



Language use in metal song lyrics:
A study of the song lyrics of the Swedish power metal band
Falconer

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Picture from www.falconermusic.com

Abstract

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Purpose: The purpose of this essay is to investigate the different linguistic aspects of a certain subgenre of metal music, power metal, to get a general picture of the language use in metal song lyrics.

Method: A qualitative study with song lyrics as empirical data.

Material: Song lyrics from one selected band were analysed.

Keywords: Metal music, power metal, Falconer, musicology, song lyric analysis.

Summary/Main results: This investigation shows that the lyrics of power metal can deal with a wide range of topics; from love, freedom and oppression to grief, greed and poverty. The level of language is high, without many mistakes and with proficient use of different literary devices such as rhymes and metaphors.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Even though most people might think that metal music is intimidating, tacky or in poor taste, it most certainly is widespread and popular with certain groups of people, mostly young people. This means that the language used in metal songs is equally widespread and that it, to some extent, influences the people who listen to it.

The notion of ‘metal’ might be rather vague to some. There are also some preconceptions about metal songs and their lyrics and the language of metal heads (i.e. people who listen to metal music). Therefore this essay must begin with defining what metal is, giving a short history of the phenomenon.

According to Wikibooks the definition of metal is thus:

”Metal is a form of music originating in the UK and USA rock scenes in the very late 1960s. Arguably, the progenitors of the style were Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, and Led Zeppelin. It is character[iz]ed by its aggressive feel and angry, destructive lyrics [...]”

I feel this description is too general and too narrow at the same time, since there are differences in music style and choice of lyrics between the subgenres, and even more so between the various bands of the subgenres. Therefore I will start by giving brief definitions of the general styles of lyrics of the most common subgenres of metal music, and exemplifying with a few bands in each subgenre. Some of the bands appear in several subgenres, due to the fact that it is hard to pinpoint exactly which subgenre they belong to.

General genres of metal:

Heavy metal: Traditional metal. Lyrics often deal with sex, drug abuse, personal trauma, death and war, but also with folklore, mythology, fiction and poetry. Bands such as AC/DC, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Aerosmith, Blue Öyster Cult, Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, Mountain, Queen, Rush, Rainbow, Uriah Heep, Thin Lizzy, Van Halen.

Thrash metal: Lyrics usually deal with social and political issues, with an aggressive, accusatorial style of language. Bands such as Metallica, Anthrax, Megadeth, Slayer, Kreator, Annihilator, Venom, Exodus.

Doom metal: Lyrics portray human beings' darker sides with a sense of doom and emotional despair. Not so much violence. Bands such as Black Sabbath, Candlemass, Katatonia, Type O Negative, Monster Magnet.

Power metal: Lyrics usually deal with themes of fantasy, mythology and legends. Metaphysical topics and a poetic language are common. Bands such as Falconer, Blind Guardian, Edguy, Masterplan, Hammerfall, Helloween, Sonata Arctica.

Death metal: Lyrics portray human beings' darker, nihilistic sides, but with more gore and death than doom metal. Satanism is common, but also mythological, philosophical and political themes are common. Lyrics are often morbid. Bands such as Amon Amarth, Cannibal Corpse, Children of Bodom, Arch Enemy, In Flames, Opeth.

Black metal: Lyrics often involve subjects such as paganism, with satanic imagery and an overall colder sense than traditional metal. Bands such as Dimmu Borgir, Dark Funeral, King Diamond, Bathory, Isengard, Primordial, Sepultura.

Folk metal: Music and lyrics are quite similar to those of power metal and often deal with fantasy, mythology, history, nature and paganism. Bands such as Falconer, Týr, Finntroll, Korpiklaani, Thyrfing, Månegarm, Mithotyn.

Gothic metal: Lyrics are usually melodramatic, concerning subjects such as mythology and legends. The style of lyrics is often epic. Bands such as The 69 Eyes, Type O Negative, Paradise Lost My Dying Bride, Lacuna Coil, Cradle of Filth.

Symphonic metal: Being similar to power metal and gothic metal, lyrics often deal with themes of fantasy and mythology. It is common to write concept albums about e.g. epic poems or operas. Bands such as Avantasia, Cradle of Filth, Within Temptation, Therion, Sonata Arctica, Nightwish, Stratovarius.

Progressive metal: Lyrics usually deal with philosophical, spiritual and political themes, with an epic style. Many progressive metal albums are so called concept albums, which have a

main lyrical theme that persists throughout the albums. Bands such as Amorphis, Blind Guardian, Borknagar, Coheed and Cambria, Cult of Luna, Dream Theater, Evergrey.

Industrial metal: Lyrics usually deal with somewhat militant political themes. Bands such as Rammstein, Ministry, Nine Inch Nails, Rob Zombie.

Sludge metal: Lyrical themes include politics, societal hatred, drugs and suffering, and have an overall pessimistic sense. Bands such as Eyehategod, Acid Bath.

Glam metal: Lyrics focus mainly on sex, drugs and alcohol, glorifying the rock'n'roll lifestyle. The lyrical style is often hedonistic and flirts with the occult. Bands such as Bon Jovi, The Darkness, Guns N' Roses, Kiss, Mötley Crüe, Twisted Sister, Van Halen.

Nu-metal: Lyrics deal with dark, human feelings such as anxiety, alienation, tragedy and pain. Bands such as Limp Bizkit, Alien Ant Farm, Linkin Park, Dir en Grey, Evanescence, Papa Roach, POD, KoRn, Slipknot, System of a Down.

1.2 Aim & Scope

I believe that the concept of 'metal' is too broad for my essay, so I intend to define the most important subgenres of metal music, one by one, and to ultimately choose one band from one specific subgenre to analyse.

The aim of this essay is to investigate how the English language is used in the lyrics of metal songs, more specifically in the songs of a power metal band. As previously mentioned, metal music is a broad concept, which simply would be too big for this essay. Therefore I must limit the topic and focus on just one subgenre. I chose power metal because it is one of the biggest of the subgenres, with many bands to choose from, and the lyrics are mostly typical for the subgenre.

In order to create a general picture of the linguistics of my chosen subgenre of metal music this essay will focus on the lexical, grammatical and contextual components of the lyrics. Since the language of metal most likely does influence some people, it is interesting to investigate the language use in metal song lyrics more closely. The areas investigated are:

- 1) Content: What the songs are about, themes, topics, etc.
- 2) How the lyrics are built up, what literary devices are used. Rhymes, alliteration, use of metaphors, symbolism, word play, etc.
- 3) What does the grammar and language in general look like? Are there differences compared to 'standard' grammar? Is the language General American or Standard British English?

One could also investigate the pronunciation of the language in the songs, something that could be very interesting from a linguistic point of view, but for reasons of time and space this essay will not deal with this.

1.3 Material and Method

Falconer is a Swedish power metal band with folk music influences. This band was chosen as subject for analysis because they are quite representative of the power metal subgenre in general, while adding a certain degree of spice with their folk music influences. Another reason why I chose this particular band is their origin, the fact that they do not come from a country where English is the native language. This could probably affect the lyrics in some way, and this will be taken into account when analysing the material.

The data for this study was obtained from the band's official homepage where the band itself has posted it. This means that the validity of the transcriptions of the lyrics is strong. All the lyrics have been read and analysed from a grammatical, a lexical and a contextual point of view.

The material used in this essay consists mostly of the song lyrics of the chosen band. All of the songs from the six albums the band has released since they formed in late 1999/early 2000 have been analysed, except for those with lyrics in the band's native tongue Swedish and the occasional instrumental song, making the total of 62 songs with English lyrics.

The findings will later be sorted into three main sections in the discussion chapter. These sections will be 1) Themes and topics, 2) Literary devices, and 3) Linguistic devices.

1.4 Previous research

There is quite a lot of previous research and investigations dealing with various cultural aspects of metal music, such as K. Khan-Harris - *Extreme Metal - Music and culture on the edge* (2007) and D. Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology* (1991), but there is little or no research specifically concerning the linguistic aspects of it, and especially not of its subgenres. This makes previous research about language use in metal song lyrics hard to find.

The areas which are quite thoroughly researched already are, apart from the music itself, the socio cultural aspects of various forms of metal bands and followers. In *Extreme Metal - Music and culture on the edge* Keith Khan-Harris delves deeply into the world of extreme forms of metal, such as death and black metal, to “spark a debate about the politics of extreme metal both within and without the metal world.” (2007; 6) He claims to want to “ask difficult questions with the aim of providing new perspectives on the politics of extreme metal.” (2007; 7) He does this by, of course, researching many books and papers on the subject, but more interestingly by interviewing people involved in the extreme metal scenes. He interviews not only people from Israel, Sweden and the UK, but also people of both genders, varying ages and different vocations, such as metal band members, record producers, fanzine editors and label managers. This approach ensures the results are varied and not coloured by any one person’s opinions.

In *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology* Deena Weinstein investigates what heavy metal is truly about, since so many people from varying cultural, religious and political backgrounds seem to think that metal music is on an equal footing with drug abuse, AIDS, Satan worshiping, violence and other “depraved” phenomena. The background to the rift is summed up as follows;

“Many people hold that heavy metal music, along with drugs and promiscuous sex, proves that some parts of youth culture have gone beyond acceptable limits. To many of its detractors heavy metal embodies a shameless attack on the central values of Western civilization. But to its fans it is the greatest music ever made.” (1991; 3)

She presents evidence that completely contradicts certain people’s claims that rock music is just a bunch of indiscernible noise, and that those who listen to it and perform it are immoral people who seek to spoil the minds of youths. Weinstein has researched heavy metal

extensively, presenting such findings as the history and development of the genre, the cultural sociology of it, and the musical code of the genre with its sonic, visual and verbal dimensions.

1.5 Plan of study

Chapter 1 gives a background to the topic, why it would be interesting to research and the aim of the essay, as well as provides a definition of metal and its subgenres to create a clear starting point. It explains how the research will be carried out and what will be investigated. It also offers a look into previous research on the topic. Chapter 2 presents the results of the research one album at a time, following a chronological order of release dates. The lexical, grammatical and contextual components of the lyrics will be presented here. In chapter 3 the findings will be sorted into three main sections, and discussed. Chapter 4 summarises what has been discovered and gives suggestions for future research.

2. Results

As seen above, the lyrics of power metal often deal with themes of fantasy, mythology and legends. Many songs are written in the style of stories, often stories about kings and queens, magic, life and death, and other fantasy related topics. It is also common that the lyrics investigate religion, the more spiritual side of human beings, the soul's inner feelings and thoughts.

I will present the material one album at a time, in a chronological order according to the album's release date, together with a list of all the analysed songs. The analyses of the song lyrics are my personal interpretations and must therefore not necessarily be correct according to what the author had intended. In the analyses I will use literary terms that here will be explained.

Perfect rhymes: rhymes where the endings sound identical.

Syllabic rhymes: rhymes where the last syllables sound identical.

Semi-rhymes: rhymes where there is an extra syllable on one of the words.

Oblique rhymes: rhymes that do not match perfectly in sound.

Stanza: a group of lines within a larger text, e.g. a verse or a poem.

Couplet: stanza consisting of two lines that rhyme.

Tercet: stanza consisting of three lines.

Quatrain: stanza consisting of four lines.

Metaphor: comparison to a certain object or idea.

Simile: comparison to a certain object or idea, using “like” or “as”.

Onomatopoeia: imitation of sounds.

Allusion: reference to literary works, myths, people, places, events, art.

2.1 Falconer

Following the band chronologically, their first album, *Falconer*, treats subjects such as guilt, self-reflection, deep emotions and feelings, religion, evil vs. good, darkness vs. light, heresy vs. piety, secrets and mysteries, freedom and a longing for it, the search for wisdom, life and death, romantic descriptions of nature, mythology and fantasy, all of it laden with metaphysical imagery. There are also a couple of songs that are written as stories.

Upon the Grave of Guilt

Heresy in Disguise

Wings of Serenity

A Quest for the Crown

Mindtraveller

Entering Eternity

Royal Galley

Substitutional World

Lord of the Blacksmiths

The Past Still Lives On

One of the “story songs”, *A Quest for the Crown*, is about a king’s missing crown, which is believed to be a sign from God to cause the fall of the kingdom if the crown is not found again (*The mission must succeed / or the kingdom will fall / with it falls the future of us all*). This song has a clear sense of fantasy and the sort of god-fearing people had in the olden days. Another “story song”, *Royal Galley*, is about a ship that goes down during her maiden

voyage. The theme of story telling is reinforced by a segment in the song which is spoken instead of sung (*The figurehead is going down towards the black end / never to be seen again crossing the seven seas*). Basically nothing more but an ode to times long gone, ***The Past Still Lives On*** praises nature and reflects over the insignificance of man (*Hearken to the waves / caressing the shore / oh how much land have they seen before*). This is, as we will see, a recurring theme in Falconer's songs. ***Entering Eternity*** also describes nature and the more spiritual side of the world in a romantic way (*Entering the world of the spirits / dwelling on the shadowside / of the world*). A strong longing for the kind of freedom mankind is clearly lacking is described in ***Wings of Serenity*** (*You're the majesty of freedom / living life at its height*). ***Mindtraveller*** deals with the search for wisdom, and has an air of fantasy (*Teach me secret holy spells / and the wisdom of the elderly*). ***Substitutional World*** is about the delusion of grandeur, a warning against megalomania. The song is a metaphor for reaching too high, not seeing the good things one already has in life, striving for more, and living in another world (an imagined one) instead of the real one (*You've burnt all your precious wings / as you had to touch the sun*). Religion, or rather the hypocrisy of religion, is explored in ***Heresy in Disguise*** (*Darkness is falling / as the spirit of god slips away / You're a sinner by night / and a holy saint by day*). ***Upon the Grave of Guilt*** is basically about wallowing in self-contempt, guilt and regret, exploring feelings of agony and anxiety (*Longing to see time rolling by / to ease the thoughts of regret / My bad conscience tears me apart / how will I ever forget*). A straightforward fantasy themed song is ***Lord of the Blacksmiths***, which praises a blacksmith who forges his creations with magic (*With wisdom and sorcery / from the beginning of time / magnificent works are forged*).

There are several literary devices used in these texts, the most frequent one being rhymes. They are used somewhat infrequently, but they do occur in every song. There are different types of rhyme used in the songs, such as;

Perfect rhymes (*pages/ages, sky/high, grey/day, light/height, crown/down, land/hand, fall/all, yore/more, exist/missed, heal/keel, astray/away, see/be, sun/done, kings/rings/things*)

Syllabic rhymes (*regret/forget*)

Semi-rhymes (*away/day, dies/demise/eyes, mind/behind, inside/hide, shore/before/more/forevermore, found/pounds, nation/damnation, unfold/told, old/behold, know/ago, upon/gone, history/see*)

Oblique rhymes (*cure/more, ground/crown, presence/existence, sun/one*).

The rhyme schemes used in the songs are mostly quatrains with the heroic stanza ABAB (*Yesterday's demon's like a plague to my mind / that never seems to cure / Imprisoning me to what I left behind / letting my conscience unchain no more*), or the even more common ABCB (*Darkness is falling / as the spirit of god slips away / You're a sinner by night / and a holy saint by day*). A few songs also feature couplets (*Don't let the gambler lead you astray / the truth is slipping further away*). Repetition of lines, sometimes with a slight change of words, is another feature used to imitate rhyming, probably to give more effect and emphasis to those certain lines. This is most common in the refrains.

Other literary devices are the use of metaphors and similes. Although not excessively used, they do occur here and there in the songs. Examples of similes are *Yesterday's demon's like a plague to my mind* and *His eyes glow like fire*. Examples of metaphors are *Your cliff is your castle; You're the majesty of freedom; I'll be the soul of the wild hawk / the whispering in the blowing wind / or at the misty glade* and *The firm hand of doom / makes the ship heal*. An example of onomatopoeia can be found in the song **Mindtraveller**: *I hear a whispering wind*, and of an allusion in the song **A Quest for the Crown**: *The elderly call it a sign as famine strikes the land / caught in the grip of the reaper's cold hand*.

The language of the first album is quite poetic and simple at the same time, and often has a strong sense of longing for freedom and a romantic view of nature and folklore.

Searching inner kingdoms / for control / to put the lid of oblivion / upon the grave of guilt
Every morning is a step towards / the edge of my soul's demise
Look down on the foolish man / competing with time / chasing his precious day
Pale cold moon be my guide / through this forest of the dawn / Enchanted wolves lead the way / to the land of infinity and destiny
I'll be the soul of the wild hawk / the whispering in the blowing wind / or at the misty glade
Powerful runes he carves / into the shining steel / to have protection / from the powers of mystery

Language-wise, this album does not have many mistakes. Disregarding the typing errors that probably occurred when transcribing the lyrics or posting them on the internet, there are only a few concord mistakes in the texts, which are consistent with the English language of non native speakers. Apart from these mistakes, the lyrics are overall grammatically correct and contain features such as main and sub-clauses, interrogative and imperative sentences,

and some informal features as well. Excluded auxiliary verbs occur, but contractions are the most common feature of informal language style. The contractions used in the lyrics of this album are *I'm, I've, you're, we'll, it's, you'll, we're, don't, isn't, you've*. The use of these contractions does stand out a bit compared to the language of the lyrics in general, but they are sometimes necessary to fit the rhythm and the melody of the songs. Even though it might sound prettier to not use contractions, they are at least used correctly with concord agreement and spelling alike.

2.2. Chapters from a Vale Forlorn

The second album, *Chapters from a Vale Forlorn*, is quite similar to the previous album, but it focuses more on the nature and psyche of man.

Decadence of Dignity

Enter the Glade

Lament of a Minstrel

For Life and Liberty

We sold our homesteads

The Clarion Call

Portals of Light

Stand in Veneration

Busted to the Floor

There are a couple of fantasy themed songs, such as *Lament of a Minstrel*, which describes the life of a minstrel (*I'm a lonely minstrel / a traveller on a road to nowhere / I sing a song to lighten the day / so come along as I walk away*), and *For Life and Liberty*, whose verbal imagery sets a scene saturated with a sense of fantasy and mystery. It depicts a hunt from the hunted's perspective, showing the cruelty of man and how obsessed man is with dominating nature (*Inside the forest oh so deep / the creatures of the night watch intensively / this hunt that flashes them by*). *Stand in Veneration* is another ode to the mighty powers of nature and an observation of how inferior man is (*As the primordial powers unveil / from beyond time, nature prevails / You can only stand in veneration*). The other songs mostly deal with the nature of man, criticising man's weak sides. *Decadence of Dignity* effectively depicts greed,

how man becomes blinded by his hunger for more and how consumption is our religion (*When profit shows his face / our sense of clarity is washed away; Living in the decadence of our dignity / When silver waves his hand / we kneel so eagerly*). The question of how much we are willing to pay for paradise and immortality with (or perhaps even without) our god, and why we are so afraid of dying is brought up in ***Enter the Glade*** (*If you are scared of death / here's eternal life / If you're down and all alone / I'll show you a paradise, for you to rejoice / I'm your wishing well, I'm your only choice*). ***We sold our Homesteads*** describes the horrors of immigration, having to leave your home and trying to survive the journey to a new land (*The air was filled with hunger and drenched in wretched cries / the howling and the noises would pierce right through the skies / and death became the ruler that forced us to our knees*). Falconer often bring up and criticise war in their songs, like they do in ***The Clarion Call***. It is a song about how ordinary people fight wars to their deaths for the sake of a few nobles' ambitions and will to dominate other people, and how wars destroy the lands and the innocent people (*Do you hear the clarion call / it's calling out to one and all / Our blood must be spilled / so the nobles' visions can be fulfilled*). More examples of this will be shown in later albums. ***Busted to the Floor*** is a bit of an anomaly because it does not quite fit in with the fantasy feel of the other songs, yet it does deal with the nature and psyche of man, so I would argue that it suits the theme of the album. It warns against trusting people too easily because they can be deceitful and cause you pain (*Deceived by my own eyes / Trust is a gamble with pain, roll the dice*). The song that has the least in common with the rest of the album is ***Portals of Light***. It is a beautiful ballad about love, about someone who has lost his lover and is now mourning this loss with the deepest grief possible (*What is there left to live for / as you've gone away / Hope's lost forever more / I'll mourn you 'till the end of days*).

The literary devices used in this album are similar to those of the previous album. Rhymes are more frequent than in the first album, here continually used in the songs, with couplets and quatrains with ABCB stanza being the most common rhyme schemes. Couplets are used in almost all of the songs, and when the ABCB stanza is not used ABAB, ABCABC, ABAC, and ABA rhyme schemes (with some variation) are used instead. The different types of rhyme used in this album are;

Perfect rhymes (*greed/creed, needs/deeds, sale/Grail, sung/tongue, side/cried, wine/mine, soul/goal, turns/burns, play/prey, way/stay, last/fast, bay/say, cave/grave, land/hand, cries/skies, knees/seas, call/all/fall/hall, for/more, sky/try, sway/day, black/back,*

might/sight, sand/land, high/sky, wave/grave, door/floor)

Semi-rhymes (*hand/command, day/today, rejoice/choice, create/fate, dream/redeem, day/away, desire/higher, when/again, tomorrow/sorrow, away/yesterday, pride/aside, heart/apart, spilled/fulfilled, vaporize/eyes, foresee/be, prevail/fail, love/above, for/forevermore*)

Oblique rhymes (*ears/hear, eyes/sky, dark/heart, deep/bleed, intensively/victory, by/eyes, countryside/fly, everyone/home, two/view, wrong/on, land/hands, endure/more, away/days, unveil/prevails*).

Other literary devices used are metaphors and similes, which occur more often in this album than in the previous one. Examples of metaphors are *There are too many stones / and life is just made of glass; Trust is a gamble with pain; true gentle rose of mine; hell is what this, our land will be; The hearts then started burning in each and everyone; The flame of intensity burns and hear how the lovely tones dance upon my tongue*. Examples of similes are *just like the birds will fly when autumn is here to stay; as quickly as birds would fly; it was as if we'd stepped into an open grave and like a fire in your soul*, and allusions such as *A fool is he who cannot foresee / hell is what this, our land will be* can be found.

The language of this album is a bit more straightforward than that of the previous one, but is still very poetic and full of metaphors and spiritual themes, and it also celebrates the beauty and power of nature.

*When profit shows his face / our sense of clarity is washed away
Here you have the ticket to immortality / just how much will you pay for ecstasy
I've gazed upon Orion for oh so many nights / astounded by the beauty of the dark and sparkling sky
Hear, my love / hear my cry of deepest grief / as I weep for you eternally
As the primordial powers unveil / from beyond time, nature prevails / You can only stand in veneration*

As with *Falconer*, this album has some grammatical mistakes, but they are not many nor particularly disturbing. There are some concord mistakes, which are consistent with the language of the previous album, but in general the lyrics are grammatically correct. Informal language appears every now and then, but the overall style of language is standard and includes features such as interrogative and imperative sentences. As with the previous album, contractions are the most common feature of informal language. The contractions used in this album are *don't, it's, we're, we'll, here's, you're, I'll, I'm, you'll, I've, who's, that's, we'd,*

couldn't, they'll, you've, hope's, nation's, hunter's, lute's.

2.3 Sceptre of Deception

According to Stefan Weinerhall, the songwriter of Falconer, *Sceptre of Deception* is a concept album, which means that the lyrics follow a storyline throughout the album. Worth mentioning is the fact that the band changed lead singer for this and the next album, from Mathias Blad to Kristoffer Göbel, an approach which somewhat changed the musical style of the album, as well as the style of the lyrics.

The Coronation
The Trail of Flames
Under the Sword
Night of Infamy
Hooves over Northland
Pledge for Freedom
Ravenhair
The Sceptre of Deception
Hear Me Pray
Child of Innocence

It begins with *The Coronation*, a song about how a man called Birger is crowned king and swears to serve and protect the land (*Receive the crown / and wear it with pride / With it comes more than just the glory and gold*). In the next song, *The Trail of Flames*, Erik and Valdemar are introduced, Birger's brothers who seem to want to bring down the king. They ride across the land, burning everything in their path and spreading fear, claiming that god stands by their side (*We'll come at dawn again / with fire and steel / leaving nothing but ashes behind*). *Under the Sword* describes how Erik and Valdemar come to the hall of the high lord Torgil and take him prisoner. Birger, the king, does not know what is happening, but welcomes his brothers and feasts with them all night. Torgil is executed for high treason and the brothers will lead the land together (*He was sentenced to death by the blade / In the name of high treason / he died under the sword*). The plot thickens in *Night of Infamy*. At first, Birger invites his brothers inside and they feast together to the grace of god. During the night however, Birger is betrayed by his brothers and he and his wife Märta are taken prisoners too

and are locked up, left to starvation and suffering. Now Erik and Valdemar alone control the land (*This night of infamy / I will never forget / nor will my brothers / the vengeance I'll get*). In ***Hooves over Northland*** the kings from the neighbouring lands invade the land to crush Erik and Valdemar. Birger is king again (*In the mist of the twilight tonight / When the sky is clear and the stars shine bright / Their land we'll smite*). As Birger gets his kingdom and throne back in ***Pledge for Freedom***, his brothers swear allegiance to him and he spares their lives, swearing that there will be peace in his family forevermore (*Fall down and bow your heads for me / I am the king you all sought me to be / To pledge you freedom*). In ***Ravenhair*** Märta, the queen, wants revenge so she seeks help from Ravenhair, a witch, to get rid of Erik and Valdemar. Unfortunately for her the witch cannot harm people of royal blood and is therefore unable to help the queen (*So let your magic be unleashed / And dispose of the false serpents of the night*). ***The Sceptre of Deception*** begins with Birger once again inviting Erik and Valdemar to his hall for a feast, this time to reconcile with each other. During the night, Birger gets his revenge by having his brothers arrested. They realise that they have no chance of escaping so they surrender (*Our swords are useless here and now / so give up this pointless fight / Doomed is our fate tonight*). ***Hear Me Pray*** is about Erik and Valdemar seeking forgiveness for what they have done before they die (*Please forgive us for our sins / let not eternity yet begin*). In the last song, ***Child of Innocence***, the people choose an innocent boy to be their new king. Remembering the mistakes of the past they crown someone who they themselves have chosen instead of letting unworthy men inherit the throne (*We chose the boy to be king / there is no blood in his crown*).

Rhymes are less frequent than in the previous albums, but they do still appear in every song. Couplets and quatrains with ABCB stanza are still the most common rhyme schemes, and when the ABCB stanza is not used ABAB, ABCABC, ABAC, ABBA, and ABA rhyme schemes are used instead. One song even features a rhyming tercet. The different types of rhyme used in this album are;

Perfect rhymes (*right/white, pride/side, gold/hold, night/light, seed/lead, stone/bone, life/strife, rule/fool, sight/night, eyes/lies, head/shed, me/be, hate/fate, crown/down, night/bite/fight/sight, play/day, sky/high, day/pray, done/sun*)

Semi-rhymes (*tonight/bright, prevail/Hail, propagate/fate, away/day, mood/intrude, forget/get, blind/behind, northland/hand, end/descend, tonight/bright/smite, hide/provide, fight/tonight, paradise/ice, inside/ride*)

Oblique rhymes (*words/heard, snow/foes, infamy/agonies, high/skies, minds/blind, deeds/need, cauldron/deception, days/way, sins/begin, cleansed/innocence, purity/unity*).

Since this is a concept album all the songs are written like parts of a story. There is a general “narrator” who describes what happens in the songs, and the different characters all have lines which they “speak”. These lines and the story-like way in which the songs are written create an additional dimension to this album that makes the tone different from that of the two previous albums. Another difference between this and the previous albums is the use of metaphors and other similar literary devices; they hardly occur at all in this album. There are some metaphors, but they are all spoken by the characters of this story; *We have harvested the crops / of the evil seed / that grew between you and me; I should not have mistaken the wolves’ scent* and *And dispose of the false serpents of the night*. This is probably due to the fact that it is a concept album, and therefore does not exactly follow the mould of traditional song writing, i.e. the songs are built-up in a fashion where the “narrator” relates the happenings while the characters provide the morals and spiritual ingredients throughout the album, rather than trying to fit in a whole tale with some kind of moral in every song.

*Remember the words of the old and wise / about what’s wrong and what’s right
They burst through the gates / with swords in hand they made their way / cross the hall of the high lord
From the western realm they marched / Through thunder, storm and rain / On a mission to quell the
snakes
When the night became morning / the fire was no more, just a red glow / Down from the stairs the guards
did descend
Remember the past and bear it inside / Witness the end of the deceiving ride*

There are a couple of concord mistakes, which, again, are consistent with the language of the previous albums. Apart from that, the language of this album is correct and standard, although it features more informal language at times because of the large amount of “spoken” lines. As with the previous albums, contractions are the most common feature of informal language. The contractions used in this album are *what’s, we’ll, we’re, you’ve, don’t, I’ll, can’t, let’s, I’m, it’s, we’ve, didn’t*.

2.4 Grime vs. Grandeur

Kristoffer Göbel is the lead singer on this album too, the last one he would be a part of, and the musical style of it is more experimental than previous and future albums. Lyric-wise this album deals with the evil, sinister and dark sides of mankind, digging into the dirt and exposing what truly lies underneath the surface of our minds, and treats topics such as drug abuse, tainted love, haughtiness and evil deeds.

Emotional skies

Purgatory Time

I Refuse

Humanity Overdose

The Assailant

Power

No Tears for Strangers

The Return

Jack the Knife

Child of the Wild

Wake Up

Rock 'n' Roll Devil

Emotional Skies seems to be about a relationship where both parts are stuck in a drug addiction, but trying to break free from it, dealing with the inevitable frustration it brings (*Why can't we end this nightmare / If that's the way take your share / leave this now or I will lose my mind*). Breaking free from a poisonous relationship where one part is clearly suffering is described in *I Refuse* (*No more lost sleep / No more lost love / I'm free*). *The Return* is another song dealing with drug addiction, with taking control of the addiction and stepping out of the mental haze caused by drug use (*Don't let your mind pollute you / you're screwing your brain / The end is no beginning / you must break the chain*). *Purgatory Time* is about redeeming ones crimes, facing the consequences of ones deeds (*It is your time to live the sum / of the acts you have done / it's purgatory time*). *No Tears for Strangers* explains why becoming numb and indifferent to the sorrows of the world can be necessary – because if you do not your heart will probably burst (*If I was to feel for one and all / I would probably crumble and fall*). *Humanity Overdose* tells us that even if you are powerful and important you are still only human and mortal, like everyone else. It is mortal life that is truly divine

(*Thorns always come with the rose / Here is what you got / humanity overdose*). **The Assailant** describes hunting for something, feeling the intoxication of the hunt, but also warns about destroying oneself in the process (*Time after time always on the hunt / It will lead you round your grave*). **Power** is another song which deals with greed and hunger for power and success. By trampling down others and betraying them in your quest for it you will find it very lonely at the top (*Trample down their dreams / to feed your own / The glory of your fortune / celebrate it alone*). **Jack the Knife** is about the legendary serial killer Jack the Ripper and his evil deeds, continuing with the theme of how evil and sinister mankind can be (*You don't know who I am / but I'm nasty and obscene / I'll take your life cut your throat / fulfilling all my dreams*). In **Child of the Wild** we see that the truly frightening beasts of the world are not wild animals, but mankind with their greed and malevolence (*Gaze into nature's eyes / is there spite, is there greed / Face your fellow man / realize he's of evil breed*). The last two songs, **Wake Up** and **Rock 'n' Roll Devil**, are bonus tracks which were only released in Japan, but they do not differ that much from the rest of the album lyric-wise. They are somewhat more like typical heavy metal songs, dealing so obviously with topics such as sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll (*The ring upon your finger doesn't mean a thing / Now when you are drunk you can be the king; Needing the fix I can't get out / If I don't get it my full body starts to shout*), but that is in line with many of the other songs of the album as well.

Rhymes are still fairly frequent and they appear in every song. Couplets and quatrains with ABCB and ABAB stanza are the most common rhyme schemes on this album as well, and ABAA stanza is used once. One song also features rhyming tercets. The different types of rhyme used in this album are;

Perfect rhymes (*me/be, night/fight, me/see, game/blame, in/sin, more/core, be/free, well/hell, sky/I, no/go, game/same, Grail/pale, plan/can, land/sand, hunt/grunt, veins/chains, bone/own, play/stray, lies/eyes, gold/hold, day/stay, ground/round, day/day, bad/sad, all/fall, brain/chain, wail/fail, near/fear, night/bite, greed/breed, night/fright, thing/king, do/you, name/shame, you/blue*)

Semi-rhymes (*nightmare/share, away/grey/day, mind/behind, more/before, own/alone, power/devour, below/go, shore/anymore, me/emotionality, control/roll, understand/hand, friend/pretend, hide/inside, knight/excite, more/before/score, out/shout/without*)

Oblique rhymes (*sum/done, pardon/bargain, blames/chains, rose/overdose,*

eternity/century, divine/decline, masquerade/bouquet, loud/out, gloom/moon, obscene/dreams, man/damned, time/mine, wild/hide, disguised/inside, peace/seas).

The lyrics are rich with metaphors, such as *Cry, cry, cry your eyes out; Come taken my hand and let us fly away / cross emotional skies; Build a tower to the sky; Thorns always come with the rose; The road to your success / it is paved with your shameless lies; When you reach the top / you will find the rainbow's gold; The end is no beginning, you must break the chain and Now when you are drunk you can be the king.* Similes such as *You feel like a tiger* and allusions such as *Can you walk on water* and *Do you know me now / I'm Jack the Ripper* also occur.

The style of the language in this album is more informal and direct. It is not very poetic, but that suits the tone of the album which is a bit more angry, honest and aggressive than the more poetic albums.

*I'm a sucker for this game / This shit is becoming something I can't live without
You're the terror well disguised / you're the fear that locks itself inside / We ought to be afraid of ourselves
Don't let the drugs abuse you / you must take control / The circle keeps on spinning, endless like a roll
My heart ain't rich enough / to suffer your reality
Go bitch on someone else / I'll take no more / no more frustration to the core*

There are some grammatical mistakes in this album too, but not as many as in the other albums. There is one concord mistake, but apart from that the lyrics are grammatically correct, although very informal at times. As with the previous albums, contractions are the most common feature of informal language, but other features also include deleted letters, such as in *lovin'*, *'cause* and *rock 'n' roll*, excluded auxiliary verbs, like in *what you got* and *I got to*, and more informal vocabulary, such as *bitch*, *shit*, *crap* and *screwing*. The contractions used in this album are *won't*, *can't*, *that's*, *it's*, *you'll*, *don't*, *I'll*, *I'm*, *you've*, *you're*, *I've*, *he's*, *doesn't*, *thorax's*, *honesty's*, *chalice's*, *conscience's*, *battle's* and the more informal *ain't*.

2.5 Northwind

The fifth album is quite similar to *Falconer* and *Chapters from a Vale Forlorn* as it also deals much with the weaker sides of man's psyche, war, religion, mythology and fantasy. With the return of former lead singer Mathias Blad the fifth album takes us back to somewhere near the starting point of the band's musical direction and lyrical style.

Northwind
Waltz with the dead
Spirit of the hawk
Legend and the Lore
Catch the Shadows
Tower of the Queen
Long gone by
Perjury and Sanctity
Fairyland Fanfare
Blinded
Delusion
Home of the knave

As mentioned above, several of the songs on this album deal with war. The title track *Northwind* depicts sailing across oceans to distant lands to fight (*Through the days and nights / through triumphant fights / we have roamed these far away lands with no peace in sight*). *Home of the Knave* criticises holy wars, questioning the enigmatic reasons for starting them in the first place (*Shadows of the templars / are yet again a fact / creeds are cast aside / determination's still intact*). The song *Delusion* displays clear criticism against the folly and intolerance of religion; against the people deluded by its lies and being so blinded by something fictitious that you would willingly sacrifice your life for it (*Yield to the nonsense / yield to the dogmatic scheme / Kneel down embrace it / indoctrination supreme*). Another song which criticises religion is *Perjury and Sanctity*. It is about the hypocrisy of redeeming one's sins and therefore finding salvation from God (*In pride and honour / you wear the crucifix / as a shield towards / the bitter consequence*). *Blinded* warns of damning future generations to poverty for the sake of greed and by making poor decisions. *Tower of the Queen* tells of how fame, fortune and success are shallow, false, fleeting and, most importantly, of how easily they can be taken away (*Beware / doubles fill the court / Who's*

who / in this hollow masquerade). **Catch the Shadows** also depicts greed as well as the folly of searching for things one cannot obtain (*The prizes fade with time / as day fades into night / The state of satisfaction / is slowly dying high*). Another ode to nature and to the freedom which men cannot enjoy is **Spirit of the Hawk** (*You're a spawn of the high cliffs / slave to wind and son to the storm / Born to a life on the free wings / without chains to hold back your heart*). **Fairyland Fanfare** is about escapism; escaping from your own unsatisfactory life into the world of fantasy role-playing, where you can be whoever you want to be and do whatever you want to do - at least for a while (*Beyond the fields of emerald green / and over the sapphire oceans / Past ruby skies there lies your salvation / to live out your true emotions*). The fact that time goes by, that people, events and things are forgotten, that nothing is forever and life is fleeting is portrayed in **Long gone by** (*The paths we used to tread / and the secrets we then told / no one knows them by now / and we, we are too old*). **Legend and the Lore** is a song about how difficult it can sometimes be to tell the difference between what is real and what is fictitious (*The mist-like shape entwines / the legend and the lore / into a conviction unsure*). **Waltz with the Dead** is about a Swedish mythological evil water spirit called 'Näcken' who lures people with his beautiful appearance and by playing his fiddle, to join him in the deep. Naturally, the people drown and the evil spirit takes their souls (*Deep in the mist you can hear him / softly playing his strings in order to snatch your soul far away*).

Rhymes are not as frequent as in previous albums, but they do appear in every song. Couplets and quatrains with ABCB and ABAB stanza are the most common rhyme schemes on this album as well, and ABACDC, ABCAB, ABABA rhyme schemes are used here and there. A few songs feature rhyming tercets, and one song even features a rhyming quatrain. The different types of rhyme used in this album are;

Perfect rhymes (*sky/fly, stand/land, guide/ride, gloom/doom, to/do, play/they, sound/drowned, sky/high, prime/time, sky/sigh, fall/all, came/fame, glass/pass, name/fame, stage/wage, court/short, day/grey, told/old, glades/fades, I/by/dye, hours/bowers, day/day, wear/there, reign/vain, brave/knave*)

Semi-rhymes (*ashore/yore, prey/away, concealed/field, old/ behold, alive/revive, lore/unsure, led/ahead, masquerade/blade, shore/evermore, divinity/me, fanfare/lair, oceans/emotions, scheme/supreme, more/obscure, fact/intact*)

Oblique rhymes (*seas/heaths, nights/fights/sight, old/cold/holds, melody/harmony, plays/stay, fiddle/riddles, strings/sing, free/seed, shadows/follow, night/high,*

falsity/royalty, decadence/consequence, redeemed/self-esteem, walls/fall, shelter/silver, sky/cry/eyes, left/deaf).

There are many other literary devices used in this album, most frequent are metaphors. Some examples are *In the prow I stand / hungry for dry land; You're a spawn of the high cliffs / slave to the wind and son to the storm / Born to a life on the free wings / without chains to hold back your heart; Soar on you king of the welkin; Where our Eden lied / in an age long gone by; See the spiteful and widening cracks / in the bricks of all their / picture perfect walls* and *To me you're just a sheep / with zippers in the back*. Similes can also be found, such as *Tunes of mendacity whispers / throughout the gloom, like echoes / of mystery or a lullaby of doom; You grasped a pot of gold / now it looks like led; It's like an ever-eve / of a gloaming light; Your hair / was like of a golden / shiny dye; In pride and honour / you wear the crucifix / as a shield towards / the bitter consequence*, and allusions such as *Where our Eden lied / in an age long gone by*. There is also a wonderful example of alliteration;

Live the legend, live life all alone / longing to linger in lore / Illuminating a lane / that leads you aloft / You're lost to the lunar lure / Leave the languish / leave lanterns of lorn / Lend lacking lustre to lies / Liberate the laces / of life for the lone / lest lament yet alights

As mentioned above the return of Mathias Blad as lead singer meant the band found there way back to the origin of their musical development, and this is clearly discernible in the lyrics. They have gone back to a more poetic style of language which creates a completely different tone from that of **Grime vs. Grandeur**, which was more direct and aggressive.

*Father up in the sky / let the ravens fly / to soar aside our ship of oak as / wild oceans we ride
Such nimble fingers that play / upon the fiddle. In shadows they / linger like the darkest of riddles
Under the starlit sky / shadows come alive / Chapters of laughter and a sigh / they do revive
Our robes have gone grey / as we sailed to mortal shore / The journey felt so short / to the gates of evermore
Beyond the fields of emerald green / and over the sapphire oceans / Past ruby skies there lies your salvation / to live out your true emotions*

The grammar of this album is far more standard than that of any of the previous albums'. There are two concord mistakes and contractions are used sparsely, with only ten throughout the entire album. The contractions used are *we're, you're, it's, who's* and *determination's*.

2.6 Among Beggars and Thieves

According to what the band have stated on their Facebook page the lyrics of this album “revolve around the misery, poverty and hard times of medieval Sweden”. As with many songs from the previous albums, this album features several songs about wars, kings, ignorance, poverty and the upper classes taking advantage of the lower classes.

Field of Sorrow

Man of the Hour

A Beggar Hero

Carnival of Disgust

Mountain Men

Pale Light of Silver Moon

Boiling Led

Dark Ages

Dreams and Pyres

Field of sorrow depicts how peasants fight and lose their lives for the riches of high society; how the lower classes are sacrificed to protect the interests of the rich and powerful (*Outside the city gates / the peasant army fights on / towards their imminent doom*). *Man of the Hour* tells a tale of how an ignorant man, who gained power just because he was of noble birth, dooms all his men (*The morning air was filled with an aria of cries / Crewmen jumped the rail now / choosing ice before the fire*). *Boling led* depicts how a king is assassinated and the following hunt for the killer (*Hooves are pounding / So many thoughts in their heads / Out to find him, sure to succeed / For their king and their leader is dead*). *Mountain Men* is a story about a people who are displeased with the tyranny of their king’s rule, so they fight back and eventually get him dethroned and chased from the country (*Mountain men / heard the call and / fought tyranny’s cold hand / Mountain men / from the harsh land / cast off their chains and the burning shackles*). *Dreams and Pyres* is a narrative on the witch-hunts which occurred in Sweden in the olden days, mostly during the 17th century. It also displays critique against the advantageous treatment of the higher classes as opposed to the persecution of the lower classes (*There is the devil’s bride / rode on the goat astride / God save us from Satan’s firm hand*). *Carnival of Disgust* portrays the life of a hangman (*Lonely he walks, outcast of shame*

/ Fearful and spat on yet respected for his name). **Pale Light of Silver Moon** describes what can come of extreme poverty (*Dweller of the sombre lanes / crow of the gutter and grime / Striving through the dark for gain / up to the gallows you climb*). **A Beggar Hero** is about a former captain of the army whose life as a beggar now consists only of misery and pain in poverty (*Enduring poverty's yoke / with a bitter sigh / A beggar hero he is*). **Dark Ages** tells of how famine kills many people and how neither courage, wisdom, gold nor sacrifices to the gods can save them. However, dying is not so bad, because you shall live forever in Valhalla's hall, feasting and drinking mead (*Years of famine and years of sigh / reaps our land that fell from crest / Creatures, serfs and men hanged high / yet no remedy*).

Rhymes are frequent in some songs while in others there are hardly any rhymes at all. Couplets and quatrains with ABCB and ABAB stanza are the most common rhyme schemes on this album as well, but ABCABC, ABA, ABAC, ABBA, and AABABB rhyme schemes are used here and there as well. A few songs also feature rhyming tercets. The different types of rhyme used in this album are;

Perfect rhymes (*on/dawn, old/bold, hour/power, game/name, den/men, greet/fleet, round/bound, light/right, shame/name, sight/night, hand/land/and, grime/climb, womb/gloom, sin/grin, sled/head/bed, runner/gunner/dunner, hide/guide, blow/snow, sigh/high, sages/ages, call/hall, scheme/dream/theme, higher/fire, ball/all, tongue/sprung, fang/sprang*)

Semi-rhymes (*day/dismay, broadside/pride, away/astay, cries/arise, foe/below, away/display, way/array, demise/eyes, ice/suffice, spree/decreed, more/before, bride/astride, aflame/game*)

Oblique rhymes (*cry/sighs, plains/shame, confusion/termination, destiny/irony, ropes/hope, lanes/gain, moon/ruin, plans/dance, poverty/misery, morning/whirling/pounding, heads/dead, years/fear, fire/desires, witch/sticks, ways/day, flock/locked*).

Metaphors are quite common in this album too, with examples such as *Cross the field of sorrow / children's souls still cry; The man of the hour / in the lion's den; Behind the veil of destiny / the path might turn in sudden twists of irony; Fight tyranny's cold hand; Look for the vulture's eyes / on the fair of misery; Paved was his road with the golden bricks / To the glory and to the fame and Prince of misfortunate fate he is*. Some examples of similes are *It's cold*

and the snow is whirling / Like a warning, a promising fate; Promises of future lies shattered like broken glass and Lonely and crippled roaming in / Gutters like a shadow of his past.

The style of the language is often quite dramatic and more narrative than the more poetic albums. The hard times, the poverty and the injustices described really come across.

*They saw the beacon aflame / burning with sorrow for the lives that would be lost
No importation and no exportation is making the nation bleed / Yet the bailiffs demand their gold / the uprising is growing for every day
Years of famine and years of sigh / reaps our land that fell from crest
It's the darkened years / superstition's flying high / There is pain, there is fear / in the poverty's sigh
Once a brave captain now but a / fallen knight of misery and pain / Starving through days and freezing through nights / Seeing the young soldiers walk by with a mocking smile*

The grammar of this album is very similar to that of *Northwind*. There are only two concord mistakes and only ten contractions throughout this album as well. The contractions used are *they're, he's, you'll, it's, I'm, can't, you've* and *she's*.

3. Discussion of results

3.1 Themes and Topics

Falconer's lyrics often praise nature and have an air of fantasy and mythology. They reflect over the insignificance of man and describe longing for freedom and a more joyful way of life, to not be forced to slave under the yoke of oppression and poverty. Oppression of the lower classes by the higher classes is a common topic in the lyrics. Many songs deal with war, especially wars being fought by poor, regular, innocent people for the sake of the rich and high society. A great deal of critique against the very existence of wars in general is presented in the songs, along with critique against exploitation. The lyrics often deal with the cruelty of man and of how obsessed man is with dominating nature and weaker people.

The nature and psyche of man, with all his dark, evil and sinister sides is also a common topic. Many songs depict deceit, malevolence and greed and how man becomes blinded by his hunger for more, destroying lives and lands in his quest for it. Drug abuse, tainted love, dysfunctional relationships, haughtiness, malice and murder are also brought up and explored.

Another topic that is treated at length is religion. There is much critique against the folly, hypocrisy and intolerance of religion in the songs. There is an overwhelming sense that people are blind to all that is good in the world and instead get caught up in the bad, superficial and depraved sides of our existence. The lyrics seem to advocate for a more humble, humanistic way of life, and for us to open our eyes to see the beauty of the world – how it could be.

As Weinstein observes, “No single lyrical theme dominates the genre. According to Kotarba and Wells, the themes of heavy metal song lyrics span a wide range, ‘from Christian salvation to oral sex.’” (1991; 34-35) Although this wide range is also the case with Falconer’s songs, Weinstein continues by claiming that “There is nothing lighthearted in heavy metal’s words.” (1991; 35) As we have seen, there are some songs in Falconer’s repertoire that are more lighthearted than the general heavy metal song, making this claim a clear glimpse of the differences between heavy and power metal. An even clearer difference is the one between power metal and various forms of extreme metal. Khan-Harris describes extreme metal lyrics as “dealing with murder, sexual assault and violence.” (2007; 7) He claims there are “two crucial traits of extreme metal discourse. One is an obsession with fantasies of control. The other is the unflinchingly explicit way in which violence is described.” (2007; 36) It is clear that the lyrics of extreme metal are more aggressive than those of heavy and power metal.

According to Weinstein, the lyrics of heavy metal can be sorted into two major categories; Dionysian and Chaos themes. Songs of the Dionysian theme are about celebrating different forms of ecstasy in life, and treat the classical heavy metal topics sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll, while Chaos themed songs treat “disorder, conflict opposition, and contradiction” (1991; 39), that is, topics such as injustice, rebellion, mythology, death, malice, etc. Weinstein suggests that by making chaos a lyrical theme it is a way to rebel against “the pieties and platitudes of normal society” (1991; 39), which basically is what metal, regardless of subgenre, is all about.

When it comes to love, which should be sorted as a kind of Dionysian theme, it is hard to find metal songs which deal with this topic in a romantic way. Weinstein claims that “[the] few songs about relationships describe those that have gone sour long ago.” (1991; 35-36) In Falconer’s lyrics I do find a couple of songs that seem to be about tainted love, which then would reinforce Weinstein’s claim. There is however one song (*Portals of Light*) that portrays a lost love; a person who is grieving the loss of his beloved, something that I argue is

definitely romantic love. Though this has to be an exception, since I believe that what Weinstein means is that few or no metal songs treat topics of blissful love and relationships, but rather bitterness of relationships gone wrong if at all mentioned in songs. A Dionysian theme that is dealt with at great extent in heavy metal songs is sex. According to Weinstein “[sex], in heavy metal’s discourse, is sweaty, fun, and without commitments.” (1991; 36) She claims that sex is not respectable in heavy metal and that women are mostly objectified, a grip which I think is used to further tell society to “go to hell”.

The topic of religion is a major part of the Chaos themes, and many metal bands get inspiration for their lyrics from it. According to Weinstein, the Book of Revelations “is a particularly rich source of imagery for heavy metal lyrics” (1991; 39), as well as pagan images which, since “[they are] judged by Christians to be a representation of chaos” are used to rebel against society (1991; 39).

The topics of uprising, rebellion, injustice and evil are abundant in metal songs, something that both my findings and Weinstein’s show. Allusions to literature, mythology, fantasy, monsters, magic and movies can also be found in both heavy and power metal.

Comparing my findings to those of Weinstein, I find support for my claims, and together we contribute to a general picture of lyric themes in metal songs.

3.2 Literary devices

The most common literary device in the song lyrics is, by far, rhymes. They occur in every song, although not equally frequently. Couplets and quatrains with ABCB and ABAB stanza are without a doubt the most common rhyme schemes in all the albums, but other rhyme schemes are also used. The use of rhymes creates a poetic feeling and certainly makes the lyrics more memorable. By rhyming the lyrics, songs become more “catchy”, enabling the mind to remember and reflect over what the lyrics are trying to tell the listener. This means that if you want someone to hear your message, you had better put it in rhyme. Too much rhyming, on the other hand, could be repetitive and tiresome. I believe this is a good reason to use different types of stanzas and rhyme schemes, even within the same song. One has to mix it up a little to avoid boredom.

Other literary devices such as metaphors, similes, allusions, onomatopoeia and alliteration occur regularly in the lyrics and they all contribute to a more nuanced style of

language. The use of metaphors is particularly extensive and certainly enables the listener to picture in their mind what the band want to communicate with their songs – the feelings, the underlying messages and the meanings become deeper.

3.3 Linguistic devices

The lyrics contain linguistic features such as main and sub-clauses, interrogative and imperative sentences. G-deletion and other spelling modification occurred only twice. This is not standard for heavy metal songs, which generally have an informal style of language and frequently delete end g's and modify other spelling for the sake of rhythm and melody. Falconer's (a power metal band, not heavy metal) songs, on the other hand, use more standard language, making g-deletion and spelling modification generally nonessential. The reason for why the language of heavy metal is more informal is, as Weinstein puts it, "[heavy metal] symbolizes a refusal to conform to rules of respectability that repress vitality or to submit to those who wish to exert their domination over others." (1991; 42) Basically, heavy metal bands tell the norms of society to "go to hell", partly by using informal (bad/simple) language. Even though Falconer is a metal band, they want to convey a more serious feeling and tone in their lyrics, making the use of standard and formal language a better means to put across their message.

Contractions, on the other hand, occur in all different sorts of metal genres (and most other musical genres as well). Although not excessively used in the songs, they do occur quite often throughout the first four albums and a little less in the last two albums. Excluded auxiliary verbs and more informal vocabulary, such as *bitch*, *shit*, *crap* and *screwing* are other features of informal language which can be found in the lyrics.

There are some concord mistakes in all six albums, but that is to be expected from non-native speakers, and there are not so many mistakes in the lyrics that they disrupt the songs completely.

4. Summary and Conclusion

To summarise, we have seen that the lyrics of power metal are not all about the classic rock themes of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, but instead deal with a multitude of topics. Themes as far apart from each other as grief, freedom, guilt, malice, love, oppression, fantasy, escapism, greed, drug abuse, religion and rising against injustices are all represented in the lyrics, and then one must keep in mind that I have only examined the texts of one single power metal band, out of all the hundreds (or maybe even thousands) of bands that exist in the world today.

We have also seen that the level of the language is quite high, standard and mostly correct. Literary devices such as rhymes, metaphors, similes, alliteration, etc. are used, which gives the language extra depth and meaning. Some modification to spelling and standard forms of words does occur to fit the rhythm and melody of the music, which also contributes to the variety of the language in the songs.

As mentioned before, one could also investigate the pronunciation of rock and metal songs. One possible angle could be to see if the pronunciation differs between non-native speakers from different parts of the world, or to compare a native speaking band to a non-native one. Another possibility for future research could be to investigate the other subgenres of metal to find out if they differ linguistically, or to compare several bands of one subgenre to see if there are differences or similarities in their language usage. This is a subject which is not researched at great length, so much could be done to minimise the blank areas of the linguistics of metal music.

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