

Exploring Figurative Language in Weyes Blood's Song “*A Lot's Gonna Change*”

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on identifying the types of figurative language used throughout Weyes Blood's “*A Lot's Gonna Change*” and understanding how these expressions shape the emotional meaning of the song. Figurative language plays an important role in songwriting because it helps artists express feelings that are often too personal or too abstract to describe in a literal way. Based on the analysis, five types of figurative language were found in the lyrics. Such as metaphor 1 (20%), personification 1 (20%), hyperbole 1 (20%), symbolism 1 (20%), and irony 1 (20%). One notable use of personification shows how the song gives life to abstract ideas, allowing listeners to connect emotionally with the message. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, examining the lyrics through close reading to identify figurative expressions and interpret their contextual meanings. Each figure of speech contributes to the song's themes of nostalgia, personal growth, and the emotional weight of change. Instead of explaining her feelings directly, Weyes Blood uses imagery and subtle comparisons to guide listeners through the shift between past innocence and present maturity. Through these devices, the song transforms personal memories into something universal. Ultimately, “*A Lot's Gonna Change*” delivers a gentle reminder about embracing life's transitions while staying grounded in who you truly are.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most essential parts of human life because it allows people to express thoughts, emotions, and experiences in ways that others can understand. It is more than just words, it is a system that helps individuals create meaning, share stories, and build connections with the world around them. Language enables people to express ideas and feelings and to interact with others in daily life (Fajrin & Parmawati, 2021). In literary texts such as song lyrics, this expressive function is often realized through figurative language, which adds emotional depth and aesthetic value (Santika & Syafyadin, 2023). Leech (1981) also notes that language shapes the way individuals understand reality, which shows how deeply it influences human interaction. Because language is so versatile, people use it for many different purposes. Whether to inform, persuade, entertain, or simply express what they feel (Keraf, 2010). To achieve these purposes, speakers

often shift between literal and non-literal expressions. Literal language conveys meaning directly, while non-literal language allows for more nuance, emotion, and creativity. One of the most expressive forms of non-literal communication is figurative language. Through comparisons, symbolism, exaggeration, and other stylistic choices, figurative language adds depth and color to everyday communication.

Keraf (2010) describes figurative language as a way for speakers to communicate ideas through unique and creative expressions. Leech (1981) discusses figurative meaning through several categories that reveal how emotions and subtle messages are conveyed. Similarly, Perrine (1977) defines figurative language as a way of saying something beyond its literal meaning and classifies it into various types, including metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, metonymy, synecdoche, symbol, understatement, and irony. These forms help writers and songwriters express thoughts and emotions in ways that resonate more strongly with their audience.

In the world of music, figurative language has become increasingly important. Many modern artists rely on it to express feelings that are difficult to explain directly. Although several studies have analyzed figurative language in song lyrics, there is still limited discussion of works by Weyes Blood, whose songwriting is known for its emotional depth and poetic storytelling. Her song "*A Lot's Gonna Change*" stands out because it layers feelings of nostalgia, reflection, and personal growth through rich and meaningful imagery.

This study aims to identify the types of figurative language used in "*A Lot's Gonna Change*" and explore how these expressions shape the emotional meaning of the song. By examining how Weyes Blood uses figurative devices, this research hopes to show how personal experiences in the song are transformed into messages that feel relatable to listeners. The study also highlights the significance of figurative language in helping modern songwriters communicate complex emotions. Through the theories proposed by Keraf (2010), Leech (1981), and Perrine (1977), this research explains how figurative expressions enrich the message of the song and support its themes of change, memory, and self-growth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Figurative language is commonly used to convey meanings beyond literal interpretation and to enrich communication. Through the use of comparison and symbolism, it allows speakers and writers to express emotions and abstract ideas more effectively. Kalandadze et al. (2018) state that figurative language enhances social communication by reshaping the listener's or reader's understanding of words or concepts through contrast and imagination.

According to Perrine (1977), figurative language is a way of saying something other than the ordinary, aiming to express ideas and emotions in a more imaginative and meaningful way. It allows writers and poets to go beyond literal language and create vivid imagery that touches readers or listeners emotionally. Figurative language does not only beautify the text but also serves as a tool to communicate complex feelings, thoughts, and experiences that cannot be conveyed through direct expression.

The first type of figurative language is simile. Simile makes an explicit comparison between two different things. According to Keraf (2010, as cited in Rahmani & Nasution, 2019), a simile signals this comparison through words like "like" or "as." Perrine (1977) also explains that simile clearly shows the relationship being compared, making its meaning easy to recognize. Beyond the definition, similes help readers visualize feelings or situations more clearly by linking them to familiar ideas. That is why they appear everywhere, from poems and songs to everyday conversations.

The second type of figurative language is metaphor. A metaphor is an implied comparison that equates one thing with another without using connecting words. Perrine (1977) states that metaphors work by directly asserting that one thing is another, creating a deeper and more subtle comparison. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) also argue that metaphors reveal meaningful similarities between two unlike things. In practice, metaphors help express emotions or experiences that are

difficult to describe literally, giving lyrics and literature layers of meaning that encourage deeper interpretation.

The third type of figurative language is personification. Personification gives human characteristics to objects, animals, or abstract ideas. According to Perrine (1977), this device makes nonhuman things feel alive and more expressive. Writers often use personification to create emotional closeness or empathy. In song lyrics, personification helps transform abstract emotions into vivid and relatable images.

The fourth type of figurative language is hyperbole. Hyperbole uses deliberate exaggeration to emphasize meaning, not to deceive. Perrine (1977) calls it “exaggeration in the service of truth,” meaning it highlights emotional intensity rather than literal fact. Hyperbole expresses feelings that are difficult to capture plainly pain that feels unbearable, love that feels overwhelming, or confidence that seems larger than life. This makes the message more emotionally powerful for the reader or listener.

The fifth type of figurative language is apostrophe. According to Perrine (1977), apostrophe is a direct address to someone absent, dead, or nonhuman as if they were present. This technique often appears when a writer expresses longing, grief, or unresolved emotion. By “speaking” to someone who cannot respond, the text becomes more intimate and reflective, showing emotional depth that literal statements cannot capture.

The sixth type of figurative language is synecdoche. Synecdoche occurs when a part is used to represent the whole, or the whole represents a part. Perrine (1977) gives examples such as using “hands” to refer to workers. This figure of speech allows writers to condense meaning into a single detail, giving a phrase both efficiency and symbolic weight.

The seventh type of figurative language is metonymy. Metonymy describes something by referring to another thing closely connected to it. Perrine (1977, as cited in Anggraini et al., 2022) defines metonymy as a term representing something because of a meaningful association, not because it is a physical part of it. Perrine (1977) also emphasizes that metonymy works through conceptual connection. Common examples include “the crown” for a king or “the press” for journalists. This device helps writers communicate ideas efficiently while adding symbolic depth.

The eighth type of figurative language is symbolism. Symbolism uses something to represent more than its literal meaning. Perrine (1977) explains that a symbol carries additional, often abstract significance. In songs, symbols frequently represent emotions, memories, or stages of life. Because symbolism invites interpretation, it encourages listeners to connect their personal experiences to the meaning of the text.

The ninth type of figurative language is understatement. Understatement expresses something as less intense or less important than it actually is. Perrine (1977) explains that this technique can appear through both wording and tone, often creating subtle emotional effects. Writers use understatement to convey irony, modesty, or emotional restraint, allowing readers to sense meaning beneath what is said.

The tenth and final type of figurative language is irony. Irony is based on a contrast between what is said and what is actually meant. Perrine (1977) identifies this mismatch as the core of irony, while Shaw (1972) states that the literal meaning often contrasts with the intended one. In song lyrics, irony creates humor, critique, or layered emotional expression, allowing writers to convey complex feelings indirectly.

Figurative language is not only found in real-life communication but also heavily used in literary works such as poetry, novels, and speeches. It is also widely used in song lyrics, where writers communicate complex feelings like nostalgia, longing, hope, personal growth-through symbolic and imaginative language that resonates with listeners. One artist who really stands out for packing her work with figurative depth is Weyes Blood. Weyes Blood, the stage name of American singer-songwriter Natalie Mering, is known for her introspective and poetic approach to music. Her songs often explore time, nostalgia, and emotional transformation through rich figurative language and cinematic melodies. In her 2019 track “*A Lot’s Gonna Change*” from the

album *Titanic Rising*, she reflects on the innocence of childhood and the inevitability of growing up. The lyrics, such as “Before I Ever Fell Down” and “When I Have The Whole World, Gently Around Me,” illustrate her deep sense of reflection and longing.

Through this study, the writer’s is going to analyze song lyric of Weyes Blood, specifically in “*A Lot’s Gonna Change*” song. What makes this song special is not just about catchy music, but also the emotional honest woven through symbolic language. It capture that mixed-up emotion of glancing back at what was, all while knowing change is something you can not avoid. Through her use of figurative expressions, Weyes Blood transforms simple memories into a poetic meditation on time, identity, and growth, allowing listeners to find pieces of their own experiences within her words.

The problem of this research lies in identifying the types of figurative language is used in Weyes Blood’s “*A Lot’s Gonna Change*” to express meaning and emotion. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the types of figurative language found in the song based on Perrine’s (1977) theory and to explain how these expressions contribute to the overall message and emotional impact of the lyrics.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method to analyze figurative language in the song “*A Lot’s Gonna Change*” by Weyes Blood, released on 5 April 2019, from the album *Titanic Rising*. The song lyrics were taken from Weyes Blood (2019) and accessed through the Genius website, then cross-checked with the official audio to ensure accuracy. The analysis was conducted collaboratively by four researchers. The song was read and listened to repeatedly to understand its context and emotional meaning. Each researcher independently identified lines containing figurative language based on Perrine’s (1977) theory. The findings were then discussed collectively to compare interpretations and reach agreement on the classification and meaning of each figure of speech. This peer-checking process was applied to minimize subjectivity and strengthen the reliability of the analysis. Although this study focuses on a single song, the use of multiple researchers and a well-established theoretical framework supports the credibility and consistency of the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis of the data taken from the song “*A Lot’s Gonna Change*” by Weyes Blood. The analysis identifies and interprets the figurative language used in the lyrics based on Perrine’s (1977) theory, which defines figurative language as a way of saying one thing and meaning another. In this study, five types of figurative language were found in the song lyrics: metaphor, personification, hyperbole, symbol, and irony. Each of these types serves to express the song’s central themes of nostalgia, emotional growth, and acceptance of change. Through these figurative expressions, Weyes Blood effectively conveys the emotional journey of growing up, looking back at the past, and embracing change. The figurative language not only enhances the beauty of the lyrics but also strengthens the emotional bond between the songwriter and listeners, allowing each listener to interpret and connect personally with the song’s message.

Table 1. The Occurrence of Figurative Language in the Songs

No	Types of Figurative Language	Amount of Data	Percentage
1	Metaphor	1	20%
2	Personification	1	20%
3	Hyperbole	1	20%
4	Symbol	1	20%
5	Irony	1	20%
Total		5	100%

1. Metaphor

According to Perrine (1977), a metaphor is an implied comparison between two unlike things without using the words “like” or “as.” It suggests similarity indirectly, allowing deeper meaning to emerge through imagery. In this study, one metaphor was identified in the lyrics of “*A Lot’s Gonna Change*.”

Datum 1

“*When I had the whole world gently wrapped around me*”

(Line: 4)

In this lyric, the phrase “the whole world” does not refer to the literal physical world but to the singer’s emotional condition in the past. The metaphor compares the “world” to a protective embrace, suggesting a sense of comfort and emotional security. This interpretation is linguistically supported by the word “gently,” which implies softness, care, and tenderness rather than power or control. In addition, the phrase “wrapped around me” reinforces the image of protection, indicating that the singer once felt emotionally safe and supported.

Based on Leech’s (1981) connotative meaning, this metaphor evokes nostalgia by portraying the past as a warm and secure emotional space. The metaphor gains further significance when contrasted with the reflective and melancholic tone of the later lines, which suggest that such comfort no longer exists in the present.

2. Personification

Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963) define personification as giving human qualities to non-human objects, ideas, or abstract concepts. In this song, one instances of personification was identified.

Datum 2

“*Hearts don’t lie*”

(Line: 7)

In this line, the abstract concept “heart” is given the human ability to tell the truth. Linguistically, the verb “lie” is typically associated with human behavior, which justifies the classification of this expression as personification. The line suggests that genuine emotions cannot deceive, emphasizing emotional honesty and sincerity. According to Leech’s (1981) connotative meaning, the heart symbolizes emotional truth and purity, reinforcing the reflective and sincere tone of the song.

3. Hyperbole

According to Knickerbocker and Reninger (1963), hyperbole is an intentional exaggeration used to create strong emotional effect. Perrine (1977) states that hyperbole functions as “exaggeration in the service of truth,” emphasizing emotional intensity rather than literal fact. In this study, one hyperbole was found.

Datum 3

“*No good thing could be taken away*”

(Line: 6)

This statement presents an absolute claim, as loss is an inevitable part of human life. The phrase “no good thing” exaggerates reality by denying the possibility of loss, which clearly signals hyperbole. Through this exaggeration, the lyric conveys how perfect and untouchable the past once felt to the singer. In terms of connotative meaning (Leech, 1981), the hyperbole evokes a

sense of emotional security and innocence, highlighting the idealized nature of childhood memories.

4. Symbol

Perrine (1977) defines a symbol as a word or object that represents more than its literal meaning. It invites interpretation and carries abstract significance. In the song, one symbolic expression was identified.

Datum 4

“Born in a century lost to memories”

(Line: 14)

The word “century” is not used literally to indicate a specific historical period. Instead, it symbolizes a distant emotional era associated with innocence and forgotten experiences. This interpretation is supported by the phrase “lost to memories,” which suggests disappearance and emotional distance. According to Leech’s (1981) affective and connotative meaning, the symbol creates a sense of nostalgia by emphasizing the singer’s separation from her past self, enriching the reflective tone of the song.

5. Irony

Irony involves a contrast between the literal meaning of a statement and the actual intention behind it (Perrine, 1977; Shaw, 1972). In this song, one example of irony was found.

Datum 5

“Try to leave it all behind”

(Line: 12)

This line suggests an attempt to move forward and abandon the past. However, the overall context of the song contradicts this idea, as the lyrics repeatedly return to memories of childhood and emotional security. This contrast between intention and emotional reality creates irony. The irony highlights the internal conflict between the desire to move on and the inability to detach from the past, strengthening the song’s theme of nostalgia and emotional struggle.

CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed the figurative language used in Weyes Blood’s song “*A Lot’s Gonna Change*” and identified five types of figurative expressions: metaphor (20%), personification (20%), hyperbole (20%), symbolism (20%), and irony (20%). Among these, personification appeared most frequently, showing how Weyes Blood often gives human qualities to abstract emotions to make them feel more alive and relatable. Through qualitative descriptive analysis, this study found that each figurative device contributes meaningfully to the song’s themes of nostalgia, self-growth, and emotional transformation. Rather than expressing her feelings directly, the songwriter uses imagery and subtle comparisons to let listeners feel the tension between childhood innocence and the realities of adulthood. Overall, the figurative language in this song does more than decorate the lyrics, it shapes the emotional tone and guides the listener through a reflective journey about change, memory, and personal identity. These findings show that figurative language plays a crucial role in deepening the emotional impact of song lyrics, helping personal experiences resonate as universal messages.

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