

## Achilles in the age of metal (Manowar, *The Triumph of Steel*, 1992), by Eleonora Cavallini

Bob Dylan's album *Blonde on blonde* (1966) contains the track *Temporary like Achilles*, a sort of modern *serenade* which a poor man in love sings outside the door of his beloved one, with the only result of being unmercifully excluded by her. The song is full of cunning puns (such as "Velvet door" and so on) and irony, which culminates in the embarrassing description of Achilles as a rough, voracious energumen keeping guard in front of the girl's house:

Achilles is in your alleway,  
He don't want me here,  
He does brag.  
He's pointing to the sky  
And he's hungry, like a man in drag.  
How come you get someone like him to be your guard?  
You know I want your lovin',  
Honey, but you're so hard.

Such a treatment doubtless sounds disrespectful towards the most famous hero in world Epic: but it is not that weird of peace-maker Dylan, who probably does not like the character of the unbeatable Greek warrior. Nevertheless, Dylan is still far from reducing Achilles to the emphatic, hateful caricature that we find in Christa Wolf's *Cassandra* (1983). Dylan (as well as all the artists that I'm going to mention below) does not notice that Achilles is a 'beatnik' *ante litteram*, a 'rebel without a cause', undisciplined, unwilling to cut his hair, and, above all, that he is a musician, singing and playing a lyre fitted with a *silver* bridge (see *Iliad* 9.186-189).

Only some decades after the so-called 'popular' culture will get back to the original sources of Achilles' character, that is to say to the Greek myth and especially to the *Iliad* (whose controversial cinematic rendition, Wolfgang Petersen's *Troy* [2004], is the subject of a recent book edited by M. M. Winkler, *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic*, Blackwell 2007). As late as the Seventies, Homeric references in popular music are generally loose and elusive, as is well shown even by the most interesting rock song dedicated to Achilles during that period: *Achilles Last Stand* by Led Zeppelin (*Presence*, 1976). Based upon guitarist Jimmy Page's acrobatic skill and vocalist Robert Plant's virtuosity, the song is a melancholic reflection about the futility of war, a nostalgic yearning for home, unusually expressed by means of a powerful sound and of a hammering use of drums:

It was an April morning when they told us we should go  
As I turn to you, you smiled at me  
How could we say no?

With all the fun to have, to live the dreams we always had  
Oh, the songs to sing, when we at last return again

Sending off a glancing kiss, to those who claim they know  
Below the streets that steam and hiss,  
The devils in his hole

Oh to sail away, to sandy lands and other days  
Oh to touch the dream, hides inside and never seen.

Into the sun the south the north, at last the birds have flown  
The shackles of commitment fell, in pieces on the ground

Oh to ride the wind, to tread the air above the din  
Oh to laugh aloud, dancing as we fought the crowd

To seek the man whose pointing hand, the giant step unfolds  
With guidance from the curving path, that churns up into stone

If one bell should ring, in celebration for a king  
So fast the heart should beat, as proud the head with heavy feet.

Days went by when you and I, bathed in eternal summers glow  
As far away and distant, our mutual child did grow

Oh the sweet refrain, soothes the soul and calms the pain  
Oh Albion remains, sleeping now to rise again

Wandering & wandering, what place to rest the search  
The mighty arms of atlas, hold the heavens from the earth etc.

Described as simple-minded teenagers overwhelmed by the demon of war, that is to say of legalized destruction disguised under fictitious values, the young heroes leaving for Troy daydream of adventures in remote countries, of "riding the wind" across the sea, and expect a return crowned by glorious victory songs. As if we were in a backwards-moving *Odyssey*, the journey fills up with fabulous visions, but the yearned return will not come true. Achilles' last thoughts are for his little son who grows in a distant land (is he Neoptolemus?), for the child's mother (but this detail would suit Odysseus better than Achilles) and for his native country: which, surprisingly, is neither Phthia nor Greece, but "Albion". This unexpected hint to the British band's true nationality distracts the listener's attention from the mythic *reverie* and brings him back to the reality of present time, maybe in order to warn him against the tragic eventuality of new wars and bloodsheds.

As war -despite the efforts of pacifist movements- seems unavoidable, one may as well exorcize it by emphasizing its most gruesome and appalling aspects (just like W.S. Burroughs, already in the Sixties, had done in some important writings, which I'm going to quote below). Beginning from the Seventies, war, death and destruction become frequent themes in the musical genre that is (broadly speaking) called *heavy metal*. So, it is certainly significant that the *heavy metal* genre is particularly interested in the character of Achilles. As a demigod, undefeatable, glamorous and terrible in his flashing weapons, which terrify the Trojans even from a great distance (*Iliad* 22.25-32); as a man, extreme in generosity, loyalty and friendship, but also in cruelty and wrath, Achilles appears to be close to the imagery of *metal*, or at least of that part of it which is called *epic metal* and, even if mostly inspired by Norse mythology, pays attention also to Greek myth: with regard to this, it is worthwhile to mention *The Odyssey* by Symphony X (2002) and especially the refined *metal opera* by Virgin Steele *The House of Atreus* (1999-2000), based on Aeschylus' *Oresteia*.

Censored by many governments worldwide because of its provocative and irreverent character, often derided and despised with no convincing arguments (or with no arguments at all), *heavy metal* remains still difficult to define and classify. There is still some doubt even about the origin of the expression *heavy metal*, or, better, of the peculiar semantic alteration which it is subjected to in the passage from the language of chemistry and metallurgy (where *heavy metal* means a metal with a specific gravity greater than about 5.0, especially one that is poisonous, such as lead or mercury: see *Oxford English Dictionary* s.v.) to the musical one. It is interesting to see that one of the earliest metaphoric employments of the expression *heavy metal* appears in W. S. Burroughs's writings, with reference to the existential discomfort of his generation. In *The Soft Machine* (1962), Burroughs creates the character of "Uranian Willy, the *heavy metal* kid". In the following novel *Nova Express* (1964), Burroughs develops the theme, by interpreting *heavy metal* as a metaphor for *addiction*:

Pp. 56-58 [Chapt. "Uranian Willy"] e. 62-63 [Chapt. "Towers Open Fire"] Uranian Willy the *Heavy Metal* Kid. Also known as Willy The Rat. He wised up the marks. [...] THIS IS WAR TO EXTERMINATION. FIGHT CELL BY CELL THROUGH BODIES AND MIND SCREENS OF THE EARTH. SOULS ROTTEN FROM THE ORGASM DRUG, FLESH SHUDDERING FROM THE OVENS, PRISONERS OF THE EARTH COME OUT. STORM THE STUDIO [...] Burnt metal smell of interplanetary war in the raw noon streets swept by screaming glass blizzards of enemy flak. [...] "Shift linguals - Free doorways - Cut word lines - Photo falling - Word falling - Break Through in Grey Room - Use partisans of all nations - Towers, open fire-" [...] "Partisans of all nations, open fire - tilt - blast - pound - stab - strafe - kill" "Pilot K9, you are cut off - back. Back. Back before the whole fucking shit house goes up - Return to base

immediately - Ride music beam back to base - Stay out of that time flak - All pilots ride Pan Pipes back to base-

The Technician mixed a bicarbonate of soda surveying the havoc on his view screen - It was impossible to estimate the damage - Anything put out up till now is like pulling a figure out of the air - [Enemy] installations shattered - Personnel decimated - Board Books destroyed - Electric waves of resistance sweeping through mind screens of the earth - The Message of Total Resistance on short wave of the world - This is war to extermination - Shift linguals - Cut word lines - Vibrate tourists - Free doorways - Photo falling - Word falling - Break through in grey room - Calling Partisans of all nations - Towers, open fire-" P. 67 [Crab nebula] They walked on into an area of tattoo booths and sex parlors - A music like wind through fine metal wires bringing a measure of relief from the terrible dry heat - Black beetle musicians saw this music out of the air swept by continual hot winds from plains that surround the city - The plains are dotted with villages of conical paper-thin metal houses where a patient gentle crab people live unmolested in the hottest region of the planet. [...] The SOS addicts had sucked up all the silence in the area were now sitting around in blue blocks of *heavy metal* the earth 's crust buckling ominously under their weight [...] p. 109 [SOS] The Blue *Heavy Metal* People of Uranus [...] p. 111 [Short Count] The *Heavy Metal* Kid returned from a short blue holiday on Uranus [...] p. 112 Green People in limestone calm - Remote green contempt for all feelings and proclivities of the animal host they had invaded with inexorable moves of Time-Virus-Birth-Death - With their diseases and orgasm drugs and their sexless parasite life forms - *Heavy Metal* People of Uranus wrapped in cool blue mist of vaporized bank notes - And The Insect People of Minraud with *metal music* - Cold insect brains and their agents like white hot buzz saws sharpened in the Ovens [...]

Burroughs's text, with its painful and lacerating tone, somehow preludes to some of the favorite sceneries of *heavy metal*: alienating and claustrophobic atmospheres, instinct of rebellion against a materialist and inhuman society, obsession for war (which Burroughs emphasizes so much as to transform it into a pure apocalyptic vision, devoid of any realistic element). In the last years of his (long) life, Burroughs showed a significant interest towards one of the most adored icons of the Sixties music, Jim Morrison (*Stoned Immacolate: the Music of the Doors*, 2000), and recorded readings from his own texts in collaboration with the *industrial metal* group Ministry (*Just one Fix*) and with Kurt Cobain (*The Priest they called him*, 1992). Some years later than Burrough's novel *Nova Express*, the phrase "heavy metal thunder" was inserted in the lyrics of Steppenwolf's song *Born to be wild* (1968), and the names of two "heavy metals", *iron* and *le(a)d*, entered the oxymoric denominations of two of the most important rock bands of the period going from the end of the Sixties to the beginning of the Seventies: the Iron Butterfly and the above-mentioned Led Zeppelin.

In the Seventies, however, *heavy metal* becomes a specific denomination for an aggressive type of music, characterized by a powerful sound and a strong rhythm, which are obtained by using drums in a hammering way, by amplifying and intentionally 'distorting' the sound of guitars and basses and, in some cases, by altering the voices (the so-called 'growl'). Formerly, the 'distortion' had been occasionally used by some historical bands of the Sixties (including the Beatles in *Helter Skelter*) to alterate the timbres of the strings, in order to achieve strident effects which, according to some observers of the phenomenon, could also involve some psychotropic implications.(1) Afterwards, the 'distortion' will be largely employed by *heavy metal*, to express anger and discomfort, to convey oneiric suggestions, sometimes even to evoke some gloomy, Gothic atmospheres.

Certainly this is not the right place to discuss about the countless *metal* subgenres, or to inquire into the reasons why a lot of bands lay stress on dreadful and ghastly sceneries. (2) Achilles has nothing to do with demonic rituals and other embarrassing topics, which –however- play a role only in *a part* of this music (on the other hand, there is also a professedly Christian *metal*, about which see [www.holysteel.com](http://www.holysteel.com)). In any case, it is not surprising that the extremely archaic, barbaric savagery of the Homeric battles (only partially concealed by the aulic perfection of the Homeric verse) has exercised a strong suggestion on some *metal* musicians.

As a matter of fact, there are at least three compositions inspired by the mythic Greek hero: Manowar's *Achilles, Agony and Ecstasy in Eight Parts* (from *The Triumph of Steel*, 1992); Warlord's *Achilles' Revenge* (from *Rising out of the Ashes*, 2002), and Jag Panzer's *Achilles* (from *Casting the Stones*, 2004). The second

and the third song are general praises of Achilles' bravery in the battlefield. Warlord's track explicitly declares to be *based on Homer's Iliad*, but the lyrics are substantially a repetitive sequence of images of destruction and bloodshed, easily adaptable to any war scenery. The most interesting detail of these lyrics consists in defining Achilles "king of the dead in Acheron" (with reference to *Odyssey* 11.485):

He carved his name, forever into books of lore  
An immortal legend - helmet, shield, and sword  
Commend the dead who fought and bled upon the fields  
And bury them with honors, swords and shields  
Remember them they could not fend in the end  
In the face of Achilles' anger, his revenge.  
Hail to the one! To the king of the dead in Acheron  
In his shadow we fade, we are lost in his name.  
Hail to the one! To the king of the dead in Acheron  
In his shadow we fade, we are lost in his name.  
Hail to the one!

Such a praise of Achilles, however, is against Achilles himself, whose shady ghost, in *Odyssey* 11.487-491, answers Odysseus' laudatory speech with the following words:

'Say not a word,' he answered, 'in death's favour; I would rather be a paid servant in a poor man's house and be above ground than king of kings among the dead (transl. S. Butler).

But the distance from Homer is even more evident in the easy, potentially commercial song by Jag Panzer, *Achilles*. The lyrics offer a brief summary of the Trojan saga, but they do it on the sole basis of the movie *Troy* by W. Petersen, released in the same year (2004). The derivation of the song from the movie is especially apparent in the following passages:

Born into war is all that he's known  
The seeds of terror are what he has sown  
A maiden has never seen into his heart  
And for this passion his soul will depart,

or,

For the shores of Troy they set sail  
When all before him failed  
To avenge his cousin's life  
A victim of the knife.

Apart from the hasty and approximate use of rhyme, it is indubitable that Jag Panzer used *Troy*'s plot as the unique source for their song (which however contains some further alterations of the original story: e.g. Achilles *does not* sail towards Troy to avenge Patroclus' death). In another work of mine ("Quaderni di Scienza della Conservazione" 4, 2004, 300-333) I defended Petersen's movie, but I hope that it won't become the only landmark for those who are interested in the myth of the Trojan War.

The first song in chronological order, *Achilles, Agony and Ecstasy in Eight Parts* (from now on referred to as *AAeE*) by Manowar, deserves far more attention. Manowar is a historical *metal band* from the United States:(3) it is worthwhile to remind that, at the beginning of their career (*Battle Hymns*, 1982; but see also *Fighting the World*, 1987), they could rely no less than on movie legend Orson Welles as a narrating voice. *AaeE* (1992) is a *suite* (28'30"), dealing with some decisive moments of the *Iliad*, from Hector's assault to the Achaean ships (books 12-15) to Patroclus' funeral (book 23). Three of the eight parts are instrumental (3: "Funeral March", 4: "Armor of the Gods" and 7: "The Desecration of Hector's Body") and aim to give an onomatopoeic rendition of some peculiar Homeric sceneries (such as Hephaestus' divine forge, where, according to *Iliad* 18, Achilles' new armor was created). In the remaining five parts, where the vocals play a

leading role, the lyrics appear to be far more accurate than in most contemporary musical interpretations of the Trojan saga.

As a matter of fact, DeMaio's lyrics imply a careful and scrupulous reading of the *Iliad*. The songwriter has focused his attention essentially on the crucial fight between Hector and Achilles, has paraphrased some passages of the poem adapting them to the melodic structure with a certain fluency and partly reinterpreting them, but *never* altering or upsetting Homer's storyline. The purpose of the lyrics (and of the music as well) is to evoke some characteristic Homeric sceneries: the raging storm of the battle, the barbaric, ferocious exultance of the winner, the grief and anguish of the warrior who feels death impending over him. The whole action hinges upon Hector and Achilles, who are represented as specular characters, divided by an irreducible hatred and yet destined to share a similar destiny. Both are caught in the moment of the greatest exaltation, as they savagely rejoice for the blood of their killed enemies, but also in the one of the extreme pain, when the daemon of war finally pounces on them. Furthermore, differently than in the irreverent and iconoclastic movie *Troy*, in *AAeE* the divine is a constant and ineluctable presence, determining human destinies with inscrutable and steely will: and, despite the generic reference to "the gods", the real master of human lives is Zeus, the only God to whom both Hector and Achilles address their prayers.

Now, some specific remarks.

### **1) In the first section (*Hector storms the Wall*):**

See my chariot run to your ships  
I'll drive you back to the sea  
You came here for gold  
The wall will not hold  
This day was promised to me  
The gods are my shield  
My fate has been sealed  
Lightning and javelins fly  
Soon many will fall  
We are storming the wall  
Stones fall like snow from the sky  
We will pay with our glory  
In the fire of battle  
Zeus today is mine  
Killing all in my way  
Like sheep and like cattle  
Smashing skulls of all who defy  
I spare not the hammer  
I spare not the sword  
This day will ring with my name  
None have to chase me  
Let he who will face me  
Kill me or die by the sword,

the word "wall", of course, does not refer to the city walls of Troy, but to the wall built by the Achaeans to defend their own camp and ships (see *Iliad* 7.435-465) and subsequently destroyed (with Zeus' leave: see 7.454-463) by Hector and his troops (*Iliad* books 12-13). The image of the stones which fall "like snow" on the enemies is an intentional quotation from *Iliad* 12.156-161:

*And like snow-flakes the stones fell ever earthward*, like flakes that a blustering wind, as it driveth the shadowy clouds, sheddeth thick and fast upon the bounteous earth; even *so flowed the missiles* from the hands of these, of Achaeans alike and Trojans; and helms rang harshly and bossed shields, as they were smitten with great stones (transl. A. T. Murray).

## 2) In the Part II of the song (*The Death of Patroclus*):

Oh friend of mine, how to say goodbye  
This was your time, but the armor you wore  
Was mine. I will not rest  
Until Hector's blood is spilled  
His bones will all be broken  
Dragged across the field  
This dear friend is how we'll say goodbye  
Until we meet in the sky,

the obvious reference to Achilles' armor -which becomes a fatal disguise for the valiant comrade of the hero- is complicated by the less obvious statement that Patroclus' death is nothing but the *anticipation* of Achilles' own death, foretold far behind and about to happen. The theme of Patroclus as Achilles' *alter ego*, and of the armor as the token of a warrior's identity, certainly did not escape classicists and anthropologists (see as instance M. G. Ciani, *Il canto di Patroclo [Iliade XVI]*, Venezia 1989, 11ff., with bibliography), but it is not that important to verify if DeMaio is acquainted with these studies. He had a keen intuition, and that is undeniable.

However, this section contains the most criticized sentence in the whole song (which, in my opinion, could otherwise be considered irreprehensible): (4) "This dear friend is how we'll say goodbye / until we meet in the sky". As is well known, in the Homeric conception the souls of the heroes, including Achilles' and Patroclus', descend to Hades (see *Odyssey* 11.467-541). I'm tempted to say that, after Homer, Hector's lot is not the same as Achilles' one (the demigod hero is granted immortality in the Isle of the Blessed). But I admit that this is not the appropriate way to face the question. Probably, "Until we meet in the sky" was simply the most suggestive and catchiest phrase to put at the end of this section, certainly more likeable than a forced "Before we meet in the Isle of the Blessed". However, it is interesting to note that the Isle of the Blessed is not extraneous to Manowar's repertory (*Each Dawn I Die*, from *Hail to England* [1984]).

## 3) In the Part VIII (*The Glory of Achilles*):

The oath of the gods, this day was fulfilled  
In the heat of the battle, Hector was killed  
See him Patroclus, down in the dust  
Rejoice in his death my symbol of trust  
A dozen highborn youths have been killed  
Cutting their throats their blood was all spilled  
Their bodies set at the foot of your fire  
With oxen, sheep and two of your hounds  
Your funeral pyre high off the ground  
Hector's body dragged three times around  
I will carry the torch to your funeral pyre  
I will ask of the wind to send high your fire  
Hector's blood will not be washed from my body until your body is burned  
A prophecy spoken a promise fulfilled  
More blood will be spilled, more will be killed,

the description of Patroclus' funeral is entirely derived from Homer, with the sacrifice of the twelve Trojan captives (*Iliad* 23.175) (5) and of many animals, including sheep, cattle (23.166) and "two household hounds" (23.174); with Achilles praying the winds in order that they send the flame of the pyre high (23.194-219), and refusing to wash away Hector's blood from his own body before the funeral is finished (23.40-46). The reference to Hector's body, dragged three times around Patroclus' grave, is also derived from Homer, but in the *Iliad* this barbaric ritual (which clearly dates back to a very archaic epoch) takes place later (24.15f.).

Finally, I would like to dwell upon the **Part V** (the dramatic *Hector's Final Hour*) which, in my opinion, represents the 'crucial' point of the whole *suite*. Just like in Homer, the Gods "weigh" the Fate of Hector, whose soul is going to "descend into Hades":

Here inside the walls of Troy, the gods weigh my fate  
From this day do I abstain, to a memory of hate  
To pay for all the blood that spilled  
The many thousands I did kill,  
No walls can contain the gods' almighty will  
I hear the silent voices I cannot hide  
The gods leave no choices so we all must die  
Oh Achilles let thy arrows fly  
Into the wind, where eagles cross the sky  
Today my mortal blood will mix with sand  
It was foretold I will die by thy hand  
Into Hades my soul descend.

In this case, too, the opening lines are derived from Homer. See *Iliad* 22.209-213:

*Then the Father lifted on high his golden scales, and set therein two fates of grievous death, one for Achilles, and one for horse-taming Hector; then he grasped the balance by the midst and raised it; and down sank the day of doom of Hector, and departed unto Hades; and Phoebus Apollo left him* (transl. A. T. Murray).

The Homeric echoes are still well perceivable, but with some interesting variation. In the *Iliad*, Hector *does not know* that he has been sentenced to death, and faces Achilles in the misleading hope to beat him, at least until he realizes that Athena has cruelly deceived him (22.297-305). In *Hector's Final Hour*, the Trojan prince (who, as in most modern interpretations of the myth, appears to be the truly 'empathetic' hero, because he is the defender of an unfairly attacked country) is going to face the fatal duel. In this moment, he perceives his own death as a 'rightful' payment for the numberless victims of his sword. According to a pattern that is more tragic than epic (see Aeschylus' *Oresteia*), he feels the haunting presence of the "silent voices" (that is to say, the Erinyes) of the fallen enemies. Nevertheless, the *ecstatic* (see the title!), even visionary, surrender, which leads Hector towards the ruthless arrows of his antagonist, (6) can be easily be compared with the attitude of a sacrificial victim. His "mortal blood" will be one more gift for the greedy Mother Earth.

When I first listened to this song, something reminded me of Jesus' monologue in the garden of Gethsemane in A. Lloyd Webber - T. Rice's *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970). Uncertain and critical in the beginning, then overwhelmed by the ineluctability of his martyrdom, Jesus says:

God thy will is hard  
But you hold every card  
I will drink your cup of poison  
Nail me to your cross and break me  
Bleed me beat me kill me take me now  
Before I change my mind.

Only later did I have the chance to read an interview with Eric Adams, Manowar's vocalist: "I used to be a Deep Purple groupie, a male groupie. I mean, I would go to every show, every show. Every show, no matter where they played because I loved Ian Gillan's voice" (<http://www.metal-rules.com/interviews/manowar.htm>). But Ian Gillan is the magnificent interpreter of Jesus in the original release of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. I don't believe this to be simply coincidental. Nevertheless, any further investigation about musical and other influences would exceed the purposes of my work.

#### Footnotes:

1) On the effects of 'popular music' on young people, see Peter G. Christenson -Donald F. Roberts, *Did the Devil, the Drummer, or the 'Doo-Wop' Make 'Em Do It?: The Effects of Exposure to Music Media*, in *It's Not Only Rock & Roll*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1998, 181-223. The authors substantially argue against a simple cause-effect relationship between music consumption and violent or wicked behaviors: nevertheless, they admit that the exposure to some kinds of music (especially *metal*) could produce a

negative effect on young people, especially with regard to their school performance. As for the title of the Beatles' song *Helter Skelter*, which was found written on the walls of Roman Polanski's house in Bel Air after the hideous massacre of August, 9-10 1969, see Vincent Bugliosi- Curt Gentry, *Helter Skelter. The true Story of the Manson Murders*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974. For an objective, broad-minded approach to the problem of the relationship music/violence, see Michael Moore's interview with Marilyn Manson in the movie *Bowling for Columbine* (2002).

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2) For a detailed analysis of *heavy metal* and of its multifarious manifestations, see R. Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993; M. Moynihan - D. Søderlind *Lords of Chaos. The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground*, Venice, CA: Feral House, 1998 (second ed.), and especially I. Christie, *Sound of the Beast: The Complete Headbanging History of Heavy Metal*, HarperCollins, 2003; furthermore, for the sociologic aspects of the subject, see D. Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology*, New York: Lexington 1991. For an updated review of the studies about *heavy metal*, 'see *'Metal Studies' –A Bibliography*, compiled by K. Kahn Harris, at <http://www.kahn-harris.org/>.

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3) At least two members of the band are of Italian origin: songwriter/bassist Joey DeMaio (whose mother, however, is a Native American), and vocalist Eric Adams, who at the age of 12 played in a band called "The Kidz" using his real name, Louis Marullo (the pseudonym derives from the names of his two sons). Former songwriter/guitarist Ross "The Boss" Friedman is of Jewish origin (<http://www.jewsrock.org>). Of course, any accuse of racism, slanderously imputed to the band, is groundless.

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4) Not all Manowar lyrics are at the same level as *AaeE*: I must admit that sometimes they are repetitive and even boring. But the wholesale liquidation of Manowar's lyrics as "cheesy" is something that goes beyond my intelligence. For instance, how could one affirm that *Guyana* (from *Sign of the Hammer*, 1984) is a "cheesy" song?

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5) It is the only case of human sacrifice in Homer, who ignores, or even denies, the cruel death of Iphigeneia (see my Introduction to *Omero mediatico. Aspetti della ricezione omerica nella civiltà contemporanea*, Bologna 2007, 4 and n.8.).

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6) For Achilles' archers, see *Iliad* 22.205-207. As is well known, they are stopped by the hero, who claims the honor to kill Hector by his own hands.

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