



UNIVERSIDADE D
COIMBRA



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**PATTI SMITH: HORSES, POETRY IN
MUSICAL FORM**

Dissertação de Mestrado em Estudos de Cultura, Literatura e Línguas Modernas, área de especialização de Estudos Ingleses e Americanos, orientada pelo Professor Doutor Stephen Daniel Wilson e apresentada ao departamento de Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra.

Setembro de 2018

FACULDADE DE LETRAS

PATTI SMITH *HORSES, POETRY IN MUSICAL FORM*

Ficha Técnica

Tipo de trabalho	Dissertação
Título	Patti Smith
Subtítulo	Horses, Poetry in Musical Form
Autor/a	Carlos Alexandre Martins Ferreira
Orientador/a(s)	Doutor Stephen Daniel Wilson
Júri	Presidente: Doutor Stephen Daniel Wilson Vogais: 1. Doutor Manuel José de Freitas Portela 2. Doutora Maria José Florentino Mendes Canelo
Identificação do Curso	2º Ciclo em Estudos de Cultura, Literatura e Línguas Modernas
Área científica	Literatura e Cultura Americana
Especialidade/Ramo	Estudos Ingleses e Americanos
Data da defesa	30-10-18
Classificação	16 valores



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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank first and foremost my advisor, Doctor Stephen Daniel Wilson. Thank you firstly for the inspiring classes that led me to choose this theme for the dissertation, and thank you for your guidance, support and shared knowledge. It was unquestionably a great experience to work with you.

I would also like to thank Doctor Maria José Canelo for being an amazing degree supervisor. And the Universidade de Coimbra as an institution, especially the department of Modern Culture, Language and Literature for receiving and instructing me.

I want to thank each and every professor who ever shared knowledge with me throughout my academic years both in Vila Real and in Coimbra.

Um agradecimento especial às amigadas fantásticas que tornaram sem dúvida memorável cada segundo que passei em Vila Real. Que os nossos caminhos se cruzem novamente.

“Paths that cross will cross again”

Um enorme agradecimento também aos amigos que sempre estiveram comigo em Penalva.

À minha mãe e irmãos, por sempre me terem apoiado e mostrarem que acreditam em mim.

À Dina, que esteve sempre ao meu lado e que foi desde que a conheci um estímulo intelectual.

“Oh we had such a braniac-amour”

Resumo

Esta dissertação, “Patti Smith, *Horses*: Poesia Sob a Forma de Música”, examina o trabalho da poetisa, cantora e compositora Nova-iorquina Patti Smith e particularmente o seu álbum de 1975 *Horses* (que se encontra analisado extensivamente no Capítulo 3 da presente dissertação). Esta análise explora as temáticas da morte, género e religião que são centrais no trabalho da artista e relaciona as mesmas com a escrita autobiográfica e os retratos da família, bem como das influências literárias e musicais de Patti Smith. Esta análise também oferece considerações críticas acerca da afirmação que Smith faz sobre a sua escrita “transcender raça, género, batismo, matemática e truques políticos”.

Smith tem sido vista como uma figura predominante na cultura Americana ao longo dos últimos 40 anos. Uma iconógrafa do rock que se tornou ela própria num ícone cultural. Patti Smith era já uma poetisa publicada antes de se tornar uma cantora de rock, o que contribui para a ligação que esta exerce entre a literatura e a música popular, bem como o que é por vezes designado de cultura de elite e cultura de massas (esta teve também ligações com o mundo artístico de Andy Warhol e de Robert Mapplethorpe).

No que diz respeito à estrutura, a presente dissertação encontra-se dividida em cinco capítulos. O primeiro capítulo é introdutório, fornece algumas informações biográficas acerca de Patti Smith e delinea a dissertação a partir desse ponto. Uma vez que Patti Smith era já uma poetisa com obras publicadas antes de enveredar pela sua carreira musical, o segundo capítulo foca-se no seu trabalho anterior a *Horses*. Segue-se então o capítulo principal, que analisa em detalhe cada canção no álbum e o capítulo seguinte tem como foco algumas canções presentes nos vários lançamentos posteriores a *Horses*.

Palavras-chave: Patti Smith, Horses, Rock n’ Roll, Poesia, Género, Religião, Morte.

Abstract

This dissertation, Patti Smith, “*Horses: Poetry in Musical Form*”, examines the work of the New York-based poet and singer/ songwriter Patti Smith, and particularly her 1975 album *Horses* (which is extensively and closely analyzed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation). That analysis explores the themes of death, gender and religion that are central to Smith’s work and relates them to Smith’s autobiographical writing and to her portraits of her family and her musical and literary influences. It also offers a critical account of Smith’s claim that her writing is “beyond race gender baptism mathematics politricks”. Smith is seen as a major figure in American culture during the last 40 years. An iconographer of rock who herself became a cultural icon. She was a published poet before she was a rock and roll singer and so she links literature and popular music, and also what is sometimes called high and mass culture (she had also connections with the New York art world of Andy Warhol and Robert Mapplethorpe).

Structurally this dissertation is divided in five chapters. The first chapter is introductory, it gives a few biographical information about Patti Smith and it delineates the dissertations outline from that point on. Because Patti Smith was already a published poet before she started her music career, the second chapter focuses in Smith's work before *Horses*. Then the main chapter analyzes in detail each song in *Horses* and the next chapter focuses on a few songs from the various studio releases Patti Smith had put out since *Horses*.

KEYWORDS: Patti Smith, Horses, Rock n’ Roll, Poetry, Gender, Religion, Death.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Patti Smith the American artist, singer, songwriter and poet was born on 30 December 1946 in Chicago, Illinois. Patricia Lee Smith was the eldest of four children who resulted from the marriage of Beverly Smith – a waitress who had previously been a Jazz singer¹ – and Grant Smith – a machinist. As a child Smith experienced gender confusion. She had primarily male friends, was described as a tomboy and felt that her physical appearance did not correspond to the images of femininity around her. Only in high school did she embrace her femininity when an art teacher showed her representations of women by great artists.

Patti Smith attended the Deptford High School, a racially integrated school where she recalls having developed her interest in music and performance. There she performed in various plays and musicals. Upon graduation from high school Patti Smith got a job at a toy factory, an experience that she does not see as particularly good but that ended up inspiring, years later, her first single *Piss Factory*.

Intending to become a high school art teacher Smith enrolled at the Glassboro State College but she did not fare well academically there; this was partially due to her insistence on discarding the traditional curriculum to focus on experimental and obscure artists, an attitude that was not appreciated by the school's administrators.

In 1967 she left the Glassboro State College and moved to New York City with the ambition of becoming a painter and took a job at a bookstore. In New York, Patti Smith

¹ Most biographers describe Beverly Smith as a Jazz singer while others such as Dave Thompson point out that she was “simply a woman who loved jazz and would sing it around the house.” (Thompson Dave, *Dancing Barefoot: The Patti Smith Story*. 2)

met a young artist named Robert Mapplethorpe, with whom she became involved in a romantic relationship. In November of that year Smith and Mapplethorpe found their first home, a cheap apartment that apparently had been rented by junkies before, as the walls were tainted with blood, and syringes were found inside the stove. Patti and Robert's relationship later came to an end when Mapplethorpe discovered his own homosexuality, but they remained close friends for years until Robert's passing in 1989. Upon Robert Mapplethorpe's death Patti started to write a memoir, at his request, about their time together but that work would only be published several years later in 2010 under the title *Just Kids*, ending up winning the National Book Award for Nonfiction of that year.

On 10 February 1971 Patti Smith gave her first public reading at St. Mark's Church, a public reading that featured Lenny Kaye playing guitar and that would prove to be an essential stepping stone in her literary and musical career.

In the following year Smith published her first poetry books; *Seventh Heaven, A Useless Death, Kodak* and *Early Morning Dream*. Apart from publishing various poetry books Patti Smith also worked as a musical journalist for magazines such as *Rolling Stone* and *Creem* during those years.

Briefly she was considered for the lead singer position of the band Blue Öyster Cult and although she ended up not getting the position, she contributed lyrics for several of the band's songs. In 1974, having already experimented setting her poetry to music, Patti Smith formed her band and released her first single "Hey Joe/ Piss Factory".

In 1975 Patti Smith released her debut album *Horses* which was a moderate commercial and great critical success. *New Music Express* placed the album in the first place on the list "20 Near-as-Damn-it Perfect Initial Efforts" in 1992. In 2002 *Horses* appeared on the list of 100 Greatest Punk Albums made by *Q* magazine and in the following year *Rolling Stone* ranked it 44 on their list of the 500 Greatest Albums of All

Time. In 2013 the album took the 10th place of the 100 Best Debut Albums of All Time, a list made, once again by *Rolling Stone* and the magazine described it as “a declaration of committed mutiny, a statement of faith in the transfigurative powers of rock & roll”². Furthermore, *Times Magazine* considered *Horses* one of their All-Time 100 Albums and it was preserved in the National Recording Registry for being “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant”³. In order to give credit to her band Smith changed the band’s bill to Patti Smith Group from the next year onwards.

New York City attracted various aspiring artists and Patti Smith was no exception, she had decided to move there carrying only her art supplies and no money. Moving there was a crucial step towards her yet-to-come artistic career. A few years after Smith and Mapplethorpe got their apartment they started struggling financially and couldn’t pay their rent so they turned to the only place where starving artists could live, the Chelsea Hotel.

Even before *Horses* was recorded Patti Smith’s musical career had already some exposure on the New York’s scene, she recalls meeting Richard Hell who was at the time still a member of the band Television. Television was the resident band of the CBGB’s music club, they did not however have a following unlike the still-at-the-time drummerless Patti Smith Group so the two bands decided to combine their strengths resulting in a two months of residency for both bands at the club that would become the cradle of the Punk scene. Patti Smith was the first group to get the CBGB’s packed and that was crucial for the band as it resulted in critical attention, meeting Bob Dylan and a deal with the record label Artista.

² Rolling Stone, “100 Best Debut Albums of All Time, From the Beatles to Nas and beyond” (*Rolling Stone* 22 March 2013). 2 June 2018.

³ Library of Congress, “The Sounds of Fighting Men, Howlin' Wolf and Comedy Icon Among 25 Named to the National Recording Registry” (*Library of Congress* 23 June 2010). 2 June 2018.

In 1980 Patti Smith married Fred “Sonic” Smith, guitarist of the Detroit City band MC5, with whom she had two children.

Through most of the 80s and until 1995 she was mostly absent from the music scene, devoting herself to domestic life, however with a succession of deaths affecting people close to her – including her brother and her husband - Patti Smith decided to return to her active music career and toured with Bob Dylan in 1995.

From then on Patti Smith regularly released both music and literary works and was involved in various important and controversial events such as playing for the Pope in the Vatican, sharing the stage with the Dalai Lama and performing at Bob Dylan’s Nobel Award Ceremony.

From the beginning, spirituality and religion were recurrent factors in Patti Smith’s life and in her work. From a very young age Patti Smith was exposed to religious views of life. As the daughter of a Jehovah’s Witness, young Patti had a strong Bible education, however as a teenager she felt that organized religion was too confining and confesses that at a certain point in her youth she developed a great interest for Tibetan Buddhism.

At around the age of twenty Smith wrote a poem entitled “Oath”. The poem starts with the famous lines “Jesus died for somebody’s sins but not mine” that was years later used in the cover version of the Them song “Gloria” that opens Patti Smith’s debut album *Horses*.

With complex spiritual and religious views Patti Smith does not avoid those matters in her art, apart from those being recurrent themes among her lyrics and poems, she created controversy by accepting the invitation made by Pope Francis and playing a concert in the Vatican in 2014. The event gave rise to criticism from her fans to which she replied in an interview with the *Guardian* saying:

It's a Christmas concert for the people, and it's being televised. I like Pope Francis and I'm happy to sing for him. Anyone who would confine me to a line from 20 years ago is a fool!

I had a strong religious upbringing, and the first word on my first LP is Jesus. I did a lot of thinking. I'm not against Jesus, but I was 20 and I wanted to make my own mistakes and I didn't want anyone dying for me. I stand behind that 20-year-old girl, but I have evolved. I'll sing to my enemy! I don't like being pinned down and I'll do what the fuck I want, especially at my age...⁴

This dissertation – focusing on the album *Horses* – traces the evolution of that 20 years old poet who dealt with notions of love and death, religion and spiritualism, freedom and activism and grew up to be Patti Smith, the great artist with a career that is almost half a century long and that keeps inspiring generations of artists all around the globe.

Horses is an eight song long album that infuses music with poetry and the debut is essential for establishing what the Patti Smith Group would come to be as a band and what Patti Smith herself would come to be as a poet.

This dissertation will take a brief look at the poetry that Smith published before releasing the iconic debut album and at a few songs she released on the subsequent albums but the main focus will be on *Horses*, analyzing each song, mainly taking in account the lyricism (using her *Collected Lyrics* [2016] book as a source for all the lyrics) but not disregarding the musicality.

As it will be seen throughout this dissertation, the debut album does already have themes and styles that would become typical and characteristic of the subsequent works of the artist. Some songs have an autobiographic background, religious and spiritual

⁴ Vivien Goldman, "Patti Smith on singing at the Vatican: 'Anyone who would confine me to an old line is a fool'" (*The Guardian* 18 Nov. 2014). 2 June 2018.

symbols are heavily present, themes such as love and death and the sublimation of her idols are also strongly present and were to remain present in her subsequent work.

One characteristic that is recurrently present in Patti Smith's writing is the figure of strong feminine characters such as Eve, Jeanne d'Arc, Amelia Earhart and even fictional figures that Smith herself constructed such as the character in the song "Rock n' Roll Nigger". Although it is unquestionable that Patti Smith's work and actions had an important role in Feminism she discards that label, as she does with most labels as a matter of fact, she claims that she takes a stance for women's rights because she believes in human rights. In an *Independent* interview with Ella Alexander, Patti Smith stated "Right now I don't want to see any injustice," she continued; "I have a son and a daughter, people always talk to me about feminism and women's rights, but I have a son too - I believe in human rights."⁵

The complexity of the feminist matter in Patti Smith is related to how complex the question of gender is for her. As an artist she places herself and her work as being beyond gender but gender doubts are not merely an artistic matter but something that is related to her past and the trouble she had identifying herself as a woman. Perhaps the best way to try to understand the subject of Patti Smith's approach to gender, femininity and feminism is through her work.

On the topic of Smith's evoking and paying tribute to her idols, as Simon Reynolds points out on "Even as a child, I felt like an alien" – an interview with Patti Smith published in *The Observer* in 2005 – Smith became an icon through "close study of her heroes",⁶ however it is important to note that she had throughout the years a close relationship with some of those great artists. The most obvious example of that was the

⁵ Ella Alexander, "Patti Smith, self-confessed Rihanna fan, on the sexualisation of women in music: 'No one should allow themselves to be exploited'" (*Independent* 2 Apr. 2014). 21 June 2018.

⁶ Simon Reynolds, "Even as a child, I felt like an alien" (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

romantic involvement she had with Robert Mapplethorpe, who was at the time – just like her – an icon in development, however she did not only get involved with young artists on the rise but also with artists of great importance and influence at the time, such as Samuel Wagstaff who became an artistic mentor to both Smith and Mapplethorpe. Wagstaff would even be honored on “Paths That Cross”, a song Patti Smith recorded on *Dream of Life* in 1988, one year after his passing. This shows that the influence that these artists had on Smith became part of her creative process and artistic productions in a way that goes beyond the conventional influence that artists exert on each other. Another example of this is William Burroughs who not only influenced Patti’s writing as an extremely important author but was also a close friend of hers. Burroughs not only became part of her writing through the conventional process of influence but also on a deeper level, he became part of the poem “ps/alm 23 revised” in which he is the central figure.

As Simon Reynolds points out, Patti Smith “started out as an iconographer” and, despite becoming an icon herself she continued studying and honoring her heroes throughout her work.⁷ Smith’s life has been haunted by the death of those surrounding her, however, through her work she has been able to immortalize their memories. Perhaps Smith is more of an iconographer than she has ever been. Throughout the years she was able to honor the memories of several great artists, such as Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, Jerry Garcia, Kurt Cobain, Amy Winehouse, and many others.

When performing the song “Elegie” live Smith usually evokes those who passed away but left through their art a legacy and she evokes them as more than deceased icons,

⁷ Simon Reynolds, “Even as a child, I felt like an alien” (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

they are evoked as friends as the final lines of the song show: “But I think it’s sad, it’s much too bad/ That all our friends can’t be with us today”.⁸

As an avid reader from a young age, Patti Smith drew tremendous literary influence from various authors. This influence can be perceived throughout her work, stylistically it is common to find in Smith’s work a form of free poetry, a characteristic that was implemented in the American literary tradition by Walt Whitman, her literary influences were not, however, restricted to American poets. Perhaps Patti Smith’s major literary influence is the French poet Arthur Rimbaud, a figure that did not only had impact on the writing style that Smith developed over the years, through the use of symbolism for instance, but who is moreover a recurrent figure in her works, evoked in poems from her early works onwards and still frequently part of her lyrics even in her most recent musical works. Another of her unquestionable literary influences is William Blake, Smith even wrote an introduction for an edition of Blake’s *Poems* in 2007. Patti Smith’s literary influences do not have any boundaries and she has cited as influences authors from all over the world, from the Russian writer Mikhail Bulgákov – whose novel *The Master and Margarita* influenced her song “Banga” from her most recent album (also called *Banga*) – to the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa.

Stylistically Patti Smith’s poetry developed a form of free poetry that usually did not rely on the use of rhyme or regular metrics without, however, abdicating rhythm. In her musical works rhyme and metre are used but it is common to infuse spoken-word parts in the form free poetry on the more traditional lyricism. In both her written and sung poetry the use of vulgar language is not unusual, however the opposite is also usual. The use of symbols is also extremely frequent, and is an obvious trace of the influence that symbolist artists such as Arthur Rimbaud have exerted on her.

⁸ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics, 1970 – 2015* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 53. Hereafter cited as *Collected Lyrics*.

Smith's literary idols do furthermore get part of her work as it is not uncommon for Patti to use some form of referential intertextuality. For example, "death by water" is the title of one of Patti Smith's early poems (published in her first poetry book *Seventh Heaven*) and it is also the title of the fourth section of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land". Other examples can be found throughout the artist's works, from her debut album *Horses* – where one case is the reference to Peter Reich's *A Book of Dreams* in "Birdland" – to the latest "*Banga*" – where (as I have already pointed out) the song of the same name is based on Mikhail Bulgákov's *The Master and Margarita* in which Banga is the name of Pilatus's loyal dog.

Because death is a usual theme in poetry Patti's obsession with poetry from a very young age may perhaps be one of the reasons why that theme is also strongly present in her work, furthermore, as Dave Thompson suggests in his book *Dancing Barefoot... The Patti Smith Story* [2011], perhaps that may be related to the fact that many of the great poets died tragic and romantic deaths at young age as was the case of Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, John Keats, Federico García Lorca and Arthur Rimbaud. As Thompson points out "only in death, she believed, could true love be revealed."⁹

Later in life Smith experienced the passing of many of those who were close to her and that is also transposed to her writing, but the co-relation between love and death that the young Patti Smith established did not fade away. Her poetry does not depress over death or the deceased but rather pays homage to them through the expression of love.

Patti Smith was a rock n' roller even before the emergence of her musical career. The rock n' roll attitude was already present in her early poetic works and prevailed as her musical career built up, that was perhaps the reason behind the term "Godmother of Punk" being attributed to Smith by the critics and fans. It is safe to say that such

⁹ Dave Thompson, *Dancing Barefoot... The Patti Smith Story* (Chicago, Illinois: Chicago Review Press, 2011) 19.

classification does not accurately represent her songs in terms of musical composition. The thing that Patti Smith may perhaps share with the punks is the passing on of messages of social awareness, songs like “Citizen Ship” and “People Have the Power” are obvious examples of that.

The Ramones released their self-titled debut album only five months after the release of *Horses*, and if a comparison must be made between both albums one could find that they are extreme opposites. Songs such as “Birdland” and “Land” are not similar at all to the “Ramones style two-chords/ two-minutes” songs, as Simon Reynolds puts it.¹⁰ The *Observer* journalist also accurately points out that in fact the song that is the most “punk-sounding” in *Horses* is “Gloria” which is in fact a cover version. Moreover, she did not share the ideologies that were common to many of British punk rockers that emerged shortly after her, such as The Sex Pistols. One example of that is the notion of nihilism behind the British punk songs that is not present in Smith’s work as she follows more of a American rock n’ roll tradition from the sixties, she even removed the sentence “hope I die before I get old” from her cover version of the song “My Generation” originally recorded by the British band The Who. Another clear dissimilarity between Patti Smith and the Punks that followed is that they were intentionally trying to differentiate themselves from the more traditional rock n’ roll bands through the abdication of certain mannerisms. This may sometimes, for example in the case of The Sex Pistols, result in unintentional poetic lyricism. Patti Smith’s work is, on the contrary, deliberately poetic even though to some degree she wanted to be a simple rock n’ roll star, as Robert Crumb states in his review of *Horses*: “To some degree, Patti Smith simply wants to be a three-chord rock n roll monster wearing wrap-around shades. But

¹⁰ Simon Reynolds, “Even as a child, I felt like an alien” (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

she knows well enough that her words and ideas are bound to betray her. She's much more than that.¹¹”

Chapter II: Before *Horses*

Patti Smith's career did not start with the recording and release of *Horses*. Like many of her heroes – like Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison – Patti was more than a songwriter, however unlike Jim Morrison, for instance, she had already published five¹² poetry books before releasing her debut album. It is also important to note that the first four books – *Seventh Heaven*, *A Useless Death*, *Kodak* and *Early Morning Dream* – were all published in 1972¹³ and the fifth – *Witt* – in 1973, all the other publications came after the release of *Horses*. It is also important to note that the famous poetry reading at St. Mark's Church preceded all of the abovementioned publications. Some poems were declaimed at that reading in 1971 and then were featured in the poetry books, which is the case of “death by water” that became part of *Seventh Heaven*.

Even the publications and the poetry reading mentioned in the previous paragraph are not where the literary work of Patti Smith started. As Philip Shaw notes:

Smith met Sam Sheppard in the fall of 1970 at the Village Gate, where he was playing drums with a rock band called the Holy Modal Rounders. Although only twenty-

¹¹ Robert Crumb, “Patti Smith, Horses” (*Sputnik Music* 26 Nov. 2005). 25 June 2018.

¹² Most references only mention four, forgetting *Kodak* due to its rarity (the only edition printed just 100 copies of the book, all of them signed by the author making a copy of *Kodak* very valuable today)

¹³ According to Oceanstar, there is some confusion regarding the date of *A Useless Death* with some sources dating it to 1977.

six, he had written twenty plays and been awarded six Obie Awards by the Village Voice. Like Mapplethorpe and Carroll, Shepard cut a handsome figure, tall, blue-eyed, and physically expressive: the very image of the cowboy archetype that had become the dominant subject of his writing.¹⁴

In the collaboration with Sheppard – with whom Smith developed a romantic relationship – “Cowboy Mouth” was born; a play that the couple had written and performed and that, as Shaw points out, takes its title from a line in Bob Dylan’s song “Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands”. In regard to the intentions that the artist had for the play Shaw quotes Shepard saying the following:

People want a street angel. ... Somebody to get off on when they can’t get off on themselves. I think that’s what Mick Jagger is trying to do ... what Bob Dylan seemed to be for a while. A sort of god in our image, you know? ... in the old days people had Jesus and those guys to embrace ... they created a god with all their belief energies ... and when they didn’t dig themselves, they could lose themselves in the Lord. But it’s too hard now. We’re earthy people, and the old saints just don’t make it, and God is just too far away. He don’t represent our pain no more. ... Any great motherfucker rock and roll song can raise me higher than all of Revelations. We created rock and roll from our own image, it’s our child...¹⁵

This very early work of Patti Smith does show traits that are fundamental to an understanding of her later. As Symon Reynolds writes in “Even as a child, I felt like an alien”: “In some ways, the closest parallel for Patti Smith is David Bowie. Both emerged

¹⁴ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 45.

¹⁵ *Id.* 46.

in the early Seventies, the point at which rock had built up enough history for it to be possible for artists to play games with the genre's own myths and archetypes."¹⁶

The presence of rock n' roll in Smith's writing is evident in "Cowboy Mouth", as it is evident in her early poetry and is unquestionably present in her own rock n' roll work; Dylan, Morrison and Hendrix are recurrent, Brian Jones is present in her early work and in the later works many others, for instance Kurt Cobain and Amy Winehouse, are included.

When Patti discovered rock n' roll she was still young, and so was the genre itself but the impact that it had on her is undeniable, it stuck on her for the rest of her life and ended up molding her career as an artist. In "To Find a Voice", the preface-like text in her *Collected Lyrics* Smith writes: "But the song that produced my first visceral reaction was sung by Little Richard"¹⁷. The hit was obviously "Tutti Frutti". In *Dancing Barefoot... The Patti Smith Story* [2011], David Thompson – describing it as a "great turning point" – tells the story of that moment:

A neighbor boy asked Patti back to his house to hear a new record, Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti." The way Patti remembered the story, her mouth fell open and she was instantly enthralled. She would also remember being six years old at the time, sitting in her Newell Street clubhouse when the boy stopped by with his invitation. In fact, she would have been at least nine years old and living in New Jersey when that record became a hit, but her point was clear: she discovered rock 'n' roll when it was still young, and she never let go of it.¹⁸

¹⁶ Simon Reynolds, "Even as a child, I felt like an alien" (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

¹⁷ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 2.

¹⁸ Dave Thompson, *Dancing Barefoot... The Patti Smith Story* (Chicago, Illinois: Chicago Review Press, 2011) 7.

From that event on rock n' roll became prominent in Patti Smith's life and found its way to her artistic works. A quick glimpse at her first poetry book *Seventh Heaven* is enough to find several references to rock n' roll. The obvious example is the poem "dog dream" that starts with the lines "have you seen/ dylan's dog". The poem written as a mix of eroticism and comedy is proof of what Smith herself would say years later about Dylan and the influence he had on her: "For me it was like visceral, physical, I was a teenage girl. I mean, he voiced a lot of things... you know, politically, poetically, but he had a lot of magnetism. [...] A sexual energy, more in a sort of fantasy term, you know. He was like my imaginary boyfriend for a while."¹⁹

Brian Jones and Jim Morrison are other rock n' roll figures that Smith evokes in her early work, both are present in the poem "death by water" (in *Seventh Heaven*). The poem takes its title from a section of T. S Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

In *Patti Smith: Horses* by Philip Shaw, the author mentions that Smith once described a dream she had about her "riding with Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, and Anita Pallenberg in a Victorian carriage"²⁰. In the dream she wander where is Brian Jones, and, according to Smith's report, "the dream recurred the following night [...] climaxing with a vision of Jones's head in the toilet"²¹. Shaw also notes that "Matters intensified when Smith fell into a fever after accidentally spilling boiling water on her leg. Under the influence of belladonna and morphine, prescribed by the local doctor to numb the pain, she began to hallucinate"²². The hallucination is related to Eliot's poem as in there Smith and Jones slip into ("enter") a whirlpool. In the hallucination Brian is saying "throw up" and "spit it out" which is related to Brian Jones' death because as Shaw puts it: "On

¹⁹ "Patti Smith on Bob Dylan and DON'T LOOK BACK" sound film strip (criterioncollection 2015). 13 September 2018.

²⁰ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 49.

²¹ *Id* 49.

²² *Id* 49.

awakening Smith felt certain that something terrible had happened to Jones. The next day, she reportedly saw a newspaper bearing the headline ‘Brian Jones Mort’. Jones had drowned in his swimming pool, under mysterious circumstances, on July 3.”²³

As Shaw further explains about the reasoning behind the title, “in calling her poem ‘death by water’ she may be forging a link between Jones’s death, the figure of Phlebas in Eliot’s poem, and, by extension, the sacrifice of Christ.” Further explaining this connection the author adds:

According to this reading, what the first line recalls is the “promise” that Christ’s sacrifice would put an end to all sacrifice. With Jones’s death this promise appears to have been betrayed. But is Smith serious in making this comparison? One answer is yes, as the association between premature rock ‘n’ roll death and the death of Christ is sustained in a section of the poem devoted to the death of Jim Morrison.²⁴

To understand the explanation provided above one must read the first stanza of Patti’s poem where she mentions that “promise” that Shaw talks about; “How long ago was man promised?/ never again. no not again./ no death by water.”²⁵

Patti Smith’s extensive use of rhetorical questions about water and death starts in this first stanza, is announced in the second, as the narrator mentions the “many questions” and further developed in the third stanza of the poem. Quoted below are the second and third stanza of “death by water”:

yet how many questions arise like yeast.

like the perfect dead:

²³ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 49.

²⁴ *Id.* 51.

²⁵ Patti Smith, *Early Work, 1970 – 1979* (London: Plexus Publishing Limited, 1994) 27. Hereafter cited as *Early Work*.

was the red sea really?
does the man rule the river?
did she/he drown?
was it natural causes?
was it sorrow?²⁶

Other literary traits that the quoted stanzas demonstrate are: an evident absence of uppercase letters, even in the title the words are not capitalized, likewise the beginning of each line is not capitalized, and the same goes to words that follow full-stop marks like in the line “never again. no not again”. This line is an example of the unconventional use of punctuation in Patti’s writing, in “death by water” from the fourth stanza onwards this trait is even more evident as she uses full stop marks to separate virtually every phrase as one can see in the fourth stanza:

How many tears on your pillow.
crocodile or real. water shed.
brian jones drowned. face down.
in a child’s pool of water. youth fountain.²⁷

Moreover, the quoted stanza introduces the figure of Brian Jones – non-capitalized in the poem, as mentioned, for coherent stylistic reasons and not as any form of disrespect. The drowning of the late Rolling Stones guitarist is the focal point of the poem and appears to elevate rock n’ roll to the level of religion by linking Jones to the notion of a savior, a sacrifice, a martyr that allows rock n’ roll to be reborn and Jim Morrison to be a prophet and a Christ figure. The final line of the stanza makes allusion to Jones

²⁶ Patti Smith, *Early Work* (London: Plexus Publishing Limited, 1994) 27.

²⁷ *Id.* 27.

deathbed as a “youth fountain” an image that is connected to life, or new life. Cirlot links the fountain to life in his dictionary entrance for fountain as seen below: “Hence it is said that water gushing forth is a symbol of the life force of Man and of all things. For this reason, artistic iconography very frequently uses the motif of the mystic fount; it is also to be found in Mithraism— a Pannonian votive inscription reads: *fonti perenni*.”²⁸

Further exploring the figure of the “youth fountain” Shaw notes that “Brian Jones is recognizable as a redeemer figure, one who dies significantly in a uterinelike “child’s pool of water,” so that Smith may live, untrammelled by maternal guilt.”²⁹ The author then concludes that by “drinking from Jones’s ‘youth fountain,’ the devotee is restored not only emotionally but also creatively”.³⁰

As mentioned before, Jim Morrison is depicted as a prophet and compared to Christ as the following lines from the final stanza make explicit:

Jim Morrison. our leather lamb. he feared
the bathroom. he warned us. hyacinth house.
how did he know. how did christ know. no
doubt about it. a marked man is always
the first to know. [...] ³¹

Patti Smith’s glorification of her rock n’ roll heroes in this poem is perhaps an affront, or “an artful response” as Shaw puts it, to the cultural conservatism of Eliot from whom she borrows the title of the poem. Philip Shaw explains that “to the grand mandarin of modernism, the gaudy figures of Jones and Morrison would most likely

²⁸ Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Routledge, 1990) 113.

²⁹ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 52.

³⁰ *Id* 52.

³¹ Patti Smith, *Early Work* (London: Plexus Publishing Limited, 1994) 27.

represent the false idols of a fallen world, the very wasteland that the poem seeks to restore”.³²

However like Eliot in *The Waste Land*, Smith does defy the stylistic norms of poetry, as she avoids rhyme and uses an unconventional punctuation, as stated before.

Also present in *Seventh Heaven* is the poem “a fire of unknown origin” that perhaps can be perceived as opposing but parallel to “death by water” in the style of the parallels that William Blake established in “Songs of Experience and of Innocence”. One aspect that corroborates that notion of parallelism is the fact that “a fire of unknown origin” is the fifth poem in the volume whilst its counterpart is the fifth poem when counting from the end. It is known that Smith is an avid Blake reader, and has been from a young age, and (as has already been mentioned) even wrote the introduction to an Edition Blake’s Poems. Both poems revolve around death and the parallelism is evident even from the titles; fire and water, the opposing elements each associated with a poem.

In Blake “experience” and “innocence” are related to paradise and to the fall which in turn relates to Smith’s attempt at commuting the material and the divine in *Seventh Heaven*. In the book Smith addresses both the material and the divine, however she merges both never dealing with them separately, as if humanizing, or giving a body to the divine. In that regard Philip Shaw notes that there is a “tension in Smith’s work between the material and the divine”³³ and points out the following:

Read as a sequence, *Seventh Heaven* takes the reader on a journey from abjection to transcendence, beginning with the transgression of Eve, passing through the sufferings and triumphs of a host of female saints (“sally,” “Jeanne d’arc,” “Edie Sedgewick,” “Marianne

³² Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 51.

³³ *Id* 61.

Faithfull,” “judith,” “marilyn miller,” “mary jane,” “amelia earhart,” “Linda”) and ending with the deliverance of the volume’s central narrative persona (“longing”).³⁴

It is irrefutably necessary to analyze the poem that gives its title to the book. “seventh heaven” is the first poem in the book with the same name and its complexity is an early demonstration of Patti Smith’s literary capacities. The premise of the poem is the story of the original sin. The biblical references start from the beginning, in the first line the author starts with an evocation; “Oh Raphael. Guardian angel.” This structure is kept up throughout the poem, Smith introduces the biblical characters and then defines them. Besides “Raphael. Guarding angel” she introduces “Mary Magdalene whore of Christ”, “Cain. The first inspired man”, “Satan as some stud” and the central figure, Eve introduced as follows: “Eve’s was the crime of curiosity”.³⁵

The story of the original sin is narrated as a hymn or adoration to the figure of Eve, attributing to this character merit for her carnal desires and the transgression that results, according to the Bible story, in the fall of mankind. The narration is extremely sexualized, a common trait of Smith’s writing, especially in her early work. It is important to note that Patti had grown up struggling with her physical appearance and that resulted in the development of a very individual sense of femininity. Shaw mentions that “she regarded herself as a chameleonic, capable of inhabiting multiple versions of the feminine: from the cool, sardonic ‘bitch’ to the dutiful, submissive housewife.”³⁶

Philip Shaw also recalls Smith explaining her process of writing, according to the author she compared her writing to Jackson Pollock’s painting technique, calling it “a very physical process” and further explaining: “I learned this from Genet, who wrote in prison so he could turn himself on and masturbate—I’d sit at the typewriter and type until

³⁴ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 49.

³⁵ Patti Smith, *Early Work* (London: Plexus Publishing Limited, 1994) 18.

³⁶ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 49.

I felt sexy, then I'd go and masturbate to get high, and then I'd come back in that higher place and write some more".³⁷

The vivid sexual descriptions are constructed with the use of vulgar language that contrasts with the biblical aspect of the song. This is shown in the following lines:

Eve's was the crime of curiosity. As the saying
goes: it killed the pussy. One bad apple spoiled
the whole shot. But be sure it was no apple.
An apple looks like an ass. It's a fag's fruit.³⁸

The use of crude language in the excerpt above does not in any way mean that the writing is basic or unsophisticated. The apple analogy in the quotation goes beyond the affirmation "an apple looks like an ass", it is clearly linked to forbidden fruit in the biblical version of the story.

Symbolism is significantly and extensively present in "seventh heaven", from the already mentioned case of the apple and the "tree of knowledge" that is referenced near the end of the poem to the seven references to the number seven; the title "seventh heaven" is followed by the remaining six consecutive uses of the number in the first part of the poem:

Oh Raphael. Guardian angel. In love and crime
all things move in sevens. seven compartments
in the heart. the seven elaborate temptations.
seven devils cast from Mary Magdalene whore
of Christ. the seven marvelous voyages of Sinbad.
sin/bad. And the number seven branded forever

³⁷ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 47.

³⁸ Patti Smith, *Early Work* (London: Plexus Publishing Limited, 1994) 18.

on the forehead of Cain. The first inspired man.
The father of desire and murder. But his was not
the first ecstasy. Consider his mother.³⁹

As the line above show this poem is yet another example of the unconventional style that Patti uses in her writing, from the previously mentioned use of vulgar terms, the wordplay in “sin/bad”, the absence of rhyme and metric and the evidently unusual use of punctuation.

Chronologically closer to *Horses* it is important to mention *Piss Factory*. In June, 1974, Patti Smith, Lenny Kaye and Richard Sohl recorded a version of “Hey Joe” and “Piss Factory”, the tracks would be side A and B of the seven-inch single that they released independently on their own Mer label.

“Piss Factory” is mostly spoken word, Patti read the poem that she had already written over the improvised melodies of Kaye and Sohl. The song does not have a clear distinction between verses and does not have a chorus, thus Shaw notes that it “is perhaps best described as a musically enhanced poem, rather than as a fully formed song.”⁴⁰

The inspiration for the poem is obvious: the job Smith took at a factory that was mentioned earlier in this dissertation. The message is of liberation, it narrates the female character’s ability to be set free from the undesirable environment surrounding her. From the first section of the poem it becomes evident that the protagonist is the only woman that is about to revolt and the criticism she makes towards the remaining workers is evident in the lines that follow:

Sixteen and time to pay off I got this job in a piss factory inspecting
pipe Forty hours thirty-six dollars a week but it's a paycheck, jack. It's

³⁹ Patti Smith, *Early Work* (London: Plexus Publishing Limited, 1994) 18.

⁴⁰ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 59.

so hot in here hot like Sahara You could faint in the heat but these
bitches are just too lame to understand too goddamned grateful to get
this job to know they're getting screwed up the ass.⁴¹

Philip Shaw creates a parallel between “Piss Factory” and the rags to riches story pointing out that “this is, of course, everywoman’s dream, and in many ways “Piss Factory” may be read as a sophisticated variant of the rags and riches story; only, in this case, the female heroine is rescued , not by Prince Charming, but solely by herself.”⁴²

⁴¹ Patti Smith, *Early Work* (London: Plexus Publishing Limited, 1994) 18

⁴² Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 59

Chapter III: *Horses*

Released by Artista Records on December 13, 1975, *Horses* was the debut album of what would come to be known as the Patti Smith Group. The group developed from a project that Smith had started a few years earlier, in 1971, with her friend the music critic Lenny Kaye. Initially intended as “Rock n’ Rimbaud” the project consisted of Patti Smith’s poetry readings incorporating electric guitar played by Kaye. The first poetry reading featuring the duo was at St. Mark’s Church in the East Village, Smith recalls dedicating the evening to crime and reading the poem “Oath” that began with the infamous lines “Jesus died for somebody’s sins but not mine”,⁴³ as Sharon DeLano points out in her article “The Torch Singer”. Patti Smith and Lenny Kaye then proceeded to perform a couple of songs, one of them being a “Rimbaudian-type poem about a young fella who was revolting against his cruel and possessive mother by crashing in a stock car. The electric guitar interpreted the crash” recollected Smith in the same article. The event became fairly well-known, however Smith credits its recognition to the fact that it was attended by “the Warhol people” Lou Reed, Mapplethorpe’s friends “from the fashion world” and Sam Shepard.⁴⁴

As the project between Patti Smith and Lenny Kaye developed they felt the need to incorporate a piano player. Richard Sohl took the place. Apart from the Patti Smith Group he would later work with Iggy Pop, Nina Hagen and Elliott Murphy among others. The next member to be recruited was Ivan Kral, a Czech-born American singer, composer, guitar and bass player and aspiring filmmaker. He had brought a camera to the United

⁴³ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 33.

⁴⁴ Sharon DeLano, “The Torch Singer” (*New Yorker* 11 Mar. 2002). 17 May 2018.

States because as a refugee from Czechoslovakia he feared he would be deported back to his country where rock n' roll was forbidden so he felt the need to record a visual diary of his days in the USA consisting of shows and the band rehearsals he attended. Apart from Patti Smith he had worked over the years with many important rock n' roll artists, even writing songs for artists such as U2, Pearl Jam, Iggy Pop, David Bowie and Blondie and had won a Grammy Award.

The last addition to Patti Smith's band was Jay Dee Daugherty, an American drummer and song writer who was to play on all of Patti Smith's albums. Daugherty worked with Tom Verlaine, Fred Smith, Billy Idol, Joey Ramone and many others after the disbanding of the Patti Smith Group in 1979 but rejoined Patti on her re-emergence in 1995 and continues to perform with her up to the present date.

Patti Smith on vocals, Lenny Kaye on the lead guitar, Richard Sohl on the piano, Ivan Kral on the bass guitar and Jay Dee Daugherty on the drums recorded *Horses* at the Electric Lady Studios in New York, the studio that was founded by Jimi Hendrix in 1970. The production of the album was led by John Cale, founding member of the Velvet Underground, however Patti Smith claims to have chosen him "not so much for the Velvet Underground connection as for the raw sound of his seventies solo albums such as *Fear* she told the *Observer*".⁴⁵ Smith and Cale's divergent work ethics resulted in several arguments but years later they would collaborate with each other again and he is credited on the live cover version of The Who's song "My Generation" that appears on the remastered reissue of *Horses*. The album also had the collaboration of additional two guitarists: "Break It Up" had the special participation of Tom Verlaine from the band Television and on "Elegie" Allen Lanier from Blue Oyster Cult takes the guitar duties.

⁴⁵ Simon Reynolds, "Even as a child, I felt like an alien" (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

The album cover is a black and white photograph that Patti's longtime companion Robert Mapplethorpe took using natural light. The Patti Smith in the photograph is an androgynous figure dressed in a plain white shirt with an untied black ribbon around the collar. Over the left shoulder Smith has a black jacket with a small, almost imperceptible detail, a pin of a horse. Her pose is a classy homage to Frank Sinatra, her look is arrogant, and her hair is wild, and the whole constitutes a defiant figure that is, as is stated in a small manifesto that is featured in the back cover of the album: "beyond race gender baptism mathematics politricks". (See Appendix A)

When the tracks in *Horses* are considered in order it is possible to divide the album into three sections in terms of the themes and inspiration for the songs. The first section contains only the opening song "Gloria In Excelsis Deo", the second section has the next four songs ("Redondo Beach", "Birdland", "Free Money" and "Kimberly") and the third and final section consists of the final three tracks of the album ("Break It Up", "Land: Horses/ Land of a Thousand Dances/ La Mer (De)" and "Elegie").

The first section is the announcement of a new persona that Patti Smith creates for herself and that is meant to be looked at not as white, a woman or any kind of political or religious figure but as an artist. "Gloria" separates Patricia Lee Smith, the aspiring artist born in Chicago from Patti Smith, the artist who moved to New York in pursuit of "the right to create, without apology, from a stance beyond gender or social definition, but not beyond the responsibility to create something of worth."⁴⁶ "Gloria" is also a step away from the artist who under the name Patti Smith published five poetry books prior to the recording of *Horses*. 'Originating' from the Patti Smith who published works in the early seventies, the Patti Smith that the first section of *Horses* presents is a new 'beginning', the beginning of a Patti Smith that through music found a new form for her poetry and a

⁴⁶ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 201634).

new voice that takes full responsibility for her sins. The difference between origins and beginnings is well established in Edward W. Said's *Beginnings: Intention and Method* [1978] and it is important to note that "Gloria" marks the beginning of Patti Smith. As Said points out, one of the essential differences between an origin and a beginning is that an origin has a more passive role whilst a beginning has a more active one as the author clarifies in the following quote:

[...] between the word *beginning* and the word *origin* lies a constantly changing system of meanings [...]

As consistently as possible I use *beginning* as having the more active meaning, and *origin* the more passive one: thus "X is the origin of Y," while "The beginning A leads to B."⁴⁷

The author further explains the definition and the conditions of '*beginning*', "... a beginning *authorizes*; it constitutes an authorization for what follows from it [and] with regard to what precedes it [...] represents [...]"⁴⁸ We can speak of a beginning when the following conditions are present:

First of all, there must be a desire, the will, and the true freedom to reverse oneself, to accept thereby the risks of rupture and discontinuity; for whether one looks to see where and when he began, or whether he looks in order to begin now, he cannot continue as he is. It is, however, very difficult to begin with a wholly new start. Too many old habits, loyalties, and pressures inhibit the substitution of a novel enterprise for an established one.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Edward Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Johns Hopkins, 1978) 6.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ *Id.*

In Patti Smith's case it is possible to say that in her early works one can find Patti's origins but it is in "Gloria" that one identifies Smith's beginning that leads to the artist's career from that point onwards.

In Patti Smith's case it is possible to say that in her early works one can find Patti's origins but it is in "Gloria" that one identifies Smith's beginning that leads to the artist's career from that point onwards.

Family and autobiographic memories are the aspects that bind "Redondo Beach", "Birdland", "Free Money" and "Kimberly" into the second section of *Horses*. Each of those four songs is in some way based or inspired by a member of Patti's family. The first song in this section is partially inspired by an argument that Smith had with her sister Linda. Although the song does not narrate that argument, it begins with a quarrel between two women, who in this case instead of being siblings are lovers. "Birdland" takes major inspiration from William Reich's *A Book of Dreams*, however Smith also mentions that her father used to read books and magazines about UFOs and that the song is directed towards her own feeling of alienation: "I didn't look like anybody else, I didn't even look like any member of my family."⁵⁰ Both cases centered on a relationship between father and son/daughter. "Free Money", as Patti has stated several times is inspired by how her mother used to dream about finding a winning lottery ticket and then spending the money not on herself but on those she loved. Finally, "Kimberly" draws inspiration from Patti Smith's childhood memory of a storm that started a fire in a barn when she was young and was holding her sister in her arms, her sister's name is Kimberly hence the song's title.

The final section of the album takes focus and inspiration from Patti's heroes, the ones that were her musical and literary influences. In the case of "Break It Up" it is clear

⁵⁰ Simon Reynolds, "Even as a child, I felt like an alien" (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

that the song takes an enormous focus on the late The Doors singer Jim Morrison. The character named Johnny that appears on the song “Land” is based on William Burroughs’s *The Wild Boys*, however there are aspects of the song that were influenced by Arthur Rimbaud and Jimi Hendrix as Smith says that the whole song is a dream that the latter is having in his dying moment. Lastly, “Elegie” is based on several of Patti Smith’s heroes, the song is in fact an elegy for all those who have died.

A new Patti Smith was born through the creation of *Horses*, a rebellious, androgynous artist that closes the manifesto boldly claiming to be “no longer afraid of death” (see Appendix B). Death will however be commemorated by the album, so is love and life itself. Through the eight songs that compose this “three chords merged with the power of the word”⁵¹ masterpiece the listener leaves behind race, gender, religion, and politics, is transported to that ship from “Birdland” and “we’ll go inside of it where we are not human”.⁵²

Gloria In Excelsis Deo

Jesus died for somebody’s sins
but not mine
melting in a pot of thieves
wild card up my sleeve
thick heart of stone
my sins my own⁵³

⁵¹ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 31.

⁵² *Id.* 40.

⁵³ *Id.* 33.

Those are the lines that open *Horses*, Patti Smith's debut album. Several years before Smith had written exactly those same lines in a poem to which she gave the title "Oath", a poem that expressed the need that she, as an artist, had to free herself from restraints like religion. In the song Smith reinforces the idea of self-liberation through the following line: "they belong to me. Me"⁵⁴ but the original poem takes a different path, proceeding as follows:

I engrave my own palm
sweet black X
Adam placed no hex on me
I embrace Eve.⁵⁵

Embracing Eve is a statement that Patti Smith had also made in the poem "seventh heaven" where she worships Eve as an empowered transgressive woman, the mother of sin and of women's free will. The song however quickly mutates and merges with "Gloria", a song written by Van Morrison and recorded in 1965 when he was still lead singer of the band Them. Although lyrically Smith does not keep much from the source song apart from the chorus and a couple of space and time references that does not mean that she diluted the sexual – misogynistic even – content of the classic song, quite the contrary in fact. Patti Smith's version is even more sexually explicit and Gloria, the women described in the lyrics, is even more objectified in this version, performed by Smith in a very feminine sensual voice, thus opening space for interpreting the song as being concerned with a same sex relationship.

"Gloria in Excelsis Deo" is more than defiant, it is a definer; as an opening song that defines the album, it corroborates the statement on the back cover of the record as the

⁵⁴ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 33.

⁵⁵ *Id.* 33.

song transcends matters like religion, gender and sexuality. The opening lines clearly put religion aside. Regarding gender and sexuality Smith told Reynolds that she always “enjoyed doing transgender songs”,⁵⁶ something she recalls to have “learnt from Joan Baez, who often sang songs that had a male point of view”⁵⁷ and proceeds to explain that her work does not reflect her sexual preferences, it reflects only the fact that she feels total freedom as an artist and concludes that idea by saying that “as an artist, I can take any position, any voice, that I want”⁵⁸ and that is definitely stated through the opening song. “People say beware but I don’t care/ The words are just rules and regulations to me. Me”.⁵⁹

Those lines in the song mark the transition from Patti Smith’s poem “Oath” into Van Morrison’s garage rock classic “Gloria” and are an obvious statement of self-affirmation, and once again show the listener that from this point onwards Patti Smith is a completely free artist, a persona stripped, as has already been stated, of religion, gender, race, sexual orientation and political views. From the visual aspect of the line one should notice that the word “me” is not simply doubled. Smith’s punctuation puts an end to a previous self and presents a new one that will accompany the listener through the album, or perhaps even through Patti Smith’s whole musical career and both the selves that Smith evokes in these lines are disjointed through the use of a full-stop signifying an end for the previous self and a rebirth for the new self. It is important to note that given that Smith often does not use punctuation, thus the decision to do so in this case is deliberate and of significance. Prior to that affirmation the poem is very much related to the Patti Smith of the past, it is the breaking point of a young woman who was raised as a Jehovah Witness and is declaring that she is turning her back on religion, or, as she would come to

⁵⁶ Simon Reynolds, “Even as a child, I felt like an alien” (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 33.

clarify in interviews throughout the years, on organized religion. Patti Smith had made on several occasions that this statement was never in any way envisioned as a rejection of spirituality or God but of religion as an organization and most of all it was intended as an affirmation that as a young artist she wished to make her own mistakes and take full responsibility for them, making the poem something of a manifesto for liberation and not a manifesto against God. In the song one can perceive that as Smith rejects salvation declaring the sins her own, she is, assuming in turn, full responsibility for them. In the poem the following lines corroborate the statement of claiming the responsibility for the mistakes that she has made: “and take full responsibility/ for every pocket I have picked”.

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When entering the section of the song where it turns into a cover version of “Gloria” one is confronted with a lyricism that is completely different from that of the 1965 classic. The original opens up with a story-telling ambiance created by the first line “Wanna tell about my baby”,⁶¹ in turn Patti starts in a more charismatic way and with an immediate sense of movement “I walk in a room you know I look so proud” and she proceeds as a charismatic character that, as she walks into the room, senses an “atmosphere where anything’s allowed”, hinting at the sin that is about to be committed, it is not until the sexualized description of Gloria begins that the narrator gains interest, before she was just bored at a party.

I walk in a room you know I look so proud
I move in here this atmosphere where anything’s allowed
Then I go to this here party but I just get bored
Until I look out the window see a sweet young thing
Humping on the parking meter leaning on the parking meter

⁶⁰ Patti Smith, *Early Work* (London: Plexus Publishing Limited, 1994) 7.

⁶¹ Azlyrics, 13 September 2018. <<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/vanmorrison/gloria.html>>

Oh, she looks so good. Oh, she looks so fine

And I got this crazy feeling that I'm gonna make her mine⁶²

As the lines quoted from Patti Smith's version show, the visual description of Gloria is much longer and more detailed in her version of the song; Van Morrison merely describes her as "About five feet four/ from her head to the ground".⁶³ In Smith's version the narrator sees Gloria by looking through the window and describes her as "a sweet young thing", a crude use of language that incites the objectification of the woman whose name is still unknown at this point. The woman is described as "Humping on the parking meter", which apart from being a sensualized position is also a deliberate use of the ambiguity as the term "humping" conveys. It is used here as a slang term for practicing sexual relations, thus Smith gestures once again towards the approaching sexual aura to the song.

The following lines are almost kept intact, Van Morrison sings "Make me feel so good/ Make me feel all right" as Smith turns it once again into a visual description and intensifies it adding by the interjection "oh" before the lines. Smith then adds a sense of possession and intensifies it once again by moaning "uh uh" immediately before saying "make her mine".

The following lines in Patti Smith's version appear to be a reference to Screamin Jay Hawkins' classic blues song "I Put a Spell on You" alluding to a sense of possession that is common to both songs. The lines that follow show a significant difference between the two versions. In Morrison's version the lines are as follows:

Walking down my street

Comes in my room

⁶² Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 33.

⁶³ Azlyrics, 13 September 2018. <<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/vanmorrison/gloria.html>>

Knocks upon my door
Then she comes in my room⁶⁴

Patti Smith's changes are significant:

[...] here she comes
Walking down the street here she comes
Coming through my door here she comes
Crawling up my stair here she comes
Waltzing through the hall [...] ⁶⁵

The use of the verbs “walking”, “coming”, “crawling” and “waltzing” in that specific order matches the intensity of the musical accompaniment that creates a sense of crescendo that is leading to the culmination in the chorus.

The next section of the song shows the influence of symbolist literature on Patti Smith's writing. She introduces the symbolic red dress that Gloria is wearing, red being a colour that in literature is usually associated with passion, love and intensity. A quick search in a dictionary of symbols – in this case Clirlot J.A's *A Dictionary of Symbols* – reveals that the colour red can be used to represent “surging and tearing emotions” and is connected with Mars and the “life-giving principle”.⁶⁶ Moreover, red is associated with fire and blood due to being their usual colour. Those elements are also symbols in their own right, representing respectively intensity and bonding (as the blood is used to bind together the elements of a ritual or as a shorthand way to refer to the link, or bond, between family members), characteristics that are consistent with the sexual aspect of the song.

⁶⁴ Azlyrics, 13 September 2018. <<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/vanmorrison/gloria.html>>

⁶⁵ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 33.

⁶⁶ Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Routledge, 1990) 54.

Another symbol that is present in the song is “midnight”. In this case the symbol is already present in the original version of the song and is one of the few elements that Smith kept although she expanded it by incorporating a visual aid for the element that is the “big tower clock”.

And my baby is walking through the door laying on my couch

She whispers to me and I take the big plunge

And oh, she was so good. And oh, she was so fine

And I' gonna tell the world that I just made her mine⁶⁷

These lines represent the sexual act as Gloria approaches and leans on the couch and the act itself is denoted by the expression “I take the big plunge” and then the lines that had appeared before as “Oh, she looks so good. Oh, she looks so fine” reappear converted with the verb “was”, becoming a reference to a sexual performance thus marking the point where desire becomes reality and the sexual act is consummated. Then, once again a parallel with what has been previously stated, while in the beginning of the song Smith expressed the desire to take possession of the woman through the line “I'm gonna make her mine” she now expresses it as a reality by professing that she did indeed achieve that. It is also stated the narrator has a need to possess and also to proclaim that possession, something that is not present on Van Morrison's version of the song.

In Patti Smith's version it is only then, as the narrator asks for her name, that the identity of the female character is revealed as “Gloria”, while in the original version of the song, as it is a story that is being told, the mystery around the woman's identity is nonexistent, the narrator knows it from the start and spells it out to the listener not long after.

⁶⁷ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 33.

After the evocation of Gloria's name in Patti's version of the song Smith places the narrator in a stadium, a place of immensity and of crowds, where a tremendous number of girls – twenty thousand – called out their names as these lines show:

It was at the stadium. There were twenty thousand girls
Called their names out to me Marie Ruth but to tell you the truth
I didn't hear them. I didn't see. I let my eyes rise to the big tower clock
And I hear those bells chiming in my heart going ding-dong⁶⁸

The number itself in this case might not be a relevant symbol in itself but simply an identifier of an enormous quantity, or it may be a doubling of ten thousand, also known as “myriad” which is the highest ancient number with its own name. However, the narrator simply ignores the girls and looks to the big tower clock that announces Gloria coming into the room with the midnight bells chiming. Patti Smith's use of the bells is clearly another piece of symbolism as the bell is usually associated with heaven, or, as Cirlot puts it in his *A Dictionary of Symbols*: “Since it is in a hanging position, it partakes of the mystic significance of all objects which are suspended between heaven and earth. It is related, by its shape, to the vault and, consequently, to the heavens.”⁶⁹

The religious symbolism mentioned in the previous paragraph culminates in the recapture of the very first sentence of the song, part of the poem “Oath”, “Jesus died for somebody's sins but not mine”. At which point on the story the idea of the sexual act as a sin is reconsolidated.

With each glance one takes at “Gloria In Excelsis Deo” it becomes more and more clear why Patti Smith had chosen the song for the opener of her debut full-length album.

⁶⁸ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 34.

⁶⁹ Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Routledge, 1990) 24.

Merging the Van Morrison's classic with her own poem "Oath" gave her the opportunity to present to her audience a new Patti Smith. As she remarks in her *Collected Lyrics*:

"Gloria" gave me the opportunity to acknowledge and disclaim our musical and spiritual heritage. It personifies for me, within its adolescent conceit, what I hold sacred as an artist. The right to create, without apology, from a stance beyond gender or social definition, but not beyond the responsibility to create something of worth.⁷⁰

It is also important to remark that "Gloria" had been covered by numerous artists since its release (and before Smith's reworking of it) and that Lenny Kaye was a serious garage rock aficionado who assembled a groundbreaking compilation of the genre titled *Nuggets: Original Artyfacts from the First Psychedelic Era* (1972), meaning that it is possible that he had influence on the choice of the song.

"Gloria" was not the first cover version recorded by Patti Smith. In 1974 Smith recorded a version of Jimi Hendrix's "Hey Joe". "Hey Joe" was originally the A side but the single has become better known for its B-side "Piss Factory". This case and Van Morrison's "Gloria" have similarities as both were already at the time Smith recorded them emblematic staple rock songs, both had lyrics that contained misogynistic elements and in both cases Patti had made several changes to the lyrics without in any way diluting them.

"Gloria" opens *Horses* in a way that is hard to imagine any other song being able to do, whether it is, musically, an improvement or a sloppy cover is simply a matter of opinion, but it is undeniable that Smith added several layers of lyricism to the song taking a certain appropriation of it and doubling it in length. One cannot simply look at "Gloria"

⁷⁰ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 34.

and “Gloria In Excelsis Deo” as two versions of the same song, the poetry in it is so different that it is almost as if those are two distinct songs.

Redondo Beach

Home to a strong gay and lesbian community and located in the South Bay area of the Greater Los Angeles region, the city of Redondo Beach gives its name to the song that follows “Gloria In Excelsis Deo”. Musically, the song is distinguished from the other songs on *Horses*, because of its reggae-like sound and poetically by the use of a more conventional structure with nearly every stanza being a tercet.

Like the previous song on the album, “Redondo Beach” explores unconventional notions of sexuality through the theme of a lesbian romance that is in this case more evident and explicit than was the case with “Gloria In Excelsis Deo”. In both cases, however, as Philip Shaw points out in *Patti Smith’s Horses*, the previously referred to gender bending tendency, that followed a tradition of artists such as Lou Reed and David Bowie, is apparent. Reynolds also establishes a comparison between Smith and Bowie noting that they were contemporaries and that at the time they emerged rock n’ roll had already achieved sufficient dimension for them to be able to “play games with the genre’s own myths and archetypes”.⁷¹ Something that both Smith and Bowie did throughout their careers.

“Redondo Beach” is also the first song of the album to approach the theme of death, a theme that reemerges in most of the songs that follow. This song narrates the story of a lesbian couple that part ways after a quarrel and the subsequent suicide of one of them,

⁷¹ Simon Reynolds, “Even as a child, I felt like an alien” (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

described as a “pretty little girl” in a song written and performed by a woman, this is reminiscent of the previous song “Gloria In Excelsis Deo”.

Although the quarrel is described in the song as being between two female lovers it was inspired by an argument that Patti had with her sister Linda, meaning that this song and the three that follow are all based on autobiographical events involving Patti Smith’s family. It is also important to note that the lyrics of the song were written three years before the song itself, the song was composed in 1974 whereas the lyrics had already been written in 1971.

The song opens with these lines: “Late afternoon, dreaming hotel/ We just had the quarrel that sent you away/ I was looking for you are you gone gone”⁷² The first line of the song provides a sense of time and space but it also introduces the notion of dreaming, a recurrent aspect of *Horses*; dreams and dreamers are depicted in all across the album and it is well-known that Patti had always been interested in psychoanalysis even basing the song “Birdland” on *A Book of Dreams*, written by Peter Reich about his father, the well-known psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich who had been a collaborator of Sigmund Freud’s. Given Patti Smith’s interest in dreams and her knowledge of Reich’s work it is a safe assumption that she was also familiar with Freud’s work. The first lines of “Redondo Beach” create a link between dreaming and the death of a beloved relative, which is one of the types of dream described in Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The section “Dreams of the Death of Beloved Persons” in Freud’s book discusses the theme of dreaming of the death of a sibling. For Freud, such dreams do not indicate that the dreamer wishes the death of the sibling at the time of the dream but it is common during childhood to at some stage have wished it to happen. As Sigmund Freud points out:

⁷² Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 35.

If anyone dreams that his father or mother, his brother or sister, has died, and his dream expresses grief, I should never adduce this as proof that he wishes any of them dead now. [...]

The elder child ill- treated the younger, slandered him, and robbed him of his toys; the younger was consumed with helpless fury against the elder, envied and feared him, or his earliest impulse toward liberty and his first revolt against injustice were directed against his oppressor. [...]

Many persons, then, who now love their brothers and sisters, and who would feel bereaved by their death, harbour in their unconscious hostile wishes, survivals from an earlier period, wishes which are able to realize themselves in dreams.⁷³

The knowledge that Smith acquired through the reading of *The Interpretation of Dreams* and the quarrel that Smith had with her younger sister may have influenced the writing and elaboration of “Redondo Beach”.

The psychological aspect of the song is a strong presence not only through the dreaming reference mentioned above but also, as Shaw notices, through the repetition of the word “gone”, perhaps a repetition that may be representative of a mental trauma suffered by the narrator upon losing her partner.

In the chorus “Down by the ocean it was so dismal/ Woman all standing with shock on their faces/ Sad description oh I was looking for you”⁷⁴ the sad description of the ocean and the shock on the women’s faces anticipate the tragic ending of the story. The protagonist is looking for her lover while all the imagery around her is anticipating the terrible event that closes the song, the protagonist is given the information that a girl had washed and then realizes that it was her lover and it is she who appears with shock on her

⁷³ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Google Books) 13 September 2018.

⁷⁴ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 35.

face as the resolution to the premonition already presented. This is clearly shown in the following lines:

Desk Clerk told me girl was washed up
Was small and angel with apple blond hair now
I went looking for you are you gone gone

Picked up my key didn't reply
Went to my room started to cry
You were small and angel are you gone gone

Down by the ocean it was so dismal
I was just standing with shock on my face
The hearse pulled away
The girl that had died it was you⁷⁵

That final tercet of the song closes with a beautiful description of the lost girl, the final line of that verse reads “You were small and angel are you gone gone”. That description, and specially the use of the term “angel”, comes after the narrator discovers that a girl had “washed up”, “a victim of sweet suicide”. At that point the narrator breaks down as she assumes that the “washed-up” girl is her lover, information that is confirmed immediately in the chorus that follows and that ends the song with the words “Good-Bye”.⁷⁶

Philip Shaw notes that as in “Gloria In Excelsis Deo” the girl on “Redondo Beach” is missing, implying the feminine as “ a sublime object of desire that must be excluded if

⁷⁵ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 35, 36.

⁷⁶ *Id.* 36.

the symbolic order is to take effect”, an idea that, as Shaw further notes, derives from authors like Jacques Lacan, once again a psychoanalyst.⁷⁷

Birdland

“Birdland” is one of the longest tracks on *Horses*, almost reaching the ten minute mark, but it was not always that long. On stage, as Smith recalls the song “used to be four minutes” however, “it flowered in the studio and ended up about nine minutes long”.⁷⁸ Despite the recording of *Horses* being what “Smith has often described [...] as a ‘season in hell’ for both singer and producer”⁷⁹ Smith still “credits Cale for creating the conditions that led to ‘Birdland’”⁸⁰ because the producer kept pushing her to experiment and expand the song. It is also pertinent to note that the expression “a season in hell” (which, as has been pointed out, Patti used to describe the recording sessions of the album with John Cale) is a title of a poem that Arthur Rimbaud published in 1873 after the end of his notorious homosexual relationship with the French poet Paul Verlaine that resulted in the later shooting Rimbaud. Due to the bad criticism it received, the poem was the last that Arthur Rimbaud ever wrote.⁸¹

The track is also one of the most complex songs on the album and by looking at the lyrics one can perceive the influence of the symbolist writers on Patti and the extent of her debt to them. The main influence on the song is, however, the memoir *A Book of Dreams* that Peter Reich published in 1973 about his father Wilhem Reich. As has already been pointed out, Reich was a disciple of Freud who during the Second World War sought refuge from the Nazis in the United States. His theories and scientific claims

⁷⁷ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 76.

⁷⁸ *Id.* 78.

⁷⁹ Simon Reynolds, “Even as a child, I felt like an alien” (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

⁸⁰ *Id.*

⁸¹ “A Season in Hell” was written in French and originally titled “Une Saison en Enfer”.

“summoned the unwelcome attentions of the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Food and Drug Administration” as Shaw notes.⁸²

A Book of Dreams captured Smith’s attention due to the emotional descriptions of the relationship between father and son but a passage about a vision that young Peter had when his father died was what led to the writing of “Birdland”. In the passage the young Peter Reich “kept going out into the fields hoping his father would pick him up in a spaceship”⁸³ and inside the spaceship the deceased Wilhem Reich was glowing. “Then the air force planes came in and chased the UFOs away and he [Peter Reich] was left there crying: No! Daddy! Come back! It really moved me.”⁸⁴ Smith recalls. It is important to note that the reaction that the young Peter had is partially mimicked in the song, more precisely in the following monologue lines:

No, daddy, don’t leave me here alone
Take me up, daddy, to the belly of your ship
Let the ship slide open and I’ll go inside of it
Where you’re not human, you are not human.

[...]

I won’t give up, won’t give up, don’t let me give up
I won’t give up, come here, let me go up fast
Take me up quick, take me up, up to the belly of a ship
And the ship slides open and I go inside of it
Where I am not human.

[...]

It’s me, it’s me, I’ll give you my eyes, take me up

⁸² Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 77.

⁸³ *Id.* 77.

⁸⁴ *Id.* 77.

Oh now please take me up, I'm helium raven

Waiting for you, please take me up, don't leave me here.⁸⁵

Apart from the already mentioned reference to the passage of Peter Reich's memoir there are other relevant elements in the lines quoted above. One example is the sense of progression that Patti Smith gives to the song through the lines "Where you are not human", "Where I am not human" and the final "where we are not human". That last is not among the lines quoted but it is the final monologue that the young boy in the song speaks before entering the spaceship. Referring to the father as "not human" might have multiple layers of meaning, Philip Shaw notes that the "not human" aspect of the father is present in Peter's memoir. In Shaw's words "Peter presents a father who is both human and mythic, a manifestly eccentric man who happens also to be a genius and a prophet".⁸⁶ The father figure in both Reich and Smith is dead and appears to the child and thus has a supernatural or "not human" characteristic, also in both cases appearing from the sky might be seen as a form of an angelic apparition, therefore making a connection to the Christian belief in God as a paternal figure who is "not human". Shaw affirms that "there is, [...], something of Smith's own relationship with her father, Grant, in this account" and mentions that Patti had revealed in the interview with Reynolds that the "you are not human", "I am not human" and "we are not human" progression is in fact also autobiographical and refers to a sense of alienation that she felt when she was young⁸⁷. In the interview Reynolds writes the following:

[...] there's a motif running through the song: 'You are not human' turns to 'I am not human' and then 'we are not human'. Smith says 'that's really talking about myself.

⁸⁵ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 39.

⁸⁶ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 77, 78.

⁸⁷ *Id.* 78.

From very early on in my childhood - four, five years old - I felt alien to the human race. I felt very comfortable with thinking I was from another planet, because I felt disconnected - I was very tall and skinny, and I didn't look like anybody else, I didn't even look like any member of my family.⁸⁸

The line in which the child offers his eyes in exchange for entrance to the ship is also a case of intertextuality between *A Book of Dreams* and “Birdland” as is apparent in the following passage from Reich’s book reveals:

Please come, I said, looking long and hard at the glowing balls coming nearer out of the sky. Please come and take me away please please. Please, here are my eyes, here I am sending them far out to you. To You. Giving my eyes, please come please. Far away in the sky there was a noise.⁸⁹

“Birdland” is narrated in two voices, a third person narrator that right from the start provides information about a boy in a story-telling way that resembles the prose poetry style of Arthur Rimbaud, as the following lines show:

His father died and left him a little farm in New England.
All the the black funeral cars left the scene.
And the boy was just standing there alone
Looking at the shiny red tractor
Him and his daddy used to sit inside
And circle the blue fields and grease the night.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Simon Reynolds, “Even as a child, I felt like an alien” (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

⁸⁹ Peter Reich, *A Book of Dreams* (New York: Dutton 1973) 86.

⁹⁰ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 38.

Patti Smith hints at the link between “Birdland” and *A Book of Dreams* from the very first lines of the song, not only the similarity between the both orphan boys is established in the first line but there is also a mention of New England, a place that also features in Reich’s memoir. When explaining the passage of the book that inspired her to write “Birdland” Smith told Simon Reynolds of the *Observer* that “There’s a section in it where Peter describes a birthday party not long after his father died”,⁹¹ that final piece of information (“not long after his father died”) is cleverly inserted in the second line of the song where Smith writes that the hearses had “left the scene” meaning precisely that the funeral had recently ended.

The lines quoted above also reveal the symbolic use of colours that will be recurrent throughout the song (in the excerpt quoted above there are black red and blue) and that, as has been previously seen in “Gloria in Excelsis Deo”, is usual in Smith’s writing. In this case, adding to the symbolic meaning of the colours there is the contrast between the “black funeral cars” and the “shiny red tractor”. The use of black accentuates the death aspect of the hearse while the colour red attributed to the tractor emphasizes the relation that it had to life by relating it to blood, as Cirlot points out “the vital character of blood informs the significance of the colour red”⁹² thus associating the memory of the deceased father with the funeral cars and the memory of him alive on the tractor.

The first line of the song also carries the theme of death that was introduced in “Redondo Beach” but “Birdland” unlike the previous song is not intended to lament death but, similarly to the songs in the last section of *Horses* (like “Break It Up” and “Elegie”), it uses death as a way of elevating the human being, or as Shaw puts it: “[...] it focus on the wish to transcend the limitations of the human, to convert death into the portal to a

⁹¹ Simon Reynolds, “Even as a child, I felt like an alien” (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

⁹² Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Routledge, 1990) 29.

higher plane of existence”.⁹³ As this dissertation will clearly demonstrate, it is usual in Patti Smith’s writing to perceive death in this way, thus, often death is celebrated rather than mourned.

The second part of the first stanza of the song runs as follows:

It was as if someone had spread butter
On all the fine points of the stars
‘Cause when he looked up they started to slip.
Then he put his head in the crux of his arm
And he started to drift, drift to the belly of a ship
Let the ship slide open, and he went inside of it
And saw his daddy behind the control board
Streaming beads of light.
He saw his daddy behind the control board
And he was very different tonight
‘Cause he was not human, he was not human.⁹⁴

In this passage, as the narrator describes the point at which the boy is about to enter the spaceship, and so transcend reality, she adopts a voice that leans more towards the symbolist style. The term “belly” that Smith uses is significant because, as Shaw says, it “seems curiously regressive, as if the child were returning to the maternal body”.⁹⁵ As used here the term “belly” leads to the assumption of a maternal womb, however upon entering it is the father who is “behind the control board”. This symbolism is closely linked to the controversial studies of Wilhem Reich and, as Philip Shaw notes, the

⁹³ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 78.

⁹⁴ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 38.

⁹⁵ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 78.

spaceship works as “a version of the orgone accumulator, the man-made womb from which the Reichian subject emerges happy, healthy, and restored”.⁹⁶

As is seen through the recurrent use of figures like Eve and Jean d’Arc in her work, Patti Smith frequently praises the mother and the feminine. The image of a male operating a womb is extremely misogynistic and “Birdland”, as Shaw argues, succeeds in pointing out how ridiculous this is by evoking the figure of “the tortured woman” and by describing the dream of the men, in the figure of the son “to bear the prophet” as “animation”. This can be seen in the following lines:

The son, the sign, the cross, like the shape of a tortured woman
The true shape of a tortured woman, the mother standing
In the doorway letting her sons, no longer presidents but prophets.
They’re all dreaming they’re going to bear the prophet
He’s going to run through the fields dreaming in animation⁹⁷

The writing is extremely sophisticated in this song as it is narrated by two voices, the main narrator with a third person voice and a second one in the first person reciting the monologues of the boy who is the central figure of the narrative. The main narrator evolves from describing a very realistic image of easily imaginable spaces and objects like “a farm”, “funeral cars” and a “tractor” in the beginning of the song, then the language becomes more symbolic and describes immaterial things like “the fine points of the stars” and “beads of light”. In the end it culminates in a frenetic use of repetitions and the Indian-like chant: “Sha da do wop da shaman do way” that makes reference to the 1950s do-wop music. The final line is the only reference to the title and simply reads “We like birdland”.

⁹⁶ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 78.

⁹⁷ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 40.

Free Money

“Free Money” is arguably the simplest song on *Horses* but it still has some points worth mentioning. The background to the writing of the song is of a biographical character and goes back to Patti’s youth. The main theme of the song is Smith’s family financial struggles during Patti’s childhood but, inspired by the ability that Beverly – Patti Smith’s mother – had to conceal the family’s financial problems, the song turns that dark theme into something beautiful. One example that Patti recalls is her mother converting a pot of potatoes into French fries.

Speaking of “Free Money”, Smith recalls: “It’s really a song for my mom. She always dreamed about winning the lottery. But she never bought a lottery ticket! She would just imagine if she won, make lists of things she would do with the money - a house by the sea for us kids, then all kinds of charitable things.”⁹⁸

This explanation, given to Simon Reynolds of the *Observer*, establishes that the plot of the song was inspired by a dream that Beverly used to have in which she would find a winning lottery ticket. The song opens with the lines:

Every night before I go to sleep
Find a ticket win a lottery
Scoop the pearls up from the sea
Cash them in and buy you
All the things you need⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Simon Reynolds, “Even as a child, I felt like an alien” (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

⁹⁹ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 41.

These lines confirm precisely the explanation that Patti gave to Reynolds, however, the song mixes images of materialism with non-material goods. In the first half of the song Smith resorts to words that suggest money and materialism, terms like “ticket” and “lottery”, “cash” and “dollar bills” and a recurrent use of the word “things” but the word is generally not used on a materialistic level as the “things”, described as “things you need” and “things you never had”, are meant to be gifts.

In the first lines of the song a parallel between natural, non-material, beauty and materialism is established through the lines “Scoop the pearls up from the sea” only to, in the following line, “Cash them in and buy you all the things you need”.

Every night before I rest my head
See those dollar bills go swirling ‘round my bed
I know they’re stolen but I don’t feel bad
I take that money buy you things you never had ¹⁰⁰

A moral complexity is also introduced in these lines from the second section of the song: when the narrator sees the dollar bills she is conscious of their unlawful origin but the non-materialistic plans that she has for the money makes it so that she feels no remorse for that.

The narrator succeeds in creating an ambience of elevation and evokes non-material pleasures marked by terms like “stratosphere”, “planets” and “Arabia” that may also represent the unreachable that has no price no matter how hard the narrator tries to buy it with the “free money”.

There is an anti-materialistic message that swirls around the song due to its dream-like characteristic, no matter how poor one may be, as Patti Smith writes, “When we

¹⁰⁰ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 41.

dream it, when we dream it, when we dream it/ We'll dream it, dream it for free".¹⁰¹

Although that message is accentuated by the repetition, the original materialistic sense of the song reemerges right after with an even longer repetition of the phrase "free money".

The whole section about the priceless aspect of the dreams reappears once again near the end of the song but once again "free money" comes in and this time is repeated more often and at a faster pace that only slows down in the last line creating the sensation that free money is overtaking the beauty and importance of the dreams while simultaneously giving the sensation of falling asleep and diving into the freedom of a dream.

Kimberly

"Kimberly" is the second song on *Horses* to be named after a woman – the first being "Gloria" – and is the opening track of the second side of the original vinyl record just as "Gloria" opens the first side. As a matter of fact, those are not just the only songs named after women but also the only songs named after people. The song is also the last song of the group of songs that are family related.

The story behind "Kimberly" goes back to a stormy night in the year 1958, the year that Patti's sister Kimberly – hence the song's title – was born. "In Even as a child, I felt like an alien", the 2005 *Observer* interview, Patti Smith told Simon Reynolds about that night; she recalled: "We lived across the street from an old abandoned barn that got hit by lightning shortly after Kimberly was born. I went outside and I was holding her, watching this barn in flames."¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 41.

¹⁰² Simon Reynolds, "Even as a child, I felt like an alien" (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

In the song, this is given thus:

The wall is high the black barn
The babe in my arms in her swaddling clothes
And I know soon that the sky will split
And the planets will shift
Balls of jade will drop and existence will stop.¹⁰³

As these lines show, the song grows from that event and the scenario that Smith described but takes on more depth because of the mysticism and the various allusions that she puts into the lyrics. The first couple of lines describe precisely the barn and Patti holding the baby. The barn is depicted as black, a colour that according to Cirlot's *A Dictionary of Symbols* is usually associated with coal, which in turn is "closely linked with fire"¹⁰⁴ making this first description a subtle initial evocation of the fire that consumed the barn on the evening that Smith described to Reynolds. The high wall may perhaps symbolize the authoritarian impositions of religion that Patti is fighting in favour of art in this song. Then, in the last three lines of the stanza, the narrator foresees the upcoming disaster in a prophetic way using the imagery of the cosmos.

"Kimberly" is a song that marks a transitional point for Patti Smith, as Philip Shaw notes regarding that storm in 1959: "The storm marks the point at which Smith, according to her own account rejects religion in favor of art."¹⁰⁵ She recalls being told that art had no place in heaven because it was a material thing. The lines in this song in the previous paragraph foresee an apocalyptic intervention of the divine and in the line that follows the narrator defies that divinity by showing indifference to it through the lines "Little

¹⁰³ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 43.

¹⁰⁴ Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Routledge, 1990) 51.

¹⁰⁵ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 81.

Sister the sky is falling/ I don't mind I don't mind."¹⁰⁶ The denial of religion does not, however, in Patti Smith's case mean that religious symbolisms will become absent from her writing, very much the opposite in fact. Shaw points out that in Patti's "notes" she recreates the scene of the storm and burning barn with an intense use of religious imagery. The transcription reads as follows:

In the field, about a hundred feet from the black barn, was the great bush tree. It was alive and vibrating, all the words of God. I spent long hours praying to it. When I was twelve my sister was born. One afternoon the sky went pitch. A storm was coming. I was holding Kimberly in my arms. The air was like milk. I was fed up with prayers. I was fed up with everything. I stared at the bush for a long time. I wanted something. I cradled the baby's skull. It was a light-bulb. I concentrated as hard as I could. Lightning struck. Her face lit up. Everything in flames. The world was turning all the destructive whims of nature. Rivers drying, rivers of salt remaining, berserk waterfowl kamikazing into raging falls. The bam was crumbling. The bush was burning. And Kimberly was shining in my arms like a phosphorescent living doll.¹⁰⁷

The text quoted above clearly has strong imagery of God and thus suggests Patti Smith's saturation by religion, but it is interesting to note that she uses the figure of a "great bush" that burns. This is a clear reference to the biblical bush that appears to Moses in Exodus 3:2, a fact that Shaw notes too. Thus it can also be perceived that the denial of God is not synonymous with a disbelief in His existence.

The line that follows returns the focus to the baby, Kimberly, saying "Little sister the fates are calling on you".¹⁰⁸ The sisters' relationship in the present song rehearses and revisits the notions of love and hate between siblings presented in "Redondo Beach",

¹⁰⁶ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 43.

¹⁰⁷ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 81, 82.

¹⁰⁸ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 43.

which draws on Freud's theories, but Kimberly, the baby in the song, is also a carnal representation of art that the young Smith holds as sacred in her arms, protecting her almost maternally and regarding it as more sacred than the signs of the Divine surrounding them.

The first lines of the next verse uses words that evoke nature's fury, terms such as "whirlwind", "sea" and "flame", but here those terms are directed towards the narrator, not the apocalyptic outbreak that is forming in the lines "Here I stand again in this old electric whirlwind/ The sea rushes up my knees like flame" show.¹⁰⁹ In this case these serve as an empowerment of the narrator who then proceeds to affirm "And I feel like some misplaced Joan of Arc",¹¹⁰ a character that had previously been the central figure of a Patti Smith poem named after her. In this case Jean of Arc is a strong figure that embodies the will and the strength that Smith herself felt that she needed in order to fight what Reynolds calls a "spiritual crusade" against God.¹¹¹ The verse continues with that defiant fight against God, the lines that follow mimic, with the reinforcement of internal rhyme, the closure of the previous verse; in the present case, however, the description is, in Shaw's words, a "parody of the creation myth"¹¹² as one can observe in the following lines:

Oh baby I remember when you were born
It was dawn and the storm settled in my belly
And I rolled in the grass and I spit out the gas
And I lit a match and the void went flash
And the sky split and the planets hit

¹⁰⁹ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 43.

¹¹⁰ *Id.* 43.

¹¹¹ Simon Reynolds, "Even as a child, I felt like an alien" (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

¹¹² Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 82.

Balls of jade dropped and existence stopped.¹¹³

Later in the song there is a line that features part of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* ("As the bats with their baby vein faces/ Burst from the barn in flames in the violent violet sky").¹¹⁴ "Bats with baby faces" appear in "What the Thunder Said", the final part of the long modernist poem.¹¹⁵ The intertextuality is interesting and as has already been seen is not the first allusion that Patti makes to *The Waste Land* (see the discussion of Smith's poem "death by water" above).

"What the Thunder Said", like "Kimberly", focuses on an apocalyptic scenario and particularly on a thunderstorm. Both texts have significant and extensive religious links and this section of Eliot's work is inspired by the legend of the Holy Grail, traditional Hindu tales and Buddhism and Patti Smith has confessed to having an interest in Buddhism. The Hindu tales make reference to the thunder's voice that according to legend "gives", "sympathizes" and "controls" similarly to the Christian God that Patti is deserting.

Although, for the most part, Kimberly is a baby who represents art and thus is loved by the first person narrator, as Shaw points out "Smith mixes feelings of love and hate in this song",¹¹⁶ for the most part it is a parallelism between love for art and a defiant hate for God but love and hate towards the baby are also recurrent (since Kimberly is somewhat of a linking element between art and god, the mundane and the divine) as is shown in the following lines:

¹¹³ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 43.

¹¹⁴ *Id.* 44.

¹¹⁵ T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909 – 1962* (London: Faber, 1963) 78.

¹¹⁶ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 83.

Your skull was like a network of spittle
Like glass balls moving in like cold streams of logic
And I prayed as the lightning attacked
That something would make it go crack¹¹⁷

In these lines the narrator prays for the baby's skull to burst, a brutal act that simultaneously symbolizes the soul of the baby – representing art and knowledge – rupturing free from the imprisonment of the skull, or religion.

In the final lines of the song Smith is conscious of, but indifferent to, the apocalyptic consequences of her acts, the imagery of the trees falling represent the destructiveness of the apocalypse but, as the following lines show, as long as the narrator can look through Kimberly's eyes, a gateway into the soul of art itself she is indifferent to the destruction.

The palm trees fall into the sea
It doesn't matter much to me
As long as you're safe Kimberly
And I can gaze deep into your starry eyes
Looking deep in your eyes baby
Looking deep in your eyes baby
Looking deep in your eyes baby
Into your starry eyes¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 44.

¹¹⁸ *Id.* 44.

Break It Up

“Break It Up” is the first song of the section that closes *Horses*. This last section can be seen as a memorial for Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix, two of Patti Smith’s heroes who were at that time recently deceased. This song in particular is written about Jim Morrison and its writing was inspired by a dream that Smith had after visiting the late The Doors singer’s grave in Paris. In Patti’s dream she finds Morrison in a clearing trapped in a marble slab by his wings, “literally trapped by being turned into an icon”,¹¹⁹ as Simon Reynolds points out, and being worshiped by the natives, an important element of Jim Morrison’s poetry.

Based on this dream, the song features two characters, the first-person narrator and “a boy”, as it is referred to several times in the song. The boy is obviously representative of Jim Morrison, to whom the song is dedicated. The first lines of the song introduce the listener to Smith’s dream by placing the listener in a clearing, just as in her dream. The following line can be perceived as a meditation on the encounter that the dreamer is about to have with Jim Morrison, starting with the word “Ribbon” that may symbolize entanglement or union between the two characters in the song. The line goes “Ribbon of life, it was nearing”,¹²⁰ evoking life from an early point in a song that is in fact about a deceased man.

I saw the boy break out of his skin

My heart turned over and I crawled in¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Simon Reynolds, “Even as a child, I felt like an alien” (*The Observer* 22 May 2005). 28 May 2018.

¹²⁰ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 45.

¹²¹ *Id.* 45.

These lines feature the first appearance of the boy – Jim Morrison – and the first encounter that the dreamer has with him, however the choice of words “break out of his skin” and “crawled in” may perhaps refer to Jim Morrison’s nickname “Lizard King” as those are terms that can be associated with reptilian life:

He cried break it up, oh, I don’t understand

Break it up, I can’t comprehend

Break it up, oh, I want to feel you

Don’t talk to me that way

I’m not listening¹²²

The chorus of the song might seem at first glance more simplistic than it in fact is, on a closer look one may notice that each time the chorus comes in it has small variations from the previous time. The first chorus (quoted above) uses the expression “He cried”, while the second chorus begins with “He sang break it up”, in both cases the pronoun refers to the boy, or Morrison, but while in the first case he is still trapped on the stone, in the second case he is already free and had been described as an angel and is therefore singing. The third chorus opens with a first person retake on the initial one with the line “I cried break it up”, referring to the narrator, or the dreamer, that is to Patti Smith herself. The final chorus is doubled and impersonal, starting simply with the interjections “So” and “Oh” respectively. The remaining part of the chorus also has derivations between choruses, building a progression as the first two have the line “I don’t understand”, the third one reads “now I understand” and in the final chorus that line is replaced by “I’m coming with you” creating an impression of liberation as Jim Morrison sets himself free from the stone.

¹²² Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 45.

According to Philip Shaw, Patti Smith had established a comparison between the images of Jim Morrison imprisoned by the stone and the Greek myth of Prometheus. The parallel between the two figures is, of course, of great importance. In Greek mythology Prometheus is the Titan who stole the secret of fire from the Gods to give to humanity, and was subsequently punished by Zeus, condemned to be trapped on a rock while an eagle constantly devours his regenerating liver. Prometheus is freed by Heracles. As Shaw suggests in his book *Patti Smith – Horses* there is an obvious association between Jim Morrison and Prometheus, as the first is perceived as a god-like figure condemned by a conservative power for promoting rebellious behavior, also the fire that Prometheus stole belonged to the Gods and it is common to perceive art as a work that comes from the Gods, this is the reason that, in classical times, most works of art were anonymous, meaning that Morrison himself might have stolen the fire – in the form of art – to offer it to humanity. The dreamer in “Break It Up” can also be associated with Heracles as they are both liberating figures and because Patti Smith usually mourns her heroes through a sense of duty she feels to carry on their legacy.

Snow started falling
I could hear the angel calling
We rolled on the ground, he stretched out his wings
The boy flew away and he started to sing¹²³

The second verse of the song, quoted above, continues the story and uses several terms with angelic connotations as the boy is set free and described as an angel with wings that he uses to fly away singing. The line “We rolled on the ground” reinforces the idea of union previously presented through the word “ribbon” as it entangles the two

¹²³ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 45.

characters of the song. Perhaps Jim Morrison breaking free from the stone can also be interpreted as a breaking free from death itself, thus transcending it.

In the third verse the song continues the biblical ambience created by the previous line: “The sky was raging. The boy disappeared/ I fell on my knees. Atmosphere broke up/ The boy reappeared. I cried take me please”.¹²⁴

This creates an apocalyptic scenario, the angelic boy appearing and disappearing seems either to be connected or coordinated with the natural disasters presented through the raging sky and the atmospheric description. The dreamer then cries to the angel “Take me please”, perhaps representing Smith asking the deceased Jim Morrison to take her as a pupil.

In the lines that follow Patti uses contrasts and parallels the image “Ice it was shining” and her feeling that her “heart, it was melting”,¹²⁵ and just like the figure of the boy, the dreamer reaches a sense of freedom that is expressed by the line “I tore off my clothes, I danced on my shoes” and by the line that follows which replicates the reptile-like release of Jim Morrison at the beginning of the song. That same line – “I ripped my skin open and then I broke through”,¹²⁶ as well as the title of the song itself (“Break It Up”) – also seem to be related to the song “Break On Through (To The Other Side)” by The Doors.

¹²⁴ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 45.

¹²⁵ *Id.* 45.

¹²⁶ *Id.* 45.

Land: Horses/ Land of a Thousand Dances/ La Mer (De)

The longest track on the album is divided in three sections; “Horses”, “Land of a Thousand Dances” and “La Mer (de)”. Adding to the complexity of the song there are several layers of meaning, several elements and influences and several overlaid vocal tracks. In the *Collected Lyrics* Patti Smith leaves a note in the end that reads: “Land” was an improvisation evoking Chris Kenner’s “Land of a Thousand Dances,” a salute to the past and an anticipation of the future.”¹²⁷ This improvisation on Kenner’s song is clearly the founding pillar of the second section of the song. This part shares the title with the 1962 classic and as the following excerpt show the lyrics borrow many expressions from the original:

Do you know how to pony like bony maroney
Do you know how to twist well it goes like this it goes like this
Then you mash potato do the alligator do the alligator
And you twista twista like your baby sister
I want your baby sister give me your baby sister teach your baby sister
To rise up from her knees do the sweet pea do the sweet pee pee
Roll down on her back got to lose control got to lose control
Got to lose control and then you take control
Then you roll down on your back
Do you like it like that like it like that
Then you do the watusi yeah do the watusi¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 52.

¹²⁸ *Id.* 49.

As has already been pointed out, most of those expressions are present in Chris Kenners' original "Land of a Thousand Dances": some examples are "know how to pony like bony maroney", "know how to twist", "mashed potato", "do the alligator", "twist the twister like little sister", "roll over on your back" and "do the watusi". All of those expressions refer to dancing moves of the time and don't serve much of a lyric purpose in the original song apart from accentuating the dancing aspect of the track. Patti Smith does however pick some terms and make some word play in the section in which the "baby sister" occurs. Firstly she creates the progression "I want your baby sister", "give me you baby sister" and "teach your baby sister", thus creating a sense of possession over the female, an aspect previously explored in "Gloria In Excelsis Deo". The fact that Smith changed the expression "little sister" to "baby sister" further contributes to that misogynistic ambiance since the term is closer to "babe". However, Patti then empowers the female character saying "teach your baby sister to rise up from her knees" and from there she plays with the word "peas" that Kenners uses when he sings "Do the sweet peas". Smith completes the line "teach your baby sister to rise up from her knees, do the sweet pea, do the sweet pee pee" thus creating the image of a woman urinating whilst standing, usually a male trait. Finally Patti encourages the female to "Roll down on her back" and "lose control" evoking the idea of defiance to the status quo as she "got to lose control and then you [the female character] take control", thus gaining an empowerment she did not have before.

After the lines analyzed above, Smith picks up the story of Johnny that she introduced in the first section of the song but quickly comes back to the improvisation on Chris Kenners' classic as the following lines show:

There's a little place a place called space

It's a pretty little place it's across the track

Across the track and the name of that place
Is I like it like that I like it like that
I like it like that I like it like that
And the name of the band is
Twistelette Twistelette Twistelette
Twistelette Twistelette Twistelette¹²⁹

In these lines Smith once again improvises around words that are present in the 1962 classic making a very close retake on the final part of the song where Kenner sings:

I wanna show you
This little place
Across the track
The name of this place
Is I like it like that

The name of the band
The Twistolettes¹³⁰

Patti Smith closes this section of the song with a repetition of the band's name creating a similar closure to the one in the first section in which she repeats the word "horses".

The first section's title is precisely "Horses" and gives its name to the album. This complex title is ambiguous, and it conveys various layers; the horse is an important staple in American culture because it had faced extinction in the American continent

¹²⁹Lyricsfreak, 13sep.2018.

<https://www.lyricsfreak.com/c/chris+kenner/land+of+1000+dances_20240355.html>

¹³⁰Lyricsfreak, 13sep.2018.

<https://www.lyricsfreak.com/c/chris+kenner/land+of+1000+dances_20240355.html>

centuries before the Europeans colonized it. The Europeans were responsible for the reintroduction of the animal and it was of great importance for the native tribes because the horse allowed them to hunt buffalos. In American literature, cinema and television the horse also became iconic for its importance in the western genre. Cirlot explains in his *Dictionary of Symbols* that “The symbolism of the horse is extremely complex, and beyond a certain point not very clearly defined” but the author also mentions the symbolism of “a pair of horses, one white and one black, representing life and death”¹³¹. This symbolism might be of relevance when looking at Patti Smith’s album because “life and death” is perhaps one of the major themes of *Horses* and it is also important to note that the photo that makes the album cover is taken precisely in black and white. As an epigraph to “Land” in her *Collected Lyrics*, Patti Smith uses the following quotation from the Koran: “All the wisdom of the universe can be found between the eyes of the horse”¹³² clearly using the horse as a symbol of wisdom. Philip Shaw also writes that the horse can bear diverse meanings, adding that “horse can be read as a euphemism for heroin (Hendrix, Joplin and Morrison were all users)”¹³³. The figures of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison are relevant because although the song features various distinct elements and inspirations it is, as Shaw notes, “the deaths of Hendrix, Joplin, and Morrison that provide the song with its dominant note”¹³⁴. In this song Hendrix has a greater importance than Joplin and Morrison because as Smith explains in *The New Yorker* article “The Torch Singer” the song has a whole “Jimi Hendrix component”, the article also notes the relevant point that “Horses was recorded at Electric Lady Studios on Eighth Street, which Hendrix had set up before he died, in 1970”¹³⁵ and Smith explains the Hendrix component of the song in the following passage: “All of ‘Land’ is a dream of

¹³¹ Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (London: Routledge, 1990) 152.

¹³² Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 47.

¹³³ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 87.

¹³⁴ *Id.* 86.

¹³⁵ Sharon DeLano, “The Torch Singer” (*New Yorker* 11 Mar. 2002). 17 May 2018.

Jimi Hendrix as he's dying," Smith says. "Jimi Hendrix is dreaming a simple rock-and-roll song, and it takes him into all these other realms. 'Land speaks of the possibilities of rock and roll. Where it can take you.'" ¹³⁶

On the record "Land" starts with a spoken word narration, in fact the entirety of the first section, *Horses*, is a spoken word narration about a boy named Johnny. Johnny is partial based on William Burroughs novel *The Wild Boys* and the Johnny in that novel but also based on Jim Morrison. But the story of Johnny progressively built itself as it went through several versions. In June 1975 Patti Smith had written "jukebox cruci-fix" for the *Creem* magazine, and in that article, describing herself at a party, Patti writes: "I went out in the hallway and stood there drinking a glass of tea".¹³⁷ The evolution from the quote above to the first line of the song ("The boy was in the hallway drinking a glass of tea") involves a process of gender change, repeating the affirmation that Patti makes in her manifesto regarding the album being "beyond gender". Another early version of "Land" in prose-poem format is present in Patti Smith's *Early Work* the first couple of lines already coincide with the ones in the song, the end also makes reference to "Land of a Thousand Dances" but the rest of the text is completely different as the following extract shows:

The boy was in the hallway drinking a glass of tea. from the other end of the hallway
a rhythm was generating. a process of rude investigation. the hard glare stretched. he sat
down his glass. growth too is rude. the high grass indigo leaves. he lit a fag surveyed the
terrain. the red air split. his nostrils twitched. his throat, filling with the phlegm of
awareness, tightened over the sounds of his despair like a net over prey.

[...]

¹³⁶ Sharon DeLano, "The Torch Singer" (*New Yorker* 11 Mar. 2002). 17 May 2018.

¹³⁷ Patti Smith, "Jukebox Cruci-fix" (*Creem* 1975). 4 October 2018.

He buckles his cup lip hands pocket full of seed. he is his own steed ready to go man
go man go and he knows how to pony as he dives into a triptych of sweat dedicated to
nothing but the cultivation of a land of a thousand dances.¹³⁸

Patti Smith starts narrating the story of Johnny in a spoken-word style similar to the beginning of “Gloria In Excelsis Deo”. The narration seems to be a simple description of a boy drinking a glass of tea in a hallway, but quickly proves to be a complex story with several dimensions. The first lines of the song that are quoted below already offer clues for interpreting the characters if one reads between the lines.

The boy was in the hallway drinking a glass of tea
From the other end of the hallway a rhythm was generating
Another boy was sliding up the hallway
He merged perfectly with the hallway
He merged perfectly with the mirror in the hallway¹³⁹

The first thing that captures one’s attention in these lines is the repetition of the word “hallway” that Patti Smith recites on the record in an almost hypnotic way that is bound to capture the listener’s attention. In the song the line “From the other end of the hallway a rhythm was generating” marks the entering of a distant indistinct guitar creating a perfect symbiotic relation between the lyrics and the song right from the start. That first section of the song also introduces a mysterious second character described only as a “boy”. At this point there are already a couple of clues regarding the mysterious character; the narrator accentuates that “He merged perfectly with the hallway/ He merged perfectly with the mirror in the hallway” the image of a person merging with his

¹³⁸ Patti Smith, *Early Work* (London: Plexus Publishing Limited, 1994) 83.

¹³⁹ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 47.

own reflection hints the possibility of a split personality becoming whole, but as Shaw notes the two phased vocal tracks that mimic each other “creates a countereffect, disrupting the conceptual harmony signified by the text”.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore Shaw establishes a connection with the psychoanalyst Lacan and his concept of the “Mirror Stage”. In simple terms the “Mirror Stage” concept explores the process of the formation of the ego through the ability that the individual acquires to identify him/herself in the mirror’s reflection. The relation between the ego and the reflection will always be linked to the ancient Greek myth of Narcissus (which tells of a man of such beauty that he fell in love with his own reflection in the river, resulting in his death by drowning) – and in this regard Lacan theorizes that the “Mirror image” “typifies an essential libidinal relationship with the body image”¹⁴¹, hence the sexual connotation that “Land” has.

The confrontation between the second boy and Johnny is narrated in the following lines:

The boy looked at Johnny Johnny wanted to run
but the movie kept moving as planned
The boy took Johnny he pressed him against the locker
He drove it in he drove it home he drove it deep in Johnny
The boy disappeared Johnny fell on his knees
started crashing his head against the locker
started crashing his head against the locker
started laughing hysterically¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 90.

¹⁴¹ Jaques Lacan, “Some reflections on the Ego”, 1953. 13 September 2018.
<<http://aejcpp.free.fr/lacan/1951-05-02.htm>>

¹⁴² Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 47.

This conflict is susceptible to two parallel interpretations, that the boy raped Johnny and that the boy murdered Johnny with a knife. The complexity of the story permits the existence of those two interpretations without one invalidating the other because the previous notion that the second boy merging with the hallway and with the mirror indicates he might be a second personality of Johnny himself and the hallway that is so thoroughly repeated at the beginning of the song is a psychological space rather than a physical one. After the description of the assault the song transitions into the second section by introducing the figure of horses as the following lines show:

When suddenly Johnny
gets the feeling
he's being surrounded by
horses horses horses
coming in all directions
white shining silver studs with their noses in flames
He saw horses horses horses
horses horses horses horses horses¹⁴³

In the lines above there is also the first allusion to drugs in the song through the figure of the white horses with their noses in flames, the “horse can be read as a euphemism for heroin” as Shaw points out, and the use of the colour white and the expression “with their noses in flames” might be a reference to cocaine, or snorting cocaine.

The final section of the song is titled “La Mer (de)” a word-play that Patti Smith makes with the French expression “la mer” that translates as “the sea”, a phonetic

¹⁴³ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 47.

connotation to “mare” (a female horse), “merde”, the French word for “shit” and a phonetic resonance to the word “murder”.

“La Mer (de)” continues the story of Johnny. After his rape/murder at the end of “Horses” Johnny had his revival in the middle section of “Land of a Thousand Dances” where the reference to the use of drugs is clear through the line “And I fill my nose with snow”, snow being slang for cocaine. Johnny’s revival in “Land of a Thousand Dances” is narrated in the following lines:

Life is filled with holes Johnny’s laying there in his sperm coffin
Angel looks down at him and says ah pretty boy
Can’t you show me nothing but surrender
Johnny gets up takes off his leather jacket
Taped to his chest there’s the answer
He got pen knives and jack knives and
Switchblades preferred switchblades preferred
He cries he screams says
Life is full of pain I push it through my brain
And I fill my nose with snow and go Rimbaud
Go Rimbaud go Rimbaud oh go Johnny go¹⁴⁴

After those lines there is a crescendo in the song that creates an ambience that accentuates both the reincarnation of Johnny and the transition to the narcotic state after Johnny fills his nose with snow”. In the beginning of “La Mer (de)” that euphoria settles down again as the narration focus on “the sea of possibilities” as the lines bellow show:

Let it calm down let it calm down

¹⁴⁴ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 49.

Patti Smith: Horses, Poetry in Musical Form

In the night in the eye of the forest
There's a mare black and shining with yellow hair
I put my fingers through her silken hair
And found a stair I didn't waste time
I just walked right up and saw that up there
There is a sea up there there is a sea up there
There is a sea up there there is a sea up there
There is a sea seize the possibility
There is no land but the land
[Up there is just a sea of possibilities]
[...]¹⁴⁵

The lines above also mention a black mare, contrasting with the white horses that are mentioned in the final lines of the first section. Then Johnny reappears and in this section the ambiguity between sex and violence is further explored and the references to drugs return in these lines:

I was standing there with my legs spread like a sailor
[In a sea of possibilities] I felt his hand on my knee
[On the screen] And I looked at Johnny
And handed him a branch of coral flame
[In the heart of man] The waves were coming in
Like Arabian stallions gradually lapping into sea horses
He picked up the blade and he pressed it against
His smooth throat and let it dip in [the veins]
Dip in to the sea the sea of possibilities
It started hardening it started hardening in my hand
And I felt the arrows of desire¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 50.

In this excerpt the narrative resembles a sex scene with lines like “I was standing here with my legs spread like a sailor”, “I felt his hand on my knee”, “It started hardening in my hand” and “the arrows of desire” but the violence aspect is kept by the image of Johnny pressing a blade against his own throat. The mention of drugs are present in background layers of vocals that evoke “spoons” and “veins”. The sea horse in this section is the third type of horse mentioned, after the common horse and the mare, corroborating the drug connection that the figure of the horse might have.

The song then proceeds to a trip into Johnny’s “cranium”, as Smith writes in the line “I put my hand inside his cranium, oh we had such a braniac-amour”,¹⁴⁷ and the description appears to narrate Johnny’s suicide. To narrate this trip Patti uses various symbols, like the lines “His skull shot open coiled snakes/ White and shiny twirling and encircling/ Our lives are now entwined we will four¹⁴⁸ years be together”¹⁴⁹ where the “coiled snakes resemble the brain while simultaneously proportionating the “entwined” aspect of both Jonny’s egos. With Johnny’s revival in the second section of the song his “murderous alter ego”¹⁵⁰, as Shaw puts it, is no longer present, as if both sides of Johnny merged together and therefore Johnny now kills himself. About that part in the first section of the song where Johnny is confronted by his alter ego and finally surrenders to it Philip Shaw writes the following:

[...] Thus in “Horses,” the boy and Johnny may be regarded as two aspects of the same personality, with the boy taking on the role of the wrathful and, indeed, murderous alter ego. The object that he subsequently drives into Johnny is indeterminate: but whether

¹⁴⁶ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 50, 51.

¹⁴⁷ *Id.* 51.

¹⁴⁸ In this quote the word “four” is likely to be a misspelling of the word “for”.

¹⁴⁹ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 51.

¹⁵⁰ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 91.

as switchblade, spike, or phallus, the act itself collapses the boundary between eras (life) and thanatos (death). To emphasize “The boy disappeared,” Smith cuts off the second vocal track. Abandoned by his fatal other, Johnny falls into hysteria, “crashing his head against the locker.” At this point, the primary vocal becomes more assertive, an effect enhanced by the addition of reverb (“suddenly”) and by the gathering intensity of the rhythm guitar, bass drum, and hi-hat cymbal. When Johnny finally surrenders his ego, bass, rhythm guitar, and drums mimic the accelerated pulse beat to oblivion by means of the accented vocal stresses of “horses horses horses horses.”¹⁵¹

An interesting aspect that Shaw notes in the quotation above is that the words and music are often symbiotic thus improving the artistry of both elements of the song. That is not exclusive to “Land” but can be perceived in other songs on the album as has already been seen.

Elegie

The final track on *Horses*, as its title indicates, is an elegy. However the song’s title is written in French with –with ‘ie’ at the end instead of a ‘y’. The song is a farewell to Patti Smith’s deceased heroes like Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin and Arthur Rimbaud all of whom, to a greater or lesser extent, perished at a young age, victims of their own excessive lifestyle that included drug abuse. Over the years it has expanded as a tribute to many other artists who have passed away. When performing the song live even to this day Smith calls out those names adding figures who were not deceased at the time

¹⁵¹ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith’s Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 91.

the lyrics were written (one example would be Joey, Johnny, Dee Dee and Tommy Ramone, the four original members of the Ramones).

The opening line of the song “I just don’t know what to do tonight”¹⁵² provides a sense of dismay that results from grieving, however it is not the lyricism but the tone of the song that reveals its grieving aspect from start. Lyrically the first stanza has a sad atmosphere but it is not until the last line that the listener gets the confirmation that death is the reason for that gloomy ambiance.

The lyrics are written in the first person, thus casting the focus on the narrator’s solitude and despair rather than focusing on the deceased individual. The absence of this deceased individual contributes to the plurality of the tribute.

The second stanza opens with: “There must be something I can dream tonight”.¹⁵³ This is a parallel to the opening line of the previous verse but with a more positive tone, which is appropriate because this stanza introduces the idea of carrying the torch of the deceased heroes, a message that is strong in the last line of the stanza: “All the fire is frozen yet still I have the will”.¹⁵⁴ The “fire” represents the art that is frozen due to the death of the great artists but the “will”, or the untamable desire that Smith expresses in this line will keep the flame burning. This sense of duty for the continuity of the previous generation of artist’s work is strongly present in this last section of *Horses* which focus on Patti Smith’s heroes as seen before.

“Elegie” was originally recorded on September 18 1975, the fifth anniversary of the tragic death of Jimi Hendrix in London (although Philip Shaw mistakenly writes, in *Patti Smith’s Horses*, that it was the sixth).

¹⁵² Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 53.

¹⁵³ *Id.* 53.

¹⁵⁴ *Id.* 53.

In the final stanza of the song – that is quoted below – Patti Smith retakes the idea that the deaths of those great artists gives the opportunity for her to carry on their legacy as the first two lines of the stanza shows, she hears music “in the distance”, “trumpets” and “violins” representing angels in heaven that are transferring to her the energy that makes her skin glow.

Trumpets, violins, I hear them in the distance
And my skin emits a ray
But I think it's sad, it's much too bad
That all our friends can't be with us today ¹⁵⁵

Regarding the message that “Elegie” transmits about death Shaw does in fact point it all out very clearly in his final paragraph about this song by writing the following:

In the end, “Elegie” suggests the futility of our attempts to come to terms with loss. Here, so-called closure is as perilous and fragile as the experience, death, that it seeks to comprehend and contain. Like its precursors in the elegiac poetic tradition, such as Milton’s “Lycidas” (1638) and Shelley’s “Adonais” (1821), Smith’s “Elegie” is thus open-ended and radically decentered; it speaks disturbingly of the richness of death, of how loss can be transformed into profit; of how a singer can feed on the legacy of the dead (Morrison, Hendrix, Rimbaud), and of how declarations of self-reliance and autonomy (“Moving on my own ... I have the will”) are haunted and undermined by attendant feelings of guilt and sorrow. *Horses* could not have a finer conclusion.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 53.

¹⁵⁶ Philip Shaw, *Patti Smith's Horses* (New York: Continuum, 2008) 122.

Chapter IV: After Horses

Horses paved the way for a career that is still preeminent after 43 years. Since the release of *Horses*, Patti Smith has added ten more albums to her catalogue and frequently published books since 1972. Most of the themes explored in the debut album are revisited in her subsequent musical works. "Shamanic" is a recurrent word when describing Patti Smith, according to Sharon DeLano in "The Torch Singer" "Burroughs used the word "shaman" to describe Smith—"someone in touch with other levels of reality." *The New York Review of Books* quoted in the back cover blurb of *Collected Lyrics* comments: "The shamanic impulse – invocation of spirits, channeling of voices of dead poets, prayer to unknown forces – pulses through the three hundred pages or so of Smith's *Collected Lyrics*." In *Horses* that "shamanic impulse" is evident from the closing chants of "Birdland" to the grieving tone of "Elegie".

Throughout her considerable discography, Patti's shamanic voice haunts the listener with lines like those that open "Ghost Dance" on the 1978 album *Easter* or the chorus from "Dancing Barefoot" in *Wave*, released in 1979, or on her most recent 2012 studio record *Banga* the song "Fuji-San". Songs quoted bellow in the order given above:

What is it children that falls from the sky

Tayi taya tayi aye aye

Mona from heaven from the most high

Food from the father tayi taya aye

We shall live again we shall live again

Shake out the ghost dance¹⁵⁷

Here I go and I don't know why

I spin so ceaselessly

Could it be he's taking over me

I'm dancing barefoot

Heading for a spin

Some strange music draws me in

Makes me come on like some heroine¹⁵⁸

Oh mountain of our eyes

What do you see?

The girl with the almond eyes

Bowing to thee

Immortal soldiers

Clear the path

Shake the almond tree

Oh mountain of our eyes

Oh hear our plea

Oh hear our plea¹⁵⁹

References to religion and the spiritual also did not end with *Horses*, and references to God, Angels and other forms of divinity are present all across Patti Smith's extensive repertoire of songs. In this case, particular mention must be made of the song "Wave" from the album with the same name. The song is dedicated to Albino Luciano, best known as Pope John Paul I and it is a monologue that Smith narrates over a piano melody

¹⁵⁷ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 82.

¹⁵⁸ *Id.* 101.

¹⁵⁹ *Id.* 256.

and the lyrics explore the ambiguity of the word “wave” as the first lines mention a beach and later the word refers to the Pope waving at people as the lines below show:

[...] I like to watch you when you're walking back and forth on the beach. And the way your, the way your cloth looks. I like I like to see the edges, the bottom of it get all wet when you're walking near the water there. It's real nice to talk to you. I didn't. I-I-I-I. How are you? How are you? I saw I saw you from your balcony window and you were standing there waving at everybody. It was really great because there was about a billion people there, but when I was waving to you, the way your face was, it was so, the way your face was, it made me feel exactly like we're, it's not that you were just waving to me, but that we were we were waving to each other. [...]¹⁶⁰

Nor is *Horses* the only album on which Patti pays tribute to her heroes, the song “Easter” from the album with the same is dedicated to Arthur Rimbaud and his family, “Grateful” from the 2000 album *Gung Ho* is dedicated to Jerry Garcia, guitarist of the legendary psychedelic rock band Grateful Dead – hence the song’s title – who passed away in 1995, and “Paths That Cross” on the 1988 album *Dream of Life* is dedicated to Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr. who had been a hero and a mentor to Patti and Robert Mapplethorpe and who had died the year before the release of the album. Mapplethorpe himself had a song written about him, titled “Memorial Song”. Smith’s family is also honored in songs on later albums: on *Gung Ho* the song “China Bird” is in memory of Grand H. Smith, Patti’s father, and on *Trampin’* (2004) the song “Mother Rose” is dedicated to Beverly Williams Smith, her mother. Smith not only honored artists who paved the way to her career, like Hendrix, Morrison and Garcia but also artists that emerged after her, such as Kurt Cobain and Amy Winehouse, to whom she dedicated the songs “About a Boy” and “This is the Girl” respectively.

¹⁶⁰ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) *Lyrics* 111.

Themes related to activism have also been present in Patti Smith's work from the early poems to the latest songs. The empowerment of the female had been thoroughly explored in the early works with poem like "seventh heaven" and "Piss" Factory" as was mentioned in the second chapter of this dissertation, in *Horses* as was seen in the chapter that is dedicated to that album most of the songs approach that theme and it continues to be vastly important in her later work. In this regard one song in particular should be highlighted; one of the most iconic Patti Smith songs, "People Have the Power", was recorded for the album *Dream of Life* in 1988 and has since become a timeless anthem for revolution, used for many occasions, and it has even been performed by the artist herself at Green Party rallies. The title of the song is strong enough but the revolutionary message spreads through the song as the following excerpts make evident:

Vengeful aspects became suspect
And bending low as if to hear
And the armies ceased advancing
Because the people had their ear
And the shepherds and the soldiers
Lay beneath the stars
Exchanging visions
Laying arms
To waste in the dust
In from the shining valleys
Where the pure air recognized
And my senses newly opened
I awakened to the cry

[...]

The people have the power

The power to dream to rule

To wrestle the Earth from fools

It's decreed the people rule [...] ¹⁶¹

In the more recent years Patti Smith has continued to write songs and literary works and has continued to enjoy critical success and recognition. She has even been invited to participate in many different projects, the most famous probably being the song “Capitol Letter” she wrote for the film *Hunger Games: Catching Fire*. More recently, Smith cemented her status as a rock n’ roll icon and an important name when discussing literature in music when she was invited by Bob Dylan himself to perform at his Nobel Prize for Literature Award ceremony.

¹⁶¹ Patti Smith, *Collected Lyrics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016) 115, 116.

Conclusion

It is safe to conclude that Patti Smith was an extremely promising artist-in-the-making from a very young age. Guided by her parents' reading habits she absorbed influences from some of the greatest literary figures from around the world; from Blake to Whitman and from Eliot to Rimbaud. Music was an interest that Smith's parents also activated, thus Patti grew up dreaming of becoming a writer and a singer.

Initially, Patti Smith wrote poems, drawing much influence from her idols like Arthur Rimbaud and from her rock n' roll heroes, such as Brian Jones, Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix. The early poems already had a sense of musicality to them as Smith was always conscientious of the performative capacity of the word but it was in 1971 when, accompanied with Lenny Kaye, she fused together music and poetry reading that a door to a new beginning opened up. That door led to *Horses*.

In 1975 Patti Smith awoke as a new persona, a figure that aimed to transcend gender, religion, social status and that defied death. The result was an iconic album that received tremendous critical acclaim and ended up, still to this day, influencing numerous artists.

In *Horses* Patti Smith revisits themes that she had already written about before but she also explores new paths. For the most part the album revolves around three main themes: the new persona that she is trying to define, who is an artist above and beyond anything else; the autobiographical recollections about herself and her family; and an adoration of her heroes that are divine for her.

Horses is the foundation stone of the career that Patti Smith has constructed so far and that has gone as far as sharing the stage with Dalai Lama and accepting prestigious invitations such as performing for the Pope in the Vatican and at Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize For Literature Award ceremony.

Patti Smith's transgressiveness earned her the nickname the "Godmother of Punk" but as has been asserted in this dissertation such a title is not fitting because of her extreme musical and philosophical differences with more canonical Punk artists (and particularly those of British origin). "Shaman" is a more fitting title and it is often attributed to her because of her vocal tone, the symbolism in her songs and the mysticism around the songs and her live performances. But then again "The Torch Singer" is the expression that Sharon DeLano uses and is the description that I find the most fitting. "The Torch Singer" perfectly describes the Prometheus-like aspect of Patti Smith who stole and is still stealing the fire from the graves of her heroes – dead rockers and poets – and giving it to humankind in the form of her prodigious work.

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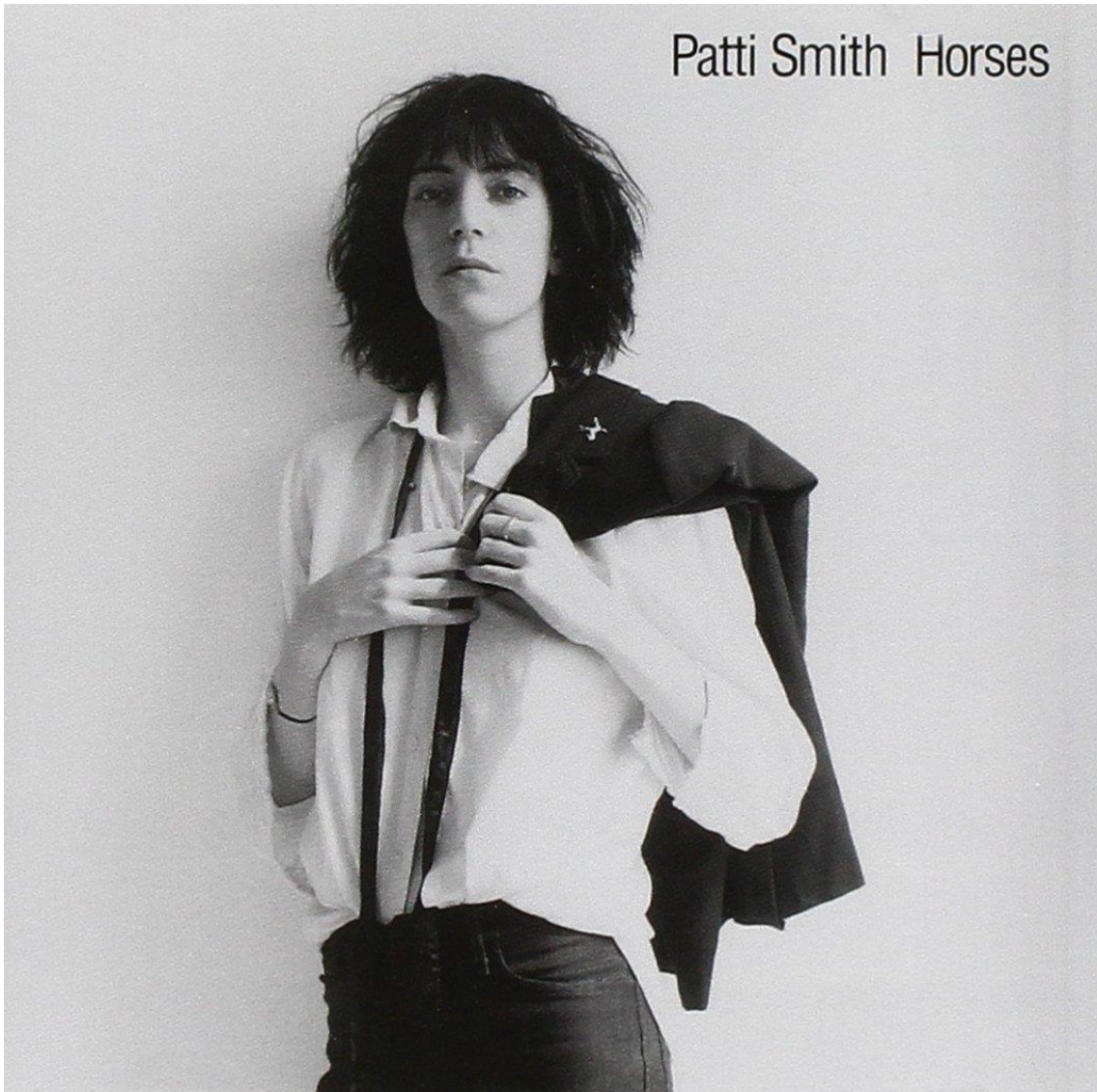
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Appendix



Patti Smith: Horses, Poetry in Musical Form



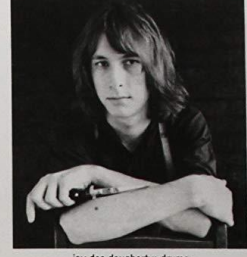
richard sohl: piano



lenny kaye: lead guitar



ivan kral: guitar, bass



jay dee daugherty: drums

compacted awareness . . . gems flattening . . . long streams of resin tools . . . kool system
of destine wax sculpt . . . drums tongue and waves slapping . . . the feel of horses long
before horses enter the scene . . . molten tar stud dead w/ bones and glass and the teeth
of women . . . veins filled w/ existence . . . beyond race gender baptism mathematics poli-
tricks . . . assassinating rythum . . . c-rude transending . . . soul-ar energy in the shape
of a laughing pack of scarabs dressed in coats of milk armour . . . grace greased w/ merc
and henna . . . hair wires . . . neither the desire nor the ability to stop i plopp on the bed
pink electric immediate some human light bulb these bands around my neck should
reveal what state i'm in . . . only history (gentle rocking mona lisa) seals . . . only histoire
is responsible for the ultimate cannonizing . . . as for me i am truly totally ready to go . . .

sonic klein man its me my shape burnt in the sky its me the memoire of me racing thru
the eye of the mer thru the eye of the sea thru the arm of the needle merging and jacking
new filaments new risks etched forever in a cold system of wax . . . horses groping for a
sign for a breath . . .

charms. sweet angels—you have made me no longer afraid of death.

gloria/redondo beach/birdland/free money
kimberly/break it up/land/elegie

produced by: john cale

executive producer: wartoke records inc.

engineering: bernie kirsh

assistant engineer: frank d augusta

recorded and mixed at electric lady studios nyc

mastered by bernie kirsh and bob ludwig at sterling sound inc.

guitars on break it up: tom verlaine (television)

guitars on elegie: allen lanier* (blue oyster cult)

birdland was inspired by peter reich and huey smith

*allen lanier appears through the courtesy of columbia records

photography: robert mapplethorpe design: bob heimall

patti smith is exclusively managed by the wartoke concern inc. nyc

special thanks to jane friedman who knew . . .

de l'ame pour l'ame



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