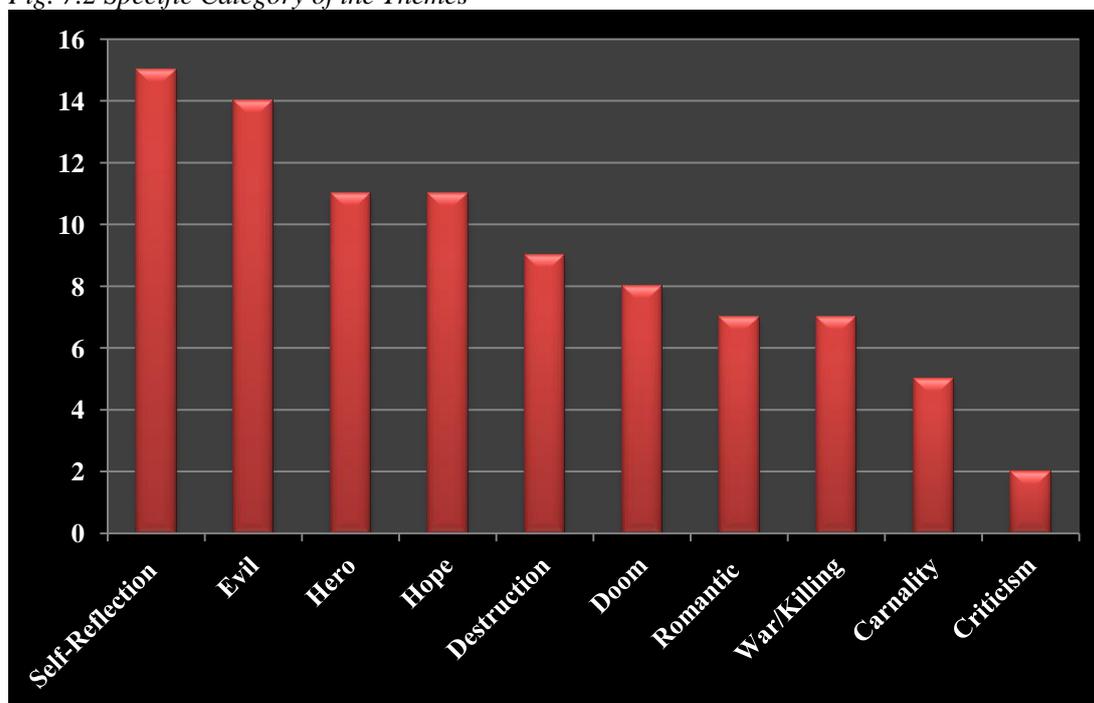
The results indicate an overt tendency by Chinese metal artists of escaping away from

their mundane lives for various reasons. For example, when being asked about the relationship between his lyrical themes and daily live in an interview, the vocalist of *Regicide* (as a brutal death metal band whose single "*Prison of Sin*" was included in the 2nd episode of ROG) Zhuang Yu replies that "Our music is always about killing and blood, which are absolutely unacceptable in the real life. Our purpose is not to advocate such staff. Instead, we are building another world outside the real one, in which fans may get something that unavailable in the latter, and our music we hope that is an abreaction" (Painkiller, Vol. 7: 29). Similarly, via a case study on the track "*Fucked with a knife*" by the US death metal band *Cannibal Corpse*, Kahn-Harris (2003: 89-90) also has pointed out that in metal scene "for most scene members, there is a dramatic gulf between the transgressive texts that they produce and consume and their everyday practice".

The results also suggest that the fantastic themes are not only based on the dark side of the world such as evil, destruction, doom, war, killing, and carnality, but also positive such as hero, hope, and romantic. In addition, Chinese metal is not political compared to other genres such as punk and folk. At the same time, religion can be seen as a relatively irrelevant factor in Chinese metal.

7.2.2 Quasi-Ritual Catharsis in Metal Live

Catharsis is a metaphor originally proposed by Aristotle in the "*Poetics*", comparing the effects of tragedy on the mind of audiences to the effect of a catharsis on the body. Later, this term was debated by many scholars with many shades of meaning, mainly referring to the religious with the meaning "lustration", the pathological or medical sense of "purgation", and the moral with the idea of "purification". Many existing metal scholars have applied the term to defend the positive effects of metal on its audiences (Gardstrom 1999; Purcell 2003; Blessing & Donhauser 2007; Hill 2011). However, it is important to realise that different social conditions may cause different

pressures and therefore different catharsis in different occasions. Thus, rather than simply claiming that Chinese metal can also serve as a catharsis, this section explores the common pressures of the contemporary Chinese individuals and how these pressures are released in metal live.

Notably, the metal fans' behaviours such "moshing" and "stage diving" in live are understood by a few academics as a realisation of the appreciation of the subculture (Weinstein 2000: 228-230). Similarly, in terms of extreme metal, the body plays a central role in exhibiting subcultural identity and in the engagement of symbolically resistant practices, in which mosh pit becomes a body symbol that challenges the conventional understandings of pain, pleasure and physical interaction (Riches 2011: 317). Instead, this section focuses more on the quasi-ritual characteristics and effects in metal live. At the same time, according to my personal experience as a metal musician, I also stress that the catharsis does not only work for the audiences but also for the artists themselves.

China Press USA (18th October 2012) comments that it is a plain truth that Chinese people have been facing increasingly pressures, which results in a universal fickleness, anxiety, and disturbance in the society. The report further lists the primary stress sources as a job, boss, individual financial situation, and the defective social welfare of medicine, education, and pension (ibid). Similar situations are also reflected by the interviewees of my fieldwork. For instance, Du Wei (2014), as a metal musician for over twenty years during which he has experienced various pressures, specifically explained his pressures as:

Table 7.1 Various Pressure in Du' Ordinary Life

The Stages of Du Wei's Life	The Types of Pressures Du Wei Has Faced
Student in high school	Teachers and parents' requirements of entering a university or college Other students' laugh at his poor grades
Employee for the first job (as a cook)	The long time working with little income No interest in the work
Employee for the second job (as officer in a local funeral parlour)	The bureaucratic style of work The insincere relationship between colleagues Seeking for promotion and better income
As a husband	Less free time An inevitable life trivia
As a father	Huge financial burden Almost no free time
As a son	Poorly healthy conditions of the parents The pressure of four parents and one child on two people (Du and his wife) because of the imperfection of China's Social Security System for the Aged

Du (ibid) acknowledged that although listening to music had nothing in practice to do with resolving any of his actual difficulties, they served as a spiritual painkiller to deal with all the negative feelings and emotions in those hard times. Being a metal musician also made him more confident and proud in the crowd, which usually offset the frustrated feelings from other aspects of life. In fact, Du's situation can be further understood in the theoretical frame of Maslow (1970)'s hierarchy of eight needs[16], including biological and physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem,

---

[16] Notably, Maslow's earliest theory in the 1940s only involved five aspects including Biological and Physiological, Safety, Love and belongingness, Esteem, and Self-Actualization needs. This five stage model was further expanded to include cognitive, aesthetic, and transcendence needs in the 1970s. More specifically, they refer to
1. Biological and Physiological needs: air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, *etc*.
2. Safety needs: protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, *etc*.
3. Love and belongingness needs: friendship, intimacy, affection and love from work group, family, friends, and romantic relationships.
4. Esteem needs: self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, managerial responsibility, *etc*.
5. Cognitive needs: knowledge, meaning, *etc*.
6. Aesthetic needs: appreciation and search for beauty, balance, form, *etc*.
7. Self-Actualization needs: realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.
8. Transcendence needs: helping others to achieve self actualization.
For more, see http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence. In this sense, being a metal musician particularly provides Du with an alternative way to fulfil those higher-level needs especially esteem, aesthetic, and self-actualization that are difficult to achieve in his ordinary life. The resulting satisfaction also helps Du to offset the pains from those more practical difficulties.

Fu (2008: 79-80) applied Victor Turner's theory of ritual (structure and anti-structure) to interpret Chinese rock live as a quasi-ritual catharsis and collective behaviour in which ordinary meanings of the reality are deconstructed and reconstructed in a theatric rebellion. An analysis of the live video of a famous Chinese ambient black metal band *Zuriaake* in 330 Metal Festival in 2015[17] specifically explains how that mechanism actually works. The analysis is conducted by examining the essential factors involved in the show, based on four scenario images obtained from the video and a costume image (see below).

Costume Image of Zuriaake (Vocalist), Image obtained from
http://www.weibo.com/u/5502427990?refer_flag=1001030102_&is_hot=1#_rnd1461055474338

---

[17] The video is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hirbkGPyO6E, and the analysis here is based on the intro section and the first song in the video (from 0': 01'' to 9': 30'').

The costume of *Zuriaake* is uniquely marked by the bamboo hat and straw rain cape which were typically linked to the fisher image in ancient China. Notably, the fisher image had often been employed by the poets of Tang and Song dynasty to portray a landscape of mountain and lake with isolated, lonely, and pessimistic connotations. Thus, this costume provides the band with a few semiotic meanings and enables them to create an atmosphere of cosmic synchronisation on the stage. Meanwhile, the members' body and face are completely covered during the show to enhance a sense of mystery and ritual of the performance.

Scenario Image 1 (0': 20"- 1': 59")

The first scenario is extracted from the intro part of the show in which the whole venue is enveloped by dimly blue light and an epic background tune. Then, two guitarists dressed in their unique costume slowly move on the stage holding two lanterns with candles inside. The highlighted red light of lanterns in the overall dark space brings about an occult feeling. The audiences are showing their acclaim to the band.

Scenario Image 2 (2': 00"- 2': 25")
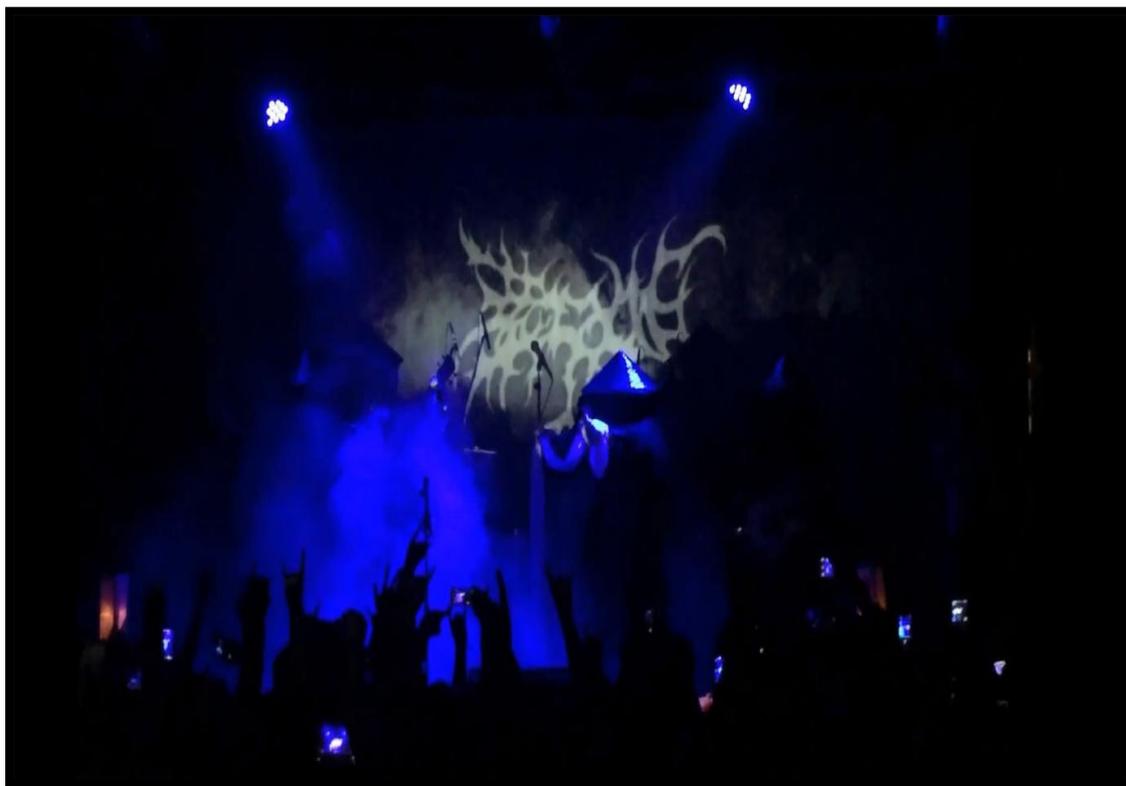
In the second scenario, after the lanterns being placed in the two corners, the vocalist appears in a puff of theatrical smoke with two hands holding a strip of white cloth. In the Chinese context, a strip of cloth used to be used in the court for hanging, and white is particularly used in funeral affairs. Thus, this item here has an explicit reference to death and ritual. At the same time, the band's logo is displayed on the back screen. In the whole process, the audiences keep raising the hands for the metal gesture.

Scenario Image 3 (2': 26"- 5': 59")

The third scenario shows the beginning of the music playing. The stage lighting is shifting to an overlap of hazy blue and red, in which the vocalist keeps holding the white cloth during the singing with hardly other movements. A few poetic words or phrases in ancient Chinese are sporadically displayed on the back screen, whose obscure meanings make the music more mysterious and occult.

Scenario Image 4 (6': 00"- 9': 30")

The final scenario illustrates the turning into the climax part of the song. The stage lighting becomes completely dark red. The white cloth is put on the microphone stand so that the vocalist is able to make a few simple gestures such as making a fist or crossing the arms on the chest. More importantly, the audiences are collectively and continuously doing the headbanging. At this moment, they are thoroughly immersed in the "ritual" and becoming an integral part of it.

The analysis reveals the mechanism of how the ritual catharsis is produced. First, all the crucial factors in the live video, including the stage design (especially the lighting), costume, theatric items (lanterns, white cloth, and smoke), visual staffs on the back screen, behaviours of the performers, reactions of the audiences, and loud music co-create a special image in which the common sense of space, time, and logic in the mundane life become meaningless. This is a moment of experience, as Weinstein (2000: 213-214) describes, in which the everyday-life world is removed.

Secondly, in this image (virtual world), both of the performers and audiences successfully transcend and deconstruct the "selves" of the reality. After that, every individual participant has the chance to re-create any meaning to the image as they wish. In this seemingly illogical chaos, the audiences obtain a satisfaction of freedom and power. At the same time, they are integrated into a whole by the collective behaviours of metal gesture and headbanging following the music, so that the individual instinctive uneasiness caused by chaos is removed by being in the crowd. Then, the original "selves" is reconstructed by these "free" individuals.

Finally, in the process of moving from the selves' deconstruction to reconstruction, the pressures and pains of the reality no more exist, temporarily. Then, the catharsis is fulfilled. In fact, the metal live can be understood as an aggregation of signifiers with symbolic transgression. It also indicates that the catharsis would not have effects on the audiences who fail to participate in that process, such as a security staff without enjoying the music. In addition, it is necessary to admit that different individuals and groups in the society may have their own ways to obtain the catharsis. Thus, metal music is never the only form with that function. However, due to its unique musical characteristics, ideologies, and transgressions, metal in China has been and will be one of the most significant means of catharsis.

7.3 Chinese Metal & Politics

As a modern social activity, rock has been inevitably engaging with politics in one form or another and often showing significant influences on societies. For example, the folk music in the 1960s positively advanced social changes in the US society, in which the ideas from the artists such as Bob Dylan and Joan Baez became the important basis of the counter-culture of the period. Even more, when the rock star David Bowie passed away in January 2016, the Germany's foreign office made an official statement on Twitter that: "Goodbye, David Bowie. You are now among Heroes. Thank you for helping to bring down the wall". Logically, when Chinese rock emerged in 1986, it was more or less referred to political issues by many academics (Brace & Friedlander 1992; Andrew 1994; Pekacz 1994; Baranovitch 2003; Wong 2005; de Kloet 2010) and even linked with the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989 (Huang 2003; Matusitz 2009). Nevertheless, more and more evidence (Huang 2001, 2003; Stokes 2004; Yan 2005, 2006; Rong 2007; Wang 2007; Qu 2012) have indicated that the relationship between Chinese rock (including metal) and politics might have been largely exaggerated and misunderstood as a projection of empathetic western critics on the Chinese cultural phenomenon (Qu 2012: 75-77). Instead, despite the fact that Chinese rock might have shared a generational root with youth radicals who expressed frustration with the severely limited life choices in the Chinese Communist Party controlled state, most current mainland rock musicians have consciously avoided from explicitly engaging in political issues (Huang 2001: 1). Similarly, McDonald (2012) observes that Chinese musicians do not seem to have been dealt with politics harshly, and when they do offer a political message, they often drape their lyrics in word-play and oblique symbolisms rather than openly criticising the Communist Party and the political system.

In this background, as an offshoot of Chinese rock, politics has never been the main theme of Chinese metal (as the previous section showed), yet there were still a few

artists being political. This section illustrates how and to what extent metal music associated with politics in the current situation of China by two lyrical analyses of the works from the metalcore band *Ordnance*[18] and modern Chinese artists Ai Weiwei.

7.3.1 "New 8 Honours and 8 Disgraces" by Ordnance

Ordnance was formed in Inner Mongolia in 1999 then moved to Beijing one year later. The band played Nu-metal in its early time and gradually transformed into metalcore. The band's name shows an overt sense with the military since that the core founder of the band, Liu Lixin, served in the People's Liberation Army of China. Since the mid-2000s, Liu became the manager of 13 Club which was a metal/rock live house in Beijing, as well as the manager of the independent record label DIME Records. In an interview in 2011[19], Liu explicitly claimed that *Ordnance* was initiated as a political band with the themes exclusively focused on social criticism. Shortly after the band's settlement in Beijing, they gained a reputation as one of the backbones of Chinese metal in the second wave. For example, *Ordnance* released their debut album titled "*Conflict*" after signing RHC Records in 2005. In the same year, they performed at the Midi Music Festival as well as 19 gigs across the country. In late 2008, their second album "*Rock City*" was released by DIME records. In July 2009, they performed on the main stage of Zhangbei Grasslands InMusic Festival.

In the wake of their politically sensitive music, the band inevitably got into political trouble. In August 2009, China's State Administration of Radio, Film and Television issued an official and nationwide ban on any display of the band's album "*Rock City*" in the mainland China[20] for the reason of that the music seriously slandered the image

---

[18] In fact, besides *Ordnance*, most Nu-metal bands had more or less political tendencies in their early works, such as *Yaska*'s "*Freedom*" in 2000, *Twisted Machine*'s "*Twisted Machine*" in 2001, and *Miserable Faith*'s "*This Is a Problem*" in 2001. However, only does *Ordnance* have maintained such political stance and musical style throughout their career.

[19] For the whole interview, see
http://www.spirit-of-metal.com/interview-groupe-Ordnance_(CHN)-id_inter-4822-l-en.html

[20] However, the album was/is available on overseas media, such as You Tube and Bandcamp, see

of the central government of the country (which can be partly understood by the album cover and title list below). Therefore, the album could not be sold in any licensed record stores, nor could it be played on any radio station or online media. The lyrical analysis of the track titled "*New 8 Honours and 8 Disgraces*" from the album will demonstrate how the slander was made, and an interview with Liu in 2015 will reveal more details about what happened after the ban. In doing so, an interaction between Chinese metal and political authority in the recent situation could be illustrated.
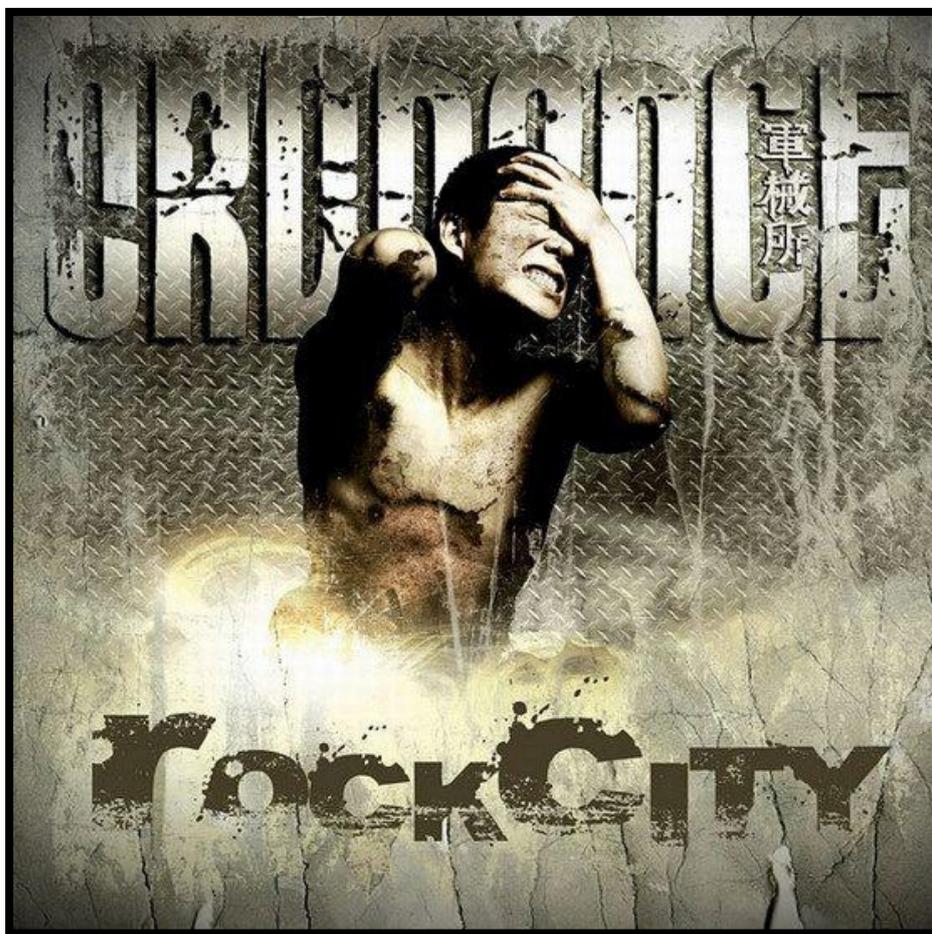
The Cover Art of "Rock City"
Image obtained from https://ordnanceband.bandcamp.com/album/rock-city

https://ordnanceband.bandcamp.com/album/rock-city

Table 7.2 Title List of "Rock City"

Track Title	Remarks of Theme & Contents
I Shall Not Be A Temporary Resident of My Own Homeland	Opposing against nation's policy of TemporaryResidential Permit which is argued to be discrimination against the rural population living in the cities
Fuck You	Criticising the wrongful actions of the national police
8 Honours and 8 Disgraces	(See the analysis below)
Rock City	A wish that one day the country is full of rock spirit
I Need to Know	A complaint against the opaqueness of the political system
People Need to Resist	Appealing for fighting for the freedom of the citizens
I Oppose	A suspicion of the mainstream ideas
This Is Ours	The ownership of Tibet, Taiwan, and Diaoyu Islands
Without Any Excuse	The determination of pursuing idealism like a soldier

"*8 Honours and 8 Disgraces*" was a slogan raised by the former Chinese President Hu Jintao in March 2006, as the new moral yardstick to measure the work, conduct and attitude of Communist Party officials. In the Chinese language, the list of "*8 Honours and 8 Disgraces*" reads like rhyming lyrics and sounds poetic.

Table 7.3 Official English Version of the Contents of "8 Honours and 8 Disgraces"[21]

-Love the country; do it no harm.

-Serve the people; do no disservice.

-Follow science; discard ignorance.

-Be diligent; not indolent.

-Be united help each other; make no gains at other's expense.

-Be honest and trustworthy; do not spend ethics for profits.

-Be disciplined and law-abiding; not chaotic and lawless.

-Live plainly, struggle hard; do not wallow in luxuries and pleasures.

"*New 8 Honours and 8 Disgraces*" was a song composed by *Ordnance*, in which the lyrics were written in the same poetic pattern of the original slogan.

---

[21] For more, see http://english.gov.cn/2006-04/05/content_245361.htm

Table 7.4 Lyrics of "New 8 Honours and 8 Disgraces"[22]

-Rouse the people; do not deceive them.

-Fair Competition; no monopoly.

-Free speech; do no strike pressure on dissent.

-Protect human rights; no one party dictatorship.

-Rule by the people; do not play on them.

-Make the government transparent; no bureaucrats shield one another.

-Ensure the freedom of press; do not make privilege.

-Comply with the people's will; do not compromise in diplomacy.

The so-called slander results from the transformation of the subjects in the two texts. Specifically, the original one sounds like an order from the government upon the people, so the subject therein is not the people. In other words, the contents mention what people should or not do. In contrast, the *Ordnance*'s version expresses the will of the people about what the government should or not do. Despite the fact that the key points are around the democracy and citizenship, some expressions such as the dictatorship and government transparent are still challenging government's tolerance. At the same time, the song was sung with angry in a kind of pissed-off-to-the-depths-of-my-soul way, which indicated that the band were not only just pissed off but also thinking long and hard about why they were pissed off (Campbell 2011: 154).

Ordnance's expressions cannot be simply understood as a sort of rebellion or subversion which challenges the authorities but a mixture of their frustrations over social issues and patriotism. As the vocalist of the band Ying Peng (cited by Campbell 2011: 155) stated that "It's not that we're opposed to everything. We've seen a lot of bad things, and we want to talk about them". Similarly, Liu (2015) explained, they made their music provocative, political, and critical, because that there should be the

---

[22] The English version is translated by myself, for the original lyrics in Chinese, see http://www.99lrc.com/lyrics_down_lrc/36/200901311642487I7bx.htm and the Video, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBSfT0GkBbo&index=1&list=RDFBSfT0GkBbo

obligation for an artist to inspire people to face the current disadvantages in order to make our country a better place. In his opinion, that is not harmful but the true love of the country. Perhaps for the same reason, the band did not receive any extra punishment except the ban and a few side effects from it. For example, in the following years, *Ordnance* had been absent from most domestic festivals due to the organisers did not want to get into any potential trouble. Liu (2015) also clarified a few rumours spread in the local metal scene, such as that he was never interrogated by the police and went to prison. The banned album was still available in many private ways such as purchasing at 13 Club live house. In September 2014, Liu went to an online radio program Youyi Rock Chat to promote their latest album and talk about the ban, which is available on the mainstream streaming media such as Netease Cloud Music[23]. In the program, he still stressed that artists should dare to express themselves and insist what is right to promote the social progression.

7.3.2 "Dumbass" by Ai Weiwei

A more controversial case came from the metal music video titled "*Dumbass*" by Ai Weiwei. As one of the most influential contemporary artists and political activists, many of Ai's arts conveyed an overtly ironic message against the Chinese governmental corruption and opaque.[24] For the same reason, he had been engaged in troubles with the Chinese authorities constantly, such as the investigation of the student casualties in Sichuan earthquake 2008 and Shanghai studio issue[25]. In April 2011, Ai was arrested by Chinese police at Beijing airport for suspected economic crimes[26]. However, the main concern here is not to clarify the conflict between Ai and Chinese government but to examine how metal music was used in Ai's response.

---

[23] The radio show is available at: http://music.163.com/#/dj?id=780046
However, the new album is not available.
[24] For more, see https://www.artsy.net/artist/ai-weiwei
[25] For more about the issues, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ai_Weiwei and http://artasiapacific.com/Magazine/64/AiWeiweiChallengesChinasGovernmentOverEarthquake
[26] For more, see http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12994785 and http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=6Rf65Pv-eXDSjsdxOEPgKLYHQvnW9bZcVPHh03puMfq7PYxrhV3sQTRoNie1F-RgAIRjR_aDuRJ_RUUmnYxbA_

The work "*Dumbass*"[27] was published on May 2013, which was collaboratively created by three artists (lyrics by Ai Weiwei, music by Zuoxiao Zuzhou[28], video by Christopher Doyle). The song could be recognised as a metal style with heavy and distorted guitar riffs but in a slow tempo. The video dramatically depicted his 81 days illegal detention after being arrested by the Chinese government: "his mug shot and fingerprints are taken, and he begins his detention. Images of Ai undergoing the mundane activities of daily prison life are interspersed with surreal shots, including a toilet full of crabs, and other animals. China analysts say animals have come to be used as code by activists resisting state censorship. Guards are shown dancing with lingerie-clad women and the video culminates with Ai shaving his head and appearing in women's clothes and heavy make-up" (BBC News Entertainment & Arts, 22 May 2013). The lyrics were a simply abuse against the government, full of repeating dirty words such as mother-fucker and dumbass (see the table below). Ai claims that the video is "dedicated to all those people who do not have the opportunity to raise their voice, who will never be able to raise their voices" (ibid). In the lyrics, a clear antithesis was formed by the two appellations of "you" (stands for the people and Ai himself) and "he" (stands for the authority and government).

Table 7.5 lyrics of Dumbass in English[29]

-When you're ready to strike, he mumbles about non-violence.
-When you pinch his ear, he says it's no cure for diarrhoea.
-You say you're a mother-fucker, he claims he's invincible.
-You say you're a mother-fucker, he claims he's invincible.
-Fuck forgiveness, tolerance be damned, to hell with manners, the low-life's invincible.
-Fuck forgiveness, tolerance be damned, to hell with manners, the low-life's invincible.

---

[27] The track and video are unsurprisingly banned in mainland China, which is available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ACj86DKfWs

[28] Zuoxiao Zuzhou is a contemporary Chinese indie rock musician and artist with a spirit of critical realism. He is also well known as a music producer, especially for producing Ai Weiwei's first album "*The Divine Comedy*" including the track "*Dumbas*s". For more, see
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zuoxiao_Zuzhou

[29] The translation was cited from
http://uk.complex.com/style/2013/05/ai-weiwei-releases-politically-charged-metal-song-dumbass-video

-Oh dumbass, oh such dumbass.

-Stand on the frontline like a dumbass, in a country that puts out like a hooker.

-The field's full of fuckers, dumbasses are everywhere.

-Fuck forgiveness, tolerance be damned, to hell with manners, the low-life's invincible.

-You say you're a mother-fucker, he claims he's invincible.

-The field is full of fuckers, dumbasses are everywhere.

It is important to realise that Ai acknowledged in another report (The Guardian, 22 May 2013) that he did not have a good understanding about heavy metal, "after I had said it would be heavy metal I ran back to check what heavy metal would sound like. Then I thought, oh my god, it's quite different. So it's Chinese heavy metal, or maybe Caochangdi (where his studio is located) heavy metal". Therefore, he made the music in metal style because he supposed that that form would suit his angry accusation. Particularly, compared to his other artworks containing more symbolic and insightful meanings, this music video is more like his personal emotional catharsis.

7.3.3 The Relationship between Metal and Politics in Current China

The two examples indicate that metal music has been still used to convey political messages currently. However, the relationship between metal and the politics can be further re-understood in four aspects. First, as discussed in Chapter 7.1, metal should be seen as a naturally aesthetic transgression in the context of Chinese culture, which therefore makes metal a preferred form (but not necessarily) to express the feelings such as anger, dissatisfaction, or criticism. This explains that why Ai Weiwei, as a non-metal artist, chose metal to make his voices. In fact, the political metal music by metal artists has been becoming more and more rational and thoughtful, in which the critic ideas are usually positive and based on an intention of patriotism.

Secondly, the notion of "being political" for the rock/metal musicians has been

changing. For example, the representative of the first generation of Chinese rock in the 1990s, Cui Jian explicitly asserts in an interview in 2010[30] that "my direction will always be to find social problems behind the tension of the economics and politics". In contrary, one of the representatives of the new generation of the 2000s, Liang Long (the front man of *Second Hand Rose*) states that "for me, there's been no one in the past five years who really comes close to the legendary status of someone like Cui Jian......The rebellious aspect of the early days obviously has its appeal, but nowhere is it written in stone that musicians should confine themselves to singing about politics" (China Daily, 2nd September 2011).

Furthermore, the free speech about politics is still forbidden in China, but the attitude of the government has been slightly relented. Perhaps, this change is partly derived from a new relationship between the arts and authorities in the context of the cultural industry. For example, when examining the recent development of Chinese rock festival, Groenewegen-Lau (2014: 11) observes that "the central policies concerning the cultural and creative industries have opened up a middle ground where officials, entrepreneurs, and musicians can negotiate tensions between subversive rock music and the hegemonic party-state". However, in this new middle ground of negotiation, how political metal music actually interacts with the society is still unclear before more studies have done.

Finally, different from those artists who employ ancient, folk, or traditional elements to form the Chineseness in metal, *Ordnance* and Ai Weiwei's creations can also be seen as an articulation of Chineseness by focusing on more contemporary and realistic aspects of the country.

---

[30] For the whole video of the interview, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HqJkjJQAVM

7.4 Authenticity & Criticism within Chinese Metal

In the field of popular music, authenticity has usually been used to differentiate genres. Herman and Sloop (cited by de Kloet 2010: 26) proposes that "the ideology of authenticity has provided the ground for a practice of judgment through which musicians, fans and critics were able to distinguish between 'authentic rock', which was transgressive and meaningful, and inauthentic rock (or 'pop'), which was co-opted and superficial". Similarly, de Kloet (ibid) examines Chinese rock as a mythology that consists of a set of narratives which produce rock as a distinct musical world that is, first and foremost, authentic, but also subcultural, masculine, rebellious, and (counter) political. In light of such crucial importance of authenticity in Chinese pop/rock discourse (and therefore metal), this section examines Chinese metal from an alternative critical angle, pointing out that there would be an inevitable absence of authenticity in Chinese metal.

7.4.1 From "Where There Is Oppression, There Is Resistance" to "A Beautiful New World"

There has seemed to be a consensus by Chinese rock musicians that rock is fundamentally different from pop. Instead of the latter's fake and commercial sound, rock expresses the truth and true feelings authentically. Meanwhile, rock is often linked to the status of the underground, while pop to the mainstream. This view became particularly strong among the metal bands in the early 2000s[31] when the underground was labelled as an important identity of true metalheads. For example, *Twisted Machine*'s second album titled "*Return to Underground*" in 2003 made an explicit expression of a proud feeling of being underground. The track "*We Come*

---

[31] As discussed in Chapter 4, the heavy rock era in the 1990s mainly featured mainstream metal, while the idea of underground had not been prominent. The trend of underground metal was conceived in the late 1990s, and did not rise until 2000.

from the Underground"[32] from the album was well-known for the phrases of "We come from the underground, our voices are such authentic; we come from the underground, we will never change our attitude". When one of my interviewees Zhang Yun (2015) explained that why he chose to work with *Extreme Music* magazine instead of *Painkiller*, he claimed that the former was more underground with more serious and cultural values while the latter was relatively more mainstream and entertaining.

In fact, authenticity can be examined from two aspects, namely the music (object) and musician (subject). Thus, the discussion here will not go further with the essentialism logic since that there could be no conclusion about which music genres/styles are inherently more authentic than any other. Instead, it targets on the actual actions of the musicians. In this sense, the authenticity is neither pre-assumed as a nature ascribed to the status of underground nor mainstream, but primarily understood as consistency in the musicians' thoughts, words, behaviours, and music works. Theoretically, both pop and rock musicians could be authentic as long as they are showing such consistency. However, the central argument here is that such consistency has been difficult to maintain for Chinese metal musicians, which is illustrated by a case study of the "successful" career of the band *Miserable Faith*.

Miserable Faith made their initial fame in early 2000 by showing an overt gesture of angry and rebellion as a Nu-metal band (see Chapter 4.4), since when their music style has constantly been changing, involving hardcore, hard rock, reggae, *etc*. Now, it seems that they would prefer just label themselves as rock. However, the general trend is that with their transgressive elements (both in music and attitude) becoming less and less, the band enjoys an increasingly commercial success. From an underground metal band to a national well-known mainstream pop/rock band, what can be interpreted from *Miserable Faith*'s transition? Perhaps, a clue can be found by a

---

[32] For the track, see http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=368778&userid=3715867

comparison between the two tracks of the band's debut and latest album.

The track "*Where There Is Oppression, There Is Resistance*"[33] was included in the debut album "*This Is a Problem*", the lyrics are only repeating three plain slogans as "What can dictatorship change for us? What can education change for us? Where there is oppression, there is resistance". The music is based on only one repeating distorted guitar riff in a syncopated rhythm pattern. The vocalist uses an angry yelling as a typical vocalisation of Nu-metal and metalcore throughout the song. Although not being involved in politics as deeply as *Ordinance* does, an obvious transgression could be found in their music. Thus, for many years they had been labelled as an underground idol with essences of rebellion and criticism.

On the contrary, in the track "*A Beautiful New World*"[34] from the album "*May Love Be without Worries*" in 2014, there is not any transgressive element left. The acoustic harmonic progression replaces the distorted guitar riff, yelling is replaced by a pop voice, and the whole song features a gently Flamenco melody. Also, the lyrics are mainly talking about "we rambling in such a beautiful new world" without oppression or resistance anymore.

For such transition, a question can be proposed that whether the world had been changed or just the *Miserable Faith* changed? Perhaps, the answer is both, but I focus more on the changes of the artists. Superficially, the band name changed. The band's full name in Chinese was "Tong Ku De Xin Yang". With more and more fans tending to call them "Tong Yang" (by using the first with last characters) for short, the band themselves began to officially use "Tong Yang" instead of the old one since 2006.

---

[33] For the track, see http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=381912&userid=3715867
[34] For the track, see http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=28949128&userid=3715867
A clear musical shift began with the album "*Don't Stop My Music*" in 2008. As Groenewegen-Lau (2014: 24) commented that "The 2008 album also marks Miserable Faith's shift from its focus on angry rap metal and nu metal inspired by Rage Against the Machine, Korn, and System of a Down to the inclusions of more nostalgic and contemplative pieces influenced by reggae and folk rock. The album features slower tempos, acoustic guitars, and accordion".

However, the change also resulted in a loss of meaning, since that "Tong Ku De Xin Yang" both articulated the meanings of "miserable" and "faith" that "Tong Yang" did not at all. In fact, the abbreviation has already indicated the altered attitude of the band[35].

Fundamentally, the attitude changed, which was reflected by the interviews of the band in different periods. For example, in an interview in 1999, Gao Hu (vocalist of the band) held an explicit idealism and criticism, stating that "justice, truth, and freedom are always my faith, and our music only pursues something spiritual. Money or being rich is not considered, making a living is enough". In another live video clip in 2000, he stressed on the stage that what he tried to express were always criticism, protest, and angry.[36] However, in April 2015 the band proudly claimed on their online media (Sina microblog) that they became the most expensive rock band in the mainland China[37] just a few days after the band signed the biggest Chinese indie label Modern Sky. One year later, the band joined a famous Chinese popular reality TV show, China Star, (China Daily, 13th January 2016), which made them the first rock band appearing on such mainstream TV show. Unsurprisingly, for most their old fans, the show was a disaster in which their underground era work "*Where There Is Oppression, There Is Resistance*" was cut off due to the nation's censorship[38], while the new song "*A Beautiful New World*" did not meet the quality of an outstanding pop/rock work. The result was that the band was eliminated from the show just after two performances, but they earned a lot, anyway.

---

[35] Notably, as the band name being changed in 2006, their EP "*No*" in the same year was also their last work with rebellious and critical spirit. After that, the band's music and lyrics changed a lot. Was that just a coincidence?

[36] The interview and the video clip are included in the band's documentary "*The Time*" in 2009, for the documentary, see
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mCjPxMhzqw

[37] For more, see http://ent.sina.com.tw/weibo/user/tongyang/3831484182217528
In fact, the band's self-statement was also questioned by some insiders. For example, it was reported that the festival appearance fee of *Miserable Faith* in 2014 was 140, 000 RMB, which was less than *Black Panther* (180, 000), *Tang Dynasty* (200, 000), and Zou Xiao Zu Zhou (200, 000-500, 000).

[38] For the cut off video, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQbkX1QkqRE

This transition of music genre/style and stance from underground to mainstream, from idealism to utilitarianism, from resistance to cooperation, from criticism to catering entertainment, has been happening in Chinese and even global metal (rock) scene, such as *Tang Dynasty*, *Overload*, and *Metallica, etc*. Marx's idea of the economic base determining the superstructure might be a useful means via which to explore what is happening here. With the changes of the musicians' reality situations, their minds had to make corresponding adaptations, so did their behaviours. Therefore, a contradiction of the authenticity of metal is brought about, namely if the metal musicians are authentic to the realities and themselves, then they should alter to adapt, but at the same time, they are "sold out" and inauthentic to the original ideas (usually initiated in an underground stance).

It is very important to clarify that the responsibility of the absence of authenticity should be not taken solely by the Chinese metal (or rock) musicians, but more by the social environments. In a few north European countries especially in Finland, this contradiction becomes less clear and even invisible due to the high level of economics, social welfare, and cultural tolerance. Nevertheless, in the current Chinese society with none of the conditions above, the authenticity of metal (particularly metal's transgression) can be hardly maintained by most professional musicians[39]. Once they started a career in metal industries, they would be inevitably involved in a negotiation between the underground and mainstream cultures: 1 becoming an underground hero by a critical stance against the hegemonic culture; 2. more radical they perform, more attention and social capital they accumulate from both the underground and mainstream; 3. compromising to the mainstream by weakening the underground stance and adding more pop elements into the music, so that becoming a half-underground hero and half-mainstream fashion star; 4. with the deepening of that transformation they may be criticised as inauthentic, but anyway, they achieved a lot,

---

[39] This may be also an important reason why most of the current Chinese metal musicians are in a semi-professional status (see Chapter 5.1), since that keeping metal as an interest rather than a career relieves the authentic contradiction.

such as money and fame. In this process, the transgressive nature of metal may serve as no more than an effective strategy that contributes to catch the public attention, obtain the social capital, and then enter into the mainstream world. Therefore, from a perspective of authenticity, Chinese metal of the past two decades can be seen as a complex praxis with idealism, opportunism, and authentic contradiction.

7.4.2 Pursuing the Authenticity of Chinese Metal

The Chinese metal (as well as rock in this sense) discourse has been facing two problems of authenticity. Musically, as a transplanted culture and music genre from the West, Chinese metal musicians have to constantly learn how to make metal and, at the same time, struggle to avoid being simply labelled copycats since the beginning. For example, one of the pioneers of Chinese metal, the ex-vocalist of *Black Panther* Dou Wei (cited by Huang 2003: 192) stated that "We are starting to move from form to content. Instead of just borrowing a western form, we need to make music that's based on Chinese life". Similarly, the ex-guitarist Liu Yijun (ibid) of *Tang Dynasty* admitted that "Rock is based on the blues, and we can never play the blues as well as an American does. It's just not in our blood. We can imitate it, but eventually, we'll have to go back to the music we grew up with, to traditional Chinese music, to folk music". In fact, a lot of musicians have been devoting themselves to establish a sort of authentic Chinese metal throughout the whole Chinese metal history, such as *Tang Dynasty*, *Again*, *Narakam*, *Zuriaake*, and the more recent folk metal bands. In this sense, the problem of musical authenticity is brought back to the issue of identity in the context of localisation and globalisation (see Chapter 5).

The other problem refers to ideology. At the beginning of Chinese rock, Cui Jian (ibid: 188) defined the nature of Chinese rock as "ideology, not a set musical form". Therefore, rock's nature of (counter) culture as spiritual liberation was stressed rather than commerce as a material constraint, in which there was a sort of authenticity

relied on the former. This authenticity primarily referred to idealism, heroism, rebellion, and criticism, which is very much echoed by de Kloet's rock mythology. Chinese metal started in this ideological context. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, the emergence of Chinese metal was not a purely cultural phenomenon but more a consequence of country's economic progress and cultural opening up. In other words, this assumed "authenticity" or "rock mythology" has been no more than an illusion in which metal musicians performed like a counter-culture hero but actually an ordinary people chasing fame and money. Even more, it is such authenticity of rock mythology which makes Chinese metal's authentic contradiction.

When considering the situation of Chinese rock in the 2000s, the famous rock critic Yan Jun (2005) strongly called for dispelling the rock mythology. In the contemporary society of cultural industry, Chinese rock does not need an individual rock hero or spiritual leader (like Cui Jian in the late 1980s and *Tang Dynasty* in the early 1990s) but the mass with independent thinking and creativity. In contrast, the mainstream media needs this (fake) rock hero or leader to produce them as an easily consuming cultural symbol constantly. At the same time, the power of these idols is used to strengthen the hegemonic culture. If there are still rock musicians cooperating with the media to make new mythologies, they should be denounced as inauthentic.

As a result, the authenticity of Chinese metal cannot exist in the context of rock mythology but the context of the indie[40] cultural product. In doing so, the rebellious ideology is replaced by the properties of industry and aesthetics. Especially, the previous criticism is maintained but in another form of symbolic transgression. At the same time, the authenticity of Chinese metal cannot be judged by being underground or mainstream, since that both of them are merely a kind of unstable status that may

---

[40] The term Indie is understood in its broad sense, namely referring to a certain initial punk-rooted genre, a certain aesthetic value, a method of social differentiation, and a marketing tool. In addition, I also observed a trend in Chinese pop/rock industries that the term rock became less mentioned but indie is becoming increasingly concerned. Perhaps, it indicates that the contradiction caused by the rock mythology has been realised, and indie is now employing as a method to deal with it.

mutually transform in the appropriate conditions. On the contrary, indie, as an attitude, indicates an individual's cultural and commercial independence which only obtained by being authentic to himself.

7.4.3 Commercialism Vs Anti-Commercialism

Perhaps, one of the corollaries of the cultural industry is the transformation of art into entertainment. With Chinese metal having experienced relatively greater popularity since the early 2010s, commercialism became one of the central debates around metal authenticity. The replies of my interviewees may suggest three main views. For example, "the authentic metal must be anti-commercial appreciated by a small group of people, and only in this way will metal keep its true meaning and value" (Pen 2015). The opposite view (Du 2014) argues that "commercialisation of metal is an inevitable trend in the era of the cultural industry so that it is a choice of adaption or elimination. If metal is over, then the discussion of authentic metal will make no sense at all". The third view (Zhang 2015) is more dialectic, that "commercialisation itself has nothing to do with "right" or "wrong" but the metal musicians do. Although we have not found it, there should be a point which successfully balances the artistry and commerciality, such as the design of the Coca-Cola bottle".

In fact, this debate had existed at the beginning of metal, marked by *Led Zeppelin* and *Black Sabbath*'s different stances towards the popular culture at the time, namely the former was relatively more commercial while the latter anti-commercial (Keferstein (2008: 15-16). However, instead of arguing which one was better, Keferstein (ibid: 14) would rather see the difference as an inner dialectic that would boost the metal's musical and ideological production, and also an inner force that would guarantee the continuous process of metal history. In other words, the opposition between the two proto-metal bands gave place to a future multi-partition of styles, currents, and subgenres.

From a macro perspective (the whole scene rather than individual musician), this inner dialectic also existed in many stages of Chinese metal history in different aspects, such as the tension between the "Pop Metal" and "Precursors of Underground Metal" (see Chapter 4.3), the magazines of "*Painkiller*" and "*Extreme Music*" (see Chapter 4.5.1), and the labels of Mort Productions and PEST Productions (see Chapter 6.3.4). Thus, whenever there is a commercial trend happens, there is an opposite to maintain the tension. Commercialisation and anti-commercialisation have always been like the two sides of the coin, coexisting with inseparable values in Chinese metal praxis. The former brings metal (used to be marginalised) into a broader world with more developmental possibilities at the cost of certain adaption and changes. The latter maintains a sort of underground value which is less influenced by the general mainstream environment and usually keeps the creativity[41] and diversity of the genre as well as a higher loyalty in metal fans. Then, this dynamic balance has ensured the stability of the overall metal scene. From a micro perspective, as discussed before, any metal musician has the right to make the decision of turning to the commercial or not. This is not an issue about the so-called authenticity but simply a personal choice. There is one kind of behaviour that is undoubtedly inauthentic: one uses the anti-commercialisation stance as merely a strategy or gimmick to achieve the goal of commercialisation.

Perhaps, this understanding of commercialisation can also be applicable to the whole current Chinese society. The last a few decades of the country's experience has proven that economic law was never the only criterion of social development. Instead, a lot of severe social problems were brought about behind the rapid GDP growth[42], such as

---

[41] For specific consideration on commerce and creativity, see Negus 1996: 45-50. Notably, Negus (ibid: 48) suggests that the way of pursuing the issue would be to examine the tensions about commerce and creativity in specific contexts, without assuming that there will be the same dynamics in different places. In this sense, the praxis of Chinese metal may provide a new angle to look at the issue.

[42] As reported by World Bank http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china/overview, since initiating market reforms in 1978, China has been experiencing rapid economic development with an average GDP growth as nearly 10 percent, annually.

Notably, the criterion solely based on GDP centralism has been increasingly criticised from the economic perspective, such as

the environmental issues, over-utilitarianism, credit crisis, and the absence of spiritual pursuit, *etc*. (will be further discussed in the next section). Just like the different subgenres with relevant values and functions in metal, there should also be diverse values to guarantee the social balance, vitality, and sustainable development. More importantly, not every value has to be measured by a price.

"China Must End Its GDP Worship", see
http://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2014-02-27/china-must-end-its-gdp-worship
 "Worship of GDP reflects twisted metric about meaning of a good life", see
http://www.shanghaidaily.com/opinion/shanghai-daily-columnists/Worship-of-GDP-reflects-twisted-metric-about-meaning-of-a-good-life/shdaily.shtml
"China's 'GDP worship' must end to allow progress", see
http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/LmzlbUs22wZK74PVl6WbQM/Chinas-GDP-worship-must-end-to-allow-progress.html

7.5 Metal & Social Pathologies of Modern China

The modernisation of China (PRC) mainly consists of three stages, including the Four Modernisations (Agriculture, Industry, National Defense & Science, and Technology) in the 1950s and 1960s, political democratisation and economic marketisation in the 1970s and 1990s, and synchronisation with the global process of modernisation after joining the WTO since 2001. After this series of reformation and development, the country gradually recovered from the pain of the World War II and had become the second-largest economy of the world since 2010 (The New York Times, 15th August 2010). However, the crises of Chinese modernity emerged at the same time. This section illustrates the central social pathologies of current China, especially a general hypocrisy. Then, I propose a term "pseudo-evil" and argue that that is an intentional behaviour applied by metal musicians as a reaction against the hypocrisy, which has been not discussed in the western worlds. In this Chinese context, metal can be further understood as an expression of existentialism, showing positive effects on the construction/reconstruction of the mainstream values in current Chinese society.

7.5.1 General Hypocrisy in Current Chinese Society

In the past three decades since 1978, China had experienced a fast development of material civilisation but a relatively behind spiritual civilisation, which has caused the society a sub-health situation in the recent period. To figure out the people's views about the healthy degree and specific problems of the current Chinese society, a survey was conducted by *People's Tribune* (as one of the official journals of the Communist Party of China) between 22nd August and 2nd September 2014 (Xv, Yuan, *et al*. 2014). The survey was held by both online and paper-based questionnaires, including 8,015 respondents. The report (ibid) reveals that, more than 80 percent respondents see the current society as unhealthy or sub-healthy. More specifically, this

unhealthy status is mainly presented in 10 pathologies (as the graph shown below). The report also points out that the reasons mainly refer to the social transformation, order reconstruction, moral anomie, and value diversification.

Fig. 7.3 Top 10 Pathologies in Current Chinese Society
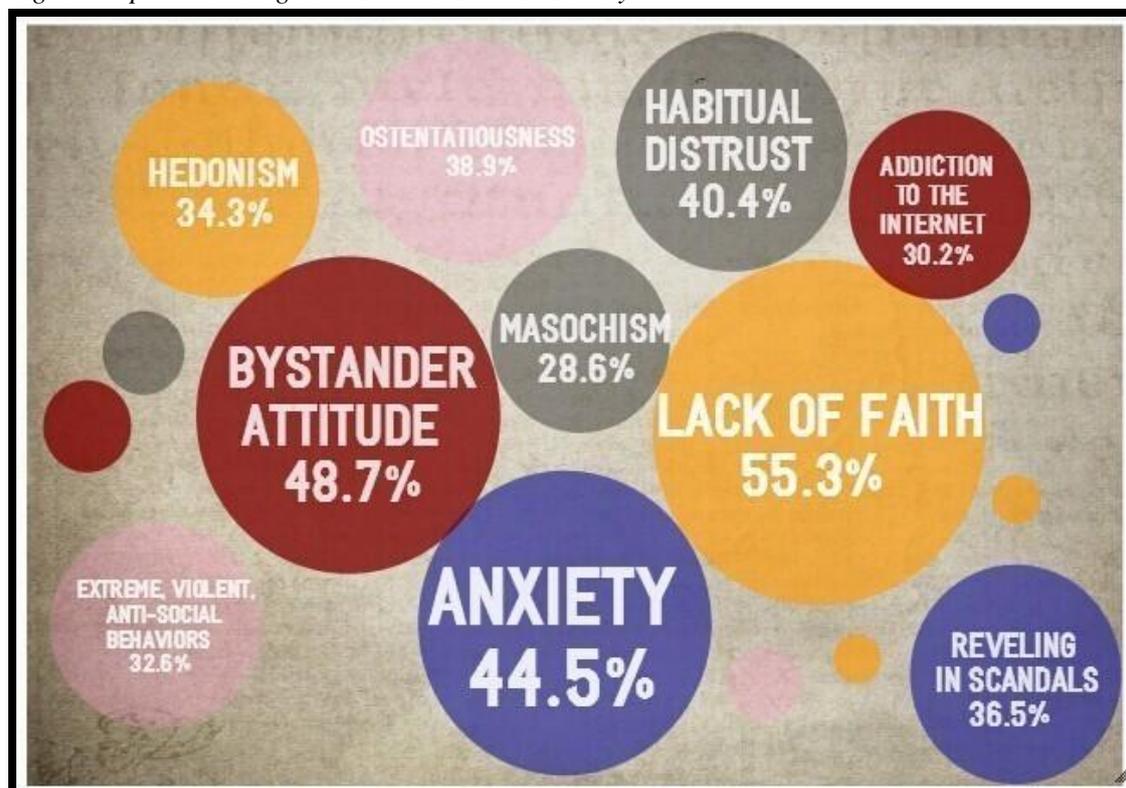
Image obtained from China Daily
http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-09/17/content_18614059.htm

Notably, the lack of credibility is becoming the most serious social crisis in China, especially the "distrust in whatever the government says", "distrust between people", "doubt over food and medicine safety", and "distrust in doctors' professional ethics" (China Daily, 17th September 2014). Another long-term online survey by *Xinhuanet*[43] echoes that "false" has existed in almost every aspect of the social business, including the medicine and health, advertising and marketing, food safety, real estate, finance and insurance, telecommunication service, tourism, commerce, education, media and publishing, and household service. At the same time, the people's increasing distrust in the government primarily targets on the non-transparency of governmental

---

[43] For the whole survey result, see http://www.xinhuanet.com/forum/sqgj/201401/xhdc13.htm

behaviours, expenditure, and the financial status of the officials (Yan & Yv 2013: 18).

One of the most severe consequences is a general hypocrisy and habitual distrust, in which the difference between the good and evil becomes absurd. For example, there would be a tendency that a person with good performances may result in a strong suspicion by others that his "good" is a kind of deceiving behaviour. In this logic, the "others" such as the authorities, organisations, or individuals are treated as hypocritical no matter what they truly are. Even more, the better they perform, the more hypocritical they could actually be. In this abnormal atmosphere, good is usually doubted to be hypocrisy. In light of such inconsistency of "the good in form" and "the good in substance", a group of people begin to rather intentionally perform evil but keeping their inside good in order to make a clear difference from the hypocrisy. This is reflected by a phenomenon of "pseudo-evil" in Chinese metal.

7.5.2 Pseudo-Evil of Chinese Metal

To keep the clarity and logic in the following discussion, a few terms are defined[44] as below:

- True good: good in both form and substance
- Hypocrisy: good in form but evil in substance
- Pseudo-evil: evil in form but good in substance
- True evil: evil in both form and substance

Perhaps, one of the ultimate pursuits for every humanity society is always the true good. However, the actual world may not be that idealistic but more practically involving hypocrisy, pseudo-evil, and true evil. Then, the question will be that when

---

[44] These definitions are based on the traditional dichotomy of the substance and form. However, it is necessary to admit that they are of simplification in a strictly philosophical sense, but I only make them applicable to the discussion here.

the true good is not available, how the people should be? There could be different choices. I propose that Chinese metal participants (artists and fans) choose to be pseudo-evil as an intentional reaction against the general hypocrisy in the current Chinese society. In other words, the Chinese metal praxis features an evil form but a good substance with an explicit stance of anti-hypocrisy.

First, the evil forms of Chinese metal are explicitly presented by its various transgressions, involving not only the musical characteristics and subject matters (as discussed in previous chapters) but also the bad-guy-like appearances and manners of the participants. For example, nearly all the musicians of my interviewees have tattoos which are still often misunderstood as the marks relevant to bad guys or gangdoms by the mainstream value. According to my personal experience in the Chinese metal scene, most of the metal musicians and fans overtly perform in impolite manners, such as the dirty words and rude deeds. Also, a majority of them have the habit of drinking and smoking. Undoubtedly, all of these factors deviate from the so-called "good" regarding the current social norms.

On the contrary, many Chinese metalheads show the honesty, kindness, and integrity in their real life roles which may seem quite different from what they look like. For example, none of my interviewees has had any criminal record. Besides being metal artists, Du Wei is also truly responsible for his work and family; Zhang Cheng is one of most respected teachers in Wuhan Conservatory; Liu Lixin has dedicated himself to promote the ideas of social justice as a social activist. A female metal fan Gou Shuobo (2015) claimed that "when I first saw metalheads, I thought they might be bad and dangerous people because of their appearances and what they performed. When I got into the scene and became more familiar with some of them, I found that they were really kind and sincere, even better than a lot of people who looked decent".

Finally, Chinese metal showed a clear attitude of strongly condemning the behaviour

of hypocrisy. For instance, in the preface to the inaugural issue of the local magazine "*Total Thrash*", the editors stressed that their central stance was to "declare war on the hypocrisy" (Total Thrash, Vol. 1: 2). Similarly, the famous local Nu-metal band *Tomahawk* accused the society of its lack of true faith and hypocrisy in the song "*The Lost Faith*"[45]. In addition, different from the real actions of violence in the Norwegian black metal scene in the 1990s (Phillipov 2011: 152), Chinese black metal musicians had alternative understandings about the subgenre and so-called Satanism. Pen Pei (2015) claimed that "when I was playing raw black metal many years ago, I was not that sort of Satanist as many northern European metalheads did. There may be indeed something adorable in Satanism, the 'truth'. In my opinion, at least, being truly evil is far better than hypocrisy".

In his thesis focused on hypocrisy, Wang (2012: III) links the social hypocrisy to a series of complex factors, such as the paradox of human existence, human primeval evil tendency, human adversarial relationship in society, division between concept and entity, value interruption, absolute nihilism, social crisis, and so forth. Shen and Liu (2012: 746-749) further summarised that the causes of the moral hypocrisy could be explained by social cognitive theory, cognitive dissonance theory, social influence theory, and dual process theory. Meanwhile, in the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, the President Xi Jinping proposed a set of moral principles[46] to deal with the pathologies in current Chinese society. In this sense, Chinese metal may not be the medicine or exert direct effects on solving those problems. It would positively make people more aware of the social hypocrisy by its particular pseudo-evil. In the dramatic contrast between the hypocrisy and pseudo-evil the "good in substance" is highlighted. It is also important to realise that pseudo-evil should still be seen as an abnormal reaction in an abnormal atmosphere, since that it still lacks the "true" (the evil in from and the good in substance still show an

---

[45] For the whole song, see http://music.163.com/#/song?id=29422013&userid=3715867

[46] The principles were named as "core socialist values", covering three dimensions as the nation: prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony; the society: freedom, equality, justice, rule of law; and the citizen: patriotism, dedication, integrity, friendship.

inconsistency). In spite of this, as a significant value of Chinese metal, the pseudo-evil is a positive attitude in current Chinese society for the ultimate pursuit of the idealistic "true good"[47].

In addition, one important implication of pseudo-evil refers to an existential attitude towards life. Existentialism can be defined as a philosophical idea with a worldview that "reacts to an absurd or meaningless world by urging individuals to overcome alienation, oppression, and despair through freedom and self-creation" (Irwin 2013: 4). Many scholars have linked this idea with the examinations of metal artists' praxes, such as *Metallica* (Sotos 2007; Wisnewski 2007) and *Black Sabbath* (Irwin 2013). The central expressions of existentialism in metal are often understood as facing the absurdity, keeping the authenticity, and making sense of the world. As Irwin (2013: 7-9) summarised, while the fundamental attitude of existentialism is not wallowing but overcoming the absurdity of the reality, the artistic creativity can be a proper response to the pain and difficulty in life. Moreover, man is nothing but that which he makes of himself so that one should prevent losing himself as a free individual by opposing conformity. Finally, man needs to make sense of a world that does not make sense. Considering in the Chinese context, the metal musicians realise and face up to the absurdity (as the social hypocrisy), and keep themselves away from that "conformity" by employing the series of transgressive elements of metal, then make their sense of the world with the pseudo-evil.

---

[47] In fact, this section only initiated the issue of pseudo-evil. Its concept and social implications can be discussed much more in-depth, in which the relevant studies such as the individual psychology, social psychology, and ethics should be involved. Meanwhile, it could be a new perspective for metal studies to measure metal's social meanings and values.

Summary of Chapter

As the final chapter of this thesis, it has concentrated on the multiple meanings of metal music in several aspects in the specific Chinese context. The chapter first understood Chinese metal as a symbolic transgression by illustrating its various subversions against the traditional and mundane aesthetics. Secondly, the chapter has highlighted the catharsis function of the Chinese metal on both the musicians and audiences, in particular, the quasi-ritual effect in metal live. Then, the current negotiating relation between Chinese metal and politics were represented by two controversial local artists *ordinance* and Ai Weiwei. After that, the chapter criticised that there was an absence of authenticity caused by the original "rock mythology" in the praxis of Chinese metal. Meanwhile, it also argued that the contradiction between the commercialism and anti-commercialism ensured the stability and development of the genre. Finally, the chapter has reached further into the country's currently social pathologies, proposing that Chinese metal could be understood as a "pseudo-evil" as an intentional reaction against the general hypocrisy in the contemporary Chinese society

After four chapters discussing the history, identity, industry, and social meaning of Chinese metal, the thesis is moving forward to the section with conclusions and a few questions not included but can be examined further.

Conclusion

This research was, for the first time, set out to explore and present the overall situation of the metal phenomenon in the mainland China, by drawing on a number of literature references, fieldwork materials, multiple textual analyses, and a range of theoretical frameworks. As a relatively unfamiliar and marginal area to the most metal scholars, this study contributed to add the subject of Chinese metal into the current discourse of metal studies, popular music studies, popular musicology, and Chinese contemporary cultural studies. This section summarises and synthesises the main findings and arguments of this research and at the same time points out the directions of further researches.

In the overall sense, by differentiating the concepts of "genre" and "style" and clarifying their relevant connotations in the popular music studies, metal has been comprehensively examined as a genre involving both the textual and contextual dimensions. Given the fact that the definition of metal could always be open and dynamic, for the sake of discussion, metal is tentatively defined in this thesis as a musical genre which is essentially determined by the prototype of *Black Sabbath* with a set of key stylistic characteristics such as the distorted timbre, power-chord and palm mute technique, riff-based structure, and overall loud and massive sound, ideologically featuring a symbolic transgression against the mainstream social norms.

Facing the awkward situation that there had been no academic monograph on Chinese metal when this PhD task was undertaken, the research was launched in a multi-layer academic background mainly referred to the metal studies, musicology, music industries, traditional Chinese aesthetics, philosophy, and cosmopolitanism theory. In doing so, four primary dimensions of Chinese metal were discussed: the history, identity, industry, and social meaning (as more specifically shown below). To fulfil

this multiple-purpose task different methodologies were employed, including data collection (online resources and secondary literature), textual analysis (musical analysis, subject matter analysis, graphic analysis, and video analysis), and personal fieldwork (online interview and face-to-face interview). Fortunately, this combination of approaches has been proven effective to this metal study, which may also positively promote the development of the methodology of popular music studies and popular musicology to bridge the textual analysis and contextual interpretation.

- Historicising a complete chronicle of Chinese metal's development (from 1990 to 2013) so far to establish a basis of "fact" for any further consideration of Chinese metal.

- Identifying the characteristics of Chinese metal in the context of cosmopolitanism, and revealing the regulation of what happened to the identity of Chinese metal as a transplanted culture phenomenon in the global atmosphere.

- Investigating the current industrial system of Chinese metal in the theoretical framework of cultural product and field, and exploring the approach for a non-mainstream musical genre to survive in today's popular music industries.

- Interpreting the social meanings and values of Chinese metal to the modern Chinese society, based on the genre's essence of symbolic transgression.

More specifically, on the historical dimension, the complete development trajectory of Chinese metal between 1990 and 2013 was formed by two waves: heavy rock era (1990-1996) and extreme metal era (2000-2013), which were connected by a

transitional Nu-metal (1997-) movement. In this period, there were two most significant moments of 1990 and 2000 that witnessed the initiation of metal as a style and the formation of metal as a genre in the country, respectively. Since that the development of Chinese metal has been moving forward with the social process of the country such as the economic growth, technological progress, and cultural liberalism, its trajectory was not simply a duplication of the West but presenting a unique U-shape curve: starting in the mainstream field in the early 1990s, declining in the late 1990s, booming underground in the early 2000s, and rising again in the 2010s. At the same time, the overall evolvement of Chinese metal has been experiencing a self-adjusting mechanism that balanced its mainstream and underground status. When an underground metal subgenre (or artist) gradually became commercial and mainstream, another more underground one would always rise with newer ideological and stylistic characteristics to replace the previous one's status in the general metal praxis.

Regarding identity dimension, Chinese metal must be understood as a transplanted culture and therefore considered in a general background of acculturation. Similar to the development process of Chinese metal, the identity characteristics of Chinese metal participants presented the elitism in the 1990s, populism in the 2000s, and multiplicity in the 2010s. This trend explicitly echoed with Adorno's idea of the transition from the elitism aesthetics to mass aesthetics with the popular music's modern industrialisation. As a transplanted cultural phenomenon, the development of Chinese metal has been inevitably undergoing a tension between globalisation and localisation, which were reflected in the texts of the music, MVs, cover arts, and folk metal subgenre. The case study of agriculture metal further revealed a particular identity struggle by the current Chinese metal musicians in the cosmopolitanism trend of global metal, which was realised by the process of original identity suspension, textual deconstruction, and identity reconstruction. More theoretically, there was an identity-aesthetics mechanism ensuring that "metal" would always be "metal" with

new elements and materials being constantly joined. This mechanism also indicated that Chinese metal could be possibly inscribed into the general "metal" as long as the Chinese identities were aesthetically and artistically represented in certain subgenres and styles.

Considering the industrial dimension, there was evidence showing that Chinese metal industries had made great progress since its beginning around 2001, mainly driven by the country's rapid economic growth and cultural diversity. In such climate, a relatively mature system of industry was established in the 2000s, including the sections of labels, recordings, lives, media, merchandise, and a few peripheral non-profit activities. This system consisted of different fields among which the flow and mutual exchange of different capitals served as the most crucial role in maintaining the overall industries survival. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that although the Chinese metal industries showed a superficial prosperity especially reflected by the statistics of the number of the metal labels, released albums, and live music events, there were unresolved issues such as the regional imbalances and low incomes of the local metal musicians. In fact, the real situation of the Chinese metal industries could be described as a "best game no one played" in which the overall industries were still more structured on the cultural capital accumulation more than economic profit. This also raised a huge task for the metal entrepreneurs and scholars to explore more effective ways of obtaining the balance between cultural and economic capitals.

On the social dimension, Chinese metal showed particular and significant meanings and values in the modern Chinese society in many aspects. The essence of Chinese metal (especially extreme metal) should be understood as a naturally symbolic transgression in Chinese society due to its various subversions against the traditional, mundane, and mainstream aesthetic conventions. As one result of such symbolic transgression, Chinese metal provided the participants with a catharsis to temporarily

escape from the pressures of the reality. This catharsis especially worked in the live performance via a quasi-ritual mechanism. Also, unlike the overt criticism stance of Chinese rock in the 1980s and 1990s (represented by Cui Jian), the majority of contemporary Chinese metal artists did not show strong connections with politics. Instead, the case studies of two controversial artists *Ordinance* and Ai Weiwei suggested a newer negotiating relationship between Chinese metal and politics. Furthermore, there was a fundamental absence of authenticity in Chinese metal resulted by an innate contradiction between the genre's so-called "rock mythology" ideology and its inevitable commercialism. However, from another perspective, such contradiction or say dialectic had served as an inner force that boosted the Chinese metal's stylistic evolvements, ideological changes, and sustainable progress. Finally, given the fact that China was/is experiencing a variety of modern social pathologies, in particular, a general hypocrisy, Chinese metal presented a unique feature of "pseudo-evil" as an intentional reaction against the hypocrisy, which should be understood as a positive value in the contemporary Chinese society.

As a pioneering research focusing on Chinese metal, the original and initial findings, arguments, and conclusions shown above make this thesis an integral piece of the puzzle for the overall metal studies. However, due to the various restrictions such as the time, budget, personal ability, and other practical reasons, this research could be therefore potentially more extensive with a few issues that not have been discussed yet. The further researchers could primarily target on two directions: the female in Chinese metal and the praxis in the peripheral regions.

Recently, gender has become an increasingly discussed topic among Chinese music scholars, both in serious music field (Yao 2015) and popular music (Song 2015). A more recent Masters dissertation on the Chinese metal scene also concluded that it was male-dominated (Zheng 2016: 67). However, these studies are still undertaken in a preliminary stage, or introducing the existing gender theories and findings of the

western scholars rather than examining the issues in the Chinese praxis. Particularly, being commonly known as an almost male dominant art, metal could be an effective case to widen and deepen the Chinese gender discourse such as the issues of identity and social power. Although this topic has not been explored in this thesis, there are a few initial considerations.

First, it is important to recognise the difference between biological sex and cultural gender (Abercrombie, Hill, &Turner 1988: 103). For instance, the ex-vocalist of *Arch Enemy*, Angela Gossow, has achieved a global reputation for her voice which is even more skillfully brutal and inhuman than many male vocalists do. However, this also brings about a contradiction that a female makes a success in metal praxis by performing like a man, in which the female identities are in fact lost. Then, how should we understand such gender contradiction in metal?

Secondly, according to Becker (1974), popular music is a collective action in practice. In this sense, the subjects of gender research do not only refer to the female artists but also the associated support personnel in the metal industries. For example, according to my personal experience, there have been not many female artists within the Chinese metal scene by the mid-2010s. However, the female participants indeed play other roles, such as the two female interviewees in my fieldwork Zhang Yichi and Guo Shuobo whose roles in the scene are label manager assist and music critic.

Thirdly, the scholar is another important identity (but is usually ignored) of female participation in the general metal discourse. For example, the female scholars such as Deena Weinstein as a sociologist, Donna Gaines as a sociological journalist, and Emma Baulch as an ethnographer had made great academic contributions to metal studies (Hickam & Wallach 2011: 255). More importantly, the studies by these female scholars are not simply an observation of metal music but also a self-reflection with particular female attitudes and stances within the metal culture.

In addition to the female issue, the peripheral regions within Chinese metal scene also need more in-depth investigations. Just like Chinese metal being a peripheral but still integral part in the global metal praxis, there are also peripheral but important regions within the Chinese metal scene, especially the north-west areas with relatively lagging economic development such as Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, and Tibet. Given the fact that China is vast geographical, the main difficulties to undertake examinations in such areas are time and budget. In the fieldwork of this research, two provinces Qinghai and Xinjiang were included but merely in a highly preliminary stage by the online interviews with two local metalheads (Du Yu 2014; Yan Weixin 2015) who used to live in Wuhan for a few years. Even worse, we almost know nothing about the metal in Gansu and Tibet at all. Therefore, more in-depth field works in these areas are necessary to promote and enrich the current Chinese metal studies.

In conclusion, after a quarter-century history since 1990, Chinese metal has already become one of the prominent integral components of the contemporary Chinese culture and popular music industries. As a transplanted genre, Chinese metal's innate tension of globalisation and localisation does not only ensure the genre's sustainable development and evolvement but also makes it a continuous topic in the global metal praxis and discourse. More significantly, due to its essential attribute of symbolic transgression, Chinese metal is showing increasingly positive functions and values in the face of the negative consequences of the country's modernization. All of these determine Chinese metal's particularly economic, social, artistic, and academic values in a variety of perspectives and levels. At the stage of the study of Chinese metal having been just broached, I hope this thesis could serve as a basis for further researches.

Perhaps, one of the ultimate aims of creating and understanding arts is to seek for the answer to how to use them to make a better world both materially and spiritually for human beings. The vocalist of the great *Iron Maiden*, Bruce Dickinson, declared in

the 2010 Sonisphere Festival that "If heavy metal bands ruled the world, we'd be a lot better off". He could be right, might be wrong, but at least, we always have reasons to expect, since

"Art cannot change the world, but it can contribute to changing the consciousness and drives of the men and women who could change the world" (Marcuse 1978: 32).

Appendix 1 Full List of Secondary Metal Literatures

This section provides details about the secondary metal literature, listed in a Chronological Order.

List of Chinese Local Metal Magazines and Fanzines

Title	Period	Issues
Extreme Music	2000-2011	Vol.1- 30
Painkiller	2000-2013	Vol.1- 50
Dragon Land	2003-2011	Vol.1- 4
Total Thrash	2009-	Updated annually
Metal Music E-Magazine http://www.guitarchina.com/metalmusic/	2008-2010	Vol.1- 6
XmusicK E-Fanzine	2012-	Updated in weekdays

List of Important Metal Documentaries

Date	Title	Director(s)	Studio/Publisher/Resource
1988	The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years	Spheeris. P	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joX5ed4IF5k
1989	Arena: Heavy Metal	Gallacher. H	BBC Illuminations Films
1992	Dream Deceivers: The Story Behind James Vance vs. Judas Priest	Van Taylor. D	KNPB Channel 5 Public Broadcasting
2001	Classic Albums: Judas Priest - British Steel	Kirkby. T	Isis Productions
2003	Grindcore: 85 Minutes of Brutal Heavy Metal	Unknown	Varese Sarabande
2004	Kiss Loves You	Heneghan. J	Video Music, Inc
2004	Metallica: Some Kind of Monster	Berlinger. J Sinofsky. B	Radical Media, Third Eye Motion Picture Company
2004	Death Metal: A Documentary		Grimoire
2005	Metal: A Headbanger's Journey	McFadyen. S Dunn. S Wise. J	Seville Pictures/Warner Home Video
2006	Get Thrashed: The Story of Thrash Metal	Ernst. R	Vivendi Entertainment
2006	Heavy: The Story of Metal	Warren. M. J	441 Productions
2006	Heavy Metal: Louder than Live	Carruthers. D	First Look Pictures/Fremantle Media
2007	Global Metal	McFadyen. S	Seville Pictures/Warner Home

		Dunn. S	Video
2007	Rat Skates: Born in The Base-ment	DeAngelis-Kundrat. L	Kundrat Productions
2007	Heavy Metal in Baghdad	Alvi. S Moretti. E	VBS.TV, Vice Films
2007	Black Metal: A Documentary	Zebub. B	Bill Zebub Productions
2007	Once Upon a Time in Norway	Aasdal.P Ledang. M	Grenzeløs Productions
2008	Black Metal Satanica	Lundberg. M	Unknown
2008	Anvil: The Story of Anvil	Gervasi. S	Unknown
2008	Promised Land of Heavy Metal	Kuusniemi. K	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksYx1XuQivw
2008	Until the Light Takes Us	Aites. A Ewell. A	Factory 25
2009	Iron Maiden: Flight 666	Dunn. S McFadyen. S	Banger Films, Phantom Music Management, EMI
2009	Pagan Metal: A Documentary	Zebub. B	Grimoire
2010	Heavy Metal Britannia	Rodley. C	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)
2010	Lemmy	Olliver. G Orshoski. W	Damage Case Films & Distribution, Secret Weapon Films, Stay Free Films
2011	God Bless Ozzy Osbourne	Fleiss. M Piscitelli. M	Eagle Rock Entertainment
2011	Metal Evolution	McFadyen. S Dunn. S	Tricon Films & Television
2011	Power Metal Point	Wright. B	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDE335CCFCA997D3C&feature=plcp
2013	Attention: Black Metal	Rusz ák. M	http://eng.attentionblackmetal.hu/

Appendix 2 Full List of Interviewees

This section provides details about the interviewees in the fieldwork of this research.

Ben. 2015, Interview with author, Wuhan, 28 February
Ben, male, is a thirty-something French who has been lived in Wuhan China for over seven years, and now is working as a language teacher in Wuhan University. He is the vocalist of a local Hardcore/Metal band *Skull Crasher*.

Du Wei. 2014, Interview with author, Wuhan, 28 June
Du, male, is a thirty-something middle-class civil servant in Wuhan, working in a local governmental funeral parlour. He was one of the forerunners of Wuhan metal scene in the late 1990s. Now, he is still active in the Chinese metal scene as the front man of the death metal band *Vanished River*.

Du Yu. 2014, Interview with author, Email interview, 12 June
Du, male, is a twenty-something black metal vocalist and a famous metal connoisseur in Xining which was/is a north-west city with a much less developed local metal scene. He is now working as a trainman of a local railway corporation.

Guo Shuobo. 2015, Interview with author, Wuhan, 15 July
Guo, female, is a thirty-something scholar and senior lecturer at Sichuan Fine Arts Institute in Chongqing. Because of her academic background in the philosophy and aesthetics, she is not only a female metal fan but also an academic observer in the Chinese metal scene.

Li Meng. 2015, Interview with author, Beijing, 9 March
Li, male, is a twenty-something metal guitarist, who moved from his hometown Xi'an to Beijing with his band *Ancestor* to pursue a better metal career several years ago. Now, he is living in Beijing by running a small café which also becomes an important venue for local metalheads gatherings.

Liu Lixin. 2015, Interview with author, Beijing, 11 March
Liu, male, forty-something, is one of the central figures with multiple identities in the second wave of Chinese metal. He was the founder and guitarist of the Nu-metal/ Metalcore band *Ordinance*. He is also well-known as the manager of the famous live house in Beijing, 13 Club, and indie metal label, DIME records.
https://site.douban.com/club13/
https://site.douban.com/dimerecords/

Kou Zhengyu. 2015, Interview with author, Beijing, 9 March
Kou, male, forty-something, is one of the most famous Chinese metal guitarist from Beijing, especially as the original member of the band *Suffocated* and *Spring Autumn*.

Meanwhile, he was the initiator of the first metal festival in the mainland China, 330 Metal Festival, who also serves as a live promoter in currently. Notably, Kou is one of the few Chinese metal artists who can make a living merely by the music.

Pen Pei, 2015, Interview with author, Wuhan, 28 February
Pen, male, forty-something, is one of the earliest metal drummers in Wuhan, who had played for more than ten local bands since the late 1990s and is still active as the drummer of the band *Skull Crasher* and S.C.O.D. He is now working as an officer in Huazhong University of Science and Technology.

Sui Xiaowei, 2013, Interview with author, Email interview, 11 December
- 2015, Interview with author, Beijing, 9 March
Sui, male, is a thirty-something metal journalist in Beijing, who experiences a great reputation in the Chinese metal scene as the ex-editor of the local metal magazine "*Extreme Music*" and the local online metal radio "*Metal Sonata*". He is now making a living as a part-time salesman of an IT corporation.

Wang Brutal, 2014, Interview with author, Email interview, 11 March
Wang, male, is a thirty-something pioneer metal entrepreneur from Xuzhou, who is the manager of a local death metal label, Brutal Reign Productions.
http://brutalreignproductions.bandcamp.com/

Wang Xiao, 2015, Interview with author, Beijing, 11 March
Wang, male, forty-something, is one of the earliest and influential figures in Chinese metal industries, with multiple identities including the initiator of the online community "AreaDeath", journalist and manager of the metal magazine "*Extreme Music*", founder and manager of Area Death Productions. Now, he is the manager of the biggest metal music store, 666 Rock Shop in Beijing.
http://www.areadeath.net/main/index.php
http://adp.areadeath.net/
http://www.xmusick.com/

Wang Zhou, 2014, Interview with author, Wuhan, 16 June
Wang, male, thirty-something, was the ex-drummer of black metal band *Grave Keeper* between 2002 and 2007. He is now the manager of a technology corporation in Wuhan and has nothing to do with metal anymore.

Yan Xinwen, 2015, Interview with author, Email interview, 4 March
Yan, male, thirty-something, was a metal bassist when he had his university education in Wuhan. He is now living in Urumchi as a freelance.

Zhang Cheng, 2015, Interview with author, Wuhan, 11 February
Zhang, male, thirty-something, is a nationally famous musician, not only for metal but also many other genres such as jazz and pop. He was the ex-bassist of death metal

band "*Vanished River*". He is now employed by Wuhan Conservatory as a bass teacher.

Zhang Heng, 2014, Interview with author, Wuhan, 16 June
Zhang, male, thirty-something, was the ex-guitarist of black metal band *Grave Keeper* between 2002 and 2007. He is now the founder of a technology corporation (the same one with Wang Zhou) in Wuhan and has nothing to do with metal anymore.

Zhang Yichi, 2015, Interview with author, Wuhan, 8 March
Zhang, female, twenty-something, is working as a tour guide in a travel company of Wuhan. She is also active in Chinese metal scene as band tour assistant.

Zhang Yun, 2015, Interview with author, Beijing, 10 March
Zhang, male, is a forty-something company manager in Beijing, who is also well known as a metal journalist and scholar in the local scene. He was one of the founders of "*Extreme Music*", the ex-editor of "*Dragon Land*", and the founder of the online community "Demogorgon" which contributes to spreading metal culture.
https://www.douban.com/people/Demogorgon/

Bibliography

Abbruzzese, J. 2015, "Forget Taylor Swift: Metalheads are Spotify's Biggest Listeners" Retrieved from
http://mashable.com/2015/05/31/spotify-mixed-blessing-metal/#C344wIo0AsqX
[Accessed 21-Jan-2016]

Abercrombie, N., Hill, S., Turner, B. 1988, *Dictionary of Sociology*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Press.

Adorno, T. W. 1990, "On Popular Music", in F. Simon, A. Goodwin (Eds.), *On Record*, London: Routledge, pp. 301-314.

Aites, A., Ewell, A. 2008, Documentary "*Until the Light Takes Us*", Factory 25.

Andrew, J. F. 1994, "The Politics of Popular Music in Post - Tiananmen China", in J. N. Wasserstrom, E. J. Perry (Eds.), *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China*, Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 148-165.

Appen, R. V. 2015, *Song Interpretation in 21st-Century Pop Music (Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series)*, Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Arnett, J. 1993, "Three Profiles of Heavy Metal Fans: A Taste for Sensation and a Subculture of Alienation", *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol.16, No. 4: pp. 423-443.

Arnett, J. 1996, *Metalheads: Heavy Metal Music and Adolescent Alienation*, Westview Press.

Avelar, I. 2003, "Heavy Metal Music in Postdictatorial Brazil: Sepultura and the Coding of Nationality in Sound", *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3: pp. 329-346.

Ball, M. S., Smith. G. W. H. 1992, *Analyzing Visual Data (Qualitative Research Methods)*, Sage Publications.

Barthes, R. 1977, 'The Grain of the Voice', in S. Heath, (Translator), *Image-Music-Text*, Fontana Press, pp. 179-189, Retrieved from
http://www.gregsandow.com/BookBlog/grain_of_the_voice.pdf
[Accessed 27-Apr-2016]

Baranovitch, N. 2003, *China's New Voice- Popular Music, Ethnicity, Gender, and Politics, 1978-1997*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Baulch, E. 2007, *Making Scenes: Reggae, Punk, and Death Metal in 1990s Bali*, Durham: Duke University Press.

Beard, D., Gloag, K. 2005, *Musicology*: *The Key Concepts*, London: Routledge.

Becker, H. S. 1974, "Art as Collective Action", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 39, No. 6: pp. 767-776.

Beebee Pop, 2015a, "The Report of Live-House in China 2014", Retrieved from http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?__biz=MzA5ODk3MTEyMQ==&mid=204128861&idx=1&sn=50e3439a1ccce6e33d11820ae6b266ca#rd
[Accessed 27-Apr-2015]

- 2015b, "A Set of Statistics Tells You That What Have Midi Festival Done in the Past 16 Years?", Retrieved from http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?__biz=MzA5ODk3MTEyMQ==&mid=210424243&idx=1&sn=95b6e978793d759c1e686381c85e31b4&scene=0#rd
  [Accessed 14-Sep-2015]

Behr, A; Brennan, M; Cloonan, M; Frith, S; Webster, E. 2016, "Live Concert Performance: An Ecological Approach", *Rock Music Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1: pp. 5-23.

Bennett, J. 2014, "Conference Review Pop-MAC 2013", *Popular Music*, Vol. 33, No. 2: pp. 341-342.

Blessing, A. K., Donhauser, J. 2007, "Fade to Black: Absurdity, Suicide, and the Downward Spiral", in W. Irwin (Ed.), *Metallica and Philosophy: a Crash Course in Brain Surgery*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 148-159.

Blistein, J. 2014, "Is There a Link between Metal Bands and a Country's Wealth", Retrieved from http://m.rollingstone.com/music/news/is-there-a-link-between-metal-bands-and-a-countrys-wealth-20140529
[Accessed 02-Jun-2014]

Bourdieu, P. 1984, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, London: Routledge

- 1989, "The Forms of Capital", in A. H. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. Brown, A. Stuart-Wells (Eds.), *Education: Culture, Economy and Society*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp.46-58.

Brace, T. 1991, "Popular Music in Contemporary Beijing: Modernism and Cultural Identity", *Asian Music*, Vol. 22, No. 2: pp. 43-66.

Brace, T., Friedlander, P. (1992), "Rock and Roll on the New Long March- Popular Music, Cultural Identity and Political Opposition in the People's Republic of China", in R. Garofalo (Ed.), *Rockin' the Boat*, Boston, MA: South End Press, pp. 115-128.

Brown, A. (2003), "Heavy Metal and Subcultural Theory: A Paradigmatic Case of Neglect", in D. Muggleton, R. Weinzierl (Eds.), *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, Oxford: Berg.

Brown, A. R. (2011), "Heavy Genealogy: Mapping the Currents, Contraflows and Conflicts of the Emergent Field of Metal Studies, 1978-2010", *Journal for Cultural Research*, Vol. 15, No. 3: pp. 213-242.

Buskirk, E. V. 2015a, "Top 25 Metal Genres on Spotify", Retrieved from https://insights.spotify.com/us/2015/08/05/top-25-metal-genres-on-spotify/ [Accessed 08-Aug-2015]

- 2015b, "Which Music Genres Have the Loyalest Fans", Retrieved from https://insights.spotify.com/us/2015/04/02/loyalest-music-fans-by-genre/ [Accessed 29-Dec-2015]

Cai, SW., Wen, HQ. 2006, *The Introduction of Cultural Industries*, Shanghai: Fudan University Press.

Cai, ZD. 1981, "The Thoughts of Music in '*Yue Ji*'", *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music*, 1981, No. 2: pp. 10-17.

- 1986, "Discussing the Musical Thoughts of Confucianism", *Journal of the Conservatory of Sichuan*, 1986, No. 4: pp. 9-19.

Campbell, J. 2011, *Red Rock: The Long Strange March to Chinese Rock & Roll*, Earnshaw Books Limited.

CAPA, 2012, "2011 China Performance Market Annual Report" Retrieved from http://www.capa.com.cn/news/showDetail/78

- 2013, "2012 China Performance Market Annual Report" Retrieved from http://www.capa.com.cn/news/showDetail/60342

- 2014, "2013 China Performance Market Annual Report" Retrieved from http://www.capa.com.cn/news/showDetail/65993

- 2015, "2014 China Performance Market Annual Report" Retrieved from http://www.wendangxiazai.com/b-830ec55389eb172ded63b7bd.html [Accessed 07-Jan-2016]

Chen, WB. 2010, "Examine Heavy Metal Music in Mainland China: A case study of *'Tang Dynasty'*", Master dissertation, Nanjing: Nanjing Arts Institute.

Chen, WH. 2003, "Discussions on Confucian Aesthetic Thoughts", *Quest*, No. 1: pp. 207-210

Cheng, DM. 2002, "The Cultural Development of China since the Reform and Opening-up Policy", *Academic Forum*, 2002, No. 2: pp. 118-121.

Chow, Y. F., de Kloet, J. 2013, *Sonic Multiplicities: Hong Kong Pop and the Global Circulation of Sound and Image*, Bristol: Intellect.

Christe, I. 2004, *Sound of the Beast: the Complete Headbanging History of Heavy Metal*, New York: Harper Entertainment.

Christenson, P., Roberts, D. 1998, *It's Not Only Rock & Roll, Popular Music in the Lives of Adolescents*, Hampton Press.

Cloonan, M. 2011, "Live Music as Ideology", *IASPM 2011 Proceedings*: pp. 77-88.
Retrieved from http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/106119/1/106119.pdf
[Accessed 03-Aug-2015]

Colletti, J. 2013, "Merch Table: Supplementing Music Income Through T-Shirt Sales"
Retrieved from
http://www.trustmeimascientist.com/2013/08/05/merch-table-the-math-behind-supplementing-creative-income-through-t-shirt-sales/
[Accessed 21-Jan-2016]

Cohen, A. 1985, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, London: Tavistock Press.

Cohen, S. 1999, "Scenes", in B. Horner and T. Swiss (Ed.), *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 139-250.

Connell, J., C. Gibson. 2004, "World Music: Deterritorializing Place and Identity", *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 28, No. 3: pp. 342-361.

Copley, J. 2008, "Psychology of Heavy Metal Music: Effects on Mood, Aggression, Suicide, Drug Use and Intelligence" Retrieved from
http://suite101.com/article/psychology-of-heavy-metal-music-a53261
[Accessed 16-Aug-2012]

De Kloet, J. 2005a, "Authenticating Geographies and Temporalities: Representations of Chinese Rock in China", *Visual Anthropology*, Vol. 18, No. 2-3: pp. 229-256.
-    2005b, "Sonic Sturdiness: the Globalisation of 'Chinese' Rock and Pop", *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol. 22, No. 4: pp. 321-338.

- 2010, *China with a Cut: Globalisation Urban Youth and Popular Music*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Dome, M., Popoff, M. (Eds.), 2013, *The Art of Metal: Five Decades of Heavy Metal Album Covers, Posters, T-Shirts, and More*, Voyageur Press.

Duffy, M. 2005, "Performing Identity within a Multicultural Framework", *Social & Cultural Geography*, Vol. 6, No. 5: pp. 677-692.

Dunn, S., McFadyen, S. 2005, Documentary "*Metal: A Headbangers' Journey*", Seville Pictures/Warner Home Video.

- 2007, Documentary "*Global Metal*", Warner Home Video.

- 2011, Documentary "*Metal Evolution*", Tricon Films & Television.

Ecker, C. 2009, "Voice Production in Death Metal Singers", NAG/DAGA 2009 International Conference on Acoustics Rotterdam, 23 - 26 March 2009 including the 35th German Annual Conference on Acoustics (DAGA).

Ernst, R. 2006, Documentary "*Get Thrashed: The Story of Thrash Metal*", Vivendi Entertainment.

Epstein, J. S., Pratto, D. J. 1994, "Heavy Metal Rock Music Juvenile Delinquency and Satanic Identification", *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 14, No.4: 67-76.

Fabbri, F. 1981, "Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications", *Popular Music Perspectives*, (June): pp. 52-81.

Fabbri, F., Chambers, I. 1982, "What Kind of Music", *Popular Music*, Vol. 2, Theory and Method: pp. 131-143.

Florida, R. 2012, "Where the Heavy Metal Bands Are: Why Do Most Heavy Metal Bands Hail from Scandinavia and Northern Europe?" Retrieved from
http://www.citylab.com/design/2012/04/where-heavy-metal-bands-are/1714/
[Accessed 02-Jun-2014]

- 2014, "How Heavy Metal Tracks the Wealth of Nations: This Music of Disillusion and Despair Is, Strangely, Biggest in Countries with Very High Quality of Life" Retrieved from
  http://www.citylab.com/politics/2014/05/how-heavy-metal-tracks-the-wealth-of-nations/371473/
  [Accessed 02-Jun-2014]

Fonarow, W. 2006, *Empire of Dirt: The Aesthetics and Rituals of British Indie Music*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Fornäs, J. 1995, "The Future of Rock: Discourses that Struggle to Define a Genre", *Popular Music,* Vol.14, No. 1: 111-125.

Fosl, P. S. 2007, "Metallica, Nietzsche, and Marx: the Immorality of Morality", in W. Irwin (Ed.), *Metallica and Philosophy: a Crash Course in Brain Surgery*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 74-84.

Freemuse. 2013, "China: Video and Song by Ai Weiwei Banned" Retrieved from http://freemuse.org/archives/6021
[Accessed 14-Apr-2015]

Friedlander, P. 1991, "China's 'Newer Value' Pop: Rock-and-Roll and Technology on the New Long March", *Asian Music*, Vol. 22, No. 2: pp. 67-81.

Friesen, B. K., Epstein, J. S. 1994, "Rock 'n' Roll Ain't Noise Pollution: Artistic Conventions and Tensions in the Major Subgenres of Heavy Metal Music", *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 18, No. 3: pp.1-17.

Frith, S. 1978, *Sociology of Rock*, London: Constable.

- 1983, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock*, London: Constable.

- 2007a, "Live music matters", *Scottish Music Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1: pp. 1-17. Retrieved from
  http://blue.caad.ed.ac.uk/ojs/index.php/SMR/article/viewFile/9/8
  [Accessed 09-Feb-2014]

- 2007b, *Taking Popular Music Seriously*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

- 2008, "Why Music Matters", *Critical Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 1- 2: pp. 165-179.

Fu, B. 2008, "Ceremony of Catharsis: the Anthromusicological Study of Rock Music in Mainland China", PhD thesis, Beijing (China) Chinese National Academy of Arts.

Galuszka, P., Wyrzykowska, K. M. 2016, "Running a Record Label When Records Don't Sell Anymore: Empirical Evidence from Poland", *Popular Music*, Vol. 35, No. 1: pp. 23-40.

Gardstrom, C. S. 1999, "Music Exposure and Criminal Behaviour: Perceptions of Juvenile Offenders", *Journal of Music Therapy*, Vol. 3: pp. 207-221.

GBtimes. 2013 Feb, "Ordnance's Heavy Metal Music Banned in China" Retrieved from
http://gbtimes.com/life/ordnances-heavy-metal-music-banned-china
[Accessed 12-Jun-2014]

Ge, T. 2004, "The Recording Industry of Shanghai between the early Twentieth Century
and 1937", *Historical Review*, 2004, No. 6: pp. 53-60.

-   2008, "The Social Changes Recorded by Sounds", PhD thesis. Shanghai: Fudan
    University.

Gong, T. 2005, "Serve for the People's Amusement", *Science & Technology Information*,
2005, No. 2: pp. 68-72.

Groenewegen-Lau, J. 2014, "Steel and Strawberries: How Chinese Rock Became State-
Sponsored", *Asian Music*, Vol. 45, No. 1: pp. 3-33.

Gross, R. L. 1990, "Heavy Metal Music: A New Subculture in American Society",
Journal of Popular Culture, Vol.24, No.1, pp: 119-130.

Guo, L. 2008, "Analyzing Development of Chinese Rock", *Journal of Shangqiu Normal
College*, Vol. 24, No. 5: pp. 126-127.

Hainaut, B. 2012, "'Fear and Wonder': Dark Fantasy and Mediant Harmony, from
Hollywood to Black Metal", *Volume*, Vol. 9, No. 2: pp. 179-197.

Hanks, W. F. 1987, "Discourse Genres in a Theory of Practice", *American Ethnologist*,
Vol. 14, No. 4: pp. 668-692.

Harrell, J. 1994, "The Poetics of Destruction: Death Metal Rock", *Popular Music and
Society*, Vol. 18, No. 1: pp. 91-103.

Harrison, L. M. 2010, "Factory Music: How the Industrial Geography and Working- Class
Environment of Post-War Birmingham Fostered the Birth of Heavy Metal", *Journal of
Social History*, Vol. 44, No. 1: pp. 145-158.

Hawkins, S. 1996, "Perspectives in Popular Musicology: Music, Lennox, and Meaning in
1990s Pop", *Popular Music*, Vol. 15, No. 1: pp. 17-36.

He, X. 2002, "The Rise of Chinese MTV and Its Characteristics 1", *Chinese Music*, 2002,
No. 1: pp. 21-29.

-   2002, "The Rise of Chinese MTV and Its Characteristics 2", *Chinese Music*, 2002, No.
    2: pp. 8-17.

Heaney, M. L. 2012, *Music as Theology*: *What Music Has to Say about the Word*, Eugene OR: Pickwick Publications.

Hecker, P. 2005, "Taking a Trip to the Middle Eastern Metal Scene: Transnational Social Spaces and Identity Formations on a Non-national Level", *Nord-Sud Aktuell*, Vol. 5, No. 1: pp. 57-66.

-    2010, "Heavy Metal in the Middle East: New Urban Spaces in a Translocal Underground", in A. Bayat, & L. Herrera (Eds.), *Being Young and Muslim: New Cultural Politics in the Global South and North*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

-    2012, *Turkish Metal - Music, Meaning and Morality in a Muslim Society*, Burlington: Ashgate Press.

Hesmondhalgh, D. 2005, "Subcultures, Scenes or Tribes: None of the Above", *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1: pp. 21-40.

-    1999, "Indie: The institutional politics and aesthetics of a popular music genre", *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1: pp. 34-61.

Hibbett, R. 2005, "What Is Indie Rock", *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 1: pp. 55-77.

Hickam, B., Wallach, J. 2011, "Female Authority and Dominion: Discourse and Distinctions of Heavy Metal Scholarship", *Journal for Cultural Research* Vol. 15, No. 3: pp.255-277.

Hill, R. 2011, "Emo Saved My Life: Challenging the Mainstream Discourse of Mental Illness around My Chemical Romance", in C. A. Mckinnon, N. Scott, K. Sollee (Eds.), *Can I Play with Madness? Metal, Dissonance, Madness and Alienation*, Oxford: Inter-disciplinary Press, pp. 143-154. Retrieved from http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/publishing/id-press/ebooks/can-i-play-with-madness [Accessed 23-Sep-2015]

Hjelm, T., Kahn-Harris, K., LeVine, M. (Eds.), 2013, *Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures (Studies in Popular Music)*, Equinox Publishing Ltd.

Holt, F. 2007, *Genre in Popular Music*, London: University of Chicago Press.

Hong, Z. 1998, "The Rock in Sunset: On '*Black Panther*'", *The World of Music*, 1998, No. 3: pp. 22-23.

Huang, H. 2001, "Yaogun Yinyue: Rethinking Mainland Chinese Rock n' Roll", *Popular Music*, Vol. 20, No. 1: pp. 1-11.

- 2003, "Voices from Chinese Rock, Past and Present Tense: Social Commentary and Construction of Identity in Yaogun Yinyue, from Tiananmen to the Present", *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 26, No. 2: pp. 183-202.

Hunter, D. 2004, *Guitar Effects Pedals the Practical Handbook Book*, Backbeat Books.

Irwin, W. (Ed.), 2007, *Metallica and Philosophy: A Crash Course in Brain Surgery*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

- 2013, *Black Sabbath and Philosophy: Mastering Reality*, Malden: John Wiley & Sons.

Jiang, KY. 1984, "Reviewing the thoughts of musical aesthetics in '*Yue Ji*'", *Social Sciences in China*, 1984, No. 3: pp. 117-137.

Jiang, W. 2008, "Why Promoting Overseas Rock Bands Performing in China Is Always a Loss?" Retrieved from
http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4e0631b301008v9f.html

- 2009, "Why Is Metal Live Unprofitable, But I Do" Retrieved from
http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4e0631b30100gb0s.html

- 2013, "Talking about Watching and Holding Lives" Retrieved from
http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4e0631b30101cowj.html
[Accessed 10-Jan-2016]

Johnson, R. 1993, *Introduction: The Field of Cultural Production By Pierre Bourdieu*, Columbia: Columbia UP.

Jung, C. 1991, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, London: Routledge.

Kahn-Harris, K. 2000, "'Roots': the Relationship between the Global and the Local within the Extreme Metal Scene", *Popular Music*, Vol. 19, No. 1: 13-30.

- 2003, "Death Metal and the Limits of Musical Expression", in M. Cloonan, & R. Gazofalo (Eds.), 2003, *Policing Pop*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 81-99.

- 2004, "The 'Failure' of Youth Culture Reflexivity, Music and Politics in the Black Metal Scene", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1: 95-111.

- 2007, *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*, Oxford: Berg Editorial Offices.

- 2011, "Metal Studies: Intellectual Fragmentation or Organic Intellectualism", *Journal for Cultural Research*, Vol. 15, No.3: pp. 251-253.

Kaplan, E. A. 1987, *Rocking Around the Clock: Music, Television, Postmodernism and Consumer Culture*, London: Routledge.

Ke, R. 2014, "Briefly Discuss on the Operation Modals of the Recording Companies in Mainland China", *Space-time of Music*, 2014, No. 7: pp. 123-124

Keat, R., Urry, J. 1975, *Social Theory as Science*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Keferstein, L. A. 2008, *The Four Abrahams: A Philosophical Discourse on Heavy Metal and Modernity*, Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/1236891/The_Four_Abrahams_A_philosophical_discourse_on_Heavy_Metal_and_Modernity_improved_translation_
[Accessed 03-May-2015]

Krims, A. 2007, *Music and Urban Geography*, New York: Routledge.

Laing, D. 1985, *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Larrouy-Maestri, P., Morsomme, D. 2012, "Criteria and Tools for Objectively Analysing the Vocal Accuracy of a Popular Song", *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology*, Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22721558
[Accessed 24-Jun-2013]

Lei, MQ. 2014, "The Evolvement of the Aesthetic Characteristics of Chinese Popular Music and Its Social Motivation", *People's Music*, 2014, No. 8: pp. 70-73.

LeVine, M. 2008, *Heavy Metal Islam: Rock, Resistance, and the Struggle for the Soul of Islam*, New York: Three River Press.

Li, W. 2009, "The Thirty Years of Chinese Rock", *Tianya*, 2009, No. 2: pp. 162-169.

Lindholm, P. 2007, "The Struggle Within: Hetfield, Kierkegaard, and the Pursuit of Authenticity", in W. Irwin (Ed.), *Metallica and Philosophy: a Crash Course in Brain Surgery*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 65-73.

Litman, E. R. 1994, "Pop-rock Music as Precipitating Cause in Youth Suicide", *Journal of Sciences*, JFSCA, Vol.39, No. 2: pp. 494-499.

Liu, XN. 2007, "Samsara in the World of Music: An Interview with the Guitarist of *Again*, Zhao Wei", *Musical Instrument*, 2007, No. 1: pp. 76-79.

Longhurst, B. 2007, *Popular Music and Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

McCourt, T. 2005, "Collecting Music in the Digital Realm", *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 2: pp. 249-252.

Mcdonald, M. 2012, "Freedom Rock Not In China" Retrieved from http://rendezvous.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/27/in-chinese-rock-the-times-they-arent-a-changin/?_r=0
[Accessed 21-Mar-2016]

Manuel, P. 1988, *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World: An Introductory Survey*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marcuse, H. 1978, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward A Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*, Toronto, Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited. Retrieved from https://machetegroup.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/aesthetic-dimension-_-marcuse.pdf.
[Accessed 30-Sep-2014]

Marshall, L. 2002, "Metallica and Morality: The Rhetorical Battleground of the Napster Wars", *Entertainment Law*, Vol. 1, No. 1: 1-19.

Maslow, A. H. 1970, *Motivation and Personality*, New York: Harper & Row.

Mast, F. J., McAndrew, T. 2011, "Violent Lyrics in Heavy Metal Music Can Increase Aggression in Males", *North American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 13, No. 1: pp.63-64.

Matt, S. J. 2011, "Current Emotion Research in History: Or, Doing History from the Inside Out", *Emotion Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1: pp. 117-124.

Matusitz, J. 2009, "Chinese Rock and Pop Music: A Semiotic Perspective", *Asia Europe Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 3-4: pp. 479-490.

Middleton, R. 1990, *Studying Popular Music*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

- 1993, "Popular Music Analysis and Musicology: Bridging the Gap", *Popular Music* Vol.12, No.2: pp: 177-190.

- 2006, *Voicing the Popular*, London: Routledge.

Miles, C. 1998, "Spatial Politics: A Gendered Scene of Place", in S. Redhead, D. Wynne, J. O'Conner (Eds.), *The Clubcultures Readers: Readings in Popular Cultural Studies*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Moberg, M. 2011, "The 'Double Controversy' of Christian Metal", *Popular Music History*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2: pp. 85-99.

Moore, A. F. 2001, "Categorizing Conventions in Music Discourse: Style and Genre", *Music and Letters*, Vol. 82, No. 3: pp. 432-443.

- (ed.), 2003, *Analysing Popular Music*, London: Cambridge University Press.

- 2012, *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song*, Surrey: Ashgate.

Moore, R. L. 2005, "Generation Ku: Individualism and China's Millennial Youth", *Ethnology*, Vol. 44, No. 4: pp. 357-376.

Moore, S. 2010, "Dissonance and Dissidents: the Flattened Supertonic within and without of Heavy Metal Music", in R. Hill, K. Spracklen (Eds.), *Heavy Fundametalisms: Music, Metal and Politics*, Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, pp. 127-140. Retrieved from http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/publishing/id-press/ebooks/heavy-fundametalisms [Accessed 20-Mar-2013]

Moynihan, M., Soderlind, D. 2003, *Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground*, Feral House.

Musician Guide 2013, *Survey of Musician Living Situation in 2013*, Retrieved from http://vdisk.weibo.com/s/HpKqg [Accessed 12-Jun-2014]

Muggleton, D. 1998, "The Post-Subculturalist", in S. Redhead, D. Wynne, J. O'Conner (Eds.), *The Clubcultures Readers: Readings in Popular Cultural Studies*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Negus, K. 1996, *Popular Music in Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- 1999, *Music Genre and Corporate Cultures*. London: Routledge.

Nihill, B. 2013, "The Best Selling Metal Albums of All Time" Retrieved from http://metaldescent.com/the-best-selling-metal-albums-of-all-time/ [Accessed 02-Apr-2014]

Page, W. 2007, "Is Live the Future of Music", *The Report*, No. 181: pp. 7-8.

Pattison, L., Richardson, N., Stosuy, B., Birk, N. 2012, *Black Metal: Beyond the Darkness*. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited.

Peng, WB. 2015, "Researching the Cultural-Marketing Strategies of Modern Sky", Master Dissertation, Guangzhou (China): Jinan University.

Pekacz, J. 1994, "Did Rock Smash the Wall? The Role of Rock in Political Transition", *Popular Music*, Vol. 13, No. 1: pp.41-49.

Peterson, R. A. 1990, "Why 1955? Explaining the Advent of Rock Music", *Popular Music*, Vol. 9, No. 1: pp. 97-116.

Pew Research Centre, 2012, *The Global Religious Landscape: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Major Religious Groups as of 2010*, The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. Retrieved from
http://probeinternational.org/library/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/globalReligion-full1.pdf
[Accessed 21-Oct-2015]

Phillipov, M. 2011, "Extreme Music for Extreme People Norwegian Black Metal and Transcendent Violence", *Popular Music History*, Vol.6, No.1, 2: pp.150-163.

- 2012, *Death Metal and Music Criticism: Analysis at the Limits*, Plymouth: Lexington Books.

- 2013, "In Defence of Textual Analysis: Resisting Methodological Hegemony in Media and Cultural Studies", *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol. 30, No. 3: pp. 209-223.

Pieslak, J. 2007, "Re-casting Metal: Rhythm and Meter in the Music of Meshuggah", *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 29, No. 2: pp. 219-245.

Popoff, M. 2015, *Who Invented Heavy Metal,* Power Chord Press.

Promogogo, 2015, "The Boom of the Live Music Industry" Retrieved from
https://gogo.promogogo.com/words/the-boom-of-the-live-music-industry_4
[Accessed 06-Jan-2016]

Purcell, N. J. 2003, *Death Metal Music: The Passion and Politics of a Subculture*, London: McFarland & Company.

Qian, W. 2007, "The Crisis of Chinese Rock: Weakness in Form or Content", PhD thesis, Liverpool: The University of Liverpool.

Qu, S. 2012, "Whose 'Rock Spirit': The Mindset of Chinese Rock Music Studies", *Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute*, No. 3: pp. 74-79.

Randel, D. M. (Ed.), 1986, *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, Harvard University Press Reference Library, Belknap Press.

Regev, M. 2013, *Pop-rock Music: Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism in Late Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ren, F. 2012, "Analyzing Contemporary Chinese Popular Music in Communication Perspective", PhD thesis, Jinan: University of Shandong.

Rice, T. 2003, "Time, Place, and Metaphor in Musical Experience and Ethnography", *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 47, No. 2: pp. 151-179.

Richard, O. 2013, "Does the Music Industry in China Have a Future" Retrieved from http://www.inaglobal.fr/en/music/article/does-music-industry-china-have-future [Accessed 04-Sep-2014]

Roccor, B. 2000, "Heavy Metal: Forces of Unification and Fragmentation within a Musical Subculture", *The World of Music*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Gothic, Metal, Rap, and Rave - Youth Culture and Its Educational Dimensions): pp. 83-94.

Riches, G. 2011, "Embracing the Chaos: Mosh Pits, Extreme Metal Music and Liminality", *Journal for Cultural Research*, Vol. 15, No.3: pp. 315-332.

Rodley, C. 2010, Documentary "*Heavy Metal Britannia*", British Broadcasting Corporation.

Rong, Y. 2007, "Game and Threat: The Double Misunderstanding towards Chinese Rock", *Youth Studies*, No. 1: pp. 31-36.

Scott, D. B. 2005, "Postmodernism and Music", in S. Stuart (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, Routledge: pp. 122-132.

- (Ed.), 2009, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Musicology*, Surrey: Ashgate.

Seidman, I. 1998, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research 2nd Edition*, New York: Teachers College Press.

Shen, H. 2008, "The Multiple Evolutions of Chinese Pop Music in Traditional Music", *Explorations in Music*, 2008, No. 4: pp. 40-42.

Shen, WB., Liu, C. 2012, "Review the Psychological Researches of Moral Hypocrisy", *Advances in Psychological Science*, 2012, No.5: pp. 745-756.

Shen, YF. 2012, "The Employment of Traditional Elements in Popular Music Context", *Journal of South China University of Technology*, 2012, No. 1: pp. 92-97.

Shi, YK. 2015, "The No.1 Asian Rock Label from Nanchang", Retrieved from
http://jx.ifeng.com/humanity/fx/detail_2015_03/06/3624865_0.shtml
[Accessed 06-Jan-2016]

Shuker, R. 1998, *Popular Music: The Key Concepts*, New York: Routledge.

-       2008, *Understanding Popular Music Culture*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Sohu, 2011, "Chinese Live House: The Markets Has Yet to Be Formed", Retrieved from
http://music.yule.sohu.com/20111228/n330571098.shtml
[Accessed 11-Jan-2016]

Song, FF. 2015, "Popular Music and Gender Studies", *People's Music*, 2015, No. 5: pp.
80-84.

Sotos, R. 2007, "Metallica's Existential Freedom: From We to I and Back Again", in W.
Irwin (Ed.), *Metallica and Philosophy: a Crash Course in Brain Surgery*, Oxford:
Blackwell Publishing, pp. 85-97.

Spracklen, K., Brown, A. R., Kahn-Harris, K. 2011, "Metal Studies Cultural research in
the Heavy Metal Scene", *Journal for Cultural Research*, Vol. 15, No. 3: pp. 209-212.

Stokes, D. 2004, "Popping the Myth of Chinese Rock", in A. Chun, N. Rossiter, B.
Shoesmith (Eds.), *Refashioning Pop Music in Asia: Cosmopolitan Flows, Political
Tempos, and Aesthetic Industries*, London: Routledge: pp. 32-48.

Stone, M. 2014, "The Great Firewall Blocking Facebook in China" Retrieved from
http://news.sky.com/story/1206329/the-great-firewall-blocking-facebook-in-china
[Accessed 14-Apr-2015]

Straw, W. 1983, "Characterizing Rock Music Culture: The Case of Heavy Metal", in S.
Frith, A. Goodwin (Eds.), *On Rock: Rock, Pop and the Written World*, New York:
Pantheon Books: pp. 97-110.

-    1991, "Systems of Articulation, Logics of Changes: Communities and Scenes in
     Popular Music", *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3: pp. 368-388.

Street, J., L. Zhang, et al. 2015, "Copyright and Music Policy in China: A Literature
Review", *CREATe Working Paper* 2015 06 (Series DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.29125),
Retrieved from
http://www.create.ac.uk/publications/copyright-and-music-policy-in-china-a-literature-rev
iew/
[Accessed 28-Aug-2015]

Sun, JY. 2012, "Researching the Chinese Rock Magazines", Master Dissertation, Changchun (China): Jilin University.

Tagg, P. 1982, "Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice", *Popular Music*, Vol. 2: pp. 37-67.

- 1987, "Musicology and the Semiotics of Popular Music", *Semiotica*, Vol. 66: pp. 279-298.

Tagg, P., Clarida, B. 2003, *Ten Little Title Tunes*, New York: The Mass Media Music Scholars' Press.

Tsitsos, W. (1999), "Rules of Rebellion: Slamdancing, Moshing, and the American Alternative Scene", *Popular Music*, Vol. 18, No. 3: pp. 397-414.

Tu, C. 2007, "Brief Discussion of the Past and Present Study of the Issue of 'Chineseness'", *Taiwan Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1: pp. 153-164.

Tucker, J. 2005, *Suzie Smiled...the New Wave of British Heavy Metal*, Shropshire: Independent Music Press.

Tuohy, S. 2011, "The Sonic Dimensions of Nationalism in Modern China: Musical Representation and Transformation", *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 45, No. 1: pp. 107-131.

Wallach, J., Berger, H., Greene, P. (Eds.), 2011, *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music around the World*, Duke University Press.

Walser, R. 1993, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, London: Wesleyan University Press.

Wang, DQ. 2006, "Decay and Rebirth: The Twenty Years of Chinese Rock", *Music Life* 2006, No. 5: pp. 18-30.

Wang, H. 2012, "On Hypocrisy", PhD thesis, Changsha (China): Central South University.

Wang, J. 2006, "Analyzing the Development Status of the Audio-video Industry in China", *Publishing Research*, 2006, No. 8: pp. 22-25.

Wang, Q. 2009, "'Scar Literature' as a Trend of Thought in Literature and Art: 1976-1984", PhD thesis, Shanghai: East China Normal University.

Wang, SQ. 2009, *Chinese Contemporary Urban Popular Music: Interactive Research on the relationship between Music and Social Culture*, Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press.

Wang, Y. 2002, "The Story of Chinese Indie Labels", *International Music*, Vol. 12: pp. 6-14.

Wang, Y. 2013, "The Marginalization of the Lyrics: How the Vocal Styles of Extreme Metal Participate in Instituting the Aesthetics Conventions and Socio-Cultural Meanings", Master Dissertation, Glasgow: University of Glasgow.

- 2015, "Formation, Industries, and Identities: Observations on Extreme Metal in Mainland China 2000-2013", in T. Karjalainen, K. Käki (Eds.), Proceedings from *Modern Heavy Metal: Markets, Practices and Cultures - International Academic Research Conference*, Helsinki, Finland.

Warren, W. J. 2006, Documentary "*Heavy: The Story of Metal*", 441 Productions.

Weinstein, D. 1991, *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology*, Oxford: Maxwell Macmillan International.

- 2000, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*, DaCapo Press.

- 2011, "How Is Metal Studies Possible", *Journal for Cultural Research*, Vol. 15, No. 3: pp.243-245.

Weston, D. 2011, "Basque Pagan Metal: View to a Primordial Past", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1: pp. 103-122.

Widdicombe, S., Wooffitt, R. 1995, *Language of Youth Subcultures: Social Identity in Action*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Williamson, J., Cloonan, M. 2007, "Rethinking the Music Industry", *Popular Music*, Vol. 26, No. 2: pp.305-322.

Wisnewski, J. J. 2007, "The Metal Militia and the Existentialist Club", in W. Irwin (Ed.), Metallica and Philosophy: A Crash Course in Brain Surgery, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 55-64.

Wong, C. P. 2005, "'Lost Lambs': Rock, Gender, Authenticity, and a Generational Response to Modernity in the People's Republic of China", PhD thesis, New York: Columbia University.

- 2011, "'A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty': Masculinity, Male Camaraderie, and Chinese Heavy Metal in the 1990s", in J. Wallach, H. Berger, P. Greene (Eds.), *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music around the World*, Duke University Press, pp. 63-85.

Wright, R. 2000, "I'd Sell You Suicide: Pop Music and Moral Panic in the Age of Marilyn Manson", *Popular Music*, Vol. 19, No. 3: pp. 365-385.

Wu, J. 2005, "Reconsidering the 'Xungen Literature'", *Literature & Art Studies*, 2005, No. 6: pp. 7-14.

Xia, J. 1988, Documentary "*Elegy of the River* (He Shang)", China Central Television, Retrieved from
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrdI2UgTU9o&list=PLnAxHcTvLOVLELEj3iYYZ
mhRRj5NAZOqH&index=1
[Accessed 28-Aug-2015]

Xiu, HL. 1986, "Analyzing the Musical Aesthetic Thoughts in '*Yue Ji*'", *Music Research*, 1986, No. 2: pp. 83-91.

Xv, Y. 2006, "Examining the Division, Integration, and Development of Popular Music Business from the Perspective of Value Chains", *Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute*, No. 4: pp. 82-85.

Xv, YH., Yuan, J., Tan, F. 2014, "(Specials) The Report of Current Social Pathology", *People's Tribune*, 2014, No. 25: pp. 16-20.

Xv, YY. 2008, "Introduction of Chinese Popular Music History", *Musicology in China*, No. 4: pp. 64-70.

Xv, YZ. 2005, "Exploring the Recording Industry in the early Twentieth Century of China", Master Dissertation, Fuzhou: Fujian Normal University.

Yan, J. 2005, "Abolish the Myth of Chinese Rock" Retrieved from
http://www.douban.com/group/topic/2478354/
[Accessed 21-Mar-2014]

- 2006, *Hui Fei Yan Mie: A Personal Observation of Chinese Rock*, Guangzhou: Huacheng Press.

Yan, MW., Yv, T. 2013, "The Series Report of Construct the Social Credibility System No. 1", *Theory and Modernization*, 2013, No. 4: pp. 17-25.

Yan, Y. 2010, "The Chinese Path to Individualization", *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 61, No. 3: pp. 489–512.

Yang, SY. 2008, "Modern Sky, as a Survival Sample of Indie Labels", *China Newsweek*, 2008, No. 2: 78-79.

Yanofsky, N. S. 2013, *The Outer Limits of Reason: What Science, Mathematics, and Logic Cannot Tell Us*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Yao, YP. 2015, *The Anxiety and Conflict of Gender*, Beijing: Central Conservatory of Music Press.

Zheng, Y. 2016, "The Screaming Successor: Exploring the Chinese Metal Scene in Contemporary Chinese Society (1996-2015)", Master dissertation, Ohio: Bowling Green State University.

Zhou, X. 2006, "Analyzing the Current Situation and Development of Chinese Audio-Video Business", *Modern Communication* (*Journal of Communication University of China*), 2006, No. 1: pp. 8-13.

Zhou, XY. 2013, "Researching Chinese Popular Music in the Cultural Perspective", PhD thesis, Suzhou: University of Suzhou.

Zhu, WY. 2005, "Reading Capital in a Non-Economic Way: Bourdieu's Concept of 'Cultural Capital'", *Social Sciences*, 2005, No. 6: pp. 117-123.

Zou, SP. 2009, "The Cultural Trend and Its Historical Effects of Chinese Society in Recent Thirty Years", *Marxism & Reality*, 2009, No. 1: pp. 39-49.

Metal Magazine/Fanzine

Painkiller, Vol. 2: pp. 68-70, "*Metal Was Forged in This Way*".

- Vol. 2: pp. 71, "*The Sound of Prison from the Underground*".

- Vol. 3: pp. 34-35, "*The Flowing Dark Branch of Beijing Underground Metal*".

- Vol. 4: pp. 34-35, "*For Forgetful Memory, Beijing Underground Metal Band Hades*".

- Vol. 4: pp. 62-63, "*The Destroyer of the Ignorant World*".

- Vol. 6: pp. 68-70, "*All the Resistances Come from the Body Yearning for Freedom*".

- Vol. 7: pp. 28-29, "*Interview with Regicide*".

- Vol. 17: pp. 48-51, "*China Heavy Music X-file I: Flying upon the Memory*".

- Vol. 20: pp. 68-69, "*New Industrial Sound: Interview with AK-47*".

- Vol. 24: pp. 41-43, "*Burning Moment, Rebirth in Fire: Interview with Narakam*".

- Vol. 31: pp. 61-65, "*The Ten Years of Chinese Nu-metal*".

- Vol. 32: pp. 64-67, "*Non-stopped Music: Interview with Gao Hu*".

- Vol. 37: pp. 50-52, "*The Stand: Interview with Twisted Machine*".

Total Thrash, Vol. 1: pp. 2, "*The Rebirth of Annihilation: Declaring War on Hypocrisy*".

Online Video/Audio Sources

A Bao. (2014), "Agriculture Heavy Metal", in *Agriculture Heavy Metal*, Shui Mu Tong Chuang Culture Limited Company
http://music.163.com/#/song?id=28524124

Ai, W. (2013), "Dumbass", Single, Self-released
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ACj86DKfWs

Black Panther. (1991), "No Place to Hide", in *China Fire I*, [TP], Magic Stone Records
Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-I9W5toBdzc
Audio http://music.163.com/#/song?id=357279&userid=3715867

Blue Cheer. (1968), "Summertime Blues", in *Vincebus Eruptum*, Philips
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kJONgWKFi0

Cui Jian. (1986), "Nothing to My Name" in *Rock 'n' Roll on the New Long March*, China Tourism Sound and Video Publishing Company
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ytz6EoFIs-w

Dark Funeral. (2009), "The End of Human Race", in *Angelus Exuro pro-Eternus*, Regain Records
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZGD04mB_Ic

Eddie Cochran. (1966), "Summertime Blues", Single, Liberty
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MeWC59FJqGc

Frosty Eve. (2012), "Don't Wanna Grow Up (S.H.E Cover)", in *Mock Paradox*, Mort Productions
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Clli9un_Jc0

He Yong. (1994), "Garbage Dump", in *Kylin Diary*, [TP], Magic Stone Records
http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=92203

Miserable Faith. (2001), "Where There Is Oppression, There Is Resistance", in *This Is a Problem*, [CD], Scream Record
http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=381912&userid=3715867

- (2014), "A Beautiful New World", in *May Love Be without Worries*, [CD], Self-released
http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=28949128&userid=3715867

Narakam. (2008), "Darkness Falling before Eyes", in *Burning at Moment*, [CD], Mort Productions
http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=367761&userid=3715867

Nine Treasures. (2013), *Nine Treasures*, [CD], Mort Productions
http://music.163.com/#/album?id=3086315

Ordnance. (2008), "New Eight Honors and Eight Disgraces", in *Rock City*, [CD], R.H.C. Records
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBSfT0GkBbo&index=1&list=RDFBSfT0GkBbo

-   (2014), online radio show with Youyi Rock Chat
    http://music.163.com/#/dj?id=780046

Overload. (1992), "The Shadow of Ancestor", in *Rock Beijing I*, [TP], International Cultural Exchange Audio & Video Press
Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcnPZvK96fM
Audio http://music.163.com/#/song?id=5282084&userid=3715867

Phoenix Legend. (2009), "The Most Dazzling Folk Style", in *The Most Dazzling Folk Style*, Peacock Records
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ynypvs5s75Y

Ritual Day. (2003), "Ritual Day", in *Sky Lake*, [CD], Mort Productions
http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=377645&userid=3715867

Sa Dingding. (2007), "Alive (Sanskrit Mantra)", in *Sanskrit Mantra*, Universal Music
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8Z8gpoF4x8

Slechtvalk. (2010), "Forsaken", in *A Forlorn Throne*, Whirlwind Records
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtYku1P8ggk

Steppenwolf. (1968), "Born to Be Wild", in *Steppenwolf*, ABC Dunhill
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMbATaj7Il8

Tang Dynasty. (1992), "A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty" in *A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty*, [TP], Magic Stone Records
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ba4jXBnkLvo

-   (2013), Tang Dynasty's talking in TV show "Star"
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-nT26qyIj4&spfreload=10%20Message%3A%20Unexpected%20end%20of%20input%20(url%3A%20https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D2-nT26qyIj4)

Tengger. (2002), "*Heaven*" and "*Mongolian*", in *Blue Sky*, Xuan Yue Culture
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBquB6L_Zk8
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZM1sjzH7KE

Tomahawk. (1992), Pass Away, in *Rock Beijing II*, [TP], BMG
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcbBmTdaVG4

- (2001), "The Lost Faith", in *Dead City*, [CD], Scream Record
  http://music.163.com/#/song?id=29422013&userid=3715867

Twisted Machine. (2001), "Nobody Looks up to You", in *Twisted Machine*, [CD], Scream Records.
http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=368793&userid=3715867

- (2003), *Return to Underground*, [CD], Jingwen Records
  http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=368778&userid=3715867

- (2006), "In the Mirror", in *Being*, Scream Records
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QNIEmgrhko

Wang Yuan. (2014), online radio program "Metal Studies" on *Metal Sonata*
http://music.163.com/#/dj?id=657026&userid=3715867

Yumbi. (2012), "Everything Dies", in *Shi*, [CD], Agricultural Civilization Records
http://abayumbi.milepub.cn/

- (2014), *The Works of Yumbi*, [CD], Self-released
  http://music.163.com/#/album?id=2875205

- (2014), Live in 2014
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LVblsK-rEQ

Zhang Chu. (1994), "Know without Being Told", in *Loneliness is a Shame*, [TP], Magic Stone Records
http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=186096

Zheng Jun. (1994), "Commodity Society", in *Chi Luo Luo*, [TP], Red Star Productions
http://music.163.com/#/m/song?id=186846

Zuriaake.(2007), *Afterimage of Autumn*, [CD], PEST Production
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwWP1sj6L2I

- (2015), Live in 330 Metal Festival
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hirbkGPyO6E[

Relevant Websites

Area Death http://www.areadeath.net

Back Street Merch https://www.backstreetmerch.com/genre/metal

China Doom Metal http://www.moldbody.net

Demogorgon http://weibo.com/41182340

Douban http://www.douban.com

Dragon Shout http://www.dragonshout.com

EMP http://www.emp-online.co.uk/

Encyclopaedia Metallum http://www.metal-archives.com

Enjoy Metal http://weibo.com/enjoymetal

Extreme Metal Merchandise http://www.extrememetalmerchandise.com/

Guitar China http://bbs.guitarchina.com

Heavy Metal Online http://www.heavymetalonline.co.uk/

Heavy Road https://site.douban.com/heavyroad

Metallatem https://www.douban.com/note/331101299

Metal Hub http://metalhub.org

Metal Sonata http://www.metalsonata.com

Metal Sucks http://www.metalsucks.net

Mort Productions http://www.mort-prod.com

Musician Guide http://musicianguide.cn

Painkiller http://www.painkillermag.com/mag

Paranoid http://www.paranoidmetal.com

Relapse Records Merch https://relapserecords.bandcamp.com/merch

Sina Weico http://www.weibo.com

So Silent http://www.sosilent.com

Under FM Black Narcissus http://www.underfm.com

XmusicK http://magazine.xmusick.com