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A POETRY OF THE DISPOSSESSED AND FALLEN[1]: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MORPHOLOGICAL AND SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES IN CANNIBAL CORPSE TITLES

Abstract: This paper delves into the lyrical aspect of the band Cannibal Corpse by focusing on the notable formal units found in the titles of their songs and albums. The corpus features the entirety of Cannibal Corpse's recorded output, which were collected by accessing the band's profile page on the web-site *Encyclopeadia Metallum: The Metal Archives*. The aim of the paper is to showcase the specific structures found in these titles, and to determine how typical these structures are for the discography of Cannibal Corpse by presenting them in percentage figures. The paper initially introduces the main tenets of death metal as a style, as well as Cannibal Corpse in particular, with an emphasis on the lyrical aspect. Next, in the theoretical perspective of the research, it defines the lexical and phrasal forms found in the corpus of titles in linguistic terms. The structures from the corpus are classified into two larger units: lexical forms, and phrasal forms + coordinated structures, as well as the appropriate subunits; the structures are then systematized according to their frequency of occurrence expressed in percentages followed by the analysis of the figures. The paper seeks to ultimately arrive at the conclusion why such forms are used to coin titles in this band's body of work, and what specific meaning they carry, as well as what similar research ideas lie in the future, in order to better understand the relationship between the titles and the lyrical topics involved in this genre of music.

Key words: Cannibal Corpse, lexical forms, phrasal forms, coordinated structures, quantitative analysis

Introduction

Death metal has been a nearly four-decade-long phenomenon, started in the mid-1980s by groups such as Death and Morbid Angel. Initially, this musical style was heavily inspired by horror fiction, both musically and lyrically, especially by

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[1] The title of the paper is taken from the review for Cannibal Corpse's record *The Bleeding* (1994), published on the blog *From the Dust Returned* (autothrall 2010).

the cult horror movies such as *The Evil Dead* (1981) and the *Halloween* franchise. While some bands underwent a lyrical shift during their careers, other artists fully embraced the gore-based approach in their writing, Cannibal Corpse being one of them. Originally inspired by the thrash metal bands of the 1980s, Cannibal Corpse are considered one of the pioneers of the Tampa death metal sound, and are one of the most commercially successful death metal artists in history. Due to their horrific nature, the band's lyrics and album covers have often stirred controversy, subsequently leading to different types of censorship.

This paper delves into the lyrical aspect of Cannibal Corpse by focusing on the notable formal units found in the titles of their songs and albums. The corpus features the entirety of Cannibal Corpse's output, amounting to 185 titles, collected by accessing the band's profile page on the web-site *Encyclopeadia Metallum: The Metal Archives*. The aim of the paper is to showcase the structures found in these titles, and to determine how typical these structures are for Cannibal Corpse's discography by presenting them in percentage terms. Section 2 introduces the main tenets of death metal as a style, as well as Cannibal Corpse in particular. Section 3 focuses on the grammatical aspects of the paper, namely the lexical and phrasal forms found in the corpus of titles, by defining them in linguistic terms. Section 4 represents the research itself, with the structures from the corpus classified into two larger units: lexical forms, and phrasal forms + coordinated structures, as well as the appropriate subunits. Finally, section 5 systematizes the research via a percentage table and analyzes the figures, ultimately arriving at the conclusion why such language forms are used to coin titles in this band's body of work, and what specific meaning they carry. The final section also presents us with other possible research ideas, in order to better understand the relationship between the creation of the titles and the lyrical topics involved in this genre of music.

A brief introduction to Death Metal and Cannibal Corpse

Death metal appeared during the mid-1980s, owing to the style of extreme thrash metal bands such as Slayer and Kreator; the genre's name was initially used by the band Possessed, who wrote a song *Death Metal* (Mudrian 2004: 107). The style eventually blossomed in the United States, Sweden and the Netherlands (see Mudrian 2004 for more detailed information). Musically, death metal is characterized by overdriven guitars, low tunings, fast tempos, and harsh vocalizing known as "growling" or "grunting" (Purcell 2003: 18–19; Philipov 2012: 162–163). The lyrics deal with anti-religious sentiments, gore and horror, war, personal struggles or the socio-political commentary (Purcell 2003: 64). Due to its over-the-top musicality and sensitive lyrical topics, death metal is still considered to be a niche genre, bereft of mainstream popularity. Still, several controversies have occurred over

the years whereby death metal has been accused of corrupting the youth, influencing them to engage in criminal activity (Unger 2016: 81).

The band whose work is the focus of this paper, Cannibal Corpse, were formed in Buffalo, New York in 1988, but have since relocated to Tampa, Florida. As of 2022, they have released fifteen studio albums, while the bassist Alex Webster and the drummer Paul Mazurkiewicz remain of the only original members (for more information, see *Encyclopaedia Metallum*). Their music is characterized by fast rhythms, technical guitar riffs and bass lines, and guttural vocals.

Lyrically, Cannibal Corpse focus exclusively on gore and horror. In fact, it has been argued that this band took a step further compared to some of their predecessors, with their lyrics being "more extreme than precursor Death's (1987) tamer horror fare depicting images of "zombie rituals" and axe-wielding corpses" (Phillipov 2012: 184). The band's first four records, featuring Chris Barnes as the vocalist and lyricist, were especially controversial, as they deal with acts of sodomy, mutilation, and sexual gratification, usually from the evildoer's perspective. As the victims are almost exclusively female, they are sometimes criticized for being misogynist and sexist. Since Barnes's dismissal, the lyrics have been written mostly by Webster and Mazurkiewicz, and have become more neutral, sometimes without any reference to the protagonists' gender or age. Despite the apparent shock value, Purcell argues that "[l]yrics such as these not only touch on the physical effects of depravity, but contemplate the psychological state of a person" driven to such deeds, and that such lyrics may be found disturbing because they are narrated "from the perspective of the perpetrator" (Purcell 2003: 70–71). Still, Webster has compared his band's lyrical extremity to "horror fiction", and emphasized that Cannibal Corpse is ultimately a "horror band" (Phillipov 2012: 175).

Because of the nature of their lyrics, song-titles, and album art, Cannibal Corpse have attracted the attention of a variety of censors, with some of their albums banned and their album covers censored, most notably in Germany. Politicians, such as the US presidential candidate Bob Dole, have been known to criticize the band on account of their supposedly negative influence on the American youth (Phillipov 2012: 170). Despite this, Cannibal Corpse have achieved some commercial success: their album *Vile* has entered the US Billboard 200 chart, they appeared in the movie *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* (1993), and they remain an active recording and touring act (Phillipov 2012: 206).

Grammatical forms

Word forms

The word forms of note for this paper feature the present and the past participle, the bare and the *to*-infinitive, the imperative mood, the *will*-modal construction, as well as the verb *be*.

The participle is defined as a non-finite form with verbal qualities, as it "govern[s] objects and give[s] temporal and aspectual information" (Bussmann 2006: 866), yet it can also possess adjectival (when it functions as a noun modifier) and nominal qualities (when it performs a subject or object function). Its basic types are the present participle, created by adding the inflectional suffix {-ing} to the verb stem, and the past participle, formed utilizing the suffixes {-ed$_2$} or {-en}. The difference between the two types comes down to the character of the forms; the present participle "designates the course of a process", and the past participle "describes its result or effect(s)" (Bussmann 2006: 866). Still, the present participle can also demonstrate adjectival (*shining star*) and nominal qualities (*I like fishing*), while the past participle is usually used as a modifier (*a broken promise*) (Jovanović 2012: 160–162).

Similarly, the infinitive is a non-finite verb form with both verbal and nominal qualities (Jovanović 2012: 158). The most common form of the infinitive is the *to*-infinitive, which includes the particle *to* and the stem form of the verb (Brinton 2000: 239). The other form, the bare or plain infinitive, excludes the particle *to* and is utilized in a verbal sense exclusively, most notably in the imperative mood where it expresses a "direct command" or the urge of the speaker towards the addressee (Brinton 2000: 116).

Another verbal structure found in the corpus is the *will*-modal construction, a periphrastic form with the modal verb *will* used to indicate future which "characterizes the state of affairs [...] as lying temporally after the speech act" (Bussmann 2006: 446). Aside from the meaning of future, however, the modal verb *will* may also carry the meaning of belief and conjecture, characteristic or persistent behavior, inherent capacity (Graver 1997: 32–34), as well as volition (Biber et al. 1999: 485). Finally, the verb *be* is considered a primary auxiliary, as it is used to express person, aspect, tense, and voice; it should not be confused, however, with its counterpart, *to be*, which has proper lexical meaning (Jovanović 2012: 137).

Phrasal forms + coordinated structures

Word groups are defined as "combinations of words and units larger than words which make up a formal and/or functional unit" (Mišić-Ilić 2008: 41). These include phrases, clauses, and sentences; for the sake of this research, we shall focus here on phrases only.

A phrase is the smallest syntactic unit, usually considered "a set of syntactic elements which form a constituent" (Bussmann 2006: 902). The central word is known as the headword, while the remaining elements "specify, modify or complete" it (Mišić-Ilić 2008: 45). The headword determines the type of the phrase; hence there are noun (NP), verb (VP), adjective (AdjP), adverb (AdvP), and prepositional

phrases (PP), all of which are examined here, aside from adverb phrases, which the corpus itself lacks.

An NP consists of a head noun (NH), as well as obligatory or optional elements which determine or modify the head (Quirk et al. 1985: 62). The modifiers represent the syntactic structure of modification, whereby there exists a structural dependence of the modifiers on the phrase head (Mišić-Ilić 2008: 59). Other notable features of the NPs in the corpus include transposition and the genitive case. Transposition refers to "the use of a word in another than its normal function" (Marchand 1967: 16). For example, the noun *stone* in the noun phrase *stone wall* functions as a prenominal modifier, although it does not assume any qualities of adjectives, which are usually found in such sentential positions; it only performs this function in a "short-termed arrangement of the sentence" (Jovanović 2014: 242) and is therefore considered "transposed" (Marchand 1967: 16). The genitive case is distinguished as the only marked case in English (Quirk et al. 1985: 318). The only type of the genitive case in the corpus is the inflectional genitive, created by adding the $\{-s_2\}$ inflectional suffix to the stem of singular countable nouns; it can indicate the owner of a possession, the agent or the patient of an action, etc. (Jovanović 2012: 64–67). Still, certain authors consider this type of the genitive case (also known as the Saxon genitive) a clitic rather than an inflectional suffix. Zwicky, for example, refers to it as a morpheme that is "always bound," "standing outside even inflectional affixes" and semantically connected to the noun phrase preceding it (Zwicky 1977: 6–7).

Next, a VP obligatorily includes the verb head (VH), which can stand on its own or "is preceded by up to four verbs in an auxiliary function" (Quirk et al. 1985: 62). Certain VPs in this paper feature transitive verbs; these verbs are transitive as "the action denoted by the verb is [...] transmitted to the object;" more specifically, the corpus has yielded a number of monotransitive verbs, which take "only one complement," the direct object (Mišić-Ilić 2008: 98). A number of VPs in the corpus feature partially converted adjectives as direct objects. Such adjectives can function as noun heads, yet they are not inflected for case or number, and are obligatorily preceded by a definite determiner; they usually refer to particular well-established groups of people (Quirk et al. 1985: 421). Additionally, certain featured VPs appear to be intransitive, i.e. without a direct object: however, the missing object is semantically implied through the contents of the verb itself, and such cases are referred to as null objects. Such objects occur when the VP in question "refers to aspectually non-delimited activities," when the "event description is restricted to apply to typical objects," and when there is no new discourse referents introduced through the VP (Pérez-Leroux et al. 2013: 446).

Next, an AdjP features the adjective head (AdjH), "optionally preceded and followed by modifying elements," while PPs include the mandatory preposition head (PH) and the object of the preposition (OP), which is usually another NP (Quirk et al. 1985: 63).

Another syntactic structure of note is coordination, "a relation between two or more elements of syntactically equal status" (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 66) achieved using the word class of conjunctions, "uninflected words that serve the purpose of linking language structures together" (Jovanović 2012: 233); this type of coordination is known as syndetic (Bussmann 2006: 256). Two types of conjunctions are featured in the corpus: coordinating, which are used to join two items of equal grammatical status, and correlative, which feature a pair of conjunction words correlating two lexical items; additionally, the corpus features a number of conjunctive adverbs, occasionally mentioned alongside conjunctions proper, which have "the purpose of conjoining syntactic structures" (Jovanović 2012: 238–242). When coordination is not explicitly marked by a conjunction, it is known as asyndetic (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 1276).

Results of corpus analysis

Corpus and methodology

The discography of Cannibal Corpse comprises 15 studio albums of original material, which constitute 172 songs in total. Additionally, the corpus for this paper includes two original songs from the EP *Worm Infested* (*Systematic Elimination* and *Worm Infested*), as well as three songs from the box-set *15 Year Killing Spree* (*Unburied Horror*, *To Kill Myself*, and *Gallery of the Obscene*). Also included are eight unique album titles (*Eaten Back to Life*, *Tomb of the Mutilated*, *Vile*, *Bloodthirst*, *Gore Obsessed*, *Kill*, *Torture*, *Violence Unimagined*); the remaining seven albums were named after one of the featured songs. On the other hand, the recorded works of this band feature nine cover songs (in other words, written by other artists but performed by Cannibal Corpse); these were excluded from the corpus as the author felt they did not represent the style of the band. Ultimately, the corpus features 185 titles, collected utilizing the band's profile page on the web-site *Encyclopedia Metallum: The Metal Archives* (https://www.metal-archives.com/bands/Cannibal_Corpse/186).

The examples were classified into two groups: word forms, and phrasal forms + coordinated structures. The first section features one sub-group, namely verbal forms, in turn comprised of six sub-types: the past participles, the present participles and gerunds, the bare infinitive / imperative forms, the *to*-infinitives, the *will*-modal construction, and the verb *be*. The second section is split into three sub-groups: nominal structures, prepositional phrases, and other notable constructions. The nominal structures are divided into five sections: the noun phrases featuring adjectives in the prenominal position (NP -> Adj + NH), the noun phrases featuring transposed nouns or other noun phrases in the prenominal position (NP -> N/NP + NH), the noun phrases featuring adjectives or adjective

phrases in the postnominal position (NP -> NH + Adj/AdjP), the single-word noun phrases, and the noun phrases featuring the genitive case. The prepositional phrases are classified according to their central preposition; hence there are phrases with the following heads: *of*, *in*, *to*, *from*, *through*, *by*, *with*, *into*, as well as six other prepositional heads manifested by a single example each. The section on other notable constructions features three types of structure: the single-word adjective phrases, the coordinated constructions, and the verb phrases with transitive verbs. All of the aforementioned sub-groups were ordered according to the descending number of examples contained within.

Word forms

The most typical word forms found in the corpus are verbal; more specifically, the present and the past participles, the *to*-infinitives and the bare infinitive / imperative forms, the *will*-modal construction and the verb *be*; thus the section on verbal forms features six sub-groups.

Verbal forms

The past participle is the most dominant form in the corpus; it is featured 69 times. Four of the titles are album titles, with the remaining 65 being song titles. Some of the titles feature two or three participles (for example, *Bound and Burned*, or *Stripped, Raped and Strangled*). Several of the verbs can be found multiple times; *broken* appears three times, while *raped* and *rotted* each appear twice. This group is represented by the following examples (the participles are italicized):
a) *Stripped*, *Raped* and *Strangled*
b) *Sentenced* to Burn
c) *Submerged* in Boiling Flesh
The present participles are less represented in the corpus compared to the past participle, but they can nonetheless be found in 16 examples, primarily with an adjectival or verbal function. Additionally, five titles feature the present participles in their predominantly nominal function, also known as gerunds. Both functions are illustrated in the following examples (the participles are once again italicized):
1) present participles proper:
   a) *Staring* Through the Eyes of the Dead
   b) *Festering* in the Crypt
   c) *Beheading* and *Burning*
2) gerunds:
   a) Relentless *Beating*
   b) Perverse *Suffering*
   c) The *Bleeding*

Eleven titles exemplify verb forms which may be considered bare infinitives or imperatives, depending on the context. Six of these feature transitive verbs with regular direct objects, four of them are also transitive constructions yet with an implied null object, and the remaining form is purely intransitive. Only one album title is found in this group; the rest represent song titles. The verb forms are italicized, and examples are included for each type of verb:

1) transitive verbs with regular direct objects
    a) *Put* Them to Death
    b) *Vomit* the Soul
    c) *Make* Them *Suffer*
2) transitive verbs with null objects
    a) *Kill* or *Become*
    b) *Asphyxiate* to Resuscitate
    c) *Surround*, *Kill*, *Devour*
3) intransitive verbs
    a) *Return* to Flesh

Contrary to the previous sub-type, eight titles feature the *to*-infinitive. One interesting example would be *Asphyxiate to Resuscitate*, whereby *asphyxiate* is a purely imperative form, and *to resuscitate* is a *to*-infinitive form of purpose. *To Kill Myself* is the only example of a transitive verb construction with a regular direct object, four additional titles represent transitive verbs with null objects, and the remaining three feature intransitive verbs. The infinitives are italicized, and instances of all three verb types follow:

1. transitive verbs with null objects
    a) Compelled *to Lacerate*
    b) Nothing Left *to Mutilate*
    c) The Time *to Kill* is Now
2. intransitive verbs
    a) Sentenced *to Burn*
    b) They Deserve *to Die*
    c) *To Decompose*
3. transitive verbs with regular direct objects
    a) *To Kill Myself*

The following four titles exemplify the *will*-modal construction. Since the modal verb *will* may also bear implications other than future time, some of these examples may imply more than one meaning. For example, *I Will Kill You* seems to express volition as well as future, while *As Deep as the Knife Will Go* refers to the inherent capacity of the tool in question. Three of these constructions are featured below (the verb forms are italicized):

a) The Undead *Will Feast*
b) I *Will Kill You*
c) As Deep as the Knife *Will Go*

This section features two examples of the verb *be*; however, the two examples differ in their use of it. The first example features *be* in its past form and as an auxiliary to the main verb *ask*, while the second one includes *be* as the main verb and in its present tense form. The forms are italicized:

a) She *was* Asking for It
b) The Time to Kill *is* Now

Phrasal forms + coordinated structures

This section focuses on the notable phrasal forms and coordinated structures found in the corpus, predominantly the noun phrases with prenominal or postnominal modification, as well as the different types of prepositional phrases. The third sub-type features some characteristic verbal and adjectival phrases, alongside a selection of coordinated structures found in the corpus.

Nominal functions

This sub-section features five different sub-types. The first two deal with prenominal modification in noun phrases, featuring adjectives proper and participles or transposed nouns and noun phrases. The third group focuses on the examples of noun phrases including postnominal modification, once again, with either adjectives proper or participles, the fourth one on the single-noun NPs, while the fifth one features the instances of the genitive case from the corpus.

The first sub-type focuses exclusively on the noun phrases from the corpus which include prenominal modifiers. The modifiers can be either adjectives proper (34 examples) or participles (17 examples). The phrases are italicized, while the premodifiers are both bold and italicized.

Three instances are included from both subtypes below:

1. with adjectives proper:
   a) ***Necrosadistic*** *Warning*
   b) ***Edible*** *Autopsy*
   c) ***Absolute*** *Hatred*
2. with adjectival participles:
   a) ***Scattered*** *Remains*, ***Splattered*** *Brains*
   b) ***Living*** *Dissection*
   c) ***Unburied*** *Horror*

The second sub-type is comprised of 21 examples of titles featuring noun phrases with transposed nouns or noun phrases as prenominal modifiers of the noun head. As in the previous section, the phrases are italicized, while the nouns or NPs in question are both bold and italicized. This type is represented by the following three examples:

a) ***Cyanide*** *Assassin*
b) ***Rotted Body*** *Landslide*
c) ***Murder*** *Worship*

The corpus also features six examples of noun phrases postmodified by adjectives or adjectival phrases. One album title is included, with the remaining five being song titles. The modifiers are both italicized and bold, while the entire phrases are italicized. Specific examples include *Every Bone Broken*, which features both a premodifier (the determiner *every*) and a postmodifier (the adjectival participle *broken*), as well as *Entrails Ripped from the Virgin's Cunt*, whereby the postmodifying participle *ripped* is followed by a prepositional phrase functioning as the adjective complement. Three examples follow:

a) *Decency **Defied***
b) *Every Bone **Broken***
c) *Heads **Shoveled Off***

Aside from multi-word NPs, the corpus includes seven examples of noun phrases featuring only the noun head, two of which are album titles. Three of the included instances are compounds, as evidenced by examples a) and b) below:

a) Bloodlands
b) Coffinfeeder
c) Monolith

Finally, there are merely two instances of the genitive case in the corpus. The nouns marked with the genitive case are italicized, and the examples are:

a) Entrails Ripped from a *Virgin's* Cunt
b) The *Murderer's* Pact

Prepositional phrases

Prepositional phrases are featured prominently in the examined corpus. Eight prepositions are usually found as the heads in these phrases: *of*, *in*, *to*, *from*, *through*, *by*, *with*, *into*, while *at*, *under*, *beyond*, *for*, *before* and *without* are present within a single title each. Some of the phrases feature articles (*a* or *the*) as part of the subsequent noun phrase functioning as the object of the preposition. The examples are classified according to the preposition head in the phrase, while the phrases themselves are italicized.

The *of*-prepositional phrases are the most numerous, having been featured in 17 titles, one of which is an album title. Examples include:

a) Cerements *of the Flayed*
b) Mutation *of the Cadaver*
c) Vector *of Cruelty*

Twelve *in*-prepositional phrases are featured, among which are:

a) Drowning *in Viscera*
b) An Experiment *in Homicide*
c) *In the Midst of Ruin*

Prepositional phrases featuring *to* as the head can be found in seven song-titles, as well as one album-title. Instances include:

a) From Skin *to Liquid*
b) Condemned *to Agony*
c) Hatchet *to the Head*

The *from*-prepositional phrases are found in four particular titles, including:

a) Eaten *from Inside*
b) *From Skin* to Liquid
c) Skewered *from Ear* to Eye

Through is found as the preposition head in three song-titles. While it may be found in another song-title, *Torn Through*, there it functions as the adverbial particle to the preceding verb form *torn* and therefore does not represent a preposition.

a) Staring *Through the Eyes of the Dead*
b) Orgasm *Through Torture*
c) Five Nails *Through the Neck*

By is featured as the prepositional head in the three following titles:

a) Devoured *by Vermin*
b) Raped *by the Beast*
c) Purification *by Fire*

The preposition w*ith* is found in two examples, which are:

a) Covered *with Sores*
b) Fucked *with a Knife*

There are only two instances of the preposition head *into*, and these are:

a) Pounded *into Dust*
b) Headlong *into Carnage*

Finally, this mixed sub-type features six additional prepositions exemplified only once in the corpus. The titles are:

a) Butchered *at Birth*
b) *Under the Rotted Flesh*
c) *Beyond the Cemetery*
d) She was Asking *for It*
e) Destroyed *without a Trace*
f) Red *Before Black*

Other notable structures

Single-adjective adjectival phrases

This section features single-adjective adjectival phrases: six titles feature adjectival participles, while another six are comprised of adjectives proper, and only one of the 12 examples is an album title (noted by the asterisk). Three instances represent each subtype:

1. adjectival participles
   a) Mangled
   b) Gutted
   c) Slain
2. adjectives proper
   a) Vile*
   b) Headless
   c) Maniacal

Coordinated constructions

This sub-type features eleven instances of coordinated constructions. Seven of them are instantiations of coordinating conjunctions *and* (six examples, with three noted below) and *or* (one example), two of them exemplify asyndetic coordination, while the remaining two feature the correlative conjunction *as ... as* and the conjunctive adverb *then*.
1. coordinating conjunction *and*:
   a) Dismembered *and* Molested
   b) Hung *and* Bled
   c) Beheading *and* Burning
2. coordinating conjunction *or*:
   a) Kill *or* Become
3. asyndetic coordination:
   a) Scattered Remains, Splattered Brains
   b) Surround, Kill, Devour
4. correlative conjunction *as ... as*:
   a) *As* Deep *as* the Knife Will Go
5. conjunctive adverb *then*:
   a) Followed Home *Then* Killed

Verb phrases with transitive verbs

This section features five examples of VPs comprised of transitive verb heads and their respective direct objects. Three of them feature adjectives which have undergone partial conversion, while the remaining two feature common nouns. The direct objects are both bold and italicized, while the phrases in full are only italicized.
1. partially converted adjectives as direct objects
   a) *Unite **the Dead***
   b) *Crushing **the Despised***
   c) *Unleashing **the Bloodthirsty***

2. common nouns as direct objects
   a) *Vomit **the Soul***
   b) *Follow **the Blood***

Table 1 - Percentage results of the corpus analysis

Lexical Forms		
Units	**Subunits**	**Corpus Percentage**
1	*2*	*3*
Past participles		37.3%
Present participles / Gerunds		11.35%
	Present participles	8.65%
	Gerunds	2.7%
Bare infinitives / imperative forms		5.94%
	Transitive verbs with regular direct objects	3.24%
	Transitive verbs with null objects	2.16%
	Intransitive verbs	0.54%
To-infinitives		4.32%
	Transitive verbs with null objects	2.16%
	Intransitive verbs	1.62%
	Transitive verbs with regular direct objects	0.54%
Will-modal construction		2.16%
The verb *be*		1.08%
	Auxiliary	0.54%
	Main verb	0.54%
Phrasal Forms + Coordinated Structures		
Units	**Subunits**	**Corpus Percentage**
Noun phrases with premodifiers		27.57%
	adjectives proper	18.38%
	participial adjectives	9.19%
Noun phrases featuring transposed nouns or noun phrases		11.35%
Noun phrases with postmodifiers		3.24%
Single-noun noun phrases		3.78%
Noun phrases with genitive case		1.08%
Prepositional phrases		30.27%

1	2	3
	of	9.19%
	in	6.49%
	to	4.32%
	from	2.16%
	through	1.62%
	by	1.62%
	with	1.08%
	into	1.08%
	other	3.24%
Single-adjective adjective phrases		6.49%
	participial adjectives	3.24%
	adjectives proper	3.24%
Coordinated constructions		5.95%
	Coordinating conjunctions	3.78%
	and	3.24%
	or	0.54%
	Asyndetic coordination	1.08%
	Correlative conjunctions	0.54%
	Conjunctive adverbs	0.54%
Verb phrases with transitive verbs		
	Partially converted adjectives as direct objects	1.62%
	Common nouns as direct objects	1.08%

Discussion and conclusion

Table 1 presents a percentage overview of the forms found in the corpus. It is important to note that even though some titles featured two or more instances of the form in question, they were still counted as a single instantiation of the form; for example, the title *Stripped, Raped and Strangled* was considered a single example of the past participle, even though it featured three instances of this particular form.

Participles are featured by far the most prominently; more specifically, past participles are featured in 37.3% of the corpus, while the present participle is less present, with 11.35%, out of which 8.65% represent the participle proper, while gerunds take up 2.7%. The high presence of the participles may be connected to the lyrical content of the corresponding songs. In other words, it indicates that the lyrics ultimately describe the effects of a violent action (the past participle), or the process of the action itself (the present participle).

The infinitive forms are featured less prominently, with 5.94% representing the bare infinitives or the imperative forms, and the *to*-infinitives being featured in 4.32% of the corpus. Additionally, the *will*-modal construction represents 2.16% of the corpus. Such verbal forms seem to correlate to actions about to take place or that should take place, and hence depict the opposite of the actions described by the participles above. The verb *be*, however, does not seem to reflect any particular important connotation, as each of the cases constitutes only 0.54% of the corpus. One of its examples is the auxiliary verb in the past tense, while the other is the main verb in the present tense, but neither seems to correlate highly to the thematic direction of the titles.

If we were to take a look at the second part of Table 1, the first thing to notice would be the high percentage of noun phrases in general. The phrases with premodified nouns constitute 27.57%, while those featuring transposed nouns or noun phrases represent 11.35% of the corpus. This type of modification can also be explained via the lyrical content represented by the titles; they either depict the effect(s) of a nominalized action or attribute a certain horrific quality to the entity in question. Postmodification is seldom featured in the corpus (3.24%), yet the examples showcase the same quality as with premodification or transposition. The single-word noun phrases are slightly harder to pinpoint semantically, as they encompass entities (*Coffinfeeder*), locations (*Bloodlands*), and actions (*Torture*); they are featured in 3.78% of the corpus. Finally, the genitive case occurs rarely (1.08%); this may be explained through depersonalization often occurring through the violent deeds in the lyrics, whereby personally attributed or possessive qualities are wholly eliminated.

Next, prepositional phrases are featured in roughly one third of the corpus (30.27%). Among the prepositions included, the dominant ones are those which possess certain descriptive qualities, such as *of* (9.19%), and those indicating location or direction, as exemplified by *in* (6.49%) or *to* (4.32%). Similar to premodification, these phrases may indicate the goal of the title's creators to either describe a quality of the entity in question or the action itself, especially in locative terms. The attributive character could also describe the purpose of single-word adjective phrases (6.49%), including both participial adjectives (3.24%) and adjectives proper (3.24%).

Coordinated constructions, featured in 5.95% of the corpus, are usually used to indicate that one gruesome action is joined by one or several more, as exemplified by the use of the coordinating conjunction *and* (3.24%) and asyndetic coordination (1.08%). Other coordinated structures are lesser in scope; each of them is exemplified by 0.54% of the corpus. They point to a choice being made (the coordinating conjunction *or*), a temporal (the conjunctive adverb *then*) or a locative relation (the correlative conjunction *as ... as*).

The transitivity of the verbs is another important verbal quality discovered in the corpus. The bare infinitive / imperative forms feature such verbs in a larger

percentage (3.24% with regular direct objects, and 2.16% with null objects) compared to the *to*-infinitive forms (2.16% with null objects, and 0.54% with direct objects). Additionally, verb phrases which feature partially converted adjectives as direct objects (1.62%) slightly outnumber those including common nouns in the same sentential function (1.08%). Seeing that gruesome acts depicted in Cannibal Corpse titles and lyrics almost exclusively feature a victim, or a number of them, the transitivity of the verb in question is not hard to comprehend, as the action mentioned often requires a direct object as the "victim." The intransitive verbs are included in a less significant measure – 0.54% with bare infinitives / imperative forms and 1.62% with *to*-infinitives; the patient(s) undergoing these actions are unknown, which may point to a more generalized or generic meaning of the action described.

To sum up, all the lexical and phrasal forms discovered in the corpus point to several dominant elements featured in the Cannibal Corpse titles: the effects of the action performed (the past participle), the qualities of the action in question (the past participle, the modification in noun phrases, prepositional phrases), or the described qualities of the entities involved (adjectival and prepositional phrases, the genitive case). As such, we can deduce that the titles in the corpus focus on characteristics quite typical of horror fiction: the perpetrators, the action, and the consequences suffered by the victims on which the actions are performed.

Cannibal Corpse is not the only musical group whose work could be examined in the manner found in this paper; other death metal artists, even though focusing on different topics such as Satanism (Deicide), war (Bolt Thrower), or socio-political issues (Napalm Death), could provide sufficient material to be studied for syntactic and/or lexical regularities. This could in turn help us deduce the relationship between the constructions used and the topics covered in the titles and/or lyrics of the bands. Expanding the scope, similar investigations could be performed on artists from other metal sub-genres with highly topical lyrics, such as black metal (anti-religious sentiments, Norse mythology), doom metal (sadness, depression), and power metal (epic fantasy, mythology). This research might yield some general conclusions on the way titles and lyrics are created, consciously or unconsciously, in metal music, ultimately leading to a better understanding of a musical genre which is so often criticized, ridiculed and condemned.

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