

CONTRATEXTUALITY - THE POETICS OF SUBVERSION

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1 CONTRATEXTUALITY AND SUBVERSION

Martin 1986 introduced the term **contratextuality** to refer to the way in which expository texts he was analysing constructed oppositional relations between themselves and opposing discourses in ecological debate. Seen in Bakhtin's 1981 terms, contratextuality can thus be interpreted as a kind of dialogism in which voices mix not simply as a pluralist expression of difference, but rather as an expression of ideological tensions centering around direct negotiation of power (for complementary developments of the notion of contratextuality see Lemke 1988:46-49, 1989; see also Kress 1985/89:49). In this paper we want to pursue this discussion of dialogism, concentrating on the issue of subversion, rather than opposition - on what constitutes subversive, rather than simply oppositional text (cf. subversive writing by feminist writers; e.g. Cranny-Francis 1986a, 1988b, 1988c, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c, in press).

The texts we have chosen for this purpose are two rock songs: Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band's "Born in the USA." (first released in 1984) and U2's "Sunday bloody Sunday" (first released in 1983). These bands are two of the three most successful rock bands of the 1980s (alongside Dire Straits), all capable of selling out giant American gridiron stadiums for a single performance and of playing consecutively for periods of one to two weeks in smaller entertainment centres in large Australian cities such as Sydney or Melbourne. No other rock bands came close to this kind of drawing power during the same decade. Each band spent several years developing their rock music with a relatively small but dedicated 'cult' following before crossing over into the pop market with timely hit singles. Because of this apprenticeship and the stability of their personnel, all three bands are respected in the rock world for their 'integrity'.

"Born in the USA" was Springsteen's biggest hit, pushing him to his highest point in popularity (his hit singles "Hungry Heart" and "Dancing in the Dark" had already laid the ground for this success). "Sunday bloody Sunday" on the other hand comes at an earlier point in U2's career; it was not until the release of "Pride" and then "With or Without You" that the band came close to matching Springsteen's drawing power.

Both of the songs we are examining had political ramifications beyond the field of rock music, which is in part why we have chosen them. On the basis of one reading of his song, Springsteen was invited to the White House during Ronald Reagan's re-election campaign in 1984 - an invitation he received with considerable embarrassment and refused (Loder 1984). U2's song has always been a controversial one because of the way it focusses on the troubles in Ireland. As a result U2 have reportedly been threatened by the IRA at the same time as having had the song banned from public airplay by Thatcher in Northern Ireland. U2 in fact dropped the song from their concert performances during their world tour in 1989, in part because of this controversy.

Springsteen hails from a small town in New Jersey and projects the image of a hard rocking working class hunk with an insightful yet sentimental attachment to his roots. U2 are an Irish band from Dublin with punkish origins, whose work is brooding and political, with a Christian inflection that sits uneasily with other aspects of rock discourse. Their members are ten years or more younger than Springsteen's E Street Band (more than a generation in the field of rock music). For further background on U2 see Stokes 1985; Breskin 1987; Dunphy 1987; Parkyn 1987.

We will be making reference to the two front men in each band throughout the article, so let us introduce them here. Bruce Springsteen is the songwriter, lead singer and occasional guitarist/harmonica player for the E Street Band; throughout his career he has been

accompanied by Clarence Clemens on tenor saxophone - a large, extremely cool, Black American dandy with whom Springsteen interacts on stage, usually with humorous effect (co-larrikins). U2's lyricist, lead singer and occasional guitarist/harmonica player is Bono (Paul Hewson); his off-sider during performance is the band's other song-writer, lead guitarist and back-up vocalist, the Edge (Dave Evans). Unlike Clemens, the Edge's cool is very much of the reserved kind, and Bono's interactions with him are based primarily on musical exchange, not antics (co-conspirators). Other members of each band also play critical roles and they will be introduced where necessary during our discussion of the performance of the two songs.



In looking at these two songs we will consider a range of semiotic systems - verbal, musical and visual - used in their public construction. In the first part of the paper (sections 2, 3 and 4) we give an analysis of the words and music of the songs as they are performed on Springsteen's *Born in the USA* and U2's *Under a Blood Red Sky* albums; these analyses will then be elaborated in section 5 and 6, taking into account two video performances of each song. Finally, we will combine the discursive analysis of these different semiotic systems in an attempt to describe the practice of subversion, as textured in these songs.

2 THE SONGS

As far as wording is concerned, both of the songs we are considering are associated with a number of closely-related realisations. With "Born in the USA", for example, one printed version of the wording is included in the *Born in the USA* album liner. Another version, this time handwritten by Springsteen, is found reproduced in the booklet accompanying his *Bruce Springsteen and E Street Band Live/1975-85* compilation album. Yet a third version appears in the published sheet music for the song. These three versions are all different from each other as far as the layout of choruses, verses and lines is concerned, with the sheet music version coming closest to what Springsteen actually sings. The original printed version from the *Born in the USA* album is as follows:

Bruce Springsteen Born in the U.S.A. [printed words from album]

Born down in a dead man's town
The first kick I took was when I hit the ground
You end up like a dog that's been beat too much
Till you spend half your life just covering up

Born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.

Got in a little home town jam so they put a rifle in my hand
Sent me off to a foreign land to go and kill the yellow man

Born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.

Come back home to the refinery
Hiring man says "son if it was up to me"
Went down to see my V.A. man
He said "son don't you understand now"

Had a brother at Khe Sahn fighting off the Viet Cong
They're still there he's all gone
He had a woman he loved in Saigon
I got a picture of him in her arms now

Down in the shadow of the penitentiary
Out by the gas fires of the refinery
I'm ten years burning down the road
Nowhere to run ain't got nowhere to go

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Out by the gas fires of the refinery
I'm ten years burning down the road
Nowhere to run ain't got nowhere to go

Born in the U.S.A.
I was born in the U.S.A
Born in the U.S.A.
I'm a long gone Daddy in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.
Born in the U.S.A.
I'm a cool rocking Daddy in the U.S.A.

For analysis of the wording in the remainder of this paper, however, we will make use of a transcription of the song as sung on the *Born in the USA* album. The differences are:

- i. the second stanza of verses which is printed as two lines above is sung as four.
- ii. the fourth stanza of printed verses is sung as two stanzas, one with three lines and the other with two.

In addition of course Springsteen introduces minor variations as different performances of the song evolve. Since these variations do not influence the reading substantively, we have not analysed them in detail.

The printed words of U2's "Sunday bloody Sunday" are presented below.

U2 Sunday Bloody Sunday [printed words form War album]

I can't believe the news today,
I can't close my eyes and make it go away.
How long, how long must we sing this song?
How long? Tonight we can be as one.
Broken bottles under children's feet,
Bodies strewn across a dead end street,
But I won't heed the battle call,
It puts my back up, my back up against the wall.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

And the battle's just begun,
There's many lost, but tell me who has won?
The trenches dug within our hearts,
And mother's children, brothers, sisters torn apart.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

How long, how long must we sing this song?
How long? Tonight we can be as one.
Tonight, tonight.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Wipe the tears from your eyes,
Wipe your tears away,
Wipe your bloodshot eyes.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

And it's true we are immune,
When fact is fiction and T.V. is reality,
And today the millions cry,
We eat and drink while tomorrow they die.
The real battle just begun.
To claim the victory Jesus won,
On a Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Once again these differ from the way the song is sung. The wording we have chosen for purposes of grammatical analysis is transcribed from U2's live *Under a Blood Red Sky* album, which is itself a slightly edited version of the song as it appears in the *Under a Blood Red Sky* live concert film. The differences between these two versions are too complex to be reviewed here, but once again do not constitute any kind of radical reworking of the song's discursive composition. Therefore, although each version of the song deserves serious attention in a complete analysis, for reasons of space we will not pursue these differences and the way they have been influenced by mode here.

Before turning to the analysis itself in section 3, we will introduce three further texts from U2's *Rattle and Hum* film. The first is taken from an interview with the band that immediately precedes the live performance of "Sunday bloody Sunday" The second is Bono's introduction of the song in that performance. And the third is a didactic rap by Bono which he inserts into the song.

Rattle & Hum film - Bono interview.

I'm not even sure if that song should be in the film actually, Sunday, bloody Sunday, because I..you know...that day...the Enniskillen...the day of the Enniskillen bombing, you know, will soon long since be forgotten and people will not understand the way we felt on stage.

Rattle & Hum performance - Bono (intro rap);

Well, here we are, the Irish in America.
The Irish have been coming to America for years,
going back to the great famine when the Irish were on the run from
starvation and a British government that couldn't care less.
Right up to today.
You know there are more Irish immigrants here in America today than ever - some illegal,
some legal.
A lot of them are just running from high unemployment.
Some run from the troubles in Northern Ireland - from the hatred of the
H-blocks and torture; others from wild acts of terrorism like we had
today in a town call Enniskillen where 11 people lie dead and many
more injured on Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Rattle & Hum performance - Bono (didactic rap):

I'm going to tell you something.
I've had enough of Irish Americans who haven't been back to their
country in 20 or 30 years,
come up to me and talk about the resistance, the revolution back home,
and the glory of the revolution,

and the glory of dying for the revolution.

Fuck the revolution!

They don't talk about the glory of killing for the revolution.

What's the glory in taking a man from his bed and gunning him down in front of his wife and his children?

Where's the glory in that?

Where's the glory in bombing a Remembrance Day parade of old age pensioners, their medals taken out and polished up for the day.

What's the glory in that?

To leave them dying or crippled for life or dead under the rubble of the revolution that the majority of the people in my country don't want.

No more. Say No more.

No more. - No more

No more. - No more.

Having presented these texts in full in in this way, it is important to note that we have introduced to readers of this paper a very distorted picture of how these songs are usually read - on radio, on the stereo, on video, at the cinema or in performance. In these aural/visual contexts just how much of the wording is read depends on the tenor variable contact (Poynton 1985/1989). Dedicated fans, with an ear for rock music, hear every word of the songs, and are very likely to be singing along with the music (at the 1989 U2 concert in Sydney the crowd sang every song with the singer throughout the entire performance). But the phonological realisation of the wording is in fact very contracted (constructing as it does a very high degree of contact) and is subject to considerable interference from keyboards, guitars and drums, and from other aspects of the listening environment (for example the appalling acoustics at Sydney's Entertainment Centre which render music as aural mud). Less dedicated fans and more casual listeners will hear only a fraction of what has just been presented here, and this is an important aspect of the two songs' subversive effect. To see what we mean try listening to the songs without the wording in front of you. Our impression is that even after having been introduced to the printed wording as presented above, most readers who do not participate in the field of rock music will understand next to nothing of what is sung.

The analysis presented below will proceed in sections 3 and 4 by considering selective aspects of the grammatical, discourse, generic and musical structure of each song.

3 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS - BORN IN THE USA¹

3.1 GENERIC STRUCTURE

As far as wording is concerned, "Born in the USA" is a narrative text, of the sub-type exemplum identified by Guenter Plum 1988. Plum proposes an Orientation ^ Incident ^ Interpretation ^ Coda schematic structure for the exemplum genre and "Born in the USA" fits very snugly into this framework. Exemplums, as Plum's work indicates, are strongly associated with spoken mode. Functionally speaking they are macro-modulations; that is to say they function as interpretations of how the world should or shouldn't be. As such they are functionally related to a number of narrative genres which make a point - fables and parables are the best known traditional story genres of this kind. "Born is the USA" in other words is a song with a lesson attached. Its moral is developed along the following lines (setting aside the chorus at this stage).

¹ We would like to thank Elizabeth Green, Peter Knapp and Theo van Leeuwen for their advice and patient tutelage as far as the music analyses are concerned.

The first stanza functions as Orientation, introducing the exemplum's main protagonist (its narrator) and contextualising his social class.

ORIENTATION

Born down in a dead man's town
The first kick I took was when I hit the ground
You end up like a dog that's been beat too much
Till you spend half your life just covering up

The second and third stanzas then construct the sequence of events which forms the back-bone of all narrative genres, referred to in the exemplum as Incident. The following analysis of conjunction in these stanzas displays this structure clearly:

INCIDENT... (potential complication)

i		Got in a little home town jam
ii	so (then)	they put a rifle in my hands
iii	(then)	Sent me off to a foreign land
iv	to	go and kill the yellow man

...INCIDENT (potential/anti- resolution)

v	(later)	Come back home to the refinery
vi	(but then)	Hiring man says "son if it was up to me"
vii	(then)	Went down to see my V.A. man
viii	(but then)	He said "son don't you understand now"

Note than unlike narrative of personal experience as described by Labov and Waletzky 1967, the story is not about a motivated hero overcoming difficulties to restore equilibrium (the 'quest narrative').

The Incident is following by two stanzas of Interpretation (note that unlike narrative of personal experience where Evaluation arrests the unfolding of events at the appropriate moment of crisis, in exemplums the 'evaluation' of what has happened follows the main events of the story; cf. Labov and Waletzky 1967; Labov 1972, 1982). The first part of the Interpretation is the more public one, constructing the Vietnam war as a futile exercise; the second part is more private, constructing America's defeat in more human terms - the narrator's sense of personal loss. Taken together the narrator's point is a clearly modulated one: "This should not have happened (to him/me/anyone)."

The final stanza of the song presents its Coda, through which the narrator is returned to his moment of speaking, not far removed from his origins as far as hopelessness and marginalisation are concerned. The overall generic analysis is presented below. This interpretation of its staging will be further motivated in various ways in the analyses which follow.

[Generic structure: EXEMPLUM 'Born in the USA']

Orientation

Born down in a dead man's town
The first kick I took was when I hit the ground
You end up like a dog that's been beat too much
Till you spend half your life just covering up now

[Born in the U.S.A.]

Incident...(potential complication)

Got in a little home town jam
so they put a rifle in my hands
Sent me off to a foreign land
to go and kill the yellow man

[Born in the U.S.A.]

...Incident (potential/anti-resolution)

Come back home to the refinery
Hiring man says "son if it was up to me"
Went down to see my V.A. man
He said "son don't you understand now"

Interpretation... [futility]

I had a brother at Khe Sahn
fighting off the Viet Cong
They're still there he's all gone...

...Interpretation. [loss]

He had a woman he loved in Saigon
I got a picture of him in her arms now...

Coda

Down in the shadow of the penitentiary
Out by the gas fires of the refinery
I'm ten years burning down the road
Nowhere to run ain't got nowhere to go

[Born in the U.S.A...]

I'm a long gone Daddy in the U.S.A.

Born in the U.S.A...

I'm a cool rocking Daddy in the U.S.A.]

Seen from the perspective of generic structure, the chorus replays the song's Orientation, spreading its realisation more prosodically across the song (this form of realisation indicates that an ideational interpretation of the chorus as Orientation will prove inadequate; given an interpersonal form of realisation in this way the chorus is structured as having a role to play in the exemplum's Interpretation). Importantly however, the class discourse of the exemplum's original Orientation is dropped and replaced with an apparently nationalist one (*Born in the USA* replacing *Born down in a dead man's town*). The significance of this recontextualisation will be further explored at various points below (see section 5 in particular).

3.2 MUSICAL STRUCTURE

The musical analysis of this song was very kindly performed for us by Elizabeth Green. For our very selective interpretation we have drawn on her advice and van Leeuwen's 1988 suggestions towards a systemic functional grammar of music. Both have very generously reviewed our paper in various drafts and a number of their comments have been incorporated (more and less faithfully) below.

i. key

On his *Born in the USA* album Springsteen sings the song in the key of B-major. Van Leeuwen associates major keys with the positive values of the bourgeoisie: "belief in progress through human achievement, science, industry, exploration and so on." (1988:22).

Key defines the tonic, the note with respect to which the melody must resolve or fail to resolve. With the exception of the first two realisations of the chorus, the overwhelming pattern in the song is an alternation of lines not resolving on the tonic with lines resolving on the tonic, with the former preceding the latter. Semantically then, the alternation of one of suspense, then resolution.

ii. melody

The melody of the song is fairly flat, with no sharp movements up or down (down a second or a third or up a third throughout). The melody has a tendency to descend, rather than ascend, through each line. Van Leeuwen 1988:26 associates small intervals with sentimentality, and characterises descending melodies as aiming "to relax, to incite the listeners to share their thoughts and feelings."

Throughout the song the melodic climax of each line is very regular - the penultimate salient syllable; this prominence is reinforced rhythmically, since the climax falls on the third beat of the line and it is also enhanced throughout the song by various devices such as intensity, duration and an anticipatory pause. On the melodic climax, the melody goes up to the 6th, which according to one traditional authority, Cooke 1959, is always 'happy'. Note that in the chorus this falls on the 'U' of USA.

In each chorus, the first salient syllable is also given special prominence, principally through the metre since it is articulated over two beats (it is also made prominent kinesically, accompanied by a clenched first Black power salute - see the analysis of the performance in section 5 below).

Prominence obviously makes it easier to hear some parts of the wording than others and so is especially relevant to the different readings of the wording which interest us (see 3.3 below).

iii. harmony

Cutting against the suspense ^ resolution tension produced by the melody resolving or not resolving on the tonic, is the tension between lines whose melody is consonant with the song's harmonic structure (that is, constructed out of notes in the relevant chord) and those whose melody is not. Throughout the song, the first two lines of both verses and chorus are consonant with the harmonic structure and the next two (where present) are not. Thus working against the suspension ^ resolution tensions constructed by the melody and tonic we have a consonance ^ dissonance tension constructed by the melody and harmonic structure.

The alternation between the tonic chord (I) and the subdominant chord (IV) maps a plagal cadence across the song as a whole. Plagal cadence (or amen cadence) is best known from hymns, and in religious contexts defines the harmonic structure of the "Amen" closing each song. Working along these lines Springsteen could be interpreted as constructing the whole song as a macro-Amen. Relevant to this is the classification of anthems as a kind of hymn in musical dictionaries.

Pursuing these religious associations, the music is what van Leeuwen describes as heterophonic - everyone singing and playing the same melody but with 'micro-variations' from one instrument or voice to the next. Van Leeuwen comments that this is apparently how hymns were sung in Protestant churches in the US in the late 18th and 19th century, with

Europeans commenting on how terrible it sounded. The point here is that instead of complementing Springsteen's melody by harmonizing with it, the band plays and sings in unison but with individual differences coming out (as, van Leeuwen comments, in the rough male choirs of Aussie beer ads) - members of the band in other words do not try to blend into a unified whole. Semiotically then what we have here is individuals doing the same thing in their own way rather than complementing each other by doing different but harmonious things.

iv. leader-chorus interaction

The chorus follows the first and second stanzas (the exemplum's Orientation and the first stanza of its Incident) and is repeated twice after stanzas 3, 4, 5 and 6 (the rest of the Incident, the two parts of the Interpretation and the Coda). The band, and of course a large proportion of any listening audience, join in on the chorus. Seen in terms of tenor, what we have here is an alternation of unequal with equal status, as reflected in the alternation of non-reciprocal dominance, then reciprocal participation.

v. rhythm and metre

The metre of the song is 4/4, a marching duration which van Leeuwen associates with ascending melodies over relatively large intervals in a heroic fashion. As is typical of rock music however, the rhythm is syncopated - implying rather than directly manifesting the metre (rebellling against it in van Leeuwen's terms). Following van Leeuwen, it is this kind of rhythm which associates rock music with leisure and self-gratification rather than work and clock-time.

Summing up, what we find is a musical structure which overall realises a number of hegemonic musical discourses (key, melody, interval, metre):

HEGEMONY:

B-major
descending melody
small intervals
4/4 metre

But at the same time we have a structure full of musical tension:

TENSION:

suspense^resolution	(melody & tonic)
consonance^dissonance	(melody & harmony)
verses^chorus	(leader-chorus interaction)
penultimate climax^+initial climax	(prominence)
metre vs. rhythm	(syncopation)
heterophonic	(same melody/individual variation)

This interplay of hegemonic voicing and structural tension is well-suited to the song's accumulated projection of anguish. It also symbolises nicely the process of subversion under focus here, which we will pursue in sections 5 and 7.

A very partial display of the musical structure of the song is presented below.

Musical structure

[thanks to Elizabeth Green]

KEY:

salient syllable
melodic climax of line

-Initial bold
- **Bold underlined**

line resolving in tonic
line not resolving in tonic

- FF (final fall)
- NFF (non-final fall)

melody consonant with harmonic structure
melody not consonant with harmonic structure

- I
- IV

Born in the U.S.A.

Bruce Springsteen

Born down in a **dead** man's town
The first kick I took was when I **hit** the **ground**
End up like a **dog** that's been **beat** too much
Till you spend half your life just **covering up** now

NFF I
FF ↓
NFF IV
FF ↓

Born in the **U.S.A.** I was
Born in the **U.S.A.** I was
Born in the **U.S.A.**
Born in the **U.S.A.** now

FF I
FF ↓
FF IV
FF ↓

Got in a little **home** town jam
So they put a rifle **in** my hands
Sent me off to a **foreign** land
to go and **kill** the **yellow** man

FF I
FF ↓
NFF IV
FF ↓

Born in the **U.S.A.** I was
Born in the **U.S.A.** I was
Born in the **U.S.A.** I was
Born in the **U.S.A.**

FF I
FF ↓
FF IV
FF ↓

Come back home to the **refinery**
Hiring man says "son if it was **up** to me"
Went down to see my **V.A.** man
He said "son don't you **understand** now"

NFF I
FF ↓
FF IV
FF ↓

had a brother **at** Khe Sahn
fighting off the **Viet** Cong
They're still there **he's** all gone..

NFF I
FF ↓
FF IV

He had a woman he loved **in** Saigon
got a picture of him **in** her arms now..

NFF I
FF ↓
IV

Down in the shadow of the **penitentiary** out by the
Gas fires of the **refinery** I'm
Ten years **burning down** the road
Nowhere to run ain't got **nowhere** to go

NFF I
FF ↓
NFF IV
FF ↓

Born in the **U.S.A.** I was
Born in the **U.S.A.** now
Born in the **U.S.A.**

FF I
FF ↓
NFF IV

I'm a long gone Daddy in the **U.S.A.** now

FF ↓

Born in the **U.S.A.**
Born in the **U.S.A.**
Born in the **U.S.A.**

NFF I
FF ↓
NFF IV

I'm a cool rocking Daddy in the **U.S.A.** now

FF ↓

3.3 FIELD

As far as field is concerned, our experience talking with friends and working with students is that Springsteen's song is generally read on one of three levels. The most 'superficial' of these is its reading as a nationalist American anthem (the reading also made by Ronald Reagan's aides). This reading appears to be based on the chorus and little more. The chorus is especially prominent in the song, realising as it does the song's title; this means that it will be announced on radio and T.V. each time the song is played (not to mention the fact that the song is the title song of the *Born in the USA* album). Musically, as we have noted, the line has two prominent phrases (*Born* and *USA*). The nationalist reading of the song thus requires minimal contact as far as the field of rock music is concerned - it is a reading that is open to the general public.

People who listen regularly to rock music certainly access more of the song's meaning than this. And many casual readers can be pushed to this second level if asked to listen carefully to the song. At this level many more of the song's wordings become available. The song's salient syllables are highlighted in bold face below (usually 4, sometimes 5 to a line - in general agreement with the song's metre). Each line's melodic climax has been underlined:

SALIENT SYLLABLES & CLIMAX ONLY

'Born in the U.S.A.'

Born		down		<u>dead</u>	town
first		took		<u>hit</u>	<u>ground</u>
End		dog		<u>beat</u>	<u>much</u>
spend		life		<u>covering</u>	up
Born				<u>U</u>	A (4)
Got	in	little		<u>home</u>	jam
So		<u>put</u>		<u>in</u>	hands
Sent		off		<u>foreign</u>	land
go		kill		yellow	man
Born				<u>U</u>	A (4)
Come		home		<u>refin</u>	ery
Hiring	man	says	"son	<u>up</u>	me"
Went	down	see`		<u>Y A</u>	man
said	"son	don't		<u>under</u>	stand
had		brother		<u>at</u>	Khe Sahn
fighting		off		<u>Viet</u>	Cong
They're	still	there		<u>he's</u>	gone...
He	woman	loved		<u>in</u>	Saigon
got		picture		<u>in</u>	arms
Down	shadow	peni		<u>tentia</u>	ry
Gas		fires		<u>refin</u>	ery
Ten	years	burning		<u>down</u>	road
Nowhere		run		<u>nowhere</u>	go
Born				<u>U</u>	A (3)
long	gone	Daddy		<u>U</u>	A
Born				<u>U</u>	A (3)
cool	rocking	Daddy		<u>U</u>	A

Reading the song at this second level is not just a matter of parsing salient syllables, however; these need to be constructed into meaningful words and phrases to be heard at all, and this has to be done with respect to expectancies associated with a particular field. What usually happens is that, on this level of reading, people construct the song as about American involvement in Vietnam. The musically prominent syllables relevant to this field are outlined below. Note the special significance of the melodic climax of most lines in this construction:

FIELD -	"Vietnam war"	'Born in the U.S.A.'		
			<u>dead</u>	town
			<u>hit</u>	ground
			<u>beat</u>	much
			<u>covering</u>	up
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
sent	off		<u>home</u>	jam
go	kill		<u>foreign</u>	land
			<u>yellow</u>	man
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Come		home		
		see	<u>V. A.</u>	man
fighting		brother	<u>at</u>	Khe Sahn
They're	still	off	<u>Viet</u>	Cong
		there	<u>he's</u>	gone...
	woman		<u>in</u>	Saigon
		picture	<u>in</u>	arms
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A
Born			<u>U</u>	A

To underline the power of field expectancies in a construction of this kind, most Australian readers hear V.A. *man* as *Vietnam* in the third stanza, in part because the meaning 'Veterans Affairs man' is unavailable to them from the acronym.

This reading is consonant with a nationalist reading of the chorus and the interpretation of the song as an American anthem. It does however introduce a note of discord, since it is not clear why the song should be celebrating American involvement in Vietnam. It could be that the song is about going into the third world and 'kicking ass', Rambo style - and that it's time people appreciated that that is just what America has done. So at this level, the discord remains a ripple, eliding into the dominant discourse formation in which most readers live.

When asked about these two readings of his song, Springsteen has commented that the Nationalist reading is the result of people hearing only the chorus: "If you don't listen to the verses, you're not going to get the whole song. You're just going to get the chorus." (from the television special, Bruce Springsteen: Glory days) And certainly there is a third reading in which fans do listen. On this reading the meaning of the exemplum unfolds in sharp contrast to the nationalist readings outlined above, reconstructing the chorus as ironic rather than celebratory and powerfully deconstructing the racist, bourgeois discourse formation which articulates both American imperialist foreign policy, as well as contemporary U.S. society. The interplay of these three readings will be further explored in section 5.

3.4 TRANSITIVITY

Before turning to the analysis of "Sunday bloody Sunday" in section 4, we will look briefly two aspects of the grammar of Springsteen's song - TRANSITIVITY (this section) and MOOD (section 3.5 below).

First we will consider AGENCY (setting aside relational processes which will be considered separately below). Overwhelmingly the voice of the song is middle; there are only 4 effective clauses (Agents in bold face; implied Agents in parentheses):

so **they** put a rifle in my hands
(**they**) sent me off to a foreign land
(**I**) to go and kill the yellow man
(**a brother** at Khe Sahn) [[fighting off the Viet Cong]]

In 3 of these clauses the Agent is not realised (ellipsed in the second, and omitted from the structure of the non-finite clauses in the third and fourth). The first two of these Agents are realised by a generalised other: *they*. The third refers to the narrator and the fourth to his friend/brother. The grammatical effect of this pattern overall is that of passivity - the narrator acts and is acted upon but he cannot affect his world (the proto-typical Medium). Agentive clauses are strongly foregrounded against this pattern; and what is foregrounded is men being sent off to kill: this is their only means of acting on the world.

The AGENCY analysis for material, mental and verbal processes in the song is presented below:

GRAMMAR - transitivity: agency (excluding relational)

MEDIUM	PROCESS	RANGE	AGENT	CIRCUMSTANCE
(1)	born			down in a dead...
I	took	kick		
I	hit	ground		
you (you)	end up covering up			like a dog...
(I)	born			in the USA
I	born			in the USA
I	born			in the USA
(I)	born			in the USA
(I)	got			in a little hometown...
rifle	put		they	in my hands
me	sent off		(they)	to a foreign land
yellow man	go & kill		(I)	
(I)	born			in the USA
I	born			in the USA
I	born			in the USA
I	born			in the USA
(I)	come	back home		to the refinery
Hiring Man	says			
(I)	went			down
(I)	see	V.A. man		
He	says			
you	understand			
Viet Cong	fighting off		(a brother)	
he	loved	a woman		
(I)	born			in the USA
I	born			in the USA
(I)	born			in the USA
(I)	born			in the USA
(I)	born			in the USA
(I)	born			in the USA

Looking at process type in more detail, the song consists wholly of material processes until the second part of the Incident, which deals with the narrator's disillusionment upon returning home from Vietnam. There, two verbal processes are used to project the wordings that dash any expectation of a hero's welcome and a job back home which may have been engendered by discourses of militaristic jingo-ism. And what is finally projected is a mental process: "Son, don't you understand, now?"

As far as the generic structure of the exemplum is concerned it is important to note the switch from mainly action (doing and saying) processes in the Orientation and Incident stages to

attributive relational processes in the Interpretation and Coda. This further reinforces the stasis of the narrator's position as far as interpreting the Incident and his current situation are concerned. The relational grammar symbolises the helplessness and induced passivity of his position as follows:

Rational transitivity:

CARRIER	PROCESS	ATTRIBUTE	CIRCUMSTANCE
---------	---------	-----------	--------------

Interpretation

I [fighting off the Viet Cong]	had	a brother	at Khe Sahn
They	're	still there	
He	's	all gone	

He	had	a woman he loved in Saigon	
I	got	picture of him in her arms	

Coda

[down in the shadow of the penitentiary]
[out by the gas fires of the refinery]

I [nowhere to run]	'm	ten years burning down the road
(I)	ain't got	nowhere to go

Overall then, the song's experiential clause grammar constructs a discourse of frustration (middle voice), disillusionment (projection) and inertia (attributive relationals). The text is like the clause.

3.5 MOOD

The MOOD structure is predictably narrative - first person declarative. The narrator gives information - tells his tale. There is no negotiation, either through varying mood, or through grading by MODALIZATION or MODULATION. The effect here is that of interpersonal inertia, which reinforces the experiential inertia outlined above. The MOOD structure is as follows:

GRAMMAR - mood

MOOD (SUBJECT^FINITE

RESIDUE

(I was)
The first kick I took was
(you)
you

born down in a dead man's town
when I hit the ground
/end up like a gog that's been beat too..
/spend half your life just covering up

(I was)
I was
I was
(I was)

born in the USA
born in the USA
born in the USA
born in the USA

(I)
they
(they)
-

/got in a little home town jam
/put a rifle in my hands
/sent me off to a foreign land
to go and kill the yellow man

(I was)
I was
I was
I was

born in the USA
born in the USA
born in the USA
born in the USA

(I)
hiring man
(I)
he

/come back hom to the refinery
/says "son if it was up to me"
/went down to see my V.A. man
/said "son don't you understand now"

I
-
They're
He's

/had a brother at Khe Sahn
fighting off the Viet Cong
still there
all gone

He
I

/had a woman he loved in Saigon
/got a picture of her in his arms now

Coda
minor
minor
I'm
minor
(I) ain't

[down in the shadow of the penitentiary]
[out by the gas fires of the refinery]
ten years burning down the road
[nowhere to run]
got nowhere to go

(I was)
I was
(I was)
I'm

born in the USA
born in the USA
born in the USA
a long gone Daddy in the USA

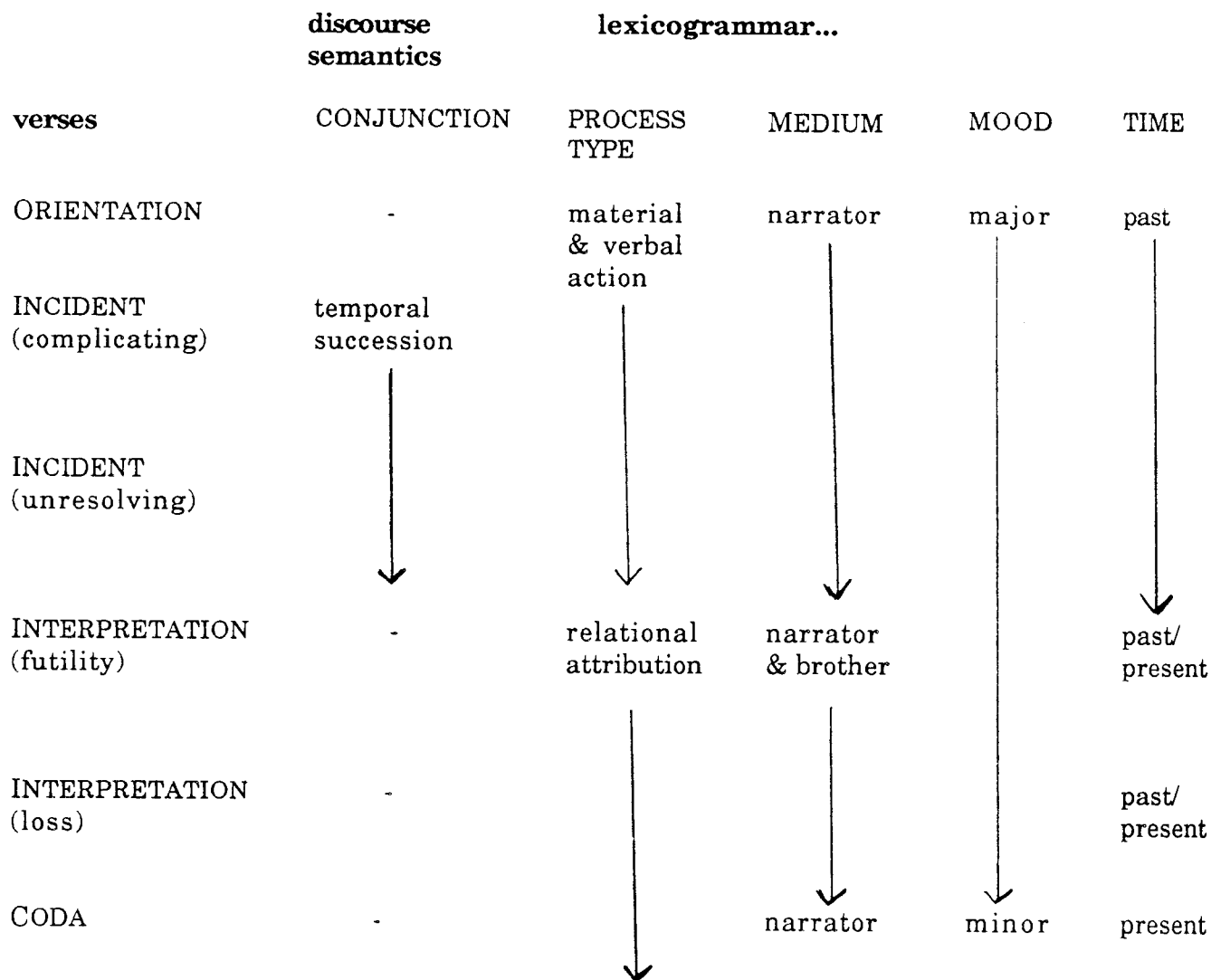
(I was)
(I was)
(I was)
I'm

born in the USA
born in the USA
born in the USA
a cool rocking Daddy in the USA

Note that by the Coda, the narrator has retreated even further from modal responsibility, lapsing into minor clauses to finish the song. The absence of a Mood (Subject Finite) element in three of the clauses in this stanza removes even the possibility of negotiation. Interpersonally the narrator can no longer intrude, even to declare his fate - his situation just is.

3.6 WORDS AND MUSIC - A SYNOPSIS

As noted during the wording analyses presented above, "Born in the USA" is structured around a number of semantic discontinuities which reflect its schematic structure. The correlation of these patterns with the exemplum's staging are summarised below.



It is also useful to consider the wording and music together from the perspective of mode of expression. Halliday 1979 associates principles of realisation with different metafunctional components in the grammar (see also Matthiessen 1988). His correlations are as follows:

METAFUNCTION	MODE OF EXPRESSION
<u>ideational</u>	particulate
<u>interpersonal</u>	prosodic
<u>textual</u>	periodic

At the level of genre, particulate expression refers to part-part or part-whole realisation; prosodic expression refers to dispersed realisation across a text; and periodic expression refers

to rhythmic realisation (waves of prominence). Stated at this level of abstraction, the modes of expression are generalisable across semiotic systems.

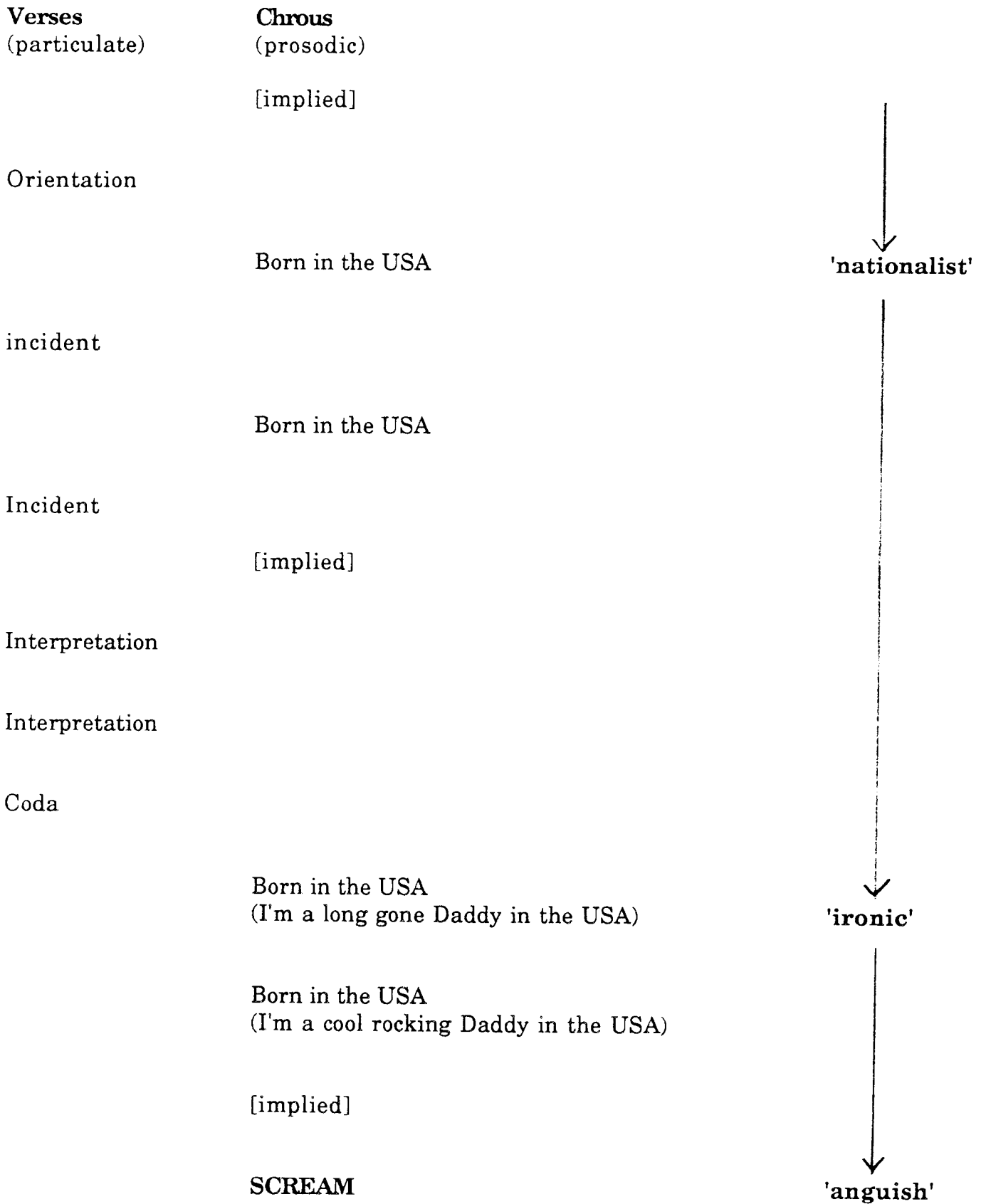
An overview of the particulate, prosodic and periodic structure of "Born in the USA" is presented below, taking both verses and chorus, and aspects of the musical structure into account. The particulate structure of the exemplum has been considered in detail above. Its complementary periodic structure reinforces the 'life-cycle' metaphor constructed by the Orientation (birth) and Coda (death/return to the hopeless situation of birth). During the sections of the song labelled 'sparse', Springsteen sings, accompanied by a synthesizer playing the same melody, another keyboard and bass guitar playing only the first note of each line, and the drums playing just the four main beats of each line; during the sections labelled 'full on', the rest of the band joins in and these players dramatically elaborate their participation.

It is particularly interesting to note that the penultimate chorus is played sparsely, and thus constructed as reinforcing the Coda: *I'm a long gone Daddy in the USA* amplifies the 'death'/no hope theme. The last chorus however is played full on, and ends with the line *I'm a cool rocking Daddy in the USA*. On the surface this line appears to contradict the rest of the song's wording; but it does certainly does not contradict the song's field, rock music, aligning Springsteen very appropriately as the rock and roll megastar he is. What is in focus here is the irony of Springsteen, the working class boy who made it, singing an remorseless hymn for the peers he's left behind. By acknowledging this, Springsteen is able to re-accommodate a nationalist reading of the song's chorus and a reading of the song overall as an American anthem.

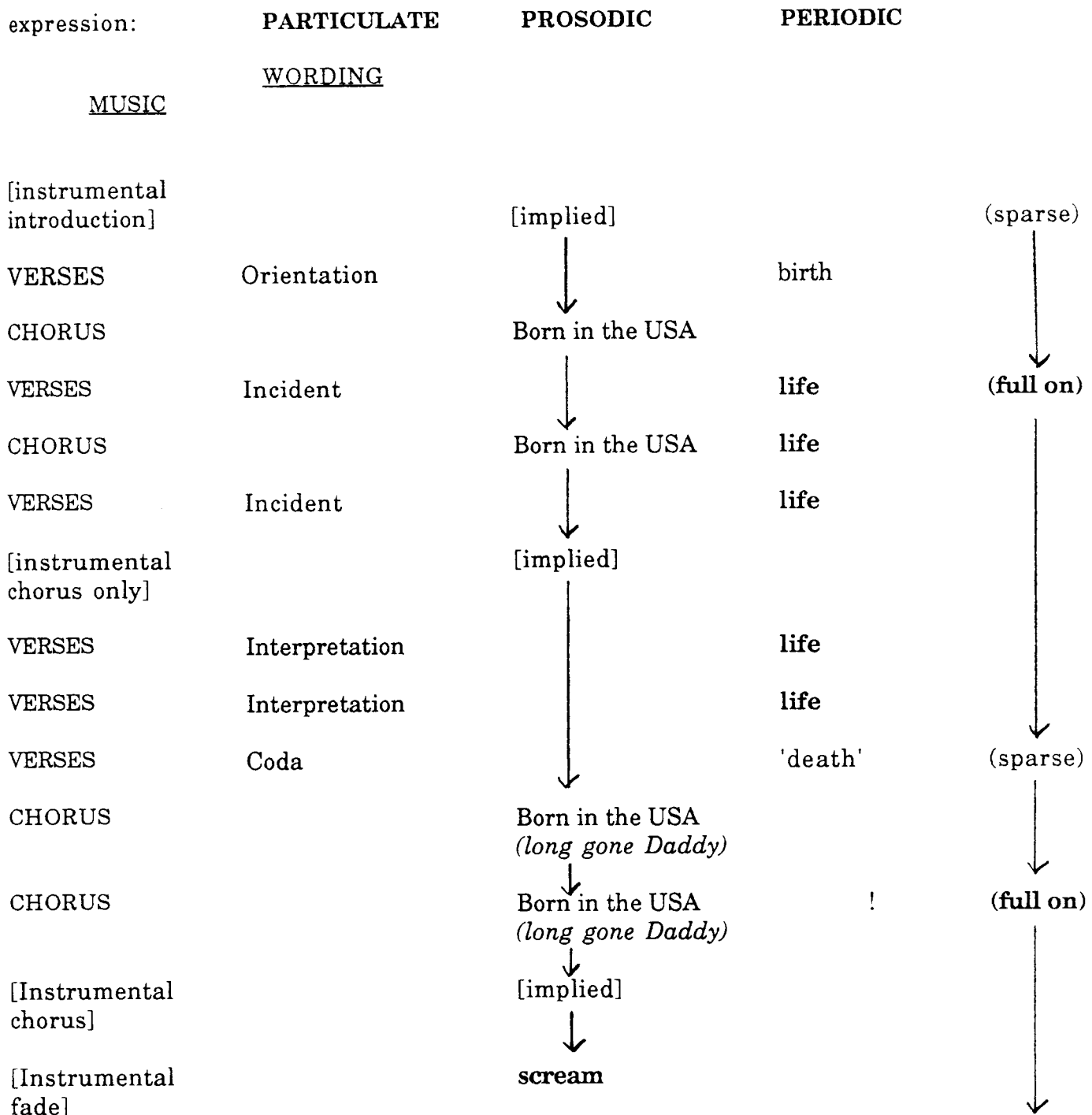
Working against this parting irony is the song's prosodic structure, realised through the song's chorus. The chorus is sung four times in the song and implied instrumentally before the Orientation, after the Incident and several times over following the last line of the song's wording *I'm a cool rocking Daddy in the USA*). Note that Springsteen does not sing the chorus while he is deconstructing American discourses of age, race and class in verses 3, 4 and 5. Towards the end of the instrumentation, Springsteen screams over several bars; the wording in a sense dissolves into a long cry of anguish. The prosodic structure in other words involves a gradual transformation of the chorus from potentially nationalist to manifestly ironic readings, culminating in his proto-interpersonal, ultra-prosodic scream:

1st chorus	nationalist
2nd chorus	nationalist
3rd chorus	ironic (long gone Daddy)
4th chorus	ironic (cool rocking Daddy)
anguish	ironic (words fail)

The interaction of particulate and prosodic structure is outlined below:



All three complementary modes of realisation throughout the song are surveyed in the following diagram:



4 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS - SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY

"Sunday bloody Sunday" is a much more complex song than "Born in the USA". Accordingly our analyses will have to be even more selective than those presented for Springsteen's song, especially as far as musical structure is concerned.

4.1 GENERIC STRUCTURE

Setting aside the "Sunday bloody Sunday" chorus, U2's song has the generic structure of a lay sermon. Like the exemplum discussed above, this genre is another macro-modulation - it is concerned with how the world should/shouldn't be; but this time it is a macro-modulation of an

expository rather than a narrative kind. It instructs by argument rather than through story as exemplification.

The schematic structure of the sermon is that of a recursive Problem ^ Solution (4 in all). This interpretation of the song is outlined below. We have glossed the Solution to the second Problem as an anti-Solution since it functions as a rejection of an violent response to the troubles outlined as its Problem.

The argument can be presented in broad outlines as a series of concessive relationships along the lines of 'things are bad but we can overcome':

1. bad news
but we can be as one
2. dead bodies
but I won't fight
3. trenches in our hearts
but we can be as one
4. fact is fiction
but we'll claim the victory Jesus won

This structure projects onto the song as a whole as follows:

Generic structure:	SERMON 'Sunday, bloody Sunday'
Problem-	I can't believe the news today, I can't close my eyes and make it go away. How long, how long must we sing this song? How long? How long?
Solution-	Tonight, we can be as one, tonight.
Problem-	Broken bottles under children's feet, And bodies strewn across a dead end street,
(anti) Solution-	But I won't heed the battle call, puts my back up, my back up against the wall.
	[Sunday, bloody Sunday...4] problem
Problem-	And the battle's just begun, There's many lost, tell me who has won? The trenches dug within our hearts, And mothers, children, brothers, sisters torn apart.
	[Sunday, bloody Sunday...2] problem
Solution-	Tonight, we can be as one, tonight...5 Wipe your tears away...5
	[Sunday, bloody Sunday...4] (I'm so sick of it.) problem? [CONFIRM AS PROBLEM?]

Problem- And it's true we are immune,
When fact is fiction T.V. is reality,
And today the millions cry,
We eat and drink while tomorrow they die.

Solution- The real battle yet begun.
To claim the victory Jesus won,
On Sunday, bloody Sunday...6 **solution!**

Having established this staging structure for the genre, it is worthwhile asking how the chorus fits in. Our reading is that the chorus is actually transformed by the contexts in which it appears from functioning as part of the Problem to part of the Solution. Certainly by the end of the song it has been grammatically reconstructed as part of the Solution, as a Circumstance locating Jesus's resurrection in time: *On Sunday bloody Sunday* (see the TRANSITIVITY analysis below); for a detailed interpretation of the dynamics of this progressive recontextualisation see section 6 below.

4.2 MUSICAL STRUCTURE

Musically "Sunday bloody Sunday" is rather complex and contrasts with "Born in the USA" in a number of interesting respects. Its tonality on *Under a Blood Red Sky* is predominantly minor rather than major (B minor). Van Leeuwen 1988:22 associates minor tonality with "everything that stands in the way of progress and human self-fulfillment", as these values are prescribed by bourgeois discourse. And as far as resolution on the tonic is concerned, the pattern throughout the song is that of resolving lines preceding unresolved ones - resolution ^ suspense. These patterns help articulate the song's message of hope and yearning in opposition to Springsteen's inert anguish.

Melodically the song is quite complex, deploying five different tunes across verses and four different choruses. There are 4 stanzas of verses. The main chorus, *Sunday bloody Sunday*, is sung six times; two of the minor choruses, *How long...* and *Tonight...* are sung twice; and the remaining chorus, *Wipe your tears away*, is sung once.

MAIN CHORUS (6)
'Sunday bloody Sunday'

MINOR CHORUS I (2)
'How long, how long must we sing this song?'

MINOR CHORUS II (2)
'Tonight, we can be as one, tonight.'

MINOR CHORUS III (1)
'Wipe your tears away.'

The verses and chorus are also distinguished with respect to the position of their melodic climax. In the verses, it is penultimate (as in Springsteen's song). But in the choruses it is initial: **How** long, **Tonight**, **Sunday** and **Wipe**. This reinforces the experiential distinction between the verses and choruses since the former articulate bad news and the latter protest and solution.

The various aspects of musical structure outlined to this point are presented below.

Musical structure
[thanks to Elizabeth Green]

Key:

salient syllable

melodic climax of line

- Initial bold
- **Bold underlined**

line resolving in tonic

line not resolving in tonic

low rise

- FF (final fall)
- NFF (non-final fall)
- LR

Sunday bloody Sunday

U2

(There's been a lot of talk about this next song - maybe been too much talk. This song is not a rebel song; this song is "Sunday bloody Sunday".)

Verses: B minor; melody 1

(moan)

(moan)

I can't believe the **news** today,

I can't **close** my eyes and **make** it go away.

FF
NFF

Chorus 1: D major; melody 2

How long, how long **must** we sing this song?

How long? **How** long?

NFF
FF

Chorus 2: B minor; melody 3

To**night**, we can be as one

to**night**.

[martial up]
FF
FF

Verses: D major; melody 1

Broken **bottles** **under** children's feet,

And **bodies** **strewn** **across** a **dead** end **street**,

But I won't **heed** the **battle** call,

Puts my **back** up, my **back** up against the wall.

FF
NFF [martial fade]
FF
NFF

Chorus 3: B minor²melody 4

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

LR
NFF
LR
NFF

Verses: B minor: melody 1

And the **battle's** **just** begun,

There's **many** lost, tell me **who** has won?

The **trenches** **dug** **within** our hearts,

And **mothers**, **children**, **brothers**, **sisters** torn apart.

[martial up]
FF
NFF [martial fade]
FF
NFF

Chorus 3: B minor; melody 4

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

LR
NFF

² The key varies slightly for the third and fourth verses of this chorus.

Chorus 1: D major; melody 2

How long, how long **must** we sing this song?

NFF

How long? How long?

FF

Chorus 2: B minor; melody 3

[martial up]

Tonight, we can be as one

NFF

tonight.

NFF

Tonight, tonight. Tonight, tonight.

NFF

[martial fade]

(the Edge)

[Edge guitar solo]

[+martial up]

(Up..get it up...two...four)

Chorus 4: B Minor; melody 5

Wipe your tears **a**way,

NFF

Wipe your tears **a**way,

NFF

Wipe your tears **a**way,

NFF

Wipe your tears **a**way,

NFF

(Sunday, bloody Sunday.

LR)

Wipe your tears **a**way,

NFF

(Sunday, bloody Sunday.

FF)

[martial fade]

Chorus 3: D major; melody 4

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

LR

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

FF

Chorus 3: D major; melody 4

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

LR

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

FF

(I'm so sick of it)

[martial up]

(Get it up...rev it up...two...four)

Verses: B minor; melody 1

And it's **true** we are immune,

FF

When fact is fiction T.V. reality,

NFF

And today the millions cry,

FF

We eat and **drink** while tomorrow they die.

NFF

The **real** battle yet begun,

FF

(Sunday, bloody Sunday.

LR)

To claim the victory Jesus won ☉

NFF

(Sunday, bloody Sunday.

FF)

Chorus 3: B minor; melody 4

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

LR

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

NFF

[martial fade]

[martial up]

Chorus 3: B minor; melody 4

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

LR

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

NFF

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

LR

Sunday, bloody Sunday.

NFF

In the verses and two of the choruses (*Sunday bloody Sunday* and *How long, how long must we sing this song*) the melody is predominantly descending (in the verses it descends, rises and then descends again). As throughout "Born in the USA", this functions as an invitation to listeners to share thoughts and feelings. Significantly however, two of the choruses (*Tonight, we can be as one* and *Wipe your tears away*) are more active. The *Tonight...* chorus begins by leaping upwards a 5th from the tonic ending the previous line; this note is the musical climax of the line and is held for two beats. The *Wipe your tears away* chorus in fact contains two melodic peaks, climaxing on *Wipe* and then descending before leaping back for the first syllable of *away*. The melody in these two choruses can be seen to function to energize the listeners, rallying them together for the sake of some joint activity or cause (see van Leeuwen 1988:26).

One other very striking aspect of the music that we would like to comment on here has to do with the rhythm. At significant points in the song an explicitly martial rhythm is highlighted with syncopated military snare drum beats in every bar; this inflects the song with a non-martial ^ martial rhythmic periodicity outlined in musical structure presented above. The martial beat is associated with both of the 'heroic' melodies just discussed, accompanying the chorus *Tonight...* both times it is played and also accompanying *Wipe your tears away*. Towards the end of the song the martial rhythm is used to build the music to a climax: it accompanies the whole of the last stanza in which the ultimate Christian solution to the troubles is proposed; it then fades and is quickly mounted again for the *Sunday bloody Sunday* chorus (now reconstructed as a message of hope) which closes the song. In this way the rhythm helps construct Bono as a warrior of peace, rallying his troops to end the troubles in a way Jesus himself might have intended.

In addition the martial rhythm ideationally reinforces the verse *And the battle's just begun* before fading out over the rest of that stanza. This association aside, the non-martial ^ martial wave maps a metaphorical Given ^ New structure onto the song, constructing the troubles as given and the peaceful reunification of Ireland under Christ as news.

In contrast to the heterophonic "Born in the USA", "Sunday bloody Sunday" is polyphonic. The Edge picks rather than strums chords throughout the song and elaborates this harmonic syntagm in such a way as to construct a melodic complement to the tune Bono sings. In addition Adam adds the odd contrapuntal riff on bass guitar in the *Sunday bloody Sunday* choruses. The polyphony is also manifested in the singing of all choruses except the last, with the Edge singing in harmony with Bono.

These complementarities are further enhanced by the interactive nature of the singing on the *Sunday bloody Sunday* chorus (choruses 1 and 2 are sung together by the Edge and Bono and Bono sings chorus 4 alone). The first time it is sung, the Edge sings the first two lines, with Bono joining him on the second Sunday (harmonizing an octave above, then an octave below the Edge). Then the Edge sings the third line and Bono the fourth, with Bono's fourth line overlapping with the Edge's third. The pattern for the first two lines is repeated next time round.

For the third realisation, the Edge sings two lines of the *Sunday bloody Sunday* chorus in harmony with Bono's last two lines of *Wipe your tears away*; the Edge then take turns with Bono singing the next four lines, again with Bono overlapping the Edge. A similar pattern is repeated during the last two lines of the final verses, with the Edge singing *Sunday bloody Sunday* in harmony with Bono's verses. Bono then shouts the pivotal *On* (on the fourth beat of the last line of verses, followed by a pause) and the Edge sings the next two lines. Finally the Edge and Bono sing the last *Sunday bloody Sunday* chorus together, in unison for the first time.

Overall then, the musicians play complementary and interactive roles, which tend to resolve towards a single voice (heterophonic as in "Born in the USA") as the song reaches its musical climax in the final chorus. This resonates appropriately with the complex discursive voicing

in the song's wording and performance and the negotiation across semiotic systems of a Christian resolution transcending this dialogism.

4.3 FIELD

Matching its musical structure, the field structure of "Sunday bloody Sunday" is extremely complex. As with "Born in the USA", different readings depend in part on how much of the song is heard. A reading based on the *Tonight we can be as one* and the *Wipe your tears away* choruses for example might well construct "Sunday bloody Sunday" as a love song. Reading the *Sunday bloody Sunday* chorus on the other hand depends not so much on how much of the wording of the song is parsed as on reading position. North American readers for example, unfamiliar with Irish history, will not be able to interpret the line in terms of the various massacres to which it refers. In general, the realisation of the wording of the song is less contracted and less overwhelmed by instrumentation than the wording of "Born in the USA" - phonologically and musically in other words it is constructed to reach a wider audience. But because of the complexity of the experiential meanings constructed, this salience does not have the effect of constructing a single reading position for the listener.

We will deal with field informally here, noting briefly three major readings that can be constructed for the song: news images, romance and Christianity. We will also consider a reading of the news that is especially inflected for the troubles in Ireland.

The lines of the song participating in the news images reading are presented below.

FIELD - 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' news images:

the news today,
it (the news) go away.
Broken bottles under children's feet,
bodies strewn across a dead end street,
the battle call,
back up against the wall.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday. Sunday, bloody Sunday.

the battle's just begun,
There's many lost, tell me who has won?
The trenches dug within our hearts,
And mothers, children, brothers, sisters torn apart.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Sunday, bloody Sunday. Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Sunday, bloody Sunday. Sunday, bloody Sunday.

we are immune,
fact is fiction T.V. is reality,
today the millions cry,
tomorrow they die.
The real battle yet begun.
On Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Expanding this reading slightly, we can highlight its Irish inflection. Lines specifically oriented to the Irish troubles are underlined below, emphasizing the length of the struggle, the problem of unity, the hunger strikes and so on.

FIELD - 'Sunday Bloody Sunday'

the troubles in Ireland:

the news today,
make it go away.
How long, how long
How long? How long?

Tonight, we can be as one
tonight.

Broken bottles under children's feet,
bodies strewn across a dead end street,
I won't heed the battle call,
puts my back up, my back up against the wall.

Sunday, bloody Sunday. (4)

And the battle's just begun,
There's many lost, tell me who has won?
The trenches dug within our hearts.
And mothers, children, brothers, sisters torn apart.

Sunday, bloody Sunday. (2)

How long, how long.
How long? How long?
Tonight, we can be as one
tonight. (5)

Wipe your tears away. (5)
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Sunday, bloody Sunday. (2)
I'm so sick of it.

today the millions cry,
We eat and drink while tomorrow they die.
The real battle yet begun.
To claim the victory Jesus won.
On Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.(5)

The romance reading is the 'shallowest' of the readings considered here. As noted above it is constructed principally out of three of the song's four choruses (excluding *Sunday bloody Sunday*). This reading is however considerably reinforced by the field of rock music in

general, both with respect to the typical themes of rock songs and the patriarchal objectification of male singers, including Bono, as sexually desirable/dominant.

FIELD - 'Sunday Bloody Sunday'

romance:

How long, how long must we sing this song?
How long? How long?

Tonight, we can be as one
tonight.

But I won't heed the battle call,

How long, how long must we sing this song?
How long? How long?

Tonight, we can be as one
tonight.

But I won't heed the battle call.

How long, how long must we sing this song?
How long? How long?

Tonight, we can be as one
tonight..
Tonight, tonight. Tonight, tonight.

Wipe your tears away,
Wipe your tears away,
Wipe your tears away,
Wipe your tears away,
Wipe your tears away,

We eat and drink.

Reading the song at its deepest level on the other hand constructs a discourse of radical Christianity. This reading is in part less accessible because of backgrounded way in which Bono presents the critical verses *The real battle just begun, To claim the victory Jesus won, On Sunday, bloody Sunday*. These are phonologically reduced and somewhat overwhelmed by the rhythmic and instrumental climaxing constructed by the rest of the band for the song. In effect they are occluded by the field of rock itself - through the musical structure of its songs and in terms of the field expectancies it sets up. Dedicated fans on the other hand are of course aware of the band's Christian leanings and will have read the words on the *War* album cover, so there is no danger of this reading being lost.

FIELD - 'Sunday Bloody Sunday'

Christianity:

How long, how long must we sing this song?
How long? How long?

Tonight, we can be as one, tonight.

But I won't need the battle call,

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

And the battle's just begun,

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

How long, how long must we sing this song?
How long? How long?
Tonight, we can be as one, tonight
Tonight, tonight. Tonight, tonight.

Wipe your tears away,
Wipe your tears away,
Wipe your tears away,
Wipe your tears away,
Wipe your tears away,

Sunday, bloody Sunday. Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Sunday, bloody Sunday. Sunday, bloody Sunday.

We eat and drink
The real battle yet begun.
To claim the victory Jesus won,
On Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.
Sunday, bloody Sunday.

The subversive interaction of these various readings will be taken up in section 6 below.

4.4 TRANSITIVITY

Before developing further our interpretation of the songs, taking into account the interaction of the wording and music with other performance systems (sections 5 and 6 below), we will look briefly at TRANSITIVITY (section 4.4) and MOOD (section 4.5).

TRANSITIVITY relations in "Sunday bloody Sunday" are displayed from an ergative perspective below as for "Born in the USA"; in addition the process type of each clause has been specified.

grammar: TRANSITIVITY - AGENCY and PROCESS TYPE

Medium	Process	Range	Agent	Circumstance
I eyes it	MENTAL:believe MATERIAL:close MATERIAL:go	news	I (I)	today away
we	BEHAVIOURAL:sing	this song		how long
we	RELATIONAL:be			tonight, as one
I my back	BEHAVIOURAL:heed MATERIAL:puts..up*	the battle	(it)	against the wall
the battle many lost (you) who trenches mothers	MATERIAL:begun RELATIONAL:'s VERBAL:tell (+me) MATERIAL:won MATERIAL:dug MATERIAL:torn		(?) (?)	within our apart
we	BEHAVIOURAL:sing	this song		how long
we	RELATIONAL:be			tonight, as one
your tears	MATERIAL:wipe		(you)	away
your tears	MATERIAL:wipe		(you)	away
your tears	MATERIAL:wipe		(you)	away
your tears	MATERIAL:wipe		(you)	away
your tears	MATERIAL:wipe		(you)	away
we... fiction reality the millions we they real battle the victory Jesus	RELATIONAL:'s RELATIONAL:'is RELATIONAL:'is BEHAVIOURAL:cry MATERIAL:eat&drink MATERIAL:die MATERIAL:begun MATERIAL:claim MATERIAL:won	true	fact TV (us)	today on Sunday...

* grammatical metaphor for mental affection: reaction - 'angers me'

As reflected in the Agent column, "Sunday bloody Sunday" is much more concerned with AGENCY than "Born in the USA", containing no less than 13 agentive clauses out of the 30 selecting for voice in the text. If we examine these clauses more carefully however, we can see that some are more agentive than others. Two Agents for example are unspecified in embedded clauses:

- UNSPECIFIED - the trenches [[dug within our hearts]]
- UNSPECIFIED - mothers, children, borthers, sisters [[torn apart]]

Two more are in fact negatively modulated as incapable of acting out their experiential role:

NEGATIVE - I can't close my eyes
 MODULATION - and (I can't) make it go away

And two are Agents in identifying relational clauses, a less than 'active' role seen from the point of view of doing (especially material) processes.

RELATIONAL - when fact is fiction
 AGENT (Token) - TV (is) reality

This strongly foregrounds the remaining Agents. The first two of these are the battle call which puts Bono's back up and the unspecified Agent addressed in the imperative *Wipe your tears away* (5 times):

it (the battle call) puts my back up, my back up against the wall
(you) wipe your tears away (5)

The song's final Agent is the group consisting of Bono and his listeners who will claim the victory Jesus won:

(for **us**) to claim the victory

The agency thus foregrounds the lesson of the song: don't make matters worse by fighting; stop crying - tears will get us nowhere; let's transcend all this through Jesus.

The only other point we would make in passing here is that recontextualisation is not just a matter of textlinguistics. Note the way in which the grammar of *It puts my back up, my back up against the wall* is transformed dynamically within the clause. Starting from the beginning, the structure appears to be developing as follows:

It	puts	my back	up
Actor	Process	Goal	Resultative Attribute

This material reading is actually a grammatical metaphor for the causative attributive relational process *It makes me angry*. By the end of the clause however, this reading has been recontextualised as follows (undoing the grammatical metaphor in the process):

It	puts	my back	up against the wall
Actor	Process	Goal	Circumstance of location in space

The message now constructs one of the consequences of violent struggle - capture, with the implication of death, with (the firing squad) or without (shot on sight) trial. The grammar, by enforcing a re-reading of this kind, symbolises the reading and re-reading processes through which the subversive meaning of the song is achieved.

As previewed above, probably the most critical aspect of the TRANSITIVITY analysis has to do with the recontextualisation of the *Sunday bloody Sunday* chorus as Circumstance of location in time in at the end of the last verse:

the victory	[[Jesus	won	on Sunday bloody Sunday]]
	Agent	Process	Circumstance

This in fact breaks down the boundary between verses and chorus that has been constructed throughout the song; and this fusion is further reinforced by the Edge starting this penultimate chorus two lines early (see section 4.6 below):

BONO sings:

The real battle yet begun
To claim the victory Jesus won
On...

THE EDGE sings:

Sunday bloody Sunday
Sunday bloody Sunday
Sunday bloody Sunday
Sunday bloody Sunday

The wording and music thus work together to consummate the song's Christian lesson - the transformation of violent struggle into peace giving salvation.

4.5 MOOD AND MODULATION

This lay sermon's macro-proposal functionality is more transparently grammaticalised than was the case for the exemplum "Born in the USA". Seven of the song's propositions are explicitly modulated:

I **can't** believe the news today.
I **can't** close my eyes and make it go away.
How long, how long **must** we sing this song?
Tonight, we **can** be as one, tonight.
But I **won't** heed the battle call.
How long, how long **must** we sing this song?
Tonight, we **can** be as one tonight.

So potentiality, obligation and inclination are all introduced as dimensions of 'imperative' negotiation (see Halliday 1982b, 1985a:335). Unlike the narrator of Springsteen's song, Bono constructs himself as interpersonally active - a negotiator with the power to change his world. This interactivity is further reflected in the song's MOOD structure which engages the listener with imperative and interrogative clauses alongside declaratives - each chorus in fact constructs a different MOOD:

INTERROGATIVE

How long, how long must we sing this song?
How long?

DECLARATIVE

Tonight, we can be as one, tonight.

MINOR

Sunday bloody Sunday.
Sunday bloody Sunday.
Sunday bloody Sunday.
Sunday bloody Sunday.

IMPERATIVE

Wipe your tears away.
Wipe your tears away.
Wipe your tears away.
Wipe your tears away.
Wipe your tears away.

These interpersonal analyses are outlined below.

Sunday Bloody Sunday

U2

grammar - mood and modulation

Mood
(Subject Finite MoodAdjunct)

Residue

I can't	believe the news today
I can't	close my eyes and make it go away
must we	How long, how long...sing this song?
<i>minor</i>	How long?
we can	tonight...be as one, tonight
<i>minor</i>	[broken bottles under children's feet]
<i>minor</i>	[bodies strewn across a dead end street]
I won't	heed the battle call
It	/puts my back up, my back up against...
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]
the battle's just	begun
There's	many lost
-	tell me "who has won?"
<i>minor</i>	[the trenches dug within our hearts]
<i>minor</i>	[mothers, children, brothers, sisters torn...]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]
must we	How long, how long...sing this song?
<i>minor</i>	How long?
we can	Tonight...be as one tonight
<i>minor</i>	[Tonight, tonight, tonight, tonight]
-	Wipe your tears away
-	Wipe your tears away
-	Wipe your tears away
-	Wipe your tears away
-	Wipe your tears away
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday,bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday,bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday,bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday,bloody Sunday]
(I'm	so sick of it)

it [[we are immune]]'s	true
fact is	fiction
TV is	reality
the millions	today.../cry
we	/eat and drink
they	tomorrow.../die
the real battle yet	begun
-	to claim the victory Jesus won on Sun...
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]
<i>minor</i>	[Sunday, bloody Sunday]

4.6 SEMANTIC DRIFT

As has been suggested above, the words and music in "Sunday bloody Sunday" redound in such a way as to strongly suggest a Christian resolution to the proliferation of discourses constructing the song. This semantic drift is developed through the particulate, prosodic and periodic structure of the song - with meanings from all three modes of expression consolidating the Christian discourse as the song reaches its climax.

As far as the particulate structure is concerned, the Christian solution is presented as the ultimate one, replacing the earlier nationalist and romance solutions (*We can be as one; Wipe your tears away*). This is prosodically reinforced by the recontextualisation of the *Sunday bloody Sunday* chorus. Two lines of this chorus are sung as background harmony to *Wipe your tears away*, and two further lines are sung as background to the very lines which reconstrue the chorus as circumstance of Jesus's resurrection. Periodically, martial rhythm and singing in unison drive the song forward at strategic points, generally associated with solutions ('good news'); the martial rhythm is particularly accentuated (with the Edge joining in, 'damping' the strings on his guitar) during the *Wipe your tears away* chorus. This martial rhythm and singing in unison are associated with the *Sunday bloody Sunday* chorus for the first time the last time it is sung, once its Christian construal has been clarified.

This convergence of particulate, prosodic and periodic structures as the Christian resolution of the song underscores the sense in which the song is not simply a mixture of discourses but rather a selection of discourses placed in ideological tension, which tension is subversively resolved in favour of one non-hegemonic voice. Key aspects of this pattern of directed articulation are outlined below. The results of the TRANSITIVITY and MOOD analyses presented above have not been included for reasons of space, but function as we have seen to amplify this picture (see the discussion of foregrounded AGENCY and unmodulated declaration in sections 4.4 and 4.5).

PARTICULATE	PROSODIC	PERIODIC: <u>rhythm</u>	<u>singing*</u>
PROBLEM 'I can't believe...' 'How long...'			B B/E u^h
SOLUTION 'Tonight, we can...'		martial up	B/E h
PROBLEM 'Broken bottles...'		martial fade	B
SOLUTION 'But I won't heed...'			B
	Sunday bloody Sunday x 4		E^B h
PROBLEM 'And the battle's...'		martial up martial fade	B
	Sunday bloody Sunday x 2		E^B h
'How long...'			E/B h
SOLUTION 'Tonight, we can...'		martial up martial fade	E/B u^h
'Wipe your tears...'		martial up martial fade	B
	Sunday bloody Sunday x 6 (2 lines in harmony)		E^B h (E)
PROBLEM 'And it's true...'		martial up	B
SOLUTION 'The real battle...' ...Jesus won $\odot \mathbb{M}^{\circ}$	Sunday bloody Sunday x 4 (2 lines in harmony)		B E
	Sunday bloody Sunday x 4	martial fade martial up	E/B u

* Key to singing notation:

B - Bono solo

E - the Edge solo

B/E - Bono and the Edge sing together

E^B - the Edge and Bono take turns, with overlap as specified above

u - singing in unison

h - singing in harmony

u^h - one line in unison followed by one line in harmony

5 ELABORATED ANALYSIS - BORN IN THE USA

In this section we will elaborate the discursive analysis begun above and relate this to an analysis of the performance of the song on two different videos. Both videos were filmed in front of live audiences, but one interpolates other images into that performance to construct a different reading - or perhaps simply a very specific reading - of the song.

5.1 VERBAL ANALYSIS

As we have already noted, "Born in the USA" is the less complicated of the two songs. There are three readily-identifiable readings of the song, as discussed above, and these accord with the different access of the audience to the song.

i. The most common reading of the song, the one most available to the casual listener, is that of xenophobic Nationalism; the reasons for the prevalence of this reading have been outlined above. It is the reading constructed, as Springsteen himself acknowledged, from the chorus alone, without reference to the words in the other verses. This reading does not require a great deal of amplification. It is based on the nationalist discourse constructed by a celebratory reading of the line, *Born in the USA*. Perhaps the redundancy of the line should alert hearers to other possibilities, perhaps even to an ironic inflection in its use, but then again maybe not; repetition of this overdetermined kind is common in popular music and would be heard as part of the naturalised discourse of rock music (on rock music see Street 1986; on music video Kaplan 1987).

ii. A second reading of the song is constructed by a juxtaposition of the nationalist discourse with the narrative constructed in the verses. This narrative is the story of a loser, a man sent to Vietnam as punishment for some minor misdemeanor. His best friend/brother in Vietnam was killed there. Returning home the narrator finds that he is back where he started; he has no job, no institutional support. He's as much of a loser as he was before he left - nowhere to run, nowhere to go. All of this despite, or perhaps because of, being - born in the USA!

Interestingly this narrative is partly reconstructed by many of those who hear the song as a nationalistic anthem. They pick up on words like Vietnam, yellow man, Khe San, Saigon - and construct a racist, nationalistic reading, an aggressive statement of American imperialist foreign policy. The narrator in this reading then becomes one of the war heroes of Vietnam, helping to free the world of communism. After all, they were *Born in the USA* .

iii. A third reading of the song deconstructs the 'loser' narrative. This guy had problems from the moment he was born - *Born in the USA*. His life experience is of humiliation and putdown which reduce him to the status of something less than fully human - *a dog that's been beat too much*. So he spends his life trying to act out other people's expectations, concealing as much as possible his own identity: *Till you spend half your life just covering up*. And what he covers up is his cultural or social identity, which placed him in the position to be treated so cruelly: that identity is essentially working class. To be working class in a bourgeois dominated social order is to be socially and politically exploitable - from birth - precisely because he was born into that class in that society - born in (the class-divided bourgeois society of) the USA.

Because of his class identity, which marks him for brutalisation, his punishment for minor misdemeanor is totally disproportionate; he is sent to another country to kill people, at the command of **faceless** middle class authority - *they* put a rifle in my hand.

And when he returns home expecting some change to his former status, some recognition - if only a job - there is no change. He is still a working class man - exploitable and expendable.

The narrator's memory of the war to which he returns in the song is one of personal loss - emblematic of the national loss suffered by the US in Vietnam. This construction of loss

contradicts any construction of the war as galant, or brave, or even just. The image of his friend in the arms of a Vietnamese woman is also important for this deconstructive narrative of class. In this image the narrator brings together the peoples exploited by this war - the Vietnamese people and the young American men - sent to Vietnam, by choice or command. It is for the narrator an image of himself - himself as the exploited and, paradoxically, as the enemy of his own nation; because it is his existence, the ideologically-determined existence of people like himself, who expose the failure of the US to live up to its own propaganda as the agent of freedom and equality. People like him, and like the Vietnamese woman, have to be disposed of, to preserve that fantasy of freedom.

This verse runs back to back with Springsteen's description of total alienation: the narrator, jobless, constantly on the verge of imprisonment - *Nowhere to run ... nowhere to go*.

In this reading of the song the chorus line, *Born in the USA*, is decidedly ambiguous. The constant juxtaposition of the narrator's story of loss and exploitation with the identification of his nationality - and specifically with the self-promotion of America as the keepers of the 'free' world, the home of liberty and justice - is heavily ironic.

And note that this is why America was supposedly in Vietnam in the first place - fighting to keep the world free. So there is actually a multiple irony in the line, situated within this narrative of America's unfree.

But the line also still carries that apparently contradictory pride in nationality which Springsteen's concert performance - accompanied by the huge flag backdrop - seems to embody.

So what is going on here? How does this nationalism relate to the story of exploitation and class-based injustice and hopelessness? The answer is - very well.

Working class culture is traditionally fiercely nationalistic, even when it is most aware of the injustice suffered by members of its own class. What Springsteen does here is reconstruct that apparently contradictory consciousness, the male working class subject - brutalised by a bourgeois social order, full of despair at the injustice of his life experience, but nevertheless fiercely nationalistic.

But he doesn't just reconstruct it. He shows the pain suffered by an individual working class subject - his humiliation and brutalisation at the hands of authorities whom he does not understand and who do not understand him, drawn as they are from a totally alien class. Springsteen shows the grief of such a man at the death of his friend and also at the death of his illusions about his own position within this country into which he was born as a citizen. He shows the identification of this subject with the oppressed, his gradual education in the exclusions he faces within this bourgeois society - exclusion from security and autonomy, from institutional support - and his final hopelessness.

In showing that pain and its cause - which pivots, as does the song, on birth - and the inequality which comes with birth into a class society - Springsteen denaturalises bourgeois class discourse.

So while it might characterise bourgeois discourse to conceptualise all individuals as potential winners, to represent their society as one of freedom of opportunity - where any boy [sic] can be president - that same discourse constructs a society in which certain people - the working class among them - have very little access to 'opportunity'. In which people such as the working class are excluded from the discourses which manipulate and appropriate power. In which birth into the working class is the beginning of a life of struggle, alienation, displacement, failure - and in which, through the class blindness constructed by that bourgeois discourse, the working class people who suffer these experiences are made to feel that their failure is personal, not a result of

their class background. Hence their increasing helplessness, despair, instability (Steedman 1986).

Springsteen constructs this worst scenario for a working class man with the uncomfortable implication that this man is not simply a personal failure, some kind of jerk who probably deserves what he gets from life. Instead he shows the life of a man who does not deserve his experiences, who suffers for his birth - for the class identity he receives at birth. He demonstrates the effect of bourgeois class ideology on a person within bourgeois society who is not bourgeois - and he makes clear the relationship between that person's non-bourgeois status and his experience of life. In other words, Springsteen shows the practice of bourgeois class ideology in the life of the non-bourgeois subject - not only the injustice and inequality which characterises that subject's experience, but also the insidious pressure it places on that individual to read that experience as personal failure - which it does by mystifying or covering up that social/class practice, by not acknowledging or describing its own partiality, its injustice. Instead it represents itself as the reverse, the guardian of freedom (Steedman 1986).

For us this represents the subversive practice of Springsteen's song. His exposure of the effect of working class status on the individual subject deconstructs the socially dominant bourgeois discourse, which propagates a myth of social equality and freedom of opportunity. Springsteen does not simply, oppositionally, construct a different discourse, a socialist discourse of freedom of opportunity, for example. He shows instead the discursive practice of bourgeois ideology contextualised by the nationalist discourse as an essential aspect of American society.

5.2 PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS³

We looked at two videos of "Born in the USA", in order to analyse the visual reading(s) of the song constructed by Springsteen's performance of them. Both showed Springsteen performing before a live audience, but they differed in several features: Springsteen's dress and physical presentation, and the intercutting in one of the videos of a series of images which 'illustrate' the song. We shall deal briefly with the straight concert video, concentrating comment on the second video which was directed by filmmaker John Sayles.

i. In the straight concert video Springsteen is the working class hunk - the working class man as sex object. This image is accentuated by his difference from most other members of the E Street band. The band members who mostly stay out of the limelight - keyboard operators, drummer, guitarist - dress in middle-class male casuals. The other front people - saxophonist Clemons and guitarist van Zandt - dress extrovertedly but not with the same coding. Clemons is the super-cool black cat, van Zandt the old hippie clinging to peace/love values in a world gone wrong.

This performance film begins with the image of Springsteen superimposed over a huge US flag - which he confronts with a clenched fist salute during his singing of the chorus, Born in the USA. The flag, we later see, is the stage backdrop and is visible to the audience throughout the performance.

This clenched fist salute by Springsteen contributes greatly to the ambiguity of the song. It can be read as an extremely conservative gesture, a Nuremberg-rally type salute of Nationalism. Or it can be read as the radical black power salute of the sixties which was also used by anti-Vietnam protestors arguing against American involvement in Vietnam (we might recall here the two Black American athletes during this period who were stripped of their Olympic medals by the International (sic) Olympic Committee for using this salute during the playing of the American national anthem as part of the medal award ceremonies). And the presentation of Springsteen from the back and slightly from the side addressing this salute at the flag is equally ambiguous: is it an oath of allegiance or a gesture of defiance?

³ Thanks to David McInnes for his insightful commentary on the performance videos.

The song is then performed against the flag backdrop, which does not feature greatly in the video. Rather this video concentrates visually on Springsteen, working-class sex symbol. The class analysis of his song might be lost in this highly conventional representation of the working-class man as sexual plaything for the middle class. On the other hand, it may be liberating for the working class to have a spokesperson of such articulateness and influence.

Once again the ambiguity remains.



ii. The Sayles video also begins with an image of the US flag - not flat and still, as in the other video, but fluttering in the breeze. It then cuts to, not Springsteen, but one of the sites in which working class people earn a living - a refinery (referred to in the song). And this cuts to working class timber housing - and finally to Springsteen singing.

Springsteen's costuming here is very different from that of the first video we discussed. Instead of tight jeans and a top and vest without sleeves which display his muscular arms, Springsteen is dressed completely in denims - from head to toe - jeans, black long sleeved shirt, jeans vest, a headband, neck scarf. Comparatively speaking he is very covered up. There is also a difference in the way he is filmed. In this performance video there are very few body shots; Springsteen is mostly shot from the chest up at the microphone, so there is very little objectification of him as a performer. This is also the kind of outfit associated with both the student radicals of the 60s and 70s and the Vietnam veterans themselves, who were mostly of the same generation.

His performance of the song wording itself is not noticeably different from that of the other video, but his dress and the inclusion of the image montage construct some different meanings.

Springsteen's many layered clothing with the added scarf and headband construct an image of restriction and binding, compared with the freedom of his movements in the other video. This change further removes him from the image of working class hunk, characterised chiefly by the expressiveness of his body. And the camera focus on his head rather than body adds to this distraction from the body as sexual object to construct an image of someone with something serious to say. That this statement will be politically controversial is suggested by the polysemy of his dress as working class and/or Viet vet and/or student radical.

Springsteen is also consistently filmed from below, so that his relationship to the microphone is not clearly authoritative. He hovers behind it - and in certain shots appears to move below it. As if what he seeks to articulate is almost unmanageable - too difficult - or as if the source of that articulation, the power to articulate, is not quite within his command. Of course, the power to articulate, and accessibility of the means of articulation, has not been a problem for Springsteen for many years, but it is a very common working class problem. As it was a problem for years for the Viet veterans. And a problem for the institutionally powerless student radicals.

Intercut with this film of the performance are a number of images from everyday - for which read, working class - life. The first sequence of images follows the verse which ends: *son don't you understand now*. This line is a revelation by the narrator of his former political naivety and of the beginnings of his recognition of class-based inequality - his growth to class consciousness. This image sequence constructs a history of a young man from childhood to his first formal occasion - and the pictures could be of Springsteen. They are also patently working class. So just as Springsteen sings of the character's realisation that he is doomed to failure in this bourgeois society, the filmmaker visually constructs the working class history of that character.

After the final chorus, punctuated as before by the clenched fist salute, there is another montage of images. Most of these again deal with working class life - either literally in everyday scenes, the welfare line, poor entertainment (the fairground, shooting gallery, baseball, drinking at the pub, men in the work place, and children in the street); or they deal with working class life metaphorically - in the images of the car for sale, the car no middle class American would own, and the empty rear vision mirror - *Nowhere to run, nowhere to go*. There are a couple of images of soldiers in training and of Vietnam veterans, the vets being mutilated in some way - one by an eyepatch and the implied injury, the other by a gruesome tattoo of a laughing skull identified by the initials USMC (United States Marine Corps). These two sets - soldiers and vets - appear in a sequence with the images of the two vets sandwiched between the

images of the soldiers. And the pictures of the soldiers are visually linked with the pictures of the working class by the image of a rifle - from shooting gallery to preparation for battle. Following the soldier/vet sequence we see the victims of war - a refugee Asian child and Arlington cemetery, where we see thousands of graves set out with military precision. We then go back to Springsteen's performance - where he is just screaming. A scream of anguish and of protest. And then again to images of working class life - men working in a factory, which are linked visually to Springsteen's stage performance by the trajectory of one of the worker's movements. He is identified with Springsteen at this point. A sequence of shots from the concert performance culminates in yet another sequence of scenes from working class life. And finally with an ambiguous image of Springsteen in front of the American flag.

These images construct visually the non-bourgeois class discourse Springsteen constructs verbally in the song. The bleakness and hopelessness of working class life is shown, as is the companionship which makes it bearable. And the far from casual connection between the working class, soldiers in training, Viet vets and death is clearly articulated in the sequencing and visual relationship of the shots. And the final scenes are again of the working class, the summary image that of the woman who looks out at the camera through a window. She looks unhappy and defensive and mistrustful - a look characteristic of a marginalised, powerless class.

The ambiguous image of Springsteen confronting the flag carries a number of possible significations - is he admiring it? or is he, as he has suggested, pissing on it? (Springsteen has played with this suggestion, made to him in a Rolling Stone interview where he originally denied it; see Loder, 1984.). The look with which he confronts the camera suggests the latter - and maybe he is making some kind of statement about the possibility of intervention and the need to speak out, to articulate injustice, even when faced with a social order which seems unassailable.

As noted earlier, the director of this performance video was John Sayles, who is well-known for his politically oppositional films - on subjects such as miner's striking for justice or institutionalised corruption. Sayles' video visually constructs the class discourse of Springsteen's song, making the mainstream readings of the song harder to maintain - though not, of course, impossible. A reader might still construct a fragmented narrative of working class life and patriotism from this video - and effectively refuse the subversive meanings constructed in both. But the subversive reading is there, reinforced by the visual semiotic.

6 ELABORATED ANALYSIS - SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY

6.1 VERBAL ANALYSIS

As noted earlier, U2's "Sunday bloody Sunday" is a far more complex song than Springsteen's Born in the USA. There are more possible readings of this song, based on the various access of the listener to the discourses constructed verbally. We discuss these discourses separately below, and then suggest how the song semiotically mixes these discourses to produce a number of marked reading positions.

i. Irish Nationalist discourse: this discourse is politically oppositional in every context, a revolutionary demand for the removal of British power in all forms from all Irish counties - and the reunification of the counties under the flag of the Republic.

It is constructed by the phrase *Bloody Sunday*, the name given to several occasions involving the killing of Catholic or Republican Irish by British soldiers or supporters. Its immediate referent when the song was written was the 1971 shooting of Catholic demonstrators by British paratroopers in Derry (the subject of the John Lennon song by the same name: Street 1986: 165-66). It is also constructed by the images of a divided people - families torn apart either literally

(by violence) or politically (by differing affiliation) - because of the political subdivision of the country. The images of children running down streets covered in broken glass is familiar from TV representations of N. Ireland (as of other countries involved in civil war - e.g. Lebanon). That and the image of bodies left in back alleys construct the representation of civil war which is central to this discourse. It is crucial to Nationalist guerilla forces that they be recognised as guerillas fighting a civil war, rather than simply criminal offenders.

This Nationalist discourse is also readable in the promise *we can be as one* - the vision of a united Ireland, which is necessarily a revolutionary demand in the Irish context.

Even so, the song does not suggest unequivocal support for a revolutionary end to this turmoil. Instead it quite explicitly rejects the call to violence - *I won't heed the battle call*.

In the final verse this anti-violence theme continues with the evocation once again of TV images - but here there is an interesting ambiguity. Where the lines about 'fact = fiction' and 'TV = reality' might be expected to preface more images of civil war violence, instead the reference changes to images of the starving. The significance of this displacement is multiple: it avoids an overt anti-revolutionary statement; it recalls the hunger strike tactics used by the IRA to argue their status as political, not civil, prisoners; it shifts the focus to all injustice - *millions cry* - rather than a localised conflict. So this verse carries meanings which could be read as pro-Nationalist and even pro-IRA, while at the same time apparently condemning Nationalist conflict.

So it is perhaps not surprising that the song has been read quite differently by participants in this conflict. Some nationalist Irish have read it as anti-nationalist because of its anti-violence, anti-revolutionary stance, while the British authorities have felt it to be sufficiently inflammatory to consider banning it from public airplay in N. Ireland.

ii. Another discourse dealing with the Irish situation might be characterised broadly as anti-IRA, which is the reading of some nationalist supporters. This discourse is constructed firstly by specific allusion to the Irish conflict, Bloody Sunday, and then by the rejection of IRA tactics - the fighting in the streets pathetically imaged by the *broken bottles under children's feet*, the guerilla fighting typical of civil war (the bodies left in alleyways could be victims of the IRA as well as of the so-called 'security forces'), the involvement of some family members against the will of others which results in divided families.

Yet the music, with its recurrent use of the military drum-beat, can also be interpreted as reinforcing the revolutionary reading of the song - and here revolution is equated with some kind of military activity. So, for example, the drum beats which sound over the repeated line "we can be as one" might suggest a military solution to the problem of Irish disunity.

The anti-IRA discourse may be read, but is at best ambiguous.

iii. A third discourse constructed verbally is that of romantic love with *we can be as one* read in Romantic terms. It is the cry of the individual against the unacceptable (violent) demands of society: the Romantic image of the individual standing against society. Here it is also given a familiar inflection - the man finds relief from the pressures of the outside (competitive/business) world with his lover. This image of love constructs the public/private dichotomy characteristic of bourgeois ideology and of patriarchal gender relations.

This discourse is constructed in the first stanza - with the *we can be as one* lines sandwiched between media images of social unrest and violence. But note that while the public/private split is constructed in the romance discourse, it is simultaneously questioned or interrogated by the narrator's admission that this is a dichotomy he cannot maintain - *I can't close my eyes and make it go away*.

So the romance discourse - familiar to Rock music - is constructed but it is simultaneously deconstructed.

iv. Another discourse constructed verbally questions the power and function of the media. As noted earlier, the images which construct the pro- and anti-IRA discourses are derived not from life, but from television. The media construct the war and viewers become consumers of war as performance. This use of media imagery - the news, TV - constructs an interrogation of the power and function of the media to constitute the reality for their consumers.

It simultaneously constructs a self-reflexive examination of the role of this particular media product - *How long must we sing this song?* What is the power and function of this song?

v. And there is a religious discourse. This is implied in the opposition to violence, though that is not the prerogative of committed Christians. It is constructed through an accumulation of references - *to the battle just begun* which may be the battle for the soul, and/or the individual soul's battle with evil in the name of Christ, to Christ wiping the tears of his followers, to the symbolic union with Christ (*we can be as one*) in the communion sacrament, and to Easter Sunday, the day of the Resurrection. And it is crucial to note here the transformation of the chorus. This transformation was discussed in some detail earlier in the analysis, and here it is discussed specifically in terms of its construction of the religious discourse of "Sunday bloody Sunday".

1. The first time the lines *Sunday, bloody Sunday* (lines 9 & 10) appear they follow the description of the violence of civil war and so serve to identify a situation of injustice; this is a bloody Sunday like many others, and specifically like the Bloody Sunday in Derry in 1971.

2. The next reference (lines 15 & 16) reinforces the local reference but already, in the Irish context, the multiple significations of the reference are accruing. After all, the first twentieth-century Irish Nationalist revolt took place on a Sunday, Easter Sunday 1916. Which not only suggests a less than damning view of revolutionary activity, but also refers the hearer to Easter Sunday and its significance as a time of victory, not defeat - of revolutionary change by non-violent means, by sacrifice - like Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

3. The third repetition of the SBS lines (lines 20 & 21) follows the repetition of two lines from the opening verse, *How long* with its implicit interrogation of media power and the *We can be as one* promise which has already been seen as having multiple significations - in the romance discourse, the Nationalist and the anti-IRA discourse, as well as the religious discourse itself. The juxtaposition of the two is interesting in itself with the notion of union (of whatever kind) as the answer to the question *How long?*, and here the Sunday, bloody Sunday chorus becomes part of that reply.

4. It is repeated three lines later (lines 25 & 26), after the *Wipe your tears away* lines with their reference to Christian compassion. And again they seem to be some kind of resolution. Wipe your tears away, take comfort, not despite Bloody Sunday, but somehow because of Bloody Sunday.

5. The final repetition of the lines (lines 30 & 31) makes their function as resolution quite clear. The discourses concerned with civil war and with media power are juxtaposed once again in the TV images, which are then dismissed as the site of the *real battle* is specified. This is the site of Christ's victory, defined as non-violent, sacrificial revolutionary change. Furthermore it is not a military or material site, but a spiritual one.

The song ends with the religious discourse as a kind of resolution to its textual polysemy. The site at which the falseness of the public/private dichotomy is not only seen but rectified is the spiritual. The site at which unification - with Christ, with the rest of Ireland - can take place without guerilla action is the spiritual. The site at which the yearning for inner peace away

from the violence of society can take place is the spiritual. It is also the site at which politically divided families can find unity - not in a Church, but in a transcendent spirituality. This in a capitalist society is itself a revolutionary stance.

The verbal text of "Sunday bloody Sunday" is extraordinarily polysemic. It constructs a number of discourses which are more or less intelligible to hearers/readers according to their familiarity with its historical context. Minimally hearers might be expected to have some understanding that the song discusses social injustice or social unrest and that it does so through the images familiar from the TV news; that it constructs some kind of romance discourse which sits uneasily with those other discourses; and that the overdetermined reference to Bloody Sunday suggests a resolution not necessarily a consequence of these other discourses. In other words, even to the casual hearer there is no easily decipherable naturalised reading of this song. Of course, to any listener with a knowledge of the Irish Troubles, and perhaps prompted by the band's Irish identity, then the concern of the song with the violence in Northern Ireland is unmistakable - but its political stance is not so easy to decipher.

This discursive complexity can be read as an attempt to avoid the naturalisation in the song of any of these familiar discourses, which range from the patriarchal romance of Rock'n'Roll to partisan political views on the Irish conflict. Instead the song constructs a discourse unfamiliar to traditional Rock'n'Roll, a Christian discourse of sacrifice and non-violence - a discourse to which the overt sexuality and violent energy of Rock would seem to be directly opposed. And yet, as the performance of the lead singer reinforces, the two discourses are in many ways wholly compatible.

6.2 PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

Again we looked at two different videos of the song in performance. The first version is from the 1983 concert video, *Under a Blood Red Sky*, made during the band's first tour of America when they had a small, but devoted following. The second version is from the concert film, *Rattle and Hum*, made during their enormously successful 1987 tour of the USA. By this time the group have accumulated a following which enables them to sell 70,000 tickets to a single performance.

In this analysis we will document the discourses constructed visually by the performances and discuss their interaction with the discourses constructed in the verbal semiotic.

i. In the 1983 concert performance of "Sunday bloody Sunday" four discourses are constructed by the visual semiotic: (1) a religious, specifically Christian, discourse of sacrifice, (2) a military discourse reinforced constantly by the recurrent military tattoo played on the drums, (3) a discourse of patriarchal male sexuality which is a familiar component of the complex institutional discourse of Rock, and (4) the discourse of media power related specifically to the (re)construction of this particular concert venue, but also realised in the verbal semiotic of the song, "Sunday bloody Sunday".

The first three discourses are not incompatible. Muscular Christianity modelled after the interventionist Christ who drove the moneylenders from the temple is a familiar discourse, while the sexualisation of the body of Christ is apparent from any reading of Christian iconography (Ash 1990). The sexualisation of Christian preachers, the messianic figure, is also a familiar rhetorical device - used in texts as diverse as fundamentalist American evangelical television and *Mad Max: beyond Thunderdome*. Bono writes of this figure of the seductive preacher in another Rattle & Hum song, "Desire": *I'm like a preacher/ Stealing hearts at a travelling show*.

The opening sequences of the *Under a Blood Red Sky* performance demonstrate these discourses and their interaction very clearly.

The film begins with the face of the singer/songwriter, Bono superimposed over images of flames; his face is turned away from the camera - from his audience. The image suggests thoughtfulness, even literally someone with a burning issue to discuss. The turning away also suggests a removal from direct engagement with the everyday. And there is a direct Christian reference; when the crucified Christ reappeared to his disciples at the Resurrection flames are said to have leaped from their heads. Also this is a traditional image of divine inspiration derived from classical Greek mythology. So what we have here is the beginnings of the construction of several discourses (1) the concentration on the singer/songwriter singles him out as the object of audience attention - which constructs the **discourse of sexuality**, (2) the associated fire imagery constructs him already as some kind of messianic figure, as someone with a message - which introduces **the religious discourse**.

An accompanying voice-over, by Bono, to this image asserts that the song to follow is not a rebel song. And then incongruously the music begins as a sequence of military drum-beats, suggesting most obviously a rebel song. So the singer immediately asserts authority over his audience, instructing them how to read this song - even in the face of such apparent contradiction as the military tattoo which follows. This assertion of authority is of course congruent with images of male sexuality. The assertion and the drum beats on the other hand begin the construction of a **discourse of militarism**, of military activity, which continues throughout the performance and subsumes the two opposing discourses which deal with military activity in the verbal semiotic - the nationalist discourse and **the anti-IRA discourse**.

The next shot defines the audience - and the fact that this is a media event - with an aerial view of the auditorium: a natural amphitheatre carved from rock, lit not only by modern stage lighting, but incongruously from two semiotically disparate sources - burning torches which recall the Beltane fires of a pre-Christian Celtic culture and hovering helicopters which add a bizarre high tech quality to the spectacle. Visually the **discourse of media** is constructed in the performance text, with the reflexive potential it has also in the verbal semiotic. But it is noticeable here that the band, and particularly the front person, Bono, do not exploit that media exposure specifically in relation to this particular song. The band is framed, contextualised, by the setting and by the audience as a successful or potentially successful group of performers - but not one yet sufficiently successful to participate in the construction of this discourse.

The discourse of militarism continues to be constructed visually by the choreography of Bono's performance: he repeatedly marches towards front of stage in time to the military drum beat used throughout the song, including his singing of the chorus, *We can be as one* with its implicit religious and sexual offering. The march step is ambiguously used also during a central symbolic part of the performance (after the Edge's guitar solo and before the *Wipe your tears away* chorus) when Bono brings a white flag to the front of the stage and plants it there, apparently to signify his desire for a cessation of hostilities. The complexity of both verbal and visual semiotics is further instanced in this section as the performer, now the focus of discourses of sexuality and spirituality, marches to a military beat while planting a flag of peace or truce or perhaps surrender, as a staged media spectacle for their audience.

The discourse of sexuality is focussed on Bono by his own performance as well as the camera's continual objectification of his body, which is fragmented in shot after shot to show bum, thigh, hips in tantalising detail. His clothing, standard punk-rock fashion for the time, is also essential to this discourse, with its cut away sleeves and art-pop fashionable black. But the kinesics of his performance are also very pertinent. When marching Bono manages to roll shoulders and hips in a provocatively sexual way. He continually moves forward to his audience, then backs away, constructing himself for them as an object of desire; he constructs an expectation of performance which he then denies - a familiar theatrical move, but very effective in performance. And he also repeatedly offers himself to this audience, moving to front of stage with arms outstretched. As he sings the line, *We can be as one* this forward movement constructs the line's erotic potential.

This construction of Bono as sex object by the camera, and kinaesthetically as object of desire, is inflected as a specifically patriarchal construction by his continuing assertion of authority. His control of the microphone, which is the source of power in a verbal performance, his control of the audience which begins in the film with the opening voice-over and continues throughout the performance as he instructs the audience how to handle the white flag and what to sing establish him as the person in control of the performance. He does not construct cooperation with his audience, but dominance over it - the kind of dominance associated with patriarchal masculinity.

And at the same time his performance constructs a religious discourse. Several times Bono kneels before his audience, significantly at the very beginning and end of his performance. He begins singing in a kneeling position, from which he moves into a punk dance step which retains elements of the march used earlier. The transitional movement appears to be a genuflection, and it is from this point that he begins the adoption of iconographic religious poses which thread visually through the performance. As he introduces the lead guitarist, the Edge, to the audience, for example, his hand pose is that of the stigmata display; the Risen Christ displaying the nail-holes which are the marks and proof of his Crucifixion. And when he later offers himself to the audience, he stands with arms outstretched sideways, in the pose of crucifixion. So his body constructs the tortured body of the crucified Christ for his audience; he makes himself victim as well as saviour. This sadomasochism is familiar from religious iconography, particularly the images of the crucified Christ, which are heavily sexualised (Ash 1990). It might be hypothesised that Bono's visual construction of a discourse complex which is sexual and religious is typical more of Irish Catholicism, or perhaps Irish Christianity, than of Protestant religions - though it is equally clear that the construction of sexual desire is also a major feature of Protestant religions and of their preachers.

The filmed performance ends with Bono in a characteristic pose, kneeling before his audience with one arm extended towards them, that arm blocked by the other which covers his body and obstructs that gesture. He both offers himself and withdraws the offer, at least so far as his body is concerned. It is a pose of both humility and pride, obeisance and control. He kneels in a position of supplicance and humility, which is also a pose of victory, the successful quester about to be knighted for his services to his king - the Crusader.

The *Under a Blood Red Sky* performance of the song constructs visually the same complex set of discourses which can be located in the verbal semiotic: a militaristic discourse which, given its semiotic deployment in the 'white flag' episode at the centre of the performance, subsumes both responses (violent and anti-violent) to the Irish conflict; a discourse of patriarchal male sexuality which defines the traditional 'romance' of Rock'n'Roll and contributes to that institutional discourse; a Christian discourse directly supportive of the Christianity constructed in the verbal semiotic; the self-reflexive discourse of media influence and power constructed in both the relationship shown between Bono and the audience and in the aerial shots which contextualise the performance spatially.

The concentration of virtually all these discourses on the body of one performer, Bono suggests that even those which are apparently contradictory - militarism, Christianity, sexuality - are not so. Rather it suggests that they can exist in a complex tension in the body of the Christian knight. What is extraordinary is the context, that these discourses are constructed within an institution which seems so hostile to any kind of religious discourse. In this institution sex is often said to be a religion - and note that this is a very phallogentric, patriarchal sexuality. In this performance U2 effectively eradicate that dichotomy between sexuality and Christianity - just as they deconstruct the public/private dichotomy of bourgeois ideology. The ideology of Rock, it should be noted here, directly opposes this dichotomy between public and private, (Street, 1986) and it seems that U2 utilise this radical aspect of Rock - only here they displace its oppositional and/or deconstructive potential across a range of discourses in which modern Rock has had little interest.

ii. In the *Rattle & Hum* performance of the song there is a marked change in the configuration of visual discourses, and also in the verbal semiotic.

Verbally, the song itself is the same, but it is contextualised by Bono using two pieces of spoken dialogue (raps). The *Blood Red Sky* performance was also contextualised on the video by Bono's voice-over (reproduced earlier), instructing the audience how to read the song: *this is not a rebel song...* In this second filmed performance the contextualising raps spell out a far more specific reading. While the earlier instructions simply rejected the notion of the song as an apology for the Irish rebel cause, or perhaps for rebellion generally, the opening rap of the *Rattle & Hum* performance refers specifically to Irish history and to recent events in Northern Ireland. And this Irish reference is reinforced by the record of an interview with the group made after the performance, but cut into the film before the performance is shown. This interview is spoken entirely by Bono; it is reproduced in section 2.

He attempts to explain the reason for his passionate statements made during the performance as the consequence of the news from Ireland that day of an IRA bombing in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland. It was a bombing which went disastrously wrong, killing and maiming not the intended soldiers but old age pensioners. The inclusion of the interview specifies for an audience not involved in the debate about Northern Ireland what this song is, to some extent, about.

In the first rap, spoken immediately before Bono begins singing, he identifies the band as Irish - the Irish in America - and then details the reasons that there are so many Irish immigrants in the US. Once they were fleeing starvation and an uncaring British government; now many of them flee unemployment; others the civil war in N. Ireland and its violence like the violence which happened that day, the day of this performance, in Enniskillen.

The rap constructs two different political discourses. One is recognisably **anti-British** (and so readable as pro-IRA) with the allusions to British government action - or rather inaction - in Ireland during the potato famine. The other is anti-violence, **anti-revolution**, with the references to the civil war in the North. For many these two discourses would be totally contradictory.

The second rap takes place in the middle of the performance, effectively substituting for the white flag episode in the performance recorded on *Under a Blood Red Sky*. This rap is also anti-revolutionary - *Fuck the revolution*. And Bono conducts a deconstruction of revolutionary propaganda - *They never talk about the glory of killing for the revolution*, systematically unpicking the meanings elided by the grammatical metaphor *the glory of the revolution* (more congruently - *It's glorious when we rebel*; Bono asks why). He specifies the revolutionary tactics of the IRA - cold-blooded murder, killing men in front of their families, the mutilation and death of citizens not involved in the war. And he then specifically rejects those tactics, along with the revolution itself - which he claims the majority of the Irish in his country don't want (though it is unclear whether their rejection of the revolution is politically motivated or is a choice prompted by their fear and disgust with the guerilla tactics in use in the North).

Visually, too, the performance focusses on this same rejection of violence, of the guerilla tactics of those fighting for revolutionary change. This performance is filmed very differently from the *Under a Blood Red Sky* performance. The earlier film concentrated on producing a kind of concert documentary in realist mode; the film is in colour, the action shots construct a simulacrum of the excitement of live performance, the objectifying images of Bono reconstructing the construction of him as sex object for/by the audience. *The Rattle & Hum* performance is filmed in black and white, which immediately foregrounds the technology of (re)production. The sense of immediacy of live performance is there, but more deliberately constructed; the media here foregrounds its own role in the construction of this performance - and, as we shall see, this is a crucial change in relation to the performance as a whole.

Bono's stage presence is uncharacteristically withdrawn in the *Rattle & Hum* performance - uncharacteristic when compared not only with the earlier version, but also with the rest of the film. He sings the first verse of the song from a kneeling position from which he makes very little eye contact with his audience. When he does address the audience directly, he does so without moving forward. And when he stands to sing, he still does not move forward and the only eye contact he makes is with the lead guitarist, not the audience. Even while using the gyrating hip movements of a Rock star to construct his audience reaction - constructing himself as a sex object to be desired by them - he complicates this with a gestural plea for solidarity. And even then the trajectory of his body is backward - away from the audience - rather than towards them.

Supporting Bono's withdrawal, this performance of the song begins very sparsely, with the Edge picking out the chords of the song on guitar and joining Bono in singing just the *Sunday bloody Sunday* choruses; Larry (drums) and Adam (bass) are dormant. This continues until the second *How long* chorus when the band awakes, driving full on; they then change gears full on into martial rhythm for the *Tonight* chorus, and continue to the second rap where Bono subdues them, with the Edge joining the rhythm section on guitar. The martial rhythm subsides for the next *Sunday bloody Sunday* chorus and then picks up again full on for the last verse and choruses to drive the song home. The periodic structure of this performance is thus very different to that on *Under a Blood Red Sky*; here the rhythm accentuates frustration - the song is powered as a macro-*No more*.

As he moves into position for the second rap, Bono rejects the march of the *Blood Red Sky* video. Instead he walks arrhythmically - seemingly deliberately out of step with the march beat of the music. He delivers the rap over this march beat, which he orders further muted with a downward arm movement, but continues to move awkwardly, not in time with the music. The image he constructs is of torture, tension, a desperate attempt to control his own violent reaction, evident in his agitated body language, to the violence in his country - to resist being constructed by that violence - and anguish at his apparent inability to do anything about it - despite songs like "Sunday bloody Sunday".

The rest of the performance is devoted to an appeal to the audience for solidarity in this rejection of violence. Bono addresses them from his authoritative position as performer, conducting their response of *No more* (Bloody Sundays), but his presentation remains withdrawn, away from the audience. As he sings the rest of the song, he picks up and carries a single, red rose - which has apparently replaced symbolically the 'white flag' episode of *Under a Blood Red Sky*. Interestingly, the rose is not traditionally a symbol of peace, but of love - which introduces a complex polysemy into the use of the symbol. Certainly it accords with his Rock persona as sex symbol, focussing on him as a representation of 'love'. But it complicates his message of non-violence by equating that with love, not peace. This displacement identifies peace and love in a characteristically Christian manner, which is underscored if the traditional Irish use of the symbol is taken into account. In Irish poetry the red rose is also used as a symbol of the crucified Christ; in fact, it is used in that way in a poem ("I See his Blood Upon the Rose") by Joseph Mary Plunkett who was shot for his part in the 1916 Easter Rebellion. With this symbol, then, Bono preserves the Christian discourse which constructed his performance on the earlier video - but it is not a very explicit or accessible gesture, particularly from the back rows of the audience.

Otherwise, Bono's self-representation as a Christ-like figure is considerably less than before. Perhaps the combination of the early rap with its reference to Irishness (strongly identified with Christianity), the band's identity as both Irish and Christian, and Bono's reputation for speaking out on social issues from a perspective which is recognisably Christian construct much of this identity for him. This seems to have motivated the director who includes a sequence of interesting waist-up shots of Bono during the second and central rap in which light reflected from a camera lens creates an encompassing halo effect. These images combined

with his authoritative presence and anti-violent message reconstruct that messianic role, but without the explicit Christianity of the previous performances.

On the other hand, it has been noted that Bono's delivery of the second rap from an elevated part of the stage to the left of the band constructs him as a preacher, the raised stage his pulpit. This is an important observation in terms of the performance. No longer is Bono offering himself as sacrifice and saviour, a Christ-like figure. This is a more worldly-wise saviour, a secular figure, choosing to speak out against actions he deplores. Here Bono takes on the Protestant preacher persona he has used elsewhere in the video, and for which he dresses in the black frock-coat and (somewhat incongruent) cowboy hat of an itinerant American preacher. Gone is the character who takes the wrongs of others on himself and suffers for them; instead we have the thundering fundamentalist preacher who bears witness to what he believes. And like many others, from Billy Graham to Martin Luther King before him, he uses the media as one of his resources.

The media itself has a strong presence in this video. Cameras are often visible in shot, and reflected light from camera lenses deconstructs the realist discourse which is sometimes associated with the filming of concert performance. Instead this artefact of the technology itself is utilised in the construction of specific discourses - such as the religious discourse, as argued above - or to reinforce the reflexive questioning of media power which is a feature of the verbal semiotic of "Sunday bloody Sunday". In the confrontational second rap, for example, when Bono uses the resources of his role as performer to speak to a huge audience about the Irish troubles, cameras are visible behind him.

In this *Rattle & Hum* performance of "Sunday bloody Sunday" Bono exploits his media presence (the immature pub band of the *Under a Blood Red Sky* video is quite transformed here). He does not, as noted above, make eye contact with his audience, but then he does not have to; he knows they will do that for him, and that the audience of the film will also do that. He constructs the second rap as a media event, an opportunity to exploit that function of the media challenged in the song - when *fact is fiction, TV reality*. Bono uses the power of the media to construct reality in order to make a specific plea about the plight of the Irish threatened by revolutionary violence. No longer is media power challenged; it is simply exploited.

The *Rattle & Hum* performance of "Sunday bloody Sunday" constructs a number of discourses, but they are not the same as those of the *Under a Blood Red Sky* performance: (1) the discourse of patriarchal male sexuality, muted by Bono's apparent unwillingness to make contact with his audience but powerfully constructed by the camera, (2) the Christian discourse constructed as much by the film editing as by Bono's own performance, that performance constructing him as preacher rather than messiah, (3) the anti-violence discourse made explicit by Bono's bodily rejection of the martial beat, as well as by the rap, (4) a contradictory discourse of violence and control, expressed as suppressed rage, which is congruent with the energised sexuality of the Rock performer, and (5) again there is a media discourse, which is constructed both by Bono's uncharacteristic shunning of his audience and consequent foregrounding of the relationship between them, by the very visible technology of modern filmmaking which impacts visually on his performance at crucial times, such as during the second rap and by Bono's explicit use of the media to construct an anti-revolutionary sermon.

The Bono of this performance is no longer the sacrificial Christ-like figure of the earlier video, but a hell-harrowing figure - only the hell is an earthly one. The resolution in non-violent Christianity, a spiritual resolution, is replaced by a passionate plea for secular deliverance from this palpable violence. Bono is now fully aware of the media coverage of his performance and plays it to the full: he is now a secular media preacher demanding popular support for secular change and deliverance, not a knight of Christ praying for spiritual resolution.



7 SUBVERSION

We began this study of "Born in the USA" and "Sunday bloody Sunday" with the aim of investigating the textual dialogue which constructs the two songs. They were particularly interesting for this purpose because of the very different readings they had been given by a variety of audiences - and because of the size of those audiences.

Our analysis of the verbal and musical semiotic of both songs suggests that they operate in a way which may be described as subversive. In both cases the songs construct a number of discourses and in each case these include mainstream discourse(s) of some kind. But interacting with these mainstream discourses are discourses which are quite other than mainstream - in Springsteen's case an oppositional class discourse which refuses the comfortable naturalisations offered by the socially-dominant bourgeois class discourse;⁴ or U2 a Christian discourse which is again fundamentally oppositional. We describe this dialogue of discourses as subversive precisely because of this mix of mainstream and oppositional discourses **and because** the discourses are manipulated semiotically so that the resolution of the dialogue (and there is a resolution) is with the non-mainstream discourse.

Of course, this does not mean that the audience will read the resolution this way; as noted above, we began the study in the knowledge that both songs attracted a wide variety of readings. However, it is pertinent that the discourses which define the songs as subversive - working class and Christian - are also the labels commonly given the two groups. On the other hand, many of their audience read only the naturalised meanings of the songs. For "Born in the USA", this is xenophobic nationalism. In the case of "Sunday bloody Sunday", this is more difficult to define, because of the number of different discourses involved; however, it can be postulated that this basically results in a romance discourse for those who hear only a few words and the melancholy of the music semiotic, and a pro-unification discourse about Ireland for those who know more about the context and hear the mixture of melancholy and militancy in the music.

Having acknowledged the possibility (or virtual inevitability) of a range of readings it is not sufficient to characterise the songs simply as failures or co-options. For one thing the tendency of audiences to (re)construct a text according to the most ideologically 'natural' reading possible is well-known and unavoidable. On the other hand, that rejection underestimates the influence and power of performers who can confront a huge audience with discourses which are oppositional and potentially revolutionary.

We looked at the other semiotic systems involved in the performances in order to discover how the different discourses are presented to readers; in other words, how readers are positioned by the texts to make meanings from these discourses.

In performance "Born in the USA" was constructed ambiguously, particularly by the clenched fist salute which accompanied Springsteen's singing of the chorus. However, Springsteen's deployment of the institutional discourse of Rock'n'Roll to give voice to an oppositional (anti-bourgeois) discourse of class which is silenced by bourgeois discourse reinforced the subversive reading of both verbal and musical semiotic systems. And John Sayles' video, in particular, voiced this discourse in an uncompromising way, graphically representing the potential life experience of a young working class man - from childhood to Arlington.

Again it was noted that Springsteen's presentation on one of the videos as a working class sex symbol is a bourgeois construct which might well deflect readers from the working class discourse he also constructs. But again it is important to note that he does actually give the working class a voice in the song, a voice ideologically denied them in a bourgeois society.

⁴ Born in the USA was in fact first written to be included on Springsteen's 'acoustic' album *Nabraska*, his homage to Woodie Guthrie. (recorded March 1987: 112, 145)

We examined two very different performances of "Sunday bloody Sunday". In the earlier 1983 *Under a Blood Red Sky* performance the Christian discourse is visually constructed as a major performance discourse, mapped seemingly paradoxically onto the patriarchal sexuality of institutional Rock and a militaristic discourse also congruent with the violent masculinist energy of Rock'n'Roll. In *Under a Blood Red Sky*, then, the Christian discourse was made semiotically prominent by its displacement across the complex institutional discourse of Rock. This performance reproduced the subversive operation of verbal and musical semiotic systems in "Sunday bloody Sunday".

The later film version of the song, the 1987 *Rattle & Hum* version, shows a different configuration of discourses constructing the performance. Here the verbal semiotic is effectively changed by the contextualising interview shown before the concert performance, and then by the two raps which remove much of the song's verbal ambiguity by focussing on specific discourses. The performance then focusses on the Northern Ireland conflict, though the political stance in relation to British involvement is still not clear, given the disparaging reference to British government callousness towards the starving Irish of the 18th century.

The visual performance is also different from the earlier version, with the Christianity muted in favour of a direct audience address on the Irish Troubles. This audience address manipulates not only the patriarchal authority of the male Rock star, but also his status as a media figure. It is a directly political use of the resources of the media to argue a political and ethical issue and to argue for a secular resolution - *No more* (Bloody Sundays). This performance loses the hope and yearning of the *Under a Blood Red Sky* performance, and this is symbolised by the muted lighting of the performance, Larry and Adam's absence from almost half the song, as well as by Bono's withdrawal from audience contact. The replacement of the revolutionary spiritual resolution with a secular one seems to spell out a defeat for the song - and, as noted, it is no longer publicly performed by the group.

There are no doubt many reasons for this change in the configuration of discourses in the performance. For our analysis what is interesting is the change from a predominantly subversive to oppositional stance. Bono does not subject himself to the audience as a sacrificial victim of spirituality any more, but takes a dominating role as preacher to argue against a particular manifestation of political action (IRA tactics in Northern Ireland). The Christ-like messianic discourse adheres to his stage presence from earlier times and has been reconstructed technically by the director but now this serves mainly to lend authority to the message of non-violence he brings. And it is important to note that this anti-violence discourse focusses specifically on the activities of the IRA, an organisation which challenges state power. So the discourse presented here does not challenge the existing social order which is the reason perhaps it does not need to be subversively contextualised in terms of mainstream, naturalised discourses.

What this analysis of the songs in performance leads us to, then, is a reading of the tactics of opposition and subversion and of the difference between them. Subversion, as noted earlier, involves the textual construction of a non-hegemonic discourse which is made palatable by its contextualisation within or its dialogue with a complex of mainstream discourses. It is not merely voiced, however; it is also situated semiotically in a position of prominence within the text. That is, the semiotic resources of the text (and its institutional place) are manipulated in such a way that the non-hegemonic discourse is an essential element in the audience's (re)construction of the text - though, as noted, this may still be subsumed within a naturalised reading of the song. Oppositional texts, on the other hand, can present marginalised discourses which do not challenge the hegemonic order in a much more overt way, again marshalling the semiotic resources of the text to lend them power and prominence.

The two songs we analysed, Springsteen's "Born in the USA" and U2's "Sunday bloody Sunday", both achieved the extraordinary feat of voicing for millions discourses which are

either marginalised or silenced within their own societies - and they achieved this within an institution (Rock'n'Roll) notoriously opposed to any kind of moralising or propagandising.

Of course, it can be argued that the songs are immediately recuperable within that Rock'n'Roll context, that Springsteen's working class narrative and the anti-bourgeois discourse it enacts is heard as a populist voice articulating nationalist, racist and sexist sentiments, and that U2's Christianity becomes little more than an ornamental sub-text to their popular humanism. The same kind of response can be made to any text which articulates non-mainstream discourses, particularly if that text is part of an institution with wide, popular support. On the other hand, a text which enacts a marginalised discourse but which is directed to a fairly select audience will not often meet the same ambiguity of response. Often, in fact, that text will be either accepted or rejected without question; the oppositional positioning it constitutes either accepted or rejected by its reader, listener or viewer. This kind of stance is evident in another Springsteen video, this one of the song "War".

Springsteen did not write "War" and he rarely performs songs written by other people. Yet the song was not only released as a single, it also features on the Springsteen video compilation. And it was not a hit, which is also unusual for Springsteen. The video was released at a time of heightened tension in the USA when Reagan was threatening to take US soldiers into Central America. Springsteen makes clear his disapproval of this action in a voice-over at the beginning of the song, which is reinforced by a collage of film material which moves from scenes of the Vietnam war to the training of civilian fighters in Latin America. The pictures are uncompromising and the song is uncompromising. It is very hard to read or hear it as anything but an oppositional text. This may be one reason why Springsteen even at the height of his popularity did not achieve a hit with this record. It is also a reason that it would not be criticised in the way that a more complex text like "Born in the USA" would be. That is, "War" presents an unambiguous statement of opposition to Reagan's hawkish foreign policy. The reader either agrees or disagrees with that statement. Springsteen might be accused by one side or the other of naivety, but it is unlikely he would be seen as selling out to the highest bidder. Yet that is the implication of many readings of "Born in the USA".

"Born in the USA" and "Sunday bloody Sunday" are also uncompromising texts. They are uncompromising in the voice(s) they articulate even if those voices produce multiple readings, rather than one particular reading. However, it is also that multiplicity of readings and the populism and popularity that engenders which empowers these texts to do more than preach to the converted. In both cases the accessibility of these texts constituted by their enactment of a range of familiar and/or conservative discourses (e.g. nationalist, patriarchal), appropriate to their specific institutional site (Rock music), simultaneously empowers them to confront their hearers/viewers with discourses (anti-bourgeois, Christian) which are not familiar and not conservative (at least at that site). It is this interplay of mainstream and marginalised discourses, constructed verbally and in the Sayles and *Blood Red Sky* video visually which constitutes the poetics of subversion.

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