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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LITERARY MOTIFS IN TWO LYRICS OF THE HEAVYMETAL BAND IRON MAIDEN

Summary

The aim of the submitted article is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the correlation between the content of two songs by the heavy metal band Iron Maiden (“Phantom of the Opera” and “The Longest Day”) and the content of the literary works on the basis of which the lyrics of the aforementioned songs were created. The author of the article focuses on literary analysis, in particular on examining the connections between the lyrics of Iron Maiden’s songs and the literary works whose content is quoted or paraphrased in the lyrics. An important aim of the article is to understand how the band Iron Maiden uses a wide range of literary works in creating their lyrics and what functions these references perform in the context of literary studies.

Streszczenie

Celem przedłożonego artykułu jest dogłębna analiza korelacji pomiędzy treścią dwóch utworów muzycznych heavy-metalowego zespołu Iron Maiden („Phantom of the Opera” oraz „The Longest Day”) a treściami dzieł literackich, na podstawie których stworzone zostały teksty ww. piosenek. Autor artykułu skupia się na analizie literaturoznawczej, w szczególności na badaniu związków między tekstami piosenek zespołu Iron Maiden a dziełami literackimi, których treść jest cytowana, bądź parafrazowana w tekstach piosenek. Istotnym celem artykułu jest zrozumienie, w jaki sposób zespół Iron Maiden korzysta z szerokiego spektrum dzieł literackich w tworzeniu swoich tekstów oraz jakie funkcje pełnią te odniesienia w kontekście literaturoznawczym.

Introduction

Heavy metal music – encompassing such subgenres as, for instance, black, dark, death, doom, trash, and power metal, with its thunderous riffs, pounding drums, and visceral vocals – often evokes images of darkness, evil, crime, rebellion, and aggression, focusing lyrically on “dark and depressing subject matter to an extent hitherto unprecedented in any form of pop music” (Hatch, Millward, 1987, p. 167). However, beneath its loud and ‘evil-like’ exterior lies a rich tapestry of literary influences and themes. The lyrics of heavy metal bands frequently draw inspiration from various literary texts, ranging from classic literature to mythology, folklore, and even modern and postmodern literature. This symbiotic relationship between literary works and heavy metal lyrics – confirming Edward Said’s statement that any type of writing “is not free, nor is it performed uniquely by a sovereign writer who writes more or less as he or she pleases. Writing belongs to a system of utterances that has all sorts of affiliative, often constricting relationships with the world of nations” (2004, p. 24) and other branches of culture and art – not only enriches the music per se but also provides the listeners with a deeper understanding of both art forms. Therefore, it is important to perceive and appreciate this unique interconnectedness between literary texts and lyrics of the songs, as asserted by Nicholas Cook who claims that “music has

an extraordinary power of ideological influence. [...] we must learn to understand the importance of music as an essential part of culture, society and ourselves” (1998, p. 138).

Heavy metal bands have long been fascinated by themes of mythology, fantasy, and the supernatural. From Black Sabbath’s exploration of occult themes to Iron Maiden’s epic tales of historical events, the genre has frequently and willingly incorporated elements of classic literature and folklore. Moreover, heavy metal lyrics often delve into existential questions, societal issues, and psychological themes reminiscent of literary works. Metal bands like Metallica and Megadeth, known for their introspective lyrics, very often explore themes of alienation, justice, human nature, and war, drawing parallels to literary classics such as George Orwell’s *1984* or Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*.

One of the most intriguing aspects of heavy metal lyrics is their use of symbolism and imagery. Like poetry, lyrics often employ vivid imagery and metaphorical language to convey complex emotions and ideas. For instance, bands like Opeth and Tool are renowned for their lyrical depth and intricate storytelling, drawing the listeners into worlds of darkness, despair, and even redemption. Furthermore, heavy metal’s penchant for dark and Gothic themes echoes the works of literary giants such as Edgar Allan Poe and H. P. Lovecraft. Hence, the use of symbolism, allegory, and surrealism in both media can create a haunting atmosphere that resonates with audience’s diverse passions.

At its core, heavy metal music is a form of artistic expression that easily captures and expresses the full spectrum of human emotions and experiences. From wrath and despair to love and longing, metal lyrics often serve – reminiscent of an ancient tragedy – as a cathartic outlet for both the artists and the listeners alike; even the bands that belong to the subgenres of black, dark, and death metal with their lyrics “permeated with notions of evil, darkness, destruction, death, attack on Christianity, Satanism as well as a plethora of forms of perversion and highly transgressive themes,” (Giza, 2022, p. 66) as asserted in one of my articles, can function as a catalyst of negative and often destructive emotions and tendencies. Therefore, by means of their exploration of universal themes, both positive and negative ones, heavy metal bands can forge a deep emotional connection with their audience, much like the protagonists of classic literature.

The diversity of literary influences in heavy metal lyrics reflects a rapid evolution and adaptability over time of the subgenres of this form of musical expression. While early metal bands drew inspiration from mythology and folklore, modern bands tend to explore much wider range of literary genres and styles such as, for instance, science fiction, dystopian literature or even apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction.

In the huge realm of music, the ‘marriage’ between literature and an intricate process of songwriting is a fascinating phenomenon that transcends genres and epochs. In his book entitled *Na stykach iskry: literackie konteksty rocka* Sławomir Kuźnicki affirms that “[T]here is no need to convince anyone that such literature is an inexhaustible source of inspiration for creators of rock and pop music” (2023, p. 17), confirming his theory by offering a catalogue of artists and their albums whose lyrics are based upon literary content (one of the bands that appears in this list is Iron Maiden

with the 1986 album “Somewhere in Time”). It is also my own conviction that the lyrics of the iconic heavy metal British band Iron Maiden confirm this remarkable synthesis between literature and music. Renowned for their electrifying melodies, powerful vocals, and elaborate compositions, Iron Maiden has crafted a rich tapestry of songs that draw inspiration from a myriad of literary sources, ranging from classic literature to historical events and mythical, symbolical tales.

Steve Pilkington asserts that “the history of Iron Maiden is inextricably bound up with founder member and bassist Steve Harris. A native of Leytonstone, in East London, Harris formed the very first incarnation on Christmas Day 1975, having previously cut his teeth in bands called Gypsy’s Kiss and Smiler. He was 19 at the time” (2020, p. 5). Since the inception of the band Iron Maiden musicians have been celebrated for their ability to weave complex narratives and thought-provoking themes into their music. Led by the bassist and primary songwriter Stephen Percy Harris (known as Steve Harris, born on 12th March, 1956), the band has consistently delved into diverse literary landscapes, transforming literary motifs and characters into epic anthems that resonate with fans around the world. Moreover, as for their style of playing heavy metal music at the beginning of their career, Christie asserts that the band “skilfully combined the sumptuous influences of Judas Priest music with the downbeat energy generated by punk rock – and it was a deadly and impressive combination” (2004, p. 59). He continues his train of thoughts by claiming that “Iron Maiden played ten times more notes than anyone else, and their dazzling compositional approach raised the artistic standard of heavy metal for decades” (p. 59), leaving an indelible mark on the music industry. Moreover, as asserted by Martin Popoff, “despite the instant smash impact of Iron Maiden’s self-titled debut, no one could say this band hadn’t paid their dues. With roots all the way back to 1975, Steve Harris and a rotating cast were creating a new wave of British heavy metal long before anybody thought to stick capital letters on that term” (2018, p. 8).

Iron Maiden was formed in Leyton, East London, by the bassist Steve Harris, who remains the driving force and primary songwriter of the band to this day. Harris had a vision of creating a band that would combine the raw energy of punk with the musical complexity of progressive rock. Joined by the guitarist Dave Murray, the guitarist Dennis Stratton, the drummer Clive Burr, and the vocalist Paul Di’Anno, Iron Maiden began to carve out their sound in the gritty London music scene of the late 1970s. In 1980, Iron Maiden released their self-titled debut album, “Iron Maiden,” which showcased their distinctive blend of aggressive guitar riffs, melodic harmonies, and fantasy-inspired lyrics. The album received critical acclaim and laid the foundation for the band’s future success. Iron Maiden’s sophomore album, “Killers” (1981), further solidified their reputation as a force to be reckoned with in the heavy metal genre. However, it was their third studio album, “The Number of the Beast” released in 1982 that propelled them to an international stardom. Featuring iconic songs such as “The Number of the Beast” and “Run to the Hills,” the album topped the charts in numerous countries and established Iron Maiden as one of the leading bands of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM). Dave Artwood, while analysing Iron Maiden’s innovative musical style, describes it in such a manner: “a deeply melodic, dextrous sense of musicianship wedded to aggressive riffs straight from the Sabbath early catalogue, Iron Maiden’s early work was a blast of fresh air in

the dank, stagnant atmosphere of late-70s metal, itself also under threat from the nascent punk movement” (2012, p. 4).

Throughout the 1980s, Iron Maiden released a string of critically acclaimed albums, including “Piece of Mind” (1983), “Powerslave” (1984), and “Somewhere in Time” (1986). These albums testify to the band’s gigantic evolution as musicians and songwriters, incorporating elements of progressive rock and incorporating intricate arrangements while maintaining their signature sound. In 1981, the vocalist Paul Di’Anno was replaced by Bruce Dickinson, whose powerful operatic voice and dynamic stage presence brought a new dimension to Iron Maiden’s music. With Dickinson at the helm, Iron Maiden reached new heights of success, releasing masterpieces such as “Seventh Son of a Seventh Son” (1988) and “Fear of the Dark” (1992), with the title song being constantly played during every concert. Despite undergoing several line-up changes over the years, with guitarists Adrian Smith and Janick Gers joining the band and Bruce Dickinson’s coming back in 1999 (after six years of absence), Iron Maiden continued to release critically acclaimed albums (“Brave New World” (2000), “Dance of Death” (2003), “A Matter of Life and Death” (2006), “The Final Frontier” (2010), “The Book of Souls” (2015), and “Senjutsu” (2021)) and tour relentlessly, solidifying their reputation as one of the greatest live acts in the world.

One of the most distinctive features of Iron Maiden’s songwriting process is their penchant for drawing inspiration from a various subgenres of literature. The band’s extensive discography (17 studio albums) is replete with references to literary masterpieces, with themes ranging from dystopian nightmares to ancient myths and legends. For instance, the epic song entitled “Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” based on Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s poem of the same name, vividly captures the haunting tale of the sailor’s journey through the treacherous waters of the Antarctic, perceived as a form of punishment for shooting an albatross. Similarly, Iron Maiden’s exploration of dystopian themes and societal critique can be traced back to George Orwell’s seminal novel, *1984*. Moreover, songs such as “2 Minutes to Midnight” and “The Prisoner” offer a chilling commentary on the perils of political oppression and nuclear brinkmanship, echoing Orwell’s warnings of totalitarianism and state control. Furthermore, the band’s fascination with both historical events and historical figures is apparent in songs such as “Alexander the Great” and “The Trooper,” which immortalize the exploits of legendary warriors and leaders throughout history. Drawing from historical narratives and folklore, Iron Maiden has been crafting vivid portraits of courage, heroism, and tragedy, inviting the listeners to embark on a journey through the annals of time.

Beyond their literary influences, Iron Maiden’s lyrics also reflect a deep engagement with philosophical and existential themes and songs such as “Hallowed Be Thy Name” and “The Number of the Beast” address issues of mortality, spirituality, evil, and the human condition, inviting the listeners to ponder on the mysteries of life, death, and diverse spiritual matters. Moreover, Iron Maiden’s lyrical prowess is complemented by their virtuosic musicianship and electrifying stage presence, creating a multisensory experience that captivates the public across generations. From the soaring vocals of Bruce Dickinson to the intricate guitar harmonies of Adrian Smith, Dave Murray and Janick Gers, the galloping bass

harmonies of Steve Harris, and an ultra-sophisticated playing on drums by Nicko McBrain, Iron Maiden's music transcends the boundaries of heavy metal, inviting the listeners on a transcendent journey through sound and storytelling.

In essence, Iron Maiden's symbiotic relationship with literary texts confirms the enduring power of music as a vehicle for storytelling and cultural expression. By drawing inspiration from the annals of literature and history, the band has been constructing a body of musical work that transcends the confines of genre, encouraging the listeners to explore the depths of human experience and imagination. As fans continue to flock to Iron Maiden's epic concerts and immerse themselves in the content of the band's iconic albums, one thing remains absolutely obvious: the symbiosis between literary texts and heavy metal music is a testament to the permanent power of storytelling in all its myriad forms. Through their music, Iron Maiden has not only enriched the heavy metal genre but also ignited a passion for literature and imagination that continues to inspire the listeners around the globe.

In conclusion, Iron Maiden's influence extends far beyond the realm of heavy metal music. With their distinctive sound, elaborate stage productions, and iconic imagery they have not only inspired countless bands and artists across multiple genres, they have also encouraged their listeners to immerse themselves in the immense ocean of literature from which the band has been fishing out a plethora of literary content in order to transform it into the intricate and sophisticated masterpieces of heavy metal music. The symbiosis between literary texts and heavy metal lyrics is, therefore, a testament to the depth and complexity of both art forms. Through their exploration of mythology, symbolism, literary motifs and a plethora of human experiences and emotions, heavy metal bands create music that transcends mere entertainment, offering their listeners a powerful insight into the human psyche and the world of literature, as well. As the subgenres continue to evolve, so will their relationship with literature, ensuring that the legacy of heavy metal music remains intertwined with the timeless themes of classic literature for generations to come.¹

1. Iron Maiden's "Phantom of the Opera" and Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera*

Iron Maiden's "Phantom of the Opera"

I've been looking so long for you now,
You won't get away from my grasp
You've been living so long in hiding,
Hiding behind that false mask.

¹ This article comprises a small section of the scientific and research project (a study sponsored by a grant no. DNR.501-9/23 obtained from University of Applied Sciences in Nowy Sącz) entitled "Literature and heavy metal music: A comparative analysis of literary motifs in lyrics of the heavy metal band Iron Maiden and the practical guide for lyricists implementing literary motifs" whose objective is an in-depth analysis of the correlation between the content of lyrics of the heavy metal band Iron Maiden and the content of literary works on the basis of which the lyrics of the songs have been created.

And you know that I know that you ain't got
that long to last
Your looks and your feelings are just the
remains of your past.

Standing in the wings there,
you wait for the curtain to fall
Knowing the terror and holding
you have on us all.

I know that you're going to scratch me
and maim me and maul
You know I'm helpless from your
mesmerising cat call.

Keep your distance,
walk away don't take his bait
Don't you stray, don't fade away

Watch your step, he's out to get you
Come what may
Don't you stray, from the narrow way

I'm running and hiding,
in my dreams, you're always there
You're the Phantom of the Opera
you're the devil you're just out to scare.

You damaged my mind and my soul
It just floats through the air
You haunt me, you taunt me, you torture me
back at your lair (Harris 1980)

The Phantom of the Opera is a classic novel written by French author Gaston Leroux.² First published in 1910, this Gothic mystery novel has captivated readers for

² Gaston Leroux was a French author, best known for his timeless and iconic novel *The Phantom of the Opera* published in 1910. He was born on May 6, 1868, in Paris, France, and passed away on April 15, 1927. Leroux's life was marked by a prolific career as a journalist, playwright, and novelist, and his works have left an enduring legacy in the world of literature. Leroux began his career as a lawyer, but his true passion lay in writing. He transitioned to journalism, working for various newspapers and covering high-profile criminal cases. His experience as a crime reporter provided him with a wealth of material that would later influence his mystery and suspense novels. Leroux's writing style was marked by a keen sense of suspense and an ability to create a haunting atmosphere. His background in journalism and his fascination with crime and mystery greatly influenced his storytelling, making his works both captivating and thrilling. In addition to *The Phantom of the Opera*, he authored other successful novels, including the 1907 *The Mystery of the Yellow Room* and the 1908 *The Perfume of the Lady in Black*. Gaston Leroux's contributions to literature, particularly in the realm of mystery and suspense, have had a lasting impact on the genre. His ability to blend elements of horror, romance, and intrigue has solidified his place as a respected and beloved author, parallel in importance to both Sir Arthur

over a century with its intriguing blend of romance, mystery, and tragedy. At the heart of the story there is the enigmatic character known as the Opera Ghost, who haunts the catacombs beneath the Opera in Paris.

Set in the enchanting and opulent Opera Garnier in Paris, the story revolves around a series of mysterious events that plague this magnificent building and people who work there. As the story unfolds, readers are introduced to Christine Daaé, a beautiful and talented young soprano, and Raoul de Chagny, the handsome and courageous young nobleman who falls in love with her. Christine becomes the obsession of the Phantom, who manipulates her career, guiding her to success while demanding her love and loyalty in return. The novel delves into the complex dynamics of love, obsession, and the pursuit of artistry.

Leroux's storytelling is masterful as he weaves a narrative that explores the themes of hidden identity, unrequited love, and the destructive power of jealousy. The Phantom's haunting presence in the cellars of the Opera house adds an eerie and suspenseful element to the story, creating a sense of both horror and sympathy for this tortured character. He is portrayed as a disfigured and highly skilled musician, trickster and architect who exerts a malevolent influence over the Opera house inhabitants and workers. Despite his talents, his actions often verge on the criminal, as he resorts to acts of sabotage and intimidation to maintain control over the Opera management and Christine Daaé.

The Opera Ghost's evil deeds, while driven by his obsessions and desires, create an atmosphere of fear and intrigue throughout the novel. His ability to influence and terrorize the Opera's employees and performers is a central element of the story, keeping the reader on edge as they navigate the dark and labyrinthine world beneath the Paris Opera House. Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera* masterfully presents the Opera Ghost as a complex character whose blend of evil, artistry, and vulnerability makes for a captivating and enduring exploration of the human psyche.

The novel has been adapted into numerous stage and film productions, most notably Andrew Lloyd Webber's iconic musical. It was likewise a powerful influence for one of Iron Maiden's songs entitled "Phantom of the Opera". The novel's enduring popularity can be attributed to its compelling characters, its exploration of the depths of the human psyche, and its ability to evoke a sense of mystery and passion. It remains a timeless classic, appealing to readers who enjoy a blend of romance, mystery, and the darker aspects of human nature.

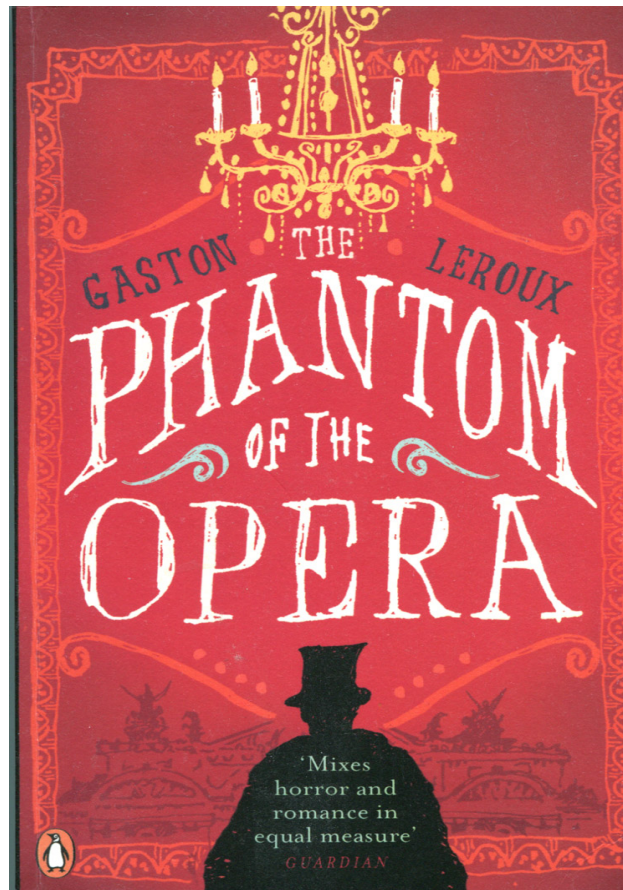


Figure 1. (The cover of *Phantom of the Opera* by Gaston Leroux; Internet source 1).

There are a few similarities between Leroux's novel and Iron Maiden's lyrics. One of the most significant is the presentation of the central figure, the protagonist called the Phantom of the Opera and it is essential to start with the appellations used with reference to this character. In both the book (to a much greater extent than in the lyrics) and the lyrics he is referred to by means of a few distinctive terms, testifying to his complex and at times ambiguous personality. As far as Iron Maiden's lyrics is concerned, the protagonist is invariably presented in the negative light, as the embodiment of evil and crime. He is called both "the Phantom of the Opera" and "the devil" (Harris, 1980). The narrative of the book offers us more varied terminology associated with this mysterious character. He is "the Opera ghost" (Leroux, 1995, p. 2), "the ghost" (p. 3), "the Angel of Music" (p. 52), "some mysterious and unscrupulous person" (p. 82), "Red Death" (p. 91), "the voice"³ (p. 96), "a living dead

³ The often references to the Opera Ghost as "the voice" testify not only to his exceptional prowess of signing and being – as a ventriloquist – an expert at imitating a variety of different sounds, it also places him in line with other literary characters whose powerful influence upon other people has been exerted by means of speaking, for example Joseph Conrad's Kurtz who is, likewise, many a time referred to as being endowed with a powerful voice or even being a voice itself. In Leroux's narrative, Christine Daaé asserts that "I had heard him for three months without seeing him. The first time I heard it, I thought, as you did, that that adorable voice was singing in another room. I went out and looked everywhere; [...] and I could not find the voice outside my room, whereas it went on steadily inside" (1995, p. 115) and in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" one can encounter the similar presentation of Kurtz made by Marlow prior to his physical encounter with the agent. For instance, Marlow asserts that "I made the strange discovery that I had never imagined him as doing, you know, but as discoursing" (Conrad, 1928, p. 113) and later he adds that "The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out pre-eminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his

man” (p. 111), “Erik” (p. 122), “a madman” (p. 125), “an immense night-bird” (p. 131), “the ‘trap-door lover’” (p. 185), “a real monster” (p. 204), “prince of conjurers” (p. 211), “the god of thunder” (p. 221), “the greatest ventriloquist that ever lived” (p. 226). However, despite the discrepancy between the amount of terms used in the book and the lyrics, the readers of both texts are stimulated to treat this mysterious character negatively.

References to his personality, conduct and appearance constitute another considerable section of similarities between the Phantom presented in the Leroux’s novel and the Ghost presented in the lyrics of Iron Maiden; in both texts he is presented as an authoritative character exerting a powerful influence upon people whom he encounters.

In one part of the song Paul di’Anno⁴ portrays the Phantom of the Opera in such a manner:

Standing in the wings there,
you wait for the curtain to fall
Knowing the terror and holding
you have on us all. (Harris, 1980)

And this depiction is utterly analogous to that of Leroux’s who many a time accentuates the shattering power and influence of the mystifying Ghost upon different people who work in the Opera. The first reference to his terroristic power is unfolded at the beginning of the story where the readers encounter young terrified girl, Giry, who has supposedly met the Opera Ghost:

This reticence exasperated the curiosity of the young ladies, who crowded round little Giry, begging her to explain herself. They were there, side by side, leaning forward simultaneously in one movement of entreaty and fear, communicating their terror to one another, taking a keen pleasure in feeling their blood freeze in their veins (Leroux, 1995, p. 13).

Importantly, young girls working at the Opera are not the only ones that are subject to the terror exerted by the Opera Ghost. The managers are likewise thrown into utter subjugation while dealing with this mysterious character, as it is evidenced in the following quotations:

Well, from that evening, no one tried to take the ghost’s private box from him. The manager gave orders that he was to have it at each performance. And whenever he came, he asked me for a footstool (p. 45).

Meanwhile, in Box Five, Moncharmin and Richard had turned very pale. This extraordinary and inexplicable incident filled them with a dread which was the more mysterious inasmuch as for some little while, they had fallen within the direct influence of the ghost. They had felt his breath. Moncharmin’s hair stood on end. Richard wiped the perspiration from his forehead. Yes, the ghost was there, around them, behind them, beside them; they felt his presence without seeing him, they heard his breath, close, close, close to them! (p. 79).

However, the person who is under the most vehement influence of the Opera Ghost is the beautiful Swedish singer Christine Daaé with whom both Raoul de Chagny and

words—the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness” (p. 113 – 14).

⁴ Paul Andrews (known as Paul di’Anno) was Iron Maiden vocalist between 1978 and 1981.

ghost fall madly in love. A few of many references to the influence of the ghost upon the singer could be as follows:

There was something in Christine's attitude that seemed to Raoul not natural. He did not feel any hostility in her; far from it; the distressed affection shining in her eyes told him that. But why was this affection distressed? (p. 55).

But what he had seen at Perros, what he had heard behind the dressing-room door, his conversation with Christine at the edge of the moor made him suspect some machination which, devilish though it might be, was none the less human. [...] all this seemed to him to constitute a moral ground only too favorable for the malevolent designs of some mysterious and unscrupulous person. Of whom was Christine Daaé the victim? (p. 82 – 83).

To what extent, at this time, was she really a victim? Whose prisoner was she? Into what whirlpool had she been dragged? He asked himself these questions with a cruel anguish; but even this pin seemed endurable beside the frenzy into which he was thrown at the thought of a lying and deceitful Christine. What had happened? What influence had she undergone? What monster had carried her off and by what means? (p. 89).

And it is significant to assert that such an overwhelming influence is the attribute of the character who, in both texts, is associated with satanic and demonical powers. In Iron Maiden's song we have such an assertion:

You're the Phantom of the Opera
you're the devil you're just out to scare
You damaged my mind and my soul
It just floats through the air
You haunt me, you taunt me, you torture me
back at your lair (Harris, 1980)

And this assertion is comparable to a plethora of portrayals of demonic Ghost and his destructive activities in the novel. One of those could be, for instance, this one uttered by Raoul:

As I did not let go of the cloak, the shadow turned round; and I saw a terrible death's head, which darted a look at me from a pair of scorching eyes. I felt as if I were face to face with Satan; and, in the presence of this unearthly apparition, my heart gave way, my courage failed me (Leroux, 1995, p. 63),

and by Christine:

'He is a demon!' And she shivered and nestled in his arms with a moan. 'I am afraid now of going back to live with him ... in the ground!' (p. 114).

I had, no doubt, to do with a terrible, eccentric person, who, in some mysterious fashion, had succeeded in taking up his abode there, under the Opera house, five stories below the level of the ground (p. 122).

What I had touched was cold and, at the same time, bony; and I remembered that his hands smelt of death. [...] I felt as if I were entering the room of a dead person. [...] In the middle of the room was a canopy, from which hung curtains of red brocaded stuff, and, under the canopy, an open coffin.⁵ 'That is where I sleep,' said Erik (p. 126).

⁵ There is an intriguing intertextual reference to Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and his preferences associated with sleeping in the coffin. In the chapter 4 of the novel we can read such a passage: "The great box was in the same

But imagine, if you can, Red Death's mask suddenly coming to life in order to express, with the four black holes of its eyes, its nose, and its mouth, the extreme anger, the mighty fury of a demon; [...] you cannot see his blazing eyes except in the dark (p. 128).

Such references to demonic appearance and activities conducted by the Opera Ghost are in abundance in the book. They all testify not only to the powerfulness of this outlandish character endowed with "mesmerising cat call" (Harris, 1980) but also to his "living so long in hiding [...] behind that false mask" (Harris, 1980) in the dungeons of the Opera House, the magnificent place that appear in both texts, being one of the similarities between them. Logically, the portrayal of this splendid building and its intricate construction is presented in more detail in the book. However, the lyrics of Iron Maiden's song offers a reference to it, focusing upon its obscure construction:

Watch your step, he's out to get you
Come what may
Don't you stray, from the narrow way (Harris, 1980).

This "narrow way" is therefore a direct reference to "ill-lit passages and staircases" (Leroux, 1995, p. 16) of the Opera House with "a narrow circular gallery, probably running all around the Opera, which is immense, underground" (p. 120). Those infernal cellars are so huge that, in line with Raoul, they are "large enough to hold a town" (p. 120) and they comprise the infernal kingdom of the Opera Ghost.

Moreover, one of the similarities between the presentations of the Ghost made by both Leroux and Steve Harris⁶ is the symbol of mask worn by the Opera Ghost. In Iron Maiden's lyrics we find such a phrase:

You've been living so long in hiding,
Hiding behind that false mask (Harris, 1980).

that is a direct reference to Raoul's assertion in the novel:

he, the man who hides behind the hideous mask of death! ... The evil genius of the churchyard at Perros! ... Red Death! ... In a word, madman [...] Angel of Music! ... But I shall snatch off his mask (Leroux, 1995, p. 93).

and that of Christine's:

place, close against the wall, but the lid was laid on it, not fastened down, but with the nails ready in their places to be hammered home. I knew I must reach the body for the key, so I raised the lid, and laid it back against the wall. And then I saw something which filled my very soul with horror. There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half restored. For the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey. The cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath. The mouth was redder than ever, for on the lips were gouts of fresh blood, which trickled from the corners of the mouth and ran down over the chin and neck. Even the deep, burning eyes seemed set amongst swollen flesh, for the lids and pouches underneath were bloated. It seemed as if the whole awful creature were simply gorged with blood. He lay like a filthy leech, exhausted with his repletion" (1994, p. 67).

⁶ Stephen Percy Harris (born 12 March 1956), known as Steve Harris, is an English musician. He is the bassist, primary songwriter and founder/leader of Iron Maiden. He has been the band's only constant member since their inception in 1975 and the only member to appear on every album.

while I overwhelmed him with abuse and called upon him to take off his mask, if it covered the face of an honest man. He replied serenely, ‘You shall never see Erik’s face (p. 125).

Erik’s black mask made me think of the natural mask of the Moor of Venice. He was Othello himself. Suddenly, I felt a need to see beneath the mask. I wanted to know the *face* of the voice, and, with a movement which I was utterly unable to control, swiftly my fingers tore away the mask. Oh, horror, horror, horror! (p. 127).

In conclusion, while the song “Phantom of the Opera” by Iron Maiden draws inspiration from the novel by Gaston Leroux, it simplifies and condenses the narrative to fit within the constraints of a rock song; the song is a condensed and more straightforward adaptation that emphasizes the darker, more malevolent aspects of the story. The novel, on the other hand, offers a much more detailed and nuanced exploration of the characters and their motivations; it provides a more comprehensive and intricate exploration of the characters and their relationships within the grand Opera House setting.

2. Iron Maiden’s “The Longest Day” and Cornelius Ryan’s *The Longest Day: June 6, 1944*

Iron Maiden’s “The Longest Day”

In the gloom the gathering storm abates
In the ships gimlet eyes await
The call to arms to hammer at the gates
To blow them wide throw evil to its fate

All summers long the drills to build the machine
To turn men from flesh and blood to steel
From paper soldiers to bodies on the beach
From summer sands to Armageddon’s reach

Overlord, your master not your god
The enemy coast dawning grey with scud
These wretched souls puking, shaking fear
To take a bullet for those who sent them here

The world’s alight, the cliffs erupt in flame
No escape, remorseless shrapnel rains
Drowning men no chance for a warrior’s fate
A choking death enter hell’s gates

Sliding we go, only fear on our side
To the edge of the wire
And we rush with the tide
Oh the water is red
With the blood of the dead

But I'm still alive
Pray to God I survive

How long on this longest day
'Til we finally make it through

The rising dead, faces bloated torn
They are relieved, the living wait their turn
Your number's up, the bullet's got your name
You still go on, to hell and back again

Valhalla waits, Valkyries rise and fall
The warrior tombs, lie open for us all
A ghostly hand reaches through the veil
Blood and sand, we will prevail

Sliding we go, only fear on our side
To the edge of the wire
And we rush with the tide
Oh the water is red
With the blood of the dead
But I'm still alive
Pray to God I survive

How long on this longest day
'Til we finally make it through (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006).

The Longest Day: June 6, 1944 is a classic historical book written by Cornelius Ryan⁷ and published in 1959. It meticulously recounts the events leading up to and

⁷ Cornelius Ryan was an Irish-American journalist and author renowned for his gripping narratives of historical events, particularly those centered around World War II. Born on June 5, 1920, in Dublin, Ireland, Ryan grew up in a tumultuous time marked by the Irish War of Independence and the subsequent Civil War. He attended Synge Street Christian Brothers School in Dublin and later moved to London, where he began his career in journalism. Ryan's journalism career started with freelance reporting for various British newspapers. During World War II, he served as a war correspondent for the London Daily Telegraph and covered events such as the D-Day landings in Normandy, the liberation of Paris, and the Battle of Berlin. These experiences provided him with firsthand knowledge of the people and events that would later inspire his literary works.

In 1947, Ryan immigrated to the United States, where he continued his career as a journalist. He became a naturalized American citizen in 1951. His breakthrough came with the publication of his first book, *The Longest Day: June 6, 1944* in 1959. Following the success of *The Longest Day: June 6, 1944* Ryan continued to delve into the untold stories of World War II. In 1966, he published *The Last Battle*, which chronicled the Battle of Berlin and the final days of the Third Reich. Similar to his debut work, this book garnered praise for its gripping narrative and meticulous attention to detail. Ryan followed this work by *A Bridge Too Far* (1974), which tells the story of Operation Market Garden, the ill-fated assault by Allied airborne forces on the Netherlands, culminating in the Battle of Arnhem.

Ryan's journalistic approach to storytelling set him apart in the realm of historical nonfiction. He conducted extensive interviews with veterans, military leaders, and eyewitnesses to recreate the events with vivid realism. His ability to humanize the experiences of individuals caught up in the turmoil of war resonated with readers and critics alike. In addition to his books, Ryan contributed articles to publications such as Collier's, Reader's Digest, and The Saturday Evening Post. He also worked as a screenwriter, adapting his own works for

during the D-Day landings on June 6th, 1944, during World War II. It starts with a prologue that sets the stage for the invasion, providing a brief overview of the planning and preparation undertaken by the Allied forces. The narrative then unfolds chronologically, covering the events of D-Day from multiple perspectives: American, British, Canadian, French, and German. Ryan delves into the months of planning and intelligence gathering that preceded D-Day, highlighting the meticulous coordination among Allied commanders. He describes the deception operations, such as the creation of fake armies and the use of double agents, designed to mislead the Germans about the location and timing of the invasion.

As the invasion day approaches, Ryan vividly portrays the tension and anticipation felt by soldiers on both sides. He describes the weather forecasters' critical role in predicting a brief break in the stormy weather, which ultimately determined the timing of the invasion. On the morning of June 6th, 1944, Allied troops land on the beaches of Normandy in an operation codenamed "Overlord". In his book Ryan provides a gripping account of the amphibious assault, depicting the chaos, confusion, and carnage that ensued as soldiers stormed the heavily fortified beaches under heavy enemy fire.

The book follows the progress of the invasion throughout the day, detailing the struggles and triumphs of individual units as they fight to secure their objectives. Ryan highlights key moments, such as the capture of strategic points like Pegasus Bridge and the fierce resistance encountered at Omaha Beach. As the day wears on, Allied forces manage to establish a foothold in Normandy, albeit at a significant cost in lives. Ryan captures the human side of the conflict, recounting the experiences of individual soldiers and civilians caught up in the chaos of war.

The book concludes with the Allied forces consolidating their position in Normandy, paving the way for the liberation of Western Europe from Nazi occupation. Importantly, Ryan reflects on the significance of D-Day as a turning point in World War II and pays tribute to the audacity and sacrifice of those who participated in the invasion. By means of his narrative, Ryan accentuates the fact that "the hard-fought invasion on the sixth day of June opened a new European battlefield that would expand during the ensuing eleven months into the heart of Germany and thereby help ensure the eventual destruction of Hitler's Nazi regime" (Dolski, Edwards, Buckley, 2014, p. 1).

Therefore, Cornelius Ryan's *The Longest Day* stands as a timeless tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of those who participated in the D-Day landings. Through meticulous research, engaging storytelling, and a balanced perspective, Ryan brings the events of June 6th, 1944, to life, ensuring that the legacy of D-Day endures for

film adaptations. *The Longest Day: June 6, 1944* was made into a blockbuster movie in 1962, starring an ensemble cast including John Wayne, Sean Connery, and Richard Burton.

Tragically, Cornelius Ryan's prolific career was cut short when he passed away from prostate cancer on November 23, 1974, at the age of 54. Despite his untimely death, his legacy endures through his groundbreaking works of narrative history. His books continue to be celebrated for their contribution to our understanding of World War II and the individuals who shaped its outcome. Cornelius Ryan's unwavering dedication to documenting the human side of history ensures that his work will be remembered for generations to come (Internet source 2).

future generations. The book became an instant bestseller and received widespread critical acclaim, establishing Ryan as a leading authority on World War II history.

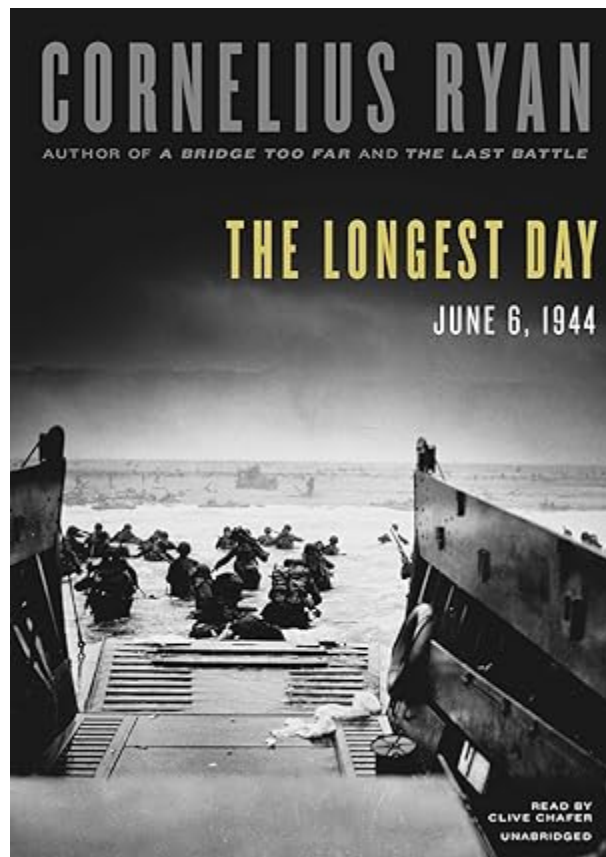


Figure 2. (The cover of *The Longest Day: June 6, 1944*; Internet source 3).

There are a few levels of comparison between the content of Iron Maiden's song and the content of the book. In my analysis I would like to present and compare those overlapping elements chronologically as they appear in the lyrics of the song.

In the gloom the gathering storm abates
In the ships gimlet eyes await (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006).

There are plenty of references to weather conditions that play a significant part during both the preparations and the day of the invasion itself. The readers can encounter the first mention about the disastrous weather just at the beginning of the first section of the narrative called "The Wait", and it is as follows:

By 11 A.M. the gale in the Channel was blowing hard. In the restricted coastal areas of Britain, sealed off from the reminder of the country, the invasion forces sweated it out. Their world now was the assembly areas, the airfields and the ships. It was almost as though they were physically severed from the mainland (Ryan, 1967, p. 44).

The readers can almost feel the growing tension and anxiety among the soldiers who are impatiently waiting for the signal to attack and who are aware of the fact that weather conditions have to be stable enough to launch and properly conduct this

significant military operation: “and so, on this stormy Sunday night, men waited, in loneliness, anxiety and secret fear, for something, anything, to happen” (Ryan, 1967, p. 60). It is important to acknowledge that not only soldiers, but Supreme Commander Dwight David Eisenhower as well, are anxiously waiting for the more favourable weather conditions, knowing that they are crucial for the success of the invasion. Among a few presentations of Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, the readers can encounter those that are marked with his apprehensive waiting for better weather condition, for example:

Throughout most of June 4 Eisenhower remained alone in his trailer. He and his commanders had done everything to insure that the invasion would have every possible chance of success at the lowest cost in lives. But now, after all the months of political and military planning, Operation Overlord lay at the mercy of the elements. Eisenhower was hopeless; all he could do was to wait and hope that the weather would improve (Ryan, 1967, p. 53).

And this predicament is also shown a few paragraphs later in the following quote:

Nobody at Supreme Headquarters expected perfect conditions on D Day, least of all Eisenhower. He had schooled himself, in countless dry runs with his meteorological staff, to recognize and weigh all the factors which would give him the bare minimum conditions acceptable for the attack. But according to his meteorologist the chances were about ten to one against Normandy having weather on any one day in June which would meet even the minimal requirements. On this stormy Sunday, as Eisenhower, alone in his trailer, considered every possibility, those odds appeared to have become astronomical (Ryan, 1967, p. 54).

Supreme Commander is cognizant of the fact that the invasion is so crucial and that the time is so urgent that he gives a green light to initiate the operation despite adverse conditions; the soldiers are those who experience this predicament the most the moment they set sail for Normandy, as for instance, mentioned in this quote: they were “amazed to see waves so high that they smashed over one end of the wallowing craft and rolled out the other [...] all day they had ridden out the storm in the Channel. Now, waterlogged and weary, they glumly lined the rails as the last of the straggling convoys dropped their anchors” (Ryan, 1967, p. 64).

Significantly, the moments prior the invasion are not only stigmatized with horrendous weather conditions, but also with the excruciating waiting on the part of the soldiers, often being cramped in small confines of their boats and other means of transport, as vividly indicted in the following quote, which is only one of many similar ones that permeate the narrative:

The men on heavy naval vessels or large transports, on airfields or in embarkation areas, were the lucky ones. They were restricted and overcrowded, but they were dry, warm and well. It was different story for the troops on the flat-bottomed landing ships heaving at anchor outside nearly every harbor. Some men had been on these vessels for more than a week. The ships were overcrowded and foul, the men unbelievably miserable. For them the battle began long before they ever left England. It was a battle against continuous nausea and seasickness. Most of the men still remember that the ships smelled of just three things: diesel oil, backed-up toilets and vomit (Ryan, 1967, p. 64).

And while being confined in their vessels and waiting for the invasion the soldiers are engaged in the activities that they, possibly, would never do under ordinary and peaceful conditions of life: they openly talk about their emotions and fears and strike

new relations with the strangers: “they drew closer to one another on this strange night and confided in men they had never even met before” (Ryan, 1967, p. 84).

The subsequent comparison between the song and the novel is associated with following image:

The call to arms to hammer at the gates
To blow them wide throw evil to its fate (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006).

As the story is being unfolded the readers are presented with a vision of troops of soldiers who, upon landing in Normandy, are forced to find their particular groups in the darkness of the night, in the havoc and a tumult of a variety of groups of people. Different nationalities accomplish that in different ways. For instance, the English use hunting horns:

Across the moonlit fields of Normandy rolled the hoarse, haunting notes of an English hunting horn. The sound hung in the air, lonely, incongruous. Again and again the horn sounded. Scores of shadowy helmeted figures, in green-brown-and-yellow camouflaged jump smocks festooned with equipment, struggled across the fields, along ditches, by the sides of hedgerows, all heading in the direction of the call. Other horns took up the chorus. Suddenly a bugle began trumpeting. For hundreds of men of the British 6th Airborne Division this was the overture to battle (Ryan, 1967, pp. 106 – 7).

The Americans employ toy crickets:

In countless small fields and pastures between the Channel and the flooded areas, Americans came together in the night, drawn not by hunting horns but by the sound of a toy cricket. Their lives depended on a few cents’ worth of tin fashioned in the shape of a child’s snapper. One snap of the cricket had to be answered by a double snap and – for the 82nd lone – a password. Two snaps required one in reply (Ryan, 1967, p. 123).

Finally, the Canadians tend to use bugles and the Scottish, bagpipes. It is, therefore, important to assert here that despite the differences between the nations taking part in the invasion, they all are eager to employ a lot of techniques that allow them survive the atrocities of the Operation.

The subsequent comparison between the content of the song and the novel is associated with the depiction of the soldiers taking part in fighting:

All summers long the drills to build the machine
To turn men from flesh and blood to steel
From paper soldiers to bodies on the beach
From summer sands to Armageddon’s reach (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006).

The references to constant and long-term preparations for the invasion are in abundance in the narrative by Ryan. One of the first mentions to a meticulous preparation for the attack appears in the first section of the book and it is as follows:

To prepare for an all-out invasion on which so much depended, intensive military planning had been going on for more than a year. Long before anyone knew that Eisenhower would be named Supreme Commander a small group of Anglo-American officers under Britain’s Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Morgan had been laying the groundwork for the assault. [...] Ultimately their studies, enlarged and modified into the final Overlord plan after Eisenhower took over, called for more men, more ships, more planes, more equipment and matériel than had ever been assembled before for a single military operation (Ryan, 1967, pp. 50 – 1).

Importantly, not only equipment had been scrupulously collected and plans of the invasion designed, soldiers were likewise subject to a continuous and lengthy training, as indicated in the following quote:

As the night closed in, the invasion forces all over England continued to wait. Keyed up by months of training, they were ready to go, and the postponement had made them jittery (Ryan, 1967, p. 60).

Nevertheless, it is significant to accentuate the fact that despite a thorough training and preparations, what some soldiers really saw and experienced upon landing in Normandy was beyond their expectations and their prowess of endurance; they simply were not prepared for such a fierce and atrocious battle, as indicated in this quote:

In the British zone, almost on the coast and just three miles east of Sword Beach, Lieutenant Colonel Terence Otway and his men lay under heavy machine gun fire at the edge of the barbed wire and mine fields protecting the massive Merville battery. Otway's situation was desperate. In all the months of training he had never expected every phase of his elaborate land-and-air assault of the coastal battery to work out exactly as planned. But neither had he been prepared for its total disintegration. Yet, somehow, it had happened (Ryan, 1967, p. 141).

However, the majority of soldiers, those who landed on Utah Beach, were really well prepared and for them the invasion itself was less arduous the training: "other men thought the assault was an anticlimax; the long months of training at Slapton Sands in England had been tougher" (Ryan, 1967, p. 177).

The next stanza of the song uncovers another layer of comparison between the lyrics and the content of the narrative:

Overlord, your master not your god
The enemy coast dawning grey with scud
These wretched souls puking, shaking fear
To take a bullet for those who sent them here (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006).

Although in this section of the song Bruce Dickinson sings about scud which in truth refers to a series of tactical ballistic missiles developed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, it is very likely that the lyricists try to paint a particular picture in the listeners' imagination, a picture in which Normandy beaches are permeated with a variety of obstacles that have been placed there by Germans. And the references to those obstacles such as "jagged triangles of steel, saw-toothed gatelike structures of iron, metal-tipped wooden stakes and concrete cones [...] mines, shells" (Ryan, 1967, p. 28), "lethal, ugly mines" (p. 68), "a 15-foot-thick hedge of barbed wire [...] a maze of machine-gun-filled trenches" (p. 112), "'Rommel's asparagus' – lines of heavy posts embedded in the ground as antiglider obstacles" (p. 138), "a hideous labyrinth of mine fields" (p. 141), "the lethal jungles of steel-and-concrete obstacles" (p. 170), "the forest of mined obstacles" (p. 171), "the obstacle-strewn sand" (p. 172), "underwater obstacles [...] causing more trouble than the enemy" (p. 187), "razor-edged reefs on the eastern half of the beach and barricades of obstacles creat[ing] havoc among the assault craft" (p. 192), and "coastal-zone obstacles" (p. 202) are in abundance in the book. They indeed paint the picture of sheer impossibility for the Allied Forces of entering Normandy. However, as the narrative unfolds, the readers observe advancing

soldiers, those “wretched souls puking, shaking fear” (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006) who, after the long struggle eventually land in Normandy, and after having crosses those obstacles, defeat the Germans.

The subsequent stanza of the song illustrates the process of fierce fighting and it is as follows:

The world's alight, the cliffs erupt in flame
No escape, remorseless shrapnel rains
Drowning men no chance for a warrior's fate
A choking death enter hell's gates (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006).

It is a brutal and violent portrayal of the struggle that Allied forces encounter upon landing in Normandy and the book likewise incorporates a wealth of similar horrid presentations of viciousness of war. In the book the readers can find a few references to fire and flames that constitute the essential part of the invasion, considerably enhancing sinister and hellish aura of the struggle. Flames and their mesmerizing powers are detected by both civilians, as indicated in the following quote:

Even before he reached the door, he could see what the trouble was. Through the windows of his shop the square, with its edging of chestnut tree and its great Norman church, appeared brilliantly lit up. M. Hairon's villa across the square was on fire and blazing fiercely (Ryan, 1967, pp. 114 – 5).

and soldiers landing in Normandy, as presented in those two quotes: “Private John Steele of the 82nd's 505th Regiment saw that instead of landing in a lighted drop zone he was heading for the center of a town that seemed to be on fire” (Ryan, 1967, p. 116) and “Surgical Technician Emile Natalie looked down on shell bursts and burning vehicles below and saw ‘a wall of fire coming up to greet us” (p. 137). However, the most dramatic and hideous presentation of fire employed as the powerful ingredient in the invasion is its being used in flame throwers that are implemented not only by Germans as the indication of their final attempt not to be defeated, but also by the British soldiers. And the implementation of flame throwers by the British army upon Germans hiding in their bunker is presented in the following quote:

The firing outside stopped and it seemed to Häger that everyone realized almost at the same moment that what was about to happen. There was a small peephole in a cupola over their heads. Häger and several others lifted a man up so he could see what was happening. Suddenly he yelled, ‘Flame thrower! They're bringing up a flame thrower’. Häger knew that the flames could not reach them because the metal air shaft which entered the bunker from the back was built in staggered sections. But the heat could kill them. Suddenly they heard the ‘woof’ of the flame thrower. [...] Gradually the temperature began to rise. Some men panicked. [...] Häger watched the metal fairing of the air shaft go from pink to red and then to a glowing white (Ryan, 1967, p. 205).

Interestingly, the analysed stanza of the song does not allude only to fire and flames, but it likewise makes a reference to the opposition, namely water, with the emphasis upon its destructive and lethal power. Along with the presentations of mesmerizing power of flames, there are references to the soldiers' considerable predicament connected with their landing on the vast territory that is dotted with a variety of shapes of water: rivers, lakes, ditches, marshes or swamps. One of the first references to this difficult situation is as follows:

Some pilots, caught in heavy cloud, mistook the mouth of the Dives for that of the Orne and let men out over a maze of marshes and swamps. One entire battalion [...] was scattered, instead, over fifty miles of countryside, most of it swampland. [...] The number of troopers who died in the wastes of the Dives will never be known. Survivors say that the marshes were intersected by a maze of ditches about seven feet deep, four feet wide and bottomed with sticky slime (Ryan, 1967, p. 111).

Therefore, it is obvious to observe that the soldiers landing in Normandy are required to fight not only with the Germans but with difficulties of the terrain on which they landed. And this struggle appears to be as strenuous as fighting with the enemy. The narrator of the story asserts that

Hundreds of men, heavily weighted with equipment, fell into the treacherous swamps of the Marderet and the Douve. Many drowned, some in less than two feet of water. Others, jumping too late, fell into the darkness over what they thought was Normandy and were lost in the Channel. [...] Some never appeared again. Others came up gasping, fighting for air and sawing desperately at chutes and equipment that could drag them under again (Ryan, 1967, pp. 121 – 22).

And the narrative abounds in the similar presentations of the soldiers' 'premature' death resulting from being dropped into the regions whose natural conditions emerge to be too arduous and, as asserted by the narrator, "scores of Utah-bound men saw the dead bodies and heard the yells and screams of the drowning" (Ryan, 1967, p. 168). He continues this train of thoughts by acknowledging that "the sight of the bodies in the water, the strain of the long trip in from the transport ships and now the ominous nearness of the flat sands and the dunes of Utah Beach jerked men out of their lethargy" (p. 168). Therefore, it is genuine what is conveyed in the lyrics of the song that the drowning men, before the battle, did not stand any chance for warriors' fate. They simply died before being able to fight their enemy, undergoing "a choking death" while "enter[ing] hell's gate" (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006). The next stanza of the song is likewise a platform on which we can observe similarities between the content of the book and the lyrics of the song.

Sliding we go, only fear on our side
To the edge of the wire
And we rush with the tide (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006).

The expression 'sliding' used in this stanza is compatible with the activity undertaken by some groups of soldiers landing in Normandy; they literary slide in the gliders, as, for example, indicated in those quotes: "like huge bats, the six gliders, each carrying approximately thirty men, swooped silently down" (Ryan, 1967, p. 97) and "a fleet of sixty-nine gliders was due to sweep down out of the Normandy skies carrying men, vehicles, heavy equipment and the precious guns" (Ryan, 1967, p. 107). At the beginning of the invasion, it appears to be one of the most convenient means of transport offering the soldiers and their weapons a fast access into the territory of the enemy. But after having landed the genuine predicament really begins, the soldiers have to rush "to the edge of the wire" (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006) that comprises one of the elements of the intricate structure of the obstacles that have been put on the beaches by Rommel's soldiers:

Nor had Rommel forgotten the threat of parachutists or glide-borne infantry. Behind the fortifications low-lying areas had been flooded, and into every open field within seven or eight miles of the coast heavy stakes had been driven and booby-trapped. Trip wires were strung between these posts. When touched, they would immediately set off mines or shells (Ryan, 1967, p. 30).

The narrative incorporates a lot of descriptions of the horrible predicament of the soldiers while trying to cross the terrain between the coast and the cliffs, the area permeated with a plethora of obstacles and wire. And one of those portrayals is as follows:

Everywhere men extricated themselves from extraordinary predicaments. Most of their situations would have been bad enough in daylight; at night, in hostile territory, they were compounded by fear and imagination. Such was the case with Private Godfrey Maddison. He sat at the edge of a field imprisoned by a barbed-wire fence, unable to move. Both legs were twisted in a wire and the weight of his equipment – 125 pounds, including four 10-pound mortar shells – had driven him so far forward into the wire that he was almost completely enmeshed (Ryan, 1967, p. 110).

However, despite the excruciating difficulty of crossing the terrain full of obstacles, the narrative of the book and the history of the World War II inform us that Allied Forces were successful and managed to cross the defences and enter the territory of Normandy occupied by Germans.

The refrain of the song: “How long on this longest day / ‘Til we finally make it through” (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006) constitutes another meeting point between the content of the book and the lyrics. Importantly, the concept of waiting for the battle to begin permeates the narrative of the first part of the book entitled “The Wait”. Here the readers encounter a lot of images presenting the anxious waiting on the part of soldiers for whom the day of the invasion will be one of the longest they will ever experience, as indicated in the following quote presenting the moment of waiting for the invasion to commence:

Almost every man in the invasion forces wrote a letter to someone during the long hours of waiting. They had been penned up for a long time, and the letters seemed to give them emotional release. Many of them recorded their thoughts in a way that men seldom do (Ryan, 1967, p. 63).

And the truth is that the day of the invasion proves to be one of the longest days for soldiers and, significantly enough, this has been predicted by Rommel himself while addressing his army before the invasion:

‘The war will be won or lost on the beaches. We’ll have only one chance to stop the enemy and that’s while he’s in the water ... struggling to get ashore. [...] Believe me, Lang, the first twenty-four hours of the invasion will be decisive ... for the Allies, as well as Germans, it will be the longest day’ (Ryan, 1967, pp. 27 – 28).

The subsequent stanza of the song, depicting atrocities of the war, offers us another ground for drawing similarities between the content of the book and the lyrics of the song:

The rising dead, faces bloated torn
They are relieved, the living wait their turn

Your number's up, the bullet's got your name
You still go on, to hell and back again (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006).

Those words comprising the most vehement and horrid presentation of carnage of the invasion and the narrative of the book presents the readers with a plethora of similar depictions of a growing number of massacred soldiers. Some of those could be as follows:

He landed with a crash in one of the trees. Around him men were being machine-gunned to death. There were shouts, yells, screams and moans (Ryan, 1967, p. 117).

As Renaud watched, 'about half a dozen Germans emptied the magazines of their submachine guns into him and the boy hung there with his eyes open, as though looking down at his own bullet holes' (Ryan, 1967, p. 117).

Within the first few minutes of the carnage at Dog Green one entire company was put out of action. Less than a third of the men survived the bloody walk from the boats to the edge of the beach. Their officers were killed severely wounded or missing, and the men, weaponless and shocked, huddled at the base of the cliffs all day (Ryan, 1967, p. 173).

There was a tremendous explosion and the boat disintegrated. It seemed to Davis that everyone in it was thrown into the air all at once. Bodies and parts of bodies landed all around the flaming wreckage (Ryan, 1967, p. 174).

A tank, buttoned up for protection and thrashing wildly up the beach to get out of line of fire, ran over the dead and the dying (Ryan, 1967, p. 192).

However, despite the overwhelming atrocities of war, the soldiers of the Allied Forces are not left hopeless and without any reward for their sacrifice of lives. After having being massacred while trying to restore freedom from Nazi regime and dignity for the oppressed, the soldiers are promised Heaven for their struggle. Bruce Dickinson sings in the next stanza of the song that "Valhalla waits, Valkyries rise and fall / [...] we will prevail" (Smith, Harris, Dickinson, 2006). It is therefore very important and reassuring that the lyrics of the song offers a powerful dose of hope for those who have sacrificed their most precious parts, their own lives, offering them in return the places in Odin's Valhalla, the place located within Asgard, "the place to which fallen warriors are led by the Valkyries and where they are cared for by them" (Schuppener, 2022, p. 14), the place where they continue to fight every day and if killed or injured come back to health to fight the next day.

Conclusions

The article underscores the profound interconnectedness between heavy metal music and the realm of literature. Through an in-depth examination of Iron Maiden's lyrical content of 2 songs in relation to them being influenced on or even based upon the content of literary works, I have arrived at several compelling conclusions that can be drawn here.

Artistic fusion: The article highlights the intricate fusion of literature and heavy metal music, revealing how both media abundantly borrow from each other to create powerful narratives and evoke intense emotions. Iron Maiden's lyrics, steeped in literary motifs connected with mythological concepts and historical events,

exemplify how heavy metal musicians can draw inspiration from classic and contemporary literary works. I found out that Iron Maiden have been proficient at doing that, incorporating a plethora of literary motifs in their songs. In the exploration of the intertwining realms of literature and heavy metal music, the article delves into a captivating journey of artistic fusion, particularly evident in the comparative analysis of literary motifs in the lyrics of Iron Maiden. Through a meticulous examination, several conclusions emerge, illuminating the profound connections between these seemingly disparate forms of expression.

Firstly, the article underscores the remarkable symbiosis between literature and heavy metal music, revealing how both media have been drawing upon shared themes, symbols, and narratives in order to convey profound messages and evoke powerful emotions. By dissecting the lyrical content of Iron Maiden's songs, it becomes evident that literary motifs do serve as a rich tapestry from which both genres derive inspiration, enabling artists to craft narratives that resonate deeply with audiences.

Furthermore, the article illuminates the transformative potential of artistic fusion, highlighting how the amalgamation of literary motifs within heavy metal lyrics transcends conventional boundaries, fostering a unique and immersive experience for listeners. I found out that this fusion has not only enriched the thematic depth of heavy metal music but has also served as a bridge between disparate artistic realms, inviting audiences to engage with complex ideas and narratives in innovative ways.

Moreover, the comparative analyses that were undertaken shed light on the role of interpretation in artistic expression, showcasing how literary motifs can be reimagined and recontextualized within the realm of heavy metal music to convey distinct perspectives and worldviews. Through the lens of Iron Maiden's lyrics, the article underscores the dynamic nature of artistic interpretation, emphasizing the multiplicity of meanings that emerge when literature and music converge.

Additionally, the article accentuates the transformative power of artistic fusion, demonstrating how the synthesis of literature and heavy metal music engenders a rich tapestry of meaning and emotion. By bridging the gap between these two seemingly disparate forms of expression, artists are empowered to create immersive narratives that transcend conventional boundaries, inviting audiences on a journey of exploration and discovery. In essence, the article serves as a testament to the enduring resonance of artistic fusion, highlighting its capacity to inspire, provoke, and captivate in equal measure.

Cultural resonance: By analyzing the thematic parallels between Iron Maiden's lyrics and literary works, the article emphasizes the cultural resonance of heavy metal music. Through references to iconic literary figures, historical events, and philosophical concepts, I discovered that Iron Maiden for many years have been engaging with broader cultural discourses, enriching their music with layers of meaning and significance. The comparative analyses of the lyrics of Iron Maiden have revealed intriguing insights into the cultural resonance of literature within the realm of heavy metal music.

Through an examination of shared literary motifs it becomes evident that Iron Maiden's lyrics have been serving as a rich tapestry woven with layers of cultural references. These motifs have not only contributed to the thematic depth of their music but have also established a profound connection with the listeners who have been

drawn to the interplay between literature and heavy metal. The article underlines the enduring influence of literature on heavy metal music and highlights the importance of cultural resonance in shaping artistic expression. By exploring the symbiotic relationship between literature and heavy metal, the listeners can gain a deeper appreciation for the multifaceted nature of artistic inspiration and the ways in which music can serve as a conduit for cultural exploration and interpretation.

Creative synergy: The article, delving into the rich tapestry of literary motifs within the lyrics of Iron Maiden's songs, has illuminated an intriguing nexus between literature and heavy metal music. Through comparative analyses, it became evident that both media share a profound symbiosis, each drawing from the other to craft narratives that resonate deeply with audiences. One of the most striking findings was the creative synergy present in the utilization of literary devices. Iron Maiden's lyrics, renowned for their epic storytelling and thematic depth, have been mirroring the timeless narratives found within classic literature.

Moreover, the exploration of themes spanning from existential angst to historical epics showcased how literature and heavy metal converge to explore the human condition in all its complexities. This shared thematic landscape has not only enriched the lyrical content of the genre but has also served as a testament to the enduring power of storytelling in all its possible forms.

Importantly, the article underscores the transformative potential of creative synergy, where the intersection of literature and heavy metal music yields narratives that transcend boundaries and ignite the imagination of the listeners. By bridging the gap between these seemingly disparate realms, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the multifaceted nature of artistic expression and the myriad ways in which it shapes our understanding of the world. As we continue to explore the interplay between literature and music, we are reminded of the boundless possibilities that emerge when creativity knows no bounds.

Cross-disciplinary dialogue: Through comparative analyses, the article fosters a dialogue between literature and music, transcending disciplinary boundaries and advancing a deeper appreciation for both art forms. By examining how literary motifs have been manifesting in Iron Maiden's lyrics, the article illuminates the multifaceted nature of artistic inspiration and the diverse ways in which creative influences intersect and intertwine.

Therefore, one of the key conclusions drawn here is the profound influence of literature on heavy metal music, particularly evident in the thematic depth and narrative complexity of Iron Maiden's lyrics. The article demonstrates the power of cross-disciplinary dialogue to inspire creativity, deepen understanding, and create new avenues for artistic expression. By exploring the intersection of literature and heavy metal music, I gained insight into the ways in which diverse cultural influences have shaped the artistic landscape, and the potential for collaboration to break down boundaries and forge new paths forward.

Cultural evolution: Ultimately, the article underscores the dynamic evolution of cultural expression, showcasing how Iron Maiden's music has been serving as a vehicle for literary exploration and interpretation in the contemporary landscape. By celebrating the interplay between literature and heavy metal, the article, I believe,

contributes to a broader understanding of the transformative power of artistic collaboration and the enduring relevance of both media in shaping cultural discourse.

The article offers significant insights into the cultural evolution of both literature and heavy metal music. Through a meticulous examination of the lyrical content of Iron Maiden's music the article underscores the dynamic interplay between literary motifs and musical expression within the heavy metal genre.

One notable conclusion drawn here is the enduring influence of literary themes and narratives on popular culture, particularly within the realm of music. By analyzing the incorporation of literary motifs in Iron Maiden's lyrics, the article highlights how elements of mythology, history, and literature have become integral components of heavy metal storytelling. This fusion of literary and musical forms has not only enriched the artistic depth of the genre but has also reflected broader societal interests and values.

Moreover, the article underscores the role of heavy metal music as a platform for cultural critique and exploration. Through their lyrics, Iron Maiden have been engaging with themes of power, rebellion, and existentialism, inviting their listeners to reflect on societal norms and values. In doing so, they have considerably contributed to the ongoing evolution of cultural discourse, challenging conventions and sparking dialogue on issues ranging from politics to personal identity.

The comparative analyses presented in the article illuminate the rich tapestry of influences shaping both literature and heavy metal music. By examining the intersection of these two artistic forms, I gained valuable insights into the cultural evolution of society at large. Moving forward, continued exploration of these themes promises to deepen the understanding of the dynamic relationship between art, music, and cultural identity.

Finally, the article illuminates the profound interconnectedness between heavy metal music and literature, showcasing how both art forms have been enriching and informing each other in a symbiotic relationship. Through the analyses of Iron Maiden's lyrics, the article highlights the cultural resonance, creative synergy, and cross-disciplinary dialogue that define the dynamic intersection of literature and heavy metal music.

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