

**Heavy, Holy, and Homey:  
The Role of Religious Imagery in Heavy Metal Album Covers**

By

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis offers an iconographical analysis of the album cover of *Temple of Shadows* by Brazilian power metal band Angra, situating it within the context of heavy metal visual culture. It argues, through a post-colonial lens, that instead of focusing on religious blasphemy, violence, and confrontation, the cover of *Temple of Shadows* uses religious iconography to communicate a message about the band's cultural identity and negotiate membership in the international and domestic heavy metal scenes. This argument is a response to Marcus Moberg's critique of the metal studies literature on the relationship between metal and religion, which tends to favour the topics of Satanism and moral panic, simplifying the subject and reinforcing stereotypical understandings of this ontological relationship. The thesis also offers directions for possible further research on the topic from a visual culture perspective.

**DEDICATION**

*In memory of Maria de Lourdes Nepomuceno Espindola, my paternal grandmother.*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of figures</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Literature Review .....	6
Theory and Methodology .....	10
Thesis Structure.....	11
Thesis Statement and its Contribution.....	12
<b>Chapter 1: Heavy Metal and Religion – Nemesis Divina</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Heavy metal’s relationship with religion.....	16
The Norwegian black metal scene .....	20
Norway’s Nemesis Divina.....	24
<b>Chapter 2: Brazil and Temple of Shadows</b> .....	<b>32</b>
Temple of Shadows .....	32
A brief overview of the history of Brazil .....	34
Religion as a marker of cultural identity.....	38
Temple of Shadows and cultural identity.....	40
<b>Directions for further research</b> .....	<b>46</b>
Israel’s Orphaned Land .....	46
Tunisia’s Myrath.....	47
<b>Images</b> .....	<b>49</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>73</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>79</b>
Appendix A: Diagram of the relationships between some subgenres of metal. ....	79

## TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Cover of Temple of Shadows, album by the Brazilian heavy metal band Angra. ....	49
Figure 2: Cover and insert of Black Sabbath's debut album, Black Sabbath. ....	50
Figure 3: Band logo of the Norwegian black metal band Mayhem. ....	51
Figure 4: Band logo of the Swedish black metal band Dark Funeral. ....	52
Figure 5: Band logo of the American death metal band Nunslaughter. ....	53
Figure 6: Dutch symphonic black metal band Carach Angren, wearing corpse paint make up. ....	54
Figure 7: The hard rock band Kiss. ....	55
Figure 8: Photographs of Gene Simmons from Kiss and a Kabuki theater performer. ....	56
Figure 9: Cover of the album Symphony of Enchanted Lands II – The Dark Secret by Italian symphonic power metal Rhapsody of Fire (formerly Rhapsody). ....	57
Figure 10: Cover of the album Nightfall in Middle Earth by German power metal band Blind Guardian. ...	58
Figure 11: Cover of the album The Satanist, by Polish black metal band Behemoth. ....	59
Figure 12: Image from the music video of "All Shall Fall" by Norwegian black metal band Immortal. ....	60
Figure 13: Promotional photo for Norwegian black metal band Mork. ....	61
Figure 14: Band logo of Norwegian black metal band Darkthrone. ....	62
Figure 15: Album cover of Nemesis Divina, by the Norwegian black metal band Satyricon. ....	63
Figure 16: Dead Cockerel. ....	64
Figure 17: Still Life with Game Birds. ....	65
Figure 18: Crowns of thorns made of barbed wire as shown in a Google Images search. ....	66
Figure 19: Icon, St George and the Dragon. ....	67
Figure 20: The Treaty of Tordesillas with explanation. ....	68
Figure 21: The Brazilian National flag. ....	69
Figure 22: The Southern Cross, circled in red by me. Figure 23. ....	70
Figure 24: Album cover of All Is One, by Israeli band Orphaned Land. ....	71
Figure 25: Album cover of Legacy by Myrath featuring a Hamsa. ....	72

## INTRODUCTION

Against the darkness of open space, a haloed St. George mounted on a white horse slays a dragon below. The violent act is invigorated by a burst of translucent red that separates it from the shadows and cuts through the surrounding darkness. Stars, astrological drawings, and geometric shapes, all of which appear to be both near and far, deepen a spatial ambiguity around the figure by fracturing into multiple, permeable picture planes through which the elements transit freely. A faded white frame barely succeeds in containing the scene and creates a margin where the stars, drawings, and shapes drift beyond the indefinite edges of the image. Hebrew inscriptions sit atop the four sides of the frame.

Clockwise from the left, side they read:

אני אהיה לו לאב והוא יהיה לי לבן

*I will be his father and he will be my son*

סורו סורו צאו משם טמא אל-תגעו צאו מתוכה הברו נשאי כלי יהוה

*Get out of the Grand Temple, do not touch the tools of God*

אני אהיה לו לאב והוא יהיה לי לבן

*I will be his father and he will be my son*

והיה משכני עליהם והייתי להם לאלהים והמה יהיו לי לעם

*I will be their God, and they will be my people*<sup>1</sup>

Described above is the cover of the album *Temple of Shadows* (fig. 1) from 2004 by the Brazilian heavy metal band Angra.<sup>2</sup> Saint George is a saint who crosses faiths: Catholicism, Islam, and the Afro-Brazilian religions called Umbanda and Candomblé. In Brazil, we are told as children that if we look carefully at the full moon, we can see Saint George killing the dragon in the shadows of the craters. My research into this album cover and the visual culture surrounding Brazilian heavy metal bands tries to make sense of this kind of religious imagery – its local meanings, art historical references, wavering

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Matan Shmuely and Chen Balbus. According to Balbus, the top line could also be translated to “disciples of God.”

<sup>2</sup> The album was released in many countries, each with its own local label release, all in 2004. It was released by Paradoxx Music in Brazil. The copy I am using is a limited edition which includes a bonus DVD with visual material from their previous release *Rebirth World Tour – Live in São Paulo*, released in Germany by Steamhammer (the heavy metal/hard rock division of the German independent record label SPV GmbH).

status between kitsch and the sublime, and its deep connections to violence. What role does religious imagery play in the construction of a heavy metal aesthetic caught between the difficult tasks of remaining locally authentic while striving for membership in an international metal scene? How does the construction of the Brazilian heavy metal aesthetic relate to other local constructions of the heavy metal aesthetic around the world?

Heavy metal is unique in that it is one of the few music genres that can be confidently defined as an international phenomenon. By “international” I do not mean it has spread evenly to every corner of the planet. Rather, I mean it has significant international traction. In turn, and very importantly, by “international” I mean something different from “mainstream pop international.” The international character of heavy metal (sometimes referred to as “metal” from here on) differs from the international character of mainstream, dance pop (sometimes referred to as “pop”) in that pop is exported merely by having its songs reproduced elsewhere: Carly Rae Jepsen’s hits play everywhere in the world as they are, carrying with them all the aesthetics and production decisions made in studio when they were created in Los Angeles at the centre of mainstream Western artistic production.

Metal, on the other hand, is international in its capacity to be exported at the deeper level of an ethos, a lifestyle, and a refuge for a group of people that find in it a kind of home, no matter the surroundings. Metal is a framework with far-reaching adaptabilities; it seems to be able to channel in each country where it arrives as a manifestation of locality that requires more than the mere exposure to and reproduction of Western songs. As such, it asks to be appropriated, digested, and regurgitated locally as something new, through new metal songs, bands, and scenes that emerge locally. It is arguably a language spoken nearly across the globe, a language capable of expressing local sentiment, socio-politics, and aesthetics, transformed and enriched at the level of local idiosyncrasies and then turned outwards, ready for international communication as original, local production.

Moreover, as it travels across the world, adapts, is transformed, and becomes an international vessel of local particularities, it remains a subculture, or a counterculture, as opposed to mainstream pop.<sup>3</sup> Pop’s ability to travel across the globe is linked to how it is manufactured; like sugar, it is sure to

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on how the meaning of the word “pop” changed in music since the emergence of popular music, see Tara Brabazon, *Popular Music: Topics, Trends & Trajectories*, (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), and David Brackett, *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

please. Metal on the other hand is often meant to disgust, cause fear, estrangement, oppose the mainstream, overwhelm, repulse, yet nevertheless spread its roots, persistently finding fertile ground for continued growth. It is a different thing to be an international phenomenon for metal than it is for pop. Pop is international, as is sunlight; it shines, just as it is, anywhere in the world. Metal, on the other hand, is like a worldwide mycelial network, expanding underground and adapting organically to different types of soil and humidity levels.

Heavy metal and religion have been known to intersect mostly through Satanism and secular opposition to religious tradition.<sup>4</sup> This relationship has been marked by negative connotations in mainstream news media, largely due to the burning of Christian churches across Norway in the 1990s by members of the black metal scene.<sup>5</sup> The moral panic that ensued has since that time distorted the image of heavy metal music as an artistic form, obfuscating the later developments that religious content has undergone within heavy metal over the decades since the incidents in Norway. However, it is not only through satanic associations that metal intersects with religion. From Bali to Los Angeles, from Sydney to Baghdad, from Beijing to São Paulo, metal has mixed itself with the various religions it has come across in its process of international expansion and found in local cultures alternative expressions of heavy metal's own Western-born initial configurations.<sup>6</sup>

The origins of metal can be traced back to the British band Black Sabbath's release of their self-titled album in 1970, followed by a second wave of British heavy metal a few years later. The genre also spread to mainland Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, Asia, Oceania, and Africa. Sepultura, one of Brazil's first heavy metal bands, was formed in 1984, rising to international status over the years and establishing itself as one of the founders of the subgenre known as groove metal. Sepultura was one of the first metal bands from a peripheral country to attain international recognition, and it did so after it consciously "became" Brazilian. In music historian Idelber Avelar's words, "for twenty years [Sepultura's] music has been changing constantly, yet it is universally recognized by metal fans as a premier and

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Moynihan and Didrik Söderlind, *Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground* (Port Townsend: Feral House, 2003); Antoine Grand, *Real Satanic Black Metal: The True History of Satanism in Extreme Metal Music*. (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, December 11, 2015); Jeffrey A Weinstock, "Profaning the Sacred: Goth Iconography, Iconoclasm, and Subcultural Resistance," in *Coverscaping: Discovering Album Aesthetics*, ed. Asbjørn Grønstad, and Øyvind Vågnes (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> For more information on the Norway church burnings which took place in 1992 see Moynihan and Söderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 81-108.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on heavy metal being international, or "global," see Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene, *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 34-59.

uncompromising death/thrash metal band,” having “methodically invented ways to introduce difference within the genre’s strict codes.”<sup>7</sup> Avelar adds that “in ascending to the international market Sepultura was led to *become* a Brazilian band, and its national origin was increasingly highlighted in its concerts and records.”<sup>8</sup> This “becoming” Brazilian was a conscious self-exoticization informed by an awareness of Western expectations and thus a strategic move that could work to advantage with Western audiences.<sup>9</sup> It allowed the band to sound and look distinct, and to claim that its members were not mere followers of the sound and aesthetic of canonical bands. Through “becoming” Brazilian, Sepultura asserted agency, proclaimed authenticity, and claimed membership in the international metal scene in a manner other local bands from countries with little tradition in metal could aspire to master to achieve the goal of inclusion and recognition.

Similar “becomings” can be found elsewhere. Salem was the first Israeli band, emerging in 1986 and remaining active ever since. Salem was followed by Orphaned Land, whose members released their debut album in 1994. Orphaned Land was the first metal band to incorporate Middle-Eastern aesthetic, sonic, and lyrical elements in their work, granting them recognition as the founders of “Oriental metal.”<sup>10</sup> But compared to the more established metal scenes, such as those in Norway, Sweden, and Germany, Israel has a marginal status. Members of the scene shared the concern that they were too much on the fringes of heavy metal because of their country of origin. Sociologist Keith Kahn-Harris recounts that “one Israeli scene member put it to me in an interview [that] ‘it’s very very frustrating here... You put more than a European band into what you are doing and you get a lot less response... It’s like we’re stuck in the edge of the world.’”<sup>11</sup>

What started as a British tradition, then, spread around the world during the next several decades, as subgenres — power metal, symphonic metal, black metal, death metal, folk metal, etc. —

<sup>7</sup> Idelber Avelar, “Otherwise National: Locality and Power in the Art of Sepultura,” in Wallach, *Metal Rules the Globe*, 138.

<sup>8</sup> Avelar, “Otherwise National,” 153.

<sup>9</sup> In this essay, I refer to Brazil as a non-Western country, although that is a questionable categorization.

<sup>10</sup> Sarha Moore, “Metal, Machismo and Musical Mode: How the ‘Feminine’ Phrygian Second Has Been Appropriated and Transformed,” *Networking Knowledge: Journal of the MeCCSA Postgraduate Network* 4, no. 1 (2011): 18. Although the term “oriental metal” carries a certain orientalist residue, the band define themselves as “oriental metal.” <https://centurymedia.store/product/Y4CDCE482/orphaned-land-30-years-of-oriental-metal-box-set-8-cds> <https://centurymedia.store/product/Y4CDCE482/orphaned-land-30-years-of-oriental-metal-box-set-8-cds> “ORPHANED LAND - 30 YEARS OF ORIENTAL METAL BOX SET - 8 CDS,” *Century Media*, <https://centurymedia.store/product/Y4CDCE482/orphaned-land-30-years-of-oriental-metal-box-set-8-cds>.

<sup>11</sup> Keith Kahn-Harris, “You Are from Israel and That Is Enough to Hate You Forever,” in Wallach, *Metal Rules the Globe*, 204.

enriched the genre.<sup>12</sup> But a metal epicentre still existed, having moved from England towards mainland Europe, particularly to Germany and Scandinavia. In the 1990s black metal gained traction in Norway where a particular aesthetic flourished, heavily associated with satanism, white supremacy, the occult, anti-Christian sentiment, and a strong affiliation with pagan Scandinavian religions and traditions.<sup>13</sup> In this context, particularly regarding white-supremacist sentiment, a few members of the Norwegian black metal scene did not appreciate the diversity of audiences and bands that were now entering the international metal arena. According to Kahn-Harris, Varg Vikernes, who founded the Norwegian black metal band Burzum, sent a letter-bomb to Zeev Tannenboim, a member of the Israeli band Salem.<sup>14</sup> Episodes like this contributed to the feeling by Israeli scene members that they were but marginal – and at times targeted – participants in the genre.

Vikernes, along with his scene mate Euronymous from the Norwegian band Mayhem, was also involved in the burning of a series of Christian churches across Norway. Vikernes subsequently assassinated Euronymous in 1993, for which he served time in prison. For Vikernes and Euronymous, the rationale behind the burning of the churches was that they stood where once had stood Scandinavian pagan temples and that such action “emphasized opposition to what was seen as Christian ‘weakness’ and celebrated the metalheads’ connection to the pre-Christian past.”<sup>15</sup> Such incidents contributed to a world-wide panic that accompanied the emergence of the subgenre. Such negative associations have weakened over the years as subsequent Norwegian bands have diligently distanced themselves from such activities and perpetrators, and the Norwegian black metal scene remains a strong protagonist in the heavy metal universe. Norway, together with Sweden and Finland, is still recognized as a breeding ground for metal in general, ranking sixth place in an article on the “Geography of Heavy Metal Bands” from 2021.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Sam Dunn, Scot McFadyen, Jessica Joy Wise, Tony Iommi, Dee Snider, and Alice Cooper, *Metal: A Headbanger’s Journey*, Special ed. (Burbank: Warner Home Video, 2006). For a heavy metal subgenre taxonomy, see Appendix A. For descriptions of heavy metal subgenres, see Valeri Tsatsishvili, “Automatic Subgenre Classification of Heavy Metal Music” (Masters diss., Department of Music, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, 2011), 17, JYX Digital Repository, <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:jyu-201201191046>

<sup>13</sup> Moynihan and Søderlind, *Lords of Chaos*.

<sup>14</sup> Kahn-Harris, “You Are from Israel,” 202-3.

<sup>15</sup> Kahn-Harris, “You Are from Israel,” 203. For more information on the anti-Christian sentiment behind the church burnings, see Dayal Paterson, *Black Metal: Evolution of the Cult* (Port Townsend: Feral House, 2013), 159-170.

<sup>16</sup> Caitlin Dempsey, “Geography of Heavy Metal Bands,” <https://www.geographyrealm.com/geography-of-heavy-metal-bands/>; accessed July 17, 2022.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, genres such as power and symphonic metal expanded heavy metal aesthetics with the addition of highly melodic keyboard passages, a bigger variety of orchestral music instruments, classically trained female singers, and a softer distortion in the guitars. Meanwhile, the genre was also reaching a more varied international audience with the growth of the internet and the piracy activities that came along with it. The heavy metal audience was becoming an international one, and an increasing number of bands started to emerge from peripheral countries outside the well-established metal scene that had developed over the first two decades of the genre in the northern hemisphere.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Among the fields in which heavy metal has been the focus of attention are anthropology, music history, ethnomusicology, sociology, cultural studies, religious studies, media studies, gender studies, and education. The relationship between religion and heavy metal has been the subject of a considerable proportion of the academic literature about the subject.

Heavy metal scholars Deena Weinstein (2016), Keith Kahn-Harris (2011), and Marcus Moberg (2012) have written about what have been the predominant tendencies within heavy metal studies and current trends in the field. Weinstein questions whether the field of metal studies has reached a sufficient level of mutual understanding between the many disciplines that approach metal academically. Her concern is that, as a heterogeneous field of studies that arises from a variety of theoretical and methodological stances rather than a cohesive field defined paradigmatically, heavy metal studies may not be offering heavy metal scholars a continuous, integrated discourse. Kahn-Harris shares Weinstein's concern with what he characterizes as the "intellectual fragmentation" in the field.<sup>17</sup>

Kahn-Harris and Moberg have paid particular attention to the heavy metal-religion relationship in their assessments of the field of heavy metal studies. In "Religion in Popular Music or Popular Music as Religion?" (2012), Moberg highlights "the need for future studies on the place of religion within metal

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<sup>17</sup> Keith Kahn-Harris, "Metal Studies: Intellectual Fragmentation or Organic Intellectualism?" *Journal for Cultural Research* 15, no. 3 (2011): 251-253; Deena Weinstein, "Reflections on Metal Studies," in *Global Metal Music and Culture: Current Directions in Metal Studies* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2016).

music and culture to recognize more openly and embrace the interdisciplinary character of this type of research,” pointing to a diversification of perspectives within metal studies that can introduce more nuance to the interpretation of the relationship between heavy metal and religion, which is often reduced to a persistent interest in the dark, satanic/Satanist, and controversial manifestations of this relationship.<sup>18</sup> Only by diversifying the lines of inquiry into religion and metal, can the field of heavy metal studies move past “the many controversies surrounding metal [that] continue to be underpinned by ill-informed and simplistic views about metal’s relationship to religion in particular.”<sup>19</sup> His critique is useful for elucidating the ways in which the current knowledge about this relationship may be refined as well as the importance of a well-defined conceptualization of the scene.<sup>20</sup>

Kahn-Harris has contributed to the discourse on heavy metal and religion in the context of Israel, in particular. In works such as “How Diverse Should Metal Be? The Case of Jewish Metal, Overt and Covert Jewishness” (2010), “You Are from Israel and That Is Enough to Hate You Forever” (2011), and “‘I hate this fucking country’: Dealing with the International and the Local in the Israeli Extreme Metal Scene” (2002), Kahn-Harris addresses the extremist ideologies within the genre and how these have often clashed with the international and ethnically-diverse character that metal has acquired over time.<sup>21</sup> He also discusses the challenges of belonging to a local, peripheral metal scene, which range from difficulties in gaining visibility within the international metal scene to being able to dedicate time and money to music while facing the economic roadblocks of a developing economy and a local culture that has not yet embraced heavy metal culture.<sup>22</sup> Although focused on the Israeli scene, his insight into the local/global dichotomy and the challenges of international membership in the international heavy metal scene have been instrumental in my reflections on the Brazilian scene.

The heavy metal-religion relationship has also been insightfully fleshed out by authors Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach, Jeffrey A. Weinstock, and Matthew Peter Unger. Clinton and Wallach offer an overview of the state of the racial configuration in metal across the globe, which is useful in

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<sup>18</sup> Marcus Moberg, “Religion in Popular Music or Popular Music as Religion? A Critical Review of Scholarly Writing on the Place of Religion in Metal Music and Culture,” *Popular Music and Society* 35, no. 1 (2012): 128.

<sup>19</sup> Moberg, “Religion in Popular Music,” 128.

<sup>20</sup> Moberg, “Religion in Popular Music,” 128.

<sup>21</sup> Keith Kahn-Harris, “How Diverse Should Metal Be? The Case of Jewish Metal, Overt and Covert Jewishness,” in *The Metal Void: First Gatherings*, eds. Niall W. R. Scott and Imke Von Helden (Oxford: Interdisciplinary Press, 2010): 95-104; Keith Kahn-Harris, “You Are from Israel and That Is Enough to Hate You Forever,” in Wallach, *Metal Rules the Globe*, 204; Keith Kahn-Harris, “‘I hate this fucking country’: Dealing with the Global and the Local in the Israeli Extreme Metal Scene,” *Critical Studies* 19 (2002): 133-152.

<sup>22</sup> Keith Kahn-Harris, “‘I hate this fucking country,’” 133-152.

understanding racial relations in metal in ways that transcend the focus on the white-supremacist tendencies of a few Scandinavian acts in the history of metal.<sup>23</sup> Most importantly, they offer perspective on where in the world metal has traveled to and stayed, demonstrating that despite the origins and cultural capital of the genre in Western countries that self-identify as White, some of the biggest metal fanbases in the world are in the developing world.

Weinstock examines one of the many relationships that exist between heavy metal and religion. Goth culture (and goth metal), which flourished in England and the United States in the 80s and 90s and is still found in many metropolitan areas, uses iconoclastic iconography to, much like the Norwegian black metal scene and satanic bands, subvert a Christian religious status quo.<sup>24</sup> Although very different from the treatment of religion by Norwegian black metal (which is often linked with Satanic themes and imagery) and by the Brazilian power metal band Angra, Goth culture is nonetheless another heavy metal genre linked to religion that has received less attention in heavy metal studies.<sup>25</sup> Unger argues that religious symbols still have a significant importance in the post-secular age. He uses the example of extreme metal, which although it is assumed to be an a-religious popular culture phenomenon, in fact employs religious symbols as vehicles for, among other things, authenticity.<sup>26</sup> His empirical analysis of extreme metal music and culture “reinforces the idea that even deeply irreligious, transgressive, and grotesque art forms exemplify the unique manner of religion’s significance in the post-secular moment,” a significance other than religious, as expressed in my own analysis of religious imagery of heavy metal visual culture.

Except for Weinstock – to whom I will return to later – these authors have not focused on the visual aspects of the relationship between metal and religion. Discussions of visual identity are usually dealt with amidst the other components of heavy metal culture, among which lyrical content and musical form take precedence and – pun intended – set the tone of the discussions. In comparison, and broadly

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<sup>23</sup> Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach, “Recolouring the Metal Map: Metal and Race in Global Perspective,” *Modern Heavy Metal: Markets, Practices and Cultures. International Academic Research Conference*, 2015, 274-282.

<sup>24</sup> Weinstock, “Profaning the Sacred,” 163.

<sup>25</sup> Goth culture and music are a separate subscene and subgenre from power metal (exemplified by Angra), satanic metal (characterized by bands such as Behemoth, from Poland), and Norwegian Black metal bands with nationalist rhetoric (such as Burzum, Vikernes’ solo act).

<sup>26</sup> Extreme metal, rather than a metal subgenre, is an umbrella term that encompasses metal subgenres considered “heavier,” often times faster, than other subgenres, as well as having predominantly guttural vocals and screeches. Examples of extreme metal subgenres are death and black metal. Matthew P. Unger, “Aesthetics, Symbols, Metal: Religion and Defilement in a Post-Secular Age” (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.7939/R3S756W6B>.

speaking, nothing of significance has been written about heavy metal in the field of art, design, and visual culture. This is not to say that the visual culture of heavy metal has not received any attention at all: Oscuro Martos offers an entertaining, informative, insider perspective on the production of some of the most iconic heavy metal album covers.<sup>27</sup> His methodology, however, is based on interviews with the bands and designers of the album covers, hence focused on the site of production of the works examined and not concerned with the relationship between metal and religion in particular. His work is also not informed by any art historical – or other – theoretical frameworks, as it is not an academic work.

Although the specific intersection between heavy metal, religion, album covers, and the history of art has not yet been explored at the scholarly level, some of the sources I include in my bibliography address one or another combination of the elements mentioned above. The sources that come the closest to this combination are the essays by Jeffrey A. Weinstock and Ian Chapman, both from the book *Coverscaping* (2010). Weinstock looks at Goth culture album covers and how they depict religious images and for what reasons.<sup>28</sup> Chapman leaves religion out of it but does a thorough iconographical analysis of an album produced by the rock and roll band Kiss.<sup>29</sup>

Moberg's insightful proposition that the field of metal studies needs more nuanced treatments of the role of religion in metal culture that can evade the dominating interest in moral panic and Satanism is the primary guideline for my inquiry into the cover of *Temple of Shadows*. My thesis shall demonstrate that religious imagery serves interests not only of cultural identity of the negative nationalist kind as seen in Norway, but also serves the purpose of representing a peripheral band's cultural identity to both a domestic and international markets, making two underlying arguments: 1) that such cultural identity is worthy of membership within the international metal community for its originality and 2) that there is a room for locality (and appreciation for one's local cultural identity) in an ever-so-foreign music genre. My project aims to answer Moberg's call for deviating from the persistent and reductive association of metal with satanism as the main intersection between metal and religion by focusing on the cover of *Temple of*

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<sup>27</sup> Ramón Oscuro Martos, ...*And Justice for Art: Stories About Heavy Metal Album Covers*, volume 3 (Tampa: Ramón Martos and Dark Canvas Book Publishing, Promotion & Distribution, 2018).

<sup>28</sup> Weinstock, "Profaning the Sacred."

<sup>29</sup> Ian Chapman, "Kiss: Alive! An Iconographical Approach," in *Coverscaping: Discovering Album Aesthetics*, ed. Asbjørn Grønstad, and Øyvind Vågnes, eds. (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2010).

*Shadows*. The art and visual culture perspective presented here also speaks to what Moberg identifies as the need for an interdisciplinary study of heavy metal and religion.

## THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

My project uses iconography as a basic art historical method of visual and material analysis. Acquiring a better understanding of iconographical and, by extension semiotic, methods thus formed an important part of my preliminary work for the project. I have used Erwin Panofsky's method of iconographical and iconological visual analysis, as well as the semiotic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles S. Peirce.<sup>30</sup> I also make use of a semiotic approach based on the ideas of Roland Barthes to examine the album cover of *Temple of Shadows* and the other visual works I include for comparison.

The main theoretical framework I have used for my research is post-colonialism. I am particularly interested in Mary Louise Pratt's concept of *contact zones*, which she defines as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power..."<sup>31</sup> Through the concept of the contact zone, I investigate to what extent the cover of *Temple of Shadows* reflects a similar process of transculturation to that observed by Pratt and identify what elements of the contemporary international metal scene are at play in influencing the visual presentation of local, peripheral heavy metal bands such as the Brazilian band Angra. I have come to understand the broader, international heavy metal community as an example of Pratt's contact zone based on a multi-sided context of heavy metal production in Brazil. For my thesis, the concept of *contact zones* is useful to refer both to Brazil as a literal space with a colonial past in which cultures meet, clash, and mix, and the international heavy metal scene as an abstract, or imagined, contact zone.

Pierre Bourdieu is useful when comparing contact zones such as Brazil with more ostensibly homogeneous zones such as Norway, and the amount of prestige scenes and bands from such different

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<sup>30</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, Perry Meisel, and Haun Saussy, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Charles S. Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," in *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*, Advances in Semiotics, ed. Robert E. Innis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985): 1-23; Roland Barthes, translated by Annette Lavers, *Mythologies* (London: Paladin, 1972).

<sup>31</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991), 34.

contexts can develop. I use Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital as an aid to my post-colonial theoretical framework to make such comparisons. Bourdieu explains that

In the case of activities like the visual arts, or playing a musical instrument, which presupposes a cultural capital generally acquired outside the educational system and (relatively) independent of the level of academic certification, the correlation with social class, which is again strong, is established through social trajectory ...<sup>32</sup>

Kahn-Harris discusses the inequality between the cultural capital of different bands and scenes, also drawing from Bourdieu. Referring to the Israeli scene but in a statement that can equally apply to Brazil, he explains the above quote from Bourdieu:

The small size of the Israeli scene, its geographical isolation from larger scenes, and the smaller amounts of time and other forms of transferrable capital available to its members create obstacles that are not encountered by members in other scenes, such as those of the United Kingdom or Sweden.<sup>33</sup>

I use Bourdieu's concept of capitals as a complement to Pratt's concept of contact zones to deepen my post-colonial reach into the dynamics between metal scenes from various parts of the world.

## THESIS STRUCTURE

My thesis is a case study of religious imagery in Brazilian heavy metal in the album cover of *Temple of Shadows*. The specificities of this case study can only be successfully understood if juxtaposed with the use of religious imagery in other metal scenes from various parts of the world. Juxtaposing this case study with cases that have been largely taken as representatives of the relationship between religion and metal is particularly important. That is the case because of my interest in demonstrating how such relationship transcends the small yet overrepresented case of the Scandinavian metal scenes that have defined the relationship in the collective perception of insiders and outsiders of heavy metal across the world.

In the first chapter I will offer an overview of the history of heavy metal – starting in 1970 with Black Sabbath's first album release – that draws attention to how metal has expanded throughout the following decades beyond the borders of the scenes where the genre originated. Along with the geographical expansion of the genre, I will cover the emergence of subgenres over the following decades

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<sup>32</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste," (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 14.

<sup>33</sup> Kahn-Harris, "'You Are from Israel,'" 218.

and the degree to which they are dependent on their geographical contexts, as well as the visual trends in album covers that emerged alongside these new subgenres. This overview will demonstrate that religious themes and imagery were part of heavy metal history from its very beginning. I will then explain the emergence of the Norwegian black metal scene in the 1990s as a particularly important development in the history of heavy metal and its subgenres, given the long-lasting effects that arose from the controversial activities and themes explored by its participants, which were tightly related to religion, constructions of national-identity, and ideas of “otherness.” I will look at how religion was deployed in the visual culture, and particularly in album covers, of Norwegian black metal releases in the 1990s and to what extent it has defined the visual culture of the subgenre. My case study in this instance is Satyricon’s *Nemesis Divina*, from 1996. These characteristics of the Norwegian black metal scene are essential for my later reflections on religion, national identity, and otherness in the Brazilian scene.

The second chapter will offer an overview of Brazilian history, from the beginnings of colonization in the sixteenth century through the twentieth century. After proper historical contextualization, I offer careful visual analysis of the album cover for *Temple of Shadows* (2004), using a semiotic approach drawing from Barthes’ theories of denotation and connotation and aided by the semiotic theories of Peirce and Saussure. My analysis will focus on the religious elements present in the cover, demonstrating how they function in a different manner than they do in Norwegian black metal scene album covers from the previous decade. My goal in this chapter is to demonstrate that the use of religious imagery in the cover of *Temple of Shadows* transcends the shock value and exclusionary idea of otherness found in the white-nationalist, occultist use of religious imagery of the Scandinavian black metal bands. Instead, it promotes an otherness that makes possible the inclusion of the band in the international heavy metal community, arguing for the enrichment of the international scene with the particularities of a local Brazilian scene and its autochthonous elements. Here, I will discuss issues of membership and peripherality, bringing to the center of the discussion the local/global dichotomy. I introduce the idea of contact zones and transculturation as discussed by Pratt and use Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital to compare Angra with the Norwegian band Satyricon.

## **THESIS STATEMENT AND ITS CONTRIBUTION**

My investigation into religious manifestations in heavy metal culture in the decades that followed the emergence of the Norwegian black metal scene has led me to conclude that the use of religious imagery in heavy metal visual culture has site- and culture-specific goals and effects. These specificities are deeply intertwined with issues that transcend religion to reach concerns of cultural identity and the membership of local metal scenes in the international community. Religious images, in this instance, function as strong cultural signifiers that aid in the construction of such national identities. The case-study of the Brazilian metal band Angra offers a window into how this relationship between heavy metal visual culture and religious imagery has been made more complex by local heavy metal scene members.

Power relations historically established between central and peripheral nations have been an important line of inquiry for the understanding of the globalized world. Such relations are commonly translated into the cultural production of nations. Brazil, as a developing country with limited representation in the world canon of cultural production, has in the band Angra a contemporary example of creative negotiation for inclusion in and challenge to an arena traditionally monopolized by countries with more economic and cultural capital in the genre. By seeking to understand religious images such as Saint George in the cover of *Temple of Shadows*, my project contributes to the understanding of the role of heavy metal scenes in the formation of global citizenship through local, religious vernaculars, and how it shapes and is shaped by the ever-increasing demand for diversity and recognition in our globalized world. My project's originality lies in its topical focus on the Brazilian metal scene; it allows me to use my cultural background as a Brazilian participant of heavy metal culture, my language abilities as a Portuguese and Spanish speaker fluent in English, and training as an art historian, to devote careful attention to the visual specificities of Brazil's negotiations of membership in the larger metal world as a case study of "making sense" of culturally-weighted, heavy metal religious images.

## CHAPTER 1: HEAVY METAL AND RELIGION – NEMESIS DIVINA

In this first chapter, I will briefly cover the history of heavy metal from 1970 to 2004, focusing on album cover art but also expanding on the visual culture of music in general. I will touch on the emergence of many heavy metal subgenres and their connections to their places of origins. This overview will lead to a discussion of the multifaceted metal-religion relationship over the years. I will discuss the Norwegian black metal band Satyricon and analyze the cover of their 1996 album *Nemesis Divina* using semiotics to demonstrate how the relationship between metal and religion is often entangled with questions of identity and heritage that complicate the monothematic treatment the relationship receives in most of the literature.

Related material, such as videos, music, and lyrics, will in some cases extend the examination and contribute to the discussion. This investigation into how religion and metal intersect, and how such intersection is often coopted into discourses about identity, will pave the way for an understanding of how the Brazilian band Angra, and *Temple of Shadows* (2004) specifically, transcend the straight-forwardly antagonistic metal-religion relationship seen in the Norwegian black metal scene, which has been historically preferred as the representation of this relationship in the academic literature.<sup>34</sup>

The origins of the music genre broadly referred to as heavy metal can be traced back to the British band Black Sabbath's release of their self-titled album in 1970 (fig. 2). Not too long after, a new wave of British heavy metal bands from the mid to late 70s, such as Iron Maiden and Judas Priest, added speed, aggressive lyrics, high pitched vocals, and a pop appeal to the genre. In the following decades, a variety of subgenres emerged, vastly enriching and diversifying the sound and aesthetics of metal – death metal, thrash metal, folk metal, melodic metal, hair metal, glam metal, goth metal, nu metal, and doom metal, to name only a few.<sup>35</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, I will focus on only two of these subgenres: black metal and symphonic power metal.

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<sup>34</sup> The antagonism I refer to here is twofold: between heavy metal and religion, in which heavy metal uses religious themes and images to oppose itself to it, often through blasphemy, and the antagonism between heavy metal and any observer of it, with an intent to shock, also often through blasphemy.

<sup>35</sup> Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene, "Affective Overdrive, Scene Dynamics, and Identity in the Global Metal Scene," in Wallach, *Metal Rules the Globe*, 5, 10. See also Sam Dunn, Scot McFadyen, Jessica Joy Wise, Tony Iommi, Dee Snider, and Alice Cooper, *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, Special ed. (Burbank: Warner Home Video, 2006).

In the late 1970s and early to mid 1980s black metal emerged with bands like Venom (England), Bathory (Sweden), Mercyful Fate (Denmark), Hellhammer, and Celtic Frost (both Switzerland). Black metal had a grittier sound than what had come before. The sound of black metal is marked by a deliberate low-quality recording of the instruments, blasting drumbeats, high pitched screaming vocals, and tremolo picking – a very fast guitar playing technique consisting of “picking a note fast and repeatedly to give the impression of a single, sustained note with a ‘trembling’ feel to it.”<sup>36</sup> Visually, it uses imagery associated with the devil, such as upside-down pentagrams and inverted crosses, and goats (figs. 3, 4, and 5). It is also notorious for the use of corpse paint, a black and white painting of the face with darkened mouths and eye sockets against a pale, dead complexion (fig. 6). The theatricality of corpse paint is also associated with bands such as Kiss, and even Japanese Kabuki theater, which preceded the emergence of the subgenre (figs. 7 and 8).<sup>37</sup>

In the 1990s and early 2000s, power metal expanded metal aesthetics with the addition of melodic keyboards, a bigger variety of orchestral music instruments (creating an offshoot of power metal called symphonic metal, or symphonic power metal), female classical singers, a softer distortion in guitars, fast, galloping drums, and a focus on uplifting and beautiful melodies and harmonies. Visually, power and symphonic power metal offer imagery more colourful and brighter than black metal. Album covers include blue skies, rainbows, beautiful landscapes, castles, ruins, heroes who fight evil forces holding their swords up to the sky, and fantastical figures such as elves and dragons (fig. 9). It could be argued that dragons and swords are the most representative motifs of symphonic power metal. It is also strongly associated with fantasy literature such as J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*; there are songs and even entire albums within the power metal genre dedicated to Tolkien’s work (fig. 10).

Aside from the branching out into subgenres, metal was becoming an international phenomenon and reaching a more varied audience. An increasing number of bands started to follow in the footsteps of bands like Sepultura in Brazil and Orphaned Land in Israel, emerging from peripheral countries outside

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<sup>36</sup> Alex Basson, “What is Tremolo Picking?” *Stack Exchange, Music & Theory and Practice Community Page*, last modified May 30, 2011, <https://music.stackexchange.com/questions/2754/what-is-tremolo-picking>

<sup>37</sup> Kabuki theater influenced Kiss’s stage characterization, according to Kiss’s bassist Gene Simmons. Elif Ozden, “When Brad Whitford Revealed Gene Simmons’ Secret About KISS Outfits,” *Rock Celebrities*, last modified November 30, 2021, <https://rockcelebrities.net/when-brad-whitford-revealed-the-gene-simmons-secret-about-kiss-outfits/> and Steve Waksman, “Arenas of the Imagination: Global Tours and the Heavy Metal Concert in the 1970s,” in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 231.

the well-established metal scene that had developed over the first two decades of the genre in the West.<sup>38</sup>

But a metal epicentre still existed, having moved away from England towards mainland Europe, particularly to Germany and Scandinavia. In the 1990s black metal gained traction in Norway where a particular aesthetic flourished, heavily associated with Satanism, white supremacy, the occult, anti-Christian sentiment, and a strong affiliation with pagan Scandinavian religions and traditions.

## HEAVY METAL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH RELIGION

Scholars of different fields concerned with studying religion have argued about what a definition of religion is, and even more so about which *kind* of definition for religion (or any noun, for that matter) is the most appropriate – functional, real (or essentialist), stipulative, and others.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, according to *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion*, an adequate definition goes along the lines of “a system of beliefs and practices that are relative to superhuman beings.”<sup>40</sup> Following the lead of *Harper Collins*, I refer to religion as a broad spectrum of religions, including the mainstream institutional religions of the Western and Eastern worlds and less hegemonic “systems of beliefs and practices” such as satanism, heathenism, and occultism. I employ the term religious imagery to refer to religious icons, symbols, and artwork (of any medium) of religious or mythological subject matter from any cultural origin that were made originally for religious purposes within religious contexts. The original purposes of such religious imagery hereby discussed may not necessarily represent (and most often does not represent) the way the metal bands or visual artists in question relate personally to such practices and beliefs.

The terms “Satanism,” “Satanic,” and “Satanist” are often linked to the occult, the study or pursuit of hidden knowledge and information, particularly for the purported purpose of gaining spiritual insight or acquiring personal power.<sup>41</sup> Occult practices include astrology, mediumship, witchcraft, Ouija boards,

<sup>38</sup> Weinstein, “The Globalization of Metal,” 43-48.

<sup>39</sup> Caroline Schaffalitzky de Muckadell, “On Essentialism and Real Definitions of Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 82, no. 2 (2014): 495–520.

<sup>40</sup> The authors do not offer a definitive definition, though, and make it clear that such a task is too complicated, and briefly discuss why on the same page. Jonathan Z. Smith, William Scott Green, and Jorunn Jacobsen Buckley, *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion*, first edition (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1995), 893.

<sup>41</sup> Jim Greene, MFA, “Occultism,” *Salem Press Encyclopedia* (2017), <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=87320947&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

and tarot cards.<sup>42</sup> Occultism was present in Europe before the continent's Christianization, after which it became associated with the Christian conception of Satan, evil, and blasphemy.<sup>43</sup> This change in connotation is best known through the persecution of persons believed to be witches and their exorcisms during the Inquisition (first founded in 1184), and the witch-hunts that took place in Europe and the United States during the early modern period, as in the Salem witch trials (1692-1693), perhaps the most well-known example of "occult paranoia" from the period.<sup>44</sup> During the Salem witch trials, a group of women from the village of Salem and neighbouring areas in Massachusetts were accused, tried, convicted, and executed for allegedly having connections with the devil and performing witchcraft.<sup>45</sup>

During the Victorian Era in England, a resurgence of interest in the occult was manifested through figures such as Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), who created a system of occult beliefs of his own and left a permanent mark on occultist thought with his many books, such as the posthumously released *Book of the Law* from 1973.<sup>46</sup> With the advent of photography at that time, occultism also took the form of spirit photography, where photographs were manipulated with techniques such as double exposure to create the illusion that spirits were present in the photographed scene, at times standing or sitting beside or behind the subject of a portrait.

At times (and it will be specified) I will be referring to Satanism as defined by the Church of Satan, founded by Anton LaVey in San Francisco, 1966. The Church of Satan's version of Satanism could be considered a modern rendition of occultism, less concerned with metaphysical or supernatural knowledge, and more oriented towards an atheistic, hedonistic system of beliefs. In 1969, LaVey published *The Satanic Bible*, a book that Magistra Peggy Nadramia, High Priestess of the Church of Satan defines as "the foundation of the Satanic religion and history's most influential book on Satanism."<sup>47</sup> The High Priestess explains that the book contains "the ideas that were making up the

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<sup>42</sup> Greene, "Occultism."

<sup>43</sup> Greene, "Occultism."

<sup>44</sup> Greene, "Occultism."

<sup>45</sup> Warren M. Billings and Kimberly Manning, "Salem Witchcraft Trials" *Salem Press Encyclopedia* (2022), <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=89139882&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

<sup>46</sup> David R. Champion, "Aleister Crowley," *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia* (2020), <https://eds-p-ebSCOhost-com.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/eds/detail/detail?vid=2&sid=ab518ba9-18b3-4d6b-a9d1-7bc8931b77bb%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2I0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=89098793&db=ers>

<sup>47</sup> Magistra Peggy Nadramia, High Priestess of the Church of Satan, "So It Was Written: The History of The Satanic Bible by Anton Szandor LaVey," *The Church of Satan*, accessed August 25, 2022, <https://www.churchofsatan.com/the-history-of-the-satanic-bible/>

philosophy of Satanism, and their expression through the rituals that had been created to exercise this philosophy.”

Defiance to Christianity as a whole motivated the creation of the Church of Satan. LaVey explains that “We established a Church of Satan—something that would smash all concepts of what a ‘church’ was supposed to be. This was a temple of indulgence to openly defy the temples of abstinence that had been built up until then. We didn’t want it to be an unforgiving, unwelcoming place, but a place where you could go to have fun.”<sup>48</sup> The Church of Satan set itself up from its inception to oppose Christian churches, although it is never specified which Christian church is the enemy. Overall, it aims to mock Christianity and create “blasphemously positive and exciting” rituals.

The iconography used by the Church of Satan in their books, website, and physical spaces is pervasive in heavy metal iconography as well, such that LaVey’s church is a key point of reference when trying to understand the use of such imagery in heavy metal visual culture, particularly when the accompanying discourse of a given band is also one of Christian defiance. An example of the potential relevance of the Church of Satan within the metal world is Adam Nergal Darski (born Adam Michał Darski, 10 June 1977), lead singer of Polish black metal band Behemoth. Nergal, as he is known, is an outspoken member of the Church of Satan, avid proponent of Satanism, and heavily inspired by Satanism in the creation of Behemoth’s work (fig. 11).<sup>49</sup>

Finally, at other times I will use the word Satanism to refer to general and often vague associations with the Devil, evil, death, darkness, deviance, opposition to Christianity, and the self-identification of individuals that do or did not necessarily associate themselves with the Church of Satan but with such general concepts instead.

In the Norwegian context, the target of anti-Christian sentiment is the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway, the state church. During the second half of the twentieth century, heathenry, “a religious movement based on the reconstruction of pre-Christian Germanic beliefs from northern Europe” began to

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<sup>48</sup> Blanche Barton, “Church of Satan History: The Church of Satan,” *Church of Satan*, accessed November 2, 2022, <https://www.churchofsatan.com/cos-church-of-satan/>

<sup>49</sup> Dayal Patterson, “What Exactly is the Church of Satan?” *Metal Hammer*, last updated October 05, 2016, <https://www.loudersound.com/features/what-exactly-is-the-church-of-satan>. The album cover of Behemoth’s *The Satanist* (fig 11) and the accompanied artwork in the album’s booklet is inspired by iconography associated with Satan and Satanism. Examples are Georges Bataille’s “Acéphale” (referred to by him as Satan, and originally illustrated by André Masson), and the “Unholy Trinity (Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet).” For more information on the influence of Satanism in Behemoth’s album cover *The Satanist*, see Oscuro Martos, ...*And Justice for Art*, 201.

flourish in various parts of Europe and the United States.<sup>50</sup> The names of these heathenry groups vary depending on their location and ideologies. For example, in Iceland the Ásatrú Fellowship is “a group dedicated to reconstructing and practicing the ancient Norse religion.” Other names related to heathenry in Northern Europe are Vanatrú or Forn Sed (meaning “old customs” in Denmark), Fyrnsidu or Theodism (Anglo-Saxon heathenism), Irminism (German heathenism), and Odinism<sup>51</sup>

Heavy Metal was associated with religion and the occult from its inception. Black Sabbath, founded in Birmingham, England in 1970, explored Christianity and the occult alike in imagery and lyrics, as well as, sonically, with a lot of distortion on the guitars and deafening volume in their performances. The tritone, “an evil sounding combination of notes that’s designed to create a chilling or foreboding atmosphere,” is the backbone of the first track in *Black Sabbath*, also called “Black Sabbath.”<sup>52</sup> The tritone is also referred to as “*Diabolus in musica* (the devil in music), the devil’s interval ... the triad and the flatted fifth.”<sup>53</sup> An article on the official website of the electric guitar manufacturer Fender explains the technicality of the tritone and why it has the specific effect it does:

Strummed together, these three strings create a pleasant-sounding chord (G, D, G). But if you take your second finger and play it a fret down as a Db instead of a “D” it creates a flatted fifth. When played after the first “G” or plucked slowly in a “G” (root note), “G” (octave), Db (flatted fifth) progression, it creates a dissonant or ugly tone, especially with distortion.<sup>54</sup>

In the introduction of the song “Black Sabbath,” a church bell can be heard. The first 2 verses of the song, which accompany a G-Db tritone being played over and over, are as follows:

What is this that stands before me?  
Figure in black which points at me  
Turn around quick, and start to run  
Find out I’m the chosen one  
Oh no

<sup>50</sup> Richard Sheposh, “Heathenry (New Religious Movement),” *Salem Press Encyclopedia* (2019), <https://search-ebcohst-com.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ers&AN=141224255&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

<sup>51</sup> Jennifer Snook, “Reconsidering Heathenry: The Construction of an Ethnic Folkway as Religio-Ethnic Identity,” *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 16, no. 3 (2013): 53.

<sup>52</sup> The Harvard Dictionary of Music refers to the *diabolus in musica* in the definition of “Mi-fa.” The entry goes: In the theory of \*hexachords used in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, a combination of \*solmization syllables designating any of several dissonant intervals against which singers and composers were warned by theorists. Because each of the syllables could designate several pitches, the combination mi-fa could represent \*tritones (called the diabolus in musica and to which the warning to avoid mi contra fa was particularly directed), minor seconds (as well as their inversions and compounds [see interval]), and \*cross relations. Don Michael Randel, *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th edition (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 511.

<sup>53</sup> Jon Wiederhorn, “The Devil’s Chord: The Eerie History of “Diabolus in Musica,” *Fender*, unknown publication date, <https://www.fender.com/articles/tech-talk/the-devils-chord-the-eerie-history-of-diabolus-in-musica>

<sup>54</sup> Wiederhorn, “The Devil’s Chord.”

Big black shape with eyes of fire  
 Telling people their desire  
 Satan's sitting there, he's smiling  
 Watches those flames get higher and higher  
 Oh no, no, please God help me!

The lyrics of Black Sabbath show that metal associated itself with religion through the idea and fear of Satan. This approximation was aided by sonic features such as the gloomy presence of rain which backdrops the juxtaposition of church bells with the *diabolus in musica* – a juxtaposition of God and Satan. Visual elements that alluded to Satan, such as the inverted cross used in the album booklet, also aid in this coming together (see again, fig. 1). In his solo career after his departure from Black Sabbath, the band's singer Ozzy Osbourne wrote a song called Mr. Crowley in direct reference to the nineteenth-century occultist.

The inverted cross was originally associated with the crucifixion of St. Peter in Christian iconography, based on second century writings in the *Acts of Peter* containing accounts of the martyrdom of Peter.<sup>55</sup> The inverted cross was appropriated much later in the history of Christianity by a Catholic Church dissident named Eugene Vintras, a controversial nineteenth-century figure from the Normandy region in France. Vintras created a sect that gathered a group of people who were dissatisfied with the Catholic church to engage in unorthodox practices such as speaking in tongues, bleedings, and stigmata. This deviant behaviour caused Vintras to be condemned by the Vatican in 1843, a sentence that followed a previous 5-year sentence for theft. As the self-proclaimed prophet of this sect, Vintras preached the end of the Reign of the Suffering Christ and the beginning of the Reign of the Holy Spirit of Love, an inversion of "Reigns" represented by his choice of the inverted cross.<sup>56</sup> Vintras' use of the inverted cross as a confrontation to the Church may have been the origin of the same confrontational use of the symbol by metal bands and other later critics of the Church and Christianity.

## THE NORWEGIAN BLACK METAL SCENE

<sup>55</sup> Angelo Di Bernardino, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 1:177, 3:155, <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=706670&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>56</sup> Richard D.E. Burton, *Blood in the City: Violence and Revelation in Paris, 1789-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 164.

In the early 1990s Norway became the birthplace of a specific strand of black metal, Norwegian black metal. Norwegian black metal emphasizes all the aforementioned sonic characteristics of black metal. Visually, it also features northern landscapes of forests and mountains, with or without snow (figs. 12 and 13), and the barren look of northern forests also influences those black metal band logos that look like bundles of twigs and/or thorns forming barely readable words (fig. 14). Marcus Moberg, scholar of the sociology of religion, explains that, although religious and/or Satanic images and themes are used across many heavy metal genres, black metal has used them with a more serious tone compared to other genres less committed to these images' dark connotations and more concerned with their stylistic effects (as in Black Sabbath's foundational metal works, for instance).<sup>57</sup> Given this close relationship between members of the black metal scene and the connotations or ideologies of religious imagery, it should come with no surprise that so much of the metal-religion relationship has been examined through the Norwegian black metal scene.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to Satanist sentiment among members of the Norwegian black metal scene, a rivalry developed in the early 1990s between Norwegian black metal bands and Swedish death metal bands. Some members of the Norwegian black metal scene felt that Swedish death metal bands that had fallen out of popularity were appropriating Norway's black metal identity to refresh themselves and become popular again. Black metal scene members, such as Varg Vikernes from the one-man act *Burzum*, saw this move as a threat to their black metal marginality and subcultural reputation. They then began to engage in music, discourse, and behaviour more extreme than ever, to make it increasingly challenging for others to associate themselves with the genre. It was a conscious effort by the Norwegians to distance themselves and their scene from those who were trying to borrow from their identity. This culture of extremity gave rise to a few extreme acts.

Several members of the Norwegian black metal scene had an explicit preoccupation with making black metal a genre associated with evil and deviance, one in which lyrics alluding to Satan or Satanism represented the genre more than the style of metal played by the band. This was the case for Øystein Aarseth, also known as Euronymous, from the legendary *Mayhem*, for example. His stage name choice

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<sup>57</sup> Marcus Moberg, "Popular Culture and the 'Darker Side' of Alternative Spirituality: The Case of Metal Music," *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis* 21 (January 2009): 118-119.

<sup>58</sup> Marcus Moberg, "Religion in Popular Music," 128.

was anything but random. Euronymous is defined in *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* as “a daemon of the lower world, who devoured the flesh of dead human bodies, and left nothing but the bones.”<sup>59</sup> Aarseth’s choice for his stage name can also be linked to Anton LaVey, who mentions this Greek mythological demon in *The Satanic Bible*. LaVey included the name “Euronymous” in a list of “Infernal Names,” and defines Euronymous as “Greek prince of death.”<sup>60</sup> According to some accounts, however, Euronymous’ interest in Satanism was purely for promotional purposes; it was a marketing gimmick.<sup>61</sup>

Other members of the scene were interested in taking the Satanic discourse more seriously and acting on it; in 1992, between 45 to 60 Norwegian stave churches (medieval wooden churches typical of Nordic countries) were either nearly or actually set on fire, with records indicating at the time that at least a third of the fires were connected to the Norwegian black metal scene.<sup>62</sup> Although these were burnings of Christian churches and Satanism played a role in them, one particular member, Varg Vikernes (born Kristian Vikernes), was also a notorious nationalist and white supremacist. When speaking of his hometown in an interview conducted in the fall of 1995, Vikernes offensively stated, “In Bergen we are still blessed with having a majority of whites – unlike Oslo, which is the biggest sewer in Norway.”<sup>63</sup> Vikernes also explained that, despite the general association of the arsons with Satanism, because they happened on the sixth day of the sixth month,

“what everyone overlooked was that on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June, year 793, in Lindisfarne in Britain was the site of the first known Viking raid in history, with Vikings from Hordaland, which is my county... That church is built on holy ground, a natural circle and a stone horg [a heathen altar]. They planted a big cross on the top of the horg and built the church in the midst of the holy place.”<sup>64</sup>

When asked if there was “a genuine connection to nationalism” in the church arsons, Vikernes explained that “I’ve always had that, more or less. It’s not a Satanic thing, it’s a national heathen thing.”<sup>65</sup>

<sup>59</sup> William Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, vol. 2, (London, UK: J. Murray, 1870), 112.

<sup>60</sup> Anton Szandor LaVey, *The Satanic Bible* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), 59.

<sup>61</sup> Moy Michael Moynihan and Didrik Söderlind, *Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground* (Port Townsend: Feral House, 2003), 102, 161.

<sup>62</sup> Moynihan and Söderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 83. Stave churches are medieval wooden churches found across Norway, Sweden and Denmark, most notably and numerous in Norway. Their architecture blends Old Norse and Christian characteristics, a blend that originates from the Christianization process of Norway that happened in the tenth century (exact start date and duration are an ongoing scholarly debate).

For more on stave churches, see Petter Aune, Ronald L. Sack, and Arne Selberg, “The Stave Churches of Norway,” *Scientific American* 249, no. 2 (1983): 96-105.

For more on the Christianization of Norway, see Sverre Bagge, “Christianization and State Formation in Early Medieval Norway,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 30, no. 2 (June 2005): 107–34. doi:10.1080/03468750510014088.

<sup>63</sup> Moynihan and Söderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 156.

<sup>64</sup> Moynihan and Söderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 92-93.

<sup>65</sup> Moynihan and Söderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 94.

Vikernes is particularly interested in the ancient Nordic religion known as Odinism, and he elaborated on both this worldview and his own self-image by saying “I am Chieftain of a tribe that has taken the lead in establishing a Norwegian Heathen Front.”<sup>66</sup> He then went on to explain that, as such, he must act like Odin in a variety of ways that have to do with honour, servitude, sacrifice, and studiousness. Vikernes served time in prison for assassinating band mate Euronymous in 1993 over escalating competition and distrust among them. About a year before Euronymous’ assassination, in August 1992, another member of the Norwegian black metal scene, Bård Eithun of the black metal band Emperor, had also killed a man, believing him to be gay and repeatedly stabbing him at a park in Lillehammer.<sup>67</sup>

The combination of arson, Satanism, and murder quickly reached the news in Norway and abroad, understandably creating international moral panic.<sup>68</sup> However, an additional aspect of making claims about one’s cultural identity was already at play within this genre of music and its marketing. Much of the problematic behaviours of scene members was due to boredom and a certain antipathy towards their general social and religious contexts. In the words of Norwegian author of the book *Rock and Satanism*, Martin Alvsvåg, “Norway, being a very wealthy country with a high standard of living, makes young kids very blasé. It’s not enough to just play pinball anymore. They need something strong, and black metal provides really strong impulses if you get into it.”<sup>69</sup> But the church burnings in Norway also represented for the participants a rejection of a “Judeo-Christian” culture that, in their view, had effaced pre-Christian Norwegian culture. In Venkatesh et al, the authors state more specifically that “black metal’s antagonistic reproach ... is linked to issues of colonialism and, more specifically, to both the semiotic over coding of pagan traditions by Christian missionaries and normative image of bourgeois idealism promulgated by the Industrialized State.”<sup>70</sup> The Norwegian State is officially tied to the Church of Norway, and despite Norwegians not being legally forced to be practicing Christians or be officially affiliated to the church, about 70% of the population remain members of the church.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, the events that took place in

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<sup>66</sup> Moynihan and Søderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 171.

<sup>67</sup> Moynihan and Søderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 111.

<sup>68</sup> Moynihan and Søderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 40, 91, 95, 99-102, 105, 310, 311, 316, 317, 320,

<sup>69</sup> Moynihan and Søderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 43.

<sup>70</sup> Vivek Venkatesh, J.S. Podoshen, K. Urbaniak, and J.J. Wallin, “Eschewing Community: Black Metal,” *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 25, no. 1 (2014): 66–81.

<sup>71</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Church of Norway,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 19, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Church-of-Norway>.

Norway may be understood as connected to, or at least mixed with, an agenda driven by the reclamation of a certain pre-Christian local culture perceived to be threatened and colonized by another.

The burning of churches, however, may look like the work of the Devil as much as a reclaiming of a Norwegian past (although one does not preclude the other). For some, burning down the churches was an act of evil inspired by Satan, as Euronymous liked to suggest. For others, such as Vikernes, it stood for revenge against the Christian churches that had been built atop traditional temples where Vikings from pre-Christian Norway had prayed to the Old Norse gods. He perceived their construction as a sign of disrespect towards Norwegian traditional religion and culture.<sup>72</sup> Because of the established relationship between the black metal scene and Satanism, even if only for promotional purposes, the church burnings, the assassination of Euronymous by Vikernes, and the Lillehammer Park killing by Bård Eithun were readily associated with the adoration of evil by the self-proclaimed Satanists from Mayhem and their friends.

What started as a fantastic teenage adventure into the aesthetics of death, darkness, and deviance by young Norwegian men who enjoyed heavy metal music, ended up on TV as real-world church burnings and assassinations.<sup>73</sup> This transcendence of the small, underground Norwegian black metal world into the mainstream collective consciousness launched the scene into never-before-seen heights and visibility, but it was tainted by violence and racism.<sup>74</sup> In the next section, visual culture will be offered to further examine this history, with a focus on one particular album cover that offers insight into how the ideologies present in the Norwegian black metal scene were manifested visually.

## NORWAY'S NEMESIS DIVINA

The cover of *Nemesis Divina*, by Norwegian black metal band Satyricon, visualizes the events that took place in Norway in the early 1990s (fig. 15). *Nemesis Divina* (translated as “divine enemy”) was released in 1996, when the hot topic of Satanic heavy metal band deviants was still in the news. The album cover is a collaboration between illustrator Stein Løken, artist and graphic designer Halvor Bodin,

<sup>72</sup> Moynihan and Søderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 87, 93.

<sup>73</sup> Moynihan and Søderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 95, 105, 310, 311, 295, 296, 281, 253, 155, 148, 149

<sup>74</sup> Moynihan and Søderlind, *Lords of Chaos*, 95, 265

art, fashion and advertising photographer Per Heimly, and Satyricon's vocalist and guitarist Satyr (band name of Sigurd Wongraven).

Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic concepts of the sign as composed of a "signifier" and a "signified," and the semiotic terms "icon(s)," "index(es)" and "symbol(s)" as conceptualized by Charles Sanders Peirce in his theory of signs offer a useful theoretical framework for the analysis of *Nemesis Divina*. I will also explain the terms "denotation" and "connotation," as employed by Roland Barthes.

According to Saussure, the signs we use to communicate (whether through written language or images) are composed of a "signifier" and a "signified."<sup>75</sup> Saussure uses the examples of a tree: when an English-speaking person hears the word *tree*, the concept of a tree is elicited in their mind. In this example, the word *tree* is the "signifier," and the concept of "tree" is the "signified." This process of hearing the word and recalling the thing that word is referring to is called "signification."<sup>76</sup>

Peirce builds on Saussure by breaking the signifier down into three categories: icons, indexes, and symbols. Icons (from the word "image" in Greek) in art history usually refer to small panels of saints or holy figures found in Eastern Orthodox religious traditions. For Peirce, however, icons, indexes and symbols are types of signs, which means they are "something that represents something else."<sup>77</sup> In the less than clear words of Peirce himself, "An Icon is a Representamen whose Representative Quality is a Firstness of it as a First. That is, a quality that it has *qua* thing renders it fit to be a representamen. Thus, anything is fit to be a Substitute for anything that it is like."<sup>78</sup>

Anne D'Alleva helps with understanding what Peirce means. She defines the representamen as "the form that the sign takes (not necessarily material),"<sup>79</sup> and explains that, in the icon "the signifier is perceived as resembling or imitating the signified, or being similar to it in some of its qualities. Examples: a portrait, a model airplane."<sup>80</sup> For Peirce, an icon is an image that resembles the thing it is referring to. For instance, a sign by the beach showing a shark indicates that the water is populated by sharks. That image of the shark is an icon for bringing the concept of "shark" to the mind of the visitor by using an

<sup>75</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, Perry Meisel, and Haun Saussy, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 67.

<sup>76</sup> Anne D'Alleva, *Methods and Theories of Art History* (second edition, London: Laurence King Publishing, 2012), 28.

<sup>77</sup> D'Alleva, *Methods and Theories*, 26.

<sup>78</sup> Charles S. Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs." *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology* (1985): 1-23, 10.

<sup>79</sup> D'Alleva, *Methods and Theories*, 28.

<sup>80</sup> D'Alleva, *Methods and Theories*, 29.

image that looks like the animal itself. Bringing Saussure's signified and signifier into this example, the signified (the thing that is being signified by the sign) is the shark, the concept of the animal. The signifier (the thing that is used to signify that concept) is the icon, or the image resembling the shark. In contrast, a symbol is an image that brings the thing referred to (the referent) to the mind of the viewer by having been conventionalized as meaning that referent. For instance, traffic lights do not each resemble what they mean; the colour red does not resemble "stop," nor does the colour green resemble "go." It has become conventional and arbitrarily known that these colours mean what they mean. The index, according to Peirce, is a signifier that carries with it physical traces of the object it signifies. Smoke, for example, is an indexical signifier of fire for being physically linked to and generated by the fire it signifies.

According to Roland Barthes, as proposed in the afterword of his work *Mythologies* (1957), denotation and connotation are "Two interrelated orders of meaning operating simultaneously in a single cultural object: the first order, denotation, functions to state 'what is'; the second order, connotation, functions conceptually and ideologically."<sup>81</sup> Denotation, thus, can be understood as a literal meaning of a word, such as the national flag of France, the example used by Barthes. When seen by an observer, the first and most basic and literal order of meaning of that object is denotative: it is the national flag of France. But when seen in dialogue with other objects and images juxtaposed with it – in other words, when it is contextualized – the flag may enter another order of meaning that Barthes calls connotation. A French flag on Tunisian soil has a colonial connotation, given the historical relationship between the two countries.

The album cover of *Nemesis Divina* is a good example of Peircean icons operating at multiple layers in their meaning-making process. The image on the cover is a photograph of an installation put together for the sole purpose of becoming this album cover. In the center of the photograph is a dead hawk with open wings crucified on an inverted cross against a wooden vertical surface. Although the cross is upside down, the bird is not. This composition and subject matter are reminiscent of still life paintings with dead game, very popular in Holland and Northern Europe in the seventeenth century.<sup>82</sup> It is also evocative of trompe l'oeil paintings of cabinet still life with small alcoves and compartments (figs. 16 and 17). To the

<sup>81</sup> "Denotation and Connotation," *Oxford Reference*, accessed 22 Mar 2022.  
<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095710580>

<sup>82</sup> Still life paintings depict fruits, flowers, and dead animals on a small surface such as a kitchen table or a window frame, often accompanied by household items such as knives, glasses and vases.

sides of the bird are vertically arranged alcoves, each holding an object, among them, from top to bottom left the eye of a pig, a bird's foot, a key, and the jaw of a pig. The space containing the bird is also an alcove itself, a bigger, central one. A metal wire zigzags from one side of the bird to the other, nailed to the wooden background, and through the bird's wings at times. Its feathers are striped in brown and white, and the bird looks down over its left wing. The key and other unidentifiable objects in the alcoves are on fire, and the relevance of fire in the image is highlighted and emphasized by the use of red, orange, and yellow in the band logo, making the logo appear to be made up of flames.<sup>83</sup> The wood surface on which everything is set is rustic and dark, seemingly illuminated only by the flames. The album's title references divinity, and the image seems religious, alluding to death, sacrifice, transformation, and ascension. The dead bird, with open wings, could ascend in resurrection like Christ himself. It is also reminiscent of another bird, the phoenix, associated with fire and resurrection.

Because the photograph was taken at a close distance from the objects, it feels real and tangible. Much like a still life, specifically a vanitas or Memento Mori, the finite and brief nature of fire reminds the viewer of the transitory nature of the scene. Meanwhile, the dead bird and pig parts allude to the mortality of living things. Fire, dead bird, and pig body parts are thus Peircean symbols working as signifiers of ephemerality and transience in the image.

The fact that the image is a photograph also supports the idea that the image is not a fantasy; it shows real objects that were damaged by fire for photographic documentation. The photographic materiality of the image is what Peirce called the index by virtue of having been generated by rays of light that touched the object and reflected onto the paper. The object depicted was not merely observed and reproduced through an artist's cognitive process; it was touched by the same rays of light that touched the paper and physically travelled from the object to the paper, creating a direct physical reproduction of that object. The image's photographic indexicality, and the depiction of a wooden structure on fire (connecting the mind of the viewer to the factuality of the real-world church burnings) work together to contribute to a sense of materiality in this image.

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<sup>83</sup> The stylized typeface band logo was designed by an unnamed friend of Satyr, then redrawn by Frost and improved by graphic designer Martin Kvamme. Ramon Oscuro Martos, ...*And Justice for Art*, 115.

The central figure on the cover is a bird surrounded by objects on fire. Moreover, the bird is a specific kind of bird—a hawk—and this choice relates to the connotative possibilities of birds. The band's vocalist and guitarist Satyr, in an interview from 2016 in Ramon Oscuro Martos' book *And Justice for Art*, explains his fascination with hawks in terms of the bird being “incredibly symbolic” and highlights the symbolic importance of the objects on the album cover: “Obviously, a key is very symbolic and so is fire. The eye is known to represent power, for instance. Some other elements are just decorative, but in no way random.” Satyr also elaborates on the significance of the bird:

“the crucified bird of prey—a hawk—on an upside-down cross with traditional ornaments from Norse mythology, to me speaks of the restraints Christianity put on our own culture. *Nemesis Divina* represents freedom and uproar towards that in many ways. At least that is what it meant to me. For those who can read Norwegian, the title track's lyrics put that point of view in context.”<sup>84</sup>

Satyr's reference to the “restraints put on our own culture” refers to discomfort with the historical fact that Christianity has taken the place of paganism as the predominant religion in Scandinavia. This discomfort comes from a purist perspective on Nordic culture which considers, for instance, the replacement of pagan temples with Christian churches not only blasphemy, but cultural imperialism, and an erasure of some perceived “true,” authentically Nordic culture. Such discomfort nonetheless was pervasive enough among Norwegian youth in the 1990s to be often mentioned by members of the Norwegian black metal scene as the main motivation for the arson attacks on Christian churches across the country. When mentioning the symbolism of the key, Satyr is most likely referring to the locking and unlocking of doors, representing oppression and liberation, respectively. When mentioning the symbolism of fire, he may be relating it to hell and suffering associated with the cultural suffocation of Christianity over Norwegian paganism, or perhaps the destructive nature of fire which supposedly plays a liberating role in the church arsons. In other words, Satyr may be suggesting that the key and fire displayed together in this photographed installation mean there is a key to liberation, and this key is the burning down of what oppresses him – Christianity. This makes sense when interpreted alongside the band's ideas of oppressive Christianity and a desired liberation from it through the rescuing of a pagan past.

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<sup>84</sup> Oscuro Martos, ...*And Justice for Art*, 113.

In Barthesian terms, there are a few denotative layers performed by the hawk in the image. The hawk can signify cultural practices associated with Northern society from the Viking era. The Sparrow Hawk and the Northern Goshawk, both of which have been found in Scandinavian burial sites and appear in Scandinavian falconry literature, share similar feather colour and patterns with the bird depicted in *Nemesis Divina*. Falconry was a prestigious activity among wealthy individuals in southern Scandinavian territories during the Viking era, and birds of prey were often buried with their deceased owners.<sup>85</sup> Images of hawks also appear on runes and metal plates from archeological sites in the region.<sup>86</sup> The Vikings, who followed a belief system now commonly referred to as “Norse mythology,” are the most recent representatives of a pre-Christian past to which critics of the Christianisation of Scandinavia cling. Importantly, the Vikings immediately preceded the Christianisation of the region, meaning they were the ones who were Christianized, thus playing the historical role of “oppressed northerners.” With this culturally specific understanding of Viking falconry as a nostalgic nod to pre-Christian Norway, the crucifixion of the bird acquires an important layer of meaning. The narrative told by the album cover changes entirely. Instead of depicting Christ as a crucified victim of the Romans, it tells the story of Norwegian cultural heritage being ritualistically destroyed by the imposition of Christianity.

Rather than interpreting the bird in the denotative context of Scandinavian falconry, it can also be understood in the context of Christianity. In Christianity, the three manifestations of God are the Holy Trinity: the father, son, and holy spirit, with the holy spirit represented by a dove. The dove, a bird of peace, is thus associated with Christ. This interpretation is supported by the juxtaposition of the bird with the cross (albeit an inverted one) and with the barbed wire, which can resemble a crown-of-thorns. One can easily create a crown-of-thorns by bundling barbed wire into a head-sized circle, and an online search of “barbed wired crown-of-thorns” shows a variety of such items for sale or as craft inspiration (fig. 18).

In Christian symbolism, a wild falcon represents evil thoughts or actions, an association derived from the predatory nature of the bird. The bird in the album cover is a hawk, not a falcon, however both are birds of prey with many characteristics in common. A domestic falcon in turn represents conversion to

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<sup>85</sup> Karyn Bellamy-Dagneau, “A Falconer’s Ritual: A Study of the Cognitive and Spiritual Dimensions of Pre-Christian Scandinavian Falconry” (PhD diss., Viking and Medieval Norse Studies, University of Iceland, 2015), 23.

<sup>86</sup> Bellamy-Dagneau, “A Falconer’s Ritual,” 24, 30.

Christianity.<sup>87</sup> This interpretation of the bird stands in opposition to the symbolic peace represented by the dove. The bird of prey – through its symbolic meaning both in Christianity and Norwegian history – represents Christian oppression of the Norwegian religious past. The narrative assigns victimhood to Norwegian pre-Christian religion instead of to Jesus, while suggesting opposition to such oppression through blasphemous appropriation and recontextualization of the Christian iconography used.

The image of the hawk on the cover of *Nemesis Divina* thus brings with it a cultural weight and significance in juxtaposition with a similar effect brought by the inverted cross. Taking the center of the image, the two icons battle for dominance, and the hawk pinned down over an inverted cross transforms the narrative surrounding the victimization of Christ into one that instead, according to denotations 2 and 3, points to the victimization of ancient Norwegian paganism. This narrative transformation villainizes Christianity, and the inverted cross gives visual representation to such villainization by virtue of using a symbol previously used to oppose Christianity.

Finally, the written elements of the cover of *Nemesis Divina* complement the semiotic roles performed by the signifiers of Nordic paganism and Satanism discussed thus far. The font used for the album title on the cover and the song lyrics inside the booklet is called Frisianus. This font was inspired by the work of Danish designer Gerhard Munthe, whose work in turn was based on Medieval Scandinavian typefaces – a nod to a period of Scandinavian history still associated with paganism or at least an early encounter of paganism with Christianity.<sup>88</sup> The letter “y” in the band logo alludes simultaneously to the Devil’s trident and horns.

The album cover for Satyricon’s *Nemesis Divina*, a name meaning “divine enemy,” transforms a loving creator for some into an enemy for others, turning the idea of a good, moral God upside down much like the inverted cross on the cover. It also presents a confrontational assertion of cultural identity that seeks to overthrow a perceived non-Norwegian, inauthentic, hegemonic culture and religion to rescue a perceived authentic Norwegian past. Although the abhorrent white-supremacist ideology of individuals like Varg Vikernes are echoed in the sentiment expressed through the album cover, the image

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<sup>87</sup> George Wells Ferguson, *Signs & Symbols in Christian Art*, Book Club Guild ed. (Oxford University Press, 1958), 18. Philip Kosloski, “5 birds and their symbolism in Christian art,” *Aleteia*, published on September 11, 2017, <https://aleteia.org/2017/09/11/5-birds-and-their-symbolism-in-christian-art/>. Marcus Tidmarsh, “Falcon Christian Symbol,” *Catholic Saints*, unknown publication date, <https://www.catholic-saints.info/catholic-symbols/falcon-christian-symbol.htm>

<sup>88</sup> The stylized typeface band logo was designed by an unnamed friend of Satyr, then redrawn by Frost and improved by graphic designer Martin Kvamme. Oscurio Martos, ...*And Justice for Art*, 115.

reveals a treatment of religious iconography that transcends the Satanism and shock-value that has dominated the scholarly literature on the metal-religion relationship, favouring instead a visual statement of cultural identity, albeit a confrontational one with violent undertones.

## CHAPTER 2: BRAZIL AND TEMPLE OF SHADOWS

In this chapter, I will turn to Brazil and Angra's *Temple of Shadows* album cover (2004), starting the chapter with an introduction to *Temple of Shadows*. The analysis will be followed by an overview of Brazilian history, highlighting the aspects of it that most contribute to a proper contextualization of the specific points being made in my analysis of the album cover. After proper contextualization, I will discuss various aspects of the cover of *Temple of Shadows*, including its physical and visual presentation and the themes present in the lyrics of the songs and visually on the cover and booklet. My analysis will demonstrate how the album cover of *Temple of Shadows* uses – like Satyricon's *Nemesis Divina* – religious imagery but draws from a very distinct relationship between cultural identity and religion. I will also discuss what this assertion of cultural identity means for a Brazilian heavy metal band in the context of the global metal scene.

### TEMPLE OF SHADOWS

The edition of *Temple of Shadows* I discuss here is German and was chosen based on availability; I own a physical copy of it. This edition of *Temple of Shadows* comes in a cardboard sleeve that features the same cover artwork as does the CD. A booklet includes the lyrics of the songs, each preceded by text that provides a narrative story spanning the album. The narrative is about a knight of the Catholic church that goes to Jerusalem during the Crusades, which took place from 1095 to 1571.<sup>89</sup> During his voyage, he marries a Muslim woman and has children, only to bury them after they are killed in the invasion of Jerusalem by the Romans. The man, known as the Shadow Hunter, is then led to question the atrocities committed on holy land in the name of God by his peers and himself, who persecuted and killed those who refused to convert to Christianity. He also seeks to find pure, non-dogmatic faith, detached from the institution he once fought for; a faith based on love, not hate and destruction. At the end of the story, he dies wounded in battle against the Crusaders. In the moment of his death, as he is being cared for by a Muslim family, he prays for redemption, although a late one as he is already dying.

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<sup>89</sup> Marshall W. Baldwin, Gary Dickson, Thomas F. Madden, "Crusades," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, last updated August 19, 2022., accessed October 9, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Crusades>.

The story was created by Rafael Bittencourt, founding member and guitarist of Angra, also responsible for the band's album concepts and owner of the Angra brand. Bittencourt explains in an interview for the YouTube channel *Heavy Talk* on October 23, 2020, that “the maxim of *Temple of Shadows* is the following: contesting dogma without losing faith, contesting the truth as it is told but without losing the spiritual channel. This is the great reflection.”<sup>90</sup> He also elaborates on the inspiration for such a maxim by saying that the story is “a Luciferian celebration, thinking about Lucifer the way I always have written about him, since writing Lullaby for Lucifer, deconstructing Lucifer, to engender a reflection on Lucifer as lucidity and knowledge, to bring down the paradigms that impede us from amplifying our theological perspectives. This has always been my jam.”<sup>91</sup> Bittencourt shares some ideas of Lucifer with the Church of Satan. For example, in “Spread Your Fire,” the opening track of *Temple of Shadows*, a verse reads “Lucifer is just a name,” while Anton LaVey claims in a 1986 interview to the *Washington Post* that “Lucifer is a symbol, nothing more.”<sup>92</sup>

The story in *Temple of Shadows* became a comic book in January 2022, produced in partnership with the Brazilian publishing company Estética Torta, with concept by Bittencourt, script by Felipe Castilho and Bittencourt, and art by Ale Santos. The comic book is titled *Templo das Sombras*, a Portuguese translation of the English title of the album. The work was released in the United States in a hard cover format (17 x 26 cm) with localized varnish finish, coloured pages, and heavyweight coated paper. The comic book alone is priced at R\$119.90 (Brazilian Reals, approximately CA\$30.44).<sup>93</sup> For the higher price of R\$349.90 (approximately CA\$88.85), fans could purchase a limited premium edition, consisting of a box containing the hard cover comic book, a typed message from the band, a t-shirt featuring art by Santos, a *Templo das Sombras* poster, prints of original artwork sketches (one of them autographed by Rafael Bittencourt), a booklet with the original script, a numbered certificate, and a secondary box cover to protect the items inside.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>90</sup> “Papo de Sexta com Rafael Bittencourt, “Heavy Talk Live #102, *Heavy Talk*, YouTube video, 1:12:20. Translated by me. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIXOL\\_4ctzw&t=3169s&ab\\_channel=HeavyTalk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIXOL_4ctzw&t=3169s&ab_channel=HeavyTalk)

<sup>91</sup> “Papo de Sexta,” 1:20:00.

<sup>92</sup> Peter H. Gilmore, “What, the Devil?” *Church of Satan*, <https://www.churchofsatan.com/what-the-devil/>. Originally published Peter H. Gilmore and Peggy Nadramia, *The Satanic Scriptures*, X edition (Baltimore, MD: Underworld Amusements, April 19, 2017).

<sup>93</sup> This and the following currency conversion as of Thursday, September 29, 2022, by Google Finance.

<sup>94</sup> “HQ – Angra: Templo das Sombras,” *Estética Torta*, <https://www.esteticatorta.com/produtos/hq-angra-templo-das-sombras/>

The cover artwork (fig. 1) was done by Isabel de Amorim, a Portuguese graphic and fashion designer residing in Grigny, France. The image is a digitally manipulated reworking of a late fifteenth-century Russian icon of Saint George and the dragon (fig. 19), currently held by The Russian State Museum. For the composition of the album cover, de Amorim rotated the dragon 90 degrees counter clockwise, whereas in the original painting it is horizontally positioned under the horse. Another major difference between the original artwork and the album cover version is the colour. The album cover has more yellow than the painting, especially in the horse's coat and Saint George's halo. The halo in the album also has curvilinear markings on it that are not visible in the digital reproduction of the original painting. The natural landscape on the background of the original painting is still partly visible, as are the red sky and the vertical crack that goes from top to bottom on the right side of the painting. The choice to keep the crack on the painting is an interesting one, and demonstrably a choice. The manipulation of the dragon's position would have been harder to achieve than the smoothing out of the crack on the surface of the painting, which suggests that the crack was maintained to achieve something. It provides the album with a sense of the painting's materiality and a sense of authenticity by keeping traces of the original object.

The sense of materiality that the preserved crack grants the painting is juxtaposed with the illusion of empty space created by the surrounding of the two main figures. The material borders of the painting are effaced on the album cover, and the strong red background of the painting fades into the blackness of empty space. This keeps the viewer focused on the image in the center, where the colours also are. Permeating both the image of Saint George in the center and the empty dark space around it are geometric shapes, grids, and astrological drawings.

## **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF BRAZIL**

To understand how the many elements in the cover of *Temple of Shadows* convey meaning (and which meanings they convey and why), I will provide a brief overview of Brazilian history. Brazilian samba singer Clara Nunes speaks of the racial makeup of Brazil and the social scarring of the context that created it in *O Canto das Três Raças (The Chant of the Three Races)* from 1976:

*No one heard  
 A sobbing of pain  
 Out of a corner of Brazil.  
 A sad lament has always echoed  
 Ever since the warrior Indian  
 Was taken into captivity  
 And, from there, sang.  
 Black man entuned  
 A chanting of revolt through the air  
 From Quilombo dos Palmares  
 Where he took refuge.  
 Not to mention the fight of the insurrectionists  
 For the breaking of the chains  
 In vain.  
 And, from war to peace,  
 from peace to war,  
 All the people from this land,  
 when they can sing,  
 They sing of pain.  
 And it echoes,  
 Night and day.  
 It is deafening.  
 Oh, how agonizing  
 Is the chanting of the working man.  
 This chanting,  
 which should be a happy chanting,  
 sounds like but a sobbing of pain.<sup>95</sup>*

The three races in this song include Indigenous Brazilians, enslaved African peoples, and white European immigrants. *The Chant of the Three Races* romanticizes and pays tribute to the Brazilian working class and its multiracial makeup. But while it lumps the “three races” together as exploited members of the Brazilian working class, it leaves out fundamental differences between the experiences of each of these three races throughout Brazilian history.

During the maritime expansion of European powerhouses in the sixteenth century, Portugal and Spain signed the Treaty of Tordesillas on June 7, 1494, which drew a vertical line through the Atlantic Ocean establishing which newfound lands would belong to which of the two powers (fig. 20). Anything found east of the line would belong to Portugal, and anything west of it would go to Spain. Unbeknownst to either, there was a portion of the South American continent that protruded east of the line, and that part is what accounts today for the Northeast and a small part of the Southeast of Brazil. The other three of the five regions of Brazil are North, Center-West, and South. Stumbled upon by Pedro Álvares Cabral and his crew in 1500, the northeastern coast of Brazil was east of the treaty line, hence claimed by Portugal.

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<sup>95</sup> Translation of *O Canto das Três Raças* by Clara Nunes by the author.

The history of captivity and enslavement in Brazil dates to the early years of the country's colonization when extractive economic activities began to take place. The colonial economy during the first half of the sixteenth century was mainly based on extraction of brazilwood (*Paubrasilia echinata*), known in Portuguese as *Pau-Brasil*.<sup>96</sup> Starting in the 1530s, sugar cane mills began to be prioritized over brazilwood extraction, followed by gold mining after the late discovery of the mineral in the state of Minas Gerais in 1695.<sup>97</sup> In the 1830s coffee became the main economic activity and led Brazil to being the world's leading exporter of coffee, a status it still holds in 2022.<sup>98</sup> Such extractive economies led the Portuguese to enslave and commit genocide against the Indigenous peoples of Brazil, despite Portuguese Jesuits advocating in the name of the Church for Indigenous-Brazilians to be converted and protected from slavery.

However, there were challenges to enslaving the Indigenous people of Brazil. The Indigenous tribes of Brazil encountered along the shore by the Portuguese belong to the *Tupi* linguistic group, and include, among dozens of others, the *Tamoio*, *Tupinambá*, and *Carijó*.<sup>99</sup> The challenges to their enslavement stemmed from their social structures and original modes of subsistence. They had defined gender-based roles in their societies and did not lend themselves well to working more than what was needed for their basic subsistence.<sup>100</sup> Having a superior understanding of their native surroundings than the newly arrived Portuguese, the Indigenous-Brazilians also knew how to hide and isolate themselves within the territory, which helped them resist captivity and forced labour.<sup>101</sup> In addition, the Indigenous peoples were decimated by diseases, smallpox in particular, brought from Europe.<sup>102</sup>

The Portuguese, finding substantial challenges in enslaving Indigenous Brazilians, found in Africa an alternative. The enslavement of Black Africans made logistical sense to the Portuguese enslavers because the extractive activities that the Portuguese wanted to implement in Brazil were already familiar to many of the African societies found by the Portuguese in Africa. Black Africans had more experience than Indigenous people with the kind of large-scale agricultural labour and, importantly, specialized labour

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<sup>96</sup> Joseph Smith, *A History of Brazil* (London: Routledge, 2002), 21.

<sup>97</sup> Smith, *A History of Brazil*, 21, 25.

<sup>98</sup> Smith, *A History of Brazil*, 67. Adrianna Szenthe, "Top Coffee Producing Countries," *World Atlas*, September 14, 2020, accessed October 9, 2022, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/top-coffee-producing-countries.html>

<sup>99</sup> Darcy Ribeiro, *O Povo Brasileiro: a Formação e o Sentido do Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995), 10-12.

<sup>100</sup> Stuart B. Schwartz, "Escravidão Indígena e o Início da Escravidão Africana," in *Dicionário da Escravidão e Liberdade*, Lília Moritz Schwarcz and Flávio Gomes, 216-223 (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2018), 216-218.

<sup>101</sup> Ribeiro, *O Povo Brasileiro*, 12-13, 63.

<sup>102</sup> Ribeiro, *O Povo Brasileiro*, 22-23.

and knowledge of techniques and technology used in such practices.<sup>103</sup> Joining the economically and logistically beneficial Atlantic Slave trade, the Portuguese imported slaves to Brazil until 1850; for every ten slaves taken from Africa, nine went either to Brazil, the Caribbean, or the northern part of the South American coast.<sup>104</sup> By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when the British African slave trade was already in decline, approximately 40% of Brazil's population were African slaves.<sup>105</sup>

The main ports of entry for the slave ships were the cities of Salvador in the northeast, and Rio de Janeiro in the southeast.<sup>106</sup> The slaves arriving on Brazilian shore came in three major waves. The first were mainly Yoruba from territories that are now in Sudan, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. In the second wave were Muslim Africans, from what is now northern Nigeria. With the third wave came the Bantu tribes of territories that are now Congo, Angola, and Mozambique.<sup>107</sup> The first capital of Brazil, Salvador, is the capital of the state of Bahia, where to this day most of the population is black Brazilians, and the inherited black culture remains visibly more present than in other regions of Brazil.

As a result of this black presence, many examples of the intense cultural and religious syncretism that arose as a result of slavery are found in Bahia.<sup>108</sup> For example, the ceremony of the washing of the Bonfim is a syncretic practice that is a collaboration between the Catholic Church and the *baianas*, which were *malês*, or Muslim slaves from Nigeria.<sup>109</sup> This practice, which takes place in Bahia, is a good representation of the kind of syncretism that took place in the early stages of Brazilian colonization and that persists to this day.

As mentioned before, there was resistance to captivity and forced labour from the Indigenous-Brazilians during the early years of Portuguese colonization. This was also the case for the African slaves. Over the course of the almost 400 years of slavery in Brazil, there were organized revolts, assassinations of slave masters, the formation of remote black settlements comprised of escaped slave known as *quilombos*, and institutional and legal changes to the terms of enslavement, some resulting

<sup>103</sup> Schwartz, "Escravidão indígena," 218-219.

<sup>104</sup> Levack, *The West: Encounters and Transformations*, 572.

<sup>105</sup> Levack, *The West: Encounters and Transformations*, 561.

<sup>106</sup> Boris Fausto, *História do Brasil* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2013), p. 51.

<sup>107</sup> Ribeiro, *O Povo Brasileiro*, 73-74.

<sup>108</sup> I use the term "religious syncretism" as "the fusion of diverse religious beliefs and practices," as defined by Britannica. "Religious Syncretism," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, August 30, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/religious-syncretism>.

<sup>109</sup> Bonfim, Luís Américo. "Lavagem do Bonfim: Tradições e Representações da Fé na Bahia." In *II Congresso Virtual de Antropologia*, pp. 1-11 (2000), 2

from international pressures during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>110</sup> Many practices of resistance have over time become main markers of African heritage in Brazilian culture. Capoeira, a martial art disguised as a dance practice and developed by slaves on Brazilian soil, likely in the seventeenth century, was a form of physical resistance to slave masters.<sup>111</sup> This martial art was practiced with accompanying music and singing, with drumming and berimbau playing. The movements can alternate from the dance-like “ginga” to dangerous and fast sweep kicks and flying kicks.<sup>112</sup>

## RELIGION AS A MARKER OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

The African religions of the diverse cultures brought by the enslaved to Brazil were also suppressed, and disguised, as the official religion in Brazil was Catholicism. This resulted in syncretic religious practices among the slaves which used Catholic iconography and language to cloak their Yoruba deities as Iberian Catholic saints. Two examples are the religions called Candomblé and Umbanda. Both inherited much from their Yorubá origins. Candomblé remains mainly a mix of Catholic and Yorubá belief created specifically to preserve African tradition as it had been practiced in Africa, while Umbanda is understood by many scholars and practitioners as a syncretic African-Brazilian religion that also includes Indigenous Brazilian religious practice and Kardecist spiritism.<sup>113</sup> There is some disagreement regarding the moment and place of origin of Umbanda. Some scholars argue that the highly syncretic and “Brazilian” version of Umbanda commonly used to refer to the religion as a whole is but a strain within an older, more diverse religion that developed over the centuries on Brazilian soil.<sup>114</sup> Scholars also argue

<sup>110</sup> Quilombos were slave communities created by slaves that fled from their masters' lands. The most famous quilombo was Palmares, which attracted thousands of slaves in the northeastern State of Alagoas. Robert Nelson Anderson, “The Quilombo of Palmares: A New Overview of a Maroon State in Seventeenth-Century Brazil,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 3 (1996): 545–66. doi:10.1017/S0022216X00023889. Brian P. Levack, Edward Muir, and Meredith Veldman, *The West: Encounters & Transformations*. 3rd ed. (Longman/Pearson, 2011), 572.

<sup>111</sup> André da Silva Melo explains that it is difficult to identify with precision the moment capoeira took shape due to Minister of Finance Ruy Barbosa ordering the burning of documentation on the history of capoeira to erase Brazilian black history. André da Silva Mello, “A História da Capoeira: Pressuposto Para Uma Abordagem na Perspectiva da Cultura Corporal,” *Congresso Brasileiro de História da Educação Física, Esporte, Lazer e Dança*, vol. 8. (2002), 3.

<sup>112</sup> *Ginga* is “the languid and offbeat way of swaying the body that makes capoeira so fascinating to look at,” as explained by Cristina Rosa. For a more detailed explanation of *ginga*, see page 147 Cristina Rosa, “Playing, Fighting, and Dancing: Unpacking the Significance of Ginga within the Practice of Capoeira Angola,” *TDR (1988-)* 56, no. 3 (October 1, 2012): 142, doi:10.1162/DRAM\_a\_00193. For a more detailed explanation of *ginga*, see page 147 in the same source.

<sup>113</sup> Graham M. S. Dann, Religion and Cultural Identity: The Case of Umbanda, *Sociology of Religion* 40, 3 (Fall 1979), 208–225. Spiritism is a religion that emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in France with the writings of the French educator Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, pen name Allan Kardec. Kardec is credited with having codified communication about the spiritual plane from spirits through the movements of a table. “Allan Kardec,” *United States Spiritist Federation*, <https://spiritist.us/allan-kardec/>

<sup>114</sup> Bruno Faria Rohde, “Umbanda, uma Religião Que Não Nasceu: Breves Considerações sobre uma Tendência Dominante na Interpretação do Universo Umbandista,” *REVER: Revista de Estudos da Religião* 9 (2009).

that the portrayal of Umbanda as a perfect blend of African, Indigenous, and white culture and religion – and thus a genuine representation of *Brazilianness* - is a constructed narrative used to legitimize the religion during the Vargas era in the beginning of the twentieth century, characterized by a nationalist agenda.

Part of the syncretism observed in Candomblé and Umbanda is the association of the Yorubá deities, called orishas, with Catholic saints.<sup>115</sup> The orishas were given their Catholic correspondents, or avatars, by the slaves. Each orisha was assigned one or more Catholic saint, so that they could be disguised as Christian icons during the Candomblé rituals performed by the slaves. Dann explains that “When combined, these components blend to give Umbanda a unique Indigenous [autochthonous] flavor,” and that for this reason Umbanda “appeals to its adherents in terms of national identity.”<sup>116</sup> Ogum, the orisha of war, son of Queen of the Sea Iemanjá, is associated with metal, especially iron, and is thus also associated with man-made instruments used for agriculture and hunting. He also represents the human capacity to harness nature to human benefit and overcome adversity and oppression. For these reasons, he is often described as the “winner of demands.”<sup>117</sup> The link between metal and tools also ties the saint to swords and to war, along with human characteristics related to war such as bravery, frankness, and impulsivity. Ogum was assigned to (or disguised as) the Catholic saint, Saint George.<sup>118</sup>

The historical figure of Saint George was born in Cappadocia (modern day Turkey), to a Palestinian mother in a Christian family, most likely in the second half of the third century. When his father passed away, he moved with his mother to Palestine, where he became a soldier. Emperor Diocletian promoted him to high rank, but eventually began prosecuting Christians. When George protested, Diocletian tried to convince his soldier to renounce his Christian faith, which George firmly and repeatedly refused to do. His opposition to the empire’s policy and his insistence on keeping his Christianity led him to being jailed,

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<sup>115</sup> Dann, *Religion and Cultural Identity*, 213.

<sup>116</sup> Dann, *Religion and Cultural Identity*, 208. Word “autochthonous” added by me. Dann does also address the blending of Indigenous Brazilian religions into Umbanda, which, according to him, contributes to the autochthonous “flavour” of Umbanda.

<sup>117</sup> Adilio Jorge Marques and Marcelo Afonso Morais, “O Sincretismo Entre São Jorge e Ogum na Umbanda: Ressignificações de Tradições Europeias e Africanas,” *Anais do III Encontro Nacional do GT História das Religiões e das Religiosidades–ANPUH-Questões teórico-metodológicas no estudo das religiões e religiosidades*. IN: *Revista Brasileira de História das Religiões*. Maringá (PR) v. III 9 (2011): 6.

<sup>118</sup> Dann, *Religion and Cultural Identity*, 210. In the State of Rio de Janeiro, Ogum is associated with St George, while in the state of Bahia he is associated with St Anthony.

tortured, and eventually beheaded in the first years of the fourth century. His body was buried in Lydda (also known as Lod, in the outskirts of present-day Tel Aviv in Israel).<sup>119</sup>

Saint George is most often depicted wearing armor, riding a horse, and slaying a dragon. According to legend, there was a dragon in a city of unclear location poisoning its inhabitants. To please the beast and prevent further poisoning, the residents began to feed it sheep. When sheep no longer satisfied the dragon, they began feeding it children. The children were selected to be fed to the dragon through a draw, and one day the King's daughter was selected. Saint George encountered the girl, found out about her fate, and promised her that he would free her and her city in the name of Jesus Christ. He then slayed the dragon, decapitating it. His deed granted him favours from the King, who offered him money. But Saint George refused the money and asked the king to give to the poor instead.<sup>120</sup>

## TEMPLE OF SHADOWS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Having Saint George as the central figure in the composition of the cover of *Temple of Shadows* is compelling evidence for the argument that the connotative meaning of the album cover is that of Brazilian cultural identity. As a warrior saint, Saint George is often used as an analogy for the nature of the Brazilian spirit, hence the Brazilian people. It is a common saying in Brazil that "I am Brazilian and I never give up," illustrating the sense of perseverance and strength associated with a warrior.<sup>121</sup> For this reason, Saint George has come over the decades to be seen as a representative of the Brazilian people who, in the context of the developing world and assailed by crime, corruption, and material adversities of many kinds, must be warriors to endure and overcome. In Brazil, as children growing up in the final decade of the twentieth century, we were told that if we look carefully at the full moon, we can see Saint George killing the dragon in the shadows of the craters. The shadows of the craters form the shape of Saint George mounted on his horse.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Rosemary Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Saints*, (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2001), 129.

<sup>120</sup> Gordon, E. O. *Saint George: Champion of Christendom and Patron Saint of England*. Swan, 1907, 16-18.

<sup>121</sup> This saying was a slogan for a political campaign by ex-president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva in 2005 when he was running for re-election. According to Danielle Andrade Souza, the success of the slogan was due to its exploitation of a general feeling of low self-esteem that has been historically present in Brazilian society. Currently (2022) Lula is running again for a third term quoting the same slogan. Danielle Andrade Souza, "Eu Sou Brasileiro e Não Desisto Nunca: Ethos e Política de Identidade no Discurso Publicitário" (Masters diss., Universidade Estadual da Paraíba, 2006), 10, Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações, <http://tede.bc.uepb.edu.br/tede/jspui/handle/tede/1907>

<sup>122</sup> A few popular sources indicate that the tie between Saint George and the moon may be a Brazilian thing, and it may be associated with the syncretism between Saint George and Ogum. Ogum has a masculine energy, which makes him seek the moon

All the aforementioned Brazilian historical specificities have contributed to Saint George becoming part of Brazilian folk culture and belief. The connection is strong enough to have been the inspiration for one of Brazil's prime time TV shows: *Salve Jorge* (*Great George*, 2012; distributed internationally as *Brave Woman*). Much of the action in this soap opera takes place in Cappadocia, Turkey, where the saint is adored. The opening song is a Brazilian *pagode* titled *Alma de Guerreiro*, or Warrior Soul, by Brazilian singer Seu Jorge (Mr. George).<sup>123</sup> The lyrics illustrate the connection between Brazilians and the saint:

George comes from Cappadocia, mounted on his horse, spear in hand.  
 Defending the people from danger, from enemy's harm, he brings hope.  
 George, our Brazilian people has a warrior soul, it never tires from fighting.  
 Facing one dragon a day, in your company we'll get there.  
 Looking up to sky I can see, Great George on the moon.  
 Tripping and getting up, always with you, Great George on the moon.<sup>124</sup>

The opening of the show shows St George riding his horse through Cappadocia and Rio, creating a direct link between the geographical origins of the saint and Brazil.

The geometric shapes on the album cover do more than create a suspended ballet of abstraction and figuration. One main circle shares the center of the image with the saint and the horse. Two other circles intersect with the central one, one on each side, in a way that their outer edges exit the boundary of the cover, and their inner edges disappear as they enter the strong red background behind Saint George and the horse. The convergence of the three circles can be interpreted as the convergence of the three Abrahamic faiths, which is one of the themes present in the story presented in *Temple of Shadows*. But, like the geometric shapes, this convergence of faiths does more than represent the story told in the album. It also refers to Brazilian history itself—a history with Portuguese, African, and Indigenous contributions—and the religious syncretism that so marks the Brazilian religious makeup. By nodding to the syncretic character of the history of religions in Brazil, the representation of convergence of faiths works as a signifier of Brazilian cultural identity.

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and its feminine energy. "São Jorge o Santo Guerreiro - História e Lenda," *Perguntas Populares*, accessed October 9, 2022, <https://www.portaldasmissões.com.br/noticias/view/id/1994/sao-jorge-o-santo-guerreiro---historia-e-lenda.html>. "Porque na Lua tem a Imagem de São Jorge?" *Portal das Missões*, published April 23 2018, accessed October 9, 2022, <https://perguntaspopulares.com/library/artigo/read/577151-porque-na-lua-tem-a-imagem-de-sao-jorge>

<sup>123</sup> Pagode is a samba-hybrid music genre from Brazil.

<sup>124</sup> Portuguese lyrics: "Jorge vem de lá da Capadócia, montado em seu cavalo, na mão a sua lança. Defendendo o povo do perigo, das mazelas do inimigo, vem trazendo a esperança. Jorge, nosso povo brasileiro tem alma de guerreiro, não cansa de lutar. Enfrentando um dragão por dia, na sua companhia, a gente chega lá. Olhando para o céu eu sou capaz de ver, salve Jorge na lua. Tropeçando e se levantando sempre com você, salve Jorge na lua." Translated by the author.

The presence of red could be understood as a reference to the red dye produced by the aforementioned native tree pau-brasil. The wood of pau-brasil releases a pigment called Brazilin, used to produce a red dye for several uses. Europeans began to use it around the twelfth century, sourcing it from Asian botanical species. In the sixteenth century the Portuguese found the substance in pau-Brazil where Brazil is today. Pau-Brazil was much more abundant than the Asian tree species from which brazilin was previously sourced, which led to extraction becoming the first main economic activity in Brazil after the arrival of the Portuguese.<sup>125</sup> One theory on the etymology of the name Brazil attributes it to pau-brasil, although there is no consensus to whether this is the name's origin, and some argue for other possible etymologies.<sup>126</sup>

Building on this signification is the visual intertextuality that links the album cover to the Brazilian national flag. The interspersing of lozenges with circles, all framed by a quadrilateral (in the case of this and other album covers, a square) alludes to the Brazilian flag, which is also formed of these shapes (fig. 21). There is a faint white banner spreading across the inner circle following the upper contour of the horse's torso that brings the two compositions yet closer together by alluding to the white banner present in the circle of the Brazilian flag. Additionally, the predominant colours on the cover of *Temple of Shadows* are green, yellow, and red. Green and yellow are the colours used by the Brazilian national soccer team for its uniforms and souvenirs; they are understood by Brazilians to be the colours of Brazil.

The visual intertextuality between the cover of *Temple of Shadows* and the Brazilian flag is furthered by references to the Brazilian sky, which is readily visible on the album cover. Traced on the torso of Saint George is the Southern Cross (fig. 22), a constellation which can be seen year-round from the southern hemisphere.<sup>127</sup> The Southern Cross is also strongly associated by Brazilians with Brazilian identity; on the Brazilian flag, for example, it can be seen on the left side of the blue circle that represents the Brazilian sky.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Rw Dapson & Cl Bain, "Brazilwood, Sappanwood, Brazilin and the Red Dye Brazilin: From Textile Dyeing and Folk Medicine to Biological Staining and Musical Instruments," *Biotechnic & Histochemistry*, 90:6 (2015): 401-423, 401. DOI: 10.3109/10520295.2015.1021381

<sup>126</sup> Fabrício Barroso dos Santos, "Origem do nome Brasil," *Brasil Escola*, accessed October 9, 2022, <https://brasilecola.uol.com.br/historiab/origem-nome-brasil.htm>.

<sup>127</sup> Dr Fred Watson (interviewed by Stuart Gary, astronomer), in "Can you see the Southern Cross in the Northern Hemisphere?" *ABC Science*, published June 17, 2010, accessed October 9, 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2010/06/17/2929420.htm>

<sup>128</sup> Four other nations in the southern hemisphere—Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, and Papua New Guinea—also depict the constellation in their national flags. Maggy Wassilieff, "Southern Cross - A National Icon," *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, accessed April 18, 2022, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/diagram/7477/national-flags-featuring-the-southern-cross>

At the core of my argument about the cover of *Temple of Shadows* is my understanding of Saint George as a figure manifesting multiple levels of syncretism. Saint George not only signifies a religious figure of Western, Judeo-Christian iconography—in this case in Byzantine form—adopted by a Brazilian band in a country colonized by Europe, but Saint George as Ogum also signifies the syncretism of Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé and Umbanda. In reference to Barthes, the figure of Saint George is unstable in its meaning and communicability. It illustrates “the myth of the stable sign.”<sup>129</sup> The multiplicity of possibilities of the sign included in Barthes’ method is effective in addressing the tension between local and global circumstances that the cover of *Temple of Shadows* demonstrates. It is through the multiple possibilities of meaning and communicability of Saint George as a sign that the album cover can situate itself between the demands of heavy metal aesthetics (which include religious themes) and a local identity that, in itself, is diverse and syncretic as a result of the process of colonization in Brazil.

The cover of *Temple of Shadows* thus deploys visual devices to create the following layers of meanings, each with their respective target audiences:

- Angra’s membership in the international metal community,
- Angra’s appeal to a Western audience through conscious self-exoticization,
- Angra’s cultural self-identification in their place and culture of origin

Each of those layers of meanings—in accordance with Barthes’ characterization of connotation—will only make sense or be effective depending on the specific audiences within which they are meant to operate. Signifiers of otherness are self-consciously employed by Angra in a global market where each country’s tradition in metal was not equally developed.

The layers of meaning associated with *Temple of Shadows* described above are different from the ones at work in *Nemesis Divina*, but the Scandinavian album cover does offer multiple layers of meaning that, as in the Brazilian cover, depend on specific contexts to become activated. In the cover of *Nemesis Divina*, it is possible to identify in Barthesian terms two layers of context-dependent connotation beyond the denotative level. The first is a connotation of anti-Christianity sentiment contributing to the meaning-making of this layer, and the second is a connotation of local cultural identification, the latter

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<sup>129</sup> Ed White, *How to Read Barthes’ Image-Music-Text* (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 143.

built upon the former, and both being dependent on the specific context of the Norwegian metal scene. In the cover of *Temple of Shadows*, in turn, the first connotative layer is that of Christianity, through the figure of a Catholic saint. The second layer is that of Brazilianness through the same Catholic saint which, when viewed in a Brazilian context, carries the added meaning of Brazilian syncretic religions and their role in the construction of a shared perception of what it means to be Brazilian: to be a warrior like Saint George and “to never give up.”

Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of *contact zones* is also a useful tool with which to analyze the Brazilian metal scene and its relationship to the global. Pratt defines contact zones as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power...”<sup>130</sup> The process of globalization that allowed heavy metal to become a global music genre has not spread the genre evenly across the world. Specifically, the earliest heavy metal scenes have retained cultural capital within the broader scene, and they still retain the power of being the carriers of heavy metal tradition and of associating themselves with the ground-breaking, established work of the bands that preceded them. Pratt’s “asymmetrical relations of power” can be detected in the global metal scene through the uneven playing field on which local bands in pursuit of recognition globally and locally find themselves.

The circumstances that have contributed to the inequality of participation and production between core and peripheral members in the global metal scene were such that, in the words of Keith Kahn-Harris, “if they wished to participate within the scene, they had to work harder than scene members in other countries.”<sup>131</sup> Comparing the experience of metal musicians from Israel to those from other countries in the metal scene, Kahn-Harris notes that “in Scandinavian countries, for example, the Social Security System allows some scene members to support themselves with state benefits while pursuing their musical activities,” while other countries with high import taxes, such as Brazil or Tunisia, can make foreign CDs prohibitively expensive.<sup>132</sup> This inequality of economic capital means that bands from developing countries end up with less recorded material with which to contribute to and influence the scene. This leads to an uneven accumulation of cultural capital, as conceptualized by Pierre Bourdieu,

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<sup>130</sup> Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” 34.

<sup>131</sup> Kahn-Harris, “You Are from Israel,” 209

<sup>132</sup> Kahn-Harris, “You Are from Israel,” 208, 209.

here derived from an inequality of economic capital. As a result, core metal scenes have the advantage of establishing themselves as trend-setters and gatekeepers of the genre.

In the context of production of a Brazilian heavy metal album, there are different parties and interests at play. First, there is the Brazilian metal band, such as Angra, whose members play a music genre originating in developed countries that have different histories of visual culture, music, and languages from their own. Then, there is a Brazilian audience of metal fans that is well versed in such foreign aesthetics, sounds, and language (primarily English), and who expect a consistent experience with what they have come to understand and enjoy as heavy metal. And finally, there is the international audience of metal fans, who would ideally recognize in Angra's work the established elements of heavy metal, as seen in bands from more established scenes, in addition to Brazilian musical elements. Such Brazilian elements, despite not usually being present in the aesthetics and sounds of metal, afford the band a certain aura of novelty, exoticism, originality, and authenticity. In an optimal scenario of exposure to the Brazilian band, the international audience would appreciate this balance of novelty and tradition.

The cover of *Temple of Shadows* offers a refreshing revision of the metal-religion relationship, one that does not rely on the preconceptions that still dominate, as pointed out by Marcus Moberg, the discourse about religion in heavy metal.<sup>133</sup> Informed by religious imagery and themes, and notions of national identity and otherness, the cover of *Temple of Shadows* negotiates the global/local dilemma by rising above peripheral status and claiming a space of respectability in and a diverse contribution to the global metal scene, asserting otherness for inclusionary goals as opposed to exclusionary ones that violently "other" outsiders. The use of religious imagery in the cover of *Temple of Shadows* is less concerned with religion itself and more concerned with the ways in which religious imagery communicates a local culture. As with *Satyricon*, Angra crafts a local identity in direct dialogue with hegemonic power. But in this case, the hegemonic power in question is not a religious one, but instead the Western stronghold on heavy metal. Instead of rejecting Western metal, Angra embraces it and transforms it to be recognized *within it*.

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<sup>133</sup> Marcus Moberg, "Religion in Popular Music," 128.

## DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

By way of conclusion, I would like to suggest 2 avenues for further consideration and research that could spring from my present analysis of religious imagery in heavy metal visual culture. The Tunisian metal band Myrath and the Israeli band Orphaned Land are peripheral metal scene bands that, like Angra, defy the stereotypical metal-religion relationship, and offer an example of how religious icons, interspersed with visual cultural signifiers of various kinds, operate together to communicate a given cultural identity and place of origin. Like Angra, Myrath and Orphaned Land exploit the western orientalist gaze for their own benefit, projecting themselves to such gaze as exotic, original, and yet worthy of membership in the international metal scene. Bands go to great lengths to include in their visual works as many visual signifiers of their cultural identity as they can, in very overt if not stereotypical ways.

### ISRAEL'S ORPHANED LAND

Orphaned Land, from Israel, released in 2013 the album *All is One*. The band was founded in 1991 under the name Resurrection and changed its name to Orphaned Land in 1992. The band self-identifies and is regarded as a founding father of "oriental metal" for spearheading the blending of progressive, doom, and death metal elements with Middle Eastern folk music. The band is known for promoting unity between metalheads from Muslim and Jewish backgrounds and is interested in paying tribute to the many different peoples who live in the Middle East and to the cultures and religions of the region.<sup>134</sup>

The cover of *All is One* (fig. 23) features three religious icons intertwined with one another: the Christian cross, the Islamic crescent, and the Jewish star of David. The icons are beige that appears golden against a black background. The linework is blunt, thick, strongly geometric and rectilinear.

The three Abrahamic symbols mingled together in the cover of *All is One* point to the geographical origins of the three religions themselves, which is the same place of origin of the band. Importantly, I do not think that Orphaned Land attempts to show pride in being a specifically Israeli band. I

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<sup>134</sup> "ORPHANED LAND - All Is One (Track by Track)," produced by Century Media Records, YouTube video, June 25, 2013, 21:21, 1:20 to 2:45.

would argue instead that Orphaned Land is communicating a sense of belonging to the Middle-Eastern region from whence the three religions come. The message of coexistence and concord in the cover of *All Is One* contrasts with *Nemesis Divina's* nationalistic, exclusionist message. The general message propagated by Orphaned Land is one of unity, as echoed by the title of the album itself.

## TUNISIA'S MYRATH

Tunisia has seen the rise and fall of many local bands over the decades. However, none of these bands achieved canonical status in the larger international metal scene. In 2001, Myrath formed in Tunisia, identifying itself as “blazing desert metal,” a subgenre of metal that, following on the footsteps of Orphaned Land, blends metal with local sounds. In this case, Myrath combines power, symphonic, and progressive metal with Tunisian and North African folk music. Myrath asserts its membership in the global metal arena not only by referencing the Berber culture of North Africa, but also by producing music and visuals based on local geography and a sense of authenticity licensed by non-Western musical and visual signifiers.

The most relevant work to my inquiry into religious imagery as a marker of cultural identity is the album cover of Myrath's heavy metal album *Legacy* (fig. 24), released in 2016. This album cover has a white background with a large Hamsa, or hand of Fatima, rendered in delicate golden beige linework in the center. Right below the arching top of the Hamsa is the band logo, a circle with a white crescent moon and three white stakes. At the top of the album cover is the band name in a serif type adorned with arabesques, and at the bottom of the album cover is the name of the album in English, *Legacy*, written also in Arabic below it – a mix that fulfills a western demand for simultaneous legibility and exotic appeal. The name of the album, *Legacy*, is in fact a translation of the name of the band itself, which means “legacy” in Arabic. In interviews, the band members often highlight their role as stewards of Tunisian and North African culture within the realms of heavy metal.

The legacy alluded to by the album name is reinforced by the use of the Hamsa on the album cover. Although the Hamsa is not a motif exclusive to Tunisian heritage, the origin of the Hamsa can be

traced back to Tanit, the chief Goddess of Carthage in pre-Islamic Tunisia.<sup>135</sup> As such, it lends itself perfectly as a visual representation of legacy for an album of the same name. The incorporation of the band logo into the design of the Hamsa performs a visual merging of the identity of the band with an ancient religious motif deeply tied to the band's *cultural* origin. In this regard, the feelings of identification with a pre-colonization culture expressed by Myrath are like those expressed by Satyricon. Alternatively, because the Hamsa has also been adopted by Judaism and Islam, and it can be seen as a unifying symbol like the three Abrahamic symbols on the cover of *All is One*.

The analysis of the two album covers shows that may use religious motifs overtly, addressing religion specifically and directly while also communicating geographical origin, which in the case of *All is One* is also present in the lyrics of the music contained in the album. In other cases, such as with *Legacy*, the religious imagery may not foreground religion, but a geographical origin and cultural heritage instead. In the case of *Nemesis Divina*, the religious imagery is likewise combined with signifiers of geographic origin and cultural heritage, but also with affective visual devices meant to ignite feelings of aggression and opposition in the viewer. This is the most found example of the metal-religion relationship, and for that reason I started my discussion with it. However, the examples of Angra, Orphaned Land, and Myrath are meant to demonstrate that the metal-religion relationship transcends that commonly found example of blasphemous, confrontational relationship represented here by *Nemesis Divina*. Satyricon can be understood as a representative of metal canonicity both in regard to its cultural capital within the scene and in regard to its closeness to the most common avenue of exploration when it comes to the metal-religion relationship. Angra, Orphaned Land, and Myrath, on the other hand, offer regional and ideological alternatives to that canonicity in that they come from peripheral heavy metal scenes with less cultural capital, offering other avenues by which to explore the relationship between heavy metal and religion.

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<sup>135</sup> Although the Hamsa is commonly used in the three Abrahamic religions, it is not as commonly associated with Judaism or Christianity as the star of David and cross. Alan Silver, *Jews, Myth and History: A Critical Exploration of Contemporary Jewish Belief and its Origins* (Leicester, UK: Matador, 2008), 201.

## IMAGES



Figure 1: Cover of *Temple of Shadows*, album by the Brazilian heavy metal band Angra.

Isabel de Amorim and Rafael Bittencourt, 2004. Digital illustration.

Image source:

<https://www.last.fm/music/Angra/Temple+of+Shadows/+images/d300922698de3a262d06ab16a07cc670>





*Figure 3: Band logo of the Norwegian black metal band Mayhem.*

Steven Smegma, circa 1990. Digital illustration.  
Image source: <https://www.thetruemayhem.com/>



*Figure 4: Band logo of the Swedish black metal band Dark Funeral.*

Unknown artist/designer and date. Digital illustration.

Image source: <https://www.loudersound.com/features/an-illustrated-history-of-the-pentagram-in-heavy-metal>



*Figure 5: Band logo of the American death metal band Nunslaughter.*

Christophe Szpajdel 1993-94. Digital illustration.

Image source: <https://www.metal-archives.com/bands/Nunslaughter/592>



*Figure 6: Dutch symphonic black metal band Carach Angren, wearing corpse paint make up.*

Unknown artist and date. Photograph.

Image source:

[https://wall.alphacoders.com/by\\_sub\\_category.php?id=208676&name=Carach+Angren+Wallpapers](https://wall.alphacoders.com/by_sub_category.php?id=208676&name=Carach+Angren+Wallpapers)



*Figure 7: The hard rock band Kiss.*

Unknown photographer and date. Digital reproduction of photograph.  
Image source: <https://deadline.com/2021/04/kiss-ae-two-part-documentary-on-classic-rock-band-biography-strand-1234744427/>



*Figure 8: Photographs of Gene Simmons from Kiss and a Kabuki theater performer.*

Unknown photographers and dates.

Image source: <https://rockcelebrities.net/when-brad-whitford-revealed-the-gene-simmons-secret-about-kiss-outfits/>



Figure 9: Cover of the album *Symphony of Enchanted Lands II – The Dark Secret* by Italian symphonic power metal Rhapsody of Fire (formerly Rhapsody).

Marc Klinnert, 2004. Digital illustration.

Image source: <https://yourlastrites.com/2004/10/24/rhapsody-of-fire-symphony-of-enchanted-lands-ii-the-dark-secret-review/>





*Figure 11: Cover of the album *The Satanist*, by Polish black metal band Behemoth.*

Denis Forkas Kostromitin, 2014. Digital reproduction. The original image on this cover was painted on linen with acrylic paint and Nergal's blood, and gilded. The album booklet also includes designs by French artist Valnoir of design boutique Metastazis and Polish artist Zbyszek Bielak. Image source: <https://free4kwallpapers.com/fantasy/the-album-cover-for-behemoths-the-satanist-by-denis-forkas-wallpaper--02OG>



*Figure 12: Image from the music video of "All Shall Fall" by Norwegian black metal band Immortal.*

Video directed by Vardefilm, 2010.

Image source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOOebk\\_dKFo&ab\\_channel=Immortal](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOOebk_dKFo&ab_channel=Immortal)



*Figure 13: Promotional photo for Norwegian black metal band Mork.*

Unknown photographer and date, digital photograph.

Image source: <https://www.loudersound.com/features/the-10-best-true-norwegian-black-metal-bands-as-chosen-by-mork>



*Figure 14: Band logo of Norwegian black metal band Darkthrone.*

Tomas Lindberg, unknown date, digital reproduction of original on paper.  
Image source: <https://www.rgd.ca/2021/02/17/top-5-metal-band-logos.php>



Figure 15: Album cover of *Nemesis Divina*, by the Norwegian black metal band Satyricon.

Stein Løken, Halvor Bodin, Per Heimly and Satyr, 1996. Digital Reproduction of photograph.  
Image source: <https://www.decibelmagazine.com/2010/11/23/satyricon-nemesis-divina/>



*Figure 16: Dead Cockerel.*

Gabriël Metsu, 1659 - 1660. Oil on panel (57 × 40 cm), Netherlands. Museo del Prado.  
Image source: <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/dead-cockerel/b4e36be9-b838-4201-99ef-ae95ce88447a>



*Figure 17: Still Life with Game Birds.*

Herman van Vollenhoven, 1619. Oil on panel, 26 x 36 cm. Museo del Prado.

Image source: <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/still-life-with-game-birds/097cb239-ebee-43c3-b797-f674c0ede35a>

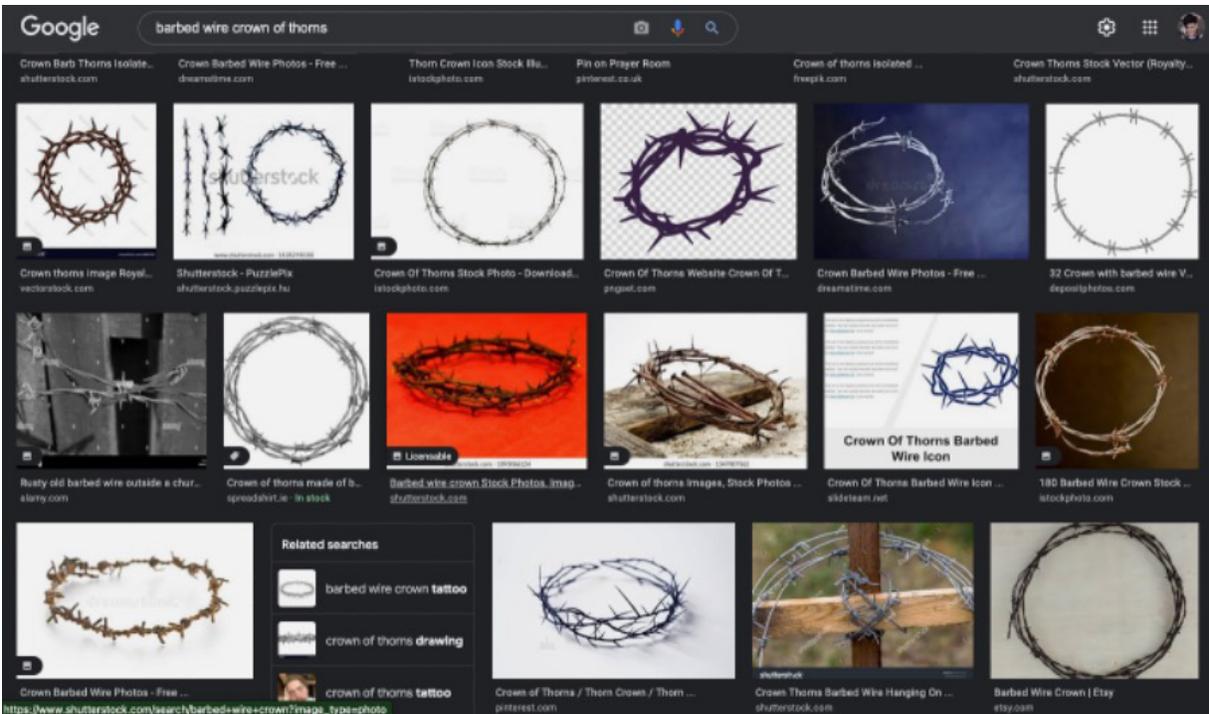


Figure 18: Crowns of thorns made of barbed wire as shown in a Google Images search.

Screen shot by me, 2022.



*Figure 19: Icon, St George and the Dragon.*

Second half of the 15th Century. Tempera on wood, dimensions unknown. Novgorod. The State Russian Museum "Art of Old Russia" collection.

Image source: <http://en.rusmuseum.ru/collections/ancient-art/artworks/ikona-chudo-georgiya-o-zmie/>

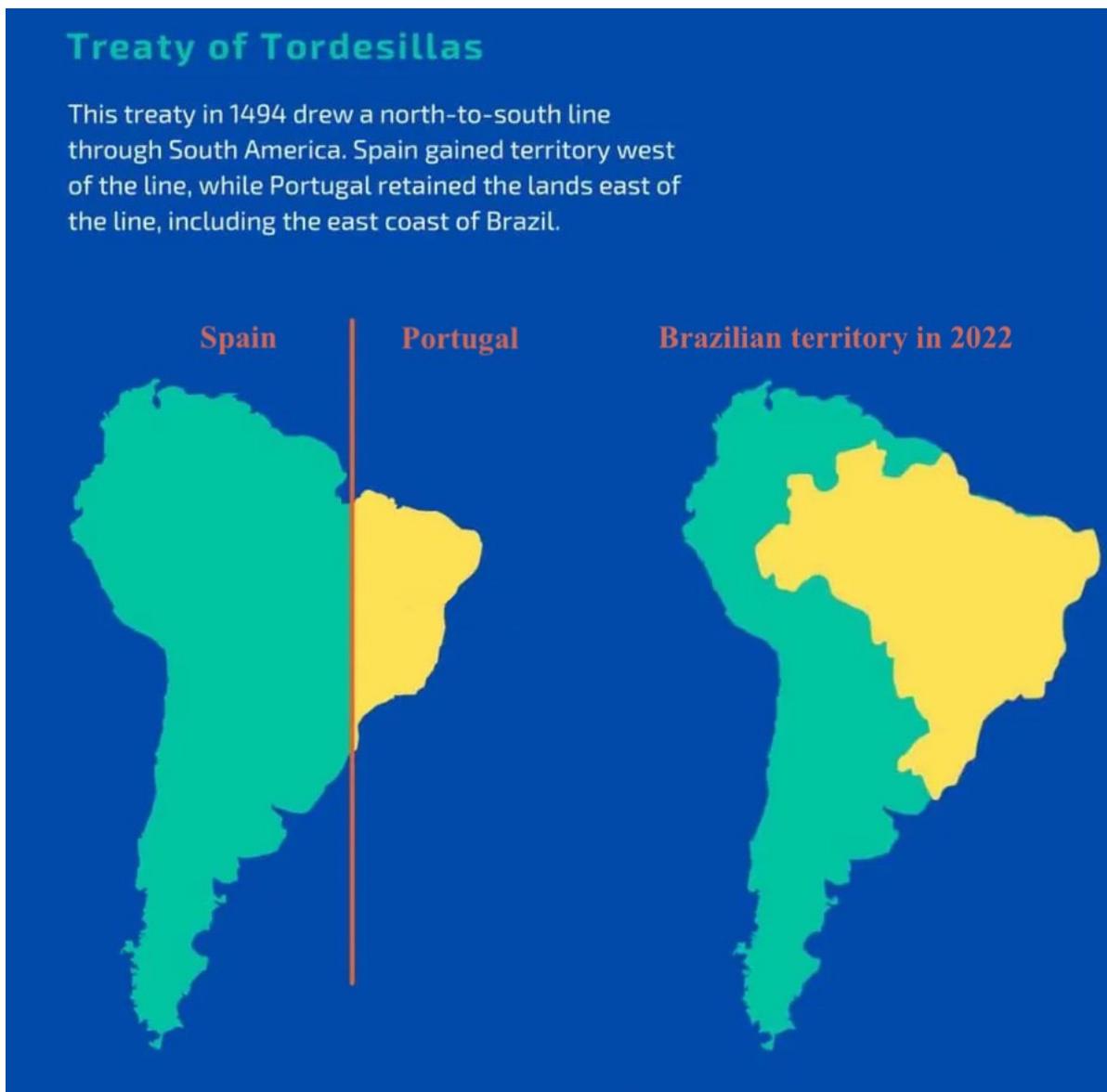


Figure 20: The Treaty of Tordesillas with explanation.

André, unknown date, edited by the author in 2022. Digital illustration.  
Image source: <https://whataboutbrazil.com/what-language-do-they-speak-in-brazil/>



*Figure 21: The Brazilian National flag.*

Raimundo Teixeira Mendes, Miguel Lemos, Manuel Pereira Reis, Décio Vilares, 19 de novembro de 1889 (primeira versão, com 21 estrelas), 11 de maio de 1992 (última versão, com 27 estrelas), digital illustration.

Image source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Flag\\_of\\_Brazil.svg#metadata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_Brazil.svg#metadata)



*Figure 22: The Southern Cross, circled in red by me. Figure 23*

Unknown artist and date, digital photograph.

Image source: <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-the-southern-cross.html>



*Figure 24: Album cover of All Is One, by Israeli band Orphaned Land.*

Metastasis, 2013, digital illustration.

Image source: <https://www.metalsucks.net/2013/04/23/i-wonder-what-it-is-orphaned-land-is-trying-to-say/>



Figure 25: Album cover of Legacy by Myrath featuring a Hamsa.

Perrine Perez Fuentes, 2016, digital illustration.

Image source: <https://www.myrath.com/shop/en/cd/41-legacy.html>

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: DIAGRAM OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOME SUBGENRES OF METAL.

Taken from Tsatsishvili, "Automatic Subgenre Classification," 17.

