

**ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE  
IN THE ALBUM “DE MYSTERIIS DOM SATHANAS”  
BY MAYHEM**

**SKRIPSI**



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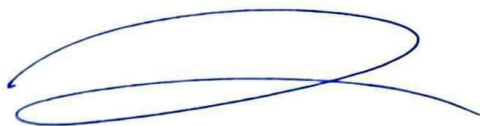
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**MOTTO**

*“Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless condition. It is the opium of the people”*

**(Karl Marx)**

## STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

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### **ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE ALBUM**

#### **“DE MYSTERIIS DOM SATHANAS” BY MAYHEM**

Is the result of my own original work, and all sources of information used have been clearly cited in the reference list according to the scientific and academic code of ethics. I am aware that if any violations of scholarly ethics regarding to the authenticity of this work are found. I personally accept the consequences in accordance with applicable regulations and am prepared to bear legal sanctions

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## ABSTRACT

**Zulfa, Achmad Zidan. (2025).** “Analysis of Figurative Language in The Album ‘De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas’ by Mayhem”. Skripsi. English Education Department. Faculty of Languages and Arts. IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Advisor I Dr Ima Isnaini Taufiqur Rohmah, M. Pd, Advisor II Ayu Fitriyaningsih, M. Pd.

This research aims to identify and classify the types of figurative language found in selected songs from the album *De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas* by the Norwegian black metal band Mayhem. The research applies the theory of figurative language proposed by Laurence Perrine, which consists of eleven categories: simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, metonymy, symbol, allegory, paradox, overstatement, understatement, and irony. A qualitative-descriptive approach was used to analyse five chosen songs: “Funeral Fog,” “Freezing Moon,” “Life Eternal,” “Pagan Fears,” and “Cursed in Eternity.” Each lyric was examined and categorized based on its dominant figurative elements. The results show a total of 33 instances of figurative language across the lyrics. Personification appeared most frequently with 8 occurrences, followed by paradox, irony, and symbol with 5 each. Metaphor and overstatement were found 3 times, apostrophe twice, and understatement once. Simile, metonymy, and allegory were not found in any of the data. These findings suggest that Mayhem’s lyrics rely heavily on implicit, abstract, and atmospheric language rather than direct comparison or structured narrative. The research concludes that figurative language plays a significant role in constructing the thematic depth of the album, especially in relation to death, nihilism, spiritual isolation, and existential dread. These results also align with previous studies that observed the dominance of personification and symbolism in poetic song lyrics. This research is expected to contribute as a reference for literary studies in non-traditional music texts and support further research in language, metal music, and subcultural expression.

## ABSTRAK

**Zulfa, Achmad Zidan. (2025).** “Analysis of Figurative Language in The Album ‘De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas’ by Mayhem”. Skripsi. Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro. Dosen Pembimbing I Dr. Ima Isnaini Taufiqur Rohmah, M.Pd., Dosen Pembimbing II Ayu Fitriarningsih, M. Pd.

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif-kualitatif terhadap lima lagu, yaitu “Funeral Fog,” “Freezing Moon,” “Life Eternal,” “Pagan Fears,” dan “Cursed in Eternity.” Setiap lirik dianalisis dan diklasifikasikan berdasarkan jenis gaya bahasa yang ditemukan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya 33 gaya bahasa kias yang tersebar di seluruh lirik. Personifikasi paling dominan dengan 8 temuan, disusul oleh paradoks, ironi, dan simbol masing-masing sebanyak 5 kali. Metafora dan hiperbola muncul sebanyak 3 kali, apostrof 2 kali, dan litotes 1 kali. Simile, metonimia, dan alegori tidak ditemukan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa lirik Mayhem cenderung menggunakan bahasa yang implisit, simbolik, dan atmosferik daripada perbandingan langsung atau narasi terstruktur. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa gaya bahasa kias memiliki peran penting dalam membangun kedalaman tema dalam album ini, khususnya terkait dengan kematian, nihilisme, keterasingan spiritual, dan kecemasan eksistensial. Hasil ini juga sejalan dengan penelitian sebelumnya yang menunjukkan dominasi personifikasi dan simbol dalam lirik lagu puisi. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi referensi dalam studi sastra terhadap teks lagu non-tradisional serta mendukung penelitian lebih lanjut di bidang kebahasaan, musik metal, dan ekspresi subkultur.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of Research

People cannot interact with each other without words (Wiguna *et al.*, 2021, p. 30). This is the way language allow human to sail-across multifaceted social landscapes and access vast amounts of information. Language is clearly correlated with music. It is widely known that music can be used to communicate with people, reach a large audience through singing, and allow people to hear voices or spoken words, as well as understand lyrics or written words. Nowadays, there are various genres of songs which usually carries real and hidden meaning in their lyrics, whether it is from mainstream songs, underground songs, and many more. The song may be a composition of a poem sung along with a musical instrument (Wiguna *et al.*, 2021, p. 31). In line with previous research, songs are works of art that combine sound and language, arranged in a structured way to reach the peak of their uniqueness.

Figurative language is a powerful medium in literature and black metal music, enabling writers and artists to convey the complex ideas, elicit meaningful imagery, drown their target audience into the rich layered chronicles. Another argue from (Wainwright, 2015, p. 225), in poetry, the word “figurative” is used in the same way as in the expression “linguistic figure”, i.e. an expression is used to give life or strength to speech or writing.

The current stylistic paraphernalia is usually outstanding in musical genres that corroborate poetic expression, such as black metal. Black metal is a sub-genre of underground metal and extreme metal, recognizable from its raw sound, atmospheric instrumental, and lyrical focus on themes like mysticism, existentialism, anti-religion, and more. It has turned out that the most profound, aggressive, melancholic and misanthropic facets of heavy metal are assigned to black metal, whose obscurity and fundamental misinterpretations are often overlooked (Silva, 2014, p. 217). This most extreme sub-genre was appeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s for the second wave.

Mayhem, a band whose album was chosen by the researcher to research, originated in Oslo, the capital of Norway and was first formed in 1984 by guitarist Øystein “Euronymous” Aarseth, vocalist which also a bassist Jørn “Necrobutcher” Stubberud, and drummer Kjetil Manheim. Mayhem recorded their first EP, *Deathcrush*, in 1987, which was released by Euronymous from his newly formed record label Posercorpse Music, *Deathcrush* EP initial release is limited to only 1000 copies and gone quickly. It was later reissued in 1993 by Euronymous’ newly renamed record label Deathlike Silence Productions or DSP in collaboration with his record shop Helvete (Norwegian for “Hell”). Regarded as one of the pioneers of the true Norwegian black metal, Mayhem’s music has hugely influenced the whole black metal sub-genre, inspired legions of artists around the world since their outset. In the late 1990s, the world's attention was drawn to

Norway by a series of church burnings, murders and suicides, with a particular focus on the now infamous black metal music scene, which originated in Scandinavia and has since proliferated worldwide (Wallin *et al.*, 2017, p. 2).

Black metal is certainly associated with certain events and notorious figures, but its value originates from the music (McWilliams, 2014, p. 26). Early in their career, Mayhem was completely chaotic with violent controversy, for instances such as their notorious live performance on stage, one of Mayhem's subsequent vocalists, "Maniac", frequently engaged in self-cutting on stage (Kahn-Harris, 2007, p. 45), the suicide of vocalist Per Yngve "Dead" Ohlin in 1991, and the murder of guitarist Øystein "Euronymous" Aarseth in 1993 by former band bassist Varg Vikernes who was the same person from one-man band Burzum.

This regarded pioneer of true Norwegian black metal has released many Demos, singles, EPs, live albums, and studio albums, such as, *Pure Fucking Armageddon* (1986), *Deathrehearsal* (1987), *Deathcrush* (1987), *Live in Leipzig* (1993), *De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas* (1994), *Carnage* (1996), *Wolf's Lair Abyss* (1997), *Mediolanum Capta Est* (1999), *Grand Declaration of War* (2000), *Live in Marseille 2000* (2001), *Chimera* (2004), *Ordo Ad Chao* (2007), *Esoteric Warfare* (2014), *Daemon* (2019), *Black Glass Communion* (2019), *Voces Ab Alta* (2021), *Atavistic Black Disorder* (2021), and so on. The lineup of band members up until this research was made includes, Attila Gábor Csihar as vocalist, Jørn Stubberud

(Necrobutcher) as bassist, Morten Bergeton Iversen (Teloch) with Charles Edward Alexander (Ghul) filling the position as guitarist, and lastly Jan Axel Blomberg (Hellhammer) as drum destroyer. Mayhem ever won an award at The Norwegian Grammy Honorary Award 2022, They deserve this award, because it is undeniable, Mayhem really shocked Norway and even the world at the beginning of their appearance. We cannot close our eyes with their controversy, but also in fact, their work can be admitted as a new face and inspiration of the black metal scene.

One of the most iconic Masterpiece in black metal history which is the current object of the researcher's picks is "*De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*" the debut studio album by Mayhem, released on May 24, 1994. The year of the songs written by "Dead" were finally released as a studio album, because some of the songs in the album were released as live albums before, entitled "Live in Leipzig", recorded in 1990 on their tour to Leipzig (Germany) and released in 1993. It is also sad that this album were finally released after "Euronymous" was murdered by his friend Varg Vikernes, this was all at once, the last album recorded by "Euronymous" and Varg Vikernes was sentenced for the murder committed by him.

The album is entitled in Latin, and if translated into English it will be "The Mysteries of Lord Satan". Guitar and drum sound from this album can be recognized even from a distance, that the distortion and reverb are typical of Mayhem, celebrated not only for its groundbreaking sound but also because of poetic and evocative lyrics. Mainly written by the band's

former vocalist Per Yngve Ohlin, also known as “Dead” and later refined by Attila Gábor Csíhar, the album drowning into themes of dead, spirituality, and cosmic mysticism. In the same frame with (Erlangga *et al.*, 2021, p. 152), lyrics are a text that is created as a theme and storyline in a song. The lyrics in black metal songs laden with figurative language which contribute properly to its ominous and otherworldly atmosphere.

Despite the band’s infamy and the controversies surrounding its history, the lyrical content of “*De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*” has not received sufficient academic attention, particularly regarding its use of figurative language. Most existing studies on figurative language in music tend to emphasize emotional or romantic themes in mainstream genres such as pop or rock, often approaching lyrics as poetic expressions of personal sentiment. For instance, (Putri *et al.*, 2024) explored themes of longing and sorrow in the song Pulang, while (Nuryuliasih, 2022) focused on love-related expressions in Nidji’s lyrics. This research, therefore, deliberately turns toward the neglected terrain of black metal lyrics—not as mere extensions of sonic aggression, but as artistic expressions shaped by figurative language. Because black metal, like any form of musical art, is inseparable from the interplay between sound and language, this research aims to explore how metaphor, symbolism, and other literary devices contribute to the album’s atmospheric and thematic depth. By analysing the song lyrics of “*De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*”, this research seeks to uncover the latent meanings embedded within the text, and to frame black metal not

as a deviant outlier, but as a legitimate artistic expression worthy of nuanced literary analysis.

## **B. Problem Formulation**

The following questions below are the research problem formulation:

1. What are figurative language categories of selected song lyrics in the album "*De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*"?
2. What are the figurative meanings are conveyed inside the lyrics in the album "*De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*"?

## **C. Objectives of the Research**

The intents of this research are:

1. To identify and classify the categories of figurative language of the selected song lyrics in the album "*De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*".
2. To analyse the figurative meanings of the selected song lyrics in album "*De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*".

## **D. Significance of the Research**

The results of this research will obviously useful and helpful in certain ways, both theoretically, practically, and pedagogically.

### **1. Theoretically**

The results of this research can expand our perceptive of diverse categories of figurative language and help readers in attempt to elucidate the meaning of this album's songs, figurative language is also part of the language, it is undoubtedly valuable to learn.



## 2. Practically

Practicality commonly feasible for certain range of aspects. In the same path with this research, the practical benefits extend to various parts, in particular, educators, students, readers, and potential researchers. The following are further breakdown:

### a. For Teachers

Through this research, teachers are expected to gain a broader understanding and utilizing these findings for additional materials to enhance their teaching strategies.

### b. For Students

By exploring this research, students may improve enthusiasm in comprehend and using figurative language.

### c. For Readers

By reading this research, it will help readers and those interested in better understanding to unravel the figurative meaning inside the chosen song lyrics in album "*De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*" by Mayhem.

### d. For Further Researchers

The findings of this research are hoped to be used as a reference or used as an additional source when writing a thesis in feasible similarity.

## 3. Pedagogically

This research contributes to educational development by providing insight into how imagery can be taught and learned effectively. It supports the development of innovative teaching strategies that improve

students' critical thinking, interpretive skills, and understanding of linguistic creativity in literature and music.

## **E. Definition of Key Terminologies**

### **1. Figurative Language**

Figurative language is not merely a tool for ornamentation—it is a linguistic weapon. As (Perrine *et al.*, 2018) asserts, figurative expressions allow writers to convey meanings that literal language fails to encapsulate, tapping into the emotional, psychological, and symbolic dimensions of human experience. (Wainwright, 2015) reinforces this by describing figurative language in poetry as an “image of speech,” a device that electrifies expression and transcends conventional meaning. Furthermore, (Glucksberg, 2001) argues that figurative language operates by intentionally violating literal norms, enabling speakers to project abstract, layered interpretations through metaphors, irony, or paradoxes. Thus, drawing from these perspectives, this research defines figurative language as a deliberate act of linguistic subversion—where meaning is encrypted rather than explained, and where expression defies convention to expose deeper psychological and symbolic truths.

### **2. Song**

According to (Middleton, 1990), a song is a cultural and semiotic act, where melody and words converge to produce meanings that

extend far beyond sound. (Tagg, 2009) sees songs as encoded communicative events, where tonal, rhythmic, and lyrical elements combine to elicit psychological or ideological responses. Meanwhile, (Frith, 1996) emphasizes that songs act as performative texts: they don't just reflect identity, they construct it—especially in genres where sound is resistance and lyrics are confession. this research defines a song as a coded performance of meaning—where sound and language intertwine not just to entertain, but to provoke, construct, and ritualize human experience.

### 3. Lyrics

Lyrics are not merely the words sung—they are the soul that animates the sound. As per (Bradley, 2017), lyrics function as poetic language in performance, often relying on rhythm, metaphor, and repetition to embody emotion and narrative. (Moore, 2012) emphasizes that lyrics in recorded music are not standalone texts; they gain meaning through their interaction with voice, instrumentation, and sonic production. Additionally, (Hawkins, 2002) sees lyrics as multi-coded texts—where meaning is shaped not just by words, but by delivery, distortion, context, and subcultural resonance. Hence, this research defines lyrics as dynamic poetic codes—textual bodies that derive their full meaning not in isolation, but through the voice, noise, and cultural echoes that carry them.

#### 4. Black Metal

Black metal is arguably the most extreme and transgressive subgenre of the metal universe. According to (Silva, 2014), it emerged in the early 1980s with pioneering acts such as Venom, Bathory, and Celtic Frost, then crystallized into a distinct Scandinavian movement in the 1990s with bands like Mayhem, Burzum, and Darkthrone—marked by its raw sound and controversial ethos. (Podoshen, J. S. *et al.*, 2014) describe black metal as a dystopian soundscape shaped by high-pitched screams, lo-fi production, and anti-mainstream ideologies—often confronting religious, social, and existential themes through sonic violence. Meanwhile, (Kahn-Harris, 2004) frames black metal as a reflexive subculture that paradoxically opposes both mainstream culture and conventional political activism. Its power lies in negation, ambiguity, and extremity—culturally coded in isolation, nihilism, and aesthetic brutality. Therefore, this research defines black metal as an intentionally raw and ritualistic musical praxis—a genre born in Nordic gloom, forged by shrieked vocals and tremolo fury, and sustained as an ideological underground that weaponizes sound and ideology against conformity.

#### 5. Mayhem

In the class of Remarkably and influential black metal band throughout history, Mayhem is a Norwegian black metal band

formed in Oslo in 1984. They were one of the pioneers of the Norwegian black metal scene, and their music has profoundly influenced the black metal genre (Wikipedia, n.d.-b).

6. *De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*

It would be “The Mysteries of Lord Satan” if translated into English. The debut studio album by Norwegian black metal band Mayhem. Songwriting began in 1987, but due to the suicide of vocalist Per “Dead” Ohlin and the murder of guitarist Øystein “Euronymous” Aarseth, the album's release was delayed until May 1994. “*De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas*” is widely regarded one of the most influential black metal albums of all time (Wikipedia, n.d.-a).