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6/17/08

Uses of WWI Imagery in the Late 60's Pop Music of the Zombies and the Royal Guardsmen

Although very different bands, the British group the Zombies and the American group the Royal Guardsmen each played a part in the 1960's pop music phenomenon known as the British Invasion: the former as a key player in the cultural movement alongside bands such as the Beatles, the Kinks, and the Who, et al, and the latter as one of hundreds (if not thousands) of American groups who sought to emulate the new British beat sounds and styles. Each of the two groups embraced the jangly guitar sound and big vocal harmonies of the genre, but beyond those commonalities, shared little else. The Zombies enjoyed continued success throughout the 1960's and beyond, and were seen as not only producers of hit singles, but as a more substantive albums-oriented group. They remain widely respected to this day and have been hugely influential of countless other pop artists. The Royal Guardsmen, on the other hand, are generally regarded as having been a teenage kitsch or novelty act, riding the brief wave of popularity they enjoyed from the success of their "Snoopy"-related singles.

The concern of this essay is the two groups' use of WWI imagery in some of their late 60's songs: the Royal Guardsmen's "Snoopy" songs (the primary four of which I will analyze here, dating from 1967-68) and the Zombies' song "Butcher's Tale (Western Front 1914)," from the acclaimed 1968 album, *Odessey and Oracle*. My assertion is that it is possible to interpret these songs as a kind of historical fiction, wherein the two bands ostensibly employ lyrics and themes from the past to actually comment on the political circumstances of their own contemporary time period. In his seminal book *The Historical Novel* (1962), Georg Lukács is

disdainful of superficial instances in historical fiction where "the past is used simply as illustrative material for the problems of the present" (288). Handled more substantively, however, he acknowledges the inevitability of past to present connections:

. . . if the historical novel is interested in the prehistory of the ideas which are being fought out today, then writers may understandably see the real historical genesis of these ideas and therewith of present-day problems in the development of the historical personalities who have championed and embodied these ideas in the past (301).

Lukács framework here speaks to the issue of why a literary text (or song, in this case) should adopt a context from the past to address contemporary issues. Clearly, history can be a legitimizing force to demonstrate that what is being experienced now has occurred before, and can suggest how to proceed accordingly. In the case of the songs in question in this essay, where the ostensible imagery for each is that of WWI, the contemporary political/military circumstance is the Vietnam War. For the Zombies' "Butcher's Tale," I will argue that history is invoked to recall the tragedies of war and that we should cease and desist from the current one. For the Royal Guardsmen's "Snoopy" songs, on the other hand, history reminds us of past military victories and the glories of American culture, for a much more conservative, pro-war agenda, not to mention an unrealistic portrayal of war itself.

In regard to the idea of music, literature, or art in general having the kinetic ability to move people to (in)action, there is ample evidence of artists throughout history who believed it to be true, although certainly not all concur. Perhaps the best example in favor in the last few hundred years is none other than Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, the very enthusiastically pro-

American (like the Royal Guardsmen, incidentally), poetic masterpiece. In his poem "Over the Carnage Rose Prophetic a Voice" (265), which was originally part of the "Calamus" cluster of poems in the *Leaves* anthology, Whitman pleads for the nation to refrain from going to civil war and to preserve the union at all costs. Once it becomes clear that war is inevitable, however, his poem "Beat! Beat! Drums!" (237), among several others in the "Drum-Taps" cluster, is nothing short of a call to arms to all Americans to fight for a Union army victory.

On the other hand, several noteworthy contemporaries of the Zombies and Royal Guardsmen in the pop music world take the opposing view that music cannot actually effect political change. Of one of the most raucous bands of the 60's era, Rolling Stones' singer Mick Jagger states, "It's stupid to think that you can start a revolution with a record. I wish you could" (Doggett 88). Likewise, Neil Young of the folk-rock group Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, says, "I think the time when music could change the world has passed. I know that it has lost the power to make changes. It's not just an opinion. I think it's a reality. I think the world today is a different place and it's time for science and physics and spirituality to make a difference in this world and to try and save the planet" (Palmer 79). Certainly, it should be noted that Jagger and Young's perspectives on the matter today may very easily be tempered with age and forty years of distance from the idealism of the 60's era. Young's aforementioned group, incidentally, has just completed an anti-Iraq war album, U.S. tour, and documentary film (entitled *Living with War*), precisely as they did in 1969 in their adamant opposition to the Vietnam war, that positions them as essentially "historically fictionalizing" themselves, in effect. As Young explains,

I think that both the Vietnam war and the tragedy of Laos in the beginning and World War II and World War I, they are all the

same war. It was just people and we have to change the way we live and we have to start thinking about . . . Someone has to step up and try to be different so we can evolve. That is what *Living with War* is all about. It hurts everybody, doesn't matter what war it is, it's the wrong way to solve problems. I know this sounds idealistic but I still feel everyone has a decision to make in their own hearts about what they should do with their lives. And so I'm trying to make a statement about how I feel and it's only about how I feel. I tried to put it in a film that allowed people to reflect about how they feel and to show both sides so that it could open up a debate, so that people could talk about it. In that way it's kind of timeless, it could have been made at any time. It doesn't really matter what war we are talking about--it's all the same war (Palmer 80).

Re-applying parallel rhetoric and artistic efforts in 2008 from their 1960's anti-war endeavors, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young are one of the few bands around today with the longevity to witness renewed political/military conflict in the world and respond to it in kind as they did forty years prior, thereby turning to their own internal historical template for a contemporary *modus operandi*.

For the *Zombies* and the *Royal Guardsmen*, their external, historical fictionalizations are, of course, premised on entirely different circumstances and aims. Their depictions and employment of WWI imagery take vastly different routes due to such factors as their disparate national origins, American v. British roles in the war, the groups' political and cultural leanings, familial connections to the war, and the intrinsically differing dynamics between aerial and

ground combat. In addition, where the Vietnam sub-terra commentary is directly acknowledged by the *Zombies*, the connection remains only implicit for the Royal Guardsmen.

To begin with the *Zombies*, the group hail from St. Albans, England, a town forty miles north of London and best known as the famous site of the Roman town Verulamium. Highly respected in the pop world, the band took a decidedly psychedelic turn with their 1968 album, *Odessey & Oracle* (title misspelling occurred at pressing time, too late to correct). Taking literary inspiration on the track "A Rose for Emily" (based on a William Faulkner short story) and the musical/historical influence of the Bee Gees song "New York Mining Disaster 1941" (which was also directive of "Butcher's Tale"), the minor chord laden, melancholic *Odessey* is often compared to the Beach Boys 1966 classic, *Pet Sounds* (Palao, "Tell" 7), and was recorded in the same Abbey Road Studios as the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper*, by the same engineers, Peter Vince and Geoff Emerick. "Butcher's Tale," described as "a thinly-disguised comment on Vietnam" (Palao, "Tell" 11), is the most somber, uncommercial track on the album, and was strangely the first single issued in 1968. It predictably flopped, and not until "Time of the Season" was released as the next single, going directly to number one in the U.S. charts, did the album begin to turn heads in the industry. Regrettably, the group was already disbanded by this time, and it has subsequently taken decades for *Odessey* to be recognized as the baroque pop masterpiece it is. "Butcher's Tale" was written by *Zombies*' bassist/vocalist Chris White, and is still described by the music press today as a "spine-tingling anti-war song" (Paytress 124). The song makes extensive use of mellotron and classically-derived chord progressions, and as Alec Palao states in the album's liner notes,

In 'Butcher's Tale,' sound effects play a large part in Chris' ominous tale of the senseless slaughter of the First World War.

The wheezing pedal organ echoes a desperate plea for life, and rather than opt for the expected collage of battle and gunfire, a tape of musique concrete was reversed and laden with echo, concocting a nightmarish sound. The high pitch tone that occurs in the chorus was generated by engineer Peter Vince on the recording console, in a similar fashion to the tone used to align analogue tapes correctly ("Tell" 11).

Chris White elaborates,

I wanted Colin [Blunstone, Zombies' lead vocalist] to sing it but they got me to sing because they said 'Your weak trembley little voice suits the song.' We used this old American pedal organ that I'd bought in a junk store, and if you listen closely you can hear Rod's [Argent, Zombies' keyboardist] fingernails, because it's all miked up. We also had some musique concrète, which I actually nicked off a Pierre Boulez record, reversed the tape and sped it up. We 'adapted' it. One of the influences on that was '1941 New York Mining Disaster' by the Bee Gees, which I thought was a great way of telling a story, very evocative (Palao, *Zombie Heaven* 51).

"Butcher's Tale" was written by White in remembrance of his uncle who was killed in WWI. As he explains to Rob Chapman,

I'd been reading AJP Taylor on the First World War and my uncle had died at Passchendaele . . . I was driving to St. Albans and working out that in the first morning there were 60,000 casualties

in the battle of The Somme. The enormity hit me and I had to pull over to the side of the road because I was shaking. That's where that [lyric] comes from, 'I just can't stop shaking . . .' (64)

Passchendaele, a small town in Belgium, was the sight of one of the most horrific battles in all of WWI. Approximately 500,000 men were killed collectively from all sides, and many were reported "missing," often meaning there were insufficient body parts remaining to identify the dead (Warner 1).

In the lyrics of "Butcher's Tale," the metaphor of the "butcher," both as a tradesman and as a soldier, is established in the first verse, and the "slaughter" of the war is sanctioned by the government ("the kings shilling is now my fee") and the Church ("And the preacher / in his pulpit sermoned / 'Go and fight, do what is right'"). The chorus is further a very poignant and accurate depiction of not only the physical strain of the war but the tremendous psychological and emotional stress endured by the soldiers. The first line begins and then stops, only to begin again, as if to demonstrate the frayed nervous system of the soldier/singer: "And I / And I can't stop shaking / My hands won't stop shaking / My arms won't stop shaking / My mind won't stop shaking / I want to go home / Please let me go home / Go home." Conspicuously absent from any of the lines is any sense of national pride or patriotism, rather only the anguish of war and the desire to get away from it. As historian Philip Warner indicates specifically of the battle at Passchendaele, "It is not merely the number of deaths which makes that battle in the autumn of 1917 unique in the history of warfare--it is the almost unimaginable horror of the circumstances. That men could survive such an experience and remain sane is, perhaps, even more astonishing than the death toll" (1). The Germans also felt a heavy toll of the battle, and former Chief of the German General Staff Kuhl wrote,

The sufferings, privations and exertions which the soldiers had to bear were inexpressible. Terrible was the spiritual burden on the lonely man in the shell hole, and terrible the strain on the nerves during the bombardments which continued day and night. The 'Hell of Verdun' was exceeded by Flanders. The Battle of Flanders [the German name for Passchendaele] has been called 'The greatest martyrdom of the World War.' No division could last more than a fortnight in this hell. Then it had to be relieved by new troops. Looking back it seems that what was borne here was superhuman. With respect and thankfulness the German people will always remember the heroes of Flanders (Warner 2).

The third verse of "Butcher's Tale" continues the imagery of the desperate circumstances of trench warfare, with a personal connection: "And I have seen a friend of mine / Hang on the wire / Like some rag toy / Then in the heat the flies come down / And cover up the boy." The verse ends with an inventory of the locales of the battles and harsh criticism toward the hypocrisy of the Church, who finds it easy to sanction violence from afar when it doesn't have to participate, not to mention the fact that religious institutions are expected to promote peace: "And the flies come down in / Gommecourt, Thiepval, / Mamets Wood and French Verdun / If the preacher he could see those flies / Wouldn't preach for the sound of guns." Chris White further explicates this verse and song: "It was the first single from the album in the States, as an anti-Vietnam war thing. Al Kooper and the others thought it was very political to put it out then but it was a weird choice for a single. I'd written it as 'Western Front 1916' but somehow the title got misprinted on the album cover. There were no complaints, but I complained, because I was heavily into the First World War, and 1916 is when the battle took place. Nobody could make

out what the words were. They're all place names on the Western Front: Gommecourt, Thiepval, Mametz Wood" (Palao, *Zombie Heaven* 51). The plodding, tragic melody of the chorus repeats at the end of "Butcher's Tale," as though to reassert the anguish of war.

Turning now to the Royal Guardsmen, it should be noted early on, in fairness to the group, that my criticism of their use of WWI imagery in the "Snoopy" songs to convey a conservative political agenda in Vietnam and an altogether unrealistic, romanticized portrayal of war itself is not entirely laid at the feet of the band. They were six high school teenagers from Ocala, Florida, interested in the sounds of the British Invasion and taken up by the machinery of the American record industry. They wrote practically none of their own material, and were almost randomly selected by record producer Phil Gernhard to record the "Snoopy" material, and from there were locked into novelty status by the record label to milk every cent possibly from the "Snoopy" and Peanuts phenomenon, which in 1965 was just hitting its stride in print and television, with pop music now on the way (Coyle 2). *Peanuts* creator Charles Schulz, though not initially on board with the band's use of his character, finally gave his blessing after his lawyers worked out a financially lucrative arrangement (Tucker 6). Beyond the "Snoopy" hits they were obligated to deliver at all performances, the rest of the group's repertoire was largely covers of the top 40 of the day (including songs by the Zombies), as they played alongside other 60's acts such as the Beach Boys, Tommy James and the Shondells, Jefferson Airplane and the Guess Who.

The four "Snoopy" songs I will address in this essay are the most well known of the Guardsmen catalogue, although there are multiple others dealing with WWI themes, including "It's Sopwith Camel Time" and "Down Behind the Lines." In addition, the band continued the "Snoopy" theme to address further historical developments beyond the contemporary concern of

Vietnam of the four songs I address, including "Smallest Astronaut" in 1969, in which Snoopy "helps the U.S. astronauts conquer the moon by manning a decoy flight to throw off the Russians." As David Coyle elaborates, the song "was a last-ditch effort to milk the Snoopy concept into a hit" (2). He conjectures that since Snoopy was already a sort of mascot to the Apollo space program, the Guardsmen, under the direction of their label, Laurie Records, saw the move as a natural proposition--another demonstration of their trend-hopping, reactionary existence. More recently, the band has even regrouped and penned "Snoopy vs. Osama" (2005) to address the current issue of terrorism, thereby reconstructing the old template and historically fictionalizing their own previous work, much in the way Neil Young has with his band, as discussed earlier.

As I will discuss, the Royal Guardsmen's treatment of the subject of WWI is altogether different from the perspective of the *Zombie's "Butcher's Tale."* Obviously, positing a cartoon character as the American protagonist ensures a playful demeanor, but the reasons go deeper than that. The United States had not been in the war as long as Great Britain, and the battlegrounds were thousands of miles away. This distance serves as a layer of insulation from the atrocities taking place, making romanticization of the war easier. Also, the Guardsmen are not speaking to a personal connection to the war in the way that Chris White was in the remembrance of his uncle, and so again, there is less to lose on this front. Additionally, David Coyle alludes to the overall political conservativeness and patriotism of the group as reasons for their more right-wing perspective: "It's this sort of pro-establishment attitude that probably turned off the hippies and the protestors, and endeared the group even further to the parents of the preteens the Royal Guardsmen albums and singles were being marketed to" (7).

Although the ostensible, ongoing battle in the "Snoopy" songs is comprised of American Sopwith Camel pilot Snoopy vs. the historical figure of German flying ace Baron von Richthofen (the Red Baron), the real stakes of the battle reveal an entirely geo-centric perspective, with American culture itself hanging in the balance. With the iconic American symbol of Snoopy as the military figurehead, it becomes unpatriotic to oppose the war, whether it be WWI or Vietnam. As Robert Schwartz describes,

Snoopy represents everything that a child wants to be in his or her fantasy world . . . Snoopy is a pilot, Snoopy is a secret agent. He can sit on the limb of a tree and hunch himself over and look like a vulture. He can stalk his prey like a saber-toothed tiger. He flies his doghouse and calls it his Sopwith Camel. He plays baseball and, of course, battles the Red Baron (2).

Beginning with the Royal Guardsmen's biggest hit (reaching #2 in the U.S. charts in 1967), "Snoopy Vs. the Red Baron," the imagery of the prolonged first verse is technological, omnipotent and deadly: "After the turn of the century / In the clear blue skies over Germany / Came a roar and a thunder men had never heard / Like the scream and the sound of a big war bird / Up in the sky, a man in a plane / Baron von Richthofen was his name / Eight men tried, and eighty men died / Now they're buried together on the countryside." Similar imagery continues in the chorus, but already by the song's second verse, all seriousness is cast away and the scenario is not only not deadly, it is cartoon-like in a world where even death is not permanent: "In the nick of time, a hero arose / A funny-looking dog with a big black nose / He flew into the sky to seek revenge / But the Baron shot him down--'Curses, foiled again!'" Further "cartoonization" of the scene continues in verse three with familiar references to Schulz'

comic strip such as the "Great Pumpkin," and at this point practically all allusions to a WWI context at all have dropped out of sight. This is purely a one-on-one battle between Snoopy and the Baron now, and Snoopy wins the round with a mere two shots, sending his nemesis "spinning out of sight." The ease of Snoopy's victory seems to suggest that America could easily achieve military victory, and even though the repeating choral ode to the deadliness of the Baron closes out the song, it only serves to reinforce the power of Snoopy and country. We are left assured of a sequel, which three months later, was duly provided.

In "The Return of the Red Baron," released in April of 1967 and reaching #3 on the U.S. charts, we are again reminded that death is not permanent (and by extension, war is not serious), and most importantly, we are immediately reminded in the first lines of the song of Snoopy and America's previous, glorious defeat of the Red Baron/Germany: "You remember that baron flying high in the sky / When Snoopy shot him down with a gleam in his eye." The proceeding lines in the extended second verse are even more cartoonish than usual, and indeed provide a template, both lyrically and musically, for early 70's American, Saturday morning cartoons like Hanna-Barbera's Scooby-Doo: "Hey watch out little Snoopy / You're really in a mess." When Snoopy responds, victory is again veritably assured in that even though he is little (not to mention, a dog), his status as great American icon is unstoppable, and effectively shifts the focus and support of the populace from a political/military campaign to simple embracement of American popular culture itself: "You thought you were through with the bloody red baron / But it looks like he's not down yet / Then a cry went up all over the land / The bloody red baron would strike again / But brave little Snoopy said 'Never fear' / As he headed for his plane all the people cheered (Yeeaaaahhhh!)."

When yet again the enemy resurges to fight, the tone of the lyric is evocative of America entering the war full-fledged in John Wayne style, almost annoyed by the continuous military skirmishes occurring that the Allies are apparently unable to contain: "Snoopy blazed a trail straight across the sea / Searching in vain for his enemy." In the final lines of verse two, Snoopy indeed locates his target, downed in battle, but of course not wounded, only annoyed himself: "Then he found that German trying to fix his plane / A-sweatin' and a-cussin' about to go insane." If death can be overcome, of course so can mechanical obstacles, and the "insanity" of the Baron is particularly astonishing when compared to the tremendous psychological illness (often bordering on, if not resulting in insanity itself) endured by the ground forces, as discussed early in "Butcher's Tale" and depicted by Warner both for the Allies and the Germans.

As verse three of "Return" begins, Snoopy actually lands his plane for a veritable "pistol duel" with the Baron, instead of doing the logical thing and destroying him in this moment of weakness. This maneuver is extremely telling of the two pilots' view of not only warfare but life itself: they come from a universe and time where chivalry and honor are still paramount concerns, representing a disposition that can also explicate much of the difference in tone and perspective between the "Butcher's Tale" trench warfare depiction and the "Snoopy" songs' aerial combat. James Thomas alludes to this very issue in his paper on the topic (2), and quotes Diane Lynn McKay stating in her own investigation,

Tales of daring ace pilots and their spectacular sky battles were fundamental in mobilizing a collective fantasy among Americans that the war did, in fact, represent a great crusade. Aviators were uniformly depicted as knights of the air who conducted themselves

according to ancient and honorable chivalric codes rather than by the bloody logic that actually governed the war (101).

Again, imagery of a Western shoot-out on main street is evoked, or perhaps just as precisely (considering the musical genre of the Guardsmen), an early-mid 60's teenage drag race, a la the early music of the Beach Boys, as well as the Safaris, the Challengers, Bruce and Terry, or any number of other Gary Usher-led hot rod bands. Any of the above arenas provides a scenario where romanticization cancels out danger and consequence, and the aforementioned American bands were just as vital to the early-mid 60's pop music scene in the States as the new British Invasion acts. By the time the Royal Guardsmen hit their stride in the mid-late 60's, it was often hard to tell where the origins of pop music trends were actually emanating from, and even the Beatles' famed producer George Martin acknowledges the "give and take" between the Fab Four and Brian Wilson's Beach Boys, with each group effectively "looking over its shoulder" for the other (*Beautiful Dreamer*). Accordingly, it isn't out of the ordinary that the Guardsmen's music and style borrow from both American and British influences (even though their name itself is supposedly drawn from the model of their Vox amplifiers, it nevertheless invokes images of British monarchy and Western imperialism), although one does think of an American group such as Paul Revere and the Raiders who manages to achieve a similar sort of historical fictionalization in an exclusively American context. The Guardsmen's knack for opportunism and jumping on the bandwagon of the latest popular trend in lieu of achieving a uniform message, however, again speaks to the conservative, reactionary nature of the group.

As Snoopy and the Baron's duel ensues, Snoopy "fired a shot and missed" and the Baron, who was "worried" anyway, "started to run." Of course, against the portrayed magnificence of American culture itself, it must be the Baron/Germany that flees, and the result is again only the

superficial consequence of annoyance for Snoopy and America. The closing lines of the song, "One of these days he's gonna make you pay / And you'll go straight to--," exclude the profanity of the implied but left out expletive "hell," which would detract from the playfulness of the "Snoopy" acme and be far too racy for a clean-cut group like the Royal Guardsmen (who were seen as far more "white bread" than even the Zombies). Furthermore, going to "hell" would have its implications of death, which of course is off-limits in the "Snoopy" plot.

In the next "Snoopy" song, "Snoopy's Christmas" (which went to #1 on the seasonal American charts), the Baron is back as a threat, as we of course cannot have the all-important hero (Snoopy) without the villain. An American-based, geo-centric perspective again permeates throughout, and the U.S. is posited as the only hope for the Allied cause: "The news it came out in the First World War / The bloody Red Baron was flying once more / The Allied Command ignored all of its men / And called on Snoopy to do it again."

Further Americanization of WWI imagery comes via the appropriation of the iconic American Christmas tale, *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*, which is echoed in words and meter in the second verse: "Was the night before Christmas, and forty below / When Snoopy went up in search of his foe." The song's chorus immediately follows, itself in the form of none other than the quintessential Christmas song, "Jingle Bells": "Christmas bells those Christmas bells / Ring out from the land / Asking peace of all the world / And good will to man." As if the task of defeating the suggested insurmountable American culture itself were not enough, now even Christmas is on the side of America and secondarily, the Allies.

Continuing the theme in verse three, the odds continue to mount against the Red Baron and Germany, even though he seems to have Snoopy on the ropes: "The Baron had Snoopy dead in his sights / He reached for the trigger to pull it up tight / Why he didn't shoot, well, we'll

never know / Or was it the bells from the village below." Two apparent explanations come to mind here in consideration of why the Baron fails to finish off Snoopy: 1) Some cosmic force on the side of good (America) has intervened to prevent the Baron, or 2) the German villagers/citizenry have realized the unjustness of their cause and mutinied against the Baron, sounding their bells to distract him in the moment of truth.

Nevertheless, the suspense is drawn out in an additional verse (which is double the usual), although the result is a predictable happy ending and the resumption of a guiding code of conduct: "The Baron made Snoopy fly to the Rhine / And forced him to land behind the enemy lines / Snoopy was certain that this was the end / When the Baron cried out "Merry Christmas, mein friend!" Even the Grinch-like Baron needs love Christmas, and is obliged to give his own unique gift of escape to Snoopy. Verse four builds on the enemies' mutual respect and sense of chivalry, and reads like anything *except* a circumstance of war: "The Baron then offered a holiday toast / And Snoopy our hero saluted his host / And then with a roar they were both on their way / Each knowing they'd meet on some other day." Robert Schwartz attempts to contextualize this unique, chivalric arrangement:

It is the battle with the Red Baron that I think expresses the primary adult philosophy. This battle is the battle between good and evil. Snoopy, of course, representing good and the Red Baron evil. However, the evil that the Red Baron represents is not the evil that really exists in the world today. The evil is a gentle evil and in the battle nobody is supposed to get hurt. In this conflict, many of the simple truths that so often get lost in our hectic

civilization come readily to the fore. In its simplicity, this conflict becomes almost a romantic adventure" (3).

Arguably, the "simple truths" that Schwartz seems to advocate are the preposterousness of chivalry in time of war and the cultural, moral, and political superiority of America. He is correct, nonetheless, that the relationship between Snoopy and the Red Baron is indeed simple: they need each other just as hero needs villain, to provide a platform to repeatedly prove his stamina and superiority. Schwartz goes on to note that "Snoopy's Christmas" basically exposes the futility of never-ending conflict" (3), apparently even when the plot must be sacrificed for the message. Were it not for the chivalric imperative that hero and villain must each survive, and thus the war (and stream of "Snoopy" songs) continue, Schwartz' notion of "the futility of never-ending conflict" would ring Wilsonian (Woodrow, not Brian) in this WWI context.

"Snoopy's Christmas" ends with the repeating Christmas carol-like chorus, with any war imagery now long gone. The line "Bringing peace to all the world" rings particularly disingenuous in this context, with peace never once appearing before (in any of the "Snoopy" songs) as an objective of either side.

The last "Snoopy" song I will address is the 1968 release, "Snoopy for President," which failed to chart. As the first verse explains, "The time had come to elect a President / And all the famous candidates thought they were heaven-sent / They screamed and raved and pounded their hands above their hearts / But soon the noble promises were hard to tell apart." Although the Guardsmen appear to take the political high ground in opposing candidates' "heaven-sent" dispositions (thereby negating outdated divine right claims to power) the implication of the song's theme overall is that great military leaders (a la Dwight Eisenhower) make good political leaders or that cultural icons (a la Ronald Reagan) make good political leaders. Such a view is

respectively either evidence of a right-wing political leaning or of a non-serious view of politics in general.

In the repeating chorus of the song, "Some wear the sign of the elephant / and some wear the sign of the mule / But we'll hold the sign of the beagle high / and love will shine right through," the reactionary bent of the group and its record label again rears its ugly head. While never a band to veer anywhere near the borders of the American political Establishment, much less disavow the system, here they are eschewing the two-party system for a popular third-party candidate. Even the liberal Democrat Bobby Kennedy cannot suffice, as the Guardsmen attempt to stay relevant and become "hip" in new counter-culture circles. Post-"Summer of Love" and after the Beatles' 1967 hit "All You Need Is Love," the Guardsmen sound particularly ridiculous singing lyrics like "love will shine right through." It is of interest to note that "the original version of this song featured a spoken introduction by the "Red Baron" mentioning the then-current presidential candidates for the 1968 election. Unfortunately, Bobby Kennedy was assassinated just days after the record had already been shipped to stores. Later pressings eliminated the spoken intro" (<http://www.lyricsmania.com>).

Just to be sure to cover all bases, WWI American imagery is trotted out again in verse four in the form of a reference to Snoopy's "Sopwith Camel plane," to once again imply a connection between Snoopy and American patriotism. The song ends with a notably contrived scenario, even by "Snoopy"-song standards: "Snoopy smiled his way into the hearts of everyone / But when the votes were counted up, they found he needed one / The winning vote for Snoopy came when a stranger raised his hand / Snoopy turned, the stranger spoke / "Mein friend, vee meet again!" Even with the normal rules of the universe thrown out long ago in the "Snoopy" context, the scene is still inexplicable: "The listener is only left to ask how a German

ex-flying ace who goaded 80 men to their deaths became an American citizen with a vote, much less the deciding vote to elect the world's first canine prez . . ." (Coyle 5).

Similarly to the spoken-word intro to "Snoopy for President," the Guardsmen did more recorded even more elaborate radio dramas to precede each of the three aforementioned songs. While the elaborate WWI sound effects and theatricality of the recordings suggest a carnivalesque approach in the Bakhtinian sense, Guardsmen writers Dick Holler and Phil Gernhard further explain:

The beginning of this cd presents a drama as fanciful as any child's dream world involving all three of the Snoopy records. It uses the medium of radio when radio didn't really exist to tell the story. We did this because there is a universality and timelessness represented by Snoopy's battle against the Red Baron. The battle against evil is yesterday, today, tomorrow, and forever (Schwartz 4).

In his chapter, "Historical Novel and Historical Drama," Lukács draws on Shakespeare's history plays to illustrate how drama can effectively portray history:

It would be quite wrong to view Shakespeare's adaptation of legendary material as a form of 'modernization' in the modern sense. There are important critics who consider that the Roman plays, written concurrently with the great tragedies, really portray English events and English characters and simply use the ancient world as costume . . . But in judging these plays what matters is precisely the generalizing nature of Shakespeare's characterization,

the extraordinary breadth and depth of his insight into the various currents forming the crisis of his period. And the classical world is a living social-moral force in this period; it is not felt as a distant past to which one has to reach back. Thus when Shakespeare portrays Brutus, say, he can see the stoic features of aristocratic republicanism in living evidence about him in his own time . . . Since Shakespeare was familiar with this type and his deepest social-human characteristics, he was able to adapt from Plutarch's history those features which the two periods had in common, historically and 'anthropologically'. Thus, he does not simply inject the spirit of his period into the ancient world, but rather brings to life those tragic events of antiquity which were based on historical-moral experiences inwardly similar to those of his own time, so that the generalized form of the drama reveals the features which the two ages hold objectively in common (155).

It is crucial to note Lukács' adept mention that the English Renaissance understood Classical values as an intrinsic part of its worldview, thus enabling him to maintain and contextualize Shakespeare's historical fictions within a historicist framework and without implication of any transcendent view of history. Lukács explanation of the function of drama in the presentation of history is not only effective for that purpose, but for understanding the function of historical fictionalization itself.

As addressed earlier in this essay, it is not altogether fair or accurate to lambaste the Royal Guardsmen for the opportunistic exploitations of their record industry handlers, although

the band clearly enjoyed their time in the limelight, whatever the artistic cost. In addition, they are certainly not the only music group to embrace patriotism and historicization as a means to commercial success, thereby seemingly revealing an even more penetrating, reactionary conservatism. Even the great Bruce Springsteen, generally regarded as the working man's rock star, has not always presented a completely genuine face to his audience. Despite his own admitted indifference at the time to political elections and his fraudulent claim of homosexuality to avoid the Vietnam War draft, he nonetheless emerged as an advocate for War and its veterans in the next decade with the release of his album *Born in the U.S.A.* Fred Goodman calls Springsteen's advocacy "carefully constructed" (347) and notes that "*Born in the U.S.A.* was peddled as a generous slice of Americana, a rock and roll state of the union" (345). Furthermore,

The song 'Born in the U.S.A.,' like much of what Springsteen was writing at the time, had its basis in someone else's work, in this case, Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic's memoir *Born on the Fourth of July* and a script by filmmaker Paul Schrader entitled *Born in the U.S.A.* His interest in the subject ran concurrent with a spate of popular films that captured the public's imagination by offering a veteran's-eye view of the Vietnam experience that included *Platoon*, *Apocalypse Now!*, *The Deerhunter*, and even *Rambo* (347).

Certainly no one, including this writer, would suggest that the Royal Guardsmen's musical legacy is anywhere near that of Bruce Springsteen, but in this particular instance, there are undeniable parallels. As Goodman continues, "*Born in the U.S.A.* wasn't undertaken to question authority or the supremacy of commercialism but to achieve it" (351). For all intents and

purposes, the Guardsmen were a creation of the burgeoning recording industry Establishment who handed them nothing short of history itself (in this case, WWI history), attached it to existing pop culture phenomena (Snoopy) and sent them off to make everyone a great deal of money for as long as the public could hold interest. With all due respect, they were "played" by the increasingly commercialized recording industry just like the fans spun their 45s. The Guardsmen were among the first of a wave of novelty groups (that continues to this day) commercially manipulated by a recording industry that only ten years prior deemed their new rock and roll music subversive and outright dangerous, but now appropriated it for their own dubious purposes. As Goodman quotes Bob Dylan in 1985, "There's an old saying, 'If you want to defeat your enemy, sing his song,' and that's pretty much still true. I think it's happened and nobody knows the difference . . . The great folk music and the great rock and roll, you might not hear it again. Like the horse and buggy" (351). To be sure, the reactionary, right-wing conservatism of the Royal Guardsmen's records served to promote American political/military interests and the Establishment that created them, and their historical fictionalization of WWI imagery, by only implied extension (carefully avoiding political controversy), suggests one's lack of support for U.S. efforts in Vietnam would be synonymous with a lack of patriotism.

The Zombies' "Butcher's Tale (Western Front 1914)" also employs the vehicle of historical fiction, as I have discussed, to openly discuss their opposition to the Vietnam War. Their depiction is a much more realistic portrayal of the actual, grim atrocities of the war, fueled by Chris White's familial connection to his song's protagonist. More graphic as well due to the direct confrontation of the enemy and the elements in the trench warfare context (as opposed to the distance of aerial combat), the anti-war and historically accurate poignancy of the Zombies'

song counters the romantic playfulness of the "Snoopy" songs. Each band manipulates and fictionalizes history to its own political satisfaction.

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Appendix A

"Butcher's Tale (Western Front 1914)"

Written by Chris White, recorded by The Zombies, 1968, on the Odessey and Oracle album

A butcher, yes, that was my trade
 But the king's shilling is now my fee
 A butcher I may as well have stayed
 For the slaughter that I see

And the preacher
 in his pulpit sermoned
 "Go and fight, do what is right"
 But he don't have to hear these guns
 And I'll bet he sleeps at night

And I
 And I can't stop shaking
 My hands won't stop shaking
 My arms won't stop shaking
 My mind won't stop shaking
 I want to go home
 Please let me go home
 Go home

And I have seen a friend of mine
 Hang on the wire
 Like some rag toy
 Then in the heat the flies come down
 And cover up the boy
 And the flies come down in
 Gommecourt, Thiepval,
 Mamets Wood and French Verdun
 If the preacher he could see those flies
 Wouldn't preach for the sound of guns

And I
 And I can't stop shaking
 My hands won't stop shaking
 My arms won't stop shaking
 My mind won't stop shaking
 I want to go home
 Please let me go home
 Go home

Appendix B

"Snoopy Vs. The Red Baron"

Written by Dick Holler, recorded by The Royal Guardsmen, 1967

After the turn of the century
 In the clear blue skies over Germany
 Came a roar and a thunder men had never heard
 Like the scream and the sound of a big war bird
 Up in the sky, a man in a plane
 Baron von Richthofen was his name
 Eighty men tried, and eighty men died
 Now they're buried together on the countryside

Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty or more
 The Bloody Red Baron was rollin' out the score
 Eighty men died tryin' to end that spree
 Of the Bloody Red Baron of Germany

In the nick of time, a hero arose
 A funny-looking dog with a big black nose
 He flew into the sky to seek revenge
 But the Baron shot him down - "Curses, foiled again!"

Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty or more
 The Bloody Red Baron was rollin' out the score
 Eighty men died tryin' to end that spree
 Of the Bloody Red Baron of Germany

Now, Snoopy had sworn that he'd get that man
 So he asked the Great Pumpkin for a new battle plan
 He challenged the German to a real dogfight
 While the Baron was laughing, he got him in his sight

That Bloody Red Baron was in a fix
 He'd tried everything, but he'd run out of tricks
 Snoopy fired once, and he fired twice
 And that Bloody Red Baron went spinning out of sight

Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty or more
 The Bloody Red Baron was rollin' out the score
 Eighty men died tryin' to end that spree
 Of the Bloody Red Baron of Germany

Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty or more
 The Bloody Red Baron was rollin' out the score

Eighty men died tryin' to end that spree
Of the Bloody Red Baron of Germany

Appendix C

"The Return Of The Red Baron"

Written by Phil Gernhard and Johnny McCullough, recorded by The Royal Guardsmen, 1967

You remember that baron flying high in the sky
 When Snoopy shot him down with a gleam in his eye
 But that baron had leaped from his blood-red plane
 Just before it burst into a ball of flame
 Snoopy circled back to check his kill

Saw the bloody red baron standing high on a hill
 Then he swooped down low
 Shouted "Curse you red baron!"
 The German shook his fist you could hear him swear "Ach der lieber!"
 Hey watch out little Snoopy
 You're really in a mess
 You thought you were through with the bloody red baron
 But it looks like he's not down yet
 Then a cry went up all over the land
 The bloody red baron would strike again
 But brave little Snoopy said "Never fear"
 As he headed for his plane all the people cheered (Yeeaaaahhhh!)
 Hey watch out little Snoopy
 You're really in a mess
 You thought you were through with the bloody red baron
 But it looks like he's not down yet
 Snoopy blazed a trail straight across the sea
 Searching in vain for his enemy
 Then he found that German trying to fix his plane
 A-sweatin' and a-cussin' about to go insane
 Take it:

Snoopy landed for a pistol duel
 The baron was worried
 Snoopy was cool
 He fired a shot and missed
 Started to run
 Before Snoopy had a chance to raise his gun
 Hey watch out red baron
 Snoopy is on your trail
 One of these days he's gonna make you pay
 And you'll go straight to-
 Well watch out red baron
 Snoopy is on your trail
 One of these days he's gonna make you pay

And you'll go straight to-
Well watch out red baron . . .

Appendix D

"Snoopy's Christmas"

Written by Dick Holler, recorded by The Royal Guardsmen, 1967

The news it came out in the First World War
The bloody Red Baron was flying once more
The Allied Command ignored all of its men
And called on Snoopy to do it again

Was the night before Christmas and forty below
When Snoopy went up in search of his foe
He spied the Red Baron and fiercely they fought
With ice on his wings, Snoopy knew he was caught

Christmas bells those Christmas bells
Ring out from the land
Asking peace of all the world
And good will to man

The Baron had Snoopy dead in his sights
He reached for the trigger to pull it up tight
Why he didn't shoot, well, we'll never know
Or was it the bells from the village below

Christmas bells those Christmas bells
Ringing through the land
Bringing peace to all the world
And good will to man

The Baron made Snoopy fly to the Rhine
And forced him to land behind the enemy lines
Snoopy was certain that this was the end
When the Baron cried out "Merry Christmas, mein friend!"

The Baron then offered a holiday toast
And Snoopy our hero saluted his host
And then with a roar they were both on their way
Each knowing they'd meet on some other day

Christmas bells those Christmas bells
Ringing through the land
Bringing peace to all the world
And good will to man

Christmas bells those Christmas bells

Ringin' through the land
Bringin' peace to all the world
And good will to man

Appendix E

"Snoopy For President"

Written by Phillip A. Gernhard, Dick Holler, and Arnold Lee Shapiro, recorded by The Royal Guardsmen, 1968

The time had come to elect a President
 And all the famous candidates thought they were heaven-sent
 They screamed and raved and pounded their hands above their
 hearts
 But soon the noble promises were hard to tell apart

Waiting at the pumpkin patch, a dog sincere and brave
 And everybody hoped that soon the country he would save
 The pumpkin said "The day has come for you to take a stand"
 "For love has left the people across our native land"

Some wear the sign of the elephant
 and some wear the sign of the mule
 But we'll hold the sign of the beagle high
 and love will shine right through

All the politicians, they swore he couldn't win
 But Snoopy only shook his head and flashed his famous grin
 He jumped into his faithful friend, the Sopwith Camel plane
 And bounced around the countryside from Washington to Maine

Some wear the sign of the elephant
 and some wear the sign of the mule
 But we'll hold the sign of the beagle high
 and love will shine right through

New York State was lookin' bad till Snoopy made a speech
 Soon Illinois and Tennessee were both within his reach
 He won the vote in Oregon but time was growin' thin
 And back at the convention hall, the votes were pourin' in

Snoopy smiled his way into the hearts of everyone
 But when the votes were counted up, they found he needed one
 The winning vote for Snoopy came when a stranger raised his hand
 Snoopy turned, the stranger spoke
 "Mein friend, vee meet again!"

Some wear the sign of the elephant and some wear the sign of the mule

Image Unavailable. Without the sixties, it's very difficult to envision the development of popular music, as we know it today. Thus enters the birth of Rock 'N Roll and the release on the table ~ "Absolutely the Best of the Sixties 2", featuring Barbarians, Chiffons, Dean/Jean, Dion, Gerry/Peacemakers, Bobby Goldsboro, Jarmels, Music Explosion, Mytics, Randy/Rainbows, Royal Guardsmen ~ featured in this collection are the roots of how deep the music goes and how widely and quickly it spread. The Royal Guardsmen made a comeback in December 2006 when they released "Snoopy vs. Osama", which was featured on The Dr. Demento Show . In the Spring of 2009, The Guardsmen's hit, "The Airplane Song" was selected as the theme song for Red Bull's Flugtag events and was aired in television commercials nationwide. A version. Continue Reading. According to classic. <http://bands.com>. A version of The Royal Guardsmen was still appearing across America in 2012. 1. Related Questions. More Answers Below. What was the best rock band of the 70s? Why does Led Zeppelin still remain as the biggest rock band that ever existed? The song was a hit and earned the group a gold record later in 1968 selling well over three million copies. Iron Butterfly had arrived. Browning uses tactile imagery of the chill of a storm, the sensation when a door is closed to it, and the fire's blaze coming from a furnace grate to describe the warmth of the cottage. Olfactory imagery. In this form of poetic imagery, the poet appeals to the reader's sense of smell by describing something the speaker of the poem inhales. In this retelling of the god Zeus's rape of the girl Leda from Greek mythology, the opening lines convey violence in the movement of the bird's beating wings while Leda's staggering provides the reader with a sense of her disorientation at the events. Organic imagery. In this form of poetic imagery, the poet communicates internal sensations such as fatigue, hunger, and thirst as well as internal emotions such as fear, love, and despair. Listen to music from The Royal Guardsmen like Snoopy vs. The Red Baron, Snoopy's Christmas & more. Find the latest tracks, albums, and images from The Royal Guardsmen. A new version of Last.fm is available, to keep everything running smoothly, please reload the site. The Royal Guardsmen. Play artist. More actions. The Royal Guardsmen. 945 likes · 33 talking about this. Hitmakers of the 1960's, The Royal Guardsmen had a string of smash chart toppers with "Snoopy vs...." I saw the Royal Guardsmen in concert sometime in the 1960s in August...a, GA. I am trying to figure out the venue and the date of the show and what other acts appeared with them. If anyone knows the answers to this I would appreciate if they could provide it. Thank you.