

Wyoming Catholic College

Immersion through Metal

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Music 102

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“This is the most heavy-metal book of the Bible,”<sup>1</sup> argues the freshman rocker Blaise Galbraith about the book of Judges in his book, *Metalheads and the Greek Consciousness*. Here, he argues for a necessary unity of the book of Judges with his love for the particular genre of musical expression known as heavy metal. Now, heavy-metal being associated with the Bible may seem contradictory or wrong somehow to our modern sensibilities, just as metal as music may seem out of place or incorrect in a Catholic liberal arts, let alone liturgical setting. However, as I hope to prove, metal is crucial to the poetic experience of the real that characterizes this school’s intellectual endeavors and provides a pathway to seeing true being “that which is”. The “Sick and Savage” recognizes this in his Biblical comparison to elements of the metallic world. As such, rather than being ignored, or worse discouraged, metal, particularly in its “heavy” variant, should be embraced and celebrated as part of the intellectual and ultimately spiritual ascent to reaching the good itself.

Metal is said in many ways of course, and while I primarily intend to focus on the application of the term with reference to music, metal is unique among equivocal words in that while equivocal, there is still a thematic unity in its equivocation. I mean by this that metal in the sense of the substance shares something in its mental apprehension with the musical genre and the lifestyle associated with that branch of musical forms. Each shares something of the deepness of tone expressed materially in density and weight in the material. Conversely, one can consider metal in the musical sense as an expression of the density of the substance applied to tonal frequencies. In man, similarly, when he lives a metalhead life, he expresses both the depths of tone in the musical metal and the density, weight, and hardness of the physical metal. This is all self-evident from experience, showing metal to be a three-way triangle of being between its senses. And yet, the truth of metal is far deeper, requiring historical background and analogy to be fully explicated.

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<sup>1</sup> Galbraith, Blaise, *Metalheads and the Greek Consciousness*. (Santa Paula: Thomas Aquinas Press, 2009), pg 4.

Metal, as we consider here, will for all of its senses be considered in relationship with the Wyoming Catholic College curriculum and the Freshman Rocker Spirit. Historically, it is far wider in scope of course, from the escapades of the Terreri family in the iron age, However, because of WCC's unfortunate aversion from its founding to all of the metallic senses, metal has found prominence in its culture only recently. Anselm's ancestors, reports Blaise further, "were the first to discover metallic ores and refine them to usable metallic implements" (Galbraith, 35). This discovery was around the year 2800 BC, as we see from *Iron Woman to Iron Man* by Michel Rioux, and "although it began simply, with the making of metal doors, hexagons for wood-fired automobiles, as the wheel had not yet been invented, clips for binding notes made on leaves together, and coinage"<sup>2</sup>. Now with the discovery of this new substance of metal, the Terreri's became revered as godlike in their ability to create a substance that felt as hard as rock, but was not rock. Temples were dedicated to fingernail size fragments of metal as everyone revered not only its discoverers but the substance itself. One of the most famous of such sites, discovered on the top of Mount Infernal in Italy, shows in fact remnants of a trail leading from the temple of metal on its peak to a miles-long cave system within the mountain. And herein lies the first glory of metal as we see the real cave of which Plato spoke in the Republic. Etched in proto-Latin in the rocks around the cave is an account of how Socrates, the real Socrates "left the cave" (Rioux, 177) and made an "ascent to the temple of metal" where he realized the proportional relationship we have intellectually in ascending from the "caves of seeming" to knowledge of beauty and the good itself.

This may seem unrelated to the concept of metal at Wyoming Catholic College, but as this so recent archaeological discovery implicates, it was this encounter with metal that brought Socrates to his own realization of being itself. The piece of metal he worshipped was small, a leaf-clip that had

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<sup>2</sup> Rioux, Michel. *Iron Woman to Iron Man: Throughout the Metallic Ages*. (Lander: CES Press, 2018), pg 155.

lain for millennia from the time of the Terreri's and metal's discovery. But the truth in the ascent he made to metal led him to his wisdom, a type of such perfection and hints at Christianity that we can see only Divine Inspiration as a possible cause. Of course, worshipping the leaf-clip would be idolatrous, but the point remains that from the time of the first Terreris to Socrates, metal is associated philosophically with wisdom and holy places.

Metal's further semantic senses began with the 1355 A.D. invention by another Terreri. Sir Grafton Terreri of Ironshire working with Henry Carter of the same town, are widely revered in heavy-metal circles as the first to experiment with the power of the bass. They cannot precisely be said to have invented metal as a genre of music, but together they produced the first rough chords, the first musical partitions not to oversimplify the reality music images to an inaccurate, shapeless, sonal tone. Again, this was not metal, but a musical expression that laid the basis for a more true to life musical experience. For this Sir Grafton and Henry were all but ignored, and if noticed, were ridiculed, but they saw such disdain as they received as necessary for music to truly be connected to reality, to truly be better than the logic "which is not really about reality at all"<sup>3</sup>. But they had laid a foundation, and while those still metaphorically in the darkness could not see the truth they discovered, and in some sense neither did they, they knew there was something important with the "rough chords" they began to use. Perhaps it was divine inspiration working across time and space from the power of Spike, but however, they found it, Terreri and Carter worked tirelessly to promote the use of their "rough chords" and complex tonal variations to as they argued "reflect reality in more than an image of an image, but as at least the beginning of the ascent" (Rioux, 158).

It took centuries of development under the overpowering presence of Baroque and Classical music for any acceptance at all to be given to these new forms. For was not perfection to be found in

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<sup>3</sup> Olsson, Dr. Scott. *Logic is all a Big Fake*. (Lander: Wyoming Catholic Press, 2014), pg. 133.

simplicity, reflecting unity of beings and peace among men? Perhaps, there is a point to such an idea, but the Classical composers far overused this theme, ignoring the fact that reality as it is, is complicated, yine, yes, no, maybe, in relation to questions of being, or when these philosophical ideas are applied to music, more than a simple, regular, and slow beat but a more complex drama or concordant and opposing causes, natures and beings. It was the Floody's back in 1878 who finally brought this idea of bringing greater reality to musical expression by complexity to the forefront. Classically based as was their music, the development of the metallic substance over time offered the Floody brothers great opportunity for imitation of its weight in the heavy use of the base, the speed of a metallic bullet simulated by record-breaking tempo, and volume also serving to imitate metal's crushing power. These three ideas are best exemplified in their *Steam-Train Symphony* of 1878. In its first opening, the new techniques they used scandalized many in their audience, but "seeing the light" as in the ascent from Plato's cave, after three months the Floody's were world-famous. The experience of listening to their music, radically different from anything anyone had ever heard or before imagined, brought about what can only be termed a mental change in the listener, who begins to live out the reality he experiences in the music in his own lifestyle, the music acting thus as a focusing lens for reality onto the life of an individual.

This mental change has now become known as the transition to becoming a metalhead, a lover of the ultimate good, a philosopher, through the power of metal. This is the intellectual ascent of which Plato spoke in the *Republic*, and while it began through metal's physical manifestation, an even higher perfection of spirit can be found through metal as music, reflecting the cosmic "music of the spheres" (Olsson, 133). But here through the intellectual lived life of metal, the life of the metalhead, one instead reaches a perfection of virtue exceeding even that given by God through the physical blessing of the substance of metal as much as the Platonic forms exceed the physical

subjects of everyday existence. This metalhead lived life is a new thing precisely, but it is both prefigured on the Old Testament and prophesied there as the completion of man's ascent to full rationality and living his calling. As Ezekial says: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you" (Ezekial 36:26). This promise of a "new spirit" within is that bestowed by the metallic lifestyle, where, in full wonder and submission to the order and complexity of the cosmos that is God, one takes upon himself the "new spirit" of living in unity with His will, as much beyond our understanding as the complexity of a metallic beat is beyond the but imperfect image of reality found in Classical music.

Furthermore, in the Old Testament, we see a sort of sacredness both in metal's substance and in a few examples of people amazingly similar accidentally to today's heavy metal rockers. In Israel's conquest of Canaan in the Book of Joshua they "burned the city with fire, and all within it", except, however, for "the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord" (Joshua 6:24). Here the things made of metal are not only saved from destruction with the rest of the city but are consecrated to the use of God. In the Book of Judges, that which Blaise calls out as "the most heavy-metal book of the Bible" we see strength and force behind metal when "the people of Israel cried to the Lord for help; for he ( the king of Canaan) had nine hundred chariots of iron, and oppressed the people of Israel cruelly for twenty years" (Judges 4:3). Here it is "chariots of iron", that is of metal, which oppress the Israelites, and while this may seem to take away from the dignity of the substance and therefore of the related music and lifestyle, God redeems it just as He does for His people. He fights for Israel and aids them in defeating the threat, here purifying the substance of metal for Himself. In the battles and characters of the Book of Judges we also see a general "wild with the spirit" (Galbraith, 195) character, the redeemed metal present in a limited sense in the lifestyle of heroes, but perverted in the remnants of evil until the full

redemption of metal in Christ, who by his Sacrifice on the Cross and Institution of the Eucharist sanctified and purified it.

Even the terror and fear that metal sometimes brings about along with its philosophical effects is sanctified as we see a deep terror and mystery in the incomprehensibility of holy things, how terror preceded God in His appearance to Elijah, or how millions of Egyptians fell beneath the waves of the Red Sea as they flowed back to their place to the tune of “Back in Black”. The destruction of all life in the Flood, the plagues of Egypt, the earth-shaking, literally, terror at the death of Christ on the cross, all demonstrate in a physical image of reality, just how beyond comprehension is God, and how mysterious and powerful are his ways. Similarly metal continues this power of realization in us, where beyond its beneficial impacts upon our mind and soul, we also gain a humility before God, who can “out-rock even the most hard-core rocker in might.”

And now, with the invention of true metallic music, the trifecta of substance, music, and lifestyle is completed and unified in the present age. Not only does contemplation of metal, as we saw in the case of the Floody’s *Symphony* lead to intellectual, philosophical development, but that very ascent also leads ultimately to God, in contemplation of the source of all being, truth, and goodness, the Good Himself. As we see again from an ancient source that imagined how metal would someday be in music, even without the blessing of actually hearing or imagining it: “Only with the power of the base can you be blasted high into the space loftier than the heavens,”<sup>4</sup> says Socrates in the *Russell* dialogue. The “bass” here stands for the vibrating rhythm of metal and its conformity to reality, and Socrates here specifically calls out how “the bass” of metal as necessary to bring one “into the space loftier than the heavens”, the land of truth, goodness, and beauty, themselves, justice itself.

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<sup>4</sup> Plato, *The New Works of Plato*. “Russell”. Trans. Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos. (Louisville: Memoria Press, 2014), 456d.

But it is not just for this end of wisdom and virtue that we need metal, and specifically heavy metal here at Wyoming Catholic College and in our lives as students here. The isolation of Lander requires the use of “heavy metal” machines, cars, buses, or airplanes in reaching this place. Even when hiking we are dependent for utility upon the use of a lighter sort of metal in the form of knives. Also in the event that we go on a river trip, we use canoes made of metal, a very heavy metal, very conducive to vibration. While WCC may not realized it, we as students here have been dependent on the physical form of metal all along, making it but analogous to seeking a deeper more lasting virtue to pursue the metal-head lifestyle through the love of the metallic genre.

Metal offers a true immersion in the real away from the distractions of sense. Its volume drowning out every distraction, the metalhead cannot help but think about deeper realities. In banging his head to the beat, any resulting pain can be offered as a sacrifice of training on the way to purifying ourselves to receive the truth, as it is. The motions and lifestyles associated thus with metal lived out in life may of course be seen as questionable as some, but by their very nature only seem so to the unwise. True metal, conforms one to order oneself with the complexity of the world and a final end of God. This is an intellectual step, a spiritual step, beyond the comprehension of those unprepared to “see the proverbial light” exiting the cave, but is so necessary for survival in a culture filled with unedifying imitations of truth. And herein lies metal’s greatest strength, as substance, music, and lifestyle, it is not able to be subjectively ignored. The one who hears ought to hear, and when he does, it is impossible for him to ignore the fact that it is real, the gift of God to edify his entire being on the path to Himself. Seeing this true existence of metal, itself, one is forced into an ultimate encounter with reality.

Unfortunately, none here have realized that this jump to the truth was needed until this year, with the arrival of the Freshman Rocker Class of 2022 and its “Sick and Savage” and “The Terror”.

With their fearless commitment to bringing the benefits of metal, the music, and the lifestyle to everyone, "Rock on, my fellow freshman rockers" has become the most common greeting around campus. And the lifestyle is growing every day, as more and more students realize the truth, dignity, utility, and justice found in metal. As one of the newest metalheads on campus wrote:

So I feel as though I should share this little known fact about myself... As of last week, I became a death "metalhead". I know, this is must be difficult for some of you to see, but Gregorian Chants just could no longer express my internal anger that I have, especially after the 92 I got on Dr. Schubert's essay(I've never gotten such a low grade on an assignment in my life--this sure to plummet my GPA).

'How did this begin?' you may be asking yourself. Well, one day I was sitting at the lunch table with Blaise Galbraith(if you don't know him, he is also a dedicated "metalhead"), and he just started talking, and the more I listened, the more it made sense. Well, at least, more sense than Dr. Olsson's philosophy class.<sup>5</sup>

This "rowdy freshman rocker", Everard, has fully taken on the lifestyle in pursuit not only of the "more it made sense" but in pursuit of the ultimate truth, goodness, and beauty. Through a metalhead lifestyle, he has found a way to combine his true self of body, with the truth and goodness of soul in proper ordering and proportion. On a search, as he and his fellow metalheads are for the truth, they are "continuing to learn more and more daily about this exciting culture" (Polinski, 36) as they find deeper unity day-by-day between the theological truths they learn in class and prayer and the pathway to the same that is every sense of metal as ordered to that same end that is God Himself.

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<sup>5</sup> Polinski, Everard. *How I Became a Metalhead*. (New York: ACDC Books, 2017), pg. 67.

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## **Marxist Trend Concerns Spark New Freshmen Course**

April 26, 2019

After analysis into the disappearance of musical items from the room of Mr. Floody, students and school officials have quickly rushed to plan a new course to correct what officials call a "growing Marxian revolution" in the student body.

While incidents have been occurring for months, things came to a head with the recent disappearance of musical accessories from the room where Mr. Floody resides. After discovering the disappearance minutes before a packed Soul Butter concert he wrote out in despair:

"We are not all family. My things are not your things. They never have been and with very few exceptions never will be. Stop taking things that don't belong to you. It's annoying and it's childish. Let's try being decent humans."

Let's become "decent humans" he implores in this e-mail sent to the entire student body. Unfortunately, the phrase with "very few exceptions" leaves room open for equivocation, so it was quickly determined that a class on being a "decent human" as opposed to a "Catholic Marxist cowboy" was needed.

An IIT staff member spearheaded this effort with a proposal to have this important message taught to Freshman:

Can we make this part of the freshman talks every year? The Marxist aspirations need to die early. Perhaps this is a simple issue of catechesis. Maybe a semester-long course on the Baltimore Catechism would help...

Most are hopeful that next year's freshmen will be less Marxist following this planned course, of which the details have yet to be decided. Angus Watts of California, an incoming Freshman for next year is one, saying that he is "hopeful to have the tyrannic, democratic, and Marxist parts of his soul removed" by what he seems to think is a surgical operation rather than a class. But does this mean that they instead become Marxist Libertarians?

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