

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter Two provides the essential theoretical and contextual foundation for this study by integrating both theoretical perspectives and previous research. This chapter begins by outlining the primary theoretical framework, namely the structural analysis approach proposed by René Wellek and Austin Warren, which serves as the central lens for examining the intrinsic elements of Joji's lyrics. Within this framework, four key aspects—imagery, figurative language, tone, and character—are analyzed to reveal how the lyrics construct meaning, evoke emotion, and convey artistic expression. This structural approach emphasizes the interrelation of these elements to form a coherent and unified work. The chapter also includes a review of previous studies related to structural literary analysis and song lyrics as literary texts, identifying relevant contributions while highlighting gaps that this study aims to address. Together, the integration of the theoretical framework and prior research situates the current study within a broader academic discourse and establishes a foundation for analyzing the complexity and emotional depth of contemporary lyrical expression.

B.1 Structural Analysis

Structural analysis is a method of literary study that focuses on the internal structure and organization of a text, examining how its elements interact to form a unified whole. This approach assumes that a literary work is an autonomous entity, meaning it can be understood and interpreted through its intrinsic

components without necessarily relying on external contexts such as the author's biography or historical background (Culler, 2002). By identifying and analyzing the relationships among various parts of a text, structural analysis seeks to uncover the patterns, coherence, and artistry that give a work its distinctive character.

In literary studies, structural analysis can involve various intrinsic aspects, such as narrative structure, thematic organization, stylistic features, and character construction. These components are not viewed in isolation but rather as interconnected elements that contribute to the overall meaning and aesthetic experience of the work. This perspective aligns with formalist traditions, where the emphasis is placed on "the work itself" rather than extrinsic factors.

René Wellek and Austin Warren, in their influential work *Theory of Literature* (1949), positioned structural analysis as a central method for understanding literature. They emphasized that a literary work should be studied as a structured whole, in which each element—whether linguistic, stylistic, or narrative—serves a particular function in achieving artistic unity. According to Wellek and Warren, the analysis of intrinsic elements is essential for capturing the essence of literary expression. They proposed examining components such as imagery, figurative language, tone, and character as vital to revealing a text's artistic and emotional depth.

Within the framework of Wellek and Warren's theory, imagery refers to the use of descriptive language that appeals to the senses and creates vivid mental pictures, enhancing the reader's imaginative engagement with the text. Figurative

language encompasses devices such as metaphor, simile, and personification, which allow for more nuanced and layered meanings. Tone reflects the author's or speaker's attitude toward the subject matter or audience, shaping the emotional resonance of the work. Character, meanwhile, involves the depiction of personalities, behaviors, and motivations that drive the narrative or lyrical voice. When these four aspects are analyzed together, they reveal the internal coherence of the text and illuminate how the lyrics function as a work of art.

By applying this structural approach, this study focuses on the internal elements of Joji's lyrics to understand how meaning and emotion are constructed through the interplay of imagery, figurative language, tone, and character. This method not only respects the autonomy of the literary text but also allows for a deeper appreciation of its aesthetic and emotional complexity.

B.1.1 Figurative Language

Figurative language encompasses linguistic devices in which the intended meaning differs from the literal meaning of the words used. According to Abrams (1999), this includes tropes such as metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, and symbolism. Figurative language allows songwriters to convey complex emotions, abstract ideas, and nuanced themes in a condensed and evocative form.

In structural analysis, figurative language is not merely ornamental but functions as a cohesive element that interlinks different parts of the text. As Perrine & Arp (2011) note, figurative expressions can create thematic resonance, reinforce imagery, and establish symbolic motifs. For example, the metaphor of "a

broken mirror” in a lyric may serve to symbolize fractured identity, lost love, or distorted perception—concepts that gain interpretive richness when examined alongside other elements in the song. Analyzing figurative language in this way highlights its role in both meaning-making and structural cohesion.

B.1.2 Tone

Tone refers to the implied attitude of the speaker or narrator toward the subject matter, as conveyed through word choice, rhythm, and style. As Kennedy & Gioia (2013) explain, tone shapes the listener’s emotional reception of a text, signaling whether it is serious, ironic, melancholic, nostalgic, or celebratory. In song lyrics, tone operates as a subtle but powerful guide to interpretation, directing the audience toward particular emotional responses.

From a structuralist viewpoint, tone is inseparable from the other intrinsic elements of a text. It is influenced by imagery, figurative language, and diction, and in turn, it affects how these elements are perceived. A single image or metaphor may carry different emotional weights depending on the prevailing tone of the piece. Thus, identifying and analyzing tone allows the researcher to trace how the interplay of stylistic devices produces a coherent emotional atmosphere throughout the song (Perrine & Arp, 2011).

B.1.3 Imagery

Imagery refers to the use of descriptive language that appeals directly to the senses—sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell—creating mental pictures and sensory experiences for the audience. Abrams (1999) defines imagery as “the

representation of sense experience through language,” emphasizing its role in transforming abstract concepts into tangible impressions. In the context of song lyrics, imagery not only serves to depict scenes and emotions but also intensifies the listener’s engagement with the song’s emotional and thematic content.

From a structural perspective, imagery operates as one of the core stylistic devices that contribute to a text’s aesthetic unity. It is often used to reinforce the mood, illustrate thematic contrasts, or establish symbolic associations within the lyrics (Perrine & Arp, 2011). For instance, a recurring image of “rain” in a lyric can symbolize sadness, renewal, or nostalgia, depending on its structural placement and surrounding language. By examining the patterns of imagery, the analyst can uncover deeper layers of meaning that might not be immediately apparent on a purely literal level.

B.1.4 Character

In literary terms, character refers to the representation of a person, persona, or voice that exists within the narrative or lyrical framework. While in novels and plays this often means fully developed fictional individuals, in song lyrics the concept of character can be more fluid. According to Wellek & Warren (1949), the “speaker” or “narrative voice” in a poem or lyric serves as an implied character whose identity is constructed through language, tone, and perspective.

Even when lyrics are abstract or fragmented, they may still project a distinct character—whether it is the songwriter’s autobiographical persona, a fictional narrator, or an archetypal figure. The character’s emotional state, worldview, and

relationship to the subject matter can be inferred from their choice of words, use of imagery, and overall tone. In structural analysis, identifying the character is essential because it situates the song within a specific communicative context, allowing the analyst to interpret not only what is being said, but who is saying it and why.

B.2 All About Joji

George Kusunoki Miller, professionally known as Joji, is a Japanese Australian singer, songwriter, and record producer, born in Osaka, Japan, on September 18, 1992, to an Australian father and a Japanese mother (Time, 2019). He attended Canadian Academy, an international school in Kobe, before moving to the United States at the age of eighteen to study at the New York Institute of Technology (Time, 2019). Before establishing himself as a musician, Joji gained popularity in the early 2010s as a YouTube content creator through channels such as *TVFilthyFrank*, *TooDamnFilthy*, and *DizastaMusic*. He became best known for his comedic personas, including *Filthy Frank* and *Pink Guy*, and for initiating the viral “Harlem Shake” trend in 2013 (Billboard, 2017). In 2017, he retired from YouTube due to health issues and mental strain, shifting his focus entirely to music (The New Yorker, 2018).

Joji debuted as a musician under the label 88rising with the EP *In Tongues* (2017), followed by his first studio album *Ballads 1* (2018), which debuted at number one on the US Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart—making him the first Asian-born artist to achieve this feat (NextShark, 2018). His second album,

Nectar (2020), featured collaborations with Diplo, Bencee, and Lil Yachty (Billboard, 2020), while his third album, *Smithereens* (2022), produced the hit single “Glimpse of Us,” which peaked at number eight on the Billboard Hot 100 and topped the Spotify Global Chart for ten consecutive days (NextShark, 2022; Radio and Music, 2022).

Joji’s successful transition from internet comedian to internationally recognized musician highlights his adaptability and artistic evolution, while also strengthening the global representation of Asian artists in contemporary popular music (The New Yorker, 2018). His works are characterized by distinctive lyrical style, thematic depth, and a consistent artistic identity. Joji’s songwriting often delivers well-constructed narratives supported by musical arrangements that enhance storytelling (Time, 2019). Considering these aspects, this study selects two of Joji’s works—*Glimpse of Us* from the 2022 album *Smithereens* and *Like You Do* from the 2020 album *Nectar*—as the primary objects of research. These songs are chosen for their global recognition, lyrical richness, and potential for exploration through structural analysis to uncover the meaning of love as represented in Joji’s works. Their thematic relevance, popularity, and artistic quality make them suitable examples for identifying how love is expressed.

B.3 Music

Music is a sound arranged into patterns that can please our ears or communicate feelings and moods. It possesses rhythm, melody, and harmony, which provide depth and allow for the use of various instruments or sounds

(Oxford Student Encyclopedia, 2005). Bernstein and Picker (1972) state that music consists of sounds organized over time, possessing artistic value, and functioning as a medium for expressing a composer's ideas and emotions to the listener. Similarly, Eagle defines music as the organization of sounds and silences within a particular flow of time and space.

Music can be understood as the art of arranging sounds carefully to form a harmonious and pleasing pattern, created either through musical instruments or the human voice. It typically contains elements such as rhythm, melody, harmony, and timbre (Syukur, 2005). From these definitions, it can be concluded that music is an arrangement of sounds and silences in a structured pattern, organized within a continuous temporal and spatial relationship that includes rhythm, melody, timbre, and harmony. These elements are generally produced by instruments or human voices, capable of pleasing the ear and expressing ideas, emotions, feelings, or moods.

Music has a profound influence on human life, as it serves not only as an enjoyable form of entertainment but also as a powerful medium that can affect human emotions. It is often integrated into various art forms such as dance, where harmonious body movements accompanied by music can contribute to character formation, particularly among young people. Furthermore, music can serve as a productive leisure activity and even as a means of achieving personal growth and spiritual well-being.

Music, as previously discussed, serves not only as a structured arrangement of sounds that evokes emotions and communicates ideas, but also as a cultural and artistic medium capable of influencing human thought and behavior. Within this broader musical framework, song lyrics occupy a distinctive position as the verbal component that conveys meaning directly through language. While instrumental music relies on melody, rhythm, and harmony to communicate feelings, lyrics utilize the power of words to articulate narratives, emotions, and perspectives. Thus, lyrics become an essential element in shaping the listener's interpretation of a song, bridging the auditory aesthetics of music with the intellectual and emotional depth of literary expression. Song lyrics are an expression of an individual's perceptions, experiences, or observations—whether seen, heard, or felt. In conveying these experiences, a songwriter or lyricist often engages in creative manipulation of words and language to create uniqueness and appeal in their work. This linguistic artistry may involve the use of vocal play, figurative language, or semantic deviations, which are further enhanced by melodies and musical notation that align with the lyrics. As a result, listeners can be drawn deeper into the songwriter's intended emotions and thoughts (Awe, 2003, p. 51).

The definition of song lyrics can be equated to that of poetry, and vice versa. As noted by Jan van Luxemburg (1989), the concept of poetic texts extends beyond traditional literary genres to include proverbs, advertising slogans, political mottos, pop song lyrics, and even prayers.

From these definitions, a literary work can be regarded as an imaginative creation that employs literary language—distinct from everyday language or scientific discourse. Literary language is characterized by its ambiguity and expressive nature, qualities that are deliberately avoided in both scientific and colloquial language (Awe, 2003, p. 49). Due to this inherent ambiguity and expressiveness, literary language tends to influence, persuade, and ultimately shape the attitudes of its audience (Wellek & Warren, 1989, pp. 14–15).

B.4 Review of Related Research

Several scholars have explored song lyrics from diverse analytical angles, providing valuable context and precedent for this study. However, most investigations tend to isolate specific literary elements or employ frameworks other than structural analysis, revealing opportunities for more integrative approaches.

Putri Rindiani Irwan (2023) conducted a qualitative descriptive study analyzing figurative language in Adele's Album 30, identifying symbolic forms, personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, and allegory as predominant. The research highlights the pervasive use of symbolic figurative devices, with symbolism comprising 36% of the lyrical language (symbolic – 36%, allegory – 28%, simile – 18%, personification – 9%, metaphor and hyperbole – 4.5%). While Kurniawan's findings provide a detailed typological breakdown, they do not engage with how these devices structurally interact with other intrinsic elements like imagery, tone, or character.

In a similar vein, Milana (2021) examined the song lyrics of Saif Adam through the lens of Perrine's theory of figurative language. The study identified eight types of tropes—metaphor, hyperbole, irony, personification, simile, litotes, metonymy, and paradox—determining metaphor as the most dominantly used (25%), followed by hyperbole (17.5%) and personification (13.75%). This analysis enriches our understanding of stylistic devices in contemporary songs but remains focused on figurative language in isolation.

Other research, such as Henny Marlioni (2018) and Setiawan (2021), supports this trend. Marlioni's thesis on Harris J.'s songs revealed that metaphor and personification dominate the figurative language landscape in those lyrics. Meanwhile, Setiawan's exploration of The Script's album #3 identified multiple tropes—metonymy, simile, hyperbole, metaphor, idiom, and synecdoche—and connected them to song themes, though without structuralist synthesis.

Taken together, these prior studies underscore a scholarly interest in figurative language and stylistic features in song lyrics. Nonetheless, a notable gap persists: few works employ a structuralist approach—especially one grounded in Wellek and Warren's theory of intrinsic elements—to examine how imagery, figurative language, tone, and character collectively contribute to lyrical meaning and emotional effect.

By integrating these elements into a cohesive analytical framework, the present research addresses this gap, offering a more holistic structural interpretation of Joji's lyrics in *Glimpse of Us* and *Like You Do*.