



An Analysis of Metaphor in Keshi's Album 'Requiem'

Muhammad Dzacky Vahendra¹, Yusmarni Djalius^{*2}

^{1,2}Universitas Andalas, Padang, Indonesia

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Correspondence :
yusmarnidjalius@hum.unand.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Keshi uses metaphors in his album Requiem to express emotions and convey deeper meanings in his lyrics. By analyzing the songs through the lens of Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the research identifies the types of metaphors used and explores what they mean in the context of each song. This study applies Use Theory by Wittgenstein to interpret the meanings of metaphors found in the song lyrics. Using a qualitative approach, the study focuses on three categories of metaphors: Orientational, Ontological, and Structural, to see how they shape the listener's understanding of the themes and emotions Keshi expresses. The analysis of these metaphorical expressions shows that metaphors play a significant role in shaping the meaning of the lyrics, providing a framework for understanding the feelings and emotions expressed by the singer. This article presents one representative metaphor from each song, selected for its clarity and relevance to the metaphor type. The findings show that metaphorical expressions significantly contribute to the depth and emotional resonance of Keshi's lyrics.

INTRODUCTION

Metaphors are linguistic devices that implicitly compare two seemingly unrelated concepts to provide new perspectives and deeper insights. Lakoff and Johnson (2003), in *Metaphors We Live By*, argue that metaphors are not just rhetorical or literary devices but rather fundamental cognitive tools that shape human thinking and perception. Through metaphorical expression, individuals can connect abstract ideas with concrete experiences, facilitating a clearer and deeper understanding of complex concepts. Given the importance of metaphor in shaping meaning, it is no surprise that music, one of the most influential art forms, often uses metaphorical language in its lyrics. Song lyrics serve not only as a form of storytelling but also as a medium to convey the emotions, personal experiences, and perspectives of the songwriter. Through metaphors, songwriters can express deep and complex emotions that may be difficult to articulate directly. In addition, metaphors enhance the emotional resonance of a song, making its message more vivid, relatable, and highly impactful for listeners. The use of metaphors has been demonstrated to enrich the semantic content of lyrics, however, extant studies on the role of metaphors in contemporary music are limited in scope. One contemporary artist who effectively incorporates metaphors into his songwriting

is Keshi, an American singer, songwriter, and music producer. Keshi's music is known not only for its simple yet emotional sound but also for the deep and meaningful lyrics, which often include figurative language such as metaphors. Keshi is recognized for his poetic and personal songwriting style. This makes the songs more than just emotional, but also rich in interpretation, allowing listeners to connect with them more deeply. These qualities make *Requiem* a strong and interesting subject for metaphor analysis. The data in this study are the song lyrics from Keshi's *Requiem* album, consisting of 13 tracks. However, due to the scope and limitations of this article, only selected lyrics are presented and discussed as representative samples of the metaphors found in the song lyrics. This provides a more detailed and focused view of how metaphors are used across multiple songs with connected themes. This research fills a gap in previous studies and offers a deeper understanding of how Keshi uses metaphor to express emotion and create a consistent message or feeling throughout the album. To interpret the meaning of the metaphors, the author uses Wittgenstein's Use theory, which states that the meaning of a word depends on how it is used in a particular context. In this research, the author focuses on analyzing the metaphors found in the lyrics of Keshi's songs from the album *Requiem*, focusing on the types of metaphors used and their meanings. There are two research questions for this research:

1. What types of metaphors does Keshi use in his lyrics in the album *Requiem*?
2. What are the meanings of the metaphors found in the lyrics?

To answer the research question, the study uses Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson, which groups metaphors into three main types: ontological, orientational, and structural. This theory helps identify and classify metaphors based on how people understand abstract ideas through more concrete experiences. Furthermore, the study applies the Use theory by Ludwig Wittgenstein, which explains that the meaning of a word depends on how it is used in context.

Some articles that also discuss the metaphor can be seen in an article written by Wahyuda, Eliwarti, and Dahnilsyah (2022), which examines metaphor usage in Coldplay's song lyrics, categorizing Metaphors based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) framework: orientational, ontological, and structural Metaphors. The research identifies a total of 45 metaphorical expressions, with structural Metaphors being the most dominant. The second is the article by Sumigar, Maru, and Tuerah (2019) from Manado State University, which examines the use of Metaphors in the song lyrics of Sidney Mohede, analyzing eight of his songs. The research identifies 24 metaphorical expressions, highlighting how these Metaphors convey both spiritual and social meanings. The study emphasizes that Metaphors are essential in expressing emotions, faith, and deeper messages within religious music. The third is the article by Jati (2020), which explores how Metaphors deepen emotional expression in music, analyzing *Drown and Throne* to highlight contrasting themes of despair and resilience. The study shows how Metaphors like "weight" symbolize depression, while "sticks and stones" represent overcoming adversity. Despite these valuable contributions, gaps remain that this research aims to address. Many studies focus on individual songs, limiting their research to identifying broader patterns within an artist's work. This study builds upon previous findings by analyzing the Metaphors of one album, *Requiem* by Keshi, to uncover metaphorical patterns. This study fills the gaps left by prior research and deepens the understanding of how metaphors shape artistic expression in contemporary music. The study will focus on different musical genres, adopt a more in-depth approach to metaphorical patterns within an album, and make new contributions to the study of metaphor in indie and alternative music lyrics. The writer uses semantics analysis, specifically the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, and a qualitative approach grounded in the theory of Conceptual Metaphor proposed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (2003).

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative method with a semantic analysis approach, specifically using Use Theory by Wittgenstein to interpret the meanings of metaphorical expressions in the song lyrics from Keshi's *Requiem* album. The qualitative approach enables an in-depth interpretation of these metaphors within the context of the songs, providing a comprehensive understanding of how Keshi's lyrics construct meaning through figurative language. This research is based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which divides metaphors into three types which are orientational, ontological, and structural. Through Use

Theory, this research investigates how metaphorical language in the lyrics conveys meaning, focusing on three categories of conceptual metaphors: orientational, ontological, and structural.

The data collection process begins with selecting *Requiem* as the focus of the research. The album is selected because it represents an artistic work that makes it possible to examine in detail the metaphorical patterns that Keshi uses. The writer's reason for analyzing the songs from the album *Requiem* is to maintain consistency and ensure a comprehensive examination of Keshi's metaphorical language. Focusing on a single album allows for a more structured and thematic analysis, making it easier to identify patterns in the use of metaphors and how they contribute to the overall message of the song. After selecting the album, the writer collects all the lyrics of 13 songs: *Amen*, *Say*, *Night*, *Soft Spot*, *Like That*, *Texas*, *Dream*, *War*, *Bodies*, *Requiem*, *Euphoria*, *Just To Die*, and *Id* from a website called genius.com.

In analyzing the data, the writer analyzes the lyrics using several steps. First, the writer analyzes the song lyrics that contain metaphors. Next, the writer categorizes metaphors into three types based on Lakoff and Johnson's (2003) Conceptual Metaphor Theory: orientational metaphors, ontological metaphors, and structural metaphors. Next, the writer analyzes their meaning within the context of the lyrics. To achieve this, the writer applies semantic analysis, specifically using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, which helps uncover how metaphors contribute to the overall meaning of the song based on context. The analysis is grounded in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, allowing for a deeper exploration of how abstract concepts are represented metaphorically. Furthermore, the author visualizes the findings into a table that shows the types of metaphors found in the 13 song lyrics in the album '*Requiem*'. Finally, the author summarizes the results, outlines the study's limitations, and provides suggestions for future research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of a study of metaphors in Keshi's *Requiem* album, along with a detailed analysis of the types and meanings of metaphors used. Below is a table of songs that contain metaphors in their lyrics:

Table 1. List of Metaphorical expressions found in the lyrics

No	Title of the Song	Metaphorical expression
1.	Amen	All of the weight of the world on my shoulders crashing down on me
2.	Soft Spot	I'm wrapped around your finger and I can't stop
3.	Night	Save me from the night
4.	Bodies	You give your heart to someone
5.	Texas	Racin' down the highway, and I'm pickin' up the speed
6.	War	Since you wanna go to war
7.	Like That	Hit me up, if you're down for the ride
8.	Dream	She's on top of the world
9.	Requiem	Stairs I can't tread, so you go on ahead
10.	Say	You finally found the high that you've been chasing
11.	Euphoria	Your touch is my favorite drug
12.	Just To Die	You just keep on rolling the dice
13.	Id	All the mountains I'm facing, I can't climb without breaking

The analysis of the metaphorical expressions consists of 13 data that go as follows:

Song 1

In the first song entitled "Amen", the lyrics "All of the weight of the world on my shoulders crashing down on me" contain an orientational metaphor. Keshi uses the metaphor of "down" to represent struggle. According to Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the metaphors "Happy is up" and "Sad is down" come from how people experience their emotions physically. The orientational metaphors of "down" are often associated with negative experiences and difficulties. The meaning of the phrase is feeling trapped under too many responsibilities or struggles. The "weight of the world" represents

heavy burdens, like personal struggles or expectations, while “on my shoulders” suggests carrying these alone. The phrase “crashing down” shows that the pressure is becoming too much to handle, leading to emotional exhaustion. This analysis is contextually analyzed using semantic analysis, specifically using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, which provides a framework for analyzing metaphors based on context.

Song 2

In the second song entitled “Soft Spot”, the lyrics “I’m wrapped around your finger and I can’t stop” contain an orientational metaphor. The phrase “wrapped around” implies positioning. According to Lakoff and Johnson’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the phrase implies a spatial relationship of dominance and submission. The singer is metaphorically in a lower position, while the other person has control. By using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, the phrase “I’m wrapped around your finger and I can’t stop” conveys the idea of being completely controlled or influenced by someone, often in a romantic or emotional sense. This shows how the singer embraces their vulnerability instead of rejecting it.

Song 3

In the third song entitled “Night”, the lyrics “Save me from the night” contain an ontological metaphor. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the word “night” is treated as a force that the singer needs to be saved from, while “night” is just a time of the day and does not harm anyone. In the lyrics, “night” is being treated metaphorically (Personification) as if it has power, just like humans. The target domain is “night,” and the source domain is a person or force capable of causing harm. The Use Theory helps convey the idea that the singer fears what the night represents, whether it is loneliness or painful memories. The singers are pleading for someone to rescue them from falling into the darkness metaphorically.

Song 4

In the fourth song entitled “Bodies”, the lyrics “You give your heart to someone” contain an ontological metaphor. The singer treats an abstract concept (love) as something that can be given or taken. This is categorized as an ontological metaphor (Entity and Substance) because love is treated as something that exists physically, not just an emotion. By analyzing the lyrics contextually using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, the meaning of the lyrics above is that the singer has given his full love and trust to someone, but the person does not appreciate it and changes their mind.

Song 5

In the fifth song entitled “Texas”, the lyrics “Racin’ down the highway, and I’m pickin’ up the speed” contain a structural metaphor where the word “highway” represents the singer’s life path, and “speed” represents how quickly life progresses. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, this metaphor is systematic, meaning that different aspects of life are understood in terms of movement. The lyric above represents the speaker’s experience of life as a fast-moving journey. By comparing life to driving on a “highway”, the line suggests a sense of urgency. The phrase “pickin’ up the speed” reinforces the idea that life is uncontrollable.

Song 6

In the sixth song entitled “War”, the lyrics “Since you wanna go to war” contain a structural metaphor where it systematically treats love and relationships as “war”. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the phrase “go to war” suggests the relationship is like a battlefield where both partners fight against each other. This is categorized as a structural metaphor under the “Love is war” concept. By using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, the lyric above means that the singer’s relationship has turned into a conflict. The singer feels like they are both trying to hurt each other rather than fix things. It suggests a toxic cycle where both partners are more focused on winning arguments than saving the relationship.

Song 7

In the seventh song entitled “Like That”, the lyrics “Hit me up, if you’re down for the ride”

contain 2 orientational metaphors. According to Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the phrase "Hit me up" is categorized as an orientational metaphor because it uses the physical position of "up" as something positive, following the metaphor related to communication or connection, and in slang, it means to reach out or contact, which is often seen as a positive action. While the phrase "If you're down for the ride" contains orientational metaphors by using the idea of "down" also describes something positive, which means willingness. Using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, the phrase "Hit me up" is the idea of saying "call me or text me." It is used to express interest in someone and suggests that the singer is eager for a response. While the phrase "if you're down for the ride" conveys the idea of whether the person the singer is interacting with is willing to proceed, even though "down" typically has a negative connotation. In this context, it is used to show agreement or acceptance.

Song 8

In the eighth song entitled "Dream", the lyrics "She's on top of the world" contain an orientational metaphor. The phrase "on top" uses spatial direction to connect the positive idea. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the phrase "on top" often refers to success, happiness, or being in a high position in life. By using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, it is crucial to underline that the meaning of a word depends on its use in context. The singer describes the girl as living a great life or making positive achievements, in contrast to the singer's feelings. The singer wants to convey that the phrase "she's on top of the world" means that the girl is emotionally developed and happy in her new relationship. The singer, on the other hand, is still stuck in his past.

Song 9

In the ninth song entitled "Requiem", the lyrics "Stairs I can't tread, so you go on ahead" contain an orientational metaphor. The phrase "so you go on ahead" reinforces the idea that someone else is moving forward, leaving the singer behind. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the phrase "go on ahead" are categorized as an orientational metaphor because it relies on spatial directions (forward/backward) to represent emotions. By using the Use Theory, the lyrics above express the singer's emotional struggle after losing someone. The "stairs" symbolize the path of life. The speaker is unable to move forward because the person they lost has already "go on ahead", implying they have gone and moved on.

Song 10

In the tenth song entitled "Say", the lyrics "You finally found the high that you've been chasing" contain an ontological metaphor (Entity and Substance) because the phrase "found the high" treats the word "high" (an emotional state) as a physical object that can be found or obtained. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the phrase "chasing" also reinforces this, as if "high" is a tangible thing that can be pursued like a physical object. The target domain is "high" (abstract), and the source domain is a physical object. By using the Theory of Use by Wittgenstein, the lyrics mean that the person seeks a euphoric feeling or emotion. The metaphor highlights how the singer treats happiness or excitement as something that can be obtained.

Song 11

In the eleventh song entitled "Euphoria", the lyrics "Your touch is my favorite drug" contain an ontological metaphor. The lyrics conceptualize an abstract concept, "touch" as a drug, something that can be consumed and create addiction. This lyric is categorized as an ontological metaphor (Entity and Substance) that describes "touch" as something addictive and dangerous, just like drugs. By using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, the phrase "Your touch is my favorite drug" means that the singer feels addicted to their lover's touch, just like a person can become addicted to a drug.

Song 12

In the twelfth song entitled "Just To Die", the lyrics "You just keep on rolling the dice" contain a structural metaphor where the phrase "rolling the dice" refers to gambling, where the outcome is based on luck. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, this metaphor structures life as something uncertain, where people can only take risks and hope. This lyric is categorized as a structural metaphor of the "Love

is a Game of Chance” concept. By using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, the phrase “You just keep on rolling the dice” means that life is unpredictable, and people have to take risks without knowing the outcome.

Song 13

In the thirteenth song entitled “Id”, the lyrics “All the mountains I’m facing, I can’t climb without breaking” contain a structural metaphor where the singer describes struggles as “mountains” they are “facing”. According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the phrase “I can’t climb without breaking” suggests that the act of overcoming struggles is like climbing a mountain, which requires strength and persistence. This is categorized as a structural metaphor where life is conceptualized as a mountain to climb. By using the Use Theory by Wittgenstein, the lyric “All the mountains I’m facing, I can’t climb without breaking” means the singer is going through big challenges in life and struggling to overcome them without feeling exhausted.

Table 2. Classification of Metaphorical Expressions Based on Metaphor Types

No	Title of the Song	Metaphorical expression	Metaphor Type
1.	Amen	All of the weight of the world on my shoulders crashing down on me	Orientational
2.	Soft Spot	I’m wrapped around your finger and I can’t stop	Orientational
3.	Night	Save me from the night	Ontological
4.	Bodies	You give your heart to someone	Ontological
5.	Texas	Racin’ down the highway, and I’m pickin’ up the speed	Structural
6.	War	Since you wanna go to war	Structural
7.	Like That	Hit me up, if you’re down for the ride	Orientational
8.	Dream	She’s on top of the world	Orientational
9.	Requiem	Stairs I can’t tread, so you go on ahead	Orientational
10.	Say	You finally found the high that you’ve been chasing	Ontological
11.	Euphoria	Your touch is my favorite drug	Ontological
12.	Just To Die	You just keep on rolling the dice	Structural
13.	Id	All the mountains I’m facing, I can’t climb without breaking	Structural

CONCLUSIONS

The metaphorical expressions identified in the 13 selected songs show that metaphors play a significant role in shaping lyrical meaning. These metaphors (orientational, ontological, and structural) provide a conceptual framework for expressing emotions and abstract experiences, allowing the songwriter to convey feelings such as love and loss in a more imaginative and relatable way. The findings indicate that metaphor is an essential element in contemporary songwriting, offering depth and emotional resonance in musical narratives.

However, this study is limited to a single album by one artist, which may not represent the broader use of metaphor in music across different genres, cultures, or languages. The analysis also focuses solely on the linguistic and contextual meaning of metaphors, without exploring audience interpretation or the songwriter’s intent.

Future research may expand the scope of analysis to cover a wider range of artists and musical genres to compare metaphor usage across various styles and cultural backgrounds. Future researchers may also consider incorporating audience perspectives by conducting interviews, focus groups, or surveys to better understand how listeners interpret metaphorical expressions in songs. In addition, the study could examine the cognitive or sociolinguistic aspects of metaphor in lyrics to explore how metaphors relate to identity, emotional expression, or cultural values.

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