

EXPLORING POLYSEMY AND HOMONYMY IN FEAST'S “MULTIVERSE” ALBUM

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Article History:

Accepted 11 January 2025;

Revised 24 January 2025;

Approved 10 February 2025.

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the use of homonyms and polysemes in the lyrics of the album “Multiverse” from Feast with a qualitative approach and content analysis methods, this study reveals how linguistic strategies used in song lyrics can create layered meanings. This analysis is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how language is used as a means of artistic expression and social criticism in music. Homonymy occurs when two or more lexemes that have the same pronunciation, spelling and it can be similar forms but the meaning is not related to each other. Homonymy is an utterance that is the same but for different things, resulting in unclear or biased meaning. Polysemy is a double-meaning word with every meaning having a close connection of meaning. The research uses a qualitative approach employing content analysis methodology to explore the linguistic phenomena of homonymy and polysemy within Feast's “Multiverse” album. Grounded in semantic theories of linguistic interpretation, the research draws heavily from Charles W. Keidler's theoretical perspectives on the intricate spectrum between homonymy and polysemy. The analysis reveals extensive use of polysemy, where words evolve from concrete to abstract meanings while maintaining semantic connections. Their strategic use of homonymy and polysemy enables them to pack complex meanings into seemingly simple phrases, allowing their lyrics to function as both artistic expression and social commentary. This approach enables their lyrics to function on both literal and metaphorical levels, creating a rich tapestry of meaning that rewards close listening and analysis. Their strategic use of homonymy and polysemy allows them to compress multiple layers of meaning into seemingly simple phrases, enabling their music to function simultaneously as artistic expression and social commentary.

Keywords: Polysemy, Homonymy, Semantics, Music

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penggunaan homonimi dan polisemi dalam lirik album “Multiverse” dari Feast dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode analisis konten, penelitian ini mengungkap bagaimana strategi linguistik yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu dapat menciptakan makna berlapis. Analisis ini diharapkan dapat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang bagaimana bahasa dimanfaatkan sebagai sarana ekspresi artistik dan kritik sosial dalam music. Homonimi terjadi ketika dua atau lebih leksem yang memiliki pelafalan, ejaan, dan bentuk yang sama, namun maknanya

tidak berkaitan satu sama lain. Homonimi adalah sebuah ujaran yang sama tetapi untuk hal yang berbeda, sehingga menghasilkan makna yang tidak jelas atau bias. Polisemi adalah

kata yang bermakna ganda dengan setiap makna memiliki hubungan makna yang erat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan menggunakan metodologi analisis konten untuk mengeksplorasi fenomena linguistik homonimi dan polisemi dalam album “Multiverse” dari Feast Didasarkan pada teori semantik interpretasi linguistik, penelitian ini sangat mengacu pada perspektif teoritis Charles W. Keidler tentang spektrum yang rumit antara homonimi dan polisemi, analisis ini mengungkapkan penggunaan polisemi yang ekstensif, di mana kata-kata berevolusi dari makna konkret ke abstrak sambil mempertahankan koneksi semantik. Penggunaan homonimi dan polisemi yang strategis memungkinkan mereka untuk mengemas makna yang kompleks ke dalam frasa yang tampaknya sederhana, sehingga memungkinkan lirik mereka berfungsi sebagai ekspresi artistik dan komentar sosial. Pendekatan ini memungkinkan lirik mereka berfungsi pada tingkat literal dan metaforis, menciptakan perpaduan makna yang kaya yang memberi penghargaan pada pendengaran dan analisis yang cermat. Penggunaan homonimi dan polisemi yang strategis memungkinkan mereka untuk memadatkan berbagai lapisan makna ke dalam frasa yang tampaknya sederhana, sehingga musik mereka dapat berfungsi secara bersamaan sebagai ekspresi artistik dan komentar sosial.

Kata kunci: Polisemi, Homonimi, Semantik, Musik

INTRODUCTION

Language represents a profound and intricate system of communication that transcends mere information exchange, emerging as a dynamic, living organism capable of capturing the most nuanced human experiences. At its core, language is not simply a tool for transmitting information, but a sophisticated medium that reflects the complexity of human thought, emotion, and perception. Within the expansive domains of art, particularly music and literature, language undergoes remarkable transformations, becoming a canvas where words are not just symbols, but portals into multidimensional meanings and interpretative landscapes. Language is an activity to express the meaning symbols of its language to deliver the meaning of its symbols to the hearer in spoken communication and to the reader in written communication. Symbol includes word, phrase, clause, and sentence (Dian & Herfyna, 2022). Language is a tool of communication that is used in people's daily activities. Words are perpetual communication. Languages are used to learn how to express and understand one's thoughts and feelings, express complex and abstract thoughts, communicate with others, and take advantage of people, a language to satisfy desires and needs. Language is also used by humans to give and receive information. Without language, people cannot understand them (Claudia, 2024). The meaning of language is something that cannot be separated from one another because language as a way of communication requires understanding in every word or sentence that is uttered, language cannot be classified as a type of communication without meaning (Harefa, 2022).

The meaning of language is something that cannot be separated from one another because language as a way of communication requires understanding in every word or sentence that is uttered, the most important aspect of a language is its meaning caused by it serves as the main conduit for social interaction, as is well recognized. Language cannot be classified as a type of communication without meaning (Zulaikah, et al, 2024). Language is an activity to express the meaning symbols of its language to deliver the meaning of its symbols to the hearer in spoken communication and to the reader in written communication. Symbol includes word, phrase, clause, and sentence (Dian & Herfyna, 2022). The linguistic phenomena of homonymy and polysemy represent critical mechanisms through which language achieves its extraordinary expressive potential. According to Pratiwi, Linguistics is the study of language as a system of human communication (Pratiwi, 2023). These sophisticated semantic constructs allow words to become more than static representations, transforming them into dynamic entities capable of carrying multiple layers of meaning simultaneously. Homonymy, characterized by words

sharing identical spelling and pronunciation but possessing fundamentally distinct meanings, and polysemy, representing words with interrelated semantic variations rooted in a common conceptual foundation, serve as powerful linguistic strategies for artistic expression. Semantic is the branches of Linguistic that focus with the study of meaning in utterance or language. In semantic, there are lexical and contextual meaning (Yuliana, 2023).

Semantic comes from Greek *sema* (noun) which means ‘sign’ or ‘symbol’. The verb is *semantic* which means ‘mark’ or ‘symbolize’ (Ahyaroni, 2019). Semantics is the study of language meaning, abstracted away from the context of use in a descriptive subject (Monika, 2023). Semantics is one the subfields of linguistics which help us to understand the meaning of words in English. Semantics is the study of meaning; how words and sentences are related to the (real or imaginary) objects they refer to and the situation they describe (Septiyani, 2021). As Pasinggi and friend said on their resources, Semantics is the study of the organization and expression of meaning in language. The study of semantics is interesting when applied to literary works such as songs, poems, and prose (Pasinggi, et al, 2022).

As Keidler puts it, “Morphemes are the intersection of form and meaning. Form is relatively easy to determine, but determining meaning can be difficult.” This statement perfectly captures the essence of the complexity of language, especially when we talk about linguistic phenomena such as homonymy and polysemy. His profound observation highlights the intricate relationship between linguistic structure and semantic interpretation. Keidler argues that while determining linguistic form might be relatively straightforward, unraveling meaning represents a considerably more nuanced and challenging endeavor. This perspective underscores the inherent complexity of language as a communicative system. Syafar & Asty define ambiguity as “the expression of words, phrases, and sentences that have more than one meaning.” This definition contemplation of language as a fluid, multifaceted medium of expression, capable of transcending literal interpretations and embracing multiple simultaneous realities.

Ambiguity is the lack of understanding the meaning of an utterance or sentence. It can be caused by double meaning or more in a word that creates confusion between the speaker or the sender and the receiver (Pratiwi, 2023). Ambiguity is an expression of a word, a phrase and a sentence that has more than one meaning (Leech, 1981). Ambiguity may happen in spoken or written language because the use of words and structure of the sentence that cannot deliver one meaning (Dian & Herfyna, 2022). This research focuses on analyzing the use of homonymy and polysemy in the lyrics of Feast songs, especially in the songs on the band's album entitled “Multiverse”. Homonymy occurs when two or more lexemes that have the same pronunciation, spelling and it can be similar forms but the meaning is not related to each other (Dian & Herfyna, 2022). While Pratiwi said, Homonymy is an utterance that is the same but for different things, resulting in unclear or biased meaning (Pratiwi, 2023). Polysemy is a double- meaning word with every meaning having a close connection of meaning. This relation of meaning is evidenced by the existence of a common thread that attributes these meanings (Latifatu, 2019). Polysemy has always become a significant issue in interdisciplinary studies, mainly because particular words or phrases tend to have multiple meanings and the way to decide on the intended meanings involves cultural understanding that may be problematic for different groups of people (Yuliyanti, 2023). Regular Polysemy demonstrates a logical relationship between the words. This relationship can be revealed by dealing with the context. For example, a word is said to be regular if there is at least another term in the same language that has a semantically distinct meaning and is not synonymous with it (Afrianto, 2021).

Feast, one of the Indonesian bands, is an indie band that makes works that criticize society (Azzahra, Irawan, 2023). Indonesian pop rock band; Feast is composed of students from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences. University of Indonesia. It was founded in 2013 by Aristo Haryo, Adnan S.P., Baskara Putra, Dicky Renanda, and F. Fikriawan. Their songs focus on social criticism of society as a whole such as; politics, religion, environment, and social issues.” Feast is an Indonesian Indie music group known for their complex and metaphorical lyrics. According to Intan Paramaditha, a professor of English Literature and popular culture at the University of Melbourne, social criticism in song lyrics is one form of resistance against existing power in society. In the Indonesian context, music can be an effective medium for voicing social criticism because Indonesian society really likes music and song lyrics can often carry strong messages (Azzahra & Irawan, 2023).

Through this research, we will explore how the band utilizes the breadth of word meanings to create deep layers of meaning in their work. The album “*Multiverse*” was released on August 18, 2017, with the lyrics in the songs talking about the passage of time and the socio-political reality of Indonesia, especially what is happening at this time. Song lyric is a social phenomenon that uses style and genre to express emotions, lyrics are a written expression of a person's thoughts and feelings; they also contain written messages in the pattern of words or sentences which can be used to create a certain imaginary atmosphere and image for listeners, allowing them to create their meaning (Harefa, 2022). In addition, the songs on the album “*Multiverse*” produced by; Wisnu Ikhsantama, Bam Mastro, Baskara Putra, Hazen Mardial, Janitra Satriani, and Johannes Bosco also contain fictional stories created by Feast Most of the songs in the album “*Multiverse*” are written in English, but there are also some songs in this album that are written in Indonesian Feast's lyrics approach exemplifies how artists can leverage linguistic complexity to create profound communicative experiences. A lyric is a literary expression of a person about something he has seen, heard or experienced, typically words and language. Lyrics have the form of messages in the form of written words and sentences that can be used to create a certain atmosphere and imaginary image for the listeners so that they can also create various meanings (Pasingi, et al, 2022). By strategically employing homonymy and polysemy, the band transforms words into multidimensional instruments of meaning-making. Each lyrical composition becomes an intricate semantic architecture, inviting listeners to engage in active interpretation, to explore the nuanced spaces between literal and metaphorical meanings Feast's lyrics approach exemplifies how artists can leverage linguistic complexity to create profound communicative experiences. By strategically employing homonymy and polysemy, the band transforms words into multidimensional instruments of meaning-making. Each lyrical composition becomes an intricate semantic architecture, inviting listeners to engage in active interpretation, to explore the nuanced spaces between literal and metaphorical meanings. Song music with lyrics has a function to express thoughts and feelings. Through songs, people can say and talk anything all text (Claudia, 2024).

The research seeks to deconstruct and analyze the band's linguistic strategies, examining how they utilize the inherent flexibility of language to communicate complex social commentaries, emotional landscapes, and philosophical perspectives. By focusing on the songs from the “*Multiverse*” album including “Fastest Man Alive,” “Jerusalem,” “Tel Aviv,” “Watcher of the Wall,” “Blackwater/Multiverses,” “Upside Down,” “Wives of Gojira,” and “Riphunter”, the study aims to reveal the sophisticated linguistic techniques that enable Feast to transform words into powerful vehicles of artistic expression. This research represents more than a mere linguistic analysis; it is an exploration of how language, when approached with creativity and intentionality, can transcend its communicative function to become an art form in itself. Through Feast's lyrics, we witness the extraordinary potential of words to create meaning, challenge perceptions, and invite listeners into complex, multilayered narrative world.

METHOD

The research uses a qualitative approach employing content analysis methodology to explore the linguistic phenomena of homonymy and polysemy within Feast's "Multiverse" album. This methodological framework enables a comprehensive and nuanced investigation into the complex linguistic strategies employed by the band in their lyrical composition. The primary data sources are the English-language songs from the album, specifically "Fastest Man Alive", "Jerusalem", "Tel Aviv", "Watcher of the Wall", "Blackwater/Multiverses", "Upside Down", "Wives of Gojira", and "Riphunter". Grounded in semantic theories of linguistic interpretation, the research draws heavily from Charles W. Keidler's theoretical perspectives on the intricate spectrum between homonymy and polysemy. The theoretical framework distinguishes between homonymy and polysemy, which represents words with multiple interrelated meanings stemming from a common semantic root. This approach allows for a deep exploration of the linguistic complexities inherent in Feast's lyrical constructions. The data collection procedure follows a systematic protocol designed to ensure comprehensive and rigorous analysis. Researchers will first compile official lyrics, verifying their accuracy through multiple sources to ensure a complete and authentic textual representation. The linguistic analysis will involve a multi-stage process of identifying potential instances of homonymy and polysemy, categorizing these linguistic phenomena, and analyzing their contextual meanings and semantic relationships.

The analytical methods incorporate semantic deconstruction, which involves breaking down word meanings across different contexts, and contextual interpretation, which examines how words function within the broader narrative of the songs. A comparative analysis will be conducted to understand how similar linguistic expressions operate across different tracks in the album, revealing the band's sophisticated approach to language manipulation. A critical component of the methodology is the development of a systematic coding framework. This framework will classify various types of homonymic expressions, assess the degrees of polysemic complexity, and track semantic shifts and interpretative possibilities. The coding process will be rigorous and transparent, allowing for multiple rounds of review and validation to ensure the reliability of the linguistic interpretations. The expected outcomes of this research extend beyond mere linguistic analysis. The study aims to provide a comprehensive mapping of linguistic phenomena in Feast's lyrics, offer insights into the creative language used in contemporary Indonesian indie rock. By bridging linguistic analysis with musical artistic expression, the research seeks to contribute to broader academic discussions about language, creativity, and musical storytelling.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A comprehensive analysis of linguistic terms reveals distinct patterns in the usage of homonymy and polysemy. The data shows a total of 37 terms distributed across these two categories, with polysemy demonstrating a notably higher frequency. Specifically, there are 13 homonymic terms, including words like "like," "run," and "blackwater," each carrying multiple unrelated meanings that contribute to linguistic diversity. In contrast, polysemy presents 24 terms, such as "light," "time," and "waters," which showcase the evolution of meaning from concrete to abstract interpretations while maintaining semantic connections to their original

concepts. The predominance of polysemic terms suggests a natural tendency in language development where words expand their meanings through related conceptual associations rather than developing completely distinct definitions. This pattern reflects the dynamic nature of language evolution, where meanings often grow organically from core concepts rather than emerging as entirely separate entities.

A. Homonymy

Data: Like

Explanation: The word “like” has two different meanings. On one side, “like” is used to show enjoyment or preference for something, as in “I like this song.” On the other side, like is also used to express similarity or resemblance, for example “He runs like the wind,” which means he runs very fast like the wind.

Data: Run

Explanation: The word “run” has several different meanings depending on the context. First, run means to move quickly using feet, as in “He runs every morning.” Second, run can also mean to manage or operate something, as in “She runs a successful business.”

Data: Darling

Explanation: The word “darling” has two different meanings. On one side, it can be used as a term of endearment for someone who is loved, as in “Come here, my darling.” However, this word can also be used sarcastically or ironically to show mockery, for example “Well done, darling,” in a context of disapproval.

Data: Right

Explanation: The word “right” has multiple meanings. First, right can mean moral or ethical correctness, as in “You did the right thing.” Second, right can also refer to direction, being the opposite of “left,” as in “Turn right at the next corner.”

Data: Pest

Explanation: The word “pest” has two main meanings. First, it can mean a bothersome creature, like insects that damage plants. Second, pest is also used metaphorically to describe an annoying or bothersome person, for example “He's such a pest.”

Data: Blackwater

Explanation: “Blackwater” itself is a powerful homonymic term, simultaneously referencing: a literal geographical location, metaphorical state of moral darkness, potential reference to private military contractors, symbolic representation of systemic violence. The word “Blackwater” has geographical meaning, like “Blackwater is a river,” or metaphorical as moral darkness, like “He was lost in the Blackwater of his soul.”

Data: Upside Down

Explanation: The phrase “upside down” can be used literally and metaphorically. Literally, it means something that is physically inverted, like “The cup is upside down.” Metaphorically, it can describe a chaotic or disordered situation, for example “My life feels upside down right now.”

Data: Stay

Explanation: The word “stay” has multiple meanings. First, it means to remain in a particular place, like “Please stay here.” Second, it can mean maintaining a certain condition or state, for example “Stay calm during the interview.”

Data: Line

Explanation: The word “line” can have different meanings. First, “line” can refer to lineage or family relations, as in “He comes from a noble line.” Second, line can also refer to conceptual or physical boundaries, like “Draw a line between right and wrong.”

Data: Hear

Explanation: The word “hear” has two main meanings. First, it refers to the act of perceiving sound with ears, like “Can you hear me?” Second, it can mean paying attention to or understanding something, as in “I hear what you're saying.”

Data: Call

Explanation: “Call” in here it can be to name of something or it can be to consider/designate. The word “call” has various meanings, including naming something, like “They call him a hero,” or considering or declaring something, like “Let’s call it a day.”

Data: Sail

Explanation: “Sail” operates with dual interpretations - the literal nautical term referring to a ship’s canvas, and a metaphorical representation of life’s journey or progression. The word “sail” has literal and metaphorical meanings. Literally, it means a ship’s sail, like “The sail is torn.” Metaphorically, it can describe life’s journey, like “She sails through challenges.”

B. Polysemy

Data: Crazy

Explanation: The word “crazy” can refer to an unhealthy mental condition, like “He's acting crazy.” However, it can also mean something extraordinary or extreme, for example “That party was crazy!”

Data: World

Explanation: The word “world” has physical and conceptual meanings. Physically, it means the planet we live on, like “The world is round.” Conceptually, it can mean a particular environment or condition, like “He lives in his own world.”

Data: Burn

Explanation: The word “burn” can mean physical burning, like “The fire burns brightly.”

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However, it can also mean spending or exhausting something, especially money, like “They burned through their savings.”

Data: Home

Explanation: The word “home” can refer to a physical dwelling place, like “This is my home,” or emotional attachment and comfort, like “Home is where the heart is.”

Data: Broken

Explanation: The word “broken” can mean physically damaged, like “The vase is broken,” or emotionally wounded, like “He's broken inside.”

Data: Road

Explanation: The word “road” can refer to a physical path, like “The road is long,” or a metaphorical journey, like “She's on the road to recovery.”

Data: Border

Explanation: The word “border” has physical and symbolic meanings. Physically, it means the dividing line between countries, like “The border is closed.” Symbolically, it can mean boundaries between groups or ideologies, like “There's a border between us.”

Data: Blood

Explanation: The word “blood” has meaning as bodily fluid, like “Blood is red,” symbol of family connection, like “Blood is thicker than water,” or symbol of violence, like “The battlefield was soaked in blood.”

Data: Space

Explanation: The word “space” has physical and metaphorical interpretations. Physically, it means geographical area, like “There's a lot of space here.” Metaphorically, it means mental state or realm of experience, like “I need my own space.”

Data: Wall

Explanation: The word “wall” can mean physical barrier, like “There's a wall between the rooms,” or ideological boundary, like “They put up walls between cultures.”

Data: Glory

Explanation: The word “glory” can mean achievement or triumph, like “He basked in glory,” but also failure in pursuing recognition, like “The glory was fleeting.”

Data: Gather

Explanation: The word “gather” means to collect physically, like “Gather the papers,” or unite emotionally or socially, like “They gathered their courage.”

Consistent pattern emerges in how the band uses physical concepts to articulate abstract ideas. Words like underground transition from literal subterranean spaces to symbolic resistance movements, while terms like broken bridge physical damage and emotional wounds. This pattern suggests a deliberate strategy of using tangible concepts to express intangible ideas.

The findings indicate that Feast employs these linguistic devices not merely for stylistic effect, but as fundamental tools for creating multiple layers of meaning. This approach enables their lyrics to function simultaneously on literal and metaphorical levels, engaging listeners in complex interpretative processes. The research demonstrates how Feast leverages the inherent flexibility of language to create sophisticated musical narratives that can sustain multiple interpretations. Their strategic use of homonymy and polysemy enables them to pack complex meanings into seemingly simple phrases, allowing their lyrics to function as both artistic expression and social commentary. This linguistic complexity contributes significantly to the depth and resonance of their music, highlighting the band's ability to harness language's full expressive potential.

CONCLUSION

This research illuminates the sophisticated linguistic architecture underlying Feast's *Multiverse* album, demonstrating how the band masterfully employs homonymy and polysemy to create multi-layered meanings in their lyrics. The analysis reveals that Feast consistently uses these linguistic devices not merely as stylistic choices, but as fundamental tools for constructing complex narratives and social commentary. The band's approach aligns with Charles W. Keidler's theoretical framework regarding the intersection of form and meaning in language, particularly in how they navigate the challenging terrain of semantic interpretation. The study identified numerous instances of both homonymy and polysemy throughout the album. Homonymic expressions are strategically deployed to create multiple interpretative possibilities. Notable examples include the term *blackwater*, which simultaneously functions as a geographical reference, a metaphor for moral darkness, and a possible commentary on private military contractors. Similarly, words like *run* and *like* demonstrate how identical forms can carry distinctly different meanings depending on context. The band's use of polysemy is particularly sophisticated, with words such as *light*, *wall*, and *waters* demonstrating semantic evolution from concrete physical meanings to abstract conceptual interpretations. For instance, *waters* extends from its literal meaning as a physical substance to represent emotional states and existential conditions. A significant pattern emerged in how the band systematically uses physical concepts to articulate abstract ideas. This is evidenced in their treatment of terms like "underground," which transitions from describing physical subterranean space to symbolizing resistance movements, and "broken," which bridges physical damage and emotional wounds. This approach enables their lyrics to function on both literal and metaphorical levels, creating a rich tapestry of meaning that rewards close listening and analysis. The research demonstrates that Feast's linguistic strategies contribute substantially to their ability to address complex social and philosophical themes while maintaining artistic coherence.

The findings suggest that Feast's approach to lyrical composition represents a sophisticated understanding of language's potential for meaning-making, particularly in the context of contemporary Indonesian indie rock. Their strategic use of homonymy and polysemy allows them to compress multiple layers of meaning into seemingly simple phrases, enabling their music to function simultaneously as artistic expression and social commentary. For example, in songs like "Tel Aviv" and "Jerusalem," the band employs terms with multiple meanings to address complex geopolitical and social issues while maintaining poetic resonance. This linguistic complexity significantly enhances the depth and resonance of their music, highlighting how careful attention to language can elevate songwriting from mere

communication to artistic innovation. The analysis also reveals how Feast's lyrics serve as a powerful medium for social criticism, particularly within the Indonesian context. Their sophisticated use of linguistic devices allows them to address sensitive social and political issues through multiple layers of meaning, making their commentary both subtle and profound. Through this analysis, we gain valuable insights into how contemporary musicians can leverage linguistic phenomena to create works that sustain multiple interpretations and engage listeners in active meaning-making processes. The study contributes significantly to our understanding of linguistic devices in musical composition, demonstrating how artistic expression can be enriched through deliberate and sophisticated manipulation of language's inherent flexibility.

The research also highlights the importance of considering both literal and metaphorical meanings in lyrical analysis, particularly when examining works that address complex social and political themes. The implications of this study extend beyond musical analysis, suggesting new avenues for understanding how language can be used creatively to communicate complex ideas while maintaining artistic integrity. Future research might explore how similar linguistic strategies are employed across different musical genres or cultural contexts, potentially revealing broader patterns in how artists use language to create meaningful and impactful work.

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