Here Be Dogs: Documenting the visual culture of the Czech Indie scene

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> The eye has always been suspect in rock culture, after all, visually, rock often borders on the inauthentic... It was here—in its visual presentation—that rock often most explicitly manifested its resistance to the dominant culture, but also its sympathies with the business of entertainment. (Grossberg 1993:195)

> For *Saturday Night Live* he wore the same clothes from the previous two days: a pair of Converse tennis shoes, jeans with big holes in the knees, a T-shirt advertising an obscure band, and a Mister Rogers style cardigan sweater. He hadn't washed his hair for a week, but had dyed it with strawberry Kool-Aid, which made his blond locks look like they'd been matted with dried blood. Never before in the history of live television had a performer put so little care into his appearance or hygiene, or so it seemed. Kurt was a complicated, contradictory misanthrope, and what at times appeared to be an accidental revolution showed hints of careful orchestration ... He obsessively—and compulsively—planned every musical or career direction, writing ideas out in his journals years before he executed them, yet when he was bestowed the honors he had sought, he acted as if it were an inconvenience to get out of bed. (Cross 2001:2)

In May 2011 I went to an opening party at the Tony Shafrazi Gallery in New York City, where Hollywood stars and celebrities, including Mickey Rourke, Quincy Jones, and Naomi Campbell mingled near a mish-mash of Eastern European-related artworks, including Robert Crumb's comic book rendition of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Vladimir Tatlin's statue "Monument to the Third International," and an exhibition called *Revolutionary Film Posters*, a trove of Russian constructivist imagery from between the wars.[1] It was a bizarre sight for me, a person who grew up in 1980s Czechoslovakia, a satellite nation in the Soviet Bloc. In the 1980s, Czechoslovak cultural policy, theoretically and declaratively (if not always in practice) respected the norms of socialist realism, and it was in the name of the very ideals promoted by these posters that Western popular culture (and Kafka, for that matter) were banned as "bourgeois" and "decadent" imperialist propaganda. Here in the spectacle of a Chelsea gallery, the stars of Hollywood—the most visible exponent of American capitalism—celebrated the repurposing of political propaganda

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into aesthetic objects, as if theatrically reasserting capitalism's victory over the ideologies of the Soviet Bloc.

This victory is not always that absolute in the former Czechoslovakia, and although its been more than twenty years since the ideologies were officially abandoned, the impact of their pre-1989 influence can still be traced in many areas of life in the Central European region. My aim here is to confront some of the issues raised by the above situation, especially attitudes towards art, fashion, and popular culture in the context of post-totalitarian Czech Republic. My focus will be the relationship of members of the 1990s and contemporary Czech independent music scenes to visual presentation of their own and others' musical objects and performances.

As a cornerstone I am going to use *Zde jsou psi/Here Be Dogs*, a Czech/English book about visual culture of Czech independent music scenes that I edited in 2010. (Fellow Czech journalist Martina Overstreet served as a producer for the book). The book features thirty-two musical projects now active in the Czech Republic, each introduced by a) a studio portrait of its personnel by the photographer Adam Holý, b) a representative set of the project's visual communications—costumes, album covers, booklets, flyers, posters, documentary and promotional photographs, video projections used during performances, merchandise, banner ads, computer wallpapers, buddy icons, etc., and c) a short text written by a third party author familiar with the Czech music scene. The image of the visually compelling part of the indie scene is complemented by Dušan Tománek's documentary photographs, which were taken of Czech audiences in the past four years at festivals, clubs, and various other venues. My experiences as pop music critic, editor of two independent arts and culture publications, and advocate for popular music studies within Czech media studies at Prague's Charles University informed my enthusiasm for the topic and allowed me to foresee the obstacles in the production and reception of this project in the Czech cultural space. There were several. The book packed more than forty names in its colophon, with some ninety members of bands (plus their designers and photographers), and sold out its initial run of a thousand copies. As such it became a useful indicator of positions on the role of the image in the indie music sphere.

I began research for the book in 2009 by examining more than 300 contemporary Czech acts that had at least some web presence, and my colleagues Martina Overstreet and Marie Hladíková also conducted a similar scope of research. Most bands I researched got by with the default page settings on MySpace, or a profile on its Czech counterpart, www.bandzone.cz. The thirty-two projects included in the book represent only a minority of bands, with our primary criteria being that those selected showed interesting approaches to their visual presentation or at least showed interest in visual

presentation. They were singled out as exemplary and the introductory text of the book served as defense of such interests.

The authors featured in the book come from very different backgrounds: they are graphic designers, artists, curators, critics, art theorists, and fellow musicians. I state in the book's introduction: "Our texts were written by experts, however they are experts on something else. We haven't found an expert on the visual part of indie bands" (Nanoru and Overstreet 2010:234) There are several reasons for this. The book, with its documentary ambition, originated partly as a reaction to the vacuum in contemporary Czech writing about popular music in its institutional framework and social context. The study of popular music had a strong tradition in the Czech scientific milieu throughout the second half of the twentieth century, but after the 1989 Velvet Revolution no one was able to meaningfully build on it and develop it further.[2] Books devoted to popular music (other than popular biographies and interviews with artists) are virtually nonexistent, and those that do exist focus on the history of popular music before 1989 (Kotek 1990, 1998; Matzner, Poledňák, and Wasserberger 1990; Dorůžka 1991). These works also use visual materials strictly for illustration.

The post-revolutionary change of priorities, the transformation of funding for the sciences, and the somewhat unchallenged division of high and low art prevented wider attention to contemporary popular music in the country's musicological research departments. In catching up with what was being neglected for the forty years under Soviet command, popular music fell behind. The humanities and social sciences departments are not particularly quick to adopt popular music studies into their curricula either—my attempts to implement it into media and communications studies program at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University were met with skepticism. The increasing influence of British cultural studies in Czech university classrooms that would suggest the possibility of future changes to this situation has not so far resulted in many publications or conference papers on popular music. More activity can be seen coming from independent enthusiasts than from scholars; for instance the first serious book on the history of black popular music, *Hudba ohně: Radikální černá hudba od jazzu po hip hop a dále* [Fire Music: A radical black music from jazz to hip-hop and further], was written by a younger music journalist Karel Veselý and published in December 2010 by BiggBoss, a record label specializing in hip-hop. The hardcore/DIY scene put its lyrics into a compendium in 2009, but that was it; the editor and publisher Tomáš Weiss gathered the verses without context or any introductory text. There is, however, a body of literature dealing with pre-1989 "parallel culture," or "the underground" as it is was called in the Czech context (Pilař 1999; Hlavsa and Pelc 2001;

Jirous 2008; Machovec 2008). *Here Be Dogs* picks up from these histories, exploring subsequent generations of musicians and fan cultures while differentiating between the social conditions of the past and post-89 times.[3] The lack of relevant Czech literature, together with the fact that the Czech indie scene often follows popular culture developments in the West (especially in Britain and the United States) also leads me to the use of works published in these countries in this article.

Perhaps the main reason for the lack of interest in the visual culture of indie outside Czech academia, and the reason some bands declined to be included in the book, is the precariousness of the suggestion that indie bands market themselves not so dissimilarly from commercially oriented musical enterprises, or the suggestion that members of the bands would stylize themselves. In my experience working in and writing about the independent scene, and especially putting together *Here Be Dogs*, contemporary Czech indie bands often refuse to acknowledge the role of graphic and product design, of on-stage or off-stage clothes and accessories, and/or performance, or at least they avoid openly discussing it. Their members claim they don't feel confident in the areas of visual representation, or don't care about them, often also suggesting that showing too much preoccupation with polishing visuals could or should have direct consequences for their credibility.

I will go more deeply into indie ethics and definition of indie later, but here I want to suggest that both scholar Wendy Fonarow (2006) and music journalist Michael Azerrad's work on indie ethics and discourse work well in my analysis, as Fonarow dissects British indie as a symbolic system with particular focus on the questions of authenticity. Throughout the article I'm going to adhere to her understanding of indie as an ideology, an ethos revolving round the idea of creative and sometimes political autonomy, rather than as a mode of distribution or a genre definition. Azerrad's book *Our Band Could Be Your Life* (2001), an account of the emergence of the American indie scene in the 1980s, inspired and strengthened ethic codes of the Czech indie scene in the 2000s. Copies of *Our Band Could Be Your Life* has circulated in the scene and on one occasion it was handed to me by a member of the Czech promoter team and record label Silver Rocket as "the Scriptures." Fonarow writes that "the indie community has an elaborate discourse concerning what constitutes 'authentic' music," (2006:188) and indeed, following Azerrad, the Czech indie scene currently screens its members for excess with puritanical consistency under the guiding principle that "the indie underground made a modest way of life not just attractive but a downright moral imperative" (Azerrad 2001:6). Openness about one's sartorial choices and general consideration of appearance is considered contradictory to pure artistic intention and, in many cases, attracts criticism,

often leading to the collective hypocrisy of stylizing one's act only to hide the embarrassing fact of such vanity.

Overstreet discussed the communication with the musicians in *Here Be Dogs* as being fraught with anxiety about even the term 'indie': "Bands were bothered by the term 'indie' and they understood 'style' as something superficial that might compromise their deep and serious creations. When I started using the words 'club scene' instead of 'indie' and 'your visual expression, which might also include clothes,' everyone was much happier." (Email correspondence, Nanoru, June 29, 2011)[4] The leader of one band was asked whether their fans could be photographed for the book:

> I don't like the idea anyway. Personally, rather than some hipster poseurs, I would prefer photos of keyboards we use, and stuff, and guitars. Make great photos of them, because for us as a band they are quite a bit more substantial than a bunch of dumb trendy girls that let themselves be entertained by [pop singer] Peter Nagy on Sunday and by us on Monday. Sorry. And thanks very much. (Anonymous email correspondence, Overstreet, June 9, 2010)[5]

Expressions of reservations towards style and issues of appearance can, to some extent, be found in most alternative/indie music scenes (see Fox 1987; Muggleton 2000; Gelder 2007; Greif 2010), but a scene in a post-communist country like the Czech Republic has its specifics, some of them stemming far before the 1989 revolution. I therefore begin my article with a brief historical exploration, which exposes the tendencies that have shaped and intensified the Czech independent scene's perspective—especially the unusually strong legacies of 1960s American counterculture and 1980s Czech folk singers, both of which were relished as a oppositional forces under Communism. From there I approach indie as a moral system and demonstrate how it is now used for policing in the Czech indie scene, using voices heard during the making of and in *Here Be Dogs*. Particularly the uneasy relationship of Southern-Bohemian band Sunshine with the punk/hardcore scene it came from is introduced to point to the indie scenes' quest for authenticity as the primarily criteria for exclusion. Then I'm going to investigate the complex ways in which indie as a Western concept is adopted in a context of post-communist country, by both the older and the newest generation. The quest for authenticity in the context of the Czech independent scene is complicated by the complex information interchange between the sources in the centers that determine global popular culture and their local counterparts in the periphery that—to a certain extent—make the Czech independent artists dependent on whatever information can travel through the traditional and often mainstream media and, more recently, via blogs and social media in affiliated communities. The aforementioned generational change then

represents the increased attention that in the past two years gained artists in their early or mid-twenties, whose bands often come from art school and/or regional backgrounds. Such new bands bring important value changes into the Czech indie discourse, whether concerning more open attitudes towards bands' presentation or their position within the global music scene. I conclude with examination of *Here Be Dogs*'s reception and its possible implications for the development of visual culture of Czech independent music culture.

The 1980s: Laying ground for indie

There are three periods in the twentieth century during which information was flowing with a relative lack of restriction in and out of Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic. The first was the First Republic, from the founding of Czechoslovakia in 1918 to the Nazi occupation in 1938; the second was circa 1963 to 1968, when the relaxation of Soviet grip, and subsequent attempts at system reform, allowed for an economic and cultural "Prague Spring," which was followed by Soviet occupation and a harsh crackdown on civil society, a time called Normalization; and the last came in the 1990s, following the Velvet Revolution in 1989. In retrospect, the movements defining the cultural atmosphere of these eras, much debated and celebrated in the wake of the post-1989 reconstituted democracy, correspond to the idealism of interwar modernist avant-gardes (attempts at art as inseparable from the praxis of life, and art in the service of public good), the liberating sixties, and the 1990s, which saw a revisitation of sixties countercultural ideals with the ethos of the Pacific Northwest "grunge" rock scene.

The early 1990s hippie revival was a wider process seen as a reaction to the Reagan-Thatcher eras in the West (from acid house to Madchester to techno, see for example Smith 1992; Reynolds 1998), but in the Czech Republic, the sixties were revived in bookstores, record stores, and in the media by way of a publishing frenzy that was stirred by those who remembered the last days of relative freedom in the 1960s, and by a general hunger for everything that had been long forbidden. In the early 1990s, formerly banned books and LPs were being released and re-released in large numbers, and classic 1960s films enjoyed renewed premiers with unparalleled audience turn outs. Then, as "Europe fell in love with the idea of sweaty, flannel-wearing, blue-collar lumberjacks with screaming guitars rocking out in the wilds of the Pacific Northwest" (McMurray 2011:ix), grunge became the first "credible" major Western musical happening to hit Czech popular music culture without censorship. The public theater of Kurt Cobain's never-resolved conflict between the DIY ethics of 1980s punk, "the desire

to rail against the dark milieu of the post-hippie early '70s and the calcified world of contemporary corporate rock" (*ibid.*:viii), and the demands of mainstream success and major label pressure, were important parts of the Czech fascination with grunge. Cobain, as much as the Czech president Václav Havel and many others on the turbulent threshold of the 1990s, went swiftly from being a dissident to being a commander in chief, blurring the barrier between the underground and the establishment.

Devotion to the ideas of 1960s was not exclusive to the post-revolutionary release. Frozen by the 1968 cutting of ties with developments in the West, the Czech underground movement of the 1970s and 1980s organized itself around the legacy of the Beats and the 1960s counterculture. Jáchym Topol, a member of the youngest underground generation, calls the Beats their "prototypes" (Topol 2011). The greatest source of inspiration for the emblematic band of the underground, the Plastic People of the Universe, was the Velvet Underground, followed closely by the Mothers of Invention and the Fugs. Books by the Beats and associated writers circulated in samizdat, publications reproduced in small numbers on typewriters or mimeographs and passed from reader to reader, and translations of the Beats' poetry and prose still enjoy great response in the Czech Republic. The poet Egon Bondy, one of the central figures of the Czech underground, was named the "The No.1 Czech beatnik" (Blumfeld 1992)[6] and poets Jan Hanč, Milan Koch, Zuzana Trojanová, Svatava Antošová, Václav Hrabě, and later Petr Placák and Jáchym Topol also drew inspiration for their literature as well as outsider lifestyle from the Beats. For the non-academic public in the early 1990s, Lou Reed, Frank Zappa, and Allan Ginsberg remained as cultural icons (see on this Pilař 1999, Janoušek 2008, Armand 2010).

The discourse of "the underground" itself was adopted from the West, but its form intensified under the totalitarian condition. In the first account of the underground literature, *Underground*, literary historian Martin Pilař quotes Canadian Paul Wilson, who at the very beginning of the 1970s performed with the germinal Czech underground band Plastic People of the Universe. Wilson remembers how, in the Czech environment, he began to perceive American avant-garde rock quite differently: "Filled with heavy dumplings, sauerkraut and beer, I comfortably sat back and listened to the Velvet Underground, Captain Beefheart and the Doors and the Fugs, and as I listened, I felt the depth of the music, which I did never feel before, as if I first heard it with the Czech ears" (Pilař 1999:25).[7] Pilař sees causes of this transformation and the strong effect the 1950s and 1960s American counterculture had on its Czech counterpart in the "lack of intellectual pluralism and free thought, which in the Central European context has always been very difficult to promote" (*ibid.*).

Singer-songwriters were a substantial influence on the overall Czech cultural atmosphere of 1980s and 1990s. Since the late 1970s, they had been more or less tolerated by the regime. They played at summer folk festivals, and, in the second half of the 1980s, recorded for the state record label Panton. Rock bands, whether "alternative" (those who preferred to play legally, when possible) or the more radical "underground" (who preferred to have no contact with the establishment, Chadima 1992:10) however, had more public scrutiny. While even banned songwriters (such as Vladimír Merta, Vlastimil Třešňák, Jaroslav Hutka, or Pepa Nos) could always secretly perform with a guitar at private concerts and at the semi-legal art exhibition openings (and, if needed, quickly hide traces of it), whereas larger productions or louder musicians tended to attract the attention of the authorities. These more noticable events were generally reserved for "official" groups whose production was prescreened by censors for "objectionable" lyrics, musical style, or general appearance.[8] The underground acts lacked the permission to perform and therefore risked imprisonment, loss of employment, exclusion from school, and other penalties (providing they found a space to perform, since the management of the venues risked similar sanctions). Continuing police repression against underground rockers, and harsh methods of "interrogation" after the 1976 process with the underground band the Plastic People of the Universe[9] successfully destroyed the radical wing of unofficial groups. Soon after, the establishment began to view even the "alternative" as a significant risk for the implementation of its "ideological education" plans and "ideological supervision" of independent cultural activities, and in the 1980s they hardened cultural policy towards popular musicians with repeated use of artificial judicial procedures and series of imprisonments (see Škvorecký 1983, 1988). In this climate, the bards of the 1980s maneuvered between the state-sponsored and underground worlds, and were perceived as an island of relative freedom by the audiences, who valued the credibility of songwriters' personal beliefs and their self-tortured role as the guardians of morals. The critical force of ridicule and liberating humor of their lyrics defied the regime's pathos and its general handling of words.[10] A large portion of the production comprised rhymed, guitar-accompanied citizen journalism that balanced the popular distrust of the media. Spontaneous expression by (at first) amateur songwriters represented an antithesis to the kitsch of commercial popular music promoted by the state-controlled media. What Azerrad notes in *Our Band Could Be Your Life* that applied to the 1980s DIY movement in the United States applied also to the reality of 1980s Czechoslovakia (with the exception of the college education, since many potential students were not allowed to enter universities):

> There are interesting parallels between indie rock and the folk movement of the early Sixties. Both hinged on purism and authenticity, as well as idealism about the power of music within culture and society; both were a reaction to shallow, complacent times and their correspondingly shallow, complacent entertainment; both had populist roots but were eventually commandeered by white middle-class college kids. (2001:8)

In the Czech mainstream of the 1980s there was consumer socialism, a kind of state-controlled mass conformity, where those who did not hide their dissenting opinions or simply stood out in any way, personal appearance included, were persecuted, and where consumer goods, whether food, fashion or music, were produced in state-monopolized, mass-standardized forms. The question was then whether goods would be delivered at all, given the frequent shortages and generally limited supplies of the failing state-planned economy. The centralized, nationwide five-year plans and ban on private entrepreneurship significantly limited the potential for seasonality, for "trends."[11] For an alert minority of listeners in and around the underground, a great many of whom after the revolution became public figures in their own right, the folk (and punk) formula "three chords and the truth" became sort of formal standard (whatever the truth may happen to be). By the end of the eighties and the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc approaching, this group grew rapidly.[12]

Václav Havel describes the dual nature of life in "normalized" Czechoslovakia in his 1984 essay "Six Asides about Culture":

> Something is always banned, now as then; virtually nothing is permitted, suppressed journals remain suppressed, manipulated institutions continue to be manipulated, and so on. The regime genuinely behaves like a gravedigger, while virtually all that is lively and yet has to be permitted lives almost by accident, almost by mistake, almost only on a word of honor, though with endless complications and no assurance about tomorrow. What is true about the will of the regime, however, is not necessarily true of the real spiritual potential of our community. However suppressed beneath the public surface, however silenced and even however frustrated, in some way that potential is still here . . . I see evidence of this in far more than the hundreds of samizdat volumes, tens of typewritten magazines, private or semi-official exhibitions, seminars, concerts and other events: besides, there are theaters crammed full of people grateful for every nuance of meaning, frantically applauding every knowing smile from the stage . . . queues at book stores when one of [writer Bohumil] Hrabal's books, emasculated though it may be, was about to appear; expensive books on astronomy printed in a hundred thousand copies (they would hardly find that many readers in the USA); young people travelling half way across the country to attend a concert that may not take place at all. Is all that—and more—really a graveyard? (1987:125)

The strength of the folk tradition was not without consequences for the visual part of the credible music productions. According to performance studies scholar Philip Auslander, both Western and Eastern resistance to show business "stemmed from the belief that the dominant culture controlled the means of producing socially influential images (e.g., the mass media)" (2006:15).[13] The 1960s counterculture and its heirs' investment in the idea of authenticity and subsequent antipathy to theatricality in music is derived from three ideological commitments, argues Auslander: "the emphasis on spontaneity and living in the present moment, the desire for community, and the suspicion that spectacle served the interests of the social and political status quo" (*ibid.*:10). Seeing the folk singers and their craft on one hand and spectacular popular culture on the other as a part of the "clash between an anonymous, soulless, immobile and paralyzing ('entropic') power, and life" (Havel 1987:133) helped shape the Czech alternative views of what was authentic and trustworthy way into 2000s, sometimes resulting in paradoxical and counterproductive uncritical formalism. This point was clear to Havel:

> At times we encounter something we might call a sectarian view of parallel culture, that is, the view that whatever does not circulate only in typescript or whatever was not recorded only privately is necessarily bad and that not being printed, publicly performed or exhibited is in itself an achievement or an honor while the reverse is always and automatically a mark of moral and spiritual decay, if not outright treason. (*ibid.*)

In principle, not much has changed since. The larger, more elaborate, more visible productions in the Czech independent scene attracting attention by their design or visual exuberance and not only by lowly musical expressions tend to entice examination and risk being associated with social and political mainstream.

Indie is a way of life

There are many definitions of "indie," with the original one stemming from an independent financial relationship to the—six, five, or four respectively—transnational major label music corporations (Negus 1999, Azerrad 2001, Fonarow 2006), and this is the definition from which Czechs have come to use the term, in English. The move from economic descriptor to aesthetic/genre descriptor began, shortly after it did in the United States, around the early 2000s (Abebe 2010). As in the United States, the space between the two meanings is a site of conflict and self-definition for each artist. Likewise, Czech indie music culture has its own narratives and heroes who define and

shape the terms of the argument. One legendary instance occurs in the plot of *Mňága — Happy End* (Zelenka 1996) a mockumentary film in which an all-powerful record company turns a simpleminded band into dancing fruit to promote an international fruit producer. But according to International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), the sales of recorded music in the Czech Republic in 2010 were close to $20 million USD. The regional branches of major labels[14] operate budgets that wouldn't support many of the Western independents and they were almost never able to exercise the relative amount of power their parent companies do in their environments (Negus 1999; Nanoru-Pospíšil 2005; Elavsky 2005). The economic definition of indie as matter of access to the corporate distribution networks, however, was rather unpractical and limiting even before the music industry collapsed under the digital revolution. Indie also cannot be confined to any musical genres or styles—the label has been applied to college rock as much as trip hop, disco, or dance-punk. Many of the 2010 annual indie "best of" lists in the Western media were topped by *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy,* a best-selling hip-hop album dealing with celebrity and excess, recorded by Kanye West, an international celebrity, and put out by Roc-A-Fella Records, a subsidiary of Universal Music Group. For this reason it seems most useful to define indie as an ideology.

The moral and ideological system of indie, developed in the United States and particularly in Britain and adopted by a select group of fans during the past twenty years in the Czech Republic, defines itself against "the mainstream" through a set of binary oppositions: small labels vs. major corporations, intimate venues vs. stadiums, local vs. global, personal vs. impersonal, lo-fi vs. elaborate production, live vs. prefabricated, spontaneous vs. choreographed, original vs. mass-produced, natural vs. artificial, utilitarian vs. ornate, individual vs. uniform, authentic vs. constructed . . . (*ibid.*; Fox 1987; Muggleton 2000; Gelder 2007). These forms of opposition cohere into an ethos similar to that of hippie, and indeed Romantic ideology of the artist, and these binaries are mutually reinforcing of one another. Likewise, one element of an artist that is on the wrong side of the binary can potentially negate all "correct" elements of the group as Fonarow argues:

> For indie, 'authentic' music is personal, live, youthful, organic, self-made, original, and motivated by concerns of artistic expression rather than commercial acquisition. This aesthetic morality is one of the ways indie asserts its music as more valuable than other genres. (2006:188)

An indie artist always has to consider what creative decisions could position him or her outside of the indie acceptability, and being preoccupied with one's image in this equation often has a tendency to do just that.

The most important distinction for Czechs is between music produced for profit and that which is espoused as being made with pure enthusiasm. In this sense, Czech indie in 1990s and 2000s often takes on the attitude of rockism, the belief that rock is the best musical form, more authentic than the other forms of popular music and therefore superior to them. Rockism equates rock fandom as natural or naturalized while other types of fandom are artifice, which is in and of itself a systematic denial of the constructedness of rock fandom. The term "rockism" had been in use within British popular music criticism discourse since the 1970s and entered into mainstream with a *New York Times* article by Kelefa Sanneh:

> Like rock'n'roll itself, rockism is full of contradictions: it could mean loving the Strokes (a scruffy guitar band!) or hating them (image-conscious poseurs!) or ignoring them entirely (since everyone knows that music isn't as good as it used to be). But it almost certainly means disdaining not just Ms. [Ashley] Simpson but also Christina Aguilera and Usher and most of the rest of them, grousing about a pop landscape dominated by big-budget spectacles and high-concept photo shoots, reminiscing about a time when the charts were packed with people who had something to say, and meant it, even if that time never actually existed . . . Rockism is imperial: it claims the entire musical world as its own. (2004)

These views, in condensed form, represent the romantic aesthetic preferences and values within the generic trope of rock fans as described by Keith Negus—favoring "timeless" rock over "consumer" pop, album over single,[15] author over performer or artists that "express themselves" through writing their own songs over the ways in which singers or groups of performers may work with arrangers, session musicians, and songwriters in putting together a composition or project (2002:121). Perhaps not surprisingly for a domain almost exclusive to a small, mostly college-educated, lower-middle class to middle-class white male cohort—and the Czech Republic is one of the socially, ethnically, and nationally most homogeneous states in Europe[16]—the indie doctrine often acts as a residuum of high art values in postmodern situation.

One of the high art values reaffirmed within indie ideology is that of the autonomous creator. As writes Fonarow, "For many, indie is the spirit of independence, being free from control, dependence, or interference. Self-reliance, not depending on the authority of others, has been the guiding value of indie music, as has the autonomy of artist" (2006:51). With "rock musician as an artist," this "rebellious individualist" is, in this mythological context, expected to express his innermost feelings through music and without interference. Anything that would resemble established professional marketing tricks, such as "superficial" and "extraneous" design or fashion,

suggests paying attention to "unessential" elements and losing of the one of the most reiterated indie values, individual artistic control. The ideal here is "unmediated" expression, or rather, something as impossible as unmediated music, unmediated media. One of the important indie binaries juxtaposes style not as temporal but eternal, formed by internally held attitudes.

The indie ideology travels well. By deriding fashion as superfluous, equaling attention to visuals as manipulative, saying that marketing techniques are only for commercial (or propagandist) acts, contemporary Czech rock musicians and fans are consistent with disparagement of the "low taste of the masses." Actively refining an image is considered cheating and rejected on the same grounds the hipster figure is declassed as a pretender because of the hipster's adoption of subcultural styles without sharing of social conditions or imagined ideologies (see Greif 2010; Hebdige 1979:46–51). Jakub Adamec, a member of the extravagant Silesian band I Love 69 Popgeju, writes in *Here Be Dogs* about another band known for its visual exuberance: "[it's] a frequent Prague phenomenon: the attempt to look and be cool on the outside, which doesn't go hand in hand with inner originality" (Nanoru and Overstreet 2010:241). By this dismissal he actively sets and defends the boundaries of indie as coherent, with core and surface.

Other artists in the book mobilized their bids for authenticity in a classic gesture of negation as outlined by Bourdieu in *Distinction* (1984). One such case was that of Amák, the leader of the darkwave post-punk band Night. In *Here Be Dogs* he states:

> I wear dirty shoes cause I'm a pig and I don't have time to clean them. My T-shirt is torn from the guitar, and I wear everything inside out, cause I don't like the type on my shirt. If someone needs to wear a blond wig and big sunglasses for the same reason and feels comfortable, then it's OK. (Nanoru and Overstreet 2010:255)

Amák is a former bassist of Sunshine, a band formed in 1994 in Tábor that had been part of the Southern Bohemian punk/hardcore scene, but which was ostracized from the scene for its "inauthentic" style sense and for courting mainstream success first abroad then back in the Czech Republic. A review of the Sunshine album *Moonshower and Razorblades,* which was released by the American record label Custard (run by mainstream pop producer Linda Perry, and distributed by Warner Brothers in United States and Universal Music in the Czech Republic), appeared on the DIY culture website Czechcore, which prompted a lengthy thread about the appropriateness of publishing a review of such an album, regardless of how positively or negatively the reviewer evaluates them. Cvalda anticipates this in the review:

> I can already see the discussion, that review of major label record shouldn't appear on Czechcore (who knows if the review will be even published after they rejected my review of the last Mötorhead album), but I think that Sunshine has strong roots in what Czechcore presents, even if it headed somewhere else . . . I know how many people in the hardcore scene view Sunshine, I understand, on the other hand, this album is simply good and I'm sincerely glad that in this fuddy-duddy country, where radios are dominated by the greatest of musical waste, Sunshine caught on and brought the masses something of at least some arty value . . . (2005)[17]

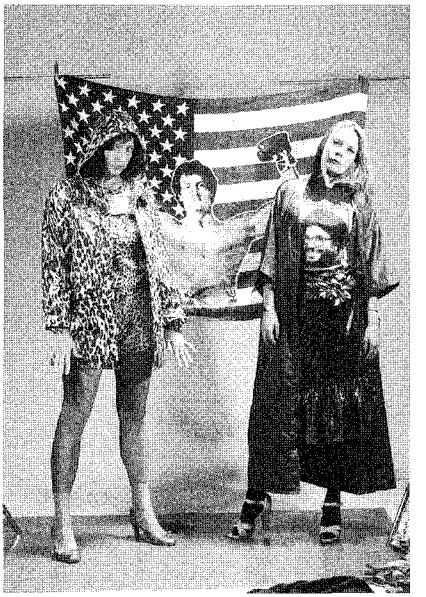
A user named Premek posted comments that were echoed by many:

> I don't even know if you're serious about this . . . Next time I'll have to read reviews somewhere on mtv, they have more pictures there :o) . . . I think that hardly anybody here thinks that Sunshine leaped further with this album . . . maybe further into (I hope not only) my ass. (2011)[18]

Given this type of reaction to Sunshine within the indie community, Amák's assertions in the book project are part of his own present attempts to claim authenticity relative to that of his former band, who are still active and play primarily in a circuit of "commercial" festivals and club performances frequented mainly by Czech teens.

The exclusiveness of rockist ideology extents further in its dismissal of exterior. One of the more fashion-conscious people on the Czech cultural scene is Jan P. Muchow of the mid-1990s Czech shoegaze and later electronic band The Ecstasy of St. Theresa. Muchow confirms his mistrust of style in favor of "taste," saying in *Here Be Dogs*: "Style is something you can buy, but taste is something you either have or don't have" (Nanoru and Overstreet 2010:248). In deriding style as easily acquired and corrupt, Muchow aligns taste as a kind of ideological superiority (Bourdieu 1984). He denies the constructedness of taste and its determination by person's social-economic and educational background, implies the existence of category of "tasteless" opposing the one and only "good taste" (i.e. the bourgeois taste, in Bourdieu's reading), and uses it as a way of actively distancing himself from a social group lacking cultural capital. Aesthetics here take the shape of a disciplinary system used to reinforce an elite status, "a cultural turnstile—it admits only those with the right tickets and excludes the masses" (Fiske 1989:121).[19]

A new generation of musical artists contradicts earlier Czech indie tendencies. These younger fans and musicians appearing on the Czech independent scene in the late 2000s tend to be exposed to and expecting of international travel, have access to post-secondary education abroad, and a engage in a direct, instant flow of media. They often have more playful attitudes toward the relationship between their work and the presentation



"Which is worst off—Czech thrift stores or Czech hip hop?" asks Petr Vizina, the author of text about Čokovoko (above) in *Here Be Dogs*. Čokovoko, part of the Brno scene, make explicit parodies of the creation of credibility through flow, dynamic stage presence, and the seemingly unmediated transition from street to stage that is a dominant part of Czech hip-hop since its inception in the 1990s. © 2010 Adam Holý. Used by permission.

of themselves. One such person is painter, promoter, and DJ Jakub Hošek of Prague's DJ duo Indie Twins and promoters team AM180, who says in *Here Be Dogs*: "We don't live ordinary lives. We don't wear ordinary clothes. We don't have to" (Nanoru and Overstreet 2010:246).

The new generation, especially those coming from the art school environment, are markedly more open about their aesthetic and sartorial choices. "We frequently borrow clothes from each other. It depends on our mood," says Edgar, a member of aggressive electro group Schwarzprior, formed in 2010 by three students of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Ostrava, who support themselves by doing construction jobs. "When I'm feeling fine, I remember what I was wearing the last time I was pissed off, and that I put on. When I'm enjoying myself on stage, I might take my shirt off" (*ibid.*:241). Those Czech artists, whose experience with music and popular culture was primarily gained after the digital turn and the collapse of the music industry's late twentieth century model, tend to see music less bound by genre rules. This development, partly caused by eroding hierarchy of media and rapid generation of short-term trends and styles that do not replace each other, but exist side by side, manifests itself in more open relationships between art forms. Theatrically-sophisticated electronic band MIDI LIDI, taken out of the club context, becomes "a conceptual, audiovisual work, whose goal

is to do contemporary pop" (*ibid.*:242). But still, even the most extravagant of the young projects on the indie scene, such as Brno's feminist, parodic rap duo Čokovoko, continue to view costumes as an evasive action and point to music's supremacy over other components of their expression: "We won't wear jeans and white tees and play the lute until we know how to do something, which is far away in the future. So for the moment wearing masks is a necessity for us, just like it is for [mask-wearing shock metalists] Slipknot." (*ibid.*:244). However, the new generation of artists entering the independent scene in the past two years brings with it vital changes, whose consequences will the scene continue to feel in the future.

Performance

The Czech indie scene's resistance to sophisticated presentation doesn't stop with design and fashion. Performance and theatricality are also subject to suspicion in the indie environment. On the hunt for authenticity, fans appear to perpetuate a systematic denial of the fact that any live performance is in great part theatrical, or, as Simon Frith writes in *Performing Rites,* that "*all* live performance involves both spontaneous action and the playing of a role. This is obvious enough in live music: it must involve a *combination* of improvisation and note-following" (1996:207, Frith's emphasis).[20] The conventions of performance are actually what the performances are judged and valued against. As popular music scholar Theodore Gracyk maintains, rock exists primarily as recorded music. The audience experiences it mostly in album form and as such, "rock is not essentially a performing art" (1996: 74–5). Gracyk claims that the media represent rock musicians as live performers and not as the studio artists they are, marketing rock as live even though it circulates mostly recorded, which perpetuates the myth of rock as live. Both Auslander (1999:76) and Frith (1996:211) add that most rock records misrepresent rock musicians by pushing the artifice of their studio recording in the background and posing as if the recording were a mere performance.

The pose reinforces some fans' belief in liveness as the most important element of popular music. One instance of this is the story of Cobra Killer, a German girl group famed within the much larger and diverse Berlin scene primarily for their performances rather than sonic sophistication. *Mladá fronta Dnes*, the Czech national daily newspaper, reported in 2007:

> 'Shut up and play!' and 'Here you're not in Germany!', sounded from the audience at the performance by the Berlin girl's duo Cobra Killer in Prague's club Rock Café. Also, broken shards of a broad-shouldered man's pint glass hit the stage after his girlfriend's shirt was stained by few drops

> of red wine, which [Cobra Killer's members] Annika and Gina poured on themselves during the show. The intolerance of the Prague audience does not lie in the rejection of music, but rather in a non-acceptance of the theatrical and cabaret element. We cannot assume that visitors would not know Cobra Killer's music, they have certainly heard their albums many times—but they expect a concert experience where music plays the lead. Instead, they are faced with two crazy, exhibitionist girls with a sequencer and prerecorded sounds trying to excite reactions that are not entirely normal in the environment of a music club. For many Berlin artists it is typical not to be ashamed to come to the concert hall with prerecorded music, to change into an extravagant costume, run an animated projection, sing out of tune and accompany it with, say, a painted maraca. Czech clubs are not yet attuned to this game, a concert is considered an event worthy of respect on both sides of the stage. (Turek 2007)[21]

This example bares the basic elements of Czech rockist resistance to the performative component dominating over the music in club environment. The audience of the Cobra Killer came with expectations of (gendered) musical skills, or at least attempts at such skills, and was upset by the obvious disinterest of the duo in technical mastery or musical innovation and its concentration on the performance and provocation. The audience expected to witness serious on-stage creation or recreation of music they know from the band's records, but was met with music only serving a whole different—frivolous, vaudevillian, willful—idea. For some, the playful distancing carried the performance away to the realm of a toy, a trick or magician's deceiving paraphernalia.

The out-there subcultures

After going through the historical developments and considering the indie's concept and the way it is applied by the members of the Czech indie scene in its basic forms, it's necessary to identify the specifics of Czech indie as opposed to its American or British counterparts in more than just chronological way. The position of the country on the fringe of world's stage leads to regional indie specifics.

First, independent scenes are characterized by high permeability and closeness between those on stage and below it, and the size of the Czech scene (Prague, the largest city, has 1.3 million inhabitants and the whole country's population is 10.5 million) makes distance impossible, in literal terms or in terms of lifestyle. Very few Czechs obtain the status of "stars," in as much as this means the adoration of many and its subsequent requirement for removal from everyday society. If indie rock artists are not supposed to be remote untouchable rock gods but "one of us," then in Czech this

rule applies absolutely. In the indie scene, fans and performers often swap roles, and the sticky environment where members of different subcultures must share venues, media, and resources with aesthetic or social opposites to survive makes it possible for style and genre ideologies to intersect and collide, which lays the ground for misconceptions about the inner workings of style, subculture, or marketing. One example is the curious mix of metal, punk, hip-hop, and ska fans who support Prague's DIY venue 007. The criteria imposed on a club serving different groups, such as 007, or on Rádio 1, the first and only FM alternative radio in the Czech Republic, vary deeply. For instance, while certain forms of conspicuous consumption such as participating in "sneaker culture" are acceptable or even desirable in the current Czech hip-hop community, it is generally condemned by (indie) rockers or by hardcore/punk fans. However may the Czech hip-hopers derive their musical origins and inspirations primarily from the British or American mainstream, as does the young Czech grime artist Smack, they share the indie scene's minority position in opposition to the Czech mainstream. This position is recognized by other alternative groups who often need to form coalitions with them.

Now I would like to address the question of authenticity of the subculture that has been transplanted from the West into the significantly different environment of a post-communist country. While the purity of the original subcultural cores and their ability to isolate themselves from the dominant consumer culture must not be overstated and overly romanticized—as subcultures are never isolated from their media environment and the majority of people who frequent any traditional subculture are followers (Thornton 1996; Trowler and Riley 1985:157)—the story of alternative culture's constant struggle to retain its authenticity and opposition towards mainstreaming is here further complicated by the fact that the position on the global cultural periphery means that Czech indie scene is derivative from the start. It's difficult to pursue "authenticity," "originality," or being "natural"[22] and "unstylized" if styles, including the music industry system and its terminology (and the very dispute about authenticity) have been imported as models from abroad where they originated as a local response to local problems. Most of the projects in *Here Be Dogs* and in the Czech music scene during the 1990s and 2000s conform to already established Western indie musical styles. Most bands sing in English, and most feature members who look up to Western musical heroes.[23] Americans or Brits complain that Elvis or the Rolling Stones took the "negro sound" and translated it into the language of the white teenagers (Leland 2004); that hippies were inauthentic children of the middle class who were not interested in jazz, literature, and philosophy of the 1950s counterculture, but only in sex and

drugs (Greif 2010); that punk was a stylistic game of two fashion designers with situationist leanings (Muggleton 2000); that the Velvet Underground was a caprice of Andy Warhol; that every known subculture has always been nothing else but a romanticized image of poverty or disemboweling styles of the inner city ghettos and dragging them out to lush green lawns of suburbia. But very little of that critique has made it to the Czech Republic—indeed, these "inauthentic" artists are the basis of our own musical countercultures. Czech bands and their fans operate in different cultural context to that of both the originators and disseminators of the style.[24]

Of course the Czech indie culture cannot be entirely dismissed as derivative. It is impossible to have an "authentic" local culture, which wouldn't be influenced by the media, commerce, and poses, because it wouldn't be globally interconnected and thus available to us. Nothing would catch on in the Czech Republic unless it resonated with local needs and desires, reflected or otherwise dealt with something the Czechs are dealing with, in whichever idiosyncratic way. Smack, the Czech grime musician, boasts of being the first to copy the latest styles from the United Kingdom, acoustically and visually. He mocks those who are behind him in the information chain (Nanoru and Overstreet 2010:258). The Czech hopefuls fit into the category of "out-there subcultures" as Cagle defines them, those who take:

> . . . styles from mass-mediated sources (out-there) and appropriate them in subcultural manner . . . [They] may engage in the recontextualization of an already commercialized (incorporated) style, but in so doing, they also engage in an act that symbolically resists the supremacy of dominant/mainstream culture. (1995:208)

The blogging boom, that has has created a discursive space where information doesn't necessarily have to enter Western mainstream media to enter the Czech Republic, is still fairly new and untested phenomenon.

Whereas it would be easy to align the adoption of traits of American and British independent scenes in the context of the Czech Republic with Western cultural imperialism, the ways in which the Czech fans acquire information about its Western models and the ways in which they are able to distribute their music these days suggest a slightly different scenario. There's no doubt that after 1989 the Czech Republic became a target for products of universalizing cultural industries promoting the hegemonic interests of Western, international elite producers, but it is increasingly difficult to argue that the ideologies of Western independent scenes were simply imposed on Czechs along with other commodities such as food or jeans. Members of the Czech independent scene, and especially the newest generation, are on a constant look out for coalitions with the outside world. The Czech

bands may feel more affiliated with musical happenings in other countries than in their own immediate vicinage, but their opportunities are limited. Fiordmoss, an electronic folk duo formed at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Brno University of Technology and included in *Here Be Dogs*, is one of the first to gain minor international recognition through blogs and Facebook connections, while being virtually unknown in the Czech Republic. They soon realized that MP3s travel far better than a tour van and refused offers for international concerts due to lack of resources. The same is confirmed by Tomáš Kopáček who runs the acoustic project Mon Insomnie, the first Czech artist ever mentioned by the influential US internet indie music website Pitchfork Media. Kopáček declined to be included in *Here Be Dogs*, because he did not want to be associated with the Czech scene. He already defines his community in other than national terms. Correspondingly, he also belongs to a generation that ignores the domestic, traditional media. "I've never listened to any radio. I do not know why would I ever want them to play my songs," he said to the Czech news weekly *Respekt* in July 2011 (Turek 2011).

Kopáček, Fiordmoss, or others in *Here Be Dogs* want to overcome the limits of their region, of sounding limitedly "regional," and anxiously seek to be a part of the global music community. For Vladimír 518, the Czech rap and graffiti legend, this is done by respecting genre boundaries (Nanoru and Overstreet 2010:257). For MIDI LIDI, this means mixing Kraftwerk-inspired electronic music with Czech folk song. The motivation remains the same: a strong desire for affiliation with alternative musical cultures from all over the world.

The art school shift

Here Be Dogs tries to locate and address some of the contradictions in the Czech indie scene and set the agenda for discussing themes we considered neglected. The book also reflects several groundbreaking shifts in the past two years. With increasing speed, the youngest generation of artists and their audiences are adopting tendencies that also shape music, art, and fashion scenes in the West.

The growing affluence of the Czech people, the flourishing of consumer marketplaces filled with a large selection of internationally-produced and name brand items, and the proliferation of the digital media have impacted many elements of Czech society, one change of which is an increase interest in fashion.[25] As the society homogenized by the totalitarian regime stratifies, consumers, even those the context of an "alternative" scene, face the widened supply of consumer goods, and their attention starts to turn to the use of

material goods as communicators. Pointing out to the fact that consumption of material utilities is also, and now more importantly, a consumption of signs (Baudrillard 1981), was one of the main aims of the book. This brings to the fore musicians born near the year 1989 and highlights the cultural shift towards attitudes and uses of art and the visual in the West. The continuing aesthetization of societies, mediatization (Krotz 2001; Schulz 2004; Couldry 2008),[26] the pictorial turn (Mitchell 1994), the designing of everything, are also increasingly apparent in the Czech Republic. The emerging processes—and the book itself—are a part of wider movement in the society of spectacle, in a "time in which fashion moves from an expression of individual style to something photographed, blogged, reported on, turned into a trend, marketed, and sold" (Greif 2010:27).[27]

British style magazines in the beginning of the 1980s (such as *i-D, The Face, Blitz,* see Hebdige 1988) launched sections devoted to street style, which were the precursors to today's fashion blogs, and these magazines influenced a new generation of American magazine counterparts in the 1990s (*Ray Gun, Vibe, Spin*) to become more explicitly fashion-oriented. They became "consumer guides to the latest sounds and styles and places written in the language of art history," as wrote Frith and Horne (1987:4). On pages of these and many other magazines, fine art seized rock'n'roll's status of the primary source of cool. Fine art since the 1960s continues its move from the wall to the performance space or media sphere, and in the Czech Republic, art schools have recently become places filled with the technologies for producing media and a talented, ambitious young work force waiting for new projects. Jiří Ptáček, who teaches at the Brno University of Technology, writes that:

> . . . every quality art school has a recording studio, where you can record and mix tracks [and] . . . in the art community it's easy to persuade your colleagues to help you make videos, photographs, projections. (Email correspondence, Nanoru, October 9, 2010)[28]

Art school bands are becoming an unmistakable force on the Czech indie scene. In the West, the art school space as a natural setting for a counterculture and as one of contested but continual presence in rock culture is well documented. But in the Czech context it represents a fairly new phenomenon. While sharing much of the ethos, art school bands stand indie puritanism on its head with the provocative question—why should music always come first? In the art school context the visual doesn't come after music, offering help, serving the music. They are created together and they are created equally. The roles members of such group perform are usually highly separated, with one person VJing, one person playing or

at least monitoring a stream of electronic music, and one person on vocal and dancing duties, with all tasks usually highly independent of what the others are doing.

The fact that the art school band phenomenon, incubated in glam rock but fully hitting the Western world in the form of the new wave, was repressed in the 1980s Czechoslovakia, increases its current, still unfolding impact. In the small Brno new wave scene of the 1980s, some bands worked with tempting influences of art rock, punk, and nascent electronic scene, however, the amount of information from the West was so limited that they mostly had to rely on their own fantasies of how the music sounded and the performances would go. Art school projects—1A2V1, Indie Twins, the Silesian/Wallachian, or the Brno scene—have progressed to the foreground of the national indie panorama in the past two years. They represent more than a third of the bands selected for *Here Be Dogs* and their approach is radically different from their predecessors. "[Symbols and costumes] determine the borders between the human race and those on stage," states Jaro Haro, the sole member of audiovisual project 1A2V1, which came to existence as a semester-long project at the Studio of Graphic Design and New Media at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague (Nanoru and Overstreet 2010:242). Haro builds a thin, but clearly visible wall between himself and presumed indie egalitarianism—he is in no case "one of us," when performing he is not even human. Compared to older generations of Czech indie, namely those of 1990s and 2000s hardcore/post-punk and rock, bands coming form the Czech art school environment tend to view music as no less a matter of gaining control, but they have a tendency to abandon class rhetorics and alliances, and view their work much more as a way of achieving broad goals of aesthetic and autonomy rather than moral or political ones.

In connection with art school bands, there has also been an embrace, resurrection, and/or update of local Czech or Central European culture within the indie scene within the last few years. Until very recently, local identity was the source of embarrassment for Czechs. This process is analogous with rise in visibility for regions other than Prague within the Czech Republic, especially the Moravian centers of Ostrava, Olomouc, and Brno. Long after the 1989 revolution, for most Czech musicians, the label "Czech sound" was mostly synonymous with creative poverty and parochialism, but now the country is witnessing the rise of a generation that exhibits local references openly and tries to take them as a starting point for original work. These references however typically don't concern the sound of the bands, but their visual presentation.

The Kratochvíls, or DVA, outside a DIY plastic greenhouse in Padouchov, the village where they record their albums at parents' weekend house. Their parents took the casual photo just for family use, but DVA took a liking to it and since that time they have released a seasonal series of promotional photos posed by the greenhouse. © 2010 DVA. Used by permission.

DVA, a moniker of married couple Bára and Jan Kratochvíl, with a matter-of-factness that felt subversive, embraced signifiers of Czech provincial homeliness such as mushroom picking, gardening, and holiday photographs, and cultivated the Kratochvíls from Eastern Bohemia, to be a working image that's unique but complex, original and contemporary. They abandoned the ubiquitous question of the Czech transitional period "When do we get to Europe?" (How to be worldly? How not to be provincial, awkward and peripheral?), and instead answered the question that until now nobody dared to ask—how to re-imagine such signifiers of cultural intimacy as cross-country skiing, fruit preserves, and high-waisted sweatpants as our own kind of cultural cool? Certain 2000s Brooklyn indie music trends helped; for instance, freak folk (with its crookedness, foppishness, and sensitivity) was easier to cultivate in the Czech Republic than was the imperial arrogance of Britpop in the 1990s.[29]

It is exactly the same point, where part of the Czech indie scene decided to abandon its long cultivated restrictive puritanism and introduce new, art school influenced elements into its realm, where it also started allow itself to embrace its local peculiarity.

Reception: 'As if the songs were only an accessory'

There are several points from which a polemic with indie's restrictiveness could depart; and several conditions that help to amplify the indie's Czech variety—and most of them can be traced in *Here Be Dogs*'s reception.

The famous cover of XTC's *Go 2* album (1978) was called a "the triumph of design" Simon by Frith and Howard Horne (1987:146). It is a text-based meta-cover, cheekily proclaiming: "What we are really suggesting is that you are FOOLISH to buy or not buy an album merely as a consequence of the design on its cover." But people *do* buy records by their cover, especially since "buying" means waiting for an open slot on any of many of the file sharing services, as most of the Czech music lovers do. When albums are "free" and come in seemingly unlimited quantities, covers function as an indispensable guide, if nothing else. There's nothing foolish in it, as there's nothing foolish in iTunes Cover Flow, the way iTunes organizes media libraries as covers for faster orientation. But *Here Be Dogs* argues that the visual is an integral part of the popular music experience.

Image is as a part of the discipline we today call "a band" as, for instance, lyrics, and the band that doesn't pay attention to its look wipes out a good portion of its vocabulary. Peter Saville, the designer for Joy Division, wasn't the only one inspired by Roxy Music, the British band legendary for their mix of music, fine arts, design, and fashion: "I saw Roxy Music as a Pop Art concept. They were a band, and there was a sound, but I saw the image as an art concept rather than dressing-up" (Saville 2003:23). From my ten years' experience in Czech publishing, doing work for musicians is popular and prestigious amongst filmmakers, designers, and photographers. In 2006 I helped Escape, an "indie" subsidiary of Czech EMI, to launch its money-losing and therefore short-lived singles edition. It was envisioned by A&R executive Libor Lisý more as vehicle for design and photos, an outlet and a space for realization of dreams of the labels' unpaid photographers and designers (in a special example of fan labor), rather than a teaser to boost sales. Although it could certainly count as an investment in the bands credibility, the promotional effect (lost on many journalists and suffering commercially because only a small number of collectors were willing to pay half the price of a regular album for just two songs in a paper sleeve) was tiny compared to the rewarding feeling shared by the creative team that having a strong visual identity is what constitutes great bands. Great bands have (great) collector items, however they might not have, as in this case, collectors to collect them.

Public displays of enthusiasm are a rare sight in the Czech Republic. Václav Havel describes in his 1988 essay "Břemeno 21. srpna," that there was a general malaise and constraint even twenty years after the tanks of

the Warsaw Pact ended the liberalization of the Prague Spring of 1968. He uses as his example Charter 77, the human rights civic initiative formed in part because of the jailing of the Plastic People of the Universe:

> People follow the work of Charter 77—and much more—on foreign radio with interest and sympathy, but they would think twice before supporting it publicly. Or at all if they were to publicly express their true feelings. Czechs and Slovaks are not enthusiasts, they don't get on something too often. In 1968 they were passionate about something, for a few months they acted as citizens enjoying their full rights, but they were hit hard: twenty years they were persecuted for their enthusiasm. After this bitter experience, their current cautiousness is more than understandable. (Havel 1999:188)[30]

Havel follows a view of the national character, of the "famous realism" (Havel 1987:125), that resonates in Czech culture throughout the twentieth century and further: Czechs are said to generally not be vain, to not risk jumping on every wave, to invest in tested quality. They're as wary, practical, and resistant to storms and trends as the outdoor clothes they wear. Such assessment is here applied to the Czech culture in general (a comparative study of the level of spectacle on, for example, Czech, Slovak, and German television still awaits deeper academic scrutiny, but it will certainly have to consider the areas' protestant or catholic traditions), but what if it is in the independent/alternative territory exemplified by aspects of the heritage of the 1960s counterculture, folk singers and the investment in the idea of authenticity already described above? The legacy of these years can be seen today in everyday moments of Czech expression and life: forced hominess, the absence of large urban centers, the market where certain needs are not yet created, the stagnant economic situation, the restricted access to information (at the moment, there is no iTunes Store or any other way of legally obtaining digital music this side of Germany)[31] and still generally low level of experience with the language of fashion. These elements combine to make what has been called the Czech "cult of casual" (Formánek 2010): a way of holding on to the (seemingly) unmediated, informal, and nonchalant as a way of hiding from the spotlight, evading responsibility, and altogether disqualifying the uneasy question of appearance. However problematic it would be to ascribe this to a nation, it certainly applies to many members of bands that we interviewed in the preparatory stages of *Here Be Dogs*. The existence of bands that could be included in the book, that acknowledge their work with the visual, proves a substantial shift has happened since the mid-2000s.

Martin Hůla, prominent figure of the hardcore/DIY scene, formerly part of the post-punk/hardcore record label and promotions group Silver Rocket as well as member of several highly credible bands, reinvented himself as

rapper in 2010. Hůla underwent the controversial move in to the new territory partly in response to conservativeness of his own scene. As Bonus, his rapping alter ego, he perpetuates the national image outlined by Havel:

> A thousand times more crowns spent on beer than music,
> And we still whine that we can't make ends meet.
> It's all new, don't hurry us,
> Coffee and cigarettes,
> Two years to get used to it,
> We want what we know,
> Again and again,
> No attitudes,
> No swearing,
> Or foreign words

("Ztrácíme čas" ["Losin' Time"] from the album *Konec civilizace*, Starcastic 2010; translated from Czech.)[32]

Similarly, one of the final paragraphs of *Here Be Dogs's* introduction reads

> *Here Be Dogs* means several things. First, hic sunt leones, here be dragons: this is dark, uncharted territory. This area is not even on a map. No one before us was exactly eager to explore indie bands' approach to visual communication. The Czech Republic is a barbaria, visually illiterate. People who deal with covers systematically, or who conceptually control projects or labels, are scarce. Critics won't cast their eyes on visuals. The same trouble is with fans. (235)

Repeating and strengthening national stereotypes doesn't help, on the contrary, and *Here Be Dogs* aimed at disrupting stereotypes by exposing bands that challenge the status quo. The amassment of such dire assessments in the intro was also somewhat corrected by the book's reception. The book sold out of its print run of 1,000 copies in eight months (60 percent through a national distributor, 20 percent through independent sellers, 20 percent online), was reviewed in six publications and it was featured in *Události* [Events], the flagship daily evening television news program for Czech Television and later also in its analytical news program. Roughly 300 people attended the launch party for the book. Similarly, an opening for subsequent exhibition of selected photographs from the book was attended by 150 and Facebook auction of the prints yielded 12,000 Czech crowns ($730) for a Prague dog shelter. The designers were selected to introduce the project at Pecha Kucha Night in Prague, an international series of presentations by designers, architects, and photographers. The book has won the second

place in the Most Beautiful Czech Book 2010 [Nejkrásnější české knihy roku 2010] competition in the category of books about fine art and photo and picture books. It was also selected for the International Photobook Award 2011 at Fourth International Photobook Festival, documenta-Halle Kassel, Germany.

This is not normally how a book about popular music would be received in the Czech Republic, or in fact, how any book is received. The controversial subject fueled popular criticism of the book, and subsequent discussions in newspaper and web boards proved that visuality is a contested subject of inquiry in Czech culture. One review fulminated: "The publication is nicer than the intentions of its origin. The authors of this book like to look at the music rather than listen to it . . . Fascinated by the surrounding culture, as if the songs were only accessory . . . They got it a little bit messed up in their heads" (Slavík 2011).[33] Another wrote: "a little more comprehensive *Vice Magazine,* minus the blather" (Pagoda 2011),[34] and the title of the next asked: "The new bible of Czech hipsters?" (Waldhauserová 2011).[35] Facebook user Satanislava Nováková commented on photographer James Mollison's series of photos documenting fans dressed up as stars (2008), which was posted on the *Here Be Dogs* Facebook fan page: "*Here Be Dogs,* according to its own words, focused on the 'unexplored' places of the 'independent club scene,' and yet it admires photos of clones of commercial stadium fillers such as Rod Stewart, Dolly Parton, and Iron Maiden."[36] Others were similarly resolute, although in a very different way: "Hardly a word about music and yet perhaps it is the most that has been ever written about music in this country," wrote DesignGuide.Cz (2011).[37] *Lidové noviny*, a national daily, even saw alternative culture and attention to surface as traditionally bonded: "The music that stands outside the superficial mainstream, or that positions itself as its direct opposite, has always been associated with a considerable degree of attention to surface—on stage and in front of it" (Štindl 2010).[38] Some simply agreed with the book's intro: "While musicians beyond our borders use the visual as a tool in attracting listeners, the Czech Republic, after decades of forced uniformity, remains a country where an artist caring about his appearance is brushed aside by the majority audience as narcissistic freak" (Děd 2011). [39]

There is one comment that needs addressing more than the others. Facebook user Lukáš Pokorný expressed his disappointment on *Here Be Dogs* fan page, stating that he "imagined more input from the bands—their own ideas of their functioning in the society that deserves criticism for its limitless consumption, but in which it is impossible to exist without a style."[40] I had to confess that we also expected input from the bands and were similarly disappointed. Our experience dealing with the band members informed the

assessments in this text. Most of the bands approached, even those included in the book, don't have a set agenda regarding the questions of image, style, or visuality, on group or individual level, and they refrained from taking a stance or saying anything. The mere fact that they let themselves be photographed, and submitted some of their own visuals—after many urgencies—was a major victory for us. As mentioned in the beginning, some declined to be included. This proved us how morally laden the topic of style in indie culture is and how important it is to initiate a discussion about it.

The book aimed to dissociate attention paid to visual presentation of musical acts with mere commercialism by showing different creative strategies employed by bands and projects within various subgenres on the Czech music scene (from metal to electro to weird folk). It advocated for diversity and openness in a reaction to the indie scene's ideological limiting of modes of expression. The concepts of verisimilitude and artificiality might be jokes for a poststructuralist, but they continue to have real meanings for music fans. In defining what is real and fake about a scene, for instance, fans are making assessments that themselves constitute new genre categories, or new scenes themselves. This can be seen constantly in the history of popular music, as in other forms of art:

> White blues fans, for example, redefined the genre in the name of authenticity to exclude anything too jazzy or upbeat, thus enforcing a snobbish and racist exclusion of certain blues artists from the canon because they were too sophisticated. Instead, they lauded the most primitive blues artists they could find, such as John Lee Hooker, from whom blacks turned away. (Barker and Taylor 2007:xi)

The Czech—and any—independent scene faces similar reductionist danger by not understanding the role of performance, design and/or fashion, suppressing the varied tradition, and/or by winnowing "its heritage down to one single inbred white gene" (Azerrad 2001:498). Those who find success at innovating while staying within the indie scene, such as Bonus, are rare and their position on the scene is constantly reevaluated and renegotiated, with the risk of discrediting always present. However, they increasingly manage to create a broader leeway that can be then used by the younger generations of artists.

Conclusion

This articles describes a situation in the last two decades of history of Czech popular music, where the certainties caused by the historical development of the country are now undergoing rapid changes due to a new generation that

was not substantially shaped by experiences of Czechoslovakian communist rule and its immediate aftermath and is weaned on globally networked information and communication technologies. A particularly strong form of Czech rockism, that finds its sources in the rebellious tradition of 1980s folk singers, 1990s idealism, and the exceptional homogeneity of the country, has been recently challenged, but still vastly unaltered by the rising speed of information exchange and the consequent emergence of art school bands. Working on a book about creative approaches to visual presentation of indie and alternative bands allowed me to test the applicability of Western critical theories to what is increasingly Western-inspired social phenomenon.

Or is it? Indie has been naturalized in the Czech Republic with surprising, if not widespread, vigor. Two essential features come along with widespread availability of the internet. The first is a tendency to follow global trends in more timely fashion, and with much greater precision in replicating them, even if only in a very small group within the indie scene. This includes not just musical aspects, but visual aspects of presentation. The second is the somewhat contradictory tendency of reconciliation of these trends with local culture. The first tendency is evident especially in the recent onset of the young generation of music associated with art schools in major Czech cities. Simultaneously, the very access to and wide array of information provided by the internet leads to growing confidence (and much better exposure), that is then evident mainly from the adoption of regional and previously repressed elements.

Academic research of Czech musical culture declined significantly after the Velvet Revolution and now only slowly begins, with the institutions still in the making. However, its advantage lays in the unique and valuable experience of transition from a planned economy with a limited range of consumables and consistent censorship to consumer capitalism. The size of the Czech market, its relative transparency, and its geographical position on the westernmost tip of the former Soviet Bloc makes it an interesting ground for monitoring the circulations of ideas naturalized in the Western cultural space, and consequently, to see these ideas anew.

This article manages to capture only a tiny aspect of the complicated position of visual communication within the indie/alternative worlds. Scholars of popular music studies, visual culture studies, and media studies would all benefit greatly from further inquiries into the strategies that bands and their fans use for dress, fashion, and/or design in different media environments and over time. The Czech bands are keeping quiet for now, but the situation is changing fast.

Notes

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1.*Revolutionary Film Posters, Aesthetic Experiments of Russian Constructivism, 1920-33*; Vladimir Tatlin, "Monument to the Third International"; R. Crumb, "Kafka"; May 6-July 29, 2011.

2. Sociology was ostracized as "bourgeois science" by the communists before 1989, but after the 1948 coup music and the culture surrounding it were considered to be very important ideological tools, and so valuable research was conducted since 1947, see Karbusický and Kasan 1964; Kasan and Košťál 1990; Lýsek 1956. Important works were published especially by Josef Kotek, Lubomír Dorůžka, or Jiří Černý, see Kotek 1998; Dorůžka 1978, 1987; Cígler 1980; Matzner, Poledňák, and Wasserberger 1990.

3. The only work on post-1989 subcultures, the history of the Czech graffiti, was written by the *Here Be Dogs* producer Martina Overstreet and published as *In Graffiti We Trust* (2006).

4. [kapelam vadi vyraz indie a vsichni chapou slovo styl jako neco povrchniho, co by mohlo jejich zavaznou a hlubokouátvorbu poskodit. Takze ve chvili, kdy jsem v mailech zacala pouzivat slova "klubova scena" a "vas vizualni projev, do ktereho patri mj. i obleceni" jsou vsichni spokojeny]

5. [Me se ten napad stejne moc nezda. A ja osobne bych uprednostnoval spis nez nejaky hipstersky pozery, udelat fotage nasich klaves co pouzivame a veci a kytar a udelat z toho super fotky ktery jsou pro nas jako pro kapelu o dost zasadnejsi nez banda trendy blbek. Ktery v nedeli bavi Peter Nagy a v pondeli nas.Sorry A diky moc.]

6. The bohemian entourage around Bondy lived in an information vacuum in the 1950s, and did not know anything about the Beats. The similarities in approach to life and literary production were not due to foreign inspiration at the time. It was a remarkable, but unrelated, parallelism. From the 1960s onward however, the Czech underground was well aware of the Beats (see Pilař 1999).

7. [Nasycen těžkými knedlíky, kyselým zelím a pivem, pohodlně jsem se opřel a naslouchal Velvet Undergroundu, Captain Beefheartovi a skupině Doors a Fugs, a jak jsem naslouchal, ucítil jsem v té muzice hloubku, kterou jsem nikdy předtím nepociťoval, jako kdybych to poprvé uslyšel českýma ušima.]

8. Censors were aware of the "dangerousness" not only of freedom of speech, but also of "uncensored feelings," even if expressed through seemingly apolitical lyrics. As noted by František Čuňas Stárek (Kostúr and Stárek 2011:13), "for the totalitarian regime is dangerous even a cricket singing in his own way [pro totalitu je nebezpečný i cvrček, preludující si po svém]". The regime tried to push songwriters into an acceptable form and those who appeared incorrigible were not only prohibited, but also persecuted. In the 1980s deciding on the acceptability of the acts was usually left up to individual approbatory organs, so for example folk singer Jaroslav Hutka was practically banned in Eastern Bohemia, but from time to time could perform in other parts of the country, see Janoušek 2008.

9. The still-active cult legends the Plastic People of the Universe were also included in *Here Be Dogs*. As noted in a study by historians Petr Blažek and Filip Pospíšil, *Vraťte nám vlasy!* [*Give us back our hair!*, 2000], the first nationwide "pogrom on the long-haired" was held in autumn 1966. Hundreds of young men were then forced to cut their hair and were beaten

for their appearance or attitude, after which other repressions followed. In 1970 the regime forbade the use of English language in music: bands could no longer sing in English, take English names, or cover songs from British or American bands. The most famous trial against underground, however, remains the case of the arrest, trial, and imprisonment of the Plastic People in 1976. After a series of searches and hundreds of interrogations, seven people were sentenced. The Plastic People, inadvertent pioneers of the white label (the secret police couldn't link them to nameless things) and guerilla marketing (concert announcements for those in the know) went to prison for their Western image. Can there be a bigger acknowledgement of its importance? (See Karásek, Hájek and Plzák 1999; Jirous 2008; Laube, Pokorná and Šustrová 2010) The legacy of the theatrical new wave costumes of the '80s is represented in *Here Be Dogs* by Karel Haloun, author of one of the texts and a graphic designer considered to be a non-playing member of the principal Czech new wave band Jasná Páka/Hudba Praha. Haloun's work on a cover in the 1980s guaranteed the quality of the music.

10. In a very similar sense to: "In the nineties, it had become commonplace to assume that one could no longer say heartfelt, sincere things outright, because all genuine utterance would be stolen and repeated as advertising" (Greif 2010:168).

11. Whereas in the 1950s and beginning of 1960s the commitment and active participation in the building of socialist society was forced on the public, in the 1970s and 1980s the conformation was bought by little allowances. The regime benefited from the political resignation of people and their escape to the private sphere. As Janoušek points out: "The communist regime of the seventies no longer aspired to direct approval, but contented itself with a quiet loyalty of citizens whom it tried to offer some kind of standard of living" (2008:15). Between the narrow layer of those who actively participated in stabilizing the state after the Soviet invasion and the layer of dissidents lived "the gray zone", a mass of citizens adapted to totalitarian conditions with which they quietly disagreed.

12. Jiří Černý, the legendary Czech critic, recalls in *Kritik bez konzervatoře* [The Critic Without Conservatory, Riedel 2007:123]: "When [songwriter Vladimír] Merta, accepting Golden Porta Award in 1986, said in front of twenty-five thousand spectators that he wished those with whom he started could stand alongside him on stage, everyone knew he was talking about [banned singer-songwriters] Kryl, Hutka, and Třešňák. And to watch the sour faces of the central youth unionists in pubs at night, when next to them boys intoned Kryl's songs, was very joyous for me."

13. This was true regardless of the fact that the status quo and the messages disseminated by the media on either side of the Iron Curtain, were, at least technically, as far from each other as the Cold War allowed. At its core the conflict of underground and mainstream culture in the second half of the twentieth century retained similar traits in both West and the East. "It seems that our regime can sniff out far better than many an art theoretician what it should consider really dangerous to itself. Hundreds of examples testify that the regime prosecutes most vigorously not what threatens it overtly but has little artistic power, but whatever is artistically most penetrating, even though it does not seem all that overtly 'political'. The essence of the conflict, that is, is not confrontation between two ideologies (for instance a socialist with a liberal one) but a clash between an anonymous, soulless, immobile and paralyzing ('entropic') power, and life, humanity, being and its mystery. The counterpart of power in this conflict is not an alternative political idea but the autonomous, free humanity of man and with it necessarily also art—precisely as art!—as one of the most important expressions of this autonomous humanity" (Havel 1987:133).

14. Warner Music closed its doors in 2010 but Universal, EMI, and Sony remain; Supraphon and Popron Music are local labels with second and fifth place in market share (Elavsky 2006).

15. According to a study commissioned by eMusic, the alternative digital retailer popular with American indie fans, seventy-five percent of its users tend to download full albums, while single-track downloads dominate the sales at the big digital outlets (Sisario 2011).

16. According to the 2001 census Czech ethnicity is claimed by 90.4 percent of the county's population (Czech Statistical Office).

17. [už vidím diskuse, jak by na czechcore neměla být recenze na desku, která vyšla major labelu (kdo ví, jestli se tady tahle recenze vůbec objeví po té, co mi zamítli recezi na poslední album Mötorhead), ale myslím, že kořeny Sunshine silně vycházejí z toho, co se na czechcore prezentuje, i když vždycky směřovali někam dál ... Vím, že spousta lidí v hardcore na Sunshine pohlíží tak, jak na ně pohlíží, chápu, na druhou stranu tahle deska je prostě dobrá a já jsem upřímně rád, že v téhle zaprděné republice, kde rádiím vládne ten největší hudební odpad, se Sunshine chytli a donesli do masovější populace něco, co má aspoň nějakou arty hodnotu...]

18. [mno... :o) ... ja ani nevim,jestli todle myslite vazne ... za chvili abych si cet recenze nekde na mtv,tam u toho maj vic obrazku :o) ... myslim si ze malokomu tady pride,ze by se Sunshine touhle deskou dostali dal...mozna tak dal do (doufam ze nejen) moji prdele ...]

19. "Reading [designer Peter] Blake's Sgt Pepper sleeve—name the faces, spot the cannabis, decode the lyrics—was like reading the underground press. This was a skill, which could easily be acquired—from friends, from the neighborhood dealer, even across the counter—but it was always constructed around a sense of difference from the 'mass' pop audience. Art rock was 'superior' at all levels, and fans took seriously the prime romantic axiom: the philistines had to be kept out" (Frith and Horne 1987:58).

20. Performances are not necessarily restricted to art forms—the most obvious reference here would be Erving Goffman's classic dramaturgical analysis of social interaction in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), benignly renamed *We All Perform* [Všichni hrajeme divadlo] by its Czech translator (1999). And the relegating of performance from music (and music from performance) is not necessarily restricted to fans: "If cultural and media studies of popular music have neglected performance, performance studies has been remiss in its general neglect of musical performances. The principal journals in the field seldom publish articles about music as performance or musicians as performers, and only a small (but growing) number of papers on these topics are presented at academic conferences. At a commonsense level, the absence of music from the array of subjects considered by performance scholars seems odd—musicians are performers, after all, and it would be eminently reasonable to discuss them as such" (Auslander 2006:2).

21. [Držte huby a hrajte! a Tady nejste v Německu!, znělo z publika na vystoupení berlínského dívčího dua Cobra Killer v pražském klubu Rock Café. Nehledě na střepy z rozbitého půllitru, jenž na pódium mrštil ramenatý týpek poté, co triko jeho přítelkyně potřísnilo několik kapek červeného vína, kterým se Annika s Ginou v rámci show polily. Koncert Cobra Killer totiž představuje zážitek, na kterém má zhruba stejný podíl hudba jako provokativní komunikace s návštěvníky, dadaistické proslovy a vtipné testování hranice, kam až dívky mohou zajít. Netolerance části pražského publika nespočívala v odmítnutí hudby, nýbrž v nepřijetí teatrálního a kabaretního prvku. Nelze se domnívat, že by návštěvníci neznali hudbu, desky mají jistě naposlouchané – ale čekají koncert, zážitek, kdy hudba hraje prim. Místo toho se objeví dvě potrhlé exhibicionistické holky se sequencerem a předtočenými zvuky a snaží se vybudit reakce, které nejsou v prostředí hudebního klubu zcela obvyklé. Pro mnohé berlínské

interprety je typické, že se nestydí přijít do koncertního sálu jen s cédéčkem, na němž mají kompletní hudbu, převléknout se do extravagantního kostýmu, spustit animovanou projekci, falešně zpívat a doprovázet se maximálně pomalovanou rumbakoulí. České kluby na tuto hru stále ještě neslyší, koncert se bere jako událost hodná úcty na obou stranách pódia.] It feels appropriate to state here Lawrence Grossberg's opening citation in full: "The eye has always been suspect in rock culture, after all, visually, rock often borders on the inauthentic. . . . It was here—in its visual presentation—that rock often most explicitly manifested its resistance to the dominant culture, but also its sympathies with the business of entertainment. It might be objected that the importance of live performance argue against this view of authenticity. However, the importance of live performances lies precisely in the fact that it is only here where one can see the actual production of sound . . . It is not the visual appearance of rock that is offered in live performance but the concrete production of the music as sound. The demand for live performance has always expressed the desire for the visual mark (and proof) of authenticity" (1993:175).

22. Natural here means "gradual," nothing else. "By the very fact that all social phenomena are constructions produced historically through human activity, no society is totally take for granted and so, a fortiori, is no symbolic universe" (Berger and Luckmann 1967:106; see also Foucault 1980).

23. Fredric Jameson writes, "in a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum" (1997:7).

24. For more on cross-cultural readings see Liebes and Katz 1993.

25. Anyone who would want to study Prague's hipsters could easily do that at any given concert by the promoters AM180, usually at a venue the size of a classroom. Vice Magazine Czechoslovakia managed to put out three print issues during its three years of existence. There are no American Apparel or Urban Outfitters stores in the country.

26. Forcing Mark Deuze to claim, that "our life should perhaps be seen as lived in, rather than with, media—a media life" (2009:468).

27. "Nothing can resist the force of this current of technical images—there is no artistic, scientific or political activity which is not aimed at it, there is no everyday activity which does not aspire to be photographed, filmed, videotaped. For there is a general desire to be endlessly remembered and endlessly repeatable. All events are nowadays aimed at the television screen, the cinema screen, the photograph, in order to be translated into a state of things" (Flusser 2000:20).

28. ["na každé lepší umělecké škole je k dispozici hudební studio, kde lze natáčet a mixovat tracky" a "v prostředí umělecké komunity není problém přesvědčit kolegy, aby pomohli s klipem, fotografiemi, projekcemi."]

29. The writer and musician Jace Clayton explains this partly in *What was the hipster?* (Greif 2010:25): "Peruvian hipsterism meant that the middle-class kids who looked down on cumbia music all their lives were suddenly throwing parties and dancing to it—all because of a compilation called "Roots of Chicha: Psychedelic Cumbias from Peru." "Roots of Chicha" was released on a French-run Brooklyn label called Barbés. The cool New York label allowed these kids to see this old music in a new light; it wasn't simple recontextualization, it was an awareness that this poorly dressed and deeply unhip aspect of their Peruvian-ness had entered into a global conversation."

30. [Lidé totiž práci Charty 77 – a zdaleka ne jenom ji – sledují se zájmem a sympatiemi ze zahraničního rozhlasu, ale velmi by si rozmysleli, kdyby ji měli veřejně podpořit. Anebo vůbec kdyby měli veřejně projevit své skutečné smýšlení. Češi a Slováci nejsou nadšenci, nenadchnou se pro něco příliš často. V roce 1968 se pro cosi nadchli, několik měsíců si počínali jako svéprávní občané, ale se zlou se potázali: dvacet let pak byli za toto své nadšení perzekvováni. Po této hořké zkušenosti je jejich dnešní opatrnost víc než pochopitelná.]

31. The website www.i-legalne.cz, a digital music store operating since November 2006, bankrupted and folded in February 2011. It was struggling thoughout its existence.

32. [Celý je to nový, na nás se nesmí rychle / kafíčko a cigárko / a dva roky než si zvyknem / chceme to, co známe, / a pokud možno znova / a hlavně žádný postoje / a sprostý / a cizí slova.]

33. [Publikace je hezčí než záměry jejího vzniku. Autoři téhle knihy se na hudbu radši dívají, než ji poslouchají ... Fascinuje je okolní kultura; jakoby písničky byly jenom doplněk. Trochu se jim to v hlavách přeházel.]

34. [trochu obsažnější Vice mínus blbý kecy]

35. [Nová bible českých hipsterů?]

36. [Zde Jsou Psi je podle vlastnich slov zamerena na 'neprobadana' mista 'nezavisle klubove sceny', a pritom obdivujou fotky klonu komercnich plnicu stadionu jako Rod Stewart, Dolly Parton a Iron Maiden]

37. [O hudbě skoro ani slovo a přesto možná nejvíc, co o ní bylo u nás kdy napsáno]

38. [K hudbě, která stojí mimo povrchní mainstream, nebo se proti němu přímo vymezuje, vždycky patřila značná míra péče o vlastní povrch—na pódiu i pod ním]

39. [Zatímco za našimi hranicemi hudebníci používají vizualitu jako nástroj, kterým vábí své posluchače, Česko po desetiletích nucené uniformity zůstává zemí, kde je umělec starající se o svůj vzhled zavrhnut většinovým publikem jako narcisistní podivín]

40. [jsem si predstavoval vetsi vstupy primo od kapel—jejich pojeti sama sebe ve spolecnosti, ktera si zaslouzi kvuli durazu na neomezenou spotrebu kritiku, ale zaroven bez stylu v ni nelze fungovat]

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