

Paradox in Melanie Martinez's Song Lyrics, "Lunchbox Friends and Fire Drill"

Rita Napitupulu

STBA- Persahabatan Internasional Asia, Medan

Corresponding Author: nurlatifanapit21@gmail.com

Stefany Kangginata

STBA- Persahabatan Internasional Asia, Medan

Abstract. *This research, done is to explore about the paradox used in the song lyrics, and through the exploration will be known how and why it is used there. The research conducted by using the method of qualitative research, which does not use statistical data; it is collected in the form of written, spoken, or observed behavior. The researcher also uses the library research in the collecting data.*

Findings of this research are paradox is used by bringing order to the ambiguous shared meanings that are provided by perceptions of reality, constructing a draft to use as a guide for their future research, reformulating element of modern, industrial society, understanding the start or result of research, supporting the suitability of the goal of the research, giving space to have critical quality, amplify contrast between elements of the lyrics.

Through this research is hoped that it can inspire the readers to deeper into the subject of paradox, spark the discussion of the paradox sentences or ideas in Martinez's lyrics, so that the readers can have a better understanding about the paradox itself.

Keywords: *Paradox, Song, Lyrics*

Abstrak. Penelitian yang dilakukan adalah untuk mengeksplorasi paradoks yang digunakan dalam lirik lagu, dan melalui eksplorasi tersebut akan diketahui bagaimana dan mengapa digunakan. Penelitian dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, yang tidak menggunakan data statistik; itu dikumpulkan dalam bentuk perilaku tertulis, lisan, atau pengamatan. Peneliti juga menggunakan penelitian Pustaka dalam pengumpulan data yang dianalisa.

Temuan dari penelitian ini adalah paradoks digunakan dengan menertibkan makna bersama yang ambigu yang diberikan oleh persepsi terhadap realitas, menyusun rancangan untuk digunakan sebagai panduan bagi penelitian mereka di masa depan, merumuskan kembali elemen masyarakat industri modern, memahami awal atau hasil. penelitian, mendukung kesesuaian tujuan penelitian, memberi ruang untuk mempunyai kualitas kritis, memperkuat kontras antar unsur lirik.

Melalui penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menginspirasi para pembaca untuk mendalami lebih dalam mengenai pokok bahasan paradoks, memantik pembahasan kalimat-kalimat atau gagasan-gagasan paradoks dalam lirik-lirik Martinez, sehingga para pembaca akan dapat memiliki pemahaman yang lebih baik lagi tentang paradox itu sendiri.

Kata Kunci: Paradoks, Lagu, Lirik

INTRODUCTION

The researcher uses the song lyrics created by Melanie Martinez. The song lyrics are the collected information used as the data of this research study. The lyrics used as the subject of study include; "*Lunchbox friends and Fire drill*", Martinez is one of the new popular American singers, songwriters and photographers born on April 27, 1995, at Astoria, Queens. Her teacher, Mr. Nadien on her vocal, teaches her and her career started to blow up after her appearance on "The Voice", an American talent show in 2012. Martinez dyed her hair half blond-half black in her sixteen, inspired by Cruella de Ville from the Disney movie titled, '101 Dalmatians' which later become her trademark style that makes her unique in the music industry. (Crybaby Jaycee, 2022: 2-6).

The term "paradox" came from the Greek words' "para" and "doxa," which mean "distinct form" and "opinion," respectively. Later, the use of paradox used in Late Latin, which came from the mid-16th century. The use of the words later got higher from 1950 until it was last recorded in 2019 (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2022). One of the famous paradoxes in song lyrics is '*darling I'm a nightmare, dressed like a daydream*' by Taylor Swift (2014), in the literal meaning, she is a nightmare, a bad thing that can influence others to be more negative and can give you all the bad stuff. Different from the second half which stated she is dressed like a daydream, which held the meaning that she will let you see her goodness, all positive energy could be gathered by her for you to see, or to feel. Contrary to paradox, the sentences only held the meaning that she is the bad news, that looks like a good person. Like a bad apple wrapped up in a still fresh and nice outer layer. To sum it up, the definition of a paradox is a statement of a conclusion that are true and logical but appears to be contradictory, false, inconsistent or sometimes, absurd.

The reason for the writer to choose the paradox found in Martinez's song lyrics as the topic is that the researcher found the lyrics that she (Martinez) wrote with her co-writer enjoyable. In addition, the paradoxes in her written song lyrics seem as an interesting object. Her writing is written quite bold compared to the classic poems, which often touch on the subject that aligns with society today. Poole & Van de Ven in Keyser B.D, Vandenbempt, K & Guiette (2021:2) state their opinion by saying that paradox is a peculiar subject, it is often surprising or seemingly illogical which makes them interesting to dive into. lyrics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Paradox

The term "paradox" is derived from the Greek words' "para" and "doxa," which mean "distinct form" and "opinion," respectively. Later, the use of paradox was used in late Latin, which came from the mid-16th century. The use of the words later got higher from 1950 until it was last recorded in 2019. (Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, 2022)

The definition of paradox was also once presented by Quine (1976; 1) in one of his lectures in November 1961, in a Shop Club at Harvard and also published by him under the title "Paradox" in Scientific American vol 206, 1962. He stated, *"in general, then, a paradox is just any conclusion that at first sounds absurd but that has an argument to sustain it? In the end, I think this account stands up pretty well. But it leaves much unsaid. The argument that sustains a paradox may expose the absurdity of a buried premise or of some preconception previously reckoned as central to physical theory, mathematics, or the thinking process. More than once in history the discovery of paradox has been the occasion for major reconstruction at the foundations of thought."*

How is Paradox Used in Literary Writing?

How paradox can assist in passing an idea that is ambiguous? This can be seen as follows; According to Keyser B.D, Vandenbempt, K &Guiette (2021:9),

- a. Paradox to theorize
 - By bringing order to the ambiguous shared meanings that are provided by perceptions of reality. For example, Nguyen (2022: 14) *"thought is not reality; yet it is through thought that our realities are created."*
 - By constructing a draft to use as a guide for their future research.
- b. Paradox to understand and develop theories of management and organization
 - By reformulating element of modern, industrial society.
- c. Paradox as means to vocalize and picture the confusing things
 - By understanding the start or result of research.
 - By supporting the suitability of the goal of the research.
 - By giving space to have critical quality..

Lyrics

The words the author has organized into a poem or song's lyrics are the lyrics themselves. Hornby (2016: 906) claims that the lyrics are "the words of a song" and "expressing a person's personal feelings and thoughts" in music (in poetry). This leads to the conclusion that song lyrics are organized words that the writer uses to convey their emotions to engage the audience through music in the form of a poem or tale. Lyrics are a written language that writers often use to compose poetry or song by adding a tune. The definition of lyrics, as stated by Hornby (2016: 906) in the Oxford Dictionary, is poetry or the lines used to communicate emotion through a song. The data in this research study are selected from song lyrics written by Melanie Martinez and her crew, the song which is sung and popularized by Martinez herself.

Song

Manser stated in Alfarisi (2017: 24) that a song is a poem set of music, intended to be sung. This statement is also in line with the definition of a song by Hornby in the Oxford dictionary (2016: 1440) he stated that a song is words that you sing or a stories that is told through singing, usually accompanied by a short piece of music. Jensen also stated in Alfarisi (2017: 24) that song is a poetic text set into musical work where both the music and the words are both held the same, equal value.

With all three statements above, it could be concluded that songs are written in form of poems or a story, accompanied by music which is sung by people to express their emotions to the audience. Both the music and the poem (or lyric) held the same value as it was the media that help the creator to express what they want to share to with the listeners.

The Relation Between Poetry (Song Lyrics), Paradox and Literature

The relationship between poetry and paradox in literature is apparent. In literary writing, paradox also plays the role of the method for the reader to have a chance to unwrap the underlying meaning that seemingly contradicts but has logic deep within. Sometimes, the paradox can also be used with the purpose to let the reader brainstorm and come up with new ideas in order to produce a new better idea than the initial idea, even though it sparsely happens.

The relationship between poetry and paradox in literature therefore could be linked, as a poem is created with paradox and irony as the base, to insert the figurative speech as stated by Brooks in Zeki (2015: 27). The fact that linked poetry and lyric is that lyrics are part of poetry itself. As poetry is a set of combined lyrics which is used to convey something.

The song is also related to poetry as a song consists of music and lyric, usually, the lyric is used to tell a story or a poem. The main idea of this whole work is to convey the creator's emotion so the people who enjoy the music could be informed, feel that they could relate, and enjoy her work.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Research Design

The research was conducted by using the method of qualitative research study. The qualitative research study is a type of research that does not use statistical data, it is collected in the form of written, spoken, or observed behavior as stated by Moleong (1989: 31). This study is done by searching through library browsing, educational papers, online journals, poems, and educational websites. The analysis is shared systematically in the written text and a conclusion will be drawn in the end to reveal the main ideas to finish this research.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter covers the analysis and findings of paradox lines taken from the selected song lyrics. The song lyrics analyzed by the writer are based on the problem of study which covers the issue of *'how is paradox used in literary writing?'* and *'why is paradox used in literary writing'* with the goal of gaining the answer to these two problem questions.

How Paradox Used in Literary Writing?

Trying to write paradox lines without knowing how it created often confuses and creates doubt about the paradox itself. The writer analyzes the paradox lines in those song lyrics to answer the method of making those lines.

a. Lunchbox Friends

This song is telling a story about a girl in her high school. One day she is invited to the table where the popular people have lunch by one of the popular girls, but she declined the invitation as she only wants to have a genuine friendship, which is different from their friendship as the popular student who only care about superficial things.

Data 1

"They said, hey girl will you sit with me?"

Table in the back cafeteria C

We can be friends if you wanna be

But only 'til the clock hits three" (Verse 1: Lines 1-4)

The songwriter open the songs with an invitation from the so-called 'popular girls' who asked her to join their table. In those lines, the songwriter creates ambiguous words by giving a statement that seems to contradict each other. The first line, '*We can be friends if you wanna be*', states the fact that the speaker wants to be friends with the listener. In the next line, the writer gives a time limit to the first statement by letting the speaker state, '*But only 'till the clock hits three*', which limit the friendship between the two. This leads to a friendship with time limits. The fact that this friendship completely seems insincere, spoken by the speaker who limits their "friendship time" by giving a time limit to their friendship is ironic. This kind of fake friendship shows the contradiction to the real friendship which is indicated in the first line, then by adding the second line, the writer adds a brushstroke to the non-existence friendship which is later mentioned as what is desired from the listener.

The songwriter created these lines by giving space for the listener to flourish their critical thinking by letting them think through it and making room for improvement to think critically. Martinez did not state straight out that, this relationship is a fake relationship, but instead use a runabout way to convey the meaning of this friendship imitation to let the reader know the message behind it.

Data 2

"Talk about the boys that we want to smash

Talk about ways to get a little more cash

After all I'll ignore your ass" (Verse 1: Lines 6-8)

The girls get along getting along to have a conversation about the boys and way to make more money but then they exclude her in the end of the day. As implied in the first data, the girls invite her to their table, they getting along at school but after the school end, they split up and didn't bother to be friends with her. This could be seen in the 'three o'clock' line.

The paradox in this line could be seen in by the girls attitude towards the songwriter, which seems like they being friendly towards the girl, but in fact they just manipulate her to their own use, then discard her after. The writer create the paradox from drafting the cronology of the event, by doing drafting the writer could explain the event systematically.

Data 3

“I don’t want no lunchbox friends

I want someone who understand

Come to my house, let’s die together

Friendship that will last forever” (Chorus)

The songwriter came out with these lines to state the protagonist’s point of view, in which did not intend to have a skin-deep friendship status with others, but she wants a real genuine friendship. The friendship in which need for the two people to get to know and understand each other fully, to be able to feel joy when the other is happy and will feel upset when one is sad. The speaker wants a friend, but the friend is not someone who just seems like a friends. In this lines, the songwriter express that they did not need a superficial person to be with them, they want someone who genuinely care about her and the one that will have a live long friendship with her.

This line is created based on the understanding of the songwriter of the start or result of research. The first data could be used by the songwriter to understand the result of the research by knowing the starting point of what she wants to envision. Understanding what the protagonist wants and voicing it out by showing contradictions on the surface to attract attention to the song is a good way to create interest for those who listen the song.

Data 4

“They want a fat ass in their brand new jeans

Want a baby in the back with the man of their dreams

That isn’t the life for me

Gotta look like a fuckin’ damn Barbie” (Verse 2: Lines 1-4)

In this part of her lyric, Martinez is taking about the dirfference in the way they see their own life in general. The difference in their world view in which, the girls see their future with their lifestyle which is pictured by their car, a man and baby to build a family, which quite different from what Melanie see in the picture of her future which indicates that she strive to focus her attention on herself by taking care of herself better, before trying to hastily start a family.

The contradiction in this lyric could be seen from the different way of this girls picture their own future which very much contradict from one and the other. The songwriter express this two point of view by creating space for the reader and listener to have the space to think critically on their own in the aim for them to be able to understand her initial ideas.

Data 5

*"Going on TV, people have high expectations of me
Wanna be my best friends and judge me
If I smoke a little weed, makes no fucking sense to me"*
(Verse 2: Lines 5-7)

In this lines, Melanie explain how people expect her to be on screen, want to be close to her to reap more benefit and fame without really care how she feel, but all she sees is that their behaviour is so hypocritical.

The contradiction of this lines could be seen on the behaviour of people, in which they trying to be get close to her but hurting her at the same time by judging her in which she claim didn't make sense. The writer using modern spurse of event to picture how she really feel about this hypocritical situation.

b. Fire Drill

This song is written to express the songwriter's view about her ex-best friend behavior who betrays her by pinning her with false accusations without caring about the consequences of her actions. This is vocalized in line 21st, *'you pull the lever for fun, yell 'Fire!' then you just run'*.

Data 6

*"I've never fit to any category
Always deemed an outcast"* (Verse 1: Lines 1 & 2)

The speaker stated she does not fit into any category in others' eyes, but later in the next line states that she is categorized as an 'outcast' which is categorized as the people who feel out of place and find it hard to belong to their environment. The second line clash with the first as it stating that she categorized as an outcast, but claims to never fit one of the categories.

The songwriter uses the suitability of the goal to point out the problem with the speaker, which the speaker conveys in the first and second lines by stating that she seems like an outcast to the people around her.

Data 7

“You live in a world in your clutch

You don’t get out very much” (Verse 1: Lines 11 & 12)

The songwriter points out the speaker’s “offender” with a little sarcasm in the first line, ‘*you live in a world in your clutch*’ which makes us assume the offender knows much about the outside world because she/he rules the world by having the world right on her/his palm. Then using the 18th line stating they did not know very much about the world itself by stating ‘*you don’t get out very much*’ highlights the irony deep within by amplifying the feeling of “owing but not knowing”.

By giving the listener space to think critically, the writer creates these lines to guide the listener for them to be able to understand the understated meaning she wants to convey. The lines are created by the writer as a means to vocalize and picture the confusing things she wants to say.

Data 8

“What would happen if a nuke just hit?

Would you say bye to your family?

Would you post about it?” (Chorus: Lines 1-3)

The different reactions stated by the songwriter in this song, stray from the common reaction most people, would have. The irony between the supposedly estimated reaction and the actual behaviour of people these days is voiced aloud by the songwriter. The lines is more of the sarcasm to the society today, which more often to be indifferent to the source of problem, which could be seen by most people’s reaction to watch rather to help when accident occur to not implicate themselves. The reaction choices opted by the writer also differs from the fact that likely would occur.

In these lines, Martinez vocalizes the irony by using a modern element as the foundation to lead the listener to think critically. The songwriter would give space for the listener to think through the choice they most likely take and the other possibility about the real outcome. This sentence also used by Martinez to indirectly make the listener realize how chilling the human heart could be as some could be so cold and indifferent to others.

Table 1. How Paradox is Used.

No Data	Method (How)	Frequency	Percentage
1,5	Ambiguous shared meanings	2	22,22 %
2, 3	Draft	2	22,22 %
8	Reformulate the element of modern, industrial society	1	11,11 %
4	Understanding start and result of research	1	11,11 %
6	Supporting suitability of the goal of research	1	11, 11 %
5, 7	Giving space to have critical equality	2	22,22 %
Total		9	100%

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study can be stated as follows;

1. The findings of this research study were related to the method of using paradox according to Keyser B.D, Vandenbempt, K & Guiette (2019; 9), focused on song lyrics taken from Melanie Martinez's songs.
2. The paradox could be used according to Keyser B.D, Vandenbempt, K & Guiette (2019; 9), by bringing up the ambiguous meaning based on reality, constructing a memo to guide the writing, intergrating it into a modern, industrial society, understanding the start or result of writing, and giving space for the listener for them to be able to think critically.

CONCLUSION

After having the analysis, he researcher comes to the conclusion as follows:

Paradox is used by :

- bringing order to the ambiguous shared meanings that are provided by perceptions of reality.
- constructing a draft to use as a guide for their future research.
- reformulating element of modern, industrial society.
- understanding the start or result of research.
- supporting the suitability of the goal of the research.
- giving space to have critical quality.
- amplify contrast between elements of the lyrics

REFERENCES

- Alfarisi, S. 2017. 'An Analysis of Figurative Language in Bruno Mars's Song Lyrics'. English Education Study Program Language and Arts Department. STKIP Siliwangi. Bandung.
- Cahyo, S.A. 2009. "The Perception of Love and Death of Emily Dickinson Seen on Her Selected Poems". English Letters Study Programme. Department of English Letters. Sanata Dharma University. Yogyakarta.
- Crybaby Jaycee. 2022. Melanie Martinez. Story Jumper, Inc.
- Dean, W and Lisa, W. 2019. Sampling Data and Data Collection in Qualitative Research. Elsevier. Research Gate. 7,112-126.
- Hinton, M. 2005. Introducing Information Management: The Business Approach. Routledge. New York, USA.
- Hoffmann, R.D. 2016. Paul Valery and the Poetics of Attention. Doctor of Philosophy in French. University of California. Berkeley.
- Hornby, A.S. 2015. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. Oxford University Press. 9th Edition.
- Hughes, H.Z & LeLoup. 2018. Time and History in Lyrics: A Unique Approach to Teaching Culture and Civilization. Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. NECTFL Review, Number 81 pp,45-65. USAF Academy.
- Keyser, B.D, Vandenbempt, K & Guiette, A. 2021. On The Use of Paradox For Generation Theoretical Contributions in Management and Organization Research. Research Gate. International Journal of Management Reviews. University of Antwerp. Belgian, Antwerp.
- Malterud, K. 2001. Qualitative Research: Standards, Challenges, and Guidelines. The Lancet. Department of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco, USA. Qualitative Research Series, Vol 358 (483-488)
- Martinez, M, Baran, CJ, & DioGuardi, K. 2015. *Pity Party*. Track 8. Cry Baby (Deluxe Edition).
- Martinez, M & Decilveo, J. 2015. Play Date. Genius. Track 14. Cry Baby (Deluxe Edition).
- Martinez, M & Keenan, M. 2020. Fire Drill. Genius. Track 1. Single.
- Martinez, M & Michael, K. 2019. Lunchbox Friends. Genius. Track 8. K-12.
- Moleong, L. 1989. Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif. Remaja Karya. Bandung.
- Nguyen, J. 2022. Don't Believe Everything You Think: Why Your Thinking is The Beginning & End of Suffering. Independently Published. United States.
- Oxford Learner's Dictionaries. 2022, "*Etymology of Paradox: Word Origin*", OXFORD University Press, <<http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>>
- Quine, W.V. 1976. The Ways of Paradox and Other Essay (2nd Edition). Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Ruiz, J.H. 2015. *Paradox and Oxymoron Revisited*. Elsevier. Technical University of Madrid, ETSIT C-204, Av Complutense 30, Madrid. Spain.

- Saldana, J, Huberman, A.M, & Miles M.B. 2014. *Qualitative Data Analysis, A Method Sourcebook*, Edition 3. USA: Sage Publications.
- Simone, C & Wendy, K. 2021. Organizational Paradox. Oxford Bibliographies. <<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com>>
- Swift, T. 2014. *Blank Space lyrics*: 'Darling I'm A Nightmare, Dressed Like A Daydream. Track 2 on 1989 Deluxe.
- Thorne, S. 2000. Data Analysis in Qualitative Research. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 3, 68-70.
- UNSW Sydney, 2022. How to Cite Online Resources: Citing Websites and Media Sources Using Harvard Referencing. UNSW Sydney Australia, <http://www.student.unsw.edu.au/>>
- Zeki, M. 2015. The Language of Paradox in the Ironic Poetry of Emily Dickinson. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*. Research Gate. Karadeniz Technical Universita, 4 (2), 24-28.