

***A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF LOVE IN SELECTED SONG
LYRICS BY LAUFEY LIN BING JONSDOTTIR***

THESIS

By:

Zakia Nova Liana

NIM 220302110053



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG
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A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF LOVE IN SELECTED SONG LYRICS
BY LAUFEY LIN BING JONSDOTTIR

THESIS

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By:

Zakia Nova Liana

NIM 220302110053

Advisor:

Whida Rositama, M.Hum.

NIP 198804222019032010



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG
2026

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **“A Stylistic Analysis of Love in Selected Song Lyrics by Laufey Lin Bing Jondsdottir”** 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 is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.



Malang, 24 July 2026
The researcher

Zakia Nova Liana
NIM 220302110053

APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify Zakia Nova Liana's thesis entitled **A Stylistic Analysis of Love in Selected Song Lyrics by Laufey Lin Bing Jonsdottir** has been approved for thesis examination at the Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.).

Malang, 24 Juni, 2026

Approved by
Advisor,



Whida Rositama, M.Hum.
NIP 198804222019032010

Head of Department of English Literature,



Dr. Agwin Degaf, M.A
NIP 198805232015031004

Acknowledged by
Dean of Faculty of Humanities,



Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag.
NIP. 197411012003121003

LEGITIMATION SHEET

This is to certify that Zakia Nova Liana's thesis entitled **A Stylistic Analysis of Love in Selected Song Lyrics by Laufey Lin Bing Jonsdottir** has been approved by the Board of Examiners as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.) in the Department of English Literature.

Malang, 24 June 2026

Board of Examiners

Signatures

1. Chair

Prof. Dr. Mundi Rahayu, M.Hum.
NIP. 196802262006042001



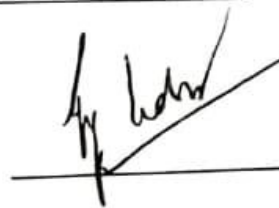
2. First Examiner

Whida Rositama, M. Hum.
NIP. 198804222019032010



3. Second Examiner

Dr. Syamsudin, M.Hum.
NIP. 196911222006041001



Approved by
Dean of Faculty of Humanities



Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag.
NIP 197411012003121003

MOTTO

“La yukallifullahu nafsan illa wus ‘aha.”

(Allah does not burden a person but according to his ability)
(QS. Al-Baqarah:286)

“Innallaha ma ‘ash-shabirin”

(Allah is with those who are patient)
(QS. Al-Baqarah:153)

DEDICATION

This thesis proudly dedicated to:

The love of my life, Bapak Supriyatna, and Ibu Mar'atus Sholihah,

My beloved younger brother, Muhammad Anas Ansori.

My kind and wise advisor,

Miss Whida Rositama, M.Hum.

All of my precious friends who always run with
me.

The amazing writer and singer Laufey,
and for myself, Zakia Nova Liana, who always shines.

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ABSTRACT

Zakia Nova Liana (2026) “A Stylistic Analysis of Love in Selected Song Lyrics By Laufey Lin Bing Jonsdottir”. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Whida Rositama, M.Hum.

Keywords: *Stylistics, Song Lyrics, Laufey, Love.*

This research examines the stylistic features in the lyrics of three songs by Laufey from her 2025 album *A Matter of Time*: *Lover Girl*, *Silver Lining*, and *Carousel*. The study focuses on five poetic elements: diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme. Using Stylistic Criticism based on Leech and Short (2014) and informed by Perrine et al (2018), this study analyzes how stylistic features construct meaning and aesthetic effects in the selected lyrics. The findings show that each song presents a different representation of romantic love. *Lover Girl* portrays love as both pleasurable and disruptive, *Silver Lining* presents love as liberating and unconditional, while *Carousel* depicts love as a source of emotional grounding and acceptance. The analysis demonstrates that diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme work together to create meaning and aesthetic expression. These findings confirm that contemporary song lyrics can serve as valuable literary texts for stylistic analysis and further studies of popular music.

مستخلص البحث

زكية نواف لينا (٢٠٢٦) "تحليل أسلوب الحب في كلمات أغاني مختارة بقلم لوفي لين بينغ جونسون". أطروحة البكالوريوس. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية في مالانج. المشرفة: ويدا روسيتاما، ماجستير في الآداب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: /الأسلوب، كلمات الأغاني، لافي، موضوع الحب.

تتناول هذه الدراسة السمات الأسلوبية في كلمات ثلاث أغنيات للوفي من ألبومها "A Matter of Time" الصادر عام 2025، وهي: *Silver* و *Lover Girl* و *Carouse/ Lining*. وتركز الدراسة على خمسة عناصر شعرية: المفردات، الصور الشعرية، واللغة المجازية، والنبرة، والموضوع. وباستخدام النقد الأسلوبى المستند إلى دراسة لينش وشورت (2014) والمستند إلى دراسة بيرين وآخرون (2018)، تحلل هذه الدراسة كيف تسهم السمات الأسلوبية في بناء المعنى والتأثيرات الجمالية في الكلمات المختارة. وتظهر النتائج أن كل أغنية تقدم تصويراً مختلفاً للحب الرومانسي. فأغنية *Lover Girl* تُصور الحب على أنه مُمتع ومُزعج في آنٍ واحد، بينما تُقدمه *Silver Lining* على أنه مُحَرَّر وغير مشروط، أما *Carouse/ Lining* فتُصوره كمصدر للثبات العاطفي والقبول. ويُبين التحليل أن المفردات والصور الشعرية واللغة المجازية والنبرة والموضوع تتضافر معاً لخلق المعنى والتعبير الجمالي. وتؤكد هذه النتائج أن كلمات الأغاني المعاصرة يُمكن أن تُشكل نصوصاً أدبية قيمة للتحليل الأسلوبى ودراسات الموسيقى الشعبية.

ABSTRAK

Zakia Nova Liana (2026) “The Theme of Love Selected Song Lyrics By Laufey Lin Bing Jonsdottir: A Stylistic Analysis”. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Whida Rositama, M.Hum.

Keywords: *Stylistik, Lirik Lagu, Laufey, Cinta.*

Dalam Penelitian ini mengkaji ciri-ciri stilistik dalam lirik tiga lagu karya Laufey dari albumnya tahun 2025, *A Matter of Time*, yaitu *Lover Girl*, *Silver Lining*, dan *Carousel*. Studi ini berfokus pada lima elemen puitis: diksi, citra, bahasa kiasan, nada, dan tema. Menggunakan Kritik Stilistik berdasarkan Leech dan Short (2014) dan diinformasikan oleh Perrine dkk (2018), studi ini menganalisis bagaimana ciri-ciri stilistik membangun makna dan efek estetika dalam lirik yang dipilih. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa setiap lagu menyajikan representasi cinta romantis yang berbeda. *Lover Girl* menggambarkan cinta sebagai sesuatu yang menyenangkan sekaligus mengganggu, *Silver Lining* menyajikan cinta sebagai sesuatu yang membebaskan dan tanpa syarat, sementara *Carousel* menggambarkan cinta sebagai sumber landasan emosional dan penerimaan. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa diksi, citra, bahasa kiasan, nada, dan tema bekerja bersama untuk menciptakan makna dan ekspresi estetika. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa lirik lagu kontemporer dapat berfungsi sebagai teks sastra yang berharga untuk analisis stilistik dan studi lebih lanjut tentang musik populer.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this study is the introduction, which provides a general explanation related to the title. The researcher organized the study into seven subchapters covering the background, The Problem of The Study, significance of the study, scope and limitations, and definitions of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Song lyrics are one of the literary forms that combine language and music to convey messages, ideas, and human experiences. As literary texts, song lyrics provide rich material for interpretation and expression, making them suitable objects of literary analysis Rahayu (2011). According to Dharma (2023), a song consists of words arranged in harmony with tones, rhythms, and melodies, making it both a musical and literary work. The literary nature of song lyrics is reflected in the use of stylistic elements such as diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme, which contribute to the construction of meaning within a text Perrine et al (2018). These elements have also been applied in the analysis of song lyrics by previous researchers Kanzunnudin et al (2023). In addition, songs function as a medium of communication through which messages and experiences are conveyed to listeners, who interpret them based on their own knowledge and perspectives Que & Patty (2023).

One of the artists who has contributed to the resurgence of jazz inspired popular music is Laufey Lin Bing Jonsdottir, an Icelandic Chinese singer

songwriter known for blending traditional jazz influences with contemporary pop music. Her songs are recognized for their expressive lyrics, distinctive storytelling, and sophisticated use of language, making them valuable objects for stylistic analysis. Her album *A Matter of Time* (2025) gained considerable attention for its lyrical depth and emotional complexity, particularly in songs such as *Lover Girl*, *Silver Lining*, and *Carousel*, which are selected as the data source of this study. There is currently a limited number of studies examining the stylistic features of Laufey's song lyrics, particularly those from her album *A Matter of Time*. Previous studies have mainly focused on figurative language, semiotics, or stylistic elements in songs by other artists, while a comprehensive stylistic analysis covering diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme in Laufey's selected songs remains underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to examine how stylistic elements are employed in the selected song lyrics and how they contribute to the creation of meaning within the literary text. There have been several studies on stylistics and figures of speech in song lyrics that have established a sound academic base for the current study. The studies may be divided into three broad categories according to their content and relation to the current study.

The first group of research revolves around the stylistic and figurative analysis of pop music songs. For example, studies conducted by Fadilla et al. (2023), and Dewi et al (2020) examined albums of Ariana Grande, Adele, and Selena Gomez, respectively. In their studies, the researchers used different stylistic elements, including metaphor, simile, and hyperbole to portray the

emotional aspects. According to (Santika & Syafryadin, 2023; Sofian, 2022) also discussed the use of stylistic techniques by Taylor Swift to narrate her stories through figurative language. On the other hand, Aras et al (2024) have carried out an extensive empirical study on top 30 songs on Spotify, highlighting that metaphor is still the leading stylistic element in contemporary lyrics.

The next group focuses on how the concept of romantic experience is shaped based on particular linguistic strategies. According to the findings of (Pratiwi et al, 2020; Putri et al, 2023), contemporary women artists utilize associational language to convey the intensity of youthful, jealous, or romantic emotions. Likewise, according to (Mawaddah & Rahmat, 2023; Salam & Sakinah, 2024), the employment of idioms and lexical choices plays an essential role in conveying the semantic meanings in love songs regardless of the music genre, whether K-pop or indie.

The third group includes studies directly connected with Laufey's albums. According to Amalia & Djuharie (2025) conducted emotional representation analysis of one of Laufey's first songs. whereas Simatupang (2025) created a thesis devoted to classification of figures of speech in her songs. The abovementioned papers are those that are the closest to the current research due to their topic. At the same time, the mentioned studies concentrate on Laufey's previous EPs (Extended Play) or just on the classification itself without analyzing the artist's latest creation. Although much has been written about stylistic analysis of song lyrics recently, little attention was paid to Laufey's latest and highly stylistically developed songs. In spite of the fact that the

previous studies, including those done by (Amalia & Djuharie, 2025; Simatupang, 2025), gave an impulse to academic researches in terms of Laufey, no studies devoted to stylistic analysis of *Lover Girl*, *Silver Lining* and *Carousel* from her 2025 *A Matter of Time* have been published so far.

This research gap carries much weight for several reasons. The three selected songs were chosen because they demonstrate diverse stylistic features that are relevant to the stylistic framework employed in this study, particularly diction, imagery, figurative language, and tone. For example, the song "Carousel" employs an elaborate structural metaphor that offers substantial material for stylistic analysis. In addition, *A Matter of Time* reflects an important stage in Laufey's artistic development, providing contemporary material for examining the construction of romantic experience through language. Furthermore, there remains limited academic discussion on the stylistic characteristics of jazz pop lyrics performed by a non Anglophone female artist. Through the stylistic analysis of these songs, this study seeks to contribute to literary discussions on how love is constructed and represented through language.

B. The Problem of the Study

This study is conducted to investigate the lyrics of three selected songs by Laufey, namely *Lover Girl*, *Silver Lining*, and *Carousel* from her 2025 album *A Matter of Time*. To achieve the objective of this study, the research question focuses on how the lyrics of these songs are analyzed stylistically.

C. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to provide significant contributions, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse in the field of stylistics by exploring how Stylistic Analysis is complexly constructed through the choice of diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme in contemporary jazz pop song lyrics. Furthermore, this research fills a research gap in the academic literature regarding Laufey's works that have not been widely analyzed through a stylistic framework, and provides new insights into how an artist with a cross-cultural background (Iceland China) articulates universal emotions through English. Practically, the results of this study are expected to provide benefits for readers and other researchers in understanding the stylistic mechanisms behind popular literary works, as well as serve as additional references for the development of stylistic studies in analyzing human emotional phenomena expressed in the medium of music.

D. Scope and Limitations of the Research

This study focuses on the stylistic analysis of selected song lyrics by Laufey. The analysis is limited to five poetic elements, namely diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme, which are commonly discussed in literary and poetry analysis Perrine et al (2018). These elements are used to examine how meaning and aesthetic effects are constructed within the lyrics. The study only analyzes three selected songs from the album *A Matter of Time* and does not discuss other linguistic or musical aspects.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding in interpreting the terms used in this study, the following key terms are defined:

1. Diction: refers to the selection of words used by the songwriter to express ideas, feelings, and meanings in the lyrics.
2. Imagery: refers to words or expressions that evoke sensory experiences and enable readers or listeners to imagine what is described in the lyrics.
3. Figurative Language: refers to the use of nonliteral language, such as metaphor, simile, and personification, to create particular effects and enrich the meaning of the lyrics.
4. Tone: refers to the songwriter's attitude or emotional expression toward the subject matter conveyed through the lyrics.
5. Theme: refers to the central idea or underlying meaning conveyed through the song lyrics.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that supports the stylistic analysis of three selected songs by Laufey. The discussion includes the stylistic approach employed in the study as well as the five poetic elements diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme used as the analytical categories of the research. The study focuses specifically on three selected songs from her album *A Matter of Time* (2025), namely *Lover Girl*, *Silver Lining*, and *Carousel*. The review of literature aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the stylistic approach and the theoretical concepts that support the analysis of the selected song lyrics.

A. Stylistics Approach

Stylistics is an established academic discipline that occupies the intersection between linguistics and literary criticism. It is concerned with the systematic study of style in literary texts and the ways in which language is used to create meaning, aesthetic value, and emotional effects. According to Simpson (2004), Stylistics seeks to explain how texts achieve their effects through the analysis of linguistic and literary features. Unlike impressionistic literary criticism, which often relies on subjective interpretation, stylistics provides a more systematic approach to understanding how meaning is constructed within a text. As a result, stylistics serves as a bridge between language and literature, making it particularly suitable for the analysis of song lyrics as a form of literary expression.

The development of modern stylistics is closely related to the work of the Russian Formalists, who argued that literary language differs from ordinary language through a quality known as literariness Simpson (2004). One important concept that emerged from this tradition is foregrounding, which refers to the deliberate use of linguistic features that make certain elements of a text more noticeable. According to Leech and Short (2014), foregrounding is a stylistic phenomenon in which particular linguistic features are made prominent in order to attract the reader's attention and create aesthetic effects. Although the concept was initially applied to literary texts such as poetry and prose, it has also been widely used in the analysis of song lyrics because of its ability to reveal how language creates meaning and emotional impact. In the context of this study, foregrounding is relevant because Laufey employs various stylistic choices to emphasize emotions and experiences associated with romantic love.

B. Song

The analysis of song lyrics in this study focuses on five poetic elements, namely diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme. These elements are considered important in revealing how meaning and aesthetic effects are constructed in literary texts and song lyrics Kanzunnudin et al (2023). Similar analytical categories have also been applied in previous studies of song lyrics. A song is one of the basic forms of artistic expression. Throughout recorded history, songs have been used to communicate emotions, transmit cultural information, and maintain social cohesion. They also explore human experiences such as joy, sadness, love, longing, storytelling, and myth. According to Webster

(2021), a song is a usually short musical composition intended for singing and consisting of words set to music. By defining a song as a combination of words and music, the dictionary highlights that a song functions as both a poetic and musical form. As stated by Dharma (2023), songs consist of verses delivered with tones, rhythms, beats, and melodies. This description highlights both the musical and aesthetic elements of a song. A song involves not only the combination of words and music but also their interaction, and the words and music are in conversation with each other. The musical context affects how one perceives and understands the words, and the words themselves influence the emotive quality of the music.

The connection between lyrics and poetry has been extensively studied by academics, and it is widely accepted today that song lyrics are a form of literary work that has many attributes in common with poetry but also unique qualities of its own. The connection between song lyrics and poetry is grounded in the literary tradition. Perrine et al (2018) argue that poetry exists to communicate experience, functioning as a means of allowing readers imaginatively to live more fully and with greater awareness a quality equally present in song lyrics. This perspective is echoed by Dharma (2023), who asserts that song lyrics are poetry, just as poetry is song lyrics, since the text of poetry covers both genres of literature. The equivalence of song lyrics and poetry is clear when one considers that most of the critical techniques used in the analysis of poetry, such as stylistics and the detection of figures of speech, apply equally to song lyrics. In their structural analysis of lyrics, Kanzunnudin et al (2023)

discovered that the structural elements of song lyrics include diction, imagery, concrete language, figures of speech, verification, and typography, while the inner structure includes theme, tone, and feeling precisely the same structural categories that literary critics have traditionally applied to the analysis of poetry. This structural parallel confirms that song lyrics are a legitimate and productive object of literary analysis.

A song has a unique form of communicative power because of their inherent quality as poetic and musical. According to Que and Patty (2023), each song tells its story with messages being delivered to the person who hears the song and interprets personal experience and knowledge. Communication is based on an invitation to participate in the interpretation of lyrics based on personal experience. The invitation is especially evident in Laufey's songs because it is believed that the emotions reflected in the lyrics are known and experienced in a similar way by everyone. According to Diko (2024), there is a particular communicative feature of songs the ability to create a universal language that allows connecting different people by means of beautiful lyrics and music. In the analysis of song lyrics, meaning is often conveyed through various poetic elements that shape the artistic and emotional qualities of a text. To examine how meaning and aesthetic effects are constructed in the selected songs, this study focuses on five poetic elements, namely diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme Perrine et al (2018). These elements are considered important analytical categories because they contribute to the expression of ideas, emotions, and experiences in literary texts and song lyrics

Kanzunnudin et al (2023). Each element is discussed separately in the following sections.

1. Diction

Diction refers to the author's choice of words used to convey ideas and create particular effects in a literary work Novidha & Nurhadi (2022). In poetic analysis, diction refers to the author's choice of words and their connotative meanings that contribute to the expression of meaning and artistic effect in a literary text Perrine et al (2018). The analysis of diction helps reveal how language is employed to communicate emotions, experiences, and themes within a text. As a key element in stylistic analysis, diction contributes to the creation of tone, imagery, and figurative meaning, making it an essential aspect in analyzing literary texts and song lyrics. In the context of song lyrics, diction plays a significant role because the meaning and emotional impact of a song are largely conveyed through carefully selected words. Therefore, diction is central to textual meaning because precise vocabulary choices shape how a text represents events and guides interpretation Degaf (2019).

Leech and Short (2014) point out the importance of diction as one of the fundamental aspects of stylistics. According to Leech and Short (2014), the choice of a certain word is multi level one might choose a particular word because of its accuracy, its connotations, its phonetic effect (rhythm, rhyme, alliteration), its level (formal/informal, archaic/modern), and its combinability with other words. This multilayered nature of word choice is

particularly pertinent to the study of lyrics because of the way music influences the use of certain language elements. Specifically, in contrast to a regular text, where phonological properties of words matter less than their semantic and syntactic features, lyrics have an additional layer of complexity introduced by the music that sets off phonological characteristics of diction. According to Chaer (2013), among many other linguists whose works are frequently quoted in Indonesian stylistic studies, diction refers not only to the choice of individual words but also to their order and combination. Additionally, in this particular case, diction analysis shall focus on the choice of diction employed by Laufey in expressing their inner feelings in the songs named *Lover Girl*, *Silver Lining*, and *Carousel*, analyzing the emotional and connotative meanings embedded in each of these songs. It should be noted that the analysis of the diction used in *Lover Girl* focuses on the associative meaning of the words since it is only through such words that the thematic dynamic can be achieved. Words such as *reckless*, *fever*, *curse*, and *lover girl* do not only carry their denotative meanings but also evoke strong connotative and emotional associations that contribute to the thematic development of the song.

2. Imagery

Imagery refers to the use of language that evokes sensory experience through the representation of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell, enabling readers or listeners to mentally reconstruct experiences described in the text. In Perrine et al (2018) approach to poetry analysis, imagery is understood as

the use of sensory language that makes abstract ideas more concrete and perceptible through mental representation. Through imagery, abstract feelings can be represented in forms that are more easily perceived and experienced by readers or listeners. In terms of the structural analysis of song lyrics provided by Kanzunnudin et al (2023), the term imagery in the structural aspect of song lyrics can be considered as the sensory images that arise from specific words or expressions in a literary text, which function both in receptive perception by the reader and expressive intention by the writer. The use of imagery is essential in song lyrics because it bridges emotional experience and sensory perception, allowing listeners to connect personal feelings with the textual representation. The main way through which the sensual parts of one's personal feelings are expressed is made available for communication. The employment of imagery in the songs' lyrics, therefore, plays a double role: that of making the abstract feeling tangible and of encouraging the listener to relate to the song in terms of their own experiences and desires by seeing themselves in the images described by the lyrics.

Imagery is an important element in the creation of lyrical imagery in Laufey's songs. According to Kanzunnudin et al (2023) define three major types of imagery in song lyrics, which include visual imagery (appealing to the sight), auditive imagery (appealing to hearing), and tactile imagery (appealing to touch). These categories provide the analytical framework for identifying and interpreting imagery in the selected songs.

3. Figurative Language

Figurative language refers to language that departs from its literal meaning in order to achieve greater clarity, emphasis, or imaginative effect Perrine et al (2018). It includes devices such as metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole, which function to extend meaning beyond literal interpretation and enrich the expressive power of literary language. According to Pertiwi and Wibowo (2025), figurative language is commonly employed to study the underlying meanings of words, and it is frequently employed in songs to enhance the beauty of the words.

The use of figurative language in song lyrics is both aesthetically motivated figurative language makes lyrics more beautiful, surprising, and memorable and emotionally motivated, since figurative language enables the communication of meanings and emotional nuances that would be impossible to convey through purely literal language. This is especially true of human relationships, which as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) famously demonstrated in *Metaphors We Live By*, is one of the most metaphorically structured domains in human experience we understand and communicate complex, abstract experience primarily through a system of conceptual metaphors that map it onto more concrete, familiar domains of experience.

Metaphor is one of the most important forms of figurative language in literary analysis because it conveys meaning by implying comparison between two unrelated concepts Perrine et al (2018). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) distinguish three types of conceptual metaphor structural,

orientational, and ontological metaphors. These categories provide a useful framework for examining how figurative language contributes to meaning construction in song lyrics.

4. Tone

Tone refers to the speaker's attitude toward the subject matter or audience as revealed through diction, imagery, and figurative language Perrine et al (2018). The analysis of tone helps reveal how emotions and perspectives are communicated through language. In song lyrics, tone is conveyed through multiple linguistic and stylistic features, including diction, stylistic register, irony, and sound patterns, as well as musical and performative elements. According to Vinuya et al (2026), punctuation is a key element in creating the tone, rhythm, and clarity of song lyrics, which indicates that even the slightest choices of language may contribute substantially to the tonal quality of a song lyric. Tone is recognized by Kanzunnudin et al (2023) as an integral part of the internal architecture of song lyrics together with theme and feeling. Therefore, tone is analyzed in this study to identify the emotional attitude expressed in the selected songs.

5. Theme

Theme refers to the central idea or underlying meaning of a literary work, representing the overall message or insight conveyed by the text Perrine et al (2018). Identifying the theme allows readers to understand the main issue, experience, or perspective expressed throughout the text. Therefore, the analysis of theme in this study aims to identify the central ideas expressed in the selected songs and to examine how these ideas are

constructed through stylistic choices in diction, imagery, and figurative language.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter explains the methodology used in this study, including sections such as research design, data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis. Each section is clearly organized to guide the study toward its objectives.

A. Research Design

This study employs a stylistic criticism. A stylistic approach based on Leech and Short (2014) is applied to examine how literary language in song lyrics constructs meaning and aesthetic effects. The analysis focuses on five literary categories, namely diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme Perrine et al (2018).

The purpose of this study is to analyze the stylistic features found in the lyrics of three selected songs by Laufey. This analysis is conducted by examining words, phrases, and expressions in the lyrics to identify how poetic elements contribute to meaning and aesthetic effects. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how language is used artistically in song lyrics.

B. Data Source

The selected songs serve as rich data for stylistic analysis using five analytical categories diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme through which the construction of meaning and aesthetic effects in the lyrics is

examined. The similarities and variations found within these poetic elements making them suitable for achieving the objectives of this study.

The lyrics for each of the songs were sourced from the official YouTube channel of Laufey. This study also employs secondary data obtained from books, journal articles, and previous studies related to stylistics and song lyric analysis.

C. Data Collection

The data were collected using a close reading technique, a common method in stylistic analysis. The researcher first gathered the lyrics of the selected songs and then read them repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of their meanings and stylistic features.

Relevant words, phrases, and lines were identified and selected based on their stylistic significance, particularly in relation to diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme. The collected data were then classified into five analytical categories: diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme.

D. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a stylistic approach based on Leech and Short (2014). The analysis was conducted using five literary categories derived from Perrine et al (2018), namely diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme. Each category was subsequently interpreted to identify its contribution to the construction of meaning and aesthetic effects within the lyrics. This analysis provides a systematic understanding of how language constructs meaning, expresses emotions, and produces aesthetic effects in song lyrics.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the stylistic analysis conducted on the lyrics of three selected songs from Laufey's 2025 album *A Matter of Time*, namely *Lover Girl*, *Silver Lining*, and *Carousel*. The analysis addresses the research question concerning how the lyrics of the selected songs are analyzed stylistically. To achieve this objective, the discussion focuses on five poetic elements: diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme. The findings are presented song by song in order to provide a systematic interpretation of the stylistic features found in each lyric. The analysis is organized according to five poetic elements, namely diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme, which serve as the analytical framework of this study.

A. Stylistic Analysis of Laufey's Song Lyrics

1. *Lover Girl*

Before to the stylistic analysis, it is necessary to introduce the selected lyrics of *Lover Girl* which would be used as the primary data for this chapter. The song *Lover Girl* came out on June 25, 2025 as the third single from Laufey's album *A Matter of Time*. The lyrics belong to Laufey (Laufey Lín Bing Jónsdóttir) who both wrote and sang them. These particular lyrics are selected due to their ability to convey emotions in the best way possible; therefore, to convey the essence of the song. The following are selected from *Lover Girl* that serve as the primary data of this

study:

[Verse 2]

*Forced to get creative, wrote my feelings down
The independent lady in me's nowhere to be found
I can't wait another day to see you
How embarrassing to be this way*

[Chorus]

*I'm in a reckless fever, love-struck girl, I'd tease her
Thought I'd never be her
Quite the job you've done on me, sir
You've been hosting parties in my mind
I'm working overtime to have you in my world
Oh, what a curse it is to be in love*

[bridge]

*i wait by the phone like a high school movie
dream at the shows, you come running to me
think i see you in the wings
god, i'm hallucinating*

[chorus]

*what a reckless fever
lovestruck girl, i'd tease her
thought i'd never be her
quite the job you've done on me, sir
you've been hosting parties in my mind
i'm working overtime
you've become my whole world
oh, what a curse it is to be a lover girl*

a. Diction

One of the most prominent features of the lyrics in *Lover Girl* is the diction employed in the song. The artist uses specific lexical choices that operate on both denotative and connotative levels, in line with Perrine et al (2018) of diction as word choice involving both literal meaning and associative meaning. It was pointed out by Leech & Short (2014) that words can be considered from several dimensions including their accuracy, emotionality, phonetics, and combinability with other words in the text.

The first significant word choice appears in the chorus:

*"I'm in a reckless fever, love-struck girl, I'd tease her / Thought
I'd never be her"*

The word *reckless* carries a denotative meaning of acting without caution, but in this context it also produces connotative meanings of emotional loss of control and psychological surrender, which intensify the portrayal of romantic obsession. Here, the connotations of reckless are dangerous, emotionally abandoned, and lack of consideration about survival which are all traits possessed by someone who is deeply engrossed in their love towards another person. Fever, on the other hand, can be described as a condition of having high body temperatures due to an infection within the body. But when placed in an emotional perspective, *Fever* beyond its literal denotation as a physical condition, carries a connotative meaning of emotional intensity and uncontrollable passion, reinforcing the idea of love as a consuming force. Therefore, the expression reckless fever creates an image of someone who is highly emotionally charged and cannot help herself in such circumstances. These are the same emotions and imagination embedded in the choice of words according to Santika & Syafryadin (2023).

That should be analyzed the compound lover girl in the same chorus. According to literal understanding, lover girl is a girl who is involved with someone. However, given the singer's own confession regarding her attitude towards this kind of girls in the previous lines of

the song (*"I'd tease her / Thought I'd never be her"*), the phrase *lover girl* acquires connotative meaning of irony and self-awareness, reflecting a shift in identity that contrasts with the speaker's earlier attitude toward romantic attachment. Indeed, according to Gee et al (2022), this term has certain emotional coloring for the singer.

The following line from Verse 2 further reinforces this portrait:

"The independent lady in me's nowhere to be found"

The literal meaning of this statement is that the strong, independent woman is gone. However, emotionally, it implies a change in the identity of the singer, who used to be an independent woman but now is totally obsessed with another person. This aligns well with the concept presented by Salam and Sakinah (2024), which highlights how words used in lyrics represent complex emotions experienced personally.

Finally, the chorus contains the following lines:

"You've been hosting parties in my mind / I'm working overtime to have you in my world"

The phrase *"hosting parties in my mind"* is a literal description of hosting social events inside your mind. In terms of emotion, it indicates that someone else has completely taken over the individual's mindspace, filling their mind in a pleasant but excessive manner. The phrase *"working overtime"* operates beyond its literal meaning, suggesting emotional labor and mental preoccupation, emphasizing the

speaker's obsessive attachment.

b. Imagery

Lover Girl uses imagery based on aspects of visuality, space, time, and motion in the creation of a lively and evocative description of the speaker's interior life. As observed by Kanzunnudin et al (2023), imagery refers to the use of language that appeals to the senses in order to create mental representations of experience Perrine et al (2018). In the case of *Lover Girl*, both roles are well played. The imagery in the song's bridge is the most vivid and culturally loaded:

"I wait by the phone like a high school movie / Dream at the shows, you'll come runnin' to me / Think I see you in the wings, God / I'm hallucinating"

The simile "*like a high school movie*" utilizes a cultural genre Hollywood teenage romantic movie to produce the ironic visual imagery of the speaker's action. Emotionally, this image depicts an individual anxiously awaiting a call from their lover on the telephone. In terms of the speaker's emotions, she acknowledges her own romantic cliché actions. She understands that she is participating in an archetypal trope that is associated with love and romance. Moreover, the speaker uses the term "*hallucination*," the term *hallucinating* creates visual and psychological imagery that reflects distorted perception caused by intense emotional involvement. The speaker is so deeply entrenched in her love that she cannot separate reality from fantasy. This notion is

reinforced by the use of the term "*wings*." In the theater, the word *wings* creates spatial imagery associated with theater space, contributing to the perception of anticipation and imagined presence. This implies that the beloved could suddenly appear from behind the stage.

The chorus also presents a spatially striking image:

*"You've been hosting parties in my mind / I'm working overtime
to have you in my world"*

Psychologically, the line "hosting parties in my mind" makes a powerful image of the loved one living inside the mind of the speaker always without being invited. She feels like she is hosting a party within herself where she does not have any control anymore. Meanwhile, the image "*working overtime*" shows how exhausted and tirelessly dedicated the speaker appears to be. It seems like she is working nonstop just to stay attached to her love and make sure he remains a part of her life.

c. **Figurative Language**

Figurative language refers to language that departs from its literal meaning in order to achieve expressive and imaginative effects Perrine et al (2018). This process can be seen in all aspects of figurative language in *Lover Girl*.

The most pervasive figurative device in the song appears in the chorus:

"I'm in a reckless fever"

The expression “*reckless fever*” functions as a metaphor that equates emotional intensity with physical illness, emphasizing the loss of control experienced by the speaker. The use of simile portrays the experience of the speaker not as a voluntary choice but as a force that has conquered her, thus removing any sense of control over the process from herself and giving it to the emotion instead. This reflects what Aras et al (2024) point out as the predominance of figurative language in modern popular music as the primary means of conveying complex feelings to the audience.

The chorus also contains another significant figurative construction:

"You've been hosting parties in my mind"

The phrase “*hosting parties in my mind*” functions as a metaphor that represents intrusive thoughts as social events occupying mental space. The metaphorical usage of the term “hosting parties” brings about irony because hosting parties is normally enjoyable and an activity that is voluntarily hosted by the host. Such metaphors enable intangible inner processes to be made into tangible realities.

The following line extends this figurative logic: Chorus

"I'm working overtime to have you in my world"

This phrase creates a picture of the mind as being a social place. In a metaphorical way, the depiction of the loved one as a host who hosts his/her parties in the mind of the speaker paints a picture of someone

whose mental activities are no longer solely their own property. The metaphorical usage of the term "*hosting parties*" brings about irony because hosting parties is normally enjoyable and an activity that is voluntarily hosted by the host. Such metaphors enable intangible inner processes to be made into tangible realities.

Finally, the bridge introduces a figurative comparison that stands apart for its cultural specificity:

"I wait by the phone like a high school movie"

This simile compares the speaker's actions to a stereotypical moment from a teenage romance movie, thus bringing up an image laden with cultural significance while at the same time using irony to comment on that action. The speaker is not just talking about her actions but reflecting upon them from a detached perspective; she recognizes that she herself has become one of those stereotypical characters whose story she used to think too corny to take seriously. According to Dewi et al (2020), in discussing figurative language use in Selena Gomez's *Lose You to Love Me*, simile is a good form of expression for emotions because they are personal yet universal.

d. **Tone**

One of the most thoughtfully developed elements of the tone in the song *Lover Girl* is the tone itself. Tone refers to the speaker's attitude toward the subject or audience as expressed through linguistic choices such as diction, imagery, and figurative language Perrine et al (2018.)

The main tone that characterizes the song *Lover Girl* can be referred to as the tone of humorous embarrassment as the speaker finds herself in the situation that she is both happy about and ashamed of.

The self aware dimension of the song's tone is established immediately in the chorus:

"love struck girl, I'd tease her / Thought I'd never be her"

These two sentences create an ironic gap between the self speaking and the self feeling. She knows that she is acting exactly the way that she used to mock people for doing before, and her realization of this irony creates a tone of self-mockery throughout the whole song. This particular tone of irony has been analyzed by Hanisfi et al (2023) in their research on the album 25 by Adele, where they emphasize the importance of irony in creating the emotional dynamics of the album due to the productive tension between vulnerability and self-awareness.

The following line from Verse 2 makes this tonal dimension even more explicit:

"How embarrassing to be this way"

In terms of emotion, it is a very simple expression of embarrassment. However, it is also a point of confessional comedy the speaker is not genuinely embarrassed but is laughing at herself and feeling confused about her emotions. It is this combination of the

confessional and the humorous that ensures the song does not lapse into pure sentimentality or irony.

However, it is important to note that the tone of the song does not remain ironic and self-deprecatory at all times. The bridge brings about an even warmer tone, one of yearning:

"I wait by the phone like a high school movie / Dream at the shows, you'll come runnin' to me"

This is a tone that is dreamy and nostalgic. It adds another element to the earlier ironic tone by adding an element of anticipation. The speaker knows how ridiculous she looks but also enjoys the tone that it brings out.

The final chorus brings this arc to its close:

"I'm working overtime, you've become my whole world"

The replacement of "you've become my whole world" by the previous phrase "to have you in my world" shows that the mood changes from one of yearning to one of awe as the speaker achieves the state she has been hinting at all along. The tone at this point becomes not only celebratory but also reverent. According to Mawaddah and Rahmat (2023), tonal complexity the interplay between positive and negative emotional tones is vital to conveying the depth and richness of lyrical expression of personal experiences, and there is no better example than *Lover Girl*.

e. Theme

Theme refers to the central idea or underlying meaning of a literary work that unifies its elements into a coherent message Perrine et al (2018). The theme of the song centers on the paradoxical experience of romantic love, where emotional joy is intertwined with loss of identity and self awareness.

The song's thematic core is articulated most directly in the following lines from the chorus

"love struck girl, I'd tease her / Thought I'd never be her"

However, the themes are expressed most clearly in the chorus of the song, where one can read the following lines:

From this passage, we can understand the thematic contrast which is the main feature throughout the entire song while the singer has always seen the girl whose mind and heart are dominated by love as a person who had been ridiculed before, she now sees herself turning into such a person. As can be understood from this excerpt, this is another example of dramatic irony used in literature, since in this case the person is both the person who ridicules and the one who is ridiculed. The thematic point, however, is much deeper than simply stating that the speaker fell in love.

The following line from Verse 2 develops this theme further:

"The independent lady in me's nowhere to be found"

The implication is that being devoted to romance is not an addition to oneself but rather a subtraction, specifically the loss of

something that was precious to one's identity. Rather than embrace her love in an uncritical way, the singer recognizes with a degree of resignation and self-deprecation that she has lost something valuable through her passion. This is typical of the way Laufey approaches the theme, recognizing the joy and the sacrifice involved in being deeply in love with someone else. As Melodic Magazine points out in their review of *A Matter of Time* (2025), *Lover Girl* is the epitome of Laufey's ability to combine the two elements.

The refrain brings the song's central thematic statement to its sharpest point:

"Oh, what a curse it is to be a lover girl"

The term “*curse*” functions as a thematic marker that expresses love as both an involuntary experience and an ambivalent emotional force, aligning with Perrine et al (2018) notion that theme emerges through repeated linguistic patterns and symbolic meaning.. However, by labeling their love a curse, the artists place the act of devotion as an imposition that comes from beyond oneself and causes pain, although it is simultaneously a pleasant sensation that seems magic and inevitable. However, the sarcastic tone of the repetition does not allow the reader to take the meaning of the word in a purely negative sense. The main message conveyed by the song is not the negative quality of love but its uncontrollable and mysterious power precisely because of its ability to change and transform the person itself. It is consistent with the findings of Alfiani and Hakim (2023), who state that lyrics by

modern female singers reflect cultural patterns of ambivalence toward the romantic experience.

2. *Silver Lining*

Before proceeding into the actual analysis, it is essential to present the chosen lyrics of *Silver Lining* as the main object for discussion in this section. The song was released as the first single from the album *A Matter of Time* on April 3, 2025. *Silver Lining* is a slow burn jazz pop ballad that uses the influence of traditional jazz music for stylistic purposes specifically, it employs the style of classic jazz compositions such as those featuring Etta James. According to an interview published by *Neon Music* (2025), Laufey stated that *Silver Lining* explores the experience of romantic desire and the emergence of one's authentic self when falling in love. These lyrics were chosen as the primary data for stylistic analysis because they contain rich linguistic and literary features that can be examined through diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme. The following are selected from *Silver Lining* that serve as the primary data of this study

[Verse 1]

*I've been falling in bad habits
Staring into the abyss
Drowning in red wine and sniffing cinnamon
We've been kissing on the playground
Acting like little kids
Making dirty jokes and getting away with it*

[Chorus]

*So, I propose
It's long overdue
When you go to hell, I'll go there with you too
And when we're punished
For being so cruel*

The silver lining's I'll be there with you

[Post-Chorus]

Mm-mm

[Verse 2]

Never been calm or collected

No one ever called me sweet

What a miracle, I found a darling

I met you at the worst time

Fell in love on a whim

Now we pirouette in fields of rosy sin

The silver lining's I'll be there with you

[Outro]

Ooh

Ooh, ooh

The silver lining's I'll be there with you

a. Diction

The diction in Silver Lining is characterized by paradoxical word choices that combine literal domains of punishment and sin with romantic and affectionate connotations. The difference here lies in how profound personal commitment to one's lover is conveyed not through the usual terms of purity and paradise but with the imagery of sin and hell. It is this deviation from normal linguistic conventions of describing love and romance that gives this song the particular diction features. According to Leech and Short (2014), words acquire connotative meanings through contextual and cultural usage, which is evident in the way Laufey constructs paradoxical romantic expressions. And it is the particular meanings associated with Laufey's deviant language that give a particular description of the nature of romantic commitment as free and a bit reckless.

The diction used in the song that seems to be the most noteworthy is found in the chorus:

"The silver lining's I'll be there with you"

The phrase *silver lining* functions idiomatically, carrying connotative meaning of hope within negativity. In this context, it is recontextualized to signify the beloved as the only positive presence within a morally and emotionally complex situation. It is among the commonest idiomatic phrases in English. The phrase means a positive side of an unpleasant situation, as implied in the proverb "*every cloud has a silver lining*". In the song, Laufey uses this idiomatic expression in an ironic way, as she finds the beloved himself to be the only *silver lining* of light amidst her otherwise turbulent life. According to Salam & Sakinah (2024), associative meanings in the lyrics of songs serve to emphasize experiencing complexity and difficulty, and Laufey succeeds in doing this through her recontextualization; she makes the beloved her only positive certainty in life despite its chaos and flaws.

Verse 2 introduces a diction choice of equal significance:

"What a miracle, I found a darling"

experiencing complexity and difficulty, and Laufey succeeds in doing this through her recontextualization she makes the beloved her only positive certainty in life despite its chaos and flaws.

The term "*darling*" carries connotative meaning associated with intimacy and vintage romantic register, particularly influenced by jazz-

era lyrical conventions. It is a term with strong connections to jazz music from the mid-twentieth century and popular songs of that era. Darling features prominently in the Great American Songbook referenced by Laufey as her main inspiration for music. Its use in her songwriting reflects the vintage romantic charm and devotion that form part of her larger aesthetic approach. The term's use alongside the self deprecating "*What a miracle*" statement that suggests a flawed individual like the singer being surprised at finding such devotion adds an interesting element of contrast to her word choice.

The same verse contains another diction choice that deserves close attention:

"I met you at the worst time / Fell in love on a whim"

The expressions "*fell in love*" and "*on a whim*" jointly construct connotative meanings of suddenness, emotional vulnerability, and lack of rational control. The notion of falling in love being something that happens involuntarily is further accentuated by the use of the phrase "*on a whim*," which means impulsively without premeditation. Together, these two diction choices construct a portrait of

The speaker as someone who was caught off guard by this very deep love. This is similar to what Mawaddah and Rahmat (2023) found when they analyzed songs, in their definition of the phrase "fall in love," where there is a sense of vulnerability, unexpectedness, and the blissful loss of control that comes with falling in love.

The chorus contains the song's most audacious diction choice:

*"When you go to hell, I'll go there with you too / And when
we're punished for being so cruel / The silver lining's I'll be
there with you"*

The lexical items *"hell," "punished,"* and *"cruel"* belong to semantic fields of moral judgment and suffering, but in this context they generate paradoxical connotative meanings of devotion and intimacy. The feeling they convey is that of suffering and misdeed. Yet, Laufey uses them not to express her feelings of guilt and shame but, on the contrary, to emphasize the unconditional nature of her devotion: she will go as far as hell with the beloved, and even if being punished, the very presence of him makes the result of such experience positive. Thus, this diction technique is unique and unprecedented in that the language of sinning is used to express the noblest feelings.

b. Imagery

Imagery refers to language that evokes sensory perception and creates mental images for the reader Perrine (2018). This makes up an interesting image world in which the themes become both decadent and divine at the same time. According to Kanzunnudin et al (2023), images within song lyrics give rise to sensory perceptions and aesthetic communication. Both play an important role in the creation of imagery employed by Laufey in her song's story.

The central visual metaphor of the song, however, is contained

in its very title, which draws on the celestial metaphor of the silver lining of a cloud. The title *Silver Lining* creates visual imagery of light emerging from darkness, symbolizing hope within emotional turbulence. In just one line of lyric poetry, Laufey creates a visual metaphor in which the subject is made equal to the luminescent edge of hope seen through the eyes of difficulty. While the association between light and hope is common in the visual metaphorical tradition of lyric poetry, the ironic juxtaposition of this celestial visual metaphor in the lyrics of a song filled with images of sin and damnation only serves to increase the brilliance of the silver lining.

Among all the images presented in Verse 2, the most memorable one can be found at the very end:

"Now we pirouette in fields of rosy sin."

The phrase "*fields of rosy sin*" creates visual imagery that combines aesthetic beauty *rosy* with moral transgression *sin*, producing a paradoxical sensory representation. The adjectives *rosy* add a warm pinkish color, suggesting the idea of beauty and innocence. In the given context, the use of such an expression as "*rosy sin*" creates a paradoxical visual image, where transgression is somehow associated with elegance and beauty. According to Santika and Syafryadin (2023)

mention, paradoxical characters are usually created with the help of such paradoxical imagery.

There is a spatial image that has been created by the statement "*When you go to hell, I'll go there with you too.*" the reference to "*hell*" creates spatial imagery associated with descent and suffering, which is reinterpreted through emotional solidarity. The spatial image of accompanying another person to hell is quite impressive because it means that one person's love and loyalty are so powerful that even divine punishment is not enough to destroy it. This kind of spatial metaphor differs from the usual one since, instead of referring to heaven, the speaker refers to hell as the final destination, but the emotion attached is a positive one. According to Pratiwi et al (2020), meaning in lyrics usually involves the use of inversions in terms of traditional imagery associated with meanings.

c. **Figurative Language**

Figurative language refers to language that departs from literal meaning in order to achieve expressive and imaginative effects Perrine et al (2018). The phrase *silver lining* functions as a metaphor that transforms abstract hope into a tangible visual representation of light within darkness. The use of the metaphor transforms an abstract concept into a concrete, tangible form (the edge of the cloud that shines). From an artistic point of view, the use of the metaphor enables the

transformation of an abstract idea into something concrete and tangible, something that can be perceived as a shining presence.

Among all figurative techniques employed in the chorus, the metaphor of shared consequence embodied in the line "*When you go to hell, I'll go there with you too*" functions as a metaphor of shared consequence, representing unconditional commitment even within moral punishment. This technique is used to project a sense of judgment and punishment onto the context of a partnership, creating an entire range of profound implications. When a relationship is viewed as a joint journey to hell, this means that a partner is also a transgressor and the very presence of such person turns punishment into a choice. Absolute devotion and loyalty are conveyed through the use of the most extreme case imaginable "*I will go anywhere with you*" vs. "*I will go to the most terrible place with you*". This is in line with the research findings by Alfiani & Hakim (2023), according to which modern lyrics often incorporate a paradox of positive/negative language.

In the sentence "*Now we pirouette in fields of rosy sin*," functions as a metaphor that maps moral transgression onto graceful bodily movement, producing a layered aesthetic contrast. In fact, ballet is associated with elegance and discipline, while "sin" is often interpreted as something negative and associated with lack of self-control. By using this metaphorical construction, Laufey was able to create what Wheelwright (1940) refers to as depth-language: language that

possesses multiple interpretations and can not be translated into one single meaning, thus allowing to convey the aspects of human experience that do not fit the literal meaning of language. At the same time, the term "*rosy*" adds to the metaphorical meaning by referring to flowers and thus to the conventional metaphor of beauty and nature.

d. Tone

Tone refers to the speaker's attitude toward the subject matter as revealed through linguistic choices Perrine et al (2018). While the tone in *Lover Girl* was witty and rather distant, this tone is more focused on a particular kind of joyful transgression, with the speaker expressing her love not in spite of her imperfections, but because of them.

The use of the register for proposal of "*So, I propose / It's long overdue*" conveys a mood of playful seriousness since the term "*I propose*" carries within it the language of engagement, while the use of "*It's long overdue*" undermines any sense of gravity in the statement by giving it a mood of impatient casualness, as if the person making the proposal could not be bothered to waste time on romantic formality. The combination of formal and casual tones in one utterance is typical of the irony romantic style in female popular songs.

The song constructs an anti sentimental tone that blends defiance with emotional devotion through paradoxical lexical choices. It is not the depiction of an ideal love relationship devoid of conflicts, but rather a realistic portrayal of love: she and her love are "*so cruel*," they

are "*punished*," and they commit sins. And the tone of this description is not that of apology and remorse, but that of rebelliousness; the punishment is worth it because of the presence of friendship. The rebellious tone is important in this context, since it represents defiance against apologizing and covering up the flawed nature of real life love.

e. Theme

Theme refers to the central idea or underlying meaning of a literary work that unifies its linguistic and stylistic elements Perrine et al (2018). The essence of true love lies not in the fact that it makes someone happy but rather in the fact that it transforms a person's identity by liberating their true self from society's influence despite being somewhat reckless. The theme develops through Verse 2 and the chorus.

Verse 2 opens with a stark self portrait before arriving at a moment of romantic revelation:

*"Never been calm or collected / No one ever called me
sweet /*

What a miracle, I found a darling"

The lines introduce the speaker as a person who has always been unyielding to any societal norms about gentleness and gracefulness. The contrast drawn between the speaker's introduction and "*What a miracle, I found a darling*" makes an important point about romantic love. Romantic love is considered a miracle because it comes to someone who does not fit into the mold of what is considered lovable in society. It is important to note that romantic love validates its lover's

identity the lines continue

*"I met you at the worst time / Fell in love on a whim / Now we
pirouette in fields of rosy sin"*

Even though the speaker did not make preparations for this connection, she was not at her best for such an attachment, and she did not choose it through rational reasoning, it came into her life nonetheless and changed everything for her. The final picture that she gives about spinning around in rosy sin shows that she is at her best state in the present moment because of love since any problems that existed in her past have been turned into something beautiful and pleasurable. According to Salsabila and Indrawati (2022), moving from past troubles to the present state in terms of lyrical narrative about love creates a sense that love can change someone's life forever thus, this theme works in *Silver Lining*.

The chorus then shifts the theme from personal transformation to unconditional commitment

*"When you go to hell, I'll go there with you too / and when we're
punished for being so cruel / The silver lining's I'll be there with you"*

The chorus reinforces the theme of unconditional devotion through paradoxical imagery of punishment and emotional intimacy, highlighting love as both destructive and sustaining. In other words, there is no qualification attached to her dedication, and she declares that she is willing to follow the one she loves even through hell itself.

Her statement that her love would follow the one she loves no matter how evil he becomes negates the possibility of being loyal only when the loved one is good and successful. With the last line saying that the bright side of every situation is having the beloved around, the theme of the song is fully realized in that love doesn't change difficult situations but makes one experience them together with someone else.

3. Carousel

The final song to be used in this essay is the third song and it is called *Carousel*. This is one of the most interesting songs included in Laufey's album entitled *A Matter of Time* that was released in 2025. The song was created and produced by Laufey herself along with Spencer Stewart. The song was composed and produced by Laufey together with Spencer Stewart and is characterized by a central metaphor that compares the speaker's internal state to a carousel, which becomes the basis for stylistic analysis.

This poem is constructed around the main metaphor which makes the comparison between the speaker's internal workings and a fairground carousel. Through this metaphorical structure, the song constructs meaning related to emotional instability and the search for inner balance. While at present the analysis concentrates on the process of the metaphor development, vulnerability, and the pursuit of inner harmony, the song provides a framework for further reflection on human relationships.

[Verse 1]
My life is a circus
Hold on for all I bring with me
You make me nervous

*Take my sincere apology
For all of my oddities
My recurring comedies
I know I'm on a*

*[Chorus]
Carousel spinning around
Floating up and down
Nowhere to go
Will you break the spell?
Tether me to your ground
Such a spectacle
You signed up for one hell of a
One man show
Tangled in ribbons
A lifelong role
Aren't you sorry that you fell?
Onto this carousel*

*[Verse 2]
The city of acrobats
Of clowns and illusory traps with me
Was losing its wonder
I thought I would go under, till we met
I'm waiting for you to see
The things that are wrong with me
Before you're on my*

*[Chorus]
Carousel spinning around
Floating up and down
Nowhere to go
Till you break the spell
Tether me to your ground
Such a spectacle
You signed up for one hell of a
One man show
Tangled in ribbons
A lifelong role
I'm so sorry that you fell
Onto this carousel*

a. Diction

The lexis in the *Carousel* part is mostly taken from the language of performance and circus acts. Among the lexemes found here are such

terms as carousel, spin, spectacle, one man show, entangled in ribbons, a role for life, acrobats, clowns, and traps for deception. The diction in Carousel is dominated by lexical items associated with performance and circus imagery, which carry both denotative meanings and connotative associations of instability, performance, and illusion Leech & Short (2014). According to Leech and Short (2014), stylistic diction contributes to textual cohesion and meaning construction through systematic lexical choices. The song further features a vital change in diction that conveys the speaker's longing for a source of stability. The phrase "*tether me to your ground*" carries connotative meaning of emotional anchoring, where "*tether*" suggests dependence and "*ground*" symbolizes stability and reality. In the song, the phrase creates the imagery of the necessity for an anchor to keep the speaker from going off balance in her chaotic internal world. "*Your ground*" is another phrase that deepens this idea with its connotations of stability, groundedness, reality, and calmness all qualities lacking in the spinning carousel.

The use of "*breaking the spell*" also stands out as an example of diction usage that deserves mentioning. The expression "*breaking the spell*" functions both literally and figuratively, where "*spell*" symbolizes emotional entanglement and psychological illusion. However, the connotation shows how the speaker's state is portrayed as a carousel that goes on without end as a form of enchantment in which

only the speaker's partner can break her from this enchantment. This reflects the same stylistic device mentioned by (Pratiwi et al, 2020; Alfiani & Hakim, 2023), in their analysis of song lyrics wherein freedom from limiting factors is described as freeing oneself from the illusion or habit to reveal the true self.

The end line of the chorus

"Aren't you sorry that you fell? / Onto this carousel" (Chorus 1) and "I'm so sorry that you fell / Onto this carousel" (Chorus 2), brings about a very distinctive change in mood. In Chorus 1, the line, "Aren't you sorry that you fell?" is directed at her partner, where it is asked with a challenge.

The verb *"fell"* carries dual connotative meanings: physical descent and the conceptual metaphor of falling in love.

In Chorus 2, *however, the change in mood occurs from "Aren't you sorry" to "I'm so sorry"* in which the speaker herself feels sorry for falling in love.

b. Imagery

Imagery refers to language that creates sensory experience and mental representation Perrine et al (2018), the chorus is built around the sensation of circular motion *"spinning around, floating up and down, nowhere to go"*, while the desire for stability is expressed through the contrasting spatial image of the ground or an anchor *"Tether me to your ground"*. The imagery employed in *Carousel* revolves mostly around kinetic imagery and spatial imagery. The song employs kinetic imagery

(movement) and spatial imagery (location), creating a sense of instability and imbalance. Spatial imagery comes to play in the imagery of the ground or anchoring "*Tether me to your ground*". It is the interplay between the imagery of the ground and kinetic imagery that forms the basic visual structure of the song.

The carousel functions as a visual symbol representing cyclical emotional experience and lack of direction. The creation of a visual imagery through "*Carousel spinning around / Floating up and down / Nowhere to go*" symbolizes a repetitive movement without any goals or purposeful direction. At the same time, it creates a visualization of a person who keeps moving, never getting anywhere and ending up back at the point he started from. Thus, the image of "*Tether me to your ground*" contrasts the partner to the concept of stability and permanence.

The imagery in Verse 2 draws on an aquatic motif:

"I thought I would go under till we met"

The phrase "*going under*" creates vertical imagery associated with emotional collapse and psychological decline. On the other hand, the metaphor of carousel suggests constant spinning horizontally. The speaker sinks vertically in Verse 2, and it suggests that the speaker's condition prior to encountering the partner was not stagnant, but rather, declining at a drastic pace. This makes the meeting seem like the point where she stops this downward spiral, and places her on the carousel a

chaotic yet living horizontal existence. Imagery of rescue from collapse or drowning is a common figurative pattern that positions the partner as essential to the speaker's well-being.

c. Figurative Language

Figurative language refers to language that departs from its literal meaning to create expressive and imaginative effects Perrine et al (2018). This structural metaphor, in the sense of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), systematically maps elements associated with a circus environment, such as performers, audience, and atmosphere, onto the speaker's internal life. The carousel is the specific instantiation of this broader conceptual metaphor, providing the song with its title and central image.

Under this metaphorical representation of love through circus imagery, the song generates several specific sub mappings. First, the partner is positioned as both the audience and a participant in the speaker's self presentation, as expressed in the line:

"You signed up for one hell of a one man show"

The phrase *"one man show"* is an idiomatic expression for a performance given by a single person, typically implying both self-sufficiency and a degree of isolation. By describing the partner as having *"signed up"* for her solo act, Laufey creates an image of someone who consciously chooses to witness and become part of someone's complex inner performance. This frames the choice as an

informed one, where the individual is aware of what they are getting into.

The second metaphor in the phrase “*break the spell*” is love as disenchantment. The typical metaphor here is that love itself is the spell, but this metaphor inverts the idea and suggests that love can disenchant someone out of their illusion. In this case, the illusion refers to the speaker's looped mind until his partner comes along and breaks the illusion. This is important since in this metaphor love can be seen as a reality, and not an illusion as it often is.

Figurative progression is also evident in the transition between

"Aren't you sorry that you fell? / Onto this carousel" (Chorus 1

and

"I'm so sorry that you fell / Onto this carousel" (Chorus 2)

The repetition of “*fell*” activates the conceptual metaphor of love as falling, emphasizing emotional vulnerability. Nonetheless, in *Carousel*, the metaphor holds an ambivalent tone of guilt rather than the usual euphoria. It is due to the fact that the speaker apologizes for having caused her partner to fall on the carousel since the speaker herself sees herself as complex. This song, unlike the other two selected ones, has the most complex tone, as well as the most emotional. The tone is characterized by tenderness and vulnerability that comes together with self-mocking humor and a real interest in the well-being of the partner. All these tonal features are reflected in the lyrics, vocabulary, and

figurative devices. An apology already built into the first verse:

"Take my sincere apology / For all of my oddities"

The use of the term sincere is important in that it indicates the genuineness of the apology, not just irony. The genuine apology generates the emotional level of sincerity and humility regarding one's own complexity as a partner. Within the chorus, there is a slight progression in terms of the tone:

"Will you break the spell?" (Chorus 1)

and:

"Till you break the spell" (Chorus 2)

The transformation from a question of hope to one of conditional trust indicates that the expression of vulnerability may have increased the speaker's faith in the partner's commitment to remain.

The final tonal shift in the song captures the tonal trajectory with remarkable accuracy in the difference between:

"Aren't you sorry that you fell? / Onto this carousel"

and:

"I'm so sorry that you fell / Onto this carousel"

One is playful and teasing in nature, while the other is genuinely sorry and open about emotions. The switch from teasing to being tender represents the emotional process undertaken by the person delivering the message. According to Kanzunnudin et al (2023), tone within song lyrics is one of the ways that meaning is conveyed in lyrics,

in which case the change from question to apology changes the meaning of an exact phrase or statement in the lyrics.

d. Tone

Tone refers to the speaker's attitude toward the subject expressed through linguistic choices such as diction, imagery, and figurative language Perrine et al (2018). The tone is characterized by tenderness and vulnerability that comes together with self mocking humor and a real interest in the well being of the partner. All these tonal features are reflected in the lyrics, vocabulary, and figurative devices. An apology already built into the first verse

"Take my sincere apology / For all of my oddities"

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e. Theme

Theme refers to the central idea or underlying meaning of a literary work that unifies its stylistic elements into a coherent message Perrine et al (2018). In contrast to the speaker of *Lover Girl*, who cannot believe her own vulnerability, or the speaker of *Silver Lining*, who enjoys committing a sin together with her beloved, the speaker in *Carousel* embraces romantic love out of a sense of true self knowledge and emotional modesty. She does not expect her lover to mend her ways or change her but only to offer her some kind of anchorage amidst her natural chaos.

Verse 2 establishes this thematic premise with striking directness:

*"Was losing its wonder / I thought I would go under till we met /
I'm waiting for you to see / The things that are wrong with me /
Before you're on my carousel"*

In this verse, a sense of vulnerability and dependence, which contributes to the uniqueness of this song, is captured, since unlike in the other two songs where the singers have their love affairs with these individuals, this singer feels that he is on the verge of falling apart without the coming of that person. This idea of romantic attachment as a matter of existential necessity rather than mere pleasure brings out the element of vulnerability, making the song what it is. In addition to that, it is from these lines onwards that one is faced with another important message regarding romance.

The chorus develops this theme through one of the song's most resonant requests:

*"Carousel spinning around / Floating up and down / Nowhere
to go / Will you break the spell? / Tether me to your ground"*

The image of a carousel moving and floating without anywhere to go represents the life of the speaker as an entity with constant motion without any direction or destination. It is against this background that the statement *"Tether me to your ground"* becomes quite significant for the understanding of themes in the song. Tethering means accepting some form of constraining oneself through loving someone else rather than being confined by the other. *"Your ground"* places the lover as

someone with some kind of property that is lacking in the speaker. The idea of the romantic relationship in terms of bringing together two entities with complementary elements of chaos and ground, for instance, is responsible for the unique nature of the theme in *Carousel*. As Salam & Sakinah (2024) point out, the presentation of love in song lyrics as something that completes the incomplete within us is one of the most important aspects of romantic song lyricism.

The final movement of the chorus adds a dimension of concern for the beloved that is unique among the three songs:

"Aren't you sorry that you fell? / Onto this carousel"

and later:

"I'm so sorry that you fell / Onto this carousel"

The transition from teasing to a full-fledged apology symbolizes the evolution of the emotions portrayed in the song. From being playfully self aware, the singer shifts to vulnerability and admits that loving a complicated person like herself could be difficult for her loved one to bear. It is precisely the thematic concern with the health of the loved one, conveyed in the apology rather than praise, that sets *Carousel* apart from the other two songs.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

This research investigated the stylistic features found in the lyrics of three selected songs by Laufey from the album *A Matter of Time* (2025), namely *Lover Girl*, *Silver Lining*, and *Carousel*. The analysis was conducted through five poetic elements namely diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme. These analytical categories were examined through a stylistic approach based on Leech and Short (2014), while their literary definitions were informed by Perrine et al (2018) discussion of poetic elements. The findings reveal that each song employs distinctive stylistic features to construct different representations of romantic love. In *Lover Girl*, the diction, imagery, and figurative language portray love as both desirable and disruptive to personal identity. In *Silver Lining*, the stylistic elements present love as liberating, spontaneous, and unconditional. Meanwhile, *Carousel* depicts love as a source of emotional grounding, acceptance, and stability through its extended metaphorical framework. The study demonstrates that stylistic analysis provides an effective approach for examining how meaning and aesthetic effects are constructed in song lyrics.

The findings also indicate that figurative language, particularly metaphorical expressions, plays an important role in shaping the themes, tones, and emotional experiences represented in the selected songs. Furthermore, this

study contributes to the growing body of research on stylistic analysis of popular music by examining three songs from Laufey's *A Matter of Time* (2025), a recent album that has received limited scholarly attention.

B. Suggestions

Based on the findings obtained from this research, a number of recommendations are made for further investigation. In this regard, it is suggested that future researchers expand stylistic analysis to other songs from *A Matter of Time*, such as *Clockwork* and *Too Little Too Late*, in order to examine how diction, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme are constructed across a broader selection of songs. Moreover, a comparative study between Laufey's stylistic construction of love and other jazz pop artists will be helpful in understanding whether the stylistic constructions found herein are unique to Laufey's style or the entire genre itself.

For English Literature students and lecturers, this study shows that contemporary song lyrics, including those written by Laufey, can be regarded as valuable literary texts for stylistic analysis, since they employ various poetic elements that contribute to the construction of meaning and aesthetic effects. This study also helps broaden students' understanding of how stylistic features and poetic elements contribute to the construction of meaning and aesthetic effects in literary texts and song lyrics.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



Zakia Nova Liana was born in Lampung on November 25, 2004.

She completed her secondary education at MA Al-Urwatul

Wutsqo Jombang, East Java, before pursuing her undergraduate

studies in English Literature at Universitas Islam Negeri

Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Throughout her time in college,

she took part in various student activities, including serving as a committee member

for Maliki English Festival (MEF) 2023 and completing a series of education and

training programs under UKM Simfoni FM UIN Malang. These experiences

allowed her to grow not only academically but also in terms of teamwork and

communication. Now in her final semester, she has chosen to dedicate herself fully

to completing her thesis embracing the process with patience and sincerity as she

prepares to step forward into the next chapter of her life.