

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE APPLIED IN MELANIE MARTINEZ'S K-12 ALBUM

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper is focused to find figurative language in the lyrics of the song "K - 12" by Melanie Martinez. The researcher uses Perrine's theory to find out the most dominant types of figurative language, implied meaning, and the type of figurative language. This study is a descriptive study by applying text oriented approach in this research to obtain the required data. The song lyrics are categorized into 7 types of figurative languages, and interpreted to find the implied meaning of it. There are 7 types of figurative language used in the lyrics of the song "K - 12" by Melanie Martinez with a total of 7 metaphor, 2 personifications, 7 hyperboles, 8 imageries, 8 ironies, 5 symbol, and 2 paradoxes.

Keywords : Perrine's figurative language, literature, song lyric, text-oriented approach, Melanie Martinez K-12 album

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### INTRODUCTION

Language is a communication tool that people use in everyday life to convey information and arguments to other people. Language plays an important role in human communication. Without the language we use, we cannot communicate with each other, because the main function of language is communication. Steven Pinker's book "The Sense of Style" (2015) offers insight into the language. Steven Tinker describes language as "a universal system of symbols that enable people to communicate thoughts and feelings" Steven Pinker emphasizes that language is a very complex and dynamic tool used for various communication purposes such as novels,

letters and poetry. Language is a feature of people that distinguishes them from other people. With the help of language, someone can communicate and convey intentions, wishes, messages and information to others. Figurative language, like metaphors, were considered derivatives of verbal language, more complex than literal language. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2016), in their book "Metaphor We Live by", they look at how the fictional language of songs affects how we understand and process information. They argue that figurative language is not just rhetoric, but an integral part of how we think and understand the world.

Perrine (1978) said that figurative language is language that cannot be interpreted literally and that says something different than usual or says something and has a different meaning. Figurative language is an imaginative phrase and should not be interpreted literally. The writer uses made-up language sentences styles. Figurative language consists of several types, namely: metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, irony, symbol and paradox (Perrine 1977:61 - 209).

Figurative language is used in all forms of communication such as everyday conversations, newspaper articles, advertisements, novels, poems, etc. According to Perrine (1982), figurative language has four main functions, namely: First: Figurative language gives readers the imaginary pleasure of creating literary works. Second: Figurative language is a way of bringing an image into poetry, to make something abstract concrete, so that literary works become more sensual. Third: figurative language is a way to add emotional intensity to informative statements and convey attitudes and information. And finally, figurative language is a way of expressing many things in short.

Figurative language is used in artistic expressions, which have long been known as a means of conveying complex ideas and feelings in a work. In music, songwriters often use imagery to create a clear image and evoke a strong emotional response from listeners. This research focuses on the Figurative Language analysis of selected lyrics from the album "K - 12" by Melanie Martinez. The contemporary work has gained widespread attention for its unique combination of catchy melodies and enchanting lyrics.

Melanie Martinez, a renowned American singer - songwriter, has established herself as a prominent figure in the alternative pop music scene. Known for her evocative storytelling and poetic lyrics, Martinez consistently incorporates various forms of figurative language, such as metaphor, simile, and personification, into her works. The album "K - 12", released on September 6, 2019, is an important milestone in Martinez's artistic journey, showcasing his proficiency in crafting narratives that seamlessly weave elements of fantasy, reality and social commentary. Through an in - depth analysis of the figurative language used in selected songs from the album "K - 12", this study aims to illuminate the ways in which Martinez uses linguistic devices to convey nuanced themes and messages. By scrutinizing the intricacies of her lyrical compositions, this study seeks to shed light on the underlying symbolism, metaphorical constructions, and thematic implications embedded in his musical storytelling.

The purpose of this study is not only to provide a comprehensive understanding of the artistic meaning of figurative language in the context of Melanie Martinez's "K - 12" album, but also to contribute to the broader topic of the role of linguistic devices in contemporary music. By exploring the complex interplay between language, music, and meaning, this research provides valuable insights into the profound impact of figurative language on the interpretation and reception of musical compositions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research provides an in - depth understanding of the use of figurative language in song lyrics on the album "K - 12" by Melanie Martinez. This research will contribute significantly to the understanding of how figurative language is used in the context of contemporary music. Using a text oriented approach, this research illustrates how a musical work, namely song lyrics, can be analyzed in depth through its text structure. This will provide a better understanding of how text elements play a role in conveying deep meaning. Using Perrine's theory (Perrine 1977, 61 - 109), this research shows how figurative language such as metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, irony, symbol, and paradox, are applied in the context of Melanie Martinez's song lyrics. This

will provide a better understanding of how figurative language can be used to convey deep and emotional messages in a musical context.

## DISCUSSION

After reading the song, we can find the metaphorical language applied in the song and classify it. Then make a list of data to make it easier to identify.

*Table 1.* Identification of figurative language used in the album "K - 12" by Melanie Martinez.

No.	Song	Lirik Lagu	Figurative Language
1.	Wheels On The Bus	"I'm just looking out the window and it's cold outside"	Imagery
		"Wheels on the bus"	Symbol
		"Trying to ignore it is fucking boring"	Hyperbole
		"No one's watching us, don't give a fuck".	Irony
2.	Teacher's Pet	"Caught the teacher giving his eyes to a student"	Metaphor
		"She's feeling like a spider in a cage"	Personification
		"Didn't learn a damn thing, honey, from you"	Hyperbole
		"Except how to lie and cheat while inside the sheets"	Imagery
		"Teacher's pet / If I'm so special, why am I secret?"	Irony
3.	Class Fight	"Kelly had a fat ass and trouble was cookin'"	Metaphor
		"Her face was fucked up and my hands were bloody / We were in the playground, things were getting muddy"	Imagery

No.	Song	Lirik Lagu	Figurative Language
		"And my one true love called me 'a monster'"	Irony
		"Daddy chimed in, 'go for the throat'"	Symbol
4.	The Principal	"Her son was a cruel motherfucker"	Metaphor
		"Killing kids all day and night"	Hyperbole
		"Shooting at the angels while claiming you're the good guy"	Imagery
		"Oh, where's the principle?"	Irony
		"Shooting at the angels"	Symbol
		"You don't know the pain that you are causing / Yeah, your actions hurt, so do your words"	Paradox
5.	Show and Tell	"Like I'm a product to society"	Metaphor
		"You pull me by my hair / So I don't go nowhere"	Hyperbole
		"There are strangers takin' pictures of me when I ask 'no more'"	Imagery
		"Art don't sell / Unless you fucked every authority"	Irony
		"Thrown away like a banana peel"	Symbol
		"I'm scared that I'll get thrown away like a banana peel"	Paradox
6.	Nurse's Office	"I'm pale as the loose-leaf paper they grow"	Metaphor
		"Into the nurse's office where I float away"	Personification
		"I'm coughing / I'm bleeding, Band-Aids won't heal it"	Hyperbole
		"From hollowing out all my lungs in the snow"	Imagery

No.	Song	Lirik Lagu	Figurative Language
		"This bitch behind me is cutting my hair / 'No, just sit your ass down at the chalkboard you stare"	Irony
7.	Drama Club	"You're hanging on my sentences"	Metaphor
		"I'ma take a bow so you can kiss my ass"	Hyperbole
		"You're bleeding on a stage"	Imagery
		"They try to feed you lines that you have to memorize / You always hide behind your Wizard of Oz disguise"	Irony
8.	Strawberry Shortcake	"Now, the boys want a taste of the strawberry shortcake"	Metaphor
		"Got boys acting like they ain't seen skin before"	Hyperbole
		"Hot wax melting, burn my skin"	Imagery
		"It's my fault, it's my fault 'cause I put icing on top"	Irony
		"Icing on top" dan "strawberry shortcake"	Symbol

1. Metaphor

- a. Teacher's Pet: "Caught the teacher giving his eyes to a student"

This metaphor describes a situation where a teacher gives inappropriate or unprofessional attention to a student. The phrase "giving his eyes" gives the impression that the teacher is not only looking at or paying attention to the student, but also giving intense and possibly emotionally stimulating attention. This highlights his impropriety in a position of power.

- b. Class Fight: "Kelly had a fat ass and trouble was cookin'"

This metaphor describes someone who has an attractive body shape but also has the potential to cause problems or difficulties. The phrase "trouble was cookin'" suggests

that something is being planned or prepared unfavorably, just as the cooking process can cause problems if not supervised.

- c. The Principal: "Her son was a cruel motherfucker"

This metaphor describes a person's character in a provocative and sharp way. The phrase "cruel motherfucker" depicts a cruel and probably his cruelty is linked to his relationship with his mother. This highlights the complexity of family relationships and the violent dynamics that may exist within them.

- d. Show and Tell: "Like I'm a product to society"

This metaphor describes the feeling of being powerless or objectified by society. The phrase "product to society" describes the individual as something produced or created by society, rather than as an individual with actual wants, needs or dignity.

- e. Nurse's Office: "I'm pale as the loose - leaf paper they grow "

This metaphor describes a person's skin color in a visual and descriptive way. The comparison with the phrase "loose-leaf paper" gives an idea of a very pale skin color and perhaps also of one's softness or helplessness.

- f. Drama Club: "You're hanging on my sentences"

This metaphor describes a person's influence or dependence on the words or speech of others. The phrase "hanging on my sentences" gives an idea of how important the person's words or utterances are to others, as well as the power or influence I t has over them.

- g. Strawberry Shortcake: "Now, the boys want a taste of the strawberry shortcake"

This metaphor uses visual images of food to describe sexual desire or craving. The phrase "strawberry shortcake" is used to refer to the strong desire or wish of the men to have a sexual relationship with the woman depicted. It highlights the complexity of desire and want in relationships.

2. Personification

a. Teacher's Pet: "She's feeling like a spider in a cage"

In this line, personification is used to describe a person's feelings. It gives human nature to something that is usually inanimate, in this case, a spider. The phrase "Feeling like a spider in a cage" gives the impression that the person feels trapped and confined, similar to the feeling of a spider confined in a cage. This creates a strong emotional image of the sense of confinement or bondage that "she" feels.

b. Nurse's Office: "Into the nurse's office where I float away"

In this line, personification is used to describe a person's experience while in the nurse's station. The phrase "float away" gives human nature to the act of floating or feeling detached from reality. This creates an image of an unusual or perhaps uncomfortable experience, where the person feels like they are experiencing something outside of their body or losing touch with reality, perhaps due to the effects of medication or poor health.

3. Hyperbole

a. Wheels On the Bus: "Trying to ignore it is fucking boring"

The hyperbole lies in the use of the word "fucking boring" to exaggerate the feeling of boredom felt when trying to ignore something. This exaggerated use of words aims to amplify the feeling of boredom that the subject feels strongly about, thus making it sound more dramatic than it is.

b. Class Fight: "Didn't learn a damn thing, honey, from you"

The hyperbole lies in the statement "Didn't learn a damn thing" to exaggerate the subject's inability to learn or gain any benefit from the experience. The use of "damn thing" indicates that nothing was learned or gleaned from the situation, although there may have been some things learned or understood.

c. The Principal: "Killing kids all day and night"

The hyperbole lies in the use of the phrase "killing kids all day and night" to exaggerate the constant acts of violence. The use of these very strong words aims to reinforce the



impression that these acts of violence are happening on a very large scale, even though this may not actually be the case.

d. Show and Tell: "So I don't go nowhere"

The hyperbole lies in the statement "So I don't go nowhere" to exaggerate the effect of the action of pulling the subject's hair. The use of this phrase aims to show that the action is very effective in controlling the subject's movements, thus making it sound more dramatic than it is.

e. Nurse's Office: "I'm bleeding, Band - Aids won't heal it"

The hyperbole lies in the statement that "Band - Aids won't heal it" to exaggerate the inability of bandages to heal wounds. The use of this phrase aims to show that the wound suffered by the subject is so severe that it cannot be healed by simple treatments such as bandages, thus making it sound more dramatic than it is.

f. Drama Club: "I 'ma take a bow so you can kiss my ass"

The hyperbole lies in the use of the phrase "so you can kiss my ass" to exaggerate the subject's actions that express his arrogance. The use of this phrase aims to show the subject's highly confident attitude and demands recognition for his achievements or successes, thus making it sound more dramatic than it should be.

g. Strawberry Shortcake: "Got boys acting like they ain't seen skin before"

The hyperbole lies in the use of the phrase "like they ain't seen skin before" to exaggerate the men's reaction to the subject's appearance. The use of this phrase aims to show that the subject's appearance is very attractive attention to make the men surprised or mesmerized, thus making it sound more dramatic than it is.

4. Imagery

a. Wheels On the Bus: "I'm just looking out the window and it's cold outside"

In this line, imagery is used to describe the atmosphere and weather conditions outside. The phrase "looking out the window" creates an image of the subject looking out the window, while "it's cold outside" creates an image of the cold temperature the

subject feels when looking out. This invites the reader to imagine a cold and possibly lonely atmosphere outside.

- b. Teacher's Pet: "Except how to lie and cheat while inside the sheets"

In this line, imagery is used to describe the act of cheating that occurs in intimate relationships. The phrase "inside the sheets" creates an image of the subject being in bed, while "lie and cheat" creates an image of dishonest or cheating behavior happening inside. This invites the reader to imagine the scene of cheating that takes place in bed.

- c. Class Fight: "Her face was fucked up and my hands were bloody / We were in the playground; things were getting muddy"

In this line, imagery is used to describe the scene of violence and chaos in the playground. The phrases "face was fucked up" and "hands were bloody" create an image of the injuries and violence experienced by the subject and others, while "playground, things were getting muddy" creates an image of the dirty and chaotic environment in the playground. It invites the reader to imagine scenes of violence and chaos amidst rain and mud.

- d. The Principal: "Shooting at the angels while claiming you're the good guy"

In this line, imagery is used to describe a moral or spiritual conflict. The line "shooting at the angels" creates an image of the subject attacking or disturbing beings that are considered holy or good, while "claiming you're the good guy" creates an image of the subject claiming himself to be good or righteous. This invites the reader to imagine a scene of conflict unfolding between the subject and the spiritual entity.

- e. Show and Tell: "There are strangers takin' pictures of me when I ask 'no more'"

In this line, imagery is used to describe feelings of discomfort and invasion of privacy. The phrase "stranger takin' pictures" creates an image of strangers taking photos of the subject without permission, while "when I ask 'no more'" creates an image of the subject asking for the action to stop. This invites the reader to imagine a situation where the subject feels intimidated and unsafe.

- f. Nurse's Office: "From hollowing out all my lungs in the snow"

In this line, imagery is used to describe an extreme physical experience. The phrase "hollowing out all my lungs" creates an image of the subject having difficulty breathing or suffering from a lung injury, while "in the snow" creates an image of a cold and freezing environment. This invites the reader to imagine the subject's struggle in extreme weather conditions.

- g. Drama Club: "You're bleeding on a stage"

In this line, imagery is used to describe suffering and a dramatic performance. The phrase "bleeding on a stage" creates an image of the subject being physically or emotionally injured or suffering on stage, while "on a stage" creates an image of a dramatic or publicly focused scene. This invites the reader to imagine an emotionally charged and dramatic stage scene.

- h. Strawberry Shortcake: "Hot wax melting, burn my skin"

In this line, imagery is used to describe the sensation of a particular action. The phrase "hot wax melting" creates an image of hot, melting wax, while "burn my skin" creates an image of the burning sensation the subject feels as the wax sticks to her skin. This invites the listener to imagine the sensation of heat and pain that the subject is experiencing, creating a very powerful image of the experience.

## 5. Symbol

- a. Wheels On the Bus: "Wheels on the bus"

In this line, the symbol "wheels on the bus" may be used to represent travel or change. The phrase "wheels on the bus" can symbolize the journey of life, with the spinning wheels representing inevitable and constant change. This creates an image of how life is constantly moving forward, with each wheel representing a different event or experience.

- b. Class Fight: "Daddy chimed in, 'go for the throat'"

In this line, the symbol "go for the throat" might be used to represent violence or a desire to attack directly. The phrase "go for the throat" may symbolize an attempt to destroy or defeat an opponent by targeting the most vulnerable or vital area. It creates an image of conflict or aggression that may occur in the relationship between a child and a parent.

c. The Principal: "Shooting at the angels"

In this line, the symbol "shooting at the angels" may be used to represent contempt or resistance to goodness or purity. The word "angels" may symbolize goodness or purity, while "shooting" may symbolize an attempt to destroy or corrupt it. This creates A description of a moral or spiritual conflict in which a person acts against values that are considered sacred or noble.

d. Show and Tell: "Thrown away like a banana peel"

In this line, the symbol "banana peel" may be used to represent rejection or disrespectful treatment. The phrase "banana peel" can symbolize something that is considered waste or garbage, such as a banana peel that is thrown away after use. This creates an image of how someone can be ignored or considered worthless, like a banana peel that is thrown away.

e. Strawberry Shortcake: "Icing on top / strawberry shortcake"

In this line, the symbols "icing on top" and "strawberry shortcake" might be used to represent something fun or uplifting. The phrase "icing on top" may symbolize something that adds value or beauty to something that already exists, such as a decoration placed on top of a cake. "Strawberry shortcake" can symbolize pleasure or happiness, as this cake is often considered a delicious and uplifting dessert. It creates an image of something that enriches or enhances an experience, such as a moment of happiness or success encountered in life.

6. Irony

a. Wheels On the Bus: "No one's watching us, don't give a fuck"

The irony lies in the statement that "no one's watching us", but then followed by "don't give a fuck". This creates irony because usually, when someone feels unobserved, they

feel freer to act or speak without worry, yet here, the subject states that they don't care even though no one is watching them.

- b. Teacher's Pet: "Teacher's pet / If I'm so special, why am I secret?"

The irony lies in the use of the term "teacher's pet" which usually refers to the teacher's favorite student, which has a positive connotation, but is followed by the question "If I'm so special, why am I secret?". This creates irony because the subject feels like he is being ignored or unrecognized despite being considered the "teacher's pet".

- c. Class Fight: "And my one true love called me 'a monster'"

The irony lies in the statement that "my one true love" calls the subject "a monster". This creates irony because true love is usually thought of as one who understands and accepts the subject completely, yet here, they call the subject a "monster", which goes against the concept of true love.

- d. The Principal: "Oh, where's the principle?"

The irony lies in the misspelling of "principle", which should be "principal". This creates irony because the subject is complaining about the existence of the principal, but by using the wrong word, which might illustrate the subject's incomprehension or ignorance of the school structure.

- e. Show and Tell: "Art don't sell / Unless you fucked every authority"

The irony lies in the statement that "Art don't sell" unless one has sex with authority. This creates irony because it states that art is only valuable or successful if one uses sexual relations with authorities, which goes against the pure values of art and creativity.

- f. Nurse's Office: "This bitch behind me is cutting my hair / 'No, just sit your ass down at the chalkboard you stare'"

The irony lies in the actions taken by "this bitch" which seem to go against the instructions they were given. This creates irony as the person who cut the subject's hair

disobeyed the instruction to sit down and observe the blackboard, which goes against the expectations or hopes that the subject may have had towards the situation.

- g. Drama Club: " You always hide behind your Wizard of Oz disguise"

The irony lies in the statement that the subject "always hide behind your Wizard of Oz disguise", which refers to the Wizard of Oz character hiding behind a curtain. This creates irony as it portrays the subject as a person who hides their identity or motives, even though they previously stated that they had to memorize the lines given to them, which shows that the subject has no actual power or authority in the situation.

- h. Strawberry Shortcake: "It's my fault, it's my fault 'because I put icing on top"

The irony lies in the statement that "It's my fault, it's my fault", which acknowledges the subject's fault, but is then followed by the excuse "because I put icing on top". This creates irony as the reason given does not directly relate to the admitted fault, which may indicate the subject's reluctance to admit their responsibility directly.

## 7. Paradox

- a. The Principal: "You don't know the pain that you are causing / Yeah, your actions hurt, so do your words"

In this line, the paradox lies in the statement that the subject states that others do not realize the pain they cause, while at the same time, the subject acknowledges that their actions and words cause pain. This paradox creates a tension in the thinking of the subject, who feels that others do not understand the impact of their actions, but at the same time realizes that they are causing pain. This highlights the complexity of the relationship between the subject and the other person, as well as the disagreements that may occur in communication.

- b. Show and Tell: "I'm scared that I'll get thrown away like a banana peel"

In this line, the paradox lies in the comparison between the subject and the discarded banana peel. This paradox creates an image of the subject feeling worthless or ignored, like a discarded banana peel, but at the same time having fears that it will happen to

her. This illustrates the paradox in the subject's thinking, who feels unappreciated or undervalued, but also fears the possible consequences of such feelings.

This research was conducted to find out what figurative language is used in the K - 12 album by Melanie Martinez. The analysis of the 39 song lyrics shows 7 types of figurative language including metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, irony, paradox and symbol. The classification of figurative language found in the 39 selected song lyrics is as follows:

*Table 2.* Kind of Figurative Language in "K-12" album.

No.	Kind Of Figurative Language	Total
1.	Metaphor	7
2.	Personification	2
3.	Hyperbole	7
4.	Imagery	8
5.	Irony	8
6.	Symbol	5
7.	Paradox	2

Based on the table above, this research has analyzed the use of figurative language in the lyrics of the song "K-12" by Melanie Martinez. The most dominant figurative language used in this research is imagery and irony. Imagery is a term used to describe or organize the mental images that arise in a person's mind when she reads or hears words. Irony is a situation where there is a discrepancy between the expectations of the reader or listener and what actually happens in the narrative or situation presented in the literary work.

## CONCLUSION

This research discusses the use of figurative language in the album K-12 by Melanie Martinez. After analyzing the data, the conclusion can be drawn that there are 8 songs analyzed in this study. The song titles include Wheels On the Bus, Class Fight, Nurse's Office, Drama Club, Strawberry Shortcake, Teacher's pet, Show & Tell, The Principal.

Based on the analysis, there are nine types of figurative language identified in the songs, namely Metaphor, Personification, Hyperbole, Imagery, Irony, Symbol, and Paradox. The most frequently used figurative language in Melanie Martinez's K-12 album are imagery and irony. Through irony, Martinez can explore complex themes such as contradictions in relationships, social injustice, or cultural pressures. Irony can also be used to convey criticism of social norms or expectations imposed on individuals. By using this figurative language, Martinez may want to trigger critical thinking or reflection in listeners towards the realities they face in their daily lives. Martinez uses imagery because it allows her to communicate emotions, concepts, and experiences more powerfully and deeply to the listener. The use of imagery allows Martinez to create vivid and evocative visual images in his song lyrics, thus reinforcing the message she wants to convey.

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