

LITERARY AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTEMPORARY SONG LYRICS

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Abstract. Song lyrics have become a powerful medium for expressing emotions, shaping identities, and addressing social and cultural themes in contemporary music. This study explores how lyrics function as literary texts with poetic structures and devices such as metaphor, narrative arc, and symbolism. It also examines their role in reflecting and influencing cultural values, linguistic trends, and collective consciousness. Drawing from selected examples across genres, the analysis reveals that lyrics often convey deeper meanings beyond their surface appeal, serving as tools for critique, resistance, and storytelling. As language becomes increasingly simplified in popular music, lyrics continue to adapt while maintaining their cultural relevance. The integration of literary analysis and cultural context demonstrates how lyrics articulate personal experiences and societal concerns, offering listeners a mirror to their realities and aspirations. Additionally, the global reach of English in songwriting highlights issues of identity, hybridity, and cross-cultural communication. By treating lyrics as both artistic and sociocultural expressions, this work emphasizes the enduring significance of words in music and their contribution to understanding contemporary life. The exploration affirms that lyrics are not merely accompanying text but essential components of meaning-making in modern musical compositions.

Keywords: cultural identity, metaphor, narrative structure, song lyrics

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, music functions as more than just entertainment. It serves as a powerful vehicle for emotional expression, social commentary, and cultural identity. Central to this multifaceted role is the lyric, a component often overlooked in favor of melody or rhythm, yet deeply significant in conveying meaning and provoking thought. For students and scholars of literature, especially within the field of English studies, lyrics provide a rich and accessible entry point for textual analysis, narrative theory, metaphorical interpretation, and sociolinguistic inquiry. The increasing scholarly interest in the interdisciplinary potential of song lyrics reflects a growing recognition that the boundaries between literary art and musical performance are porous, and that popular music, far from being mere commercial art, offers profound insights into the human condition. In the last few decades, literary and linguistic studies have begun to embrace the textual analysis of song lyrics, highlighting their capacity to function as modern forms of poetry.

This perspective is supported by researchers such as Vinh (2025), who argues that the song "Yesterday" by Paul McCartney is replete with conceptual metaphors