EXISTENTIAL JOURNEY TOWARDS LIVING AN AUTHENTIC LIFE IN BILLIE EILISH'S SELECTED SONG LYRICS

THESIS

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THESIS

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I state that the thesis entitled **"Existential Journey towards Living an Authentic Life in Billie Eilish's Selected Song Lyrics"** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there are any objections or claims, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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The Researcher

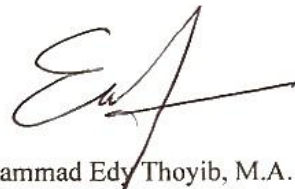Wahyu Alif Nur Aulia

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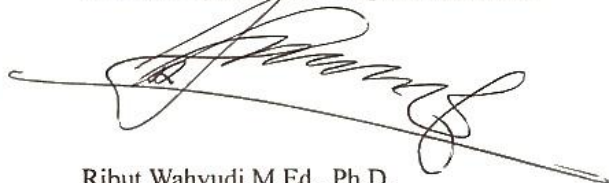
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MOTTO

"It always seems impossible until it's done."

— Nelson Mandela

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, who have always supported and prayed for me throughout my university education. Thanks to their prayers, sacrifices, and unwavering material and moral support, I was able to complete this thesis. In addition, I dedicate this thesis to myself—for having the strength to persevere despite all the challenges faced along the way.

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First of all, all praise is due to Allah SWT, the Lord of the universe, the Most Compassionate and Most Merciful. By His abundant grace, I was able to complete this thesis entitled "Existential Journey towards Living an Authentic Life in Billie Eilish's Selected Song Lyrics." Peace and blessings be upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who has guided us from the darkness into the light.

Secondly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Muhammad Edy Thoyib, M.A., my thesis supervisor, for his invaluable guidance and support, which have enabled me to complete this thesis. I also extend my gratitude to the Rector of UIN Malang, Prof. Dr. H. Zainuddin, M.A.; the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Dr. Faishol, M.Ag.; the Head of the English Literature Study Program, Mr. Ribut Wahyudi, M.Ed., Ph.D.; my academic advisor, Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, M.Pd.; and all lecturers of the English Literature Department for their continuous support and direction throughout my academic journey.

Thirdly, my heartfelt thanks go to my dear friends — Stivanny, Windi, Indah, and Dara — who have always been there for me with their unwavering support. Whether it was taking me to buy something or helping me understand difficult assignments, they never hesitated to lend a hand.

Lastly, I am fully aware that this thesis is far from perfect. Therefore, I warmly welcome any constructive criticism and suggestions for the improvement and refinement of this research.

ABSTRACT

Aulia, Wahyu Alif Nur (2025) Existential Journey towards Living an Authentic Life in Billie Eilish's Selected Song Lyrics. Undergraduates Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Muhammad Edy Thoyib, SS., M.A.

Keywords: Existentialism, Authentic Life, Bad Faith, Song Lyric

Existentialism is a school of philosophy that asserts human existence precedes essence. This means that humans are not born with a fixed meaning or purpose but must instead create their own meaning and identity through freedom of choice and conscious action. In the context of today's fast-paced and demanding society, many individuals face existential struggles, often characterized by feelings of emptiness and uncertainty, which make it difficult to live an authentic life. This research aims to examine the existentialism of authentic life in Billie Eilish's song lyrics through the use of figurative language. Employing literary criticism and Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist theory, this research analyzes four songs that reflect the concepts of authentic life and bad faith through figurative language devices such as metaphor, symbol, irony, personification, and hyperbole. The findings reveal that the songs *Xanny* and *You Should See Me In A Crown* present subject who are aware of her freedom, willing to reject external pressures, and take full responsibility for the meaning she assigns to her life. In contrast, the songs *Wish You Were Gay* and *Bad Guy* depict subject trapped in bad faith, unable to act authentically due to social pressure and anxiety, ultimately leading subject to deny her own freedom. This research concludes that each song represents a unique existential journey: two songs depict subjects who embrace authenticity, while the other two illustrate subjects confined by bad faith.

ABSTRAK

Aulia, Wahyu Alif Nur (2025) Perjalanan Eksistensial Menuju Kehidupan yang Autentik dalam Lirik Lagu Pilihan Billie Eilish. Skripsi. Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing Muhammad Edy Thoyib, SS., M.A.

Kata Kunci: Eksistensialisme, Kehidupan Otentik, Itikad Buruk, Lirik Lagu

Eksistensialisme adalah aliran filsafat yang menyatakan bahwa keberadaan manusia mendahului esensi. Artinya, manusia tidak dilahirkan dengan makna atau tujuan tetap, melainkan harus menciptakan makna dan identitas mereka sendiri melalui kebebasan memilih dan tindakan yang sadar. Dalam konteks masyarakat modern yang serba cepat dan penuh tekanan, banyak individu mengalami masalah eksistensial, yang ditandai dengan rasa hampa dan ketidakpastian, sehingga sulit menjalani kehidupan yang autentik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji eksistensialisme kehidupan otentik yang ada pada lirik lagu Billie Eilish melalui penggunaan figurative language. Penelitian ini menggunakan kritik sastra dan menggunakan teori eksistensialisme dari jean paul sartre. Peneliti menemukan empat lagu yang merepresentasikan konsep bad faith dan authentic life melalui penggunaan gaya bahasa kiasan seperti metafora, simbol, ironi, personifikasi, dan hiperbola. Peneliti menemukan bahwa lagu *Xanny* dan *You Should See Me In A Crown* menggambarkan subjek yang sadar akan kebebasannya, berani menolak tekanan eksternal, dan bertanggung jawab atas makna hidup yang dipilihnya. Sementara itu. lagu *Wish You Were Gay* dan *Bad Guy* menunjukkan subjek yang terjebak dalam bad faith karena tidak mampu bertindak secara autentik akibat tekanan sosial dan kecemasan, sehingga menyangkal kebebasan mereka sendiri. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa setiap lagu menyajikan perjalanan eksistensial yang unik: dua lagu mencerminkan kehidupan yang otentik, sementara dua lainnya menunjukkan keterjebakan dalam itikad buruk.

مستخلص البحث

أوليا، واهيو أليف نور (2025). الرحلة الوجودية نحو عيش حياة أصيلة في كلمات مختارة من أغاني بيلي إيليش. سكريبسي. قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: محمد إيدي طيب، س. س. م

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوجودية، الحياة الأصيلة، النية السيئة، كلمات الأغاني

الوجودية هي تيار فلسفي يرى أن وجود الإنسان يسبق جوهره، أي أن الإنسان لا يُولد بمعنى أو هدف ثابت، بل عليه أن يخلق معناه وهويته من خلال حرية الاختيار والأفعال الواعية. في سياق المجتمع الحديث الذي يتسم بالسرعة والضغوط، يواجه كثير من الأفراد مشاكل وجودية تتمثل في الشعور بالفراغ وعدم اليقين، مما يجعل من الصعب عيش حياة أصيلة. يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة الوجودية والحياة الأصيلة في كلمات أغاني بيلي إيليش من خلال استخدام اللغة المجازية. اعتمد الباحث في هذا البحث على النقد الأدبي ونظرية الوجودية لجان بول سارتر. وقد وجد الباحث أن هناك أربع أغانٍ تمثل مفهومي "النية السيئة" و"الحياة الأصيلة" من خلال استخدام الأساليب البلاغية مثل الاستعارة، والرمز، والسخرية، والتجسيد، والمبالغة. تشير نتائج البحث تصوران شخصية تدرك حريتها، ترفض *You Should See Me In A Crown* و *Xanny* إلى أن أغنيتي و *Wish You Were Gay* الضغوط الخارجية، وتتحمل المسؤولية عن معنى الحياة الذي تختاره. أما أغنيتا فتُظهران شخصية عالقة في "النية السيئة" لعدم قدرتها على التصرف بشكل أصيل بسبب الضغوط *Bad Guy* الاجتماعية والقلق، مما يؤدي إلى إنكار حريتها الذاتية. ويخلص هذا البحث إلى أن كل أغنية تقدم رحلة وجودية فريدة: فهناك أغنيتان تعكسان الحياة الأصيلة، بينما الأغنيتان الأخريان تظهران الوقوع في فخ النية السيئة.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the background of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitation and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Existentialism asserts that people have free will, enabling them to define their own life's purpose (Uy & Flores, 2018). Sartre (1943) argues that humans do not possess an inherent essence or purpose at birth; instead, they shape their identity through decisions and actions. However, in today's fast-paced and demanding society, many individuals struggle with their sense of self, often experiencing feelings of emptiness and uncertainty. A survey on youth anxiety found that young adults frequently struggle with their sense of identity as they get older, feeling pessimistic due to pressures related to relationships, finances, and education, along with uncertainty and self-doubt (McNulty & Parsons, 2023). These struggles make it difficult for individuals to discover an authentic life.

In existentialist philosophical writings, the term *"authenticity"* is used to describe an ideal life characterized by qualities like integrity, intensity, clarity, logic, and honesty (Guignon, 2008). According to Sartre (1943), authenticity is part of a long-standing philosophical tradition that explores the meanings of happiness, humanity, and self-identity. Living authentically means rejecting bad

faith and embracing personal freedom along with the responsibilities it entails. One must acknowledge that humans have the power to shape both their environment and themselves through their choices and actions (Sartre, 1943). Sartre highlights that despite its apparent burden, authenticity represents a profound form of optimism, as it grants individuals complete control over their own destiny.

Building upon this notion, Sartre further develops the idea of authenticity as a response to existential freedom and personal responsibility. In *"Being and Nothingness" (L'Être et le Néant),* he discusses key existentialist concepts such as being, nothingness, freedom, and responsibility, all of which are crucial to understanding authenticity. Sartre states, *"As we have seen, for human reality, to be is to choose oneself; nothing comes to it either from the outside or from within which it can receive or accept" (Sartre, 1943).* Sartre argues that being authentic means recognizing our freedom to define who we are and how we live, without relying on external reasons or justifications. Sartre further emphasizes that authenticity is not merely a given state but something that must be actively pursued. He explains:

> *"Authenticity and individuality have to be won: I will be my own authenticity only if, under the infuence of the call of conscience (Ruf des Gewissens), I throw myself toward death, as toward my ownmost possibility, with resolute decision (Entschlossenheit). At that moment I am disclosed to myself in authenticity, and I raise others, too, along with me, in the direction of authenticity" (Sartre, 1943).*

The impact of existentialist thought extends beyond philosophy into the realms of art and literature. Rising to popularity in Paris in the 1950s, existentialism transformed from academic discussions into a cultural movement that influenced literature, song, and political thought (Sartre, 1943). *"The Second Sex"* became one of the most influential non-fiction books of the 20th century, particularly in shaping existential feminist thought (Reynolds, 2014). Furthermore, novels such as *"Nausea"* by Sartre and *"The Outsider"* by Albert Camus became widely read and critically acclaimed classics. Meanwhile, in music, existentialism has played a major role in shaping the meaning and themes of song lyrics.

As a result, existentialism evolved into a widespread cultural phenomenon that captured the attention of many. Song lyrics, in particular, provide musicians with a unique platform to poetically express existential struggles in a deeply personal way. As a form of artistic expression, song lyrics often reflect the singer or songwriter's emotional experiences. They tend to be abstract, conveying emotions implicitly (Hu et al., 2009). Through powerful and imaginative language, lyrics can capture deep and complex emotions. Influenced by existentialist thought, themes of existential anxiety, alienation, and self-identity continue to resonate in modern music.

One modern artist whose work reflects existentialist concepts is Billie Eilish. The American singer-songwriter is widely recognized for her reflective and melancholic lyrics. Eilish's capacity to express ideas of alienation, self-identity, and existential angst has fascinated audiences since her debut. Among

her discography, the researcher has chosen to focus on the album *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go? (2019)* rather than her other works, because this album delves more deeply into existentialist themes—particularly the search for meaning in life, inner turmoil, and the notion of individual freedom. These themes are conveyed through a combination of dark and emotionally charged lyrics. There are 14 tracks on the album, *including "!!!!!!!," "Bad Guy," "Xanny," "You Should See Me In A Crown," "All The Good Girls Go To Hell," "Wish You Were Gay," "When The Party's Over," "8," "My Strange Addiction," "Bury A friend," "Ilomilo," "Listen Before I Go," "I Love You," "Good Bye."* Among these, four songs are particularly relevant to existentialist themes.

Those four songs emphasize the struggles of achieving an authentic life by using existential concepts like freedom, anxiety, and bad faith. The difficulties of self-identity, social expectations, and individual freedom are all depicted beautifully through the lyrics. The existential concerns in Eilish's lyrics are heavily influenced by figurative language. Through personification, metaphor, and symbolism, figurative language allows writers to express abstract concepts and nuanced feelings (Raisa, 2017). Examining these lyrical components provides a more profound understanding of the existentialist concepts contained throughout her songs.

Billie Eilish's work has attracted researchers to examine her song lyrics. For instance, Lutfiana (2023) examines imagery, while Queenta (2022) analyzes different types of figurative language. Adi and Devita (2024) investigate

metaphorical expressions, whereas Siahaan (2021) and Nasution (2024) focus on identifying slang words. Additionally, several studies have explored existentialist concepts, particularly the concept of authenticity in life. Fitriana (2018) and Jia (2021) analyze existentialism in song lyrics, while Pani (2013), Sharma (2015), and Boukerrou (2023) examine existentialist concepts in T.S. Eliot's poetry. Petrović (2020) and Umar (2021) discuss the relationship between existentialism and nihilism in poetry. Furthermore, Ma (2021) and Sholihah & Simanjutak (2024) investigate how poetry serves as a medium for exploring authenticity in existentialist thought.

Although previous studies have analyzed Billie Eilish's song lyrics, this study differs in its focus. Prior research has examined figurative language, such as personification, metaphor, and simile, highlighting its role in shaping meaning and emotion. However, this study goes further by including an existentialist perspective, specifically using Jean-Paul Sartre's theory to explore concepts of authenticity, freedom, and responsibility in *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?*. By analyzing philosophy through figurative language, this study not only reinforces previous findings but also expands the discussion on existentialism in Billie Eilish's lyrics, an area that remains underexplored.

B. Problem of the Study

Related to the research background above, the problem design is how do the selected song lyrics in "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?" album portray the existentialism of authentic life?

C. Significance of the Study

This study makes a significant contribution to existentialism studies, particularly in the context of song lyrics. It explores how Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of an authentic life is expressed in modern songs, specifically through Billie Eilish's lyrics. The research deepens our understanding of complex philosophical concepts such as freedom, responsibility, angst, and bad faith. It reveals how Eilish's lyrics reflect the existential struggles of many young people today, including anxiety, uncertainty, and the search for meaning. Additionally, this study highlights how popular music can help individuals find identity issues. Furthermore, by analyzing song lyrics using figurative language, this research expands the study of music by demonstrating how symbolism and allusion can effectively convey existential concerns.

D. Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study examines the struggles of achieving an authentic life as reflected in song lyrics, using Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy of existentialism as the main theoretical framework. This research focuses on how existential concepts such as freedom, responsibility, angst, and bad faith are expressed in selected lyrics, particularly in relation to Sartre's notion of authenticity. However, the study is limited to the analysis of four songs: *Bad Guy, Xanny, You Should See Me in a Crown,* and *Wish You Were Gay.* These songs were selected based on their themes of relevance to existential struggle and self-

identity. Consequently, the findings and interpretations are confined to these selected tracks.

E. Definition of Key terms

1. Existentialism

   Existentialism is a school of philosophy that holds that human existence precedes essence. This means that human beings are not born with a fixed purpose or inherent meaning, but must instead create their own meaning and identity through free choice and conscious action (Sartre, 1943).

2. Authenticity

   Authenticity means accepting our mortality, recognizing our freedom, and resolutely choosing to live according to our own beliefs (Sartre, 1943).

3. Authentic life

   Authentic life means living with full awareness of our freedom and taking full responsibility for it (Sartre, 1943).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter consists of some theories related to this study both in terms of literature and approaches used, concerning existentialism in philosophy, Jean Paul Sartre's existentialism, and figurative language. This chapter aims to provide readers with a deep understanding of the theories used in this study.

A. Existentialism

Existentialism was born out of Kierkegaard's 19th-century rejection of Hegel's rationalist and idealist system, which later developed further in modern philosophy. In Hegel's system, the individual is merely a small part of the grand historical process, which is believed to have a definite direction and can be explained rationally (Rempel, 1959). However, Kierkegaard rejected this perspective, emphasizing that the individual exists as a unique entity that must make its own existential decisions (Löwith, 1966). He argued that Hegel's system overlooked the subjective experience of the individual, reducing human existence to an abstract component within a rational and deterministic framework (Rempel, 1959).

From this criticism, Kierkegaard developed several key concepts that form the foundation of existentialism (Rempel, 1959). First, the individual as the center of existence, no philosophical system can fully explain human life. Second, existential decision-making, humans must define their own meaning without relying on metaphysical systems or rationalism. Third,

anxiety as an inherent part of existence, humans experience anxiety because they must confront their own freedom and responsibility. Consequently, Kierkegaard introduced the concept of *"Hiin Enkelte,"* meaning *the solitary individual (Rempel, 1959).* He asserted that true existence is an individual existence, in which a person must face God directly, rather than as part of a larger rational structure, as proposed in Hegel's philosophy.

Kierkegaard's ideas later inspired 20th-century existentialists such as Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus, who further developed the notion that human existence has no inherent meaning and that individuals must create their own meaning (Rempel, 1959). Reynolds (2014) identifies six main concepts in existentialism, which serve as common threads in existentialist thought. First, freedom and responsibility, where Sartre argues that humans are *"condemned to be free,"* meaning that no external justification can determine one's actions, and individuals must take full responsibility for their choices. Second, death and mortality, as Heidegger introduced the concept of *"Being-towards-death,"* emphasizing that awareness of death is central to human existence.

Third, phenomenological experience and moods, where Camus developed the idea of *"the absurd,"* describing humanity's search for meaning in a world that offers no inherent answers. Fourth, authenticity vs. self-deception, illustrated by Sartre's concept of *"bad faith,"* which occurs when individuals deceive themselves to escape the burden of freedom. Fifth, critique of traditional morality and values, as Nietzsche argued that

traditional morality arises from resentment, a reaction of the weak against the strong, while Sartre and de Beauvoir later contended that morality is not externally imposed but must be self-created. Lastly, relationships with others and social structures, where Sartre famously stated that *"Hell is other people,"* suggesting that social interactions often lead to existential conflict, though Merleau-Ponty countered this view by emphasizing that social relationships also shape self-awareness.

B. Jean Paul Sartre's Existentialism

According to Sartre (1943), existentialism highlights the fact that each individual is not born with a specific purpose or essence; instead, they must create their own meaning and purpose in life through choices and actions. He introduced the idea that *"Existence Precedes Essence,"* which suggests that rather than adhering to a predetermined nature, humans first exist and then establish their meaning or essence through their decisions and actions. Sartre emphasized that humans are *"condemned to be free"* and are completely responsible for their choices. He states, *"Human freedom precedes man's essence and makes it possible; the human being's essence is in suspense in his freedom" (1943)*. This quotation indicates that freedom serves as the foundation for a person's essence, which is subsequently revealed through their decisions and experiences in life.

Being and Nothingness by Jean-Paul Sartre discusses existentialism concepts concerning human existence, freedom, responsibility, and authenticity. These fundamental concepts put human freedom and

responsibility at the center of life, challenging traditional philosophical and theological frameworks. Here is an overview of the key concepts in Sartre's existentialism.

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┌──────────┐      ┌──────────┐      ┌──────────┐
│ Existence│ ⟹   │   Being  │ ⟹   │  Freedom │
│ Precedes │      │ For-Itself│     │          │
│  Essence │      │  (Human) │      │          │
└──────────┘      └──────────┘      └──────────┘
                                          ⇓
┌──────────┐      ┌──────────┐      ┌──────────┐
│Responsibi│ ⟸   │Transcende│ ⟸   │Interpersonal│
│   lity   │      │   nce    │      │Relationship │
└──────────┘      └──────────┘      └──────────┘
     ⇓
┌──────────┐      ┌──────────┐
│          │  ⟶  │ Bad Faith│
│ Anguish  │      └──────────┘
│          │  ⟶  ┌──────────┐
└──────────┘      │Authentic Life│
                  └──────────┘
```
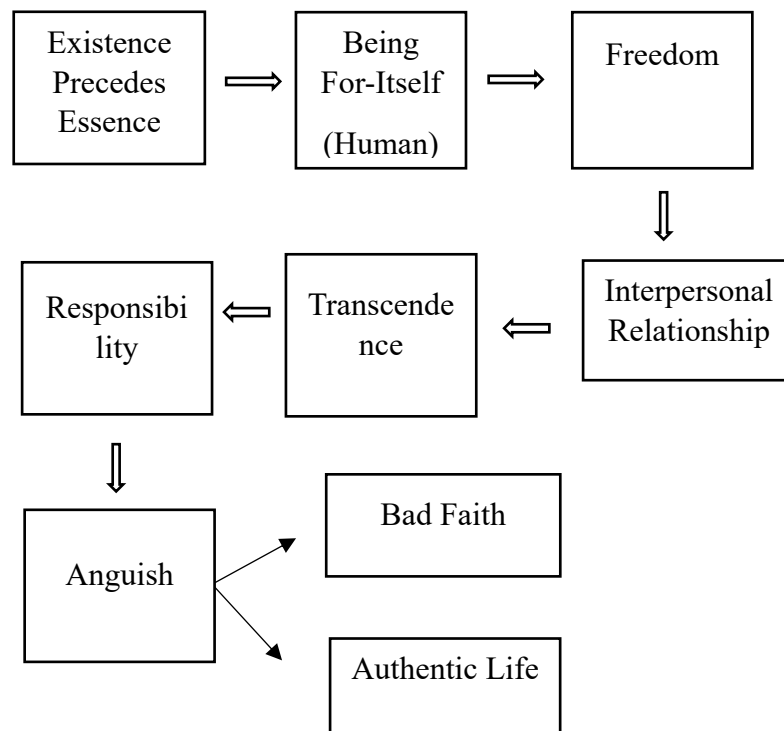
1. Existence Precedes Essence

   Sartre first proposed the concept that existence precedes essence, meaning that people are not born with an intrinsic nature or predetermined purpose. Instead, they shape their own identity through the decisions and actions they take throughout life. Essentialism, as supported by Aristotle and religious doctrines, holds that all beings have a definite essence or purpose that is inherent from the beginning. Sartre, however, rejects this perspective. According to Sartre,

existence refers to a person's physical reality, their presence in the world and their awareness of themselves.

Humans are continuously confronted with the freedom to make choices that shape who they are. As he states: *"The eternity that man seeks is not the infinity of duration, that futile chasing after itself for which I myself am responsible: it is self-repose, the atemporality of absolute self-coincidence" (Sartre, 1943).* This quote portrays man's desire to reach an absolute state of self-coherence and completeness. However, Sartre argues that this is an illusion. Humans often seek "eternity" in the form of absolute peace or certainty, something that exists outside of time (atemporality). This desire, however, is ultimately futile, as human beings are dynamic, constantly changing, and defining themselves through action.

Sartre asserts that man never has a stable essence to achieve or harmonize with. Instead, man must create his own meaning through choices and actions over time. The search for immortality or "peace in oneself" contradicts the nature of human existence, which is always a project of becoming. As such, the desire to "rest in oneself" is simply another way of escaping the reality of human freedom. Sartre believes that the search for absolute harmony with oneself is an illusion because humans can never be fully at one with themselves, they are always in an "unfinished" state and must take responsibility for their existence.

2. Being-in-Itself *"Être-en-soi"* and Being-for-Itself *"Être-pour-soi"*

Being-in-itself refers to the existence of objects in the world that are passive, static, and unconscious entities. A rock or a table, for example, simply exists; it does not possess self-awareness or the ability to reflect on its own existence. On the other hand, being-for-itself refers to the nature of human existence that is conscious, dynamic, and constantly in the process of becoming. Humans do not simply exist; they continuously define themselves through their choices and actions.

Sartre emphasizes this in his statement: *"Man is free because he is not an itself but self-presence" (Sartre, 1943).* This means that humans do not have a fixed identity or essence (as objects in being-in-itself do). Instead, humans are "present to themselves," meaning they continuously shape their identity through consciousness and choice. This reflects existential freedom, which is not bound to any particular condition or pre-existing essence. As being-for-itself, humans can always choose and redefine themselves; thus, their freedom is not confined by any limitations, whether environmental, social, or personal.

3. Freedom

For Sartre, freedom is not merely a concept in political or social contexts; it is the fundamental essence of human existence. This

freedom is not something that can be avoided or delegated to others. Sartre asserts that humans are "condemned to be free." This means that humans do not have a predetermined essence that defines them from the beginning; instead, they must create themselves through action. Freedom in Sartre's existentialism is absolute, there is no external entity that determines a person's fate except for themselves. However, this freedom is not just a right; it is also a burden that requires individuals to take full responsibility for their choices.

4. Interpersonal Relationship

Interpersonal relationships are often conflictual due to the freedom of each individual. In being-for-others, humans are not only aware of themselves, but also how they are seen by others. This relationship creates tension between the desire to be a subject (who actively chooses and acts) and the fear of being an object (who is judged or controlled by others). As he wrote, *"Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others" (Sartre, 1943)*. This conflict arises because the presence of others threatens our freedom. When someone looks at us, we become aware that we can be judged, manipulated, or even reduced to "something" in their perspective.

5. Transcendence

In Sartre's philosophy, transcendence refers to human consciousness that always moves beyond its current state of existence. Consciousness is not static; it constantly projects itself into the future,

creating new projects and possibilities. This concept highlights humanity's capacity to go beyond present circumstances and create new meaning and purpose in life.

Unlike objects (being-in-itself), which exist in a fixed and unchanging state, human consciousness (being-for-itself) is always in the process of "becoming." For example, a student currently studying in college is not merely a student, he is always in the process of becoming something more, such as an academic, writer, or professional in his field. He is not limited to one definition because his consciousness allows him to continuously change and develop. Humans are never "finished," we are always engaged in a project to become something else. This explains why people often feel restless or dissatisfied with their current state because they are always seeking something beyond what they presently are.

6. Responsibility

Since humans are free, they are also fully responsible for their actions. Sartre rejects the idea that people can blame external factors such as God, fate, or society for their decisions and existence. He writes: *"Man carries the whole world on his shoulders" (Sartre, 1943).* Which means that every decision a person makes reflects who they are and shapes the world they live in. Human beings are not passive recipients of their circumstances; rather, they actively construct their own identity through their choices.

7. Anguish

According to Sartre (1943), angst (anxiety) arises when individuals become fully aware of their absolute freedom and the weight of responsibility that comes with it. Sartre describes human beings as "condemned to be free," meaning that no external force whether fate, God, or societal structures determines their choices.

Human becomes anxious when he knows that he can choose his own path. As he states: *"And the anguish is me, since, by the mere fact of bearing myself in existence as consciousness of being, I make myself as not being this past of good resolutions that I am" (Sartre, 1943)*. This insight reveals that since no external factors control one's life path, each person is entirely responsible for defining their own purpose. This often leads to existential angst, as there are no guarantees that one's choices are the "right" ones. However, Sartre views angst as a positive experience. By embracing it, individuals can live authentically, creating their own values and purpose rather than conforming to external pressures or the illusion of universal truths.

8. Bad Faith

Sartre argues that many people try to escape their own freedom through bad faith *(mauvaise foi)*. This is a state in which a person deceives themselves by pretending that they are not free or that they are "forced" to act in a certain way. He explains: *"Bad faith seeks to flee from the in-itself into the internal disintegration of my being"*

(Sartre, 1943). This means that bad faith is an attempt to escape the burden of freedom by convincing oneself that one's choices are predetermined or inevitable.

A person in bad faith simultaneously believes and disbelieves their own lie. This is different from cynicism; a cynic is aware of their deception but does not care, while a person in bad faith constructs a reality that allows them to avoid the truth without fully realizing it. One of Sartre's famous examples of bad faith is the café waitress who behaves rigidly and mechanically, as if she is merely a "waitress" and nothing more. She hides her freedom behind her social role, denying herself the possibility of being anything else.

However, Sartre states that bad faith is not final. Although bad faith can become a settled way of living for some individuals, it is metastable—meaning that it is not entirely stable and can be disrupted or abandoned. Although difficult, Sartre maintains that one can "wake up" from bad faith, just as one can awaken from a dream. The term metastable refers to a condition that may persist for a long time yet still holds the potential for change or interruption.

This means that although one may remain in bad faith for an extended period, it does not mean one is trapped there indefinitely. The structure of bad faith is not absolute or fixed; it can be "shaken" by newfound awareness or existential reflection. Sartre rejects the notion of psychological determinism that would condemn a person to

permanent self-deception. Instead, he argues that human beings are always engaged in an existential project—and this project can change the moment they reawaken to the reality of their freedom.

9. Authenticity - Authentic Life

Authenticity in Sartre's existentialism means living in accordance with one's freedom and responsibility, without hiding behind illusions or social lies. An authentic person recognizes their freedom, acts based on self-chosen values, and does not live in bad faith. In contrast, inauthentic individuals try to deny their freedom by blaming external factors or conforming to established social roles. So, authenticity is the realization and acceptance of one's own existential principles.

A truly authentic person maintains consistency between thoughts, actions, and emotions, is honest with themselves about their choices, reflects on their decisions rather than blindly following social expectations, and has the courage to make decisions based on personal values. Someone who fully understands their existential freedom will live authentically, making choices that align with their true self rather than seeking validation from others. By embracing authenticity, individuals take full control of their existence and shape their identity in a meaningful way.

C. Figurative Language

Many song lyrics utilize figurative language to enhance meaning and amplify emotional expression in music. Figurative language significantly

differs from what language users perceive as the usual meaning of words or the standard order of words, aiming to achieve a particular meaning or effect (Abrams & Harpham, 2015). In the 11th edition of *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams, various terms related to figurative language are discussed. The book explores several forms of figurative language, including the following:

1. Simile

A simile is an explicit comparison between two different things, using the words "like" or "as" which aims to illustrate an idea or make a description more vivid. This technique creates a strong visualization by showing an unexpected but relevant relationship, as in "She is as brave as a lion." This comparison is not only aesthetic, but also often gives depth of meaning or emotion to the text.

2. Metaphor

In metaphor, a word or expression that in literal usage shows one kind of thing is applied to a very different kind of thing, without stating a comparison. Metaphors go beyond literal explanations to create new relationships, as in "Time is a thief." It describes time as a thief who steals life's moments without actually physically stealing them, explaining the concept in a deep and abstract way.

3. Personification

Personification, or in Greek terms, prosopopeia, in which inanimate objects or abstract concepts are said to be as if gifted with life or with

human attributes or feelings. As in "The wind whispered through the trees." Personification creates an emotional effect and builds a bridge between the human and non-human worlds.

4. Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of adjacent words, often used for musicality or rhythmic effect. Alliteration is often used in poetry and speech for aesthetic appeal. As in "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." It is used to create rhythm, tone, or emphasize a particular phrase.

5. Metonymy

Metonymy comes from a Greek word meaning "change of name." In metonymy, a literal term for something is used to refer to something closely related to it, based on repeated common experience. Examples of metonymy include "the crown" or "the scepter" referring to a king, and "Hollywood" referring to the movie industry.

6. Assonance

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds in adjacent words, adding harmony and beauty to the sound. As in "The rain in Spain falls mainly in the plain." This technique creates phonetic harmony and is often used to enrich the musicality of poetry.

7. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an exaggerated statement for dramatic effect. It serves to amplify emotion or emphasize a specific point. As in "I've told you a million times." The aim is to emphasize or create a dramatic effect.

8. Irony

Irony is the use of language to convey the opposite meaning of what is expected. There are different types of irony, including verbal irony where what is said contradicts the intent, situational where the outcome contradicts the expectation, or dramatic where the audience knows something the character does not. Irony enriches meaning and often provides social commentary.

9. Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia are words that imitate the original sound of an object or action, such as "buzz," "whisper," or "bang." This creates a sensory effect and strengthens the reader's imagination.

10. Symbolism

The use of symbols is used to represent abstract ideas or concepts. which serves to create multiple meanings in the text. For instance, the dove symbolizes peace. Symbolism allows for another level of meaning in a literary work.

11. Paradox

A paradox is a statement that seems contradictory but contains a hidden truth, such as "Less is more." Paradox challenges the reader to

think critically about the reality and complexity of the idea being conveyed.

12. Oxymoron

Oxymoron is the combination of two words that are opposite in meaning, such as "bittersweet" or "deafening silence." It is often used to describe complex and ambiguous situations or emotions.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research design, the instruments used, the sources of data, the procedures for data collection, and the techniques employed for data analysis

A. Research Design

This research employs literary criticism because it aims to analyze a literary work, where literary criticism involves analysis rather than fault-finding (Peck & Coyle, 1993). Song lyrics are classified as lyric poetry, which has evolved over time and serves as a fundamental element of literary expression. Miner (2014) describes lyric as the foundation of poetics and systematic literary assumptions across cultures, highlighting its historical significance. Furthermore, this study adopts an existentialist perspective using Jean-Paul Sartre's theory to analyze song lyrics as literary works that reflect human experiences and existential struggles. It specifically explores how Sartre's concepts of freedom, responsibility, anxiety, and bad faith manifest through figurative language, emphasizing their meaning and relevance to existentialist thought.

B. Data Source

The data source consists of the album *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?,* which was released in 2019 by Darkroom in the United States. Billie Eilish and her brother, Finneas O'Connell, collaborated as the primary

songwriting team for all the songs. However, despite their collaboration, most of the songs on the album are primarily shaped by Billie's lyrical contributions and main ideas. She serves as the main writer for the themes, lyrics, and concepts of the songs, as they reflect her personal perspectives and experiences, while Finneas is more involved in music production and refining the final sound of the tracks. The data used in this study consists of excerpts from song lyrics in the form of stanzas, lines, or individual words. Additionally, the researcher collects, analyzes, and interprets the data by applying Jean-Paul Sartre's theory from Being and Nothingness.

C. Data Collection

Data were collected from four songs: *"Xanny," "Bad Guy," "You Should See Me in a Crown," and "Wish You Were Gay."* The researcher gathered data from words, lines, or stanzas that contain the concepts of freedom, bad faith, and anxiety, which are conveyed through figurative language. Then, the researcher identified the types of figurative language used to express existentialist concepts. This process involved in-depth reading and textual analysis to examine how metaphor, symbolism, personification, and other literary devices are used to convey existential struggles.

D. Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the figurative language used to express Sartre's existentialist concepts. The use of figurative language illustrates how existentialism is represented in Billie Eilish's song lyrics, particularly in depicting inner conflict, the search for meaning in

life, and individual struggles in facing freedom and the consequences of personal choices. This analysis reveals that figurative language in these lyrics not only serves as an artistic expression but also as a medium for conveying the implicit philosophical ideas of existentialism.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion on the concept of existentialism in the lyrics of the song entitled *Xanny, You Should See Me In A Crown, Wish You Were Gay* and *Bad Guy.* The analysis is based on Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist concepts, including bad faith, angst, transcendence, responsibility, freedom and being-for-itself. In addition, this research examines the use of figurative language, such as metaphor, metonymy, personification, and symbolism, in illustrating existentialist concepts in the song lyrics. The discussion is organized by categorizing the findings based on the song lyrics and Sartre's concepts of existentialism.

A. Songs that represent Authentic Life

An authentic life is the outcome of understanding and embracing the core principles of existentialism, reflecting an individual's full awareness and acceptance of their own freedom. A person who truly grasps existentialist thought lives authentically by recognizing that they are free, taking full responsibility for their existence, rejecting self-deception or bad faith, and making life choices that align with their genuine beliefs and values. This state of authenticity signifies a commitment to living truthfully and consciously, rather than conforming to external expectations or societal roles. The following songs illustrate this existential authenticity through the subjects' conscious engagement with their freedom and their refusal to live in denial.

1. Xanny

This song explains how the subject (the narrator of the song) lives authentically, while her friends live in bad faith. The subject chooses to act according to her own will by refusing to use xanny, unlike her friends. Xanny is a slang term for Xanax, a drug used to treat anxiety. However, people use Xanny merely for fun and to escape from reality, living in a false self. Her decision not to use xanny has consequences, as she is responsible for staying sober among her intoxicated friends and for taking one of them home, being the only sober person in the group. On the other hand, her friends use their freedom to take xanny but do not take responsibility for their actions. Instead, they blame external factors and fail to reflect on themselves, ultimately falling into bad faith. To explain this further, the following stanza will be analyzed to explore the meaning of the song *Xanny*:

[1st stanza]
What is it about them?
I must be missing something
They just keep doing nothing
Too intoxicated to be scared
Better off without them
They're nothing but unstable
Bring ashtrays to the table
And that's about the only thing they share

[2nd stanza]
I'm in their secondhand smoke
Still just drinking canned Coke
I don't need a Xanny to feel better
On designated drives home
Only one who's not stoned
Don't give me a Xanny, now or ever

[3ʳᵈ stanza]
Wakin' up at sundown (Ooh)
They're late to every party (Ooh)
Nobody's ever sorry (Ooh)
Too inebriated now to dance
Morning as they come down (Come down)
Their pretty heads are hurting (Hurting)
They're awfully bad at learning (Learning)
Make the same mistakes, blame circumstance
(Eilish, 2019)

In the first stanza, lines 5-6: *"Better off without them / They're nothing but unstable."* This line demonstrates verbal irony because the subject expresses something that, at first glance, appears to be a direct statement but actually conveys a deeper meaning or hidden insinuation. The subject's friends may consider themselves "free" or "happy" with their lifestyle, but in reality, they are unstable and self-destructive. The subject aims to show that, although they believe they are having fun, they are actually trapped in bad habits that are harming them.

Furthermore, in the second stanza, in the line *"I'm in their second-hand smoke,"* the term *"second-hand smoke"* in this context does not refer to the unwanted cigarette smoke inhaled by the subject. Instead, it is a metaphor for the subject being in an environment filled with bad habits, particularly drug culture, even though she does not participate. Moreover, in *"Still just drinking canned coke,"* the contrast between her friends' drug use and her choice to drink soda highlights her active decision to follow her own path. This reflects self-awareness in *being-for-itself*. The subject is aware of her freedom (being-for-itself) in choosing not to follow the behavior patterns of those around her who

use *Xanny*. She realizes that freedom is not just about going with the flow but also about rejecting social coercion.

In Sartre's existentialism, humans as being-for-itself *(être-pour-soi),* possess reflective consciousness and the freedom to determine their own existence. Unlike being-in-itself *(être-en-soi),* which merely exists without awareness, being-for-itself is always conscious of its choices and is continuously in the process of becoming. In the second stanza, lines 1-2, the subject demonstrates an awareness of the surrounding environment, which is dominated by substance abuse culture. However, she consciously chooses not to participate.

This aligns with Sartre's view that humans, as being-for-itself, always possess self-awareness and awareness of their environment. He states: *"Consciousness is a being for whom, in its being, there is a question of its being, insofar as this being implies a being other than itself" (Sartre, 1943).* This means that humans do not merely exist; they also recognize their existence and constantly question its meaning. The subject in this song is aware that she could have taken Xanax like their friends, yet she choose to remain sober and unaffected.

Next, in the second stanza, lines 3 and 6 *"I don't need a xanny to feel better / Don't give me a xanny now or ever,"* the subject asserts her freedom by refusing to follow the trend of drug use. She realizes that true freedom means acting according to her own choices rather than yielding to social pressure. Sartre argued that humans often experience "bad faith" *(mauvaise foi)*, where they

deny their freedom and live according to external expectations. However, in this song, the subject avoids *bad faith* by firmly standing by her own choices.

In addition, Sartre also argues that humans are *"condemned to be free."* This means that people cannot escape the responsibility of making choices, even in situations of social pressure. In these lines 3 and 6, the subject asserts that her happiness is not dependent on drug use but is instead determined by her own choices. He wrote: *"Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (Sartre, 1943).* This means that humans have no predefined essence; they become who they are through their actions. By rejecting Xanny, the subject refuses to let her identity be shaped by social pressure or group norms. Instead, she affirms her freedom as a conscious and independent individual.

Further, in the second stanza, lines 4-5: *"One designated drives home / Only one who's not stoned."* The *"designated driver"* serves as a symbol of awareness, responsibility, and self-control, especially in the context of a song addressing substance abuse. As the only sober person among her friends, the subject symbolizes an individual who chooses a different path, someone who takes responsibility for her own freedom. She consciously chooses to remain sober and accountable despite being surrounded by an unstable environment.

According to Sartre, freedom is inseparable from responsibility. He states: *"What happens to me happens to me through me" (Sartre, 1943).* This suggests that while individuals cannot control every aspect of their lives, they are still responsible for how they respond to circumstances. As the only sober person (not stoned), the subject is not only responsible for herself but also takes on the

role of a designated driver—someone who ensures others can get home safely. This demonstrates that the subject does not merely reject destructive behavior but also actively takes responsibility for the well-being of her friends. From Sartre's perspective, this is a form of authentic responsibility, the recognition that one's choices have consequences and that one must fully accept them.

Moreover, in Sartre's concept, one cannot blame external circumstances for one's actions. This idea contrasts with the third stanza's last line: *"Make the same mistakes, blame circumstance."* Here, the subject points out how her friends refuse to take responsibility for their actions, shifting the blame onto external factors something that contradicts Sartre's existentialism. In contrast, the subject embraces an existential stance by fully accepting responsibility for her choices rather than blaming her surroundings. Below is the conceptual framework derived from the preceding analysis:
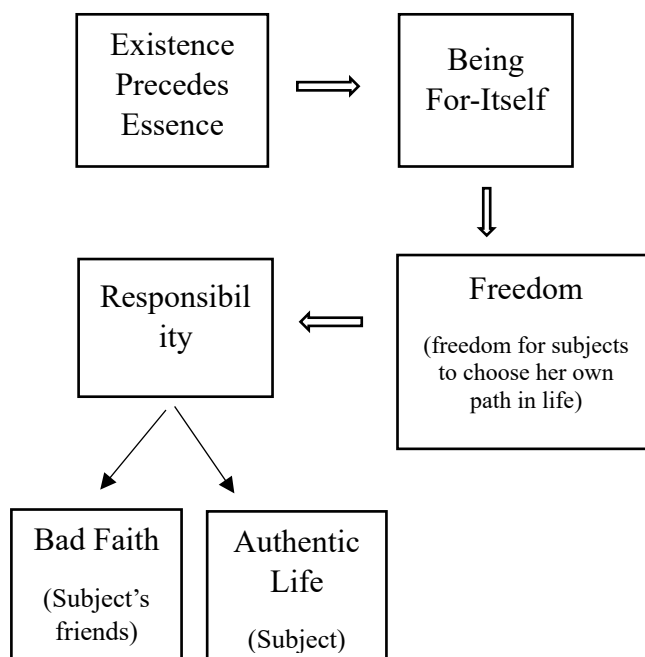
Conclusively, it becomes evident that the subject lives authentically, while her friends live in bad faith. Sartre argues that living authentically means recognizing radical freedom and taking full responsibility for one's actions. In the lyrics of *Xanny*, the subject is self-aware and acknowledges her freedom. She chooses to reject social pressure to conform to drug use. However, as a consequence of her choice, she must take full responsibility for staying sober amidst her friends who use *Xanny*. In the end, the subject successfully takes responsibility for herself by remaining sober and even assumes responsibility for her friends by driving them home. On the other hand, her friends fall into bad faith because they refuse to take responsibility for their own actions.

2. You Should See Me In A Crown

This song illustrates the subject's ability to resist and transcend her current condition. She refuses to be seen as an object in the eyes of others, as she considers it a restriction on her freedom. On the contrary, he asserts herself as a ruler, proving that she will take over and dominate those who have underestimated her. By demonstrating great ambition and high self-confidence, she shows that she is more than what others perceive her to be. Ultimately, the subject in this song lives authentically, as she exercises her freedom to act and transcend her own limitations in defiance of others' judgments. To explain this further, the following stanza will be analyzed to explore the meaning of the song:

[1st stanza]
Bite my tongue, bide my time
Wearing a warning sign
Wait 'til the world is mine

Visions I vandalize
Cold in my kingdom size
Fell for these ocean eyes

[2ⁿᵈ stanza]
You should see me in a crown
I'm gonna run this nothing town
Watch me make 'em bow
One by one by one
One by one by

[4ᵗʰ stanza]
You say, "Come over, baby
I think you're pretty"
I'm okay, I'm not your baby
If you think I'm pretty
(Eilish, 2019)

In the first stanza, line 1-4, *"Bite my tongue / Wearing a warning sign / Wait 'til the world is mine / Visions I vandalize,"* contains figurative language, especially metaphors. First, *"Bite my tongue"* does not mean that the subject literally bites her tongue. Instead, the phrase is a metaphor for holding back emotions or opinions from being expressed. The subject is restraining herself and remaining patient, which indicates an awareness of the possible future and a choice to wait for the right moment. Second, *"Wearing a warning sign,"* the subject is not actually wearing a physical warning sign. Instead, this phrase is a metaphor for projecting a certain expression or aura that makes others wary or keeps them at a distance. The subject recognizes that she possesses a potential danger or power that is being suppressed. This illustrates how the subject is not merely stuck in the present state but has an understanding of her own potential, which can be realized in the future.

In Sartre's existentialism, humans are always in the process of becoming. He writes, *"I am perpetually choosing myself and I can never be described as having-been chosen, or I would collapse back into the pure and simple existence of the in-itself. The necessity of my constantly choosing myself is one and the same thing as the pursued-pursuit that I am" (Sartre, 1943).* This statement emphasizes that humans are continuously shaping their own identities. There is no definitive endpoint to one's identity, as we constantly interpret and reconstruct ourselves through our choices and actions. By waiting and holding back, the subject demonstrates that she does not accept her current state as final but instead sees it as something that can be transformed through future actions.

Third, *"Wait 'til the world is mine,"* the phrase is an example of hyperbole because literally, the subject cannot own the world. However, it conveys a strong sense of ambition. The lyrics reflect an awareness of a better future and a determination to achieve it. The subject does not merely accept the world as it is but strives to reshape it according to her desires. According to Sartre, humans do not simply exist, they are always in the process of creating and defining themselves. The subject in these lyrics expresses a desire to defy expectations and shape her own reality.

Fourth, "*Visions I vandalize,"* the verb *"vandalize"* literally means to deliberately cause physical damage. However, in this context, the phrase is a metaphor because *"visions"* cannot be physically destroyed. Instead, it implies that the subject disrupts or alters others' hopes and dreams. The subject does not merely have visions or aspirations but actively seeks to change them. This

demonstrates how human consciousness not only perceives reality but also transforms it according to personal desires. In Sartre's view, humans have the freedom to create meaning in their own lives. This statement expresses the subject's desire to define herself according to her own vision rather than passively accepting existing circumstances.

Moreover, in the second stanza, line *"You should see me in a crown / I'm gonna run this nothing town/ Watch me make 'em bow / One by one by one."* The word *"crown"* in these lyrics symbolizes power and leadership. The subject wants to demonstrate her potential to dominate the situation or the world around her, which is reflected in the image of a crown—an emblem often associated with kings and rulers. The use of this symbol emphasizes the subject's desire to change her position or circumstances to become more dominant and to resist having her identity humiliated or controlled by anyone. This aligns with the concept of transcendence in Sartre's existentialism, where the subject does not merely accept her current existence but transcends it to create a more powerful version of herself. She also exercises her freedom by taking action against those who once looked down on her, asserting control over her own position and destiny.
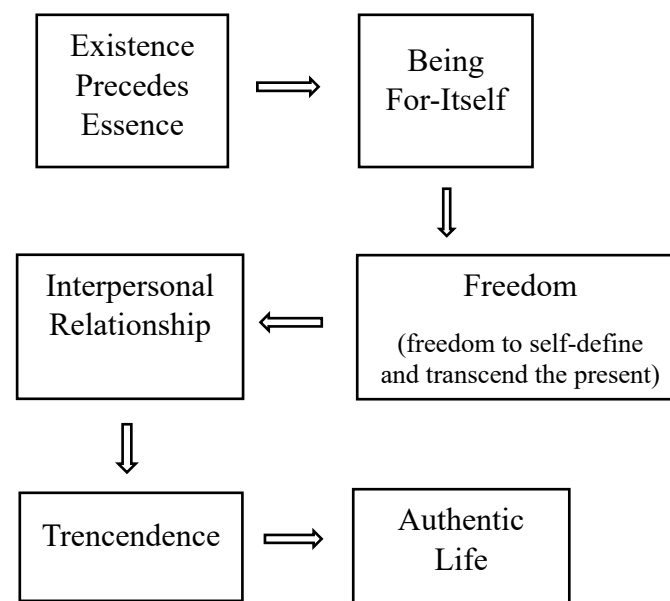
Furthermore, in the second line, *"I'm gonna run this nothing town,"* the sentence uses hyperbole to emphasize the subject's great ambition. *"Nothing town"* describes a place or situation that seems to have no value or relevance, and the subject plans to change it completely. The subject does not accept this seemingly ordinary world but aims to transform it into something more

meaningful with the ability and control she possess. This is an example of the process of transcendence, where the subject considers herself capable of redefining the world around her.

Then, in lines 3 and 4 *"Watch me make 'em bow / One by one by one,"* the word *"bow"* does not simply refer to the physical act of bowing. Instead, it serves as a metaphor, illustrating the subject's ability to command respect and assert power over others. Through the repetition of *"One by one by one,"* the lyrics convey the subject's ambition to dominate and conquer the world or the people around them in a systematic and deliberate manner. This repetition reinforces the subject's determination to gain control over each element of their surroundings with unwavering persistence. This act reflects transcendence, as the subject seeks to surpass the existing boundaries of their reality and assert dominance over the social or emotional around subject.

Further, in the fourth stanza, line 2 *"I think you're pretty,"* the subject experiences what Sartre calls *being-for-others,* where her identity as "pretty" is determined by the perception of another. This reflects the interpersonal phase in which external factors—particularly how she is seen by others—attempt to define her. However, rather than passively accepting this objectification, in line 3 *"I'm okay, I'm not your baby,"* the subject actively resists and negates that imposed identity. She does not merely reject the label of "pretty," but asserts her authentic self—a declaration that she refuses to be confined by others' standards or desires, as she feels that this interferes with her freedom to define herself. Sartre argues, *"In the first place, the Other's look, as the necessary*

condition of my objectivity, is the destruction of all objectivity for me. The Other's look reaches me through the world and is not only a transformation of myself but a complete metamorphosis of the world. I am looked at in a world that is looked at" (Sartre, 1943). Sartre explains that when we are recognized by others (being seen), we are no longer pure subjects (being-for-itself) but instead become objects in the eyes of others (being-for-others). This can lead to feelings of shame, self-consciousness, or even a loss of freedom, as we feel defined and positioned by the perspective of others. Below is the conceptual framework derived from the preceding analysis:

```
┌──────────────┐         ┌──────────────┐
│  Existence   │  ═══>   │    Being     │
│   Precedes   │         │  For-Itself  │
│   Essence    │         │              │
└──────────────┘         └──────────────┘
                                ⇓
┌──────────────┐         ┌────────────────────────┐
│Interpersonal │  <═══   │        Freedom         │
│ Relationship │         │                        │
│              │         │ (freedom to self-define│
│              │         │ and transcend the present)│
└──────────────┘         └────────────────────────┘
       ⇓
┌──────────────┐         ┌──────────────┐
│              │  ═══>   │   Authentic  │
│ Trencendence │         │     Life     │
└──────────────┘         └──────────────┘
```

Conclusively, the subject exercises her freedom to transcend her current situation. She refuses to be defined by others, rejecting objectification and maintaining her autonomy in defining herself. Therefore, the subject does not merely accept her circumstances but actively seeks to transcend and dominate

them. Sartre argues that humans are always in the process of becoming, continuously shaping and defining themselves through the choices they make. In this sense, the subject lives authentically by refusing to be objectified and constantly evolving to define herself on her own terms.

B. Songs that represent Bad Faith

Bad faith is a condition within human existentialism in which an individual fails to recognize their own freedom and existential nature. It represents a denial of the core principles of existentialism—an escape from human freedom and a rejection of existential responsibility. In the following song, the subject demonstrates a failure to understand and embrace their own existential condition.

1. Wish you were gay

This song expresses the subject's angst and disappointment with her partner, which leads her to fall into a state of bad faith. The subject is unable to accept the unilateral decision made by her partner. Instead of engaging in self-reflection, she attempts to rationalize the pain by searching for alternative explanations. The subject hopes that the reason for the relationship's failure is the partner's sexual orientation, rather than in her own inadequacy. Her feelings of angst and inability to accept the end of the relationship are illustrated in the following stanza.

[1st stanza]
"Baby, I don't feel so good," six words you never understood
"I'll never let you go," five words you'll never say (Aww)
I laugh along like nothing's wrong, four days has never felt so long
If three's a crowd and two was us, one slipped away (Hahahahahahahaha)

[2nd stanza]
I just wanna make you feel okay

But all you do is look the other way
I can't tell you how much I wish I didn't wanna stay
I just kinda wish you were gay

[5th stanza]
To spare my pride
To give your lack of interest an explanation
Don't say I'm not your type
Just say that I'm not your preferred sexual orientation
I'm so selfish
But you make me feel helpless, yeah
And I can't stand another day
Stand another day
(Eilish, 2019)

In the first stanza, lines 3-4: *"I laugh along like nothing's wrong, four days has never felt so long / If three's a crowd and two was us, one slipped away."* The lines contain figurative language. The first line, *"I laugh along like nothing's wrong,"* is an example of verbal irony because there is a contradiction between what is shown—laughing and pretending that nothing is wrong—and the actual feeling, which is emotional suffering. Meanwhile, *"Four days has never felt so long"* is a form of personification. The lyrics attribute human qualities to time by implying that time "feels long." Normally, time is an abstract concept without emotion, but through personification, the lyrics convey how time feels stretched and heavy due to the tension in the relationship.

Furthermore, in the fourth line, *"If three's a crowd and two was us, one slipped away,"* the phrase does not literally mean there is a crowd because three people are present. Instead, it is a metaphor describing a relationship situation using numbers. *"Three's a crowd"* refers to the presence of a third party disrupting the relationship, while *"two was us"* represents the initial state of the relationship, consisting of just two people. However, *"one slipped away"*

indicates that one party, possibly the partner, eventually leaves or distances themselves, leaving behind a broken relationship.

The lyrics depict self-sacrifice as the subject hides her true feelings by choosing to "laugh" and pretend that everything is fine, despite feeling trapped in uncertainty. This reflects the anguish that comes with having the freedom to respond to a situation while simultaneously feeling emotionally alienated and confused. In Sartre's existentialism, anguish is not just an ordinary emotion like fear, but a form of reflective awareness of the absolute and inescapable freedom of human beings. Sartre wrote, *"I flee in order not to know, but I cannot be unaware that I am fleeing, and a flight from anguish is just one way of becoming conscious of anguish (Sartre, 1943)."* This statement explains that even though we try to avoid anguish such as by living in bad faith or denying our freedom— we are still aware that we are fleeing. Thus, anguish remains present, even in our attempts to resist it

Moreover, in the second stanza, lines 1-2: *"I just wanna make you feel okay / But all you do is look the other way"* the subject expresses a desire to make her partner happy, to be close, and to receive care. However, the person she likes ignores her, fails to provide the expected response, and seems indifferent. The subject appears to depend on others for her happiness, neglecting her own freedom and responsibility in determining the meaning of her life. Next, in third line *"I can't tell you how much I wish I didn't wanna stay"* the subject wants to reject her own feelings but feels incapable of doing so. She is trapped in these emotions, unable to choose to move on.
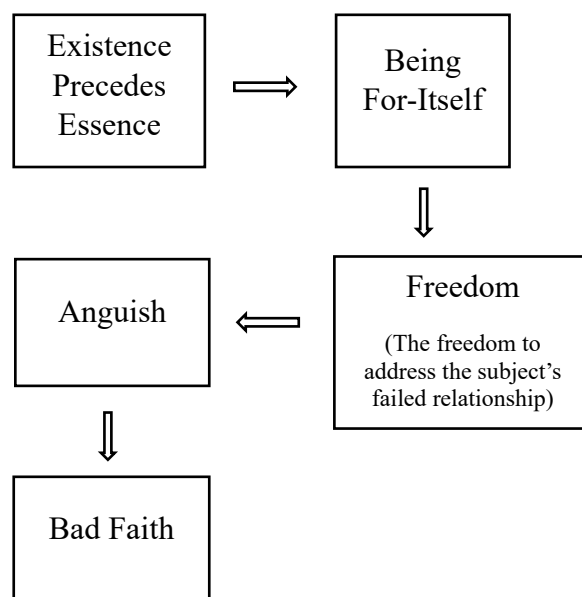
However, as Sartre (1943) states, *"man is condemned to be free."* Saying, I can't get out of this feeling, is a form of bad faith, as the subject rejects responsibility for her own emotions and choices. Furthermore, she acknowledges that the person she loves does not return her feelings. But instead of accepting this painful reality, she offers an alternative excuse in fourth line: *"I just kinda wish you were gay."* This is another instance of bad faith, where the subject avoids confronting the truth of her emotions and creates a scenario that feels easier to accept.

He argues that *"Bad faith implies in its essence the unity of a single consciousness... the person to whom one is lying and the person who is lying are one and the same person (Sartre, 1943)."* Unlike ordinary lies, which require two parties (the deceiver and the deceived), bad faith occurs within a single consciousness. That is, the subject lies to herself, knowing the truth yet consciously rejecting it.

Further, in fifth stanza lines 1-4: *"To spare my pride / To give your lack of interest an explanation / Don't say I'm not your type / Just say that I'm not your preferred sexual orientation"* The subject appears to lie to herself in order to maintain her self-esteem, which has collapsed due to a failed relationship with her partner. Rather than confronting the possibility that the relationship failed due to incompatibility in her own nature or character, she prefers to adopt an inauthentic explanation that the failure occurred because of her partner's sexual orientation. In other words, she avoids the existential freedom to accept herself

as she truly is, choosing instead to remain within an illusion to escape the feeling of personal failure and rejection.

In bad faith, individuals deny their freedom and live in self-deception to avoid existential anxiety. In this case, the subject consciously constructs a narrative that is easier to accept than facing the painful truth: that she might simply not be the "type" of person her partner desires. This illustrates the complexity of human consciousness—the ability to knowingly reject an uncomfortable truth in favor of psychological comfort, even at the cost of authenticity and genuine freedom. Below is the conceptual framework derived from the preceding analysis:

```
┌──────────────┐            ┌──────────────┐
│   Existence  │            │    Being     │
│   Precedes   │  ⟹         │  For-Itself  │
│   Essence    │            │              │
└──────────────┘            └──────────────┘
                                   ⇓
┌──────────────┐            ┌──────────────────┐
│              │            │     Freedom      │
│   Anguish    │  ⟸         │ (The freedom to  │
│              │            │ address the subject's │
└──────────────┘            │ failed relationship) │
       ⇓                    └──────────────────┘
┌──────────────┐
│   Bad Faith  │
└──────────────┘
```

Conclusively, the subject experiences existential angst when confronted with her own freedom. She fails to exercise that freedom authentically by choosing and acting in accordance with her true self in the face of a painful reality: the end of her romantic relationship. Rather than accepting the possibility that she is simply not loved, the subject deceives herself by creating

a narrative that protects her from the feeling of personal rejection. She chooses to believe that the relationship ended because of her partner's sexual orientation, rather than considering her own personality, character, or the potential incompatibility between them. In doing so, the subject denies her existential freedom and acts in what Sartre refers to as "bad faith"—a self-deception where one escapes the burden of freedom and responsibility by living under an illusion.

2. Bad Guy

The song portrays how the subject intentionally takes on the role of the "bad guy" as a way to shape her identity. She adopts this role not because she is inherently bad, but as a way to resist social expectations that women should always be gentle, obedient, and sweet. By becoming the opposite of these ideals, she tries to assert her independence. However, in doing so, she ends up living in bad faith, as described by Sartre—because defining herself mainly through resistance to stereotypes means she is not fully being true to herself, but still letting external norms shape who she is. To explain this further, the following stanza will be analyzed to explore the meaning of the song:

[2nd stanza]
So you're a tough guy
Like it really rough guy
Just can't get enough guy
Chest always so puffed guy
I'm that bad type
Make your mama sad type
Make your girlfriend mad tight
Might seduce your dad type
I'm the bad guy
Duh

[3rd stanza]
I like it when you take control
Even if you know that you don't
Own me, I'll let you play the role
I'll be your animal

[5th stanza]
I like when you get mad
I guess I'm pretty glad that you're alone
You said she's scared of me?
I mean, I don't see what she sees
But maybe it's 'cause I'm wearing your cologne
(Eilish, 2019)

In the second stanza, lines 1–5: *"So you're a tough guy / Like it really rough guy / Just can't get enough guy / Chest always so puffed guy / I'm that bad type"* the subject mocks the male stereotype of being macho, violent, and dominant. However, rather than merely criticizing these traits, she adopts the role of the "bad guy" to gain power in the relationship. She reverses traditional gender norms by presenting a dominant and manipulative image of women. This reversal is illustrated in lines 6–9, *"Make your mama sad type / Make your girlfriend mad tight / Might seduce your dad type / I'm the bad guy"* the subject appears to define herself through the negative impact she has on others. By deliberately taking on the role of a "troublemaker" someone who makes her mother sad, angers her partner, and even mocks her father, the subject chooses to play an identity that may not reflect her authentic self.

This is not an expression of who she truly is, but rather a reaction to societal expectations. She defines herself not by her personal desires or inner essence, but as a form of resistance to the roles imposed on women by society. Within the framework of Sartre's existentialism, this behavior reflects a form of bad

faith. The subject deceives herself by pretending to be the "bad guy" in order to appear free and in control, while in reality, she remains confined by the very value system she seeks to reject. He writes, *"and the ontological characteristic of this world of bad faith, in which the subject suddenly immerses himself, is that, in it, being is what it is not, and is not what it is (Sartre, 1943)."* In this condition, a person denies their true nature in order to construct a version of themselves that aligns with either personal desire or societal expectations.

Moreover, In the third stanza, lines 1–2, *"I like it when you take control / Even if you know that you don't"* the subject revealed that she let her partner take control, even though, in the end, the partner was not truly in control due to the subject's resistance. Then, in line 3, the phrase *"play the role"* does not literally refer to someone acting in a drama, but rather serves as a metaphor for a person who takes control or performs a particular identity within a relationship. Meanwhile, in line 4, *"I'll be your animal,"* the subject compares herself to an animal, used here as a metaphor for obedience or submission. In other words, she likens herself to a creature that is typically viewed as compliant, controlled, or under someone else's authority. This suggests that the subject is willing to become the object of another's desire, as if such submission represents a form of freedom or self-mastery.

However, this act is ultimately a form of pretense. The subject is not truly free, as she merely performs a particular role to maintain an image of being "strong" or "powerful" an image that is actually shaped by external expectations. This performance reinforces the idea that she is not acting from

authentic freedom, but rather from a reactive desire to either conform to or resist existing norms. In doing so, she does not reflect upon her true self, but instead continues to let societal pressures dictate her identity.
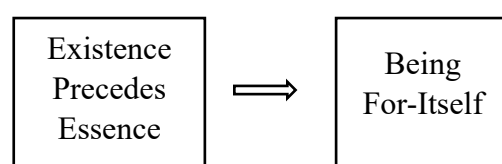
Subsequently, in the fifth stanza, lines 1–2, *"I like when you get mad / I guess I'm pretty glad that you're alone,"* The subject reveals a concealed sense of emotional detachment or underlying resentment. There is an apparent satisfaction in the subject's tone, as she seems pleased that her partner is now left alone. However, in lines 3–5, *"You said she's scared of me? / I mean, I don't see what she sees / But maybe it's 'cause I'm wearing your cologne,"* the subject begins to express doubt and uncertainty about her identity. The line *"I don't see what she sees"* suggests that the subject feels alienated from the image of herself that others perceive, she does not recognize or approve of the version of herself reflected in the eyes of others.
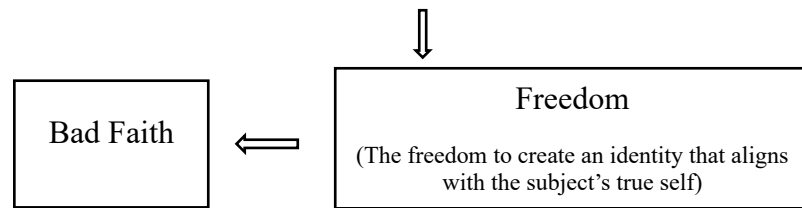
The line *"maybe it's 'cause I'm wearing your cologne"* the subject is not literally wearing someone else's perfume. Instead, it functions as a metaphor, indicating that the subject is aware she is "wearing" something that does not belong to her, symbolically, someone else's identity. Within the context of a relationship or social role, this suggests that the subject is performing a borrowed persona, rather than presenting her authentic self. Here, the subject acknowledges that how others perceive her may not align with her true identity. By offering a justification like *"maybe it's 'cause I'm wearing your cologne,"* she subtly shifts the responsibility for that perception away from herself. This deflection implies dishonesty in how she defines herself; when others fear her

or misunderstand her, she blames external factors rather than accepting responsibility.

This is a clear reflection of bad faith, as described by Sartre where the individual depends on external cues or roles to justify a self-image, rather than embracing personal responsibility for self-definition. From the perspective of Sartre's existentialism, this is a moment of realization that the subject is not being true to herself. She is "wearing the fragrance" of someone else both literally and symbolically and that, perhaps, is the reason why others fear her. This is a form of bad faith because she is not fully honest with herself. She takes a role that is inauthentic and continues to define herself through external appearances or the expectations of others.

This idea is echoed in Sartre's statement: *"I resolve to be poorly convinced in order to convince myself that I am what I am not (Sartre, 1943)."* It illustrates how the subject makes a conscious choice to believe in a version of herself that she knows is not true, yet does so weakly. If she were fully convinced, she would have to face the lie. If she didn't believe at all, she could no longer play the role. Therefore, she chooses to remain in an unstable in-between state: not fully believing, yet not disbelieving either. According to Sartre, it is in this fragile space of self-deception that bad faith emerges. Below is the conceptual framework derived from the preceding analysis:

Existence Precedes Essence	$\implies$	Being For-Itself

⇩

Bad Faith	⇐	Freedom (The freedom to create an identity that aligns with the subject's true self)

Conclusively, the subject constructs her identity based on external influences rather than her authentic self. Instead of embracing her true existence and taking pride in who she genuinely is as a way to defy social expectations and the dynamics of her relationship, she adopts the persona of the "bad guy" a role typically associated with strength, dominance, and emotional detachment as a form of resistance to societal pressure. However, this action is not an expression of genuine freedom, but rather a form of self-deception. By choosing to become something she is not in order to appear powerful, the subject is being dishonest with herself and, in the process, relinquishes her freedom to define herself according to her own will and consciousness. Therefore, the subject can be seen as living in bad faith, as she fails to exercise her existential freedom authentically and instead becomes trapped within a self-image shaped by the expectations of others.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the conclusions of the research findings and offers suggestions for future studies on existentialism through the use of figurative language.

A. Conclusion

This study analyses four songs that represent the concepts of authentic life and bad faith using Sartre's theory of existentialism and through the analysis of figurative language. Figurative devices such as metaphor, symbol, irony, personification, and hyperbole were employed to express existential meanings that are not directly stated in the lyrics. Figurative language is particularly effective in conveying these existential ideas implicitly, allowing deeper interpretation beyond the literal level.

Each song presents its own unique journey in exploring existential concepts. Two songs that particularly reflect the idea of authentic life are *Xanny* and *You Should See Me in a Crown.* The researcher found that the subject appears to be aware of her own identities and recognize her freedom to create personal meaning in life. This self-awareness empowers her to act authentically, even when doing so contradicts external pressures. The subject demonstrated absolute freedom and make choices that align with her true self. Moreover, she exhibits strong self-belief and are not easily influenced by others during the process of self-definition. These

traits reflect an authentic existence, as proposed by Sartre where individuals take full responsibility for the meaning and direction of their lives.

On the other hand, the songs that depict bad faith are *Wish You Were Gay* and *Bad Guy.* The researcher found that the subject was unable to exercise her freedom authentically due to social expectations and anxiety about her situations. As a result, she failed to act in accordance with her true self. This led the subject to fall into bad faith, as she denied her own freedom and avoided taking responsibility for her authentic choices. The subject's self-deception illustrates a rejection of her existential condition, as defined by Sartre.

B. Suggestion

Based on the results of this study, the researcher suggests that further research be conducted on the theme of existentialism in other Billie Eilish songs, while still employing a figurative language approach. Such continued research is essential for deepening the understanding of how existential themes are aesthetically conveyed through song lyrics. To achieve more varied and comprehensive results, the researcher also recommends integrating Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of existentialism with the perspectives of other existentialist philosophers, such as Simone de Beauvoir or Martin Heidegger. This approach may broaden the analytical perspective and enhance the exploration of human existential dynamics as reflected in popular music.

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CURICULUM VITAE

Wahyu Alif Nur Aulia was born in Pasuruan on March 17, 2003. She completed her secondary education at SMA Negeri 3 Pasuruan before pursuing higher education. During her time at school, she actively participated in traditional dance and took part in various competitions. In 2021, she was admitted as a student at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, majoring in English Literature. Throughout her academic journey at UIN Malang, she became a member of the Reading and Writing Club. In her fifth semester, she also enrolled in a professional translation course.

APPENDIX

Full song lyrics

1. **Xanny**

    What is it about them?
    I must be missing something
    They just keep doing nothing
    Too intoxicated to be scared
    Better off without them
    They're nothing but unstable
    Bring ashtrays to the table
    And that's about the only thing they share

    I'm in their secondhand smoke
    Still just drinking canned Coke
    I don't need a Xanny to feel better
    On designated drives home
    Only one who's not stoned
    Don't give me a Xanny, now or ever

    Wakin' up at sundown (Ooh)
    They're late to every party (Ooh)
    Nobody's ever sorry (Ooh)
    Too inebriated now to dance
    Morning as they come down (Come down)
    Their pretty heads are hurting (Hurting)
    They're awfully bad at learning (Learning)
    Make the same mistakes, blame circumstance

    I'm in their secondhand smoke
    Still just drinking canned Coke
    I don't need a Xanny to feel better
    On designated drives home
    Only one who's not stoned
    Don't give me a Xanny, now or ever

    Please don't try to kiss me on the sidewalk
    On your cigarette break
    I can't afford to love someone
    Who isn't dying by mistake in Silver Lake
    What is it about them?
    I must be missing something

They just keep doin' nothing
Too intoxicated to be scared
Hmm, hmm
Hmm, mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm
Come down
Hurting
Learning

2. You Should See Me In A Crown

Bite my tongue, bide my time
Wearing a warning sign
Wait 'til the world is mine
Visions I vandalize
Cold in my kingdom size
Fell for these ocean eyes

You should see me in a crown
I'm gonna run this nothing town
Watch me make 'em bow
One by one by one
One by one by
You should see me in a crown
Your silence is my favorite sound
Watch me make 'em bow
One by one by one
One by one by one

Count my cards, watch them fall
Blood on a marble wall
I like the way they all scream
Tell me which one is worse
Living or dying first
Sleeping inside a hearse (I don't dream)

You say, "Come over, baby
I think you're pretty"
I'm okay, I'm not your baby
If you think I'm pretty

You should see me in a crown
I'm gonna run this nothing town
Watch me make 'em bow

One by one by one
One by one by
You should see me in a crown
Your silence is my favorite sound
Watch me make 'em bow
One by one by one
One by one by one

Crown
I'm gonna run this nothing town
Watch me make 'em bow
One by one by one
One by one by
You should see me in a crown (You should see me, see me)
Your silence is my favorite sound (You should see me, see me)
Watch me make 'em bow
One by one by one
One by one by one

3. **Wish You Were Gay**

"Baby, I don't feel so good," six words you never understood
"I'll never let you go," five words you'll never say (Aww)
I laugh along like nothing's wrong, four days has never felt so long
If three's a crowd and two was us, one slipped away (Hahahahahahahaha)

I just wanna make you feel okay
But all you do is look the other way
I can't tell you how much I wish I didn't wanna stay
I just kinda wish you were gay

Is there a reason we're not through?
Is there a 12 step just for you?
Our conversation's all in blue
11 "heys" (Hey, hey, hey, hey)
Ten fingers tearin' out my hair
Nine times you never made it there
I ate alone at 7, you were six minutes away
(Yay)

How am I supposed to make you feel okay
When all you do is walk the other way?

I can't tell you how much I wish I didn't wanna stay
I just kinda wish you were gay

To spare my pride
To give your lack of interest an explanation
Don't say I'm not your type
Just say that I'm not your preferred sexual orientation
I'm so selfish
But you make me feel helpless, yeah
And I can't stand another day
Stand another day

I just wanna make you feel okay
But all you do is look the other way, hmm
I can't tell you how much I wish I didn't wanna stay
I just kinda wish you were gay
I just kinda wish you were gay
I just kinda wish you were gay

4. **Bad Guy**

White shirt now red, my bloody nose
Sleepin', you're on your tippy toes
Creepin' around like no one knows
Think you're so criminal
Bruises on both my knees for you
Don't say thank you or please
I do what I want when I'm wanting to
My soul? So cynical

So you're a tough guy
Like it really rough guy
Just can't get enough guy
Chest always so puffed guy
I'm that bad type
Make your mama sad type
Make your girlfriend mad tight
Might seduce your dad type
I'm the bad guy
Duh

I'm the bad guy
I like it when you take control

Even if you know that you don't
Own me, I'll let you play the role
I'll be your animal
My mommy likes to sing along with me
But she won't sing this song
If she reads all the lyrics
She'll pity the men I know

So you're a tough guy
Like it really rough guy
Just can't get enough guy
Chest always so puffed guy
I'm that bad type
Make your mama sad type
Make your girlfriend mad tight
Might seduce your dad type
I'm the bad guy
Duh

I'm the bad guy, duh
I'm only good at bein' bad, bad

I like when you get mad
I guess I'm pretty glad that you're alone
You said she's scared of me?
I mean, I don't see what she sees
But maybe it's 'cause I'm wearing your cologne

I'm a bad guy
I'm, I'm a bad guy
Bad guy, bad guy
I'm a bad