

Heavy Metal: A Musical Subculture and Literature

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Letter of Recommendation

Riva Rana has completed her thesis entitled “Heavy Metal: A Musical Subculture and Literature” under my supervision. I hereby recommend her thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Abstract

This research work, in efforts to unravel shared characteristics between heavy metal and literature, explicates heavy metal as extension of culture. Heavy metal is one of the most diverse genres of today's music world. The culture and lyrics of heavy metal resemble European literary Romanticism in its emphasis on the individual and nature. Heavy metal lyrics are literature in the simplest form. As literature has been changing lives and societies across the globe, heavy metal's influence is no different from that of literary work. Music style of this genre is inspired from many historical events. Many songs and lyrics are based on a made up story from the world of fantasy. Heavy metal, with its blend of verbal and non-verbal elements, fascinates the way in which it addresses themes and concepts traditionally and purview of theology and aesthetics. Close textual analysis for this research has been done through the analysis of the lyrical content of some heavy metal songs.

Heavy Metal: A Musical Subculture and Literature

This research work exposes heavy metal as a literary genre in their shared characteristics in terms of narrative and sound of verbal and non–visual arts. By exposing notations of music in conformity with sound of poetry, the heavy metal music system unfolds underlying connections between literary genre and non –verbal art of music. Historically, the 1960s was a time when rock music began to take hold on its listeners and became a powerful and influential music genre. By the end of the decade, a new form of rock music known as heavy metal began to form in Britain. This genre of rock, which was generally more aggressive and of a more serious tone than other types of music, gained popularity in England and in many other countries. In early 1970s, this genre of music developed in the United States as well, but with more dramatic, darker flair. Heavy metal evolved and grew throughout the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and continues to thrive in the current music industry. From there the style evolved and branched into many different subgenres. Simply put, heavy metal is a wide umbrella term characterizing a style of music that is generally loud and expressive which came in sense since late 1960's.

Heavy metal bands usually have a singer, a lead guitarist, a rhythm guitarist, a bassist and a drummer. Depending upon the genre, other instruments like keyboards, organs, flute, etc. are also used. Heavy metal songs are loud and aggressive with strong rhythm. This style of music is known for an overpowering drumbeat, distorted electric guitar, clean vocals with explosive lyrics and some screaming on the side. Bands like Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Deep Purple are regarded as pioneers and founders of this genre. The bands that performed this revolutionary music did not develop their style in a vacuum. Rather, their country of origin influenced most of their creations. Lifestyle of working class in 20th century Britain, English historical

events, British cultural works and social alienation of the British youth are manifested in British heavy metal music and noticeably influenced heavy metal musicians' styles.

Musically, the genre saw an appropriation from closely related rock and blues. Many practitioners of metal music identify classical musicians as a source of inspiration as well. Heavy metal musicians amalgamated aspects of blues music with psychedelic rock to produce the signature sound of the genre. With the popularity surrounding this distinct type of music, several heavy metal bands rose from the dark and have outlasted many trendier genres and continue to evolve and become popular today.

Notable heavy metal artists during the 1960s and 70s include Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, Aerosmith, Alice Cooper, Cream, Judas Priest, Kiss, Motorhead, etc. By the end of the 1970s, heavy metal was briefly overshadowed by disco music, but it once again regained popularity by the 1980s. Notable artists or bands during that time include Def Leppard, Iron Maiden, Saxon, Van Halen, etc. These bands enjoyed continued success throughout the 1990s even with the increasing popularity of rap music.

Heavy metal has become more than just a genre of music. It has become a subculture that not only listens to bands that play heavy metal but also attends concerts. Fans of this music embrace its style, way of thinking, behavior, language and symbolism. Members of this subculture have established their own identity. They are called 'metal head' and 'head banger,' the former for obvious reasons and the latter due to head banging being the popular move at heavy metal concerts. Another common nickname is 'thrasher' due to heavy metal's well known rapid beat. They, in addition to being extremely enthusiastic about the music, follow the fashion and behavioural rules imposed by the subculture.



Figure 1. Metalheads headbanging during a concert.

The heavy metal distinctive fashion remarkably contrasts it from other styles. Metal heads usually wear black T-shirt, leather jacket, blue jeans and boots. Hi-top basketball shoes are more common with old school trash metal lovers. T-shirts and sometimes baseball caps can have the name or logo of a metal band imprinted on them, allowing others to see what that person's favourite band is. This very fact is what often leads to mutual appreciation of each other's musical tastes. Leather objects, like wrist bands, gauntlets or belts, decorated with metal spikes or chains are also very popular among metal music lovers. Necklaces often have a cross or a skull medallion. Moreover, colourful tattoos can be often found on the arms of metal heads. With development of Heavy Metal and its sub-genres, long hair gained new connotations. Long hair became a way to look similar to Vikings/Pagans.



Figure 2. Judas Priest, in typical heavy metal stage attire, performing at the VH1 Rock Honors on May 25, 2006.

The heavy metal community has its own norms, values and behaviors. The “code of authenticity” must be followed by bands which have to show a “disinterest in commercial appeal” and a refusal to “sell out”. Another factor present in the metal code is the “opposition to established authority, and separateness from the rest of society”. The metal performer becomes an ideal image of the music and subculture, being compelled to show total devotion to the music. A performer needs to be an “idealized representative of the subculture”. Authenticity holds core value in this subculture. The term poseur (or poser) is used to describe "a person who habitually pretends to be something he/she is not," as in adopting the appearance and clothing style of the metal scene without truly understanding the culture and its music.

Head banging and the heavy metal hand signs, often referred to as “metal fingers”, “metal horns” or “Satan fingers” also play an important role in the subculture. Head banging is the “dance” of choice for metal heads. It is an activity most metal heads engage in, refers to a “violent rhythmic shaking of the head by fans of heavy metal music”. Metal heads usually ‘head bang’ when they get lost in the music. It is more often seen in the near proximity of the stage and it is not absent from any show. Moshing or slam dancing is another activity in which participants bump, jostle, and slam into one another. Even though this genre of music tends to be stigmatized by the general public, heavy metal fans follow strict rules of 'mosh pit etiquette', which they pass on to the next generation. The metal horns were popularized in the subculture by Ronnie James Dio, a member of Black Sabbath, who claimed his grandmother used the sign to keep away the “evil eye”. Nowadays, this is a sign widely used by fans not only in concerts, but also in other social gatherings.



Figure 3. Vocalist Ronnie James Dio making the metal horn (corns) sign.

Even though heavy metal music is already widespread and popular worldwide, misconceptions about heavy metal are still prevalent in society. One of the most common misconceptions is that fans of heavy metal music are considered Satanist, drunkards, and primitive. Non-metal heads perceive this music genre as brutal and noisy, even very disturbing, but there is a completely different approach to it. Most of the people are unfamiliar with the fact, that most of heavy metal songs have very rich context. This music style has so much to offer. This leads to the primary aim of this research, which is, represent heavy metal as a literary genre.

Bob Dylan was awarded with the Nobel Prize in Literature 2016 "for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition" (Bob Dylan np). He is the first musician to win the award, an honor that elevates him into the company of T. S. Eliot, Gabriel García Márquez, Toni Morrison and Samuel Beckett. Achievement as such redefines the boundaries of literature.

There has been a number of scholarly arguments that demonstrates the pedagogical effectiveness of certain Heavy metal music that is relevant to the numerous studies, including linguistics and literature. The trend began in 2008 after Doctor Niall Scott, Senior lecturer in Ethics at the University of Central Lancashire, organized the first international academic conference centered on Heavy metal (Shepherd).

Four years later, on November 2012, University of Dayton symposium entitled "Heavy Metal for the Sophisticated Educated Ear" examined the societal implications of the music's controversial culture, while also discussing the history behind Heavy metal (Ritchie).

The application of Heavy metal to literary studies is becoming an increasingly prevalent feature among both college and high school curricula

because of its association with modern literary genres, such as gothic, romanticism and post-modernism and its didactic alteration of the classics. In a 2013 interview with DeathMetal.org, Professor Dr. Martin Jacobsen was asked about the similarities between Heavy metal and literature. The West Texas A & M English instructor remarked, "... the questioning mindset of a humanities major surely brings them in line with Heavy metal" (Stevens).

In his essay "Mindcrime and Doublethink: Using Music to Teach Dystopian literature," Daniel Ian Rubin notes that the use of relating music to literature can benefit a student's analytical abilities by allowing him/her to look critically both at and beyond the text, toward other sources:

The use of non-print materials, such as music, can help students engage with the literature presented and encourage a higher level of literary and socio cultural analysis than just covering the text alone. And reading novels takes on a new spin for students when they are perceived through a musical perspective. (78)

Rubin's pro-music discourse derives from a particular unit implemented in both his junior and senior level British literature classes, a space traditionally reserved for texts such as *Macbeth*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Gerd Bayer, author and editor of *Heavy Metal Music in Britain*, revealed that the band Iron Maiden's lyrics reflect a classical influence that varies from the "stock mythology of the Icarus story (Flight of Icarus) and the Odyssey's sirens (Ghost of the Navigator), to a more historiographical approach in 1986's 'Alexander the Great'" (8). If instructors are willing to disregard any unfavorable presuppositions held toward heavy metal, they might discover the plethora of worthwhile material bands such as Iron Maiden have produced.

A certain class added to the course offering list for West Texas A&M University's English department has filled the intellectual void. That sophomore-level course, referred to as Introduction to Literature: Heavy metal as Literary Genre, has succeeded in turning the heads of scholars and Heavy metal zealots alike (Stevens). As we will see, music also constitutes as a new means of instruction which can provoke greater student response in the classroom. Again, the music serves the listener/student on multiple levels because the lyrics serve as a text for literary analysis, while the instrumentation and sounds stimulate the individual's aural senses which can often be neglected in formal education.

Professor Dr. Martin Jacobsen, a linguistics scholar, is a firm believer in the intellectual merit of Heavy metal and remarked on its practicality in literature. According to him, "the thematic content of Heavy metal lends itself to the same kind of thought processes that reading literature would bring up" (Richardson). Dr. Martin Jacobsen opines:

You constantly see these nods to the intellectual tradition that these writers, these lyricists come from. It's connected itself and grounded itself in literary tradition," he said. "Therefore it's reasonable to conclude that it is a form of literature as well as a form of music. (np)

The idea behind Jacobsen's class arose from a previous class exercise involving syntactical structure. Richardson's article "WT adds heavy metal lit class" recaps Dr. Jacobsen's initial multi-media work: "As an illustration, [Jacobsen] diagrammed the lyrics of Iron Maiden's 'Out of the Silent Planet' in their entirety. He then created a PowerPoint presentation of all the diagrammed lyrics and played the song along with it." The subsequent student interest generated after Dr. Jacobsen's presentation paved the way for his current 2000-level course: "The students were mad for it. They just

thought it was crazy and they loved it” (Richardson). This grassroots demand for such a class demonstrates the music’s perceived academic worth among students and certain scholars, but it also exhibits the passionate adoration displayed by young heavy metal fans.

Dr. Martin Jacobsen’s academic efforts have drawn the interest of many heavy metal fan site writers and editors across the Web, including Brett Stevens of *DeathMetal.org*. Stevens’ subsequent interview with Dr. Martin Jacobsen focused on the correlation between literature and heavy metal. Stevens asked Dr. Jacobsen to cite some examples of literary influence on heavy metal artists, to which the professor replied: “Rush and Dream Theater in prog metal use literary themes and models (like Avn Rand’s ideas in 2112 or the Hamlet motif in DT’s “Pull Me Under” or the Metropolis suite).” The connection between literature and heavy metal was further elaborated when Stevens challenged Dr. Martin Jacobsen to determine which literary movements the instructor felt were most reminiscent of the music:

Much of it is similar in nature to Romanticism. Surely Death Metal and Black Metal have postmodern elements. It is a movement, I think, and what’s interesting to me is how it has so many sub-genres within it. We can really analyze metal as a literature of it’s [sic] own making. While it’s interesting that metal artists use so much from literature, it’s even more interesting that they have enough depth and innovation to create an independent ethos. (np)

Laura Wiebe also perceives Heavy metal as an applicable academic discourse. Wiebe reveals that beneath some of the distracting garishness of Heavy metal, there exists “the potential for social consciousness, and for an intelligent critique of human behavior and contemporary civilization” (Bayer 7). Rammstein’s bilingual

release “Amerika” epitomizes this notion of heavy metal operating as social commentary with a cynical view towards contemporary culture. The English translation of the German portion of the song’s lyrics reveals disparagement for both American globalization and Anglocentrism.

Professor Martina Luke’s essay dealt with the use of Heavy metal in her foreign language and linguistics class. The German-speaking industrial metal band Rammstein was the primary subject of her music-related teachings: “The music of the group Rammstein can be an effective instrument in the German language learning to teach both culture and the language while enhancing oral-aural skills” (Luke 22). One of Dr. Lüke’s primary arguments in her 2011 essay “Modern Classics: Reflections on Rammstein in the German Class,” is the symbiotic relationship held between music and literature throughout history (16). In this light, Dr Luke reposes:

... the studio albums *Reise, Reise* and *Rosenrot*, released in 2004 and 2005, have very poetic topics and contents, which are adopted from classical German texts. For example, “Dalai Lama” from the album *Reise, Reise* is a modern version of one of Germany’s most famous ballads: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s “Erlkönig. (17)

Robin and Luke each relate the thematic coherence of literature to certain bands’ lyrics; and much like other non-print materials which have now budged their way into the classroom, the music succeeds in producing an engaged reaction from students. Tyler Snodgrass, another high school English teacher, noticed an immediate change in student behavior when he decided to use Heavy metal songs to assist his 20th century unit referred to as “War as lit.” Snodgrass references the 2007 California Teacher of the Year Alan Sitomer, a major advocate of

using music in the classroom, in his argument for the value Heavy metal possesses in providing historical enlightenment to listeners. One of the Sitomer's presentations on the value of the music in the classroom illustrates the various angles of academic analysis which can be applied to Iron Maiden's 1983 single "Run to the Hills" (Snodgrass). A highly acclaimed track within the heavy metal community and one known for its pounding rhythm and direct lyrics, "Run to the Hills" is broken down by Snodgrass as he expounds upon Sitomer's presentation:

This song alone could be used in English to teach about Native American literature or genocide...in American history class to teach early American history or immigration, in science class to teach about disease, or even in math to teach percentages (using the lyrics to inspire a word problem in which students figure out what percentage of native Americans were wiped out by disease brought from overseas). (np)

Imke Von Helden's essay renders an analysis of Old Norse mythology in Viking metal music in terms of both lyrics and cover artworks. Viking metal bands adopt and reinterpret saga themes, stories and characters, mainly taken from Eddas. Heroic or romantic imagery plays an important role among metal bands in general. Strong Viking warriors in chain mail and leather as well as scenes of assumedly everyday Viking life in Northern landscapes can be found in many cover booklets. In Pagan metal, the term 'Pagan' is used quite vaguely in that it does not always have a connection to any religion at all – it might simply mean that the band or fan loves nature and metal or plays with names from mythology like Odin or Thor (Helden 36). Literature is often utilized

in pagan and Viking metal in equal measure. The Eddas and other material from Old Norse mythology are employed in most of the cases.

Heavy metal music's emergence coincided with the decline of the youth culture and anti-war movement that drove the imagination of the young generation during the early 1960s. Heavy metal's major source for its imagery and rhetoric of chaos is religion, particularly Judeo-Christian and Paganism (Weinstein 39). Religion and war are the most frequently appearing themes, with religion being the subject either explicitly or implicitly. Religion in dialogue is exercised primarily through lyrics, specifically those grounded in ideas of Christianity, Satanism and good versus evil. Religious symbols are often used to refer to something different or are given a new meaning altogether.

Rafalovich and Schneider argue that "today's metal scene offers a vehicle to express the subjective condition of an insidious repression" (21). Andrew Kemp discusses the relation between the genre of Heavy metal and Liberalism and Individualism. He believes that Heavy metal music exhibits the elements of Individualism and Liberalism (Kemp). Heavy metal bands often revolve their lyrics around medieval themes, such as the popular Dungeons and Dragons games and the works of J. R. R. Tolkien ironically (Christi 67). Heavy metal music is actually a display of emotions and views that often have a purging effect which helps youth listening to metal cope with the constantly changing world around them. Self-fulfillment and self-expression are held high in this genre whereas self-restraint and self-denial are scorned as the values of the timid, the dull, and the humorless.

For a heavy metal enthusiast like Rakesh Lama, heavy metal has always helped him calm feel calmer and has provided an outlet for emotions and experiences.

The reason is that the themes of alienation, frustration, and even pain, match the experience of a person struggling to fit in and make sense of the world. For him it's poetry in a different context. It is music that stimulates him—that inspires him to think about how words can be used, what is worth studying and just what the human experience really is (Lama). Aman Malhotra, another heavy metal enthusiast, takes heavy metal as an influential and soothing source in his writing. He believes that it takes wider sense and vast vocabulary skills to understand metal lyrics. He has noticed improvement in his friends for English writing with the help of heavy metal song lyrics (Malhotra). Additionally, metal is used as a tool for expressing emotion in a nonviolent way, rather than through physical destruction sought by some adolescents. The use of relating music to literature can benefit a listener's analytical abilities by allowing him/her to look critically both at and beyond the text, toward other sources.

Music and poetry sometimes are combined synthetically. The old Cathedral of Coventry, destroyed in World War II, was redesigned, rebuilt, and dedicated in 1959. For that dedication, Benjamin Britten composed the famous War Requiem, basing his music on the bitterly sad poems of Wilfred Owen, killed in the trenches just before the end of World War I. The music and poems, we think, are inextricably melded (Jacobus and Martin 381). To begin with, there is the formal aspect of poetry that allows metal song lyrics to fit into works of literature. Often these lyrics have a rhyme and measure, which offer the aesthetic beauty that we expect of poetry and are usually filled with emotions.

So can heavy metal be considered literature? Dr. Bryan Bardine, Associate Professor of English at the University of Dayton, presents the music as a textual form “in the tradition of Romanticism’s critical dialogue with the Enlightenment” (Bayer

8). Bardine holds a PhD in Education from Kent State University and his research focuses on the recurring elements inherent in gothic literary themes and heavy metal lyrics (“Bryan A. Bardine”). Meanwhile, Iain Campbell, who teaches classical texts and English at Radley College, is intrigued by the impact of the classics on heavy metal. His essay “From Achilles to Alexander: The Classical World and the World of Metal” deals with the presence of classical literature and mythology influences in heavy metal music (Bayer 8). Progressive scholars are now embracing new technologies as valuable options for instruction, and no longer revere the book as the sole medium for presenting a text.

We have now looked at several examples of heavy metal being used in both secondary education and even collegiate instruction. And while we have seen instances in which heavy metal has become a sideshow within the academic setting, we have yet to discuss any instances where the music operates as the feature attraction. The ancient Greek poems were written to be sung, such as *Hymn*, *Ode*, *Ecolga*. In middle age, The cantiga, The madrigal, The ballad were sung, not read and that is literature. When human emotions are expressed through writing, it is considered a literature. Dramas are written and performed. So, what about heavy metal? It is sung and performed but at the same time it can be read, appreciated, and studied. In heavy metal songs, same written piece expresses human emotions, giving shape of a melodic voice. Obviously, if a song is simply instrumental, and doesn't contain any lyrics, then it would not be literature by any definition. Prominent elements of heavy metal, such as lyrics and imagery resemble those of literature, and thus non-verbal musical and verbal literary art are rooted in the same aesthetics resonance.

Many commonalities exist between heavy metal music and literature. Heavy metal music is generally acknowledged as a piece of literary art which includes a group of related styles that are intense, virtuosic and powerful rhythm with majestic lyrics, themes and setting. Much of the lyrical content, thematic elements and associated imagery of heavy metal comes from literature. Any written material which has an enduring artistic expression can be defined as literature. Heavy metal songs have this feature in them. The lyrics constitute the songs. Heavy metal lyrics are literature in the simplest form. When we read those lyrics, there are always some stories behind them. Heavy metal's interconnection with literature is well-known and well-documented all around the globe. For many musicians, inspirations come from poetry, short stories or novels. No other genre of music is closely associated with literature than heavy metal. Heavy metal can also be considered a great tool for teaching and learning literature.

Heavy metal music has always fascinated me. This genre of music has power, which pushes boundaries; both conceptually and aesthetically. The sheer intensity of the music and the abilities of the musicians have always enthralled me. Also, I have always been someone who believes in the importance lyrics—I like to know what bands are singing about, and heavy metal lyrics provide a wide range of topics. Lyrics provide aesthetic completeness to music. Just like, when we need subtitle to understand foreign movies, lyrics are needed to understand what the songs are about. To fully embrace the music of liking, it is important to understand the lyrics. Because of my love for heavy metal and literature, I continued researching the connection between heavy metal lyrics and literature.

Even though most people view heavy metal music as intimidating, unsophisticated or of poor taste, it is widespread and popular with certain groups of

people, mostly young generation. In such popularity among young generation proves that the language used in metal songs is equally relevant and influences the listeners. Since heavy metal comprises of many different subgenres, there are differences in music style and choice of lyrics between the subgenres. We can find that especially Black metal has connection with post-modern literature. But we can also see that there are so many subgenres of heavy metal, it has to create its own literature styles and independent ethos.

Heavy metal songs whether written or spoken, audio or visual, are based on some set of stylistic criteria. Genres are formed by conventions that change over time as new genres are invented. Genre became dynamic tool to help the public make sense out of unpredictable art because art is often a response to a social state, in that people write/paint/sing/dance about what they know. Every heavy metal song is considered art because the lyrics express the emotions of the writer. Similarly, when a band performs the song they relate to it and feel the emotions that the lyrics draw out of them.

Heavy metal's primary distinguishing characteristic is that it embraces a literary structure more than most popular music; "while rock is notorious for its verse-chorus-verse structure and jazz emphasizes a looser version of the same allowing unfettered improvisation, metal emphasizes a motivic, melodic narrative structure in the same way that classical and baroque music do. Each piece may utilize other techniques, but what holds it together is a melodic progression between ideas that do not fit into simple verse-chorus descriptors" (Anus 6). Metal music is essentially a portrait of the post-Humanist mindset, for it is concerned about natural reality more than social symbolism, addressing experience rather than moral conclusion, and orienting itself towards subjective experience rather than an "objectivity" derived

from shared societal concepts (7). Robert Walser highlights that - “[h]istorians and critics of popular music have so far failed to take seriously the musical accomplishments of heavy metal musicians” (103). The “dark” side of metal, often misattributed to Satanic or Pagan emphases, obfuscates the very real, contemporaneous concerns of the modern world, like war, greed, patriarchy, surveillance, and control (Walser 163). In that sense, heavy metal becomes a powerful literary genre.

This research considers vast array of literature everything from the ancient myths and the Bible to Shakespeare, Tolkien, the Oz books, "Star Trek" and "Star Wars" as influential factor in heavy metal and presents how musicians adapt historical events, myths, religious themes, and epics into their own contemporary art. The researcher has constructed several categories to analyze various songs and albums. A segment entitled "religion" explores religious influences and theme in metal songs. Another segment entitled "poetry" explores poetic adaptation in various songs and albums. A segment entitled "prose" explores adaptation of epic, fiction, non-fiction in metal songs.

1. Religion

Religion is more than just a belief in God. Influence of religion, be it Christianity or Hinduism, is evident in literature. Concept of suffering, death, awakening, salvation, heaven, hell is prevalent in many religions. Human experience, struggle between temptation and morality, good and evil have become themes of popular music. From band names to song themes, Biblical themes can be seen in metal music. There are numerous bands with names from Bible. Testament, Sepultura, Lamb of God, Avenged Sevenfold are some of the examples. While many heavy metal bands are frequently grouped as devil worshipers, in fact the prevalence

of Biblical themes is quite strong. There are many bands that focus on Norse Paganism. Bathory, Burzum, Amon Amarth are few of the examples.

Amon Amarth's song "Twilight of The Thunder God" is based on Thor's slaying of the serpent Jörmungandr. Pagan influence is visible in this song.



Figure 4. Amon Amarth performing 'Twilight of The Thunder God' live at Summer Breeze festival 2017 in Germany.

Thor! Odin's son, protector of mankind
Ride to meet your fate, your destiny awaits
Thor! Hlödyn's son, protector of mankind
Ride to meet your fate, Ragnarök awaits
Mighty Thor grips the snake
Firmly by its tongue

Lifts his hammer high to strike

Soon his work is done

Vingtor sends the giant snake

Bleeding to the depth

Twilight of the thundergod

Ragnarök awaits

(Twilight of The Thunder God)

The song depicts the fight between Thor and giant snake Jörmungandr. How he strikes the snake with his mighty hammer and ends the battle is shown here. This song creates visual imagery of the battle in listeners.

Metallica's "The Four Horsemen" is based on Christian faith. It is about apocalypse.



Figure 5. Metallica performing 'The Four Horsemen' live at The Metro in Chicago, USA on August 12, 1983.

The Horsemen are drawing nearer

On leather steeds they ride

They've come to take your life

On through the dead of night

With the Four Horsemen ride

Or choose your fate and die

Time

Has taken its toll on you

The lines that crack your face

Famine

Your body it has torn through

Withered in every place

Pestilence

For what you have had to endure

And what you have put others through

Death

Deliverance for you for sure

Now there is nothing you can do

(The Four Horsemen)

The song references the Biblical texts about Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse; Time, Famine, Pestilence and Death. In Christian religion, the signs of the end of the world are The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse; Pestilence, War, Famine, and Death. It is believed that the Four Horsemen are to set a divine end time upon the world as harbingers of the Last Judgment.

Religious influence is evident in all genres. Misconception of heavy metal being satanic or irreligious should be cleared because positive moral influence is also there in this genre.

2. Poetry

In the most common use of the term, a lyric is any fairly short poem, consisting of the utterance by a single speaker, who expresses a state of mind or a process of perception, thought, and feeling. Many lyric speakers are represented as musing in solitude. In dramatic lyrics, however, the lyric speaker is represented as addressing another person in a specific situation (Abrams). A lyric poem is a poem which is short, conveys thoughts and powerful feelings of the speaker. It expresses specific mood and or emotion. It is highly musical and can feature poetic devices like rhyme and meter. In ancient Greece, lyric poetry was, in fact, signified as a song accompanied with music played on an instrument called a lyre. In current usages, lyrics still retains the sense of and is written to be set to music. Song lyrics often begin as lyric poems as many musicians begin as poets. Poetry adapted to music, with focus on Romanticism and epic will be analyzed at this point. For over twenty years, heavy metal scholars have advanced the idea that heavy metal bears much in common thematically with the Romantic Movement in literature, arts and music.

No other bands have had an impact on so many subgenres of metal like Iron Maiden. Maiden's educated approach to lyrics is legendary. Through their career they have mined history and literature for song themes, and rather than simply quoting or referencing great works, they explain, abridge and interpret. Listening to Iron Maiden is like listening to literary canon set to music. They are masters at what they do. They could write their own book. Many of their songs are adapted from literature. According to Walser, they are one of the most mystical and philosophical of heavy-

metal bands, taking inspiration from the Bible, Romantic poetry, and various other mythologies (151).

No literary metal playlist, however, would be complete without ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’. This often adapted poem by St. Coleridge is one of Iron Maiden's Romantic era adaptations. Iron Maiden’s song of the same name was written by the band’s bassist Steve Harris and is included in the album Powerslave. This musical re-telling of Coleridge's poem of same name is a 13-minute-42 second metal ballad which includes some lines from the poem.



Figure 6. Iron Maiden performing 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' live in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2008.

The albatross begins with its vengeance
 A terrible curse a thirst has begun
 His shipmates blame bad luck on the Mariner
 About his neck, the dead bird is hung.
 And the curse goes on and on and on at sea
 And the thirst goes on and on for them and me
 Day after day, day after day,
 We stuck nor breath nor motion
 As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean
 Water, water everywhere and
 All the boards did shrink
 Water, water everywhere nor any drop to drink

(The Rime of the Ancient Mariner)

The excerpt above summarizes the events of the poem and includes a direct quote from Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" relating his tale. By putting the poem to music, Iron Maiden faithfully presents the tale in a classic oratory form, and manages to capture the ageless struggle of man against the power of nature that inspired Coleridge.

Written by bassist and founding member Steve Harris, "The Trooper" is another song by Iron Maiden which is based on the poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Throughout their history, Iron Maiden has revisited British wartime victories and defeats. But nothing conjures panic, fear and chaos like "The Trooper." This song was released as the second single on 20 June 1983 from the band's fourth studio album, Piece of Mind. The song is about the Battle of Balaclava 1854, which took place during the Crimean War and was inspired by

Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem of the same name. The lyrics being written from the point of view of an anonymous soldier, narrates all the tension experienced up to the moment, when he is shot by the Russian enemy and dies.



Figure 7. Iron Maiden performing 'The Trooper' live in Japan during Somewhere Back in Time World Tour in 2008.

You'll take my life but I'll take yours too
You'll fire your musket but I'll run you through
So when you're waiting for the next attack
You'd better stand, there's no turning back
The bugle sounds the charge begins
But on this battlefield no one wins

The smell of acrid smoke and horses' breath

As I plunge on into certain death.

(The Trooper)

The song's lyrics follow the narrative of Tennyson's poem fairly closely where the narrator describes his own death: "And as I lay there gazing at the sky / My body's numb and my throat is dry / And as I lay forgotten and alone / Without a tear I draw my parting groan." This song carries individualistic perspective. Poetic device like metaphor, hyperbole, and personification can be found in this song. "The mighty roar of the Russian guns" shows use of personification where Russian guns are given the human characteristics. "And as we race towards the human wall" shows the use of metaphor and hyperbole because it is comparing the amount of dead bodies to wall, and it's very unlikely that the bodies actually stacked up to tower over the battlefield.

In its strict sense the term epic or heroic poem is applied to a work that meets at least the following criteria: it is a long verse narrative on a serious subject, told in a formal and elevated style, and centered on a heroic or quasi-divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the human race (Abrams). It's no secret that literary influences run through heavy metal. Artists have often employed narrative arc of epic in their works. Homer almost certainly never imagined such an introduction to his epic poem *Iliad*. Manowar decided they only needed one side of vinyl to retell Homer's ancient Greek Trojan War document in spectacular style.

Manowar's song "Achilles, Agony and Ecstasy in Eight Parts" is based in Homer's epic poem *Iliad*. Included as the first song of their seventh studio album "The Triumph of Steel", this is the longest and most complex epic metal song of Manowar.



Figure 8. Manowar performing 'Hector's Final Hour' live at Release Festival in Athens, Greece on June 14, 2019.

Oh friend of mine, how to say goodbye
 This was your time, but the armor you wore was mine
 I will not rest until Hector's blood is spilled
 His bones will all be broken dragged across the field
 This dear friend is how we'll say goodbye
 Until we meet in the sky
 Here inside the walls of Troy, the gods weigh my fate
 From this day do I abstain, to a memory of hate
 To pay for all the blood that spilled the many thousands I did kill
 No walls can contain the gods' almighty will
 I hear the silent voices I cannot hide
 The gods leave no choices so we all must die

Oh Achilles let thy arrows fly, into the wind, where eagles cross the sky

Today my mortal blood will mix with sand it was foretold

I will die by thy hand into Hades my soul descend

(Achilles, Agony and Ecstasy in Eight Parts)

This 28 minutes and 38 seconds long masterpiece is a befitting musical rendition of Homer's epic. As indicated in the title, this song thematically consists of eight distinct parts. The lyrics of the song imply that DeMaio made careful and scrupulous reading of Iliad. The song focuses essentially on the crucial fight between Achilles, the Greek champion, and Hector, the Trojan leader. Some passages of the poem have been paraphrased in the song; adapting them to the melodic structure with certain fluency and partly reinterpreting them, but never altering or upsetting Homer's storyline. The excerpts above represent 2nd and 5th parts of the song. In the 2nd part Achilles swears an oath of vengeance upon Hector, who murdered Patroclus. In the 5th part Hector perceives his own death. This song creates imagery of battlefield.

Overall, the logical connection between lyric poetry and musicians of all genres is evident. The vast array of poetic inspiration, particularly from the Romantic era, which appeals to heavy-metal musicians exhibits the same types of alienation and search for identity that the poets explored. In many ways, the development of the self is timeless; every young person must understand and accept (or reject) their role in society as they advance into adulthood. The theme is perhaps as universal as love, loss, and other typically eulogized emotions. Likewise, epic tales seems to fit well in concept albums, which enable artists to narrate a story from multiple perspectives. The scope of epic is expansive. For heavy metal, epic is an appealing subject because of the characters, themes and imagery it provides. Some bands even incorporate costumes and set designs to recreate epic battles. Even the album cover artwork

emulates allegorical imagery to emphasize the eternal of man against nature, man against monster, and man against himself.

3. Prose

Prose is an inclusive term for all discourse, spoken or written, which is not patterned into the lines either of metric verse or of free verse. It is possible to discriminate a great variety of non metric types of language, which can be placed along a spectrum according to the degree to which they exploit and make prominent, modes of formal organization (Abrams).

Metallica, another influential band, have also composed literary adaptations throughout their career. "For Whom the Bell Tolls" is one of their celebrated adaptations. It was first released on the band's second album, *Ride the Lightning* in 1984. This song is a direct allusion to Ernest Hemingway's 1940 novel of the same name.



Figure 9. Metallica performing 'For Whom the Bell Tolls' live at Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England on June 18, 2019.

For whom the bell tolls
 Time marches on
 For whom the bell tolls
 Take a look to the sky just before you die
 It is the last time you will
 Blackened roar, massive roar, fills the crumbling sky
 Shattered goal fills his soul with a ruthless cry
 Stranger now are his eyes to this mystery
 He hears the silence so loud
 Crack of dawn, all is gone except the will to be
 Now they see what will be, blinded eyes to see
 For whom the bell tolls
 Time marches on
 For whom the bell tolls
 (For Whom the Bell Tolls)

This song is about other characters in the novel. It highlights a scene in Chapter 27 of the novel in which El Sordo and four of his soldiers make a stand against the Fascists and attempt to flee from them before meeting their fate atop a hill on which they are surrounded and obliterated. The repeated chorus borrows directly from the title of Hemingway's novel. It reads: For whom the bell tolls / Time marches on / For whom the bell tolls.

Heavy metal's affinity with popular fiction is obvious. From the very beginning Blind Guardian have been inspired by the fictional worlds of writers such as J. R. R. Tolkien Michael Moorcock, Stephen King, and Robert Jordan, as well as traditional legends and epics.

"Time Stands Still (At The Iron Hill)" is the second song from their album "Nightfall in Middle-Earth", released on 28 April 1998. "Nightfall in Middle-Earth" is a concept album with 22 songs, which means that the lyrics follow a storyline and plot throughout the album. This album is based upon J. R. R. Tolkien's The Silmarillion, a book of tales from the First Age of Middle-earth, recounting the War of the Jewels. This book tells of the creation of Middle-Earth and the incidents from the time before the lord of the rings.



Figure 10. Blind Guardian performing 'Time Stands Still (At The Iron Hill)' live at Wacken Open Air festival in Wacken, Germany in 2007.

I stand alone
 No one's by my side
 I'll dare you
 Come out
 You coward
 Now it's me or you
 He gleams like a star
 And the sound of his horn's
 Like a raging storm
 Proudly the high lord
 Challenges the doom
 Lord of slaves he cries

Time Stands Still (At The Iron Hill)

This song is about Fingolfin riding to the gates of Angband to challenge Morgoth to a duel. Fingolfin wounds Morgoth seven times but is eventually killed. Verse and chorus of this song conjures imagery of Elves playing flutes and dancing in the forest.

Herman Melville was one of the most famous Dark Romantic writers of the 19th century. His classic work *Moby Dick* is a tale of revenge, obsession, and race. There has been many adaptation of this epic adventure. Mastodon's first concept album "Leviathan" is loosely based on the novel. Singles released included "Iron Tusk," "Blood and Thunder," "I am Ahab," and "Seabeast." In 2004 magazines such as *Revolver*, *Kerrang!* and *Terrorizer* awarded *Leviathan Album of the Year*. In 2009 and 2015 *MetalSucks* named *Leviathan* the best metal album of the 21st century.



Figure 11. Mastodon performing 'Blood and Thunder' live at O2 Academy Brixton, London, England on February 11, 2012.

I think that someone is trying to kill me
Infecting my blood and destroying my mind
No man of the flesh could ever stop me
The fight for this fish is a fight to the death
White whale, holy grail
White whale, holy grail
What remorseless emperor commands me
I no longer govern my soul
I am completely immersed in darkness
As I turn my body away from the sun
White whale, holy grail
White whale, holy grail

(Blood and Thunder)

"Blood and Thunder" is the first song from the album "Leviathan". The excerpts above introduce the story of Moby Dick. It focuses pretty much entirely on Captain Ahab, describing his paranoia, his ever imminent descent into madness, and his desire for revenge.

Ronnie James Dio's song "Holy Diver" is another most popular song. Even though this song sounds religious, I have placed this song in this segment because of the fantasy metaphor used in this song. Heavy metal band Dio released this in August 1983 as the lead single from their debut album of the same name.



Figure 12. Dio performing 'Holy Diver' live at Hammersmith Apollo in London, England on December 12, 1993.

Holy diver

You're the star of the masquerade

No need to look so afraid

Jump, jump

Jump on the tiger

You can feel his heart but you know he's mean

Some light can never be seen, yeah

Holy diver

You've been down too long in the midnight sea

Oh, what's becoming of me? No! no!

Ride the tiger

You can see his stripes but you know he's clean

Oh, don't you see what I mean?

(Holy Diver)

In an interview with Sam Dunn in the film "Metal: A Headbanger's Journey", Dio explained this song by saying, "The song 'Holy Diver' is really about a Christ-figure, who on another place, not Earth, has done exactly the same as we've apparently experienced or were supposed to have experienced on Earth: dying for the sins of man so that man can start again and be cleansed and do it properly." Use of metaphor is clearly evident. Lines such as "Holy diver/ You've been down too long in the midnight sea" "Ride the tiger/ You can see his stripes but you know he's clean" proves it. This song is about things that are not always what they appear to be. Bad people may have normal appearance. Also, good people may not always be the ones who are prettiest on the outside.

The reception of Old Norse literature in Heavy Metal music in general is closely linked to the pre-Christian Scandinavian cultural heritage and tradition. These aspects of content and imagery thus cultivate a certain romantic, escapist image. Considering the content of the lyrics, allusions to Old Norse mythology are frequently employed by Viking Metal bands. Saga material is being retold and reinterpreted,

sometimes even quoted literally in the songs. Fascination for native folklore and tradition as well as primal energies within man is being displayed.⁸ Christian oppression is a recurring motif, too, especially in Viking Metal texts. Some musicians also involve racist ideology in their lyrics, as seen in the case of Burzum (Helden 2).

Viking metal songs are often written in Nordic languages like Norwegian, Old Norse, and Swedish. There are also examples in Finnish and Faroese. For the understanding of fans many texts are written in English. Amon Amarth is one of heavy metal bands that cover mythology and the Viking Age. They draw lyrical matter from the Eddas, Old Norse poems and ancient Icelandic literature. The band has succeeded to expose their fans to Norse mythology in an entertaining way. Their song "Hermod's Ride To Hel" is one of the examples. Included as the fourth song of their sixth full-length studio album "With Oden on Our Side", this interprets the story of Norse god Baldur's death.



Figure 13. Amon Amarth performing 'Hermod's Ride To Hel' live at Trädgårn, Gothenburg, Sweden on October 13, 2009.

Hermod:

I have come to bring him back with me

The whole world mourns his death

Please set Balder free

Give him back his breath

Hel :

If it's true, what you say to me

That the whole world mourns his death

If the whole world will weep

I will give him back his breath

(Hermod's Ride To Hel)

The blind god Höd, deceived by the evil Loki, killed his brother Balder by hurling mistletoe, the only thing that could hurt him. After his death, another brother Hermond vowed to bring him back from Hel, the domain of death. "Hermond's Ride to Hel," depicts his journey and proposal to the goddess Hel to release Baldur. The excerpt above describes Hermond's plea to Hel. The song leaves the story open for continuation, suspense, a cliffhanger as it does not provide us with the outcome of Loki's, Hermond's or Baldur's fate.

Again the connection between wide arrays of prose and musicians of all genres is evident. Heavy metal often takes on the characteristics of its native country or locality, incorporating local instruments, sounds and folklore. Consequently folk texts play a central role for many metal bands, particularly from Northern Europe. The impact of literary work is apparent in heavy. This is one of the reasons why attending a heavy metal concert is an incomparably rich cultural experience. Heavy metal songs bring literature to life.

For centuries, the literary canon has inspired young generations of writers, artists and musicians. Successful adaptations and reiterations of literary works conclude this theory. Furthermore, themes of human experience, nature, mythology have been of interest of heavy metal performers. Since lyrical themes are inspired by authors whose works have transcended the quality of popular literature, they are viewed as popular and fine literature. Just because there is dark lyrical content does not necessarily imply praise towards Satanism or any blatant references to the occult. The seemingly endless array of subgenres in heavy metal is incredibly unique. Adaptations of poems by St. Coleridge, Alfred Lord Tennyson proves that heavy metal bands draw inspiration from literary canon – thus establishing a connection between the music genre and literature. Poetic devices such as metaphors, similes, personification, point of view, imagery, etc. are certainly at home in metal lyricist's toolbox, so too are honesty and bluntness.

There are whole college courses devoted to teaching English literature via the medium of heavy metal which makes it obvious that scholars are no longer reluctant to treat heavy metal as a pedagogical aid for the modern classroom. The diverse lyrical themes and clever songwriting offers a largely untapped reservoir of academic literature for any instructor seeking to implement contemporary discourse into studies involving romanticism, gothic fiction, post-modernism, and even linguistics. In addition, music has proven to elicit a strong cognitive response for individuals who thrive on aural stimulation. The intricate instrumentation can also result in engaging students who are more receptive to nontraditional teaching methods. Heavy metal is primed and ready for its expanding role at both the high school and collegiate level. Perhaps we better make room for bands like Iron Maiden in future English syllabi.

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APPENDIX**SONG LYRICS**

Lyrics provided here are for educational purposes. Lyrics are property and copyright of their owners.

1. Song: Hermod's Ride To Hel**Artist: Amon Amarth****Album: With Oden on Our Side (2006)**

[Hermod:]

Ride Sleipner

Ride for all you're worth

Faster than lightning

To the dark realms of the world

Through valleys of darkness

On our way to Nifelheim

To the halls of Hel

Where my brother waits

Wailing voices on the wind

Urging me to turn

Distant tortured screams

Cold blue fires burn

I hear the sound of river Gjoll

Running cold and deep

It's a golden bridge shines in the dark

The bridge that Modgud keeps

Over the bridge, on through the night

Hel is getting near

There are the gates, towering high

Afflicting me with fear

In her hall, at the honor seat

My brother sits in pain

Pale and tortured Balder great

Bound by invisible frozen chains

[Hermod:]

I have come, to bring him back with me

The whole world mourns his death!

Please set Balder free

Give him back his breath!

[Hel:]

If it's true, what you say to me

That the whole world mourns his death

If the whole world will weep I'll give him back his breath!

2. Song: Twilight of The Thunder God

Artist: Amon Amarth

Album: Twilight of The Thunder God (2008)

There comes Fenrirs' twin, his jaws are open wide
The serpent rises from the waves
Jormungandr twists and turns, mighty in his wrath
The eyes are full of primal hate

Thor! Odin's son, protector of mankind
Ride to meet your fate, your destiny awaits
Thor! Hlödyn's son, protector of mankind
Ride to meet your fate, Ragnarök awaits

Vingtor rise to face the snake with hammer high
At the edge of the world
Bolts of lightning fills the air as Mjöltnir does its work
The dreadful serpent roars in pain

Thor! Odin's son, protector of mankind
Ride to meet your fate, your destiny awaits
Thor! Hlödyn's son, protector of mankind
Ride to meet your fate, Ragnarök awaits
Mighty Thor grips the snake firmly by its tongue
Lifts his hammer high to strike soon his work is done
Vingtor sends the giant snake bleeding to the depth
Twilight of the thunder god, Ragnarök awaits
Twilight of the thunder god
Twilight of the thunder god

Twilight of the thunder god

Twilight of the thunder god

Thor! Odin's son, protector of mankind

Ride to meet your fate, your destiny awaits

Thor! Hlödyn's son, protector of mankind

Ride to meet your fate, Ragnarök awaits

3. Song: Time Stands Still (At the Iron Hill)

Artist: Blind Guardian

Album: Nightfall in Middle-Earth (1998)

Light fails at dawn

The moon is gone

And deadly the night reigns

Deceit

Finally I've found myself

In these lands

Horror and madness I've seen here

For what I became a king of the lost?

Barren and lifeless the land lies

Lord of all Noldor

A star in the night

And a bearer of hope

He rides into his glorious battle alone

Farewell to the valiant warlord

The Fate of us all
Lies deep in the dark
When time stands still at the iron hill
The Fate of us all
Lies deep in the dark
When time stands still at the iron hill
I stand alone
No one's by my side
I'll dare you
Come out
You coward
Now it's me or you
He gleams like a star
And the sound of his horn's
Like a raging storm
Proudly the high lord
Challenges the doom
Lord of slaves he cries
Slowly in fear
The dark lord appears
Welcome to my lands
You shall be damned
Lord of all Noldor
A star in the night
And a bearer of hope

He rides into his glorious battle alone

Farewell to the valiant warlord

The Fate of us all

Lies deep in the dark

When time stands still at the iron hill

The Fate of us all

Lies deep in the dark

When time stands still at the iron hill

The iron crowned

Is getting closer

Swings his hammer

Down on him

Like a thunderstorm

He's crushing

Down the Noldor's

Proudest king

Under my foot

So hopeless it seems

You've troubled my day

Now feel the pain

Lord of all Noldor

A star in the night

And a bearer of hope

He rides into his glorious battle alone

Farewell to the valiant warlord

The Fate of us all
Lies deep in the dark
When time stands still at the iron hill
The Fate of us all
Lies deep in the dark
When time stands still at the iron hill
The Elvenking's broken
He stumbles and falls
The most proud and most valiant
His spirit survives
Praise our king
Praise our king
Praise our king
Praise our king

4. Song: Holy Diver

Artist: Dio

Album: Holy Diver (1983)

Holy Diver
You've been down too long in the midnight sea
Oh what's becoming of me?
Ride the tiger
You can see his stripes but you know he's clean
Oh don't you see what I mean?

Gotta get away

Holy Diver

Got shiny diamonds

Like the eyes of a cat in the black and blue

Something is coming for you, look out!

Race for the morning

You can hide in the sun 'till you see the light

Oh we will pray it's all right

Gotta get away, get away

Between the velvet lies

There's a truth that's hard as steel, yeah

The vision never dies

Life's a never-ending wheel, say

Holy Diver

You're the star of the masquerade

No need to look so afraid

Jump, jump, jump on the tiger

You can feel his heart but you know he's mean

Some light can never be seen, yeah!

Holy Diver

You've been down too long in the midnight sea

Oh what's becoming of me? No! No!

Ride the tiger

You can see his stripes but you know he's clean

Oh don't you see what I mean?

Gotta get away, get away

Gotta get away, get away, yeah

Holy Diver, sole survivor

You're the one who's clean

Holy Diver, Holy Diver

There's a cat in the blue coming after you, Holy Diver

Oh Holy Diver

Yeah, alright

Get away, get away, get away

Holy Diver, Holy Diver

Oh Holy Diver

Hmm hmm hmm

5. Song: The Rime of Ancient Mariner

Artist: Iron Maiden

Album: Powerslave (1984)

Hear the rime of the Ancient Mariner

See his eye as he stops one of three

Mesmerises one of the wedding guests

Stay here and listen to the nightmares of the Sea

And the music plays on, as the bride passes by

Caught by his spell and the Mariner tells his tale

Driven south to the land of the snow and ice

To a place where nobody's been

Through the snow fog flies on the albatross
Hailed in God's name, hoping good luck it brings
And the ship sails on, back to the North
Through the fog and ice and the albatross follows on
The mariner kills the bird of good omen
His shipmates cry against what he's done
But when the fog clears, they justify him
And make themselves a part of the crime
Sailing on and on and North across the sea
Sailing on and on and North 'til all is calm
The albatross begins with its vengeance
A terrible curse a thirst has begun
His shipmates blame bad luck on the Mariner
About his neck, the dead bird is hung
And the curse goes on and on and on at sea
And the thirst goes on and on for them and me
"Day after day, day after day, we stuck nor breath nor motion
As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean
Water, water everywhere and all the boards did shrink
Water, water everywhere nor any drop to drink"
There, calls the mariner there comes a ship over the line
But how can she sail with no wind in her sails and no tide
See onward she comes
Onwards she nears, out of the sun
See she has no crew

She has no life, wait but there's two
Death and she Life in Death, they throw their dice for the crew
She wins the Mariner and he belongs to her now
Then crew one by one
They drop down dead, two hundred men
She she, Life in Death
She lets him live, her chosen one
"One after one by the star dogged moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang
And cursed me with his eye.
Four times fifty living men
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one."
The curse it lives on in their eyes
The Mariner he wished he'd die
Along with the sea creatures
But they lived on, so did he
And by the light of the moon
He prays for their beauty not doom
With heart he blesses them
God's creatures all of them too
Then the spell starts to break
The albatross falls from his neck

Sinks down like lead into the Sea
Then down in falls comes the rain
Hear the groans of the long dead seamen
See them stir and they start to rise
Bodies lifted by good spirits
None of them speak and they're lifeless in their eyes
And revenge is still sought, penance starts again
Cast into a trance and the nightmare carries on

Now the curse is finally lifted
And the Mariner sights his home
Spirits go from the long dead bodies
Form their own light and the Mariner's left alone
And then a boat came sailing towards him
It was a joy he could not believe
The Pilot's boat, his son and the hermit
Penance of life will fall onto him
And the ship it sinks like lead into the sea
And the hermit shrives the mariner of his sins
The Mariner's bound to tell of his story
To tell his tale wherever he goes
To teach God's word by his own example
That we must love all things that God made
And the wedding guest's a sad and wiser man
And the tale goes on and on and on and on

6. Song: The Trooper

Artist: Iron Maiden

Album: Piece of Mind (1983)

You'll take my life but I'll take yours too
You'll fire your musket but I'll run you through
So when you're waiting for the next attack
You'd better stand, there's no turning back
The Bugle sounds and the charge begins
But on this battlefield no one wins
The smell of acrid smoke and horses breath
As I plunge on into certain death
The horse he sweats with fear, we break to run
The mighty roar of the Russian guns
And as we race towards the human wall
The screams of pain as my comrades fall
We hurdle bodies that lay on the ground
And the Russians fire another round
We get so near yet so far away
We won't live to fight another day
We get so close near enough to fight
When a Russian gets me in his sights
He pulls the trigger and I feel the blow
A burst of rounds take my horse below

And as I lay there gazing at the sky
My body's numb and my throat is dry
And as I lay forgotten and alone
Without a tear I draw my parting groan

7. Song: Achilles, Agony and Ecstasy in Eight Parts

Artist: Manowar

Album: The Triumph of Steel (1992)

[I - HECTOR STORMS THE WALL]

I see my chariot run to your ships
I'll drive you back to the sea
You came here for gold
The wall will not hold
This day was promised to me
The gods are my shield
My fate has been sealed
Lightning and javelins fly
Soon many will fall
We are storming the wall
Stones fall snow from the sky
We will pay with our glory
In the fire of battle
Zeus today is mine
Killing all my way

Like sheep and like cattle
Smashing skulls of all who defy
I spare not the hammer
I spare not the sword
This day will ring with my name
None have to chase me
Let he who will face me
Kill me or die by the sword

[II - THE DEATH OF PATROCLUS]

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

[III - FUNERAL MARCH]

[IV - ARMOR OF THE GODS]

[V - HECTOR'S FINAL HOUR]

Here is inside the walls Troy, the gods weigh my fate
From this day do I abstain, to a memory of hate
To pay for all the blood that spilled
The many thousands I did kill,
No walls can contain the gods' almighty will

I hear the silent voices I cannot hide
The gods leaves no choices so we all must die
Oh Achilles let thy arrows fly.
Into the wind, where eagles cross the sky
Today my mortal blood will mix with sand
It was foretold I will die by thy hand
Into Hades my soul descend
[VI - DEATH HECTOR'S REWARD]
Cowards in the grip of fear, no valour to uphold
Cut into the earth, with honor long been sold
For all shall come to know me
As they fall unto their knees
Zeus the Thunderer, control my destiny
When the cards of life were dealt,
My hand a ruthless fate
To avenge, and bringeth fury, Hector feel my hate
A bloodbath was born to bring, by birth I'm an assassin
To cut the cord of life and beath,
Ties to earth unfasten
Blood and fire death and hate, your body I will desecrate
Dogs and vultures eat your flesh the hall of Hades waits
Kill...
Hector's blood lies on the battlefield
His body lies on the battlefield
His body's mangled wounds,

The gods who once protected him are now his gods of doom,
Like a tower standing tall, steadfast in direction
I fall upon you bringing death, the gods give no protection
Coward in the grip of fear, no valour to uphold
Cut into the earth, with honor long been sold
For all shall come to know me, as they fall into their knees
Zeus the Thunderer, control my destiny
Blood and fire death and hate, your body I will desecrate
Dogs and vultures eat your flesh the hall of Hades waits
Die, die, die...

[VII - THE DESECRATION OF HECTOR'S BODY]

[PART 1]

[PART 2]

[VIII - THE GLORY OF ACHILLES]

The oath of the gods, this day was fulfilled
In the heat of the battle, Hector was killed
See him Patroclus, down in the dust
Rejoice in his death my symbol of trust
A dozen highborn youths, have been killed
Cutting their throats their blood was all spilled
Their bodies set at the foot of your fire
With oxen, sheep and two of your hounds
Your funeral pyre high off the ground
Hector's body dragged three times around
I will carry the torch to your funeral pyre

I will ask of the wind to send high your fire
Hector's blood will not be washed from my body until your body is burned
A prophecy spoken a promise fulfilled
More blood will be spilled, more will be killed

8. Song: Blood and Thunder

Artist: Mastodon

Album: Leviathan (2004)

I think that someone is trying to kill me
Infecting my blood and destroying my mind
No man of the flesh could ever stop me
The fight for this fish is a fight to the death
White whale, holy grail
White whale, holy grail
What remorseless emperor commands me
I no longer govern my soul
I am completely immersed in darkness
As I turn my body away from the sun
White whale, holy grail
White whale, holy grail
Split your lungs with blood and thunder
When you see the white whale
Break your backs and crack your oars men
If you wish to prevail

This ivory leg is what propels me
Harpoons thrust in the sky
Aim directly for his crooked brow
And look him straight in the eye
White whale, holy grail
White whale, holy grail

9. Song: For Whom the Bell Tolls

Artist: Metallica

Album: Ride the Lightning (1984)

Make his fight on the hill in the early day
Constant chill deep inside
Shouting gun, on they run through the endless grey
On they fight, for they're right, yes, but who's to say?
For a hill, men would kill, why? They do not know
Stiffened wounds test their pride
Men of five, still alive through the raging glow
Gone insane from the pain that they surely know
For whom the bell tolls
Time marches on
For whom the bell tolls
Take a look to the sky just before you die
It's the last time you will
Blackened roar, massive roar, fills the crumbling sky

Shattered goal fills his soul with a ruthless cry
Stranger now, are his eyes, to this mystery
He hears the silence so loud
Crack of dawn, all is gone except the will to be
Now they see what will be, blinded eyes to see
For whom the bell tolls
Time marches on
For whom the bell tolls

10. Song: The Four Horsemen

Artist: Metallica

Album: Kill 'Em All (1983)

By the last breath of the fourth winds blow
Better raise your ears
The sound of hooves knock at your door
Lock up your wife and children now
It's time to wield the blade
For now you have got some company
The Horsemen are drawing nearer
On leather steeds they ride
They've come to take your life
On through the dead of night
With the Four Horsemen ride
Or choose your fate and die

You have been dying since the day you were born

You know it has all been planned

The quartet of deliverance rides

A sinner once a sinner twice

No need for confessions now

Cause now you have got the fight of your life

The Horsemen are drawing nearer

On leather steeds they ride

They've come to take your life

On through the dead of night

With the Four Horsemen ride

Or choose your fate and die

Time

Has taken its toll on you

The lines that crack your face

Famine

Your body it has torn through

Withered in every place

Pestilence

For what you have had to endure

And what you have put others through

Death

Deliverance for you for sure

Now there is nothing you can do

So gather round young warriors now

And saddle up your steeds
Killing scores with demon swords
Now is the death of doers of wrong
Swing the judgement hammer down
Safely inside armor blood guts and sweat
The Horsemen are drawing nearer
On leather steeds they ride
They've come to take your life
On through the dead of night
With the Four Horsemen ride
Or choose your fate and die