BLURRING THE ARTISITIC BOUNDARIES BETWEEN MUSIC AND LITERATURE: AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED ENGLISH SONGS FROM PAKISTAN

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Blurring the Artistic Boundaries Between Music and Literature: An Explorative Study of Selected English Songs from Pakistan

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Blurring the Artistic Boundaries between Music and Literature: An Explorative Study of Selected English Songs from Pakistan** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Blurring the Artistic Boundaries between Music and Literature: An Explorative Study of Selected English Songs from Pakistan

There should be more scholarly discussion about the literary value and meaning construction present in a well-written and well-composed song. This study aims to start a formal scholarly discussion by exploring the overlapping boundaries of music and literature in songs that create a shared meaning and overall effect through communication. Assuming, that when the textual and musical components of a song communicate with each other, they construct a specific meaning. Music and literature have always overlapped, from the times when oral tradition was the only form of literature. It relied heavily on rhythm, rhyme, and composition for memorization and sharing. So literature and songs have the same origin. This research studies the art of meaning creation in a song, as one of those overlapping art forms. Songs have many components, including instruments, vocal techniques, lyrical content, and composition that convey an overall message to listeners. This study decodes that overall message by analyzing the meaning behind each song component. The songs selected for analysis are taken from the works of Aamir Zaki, Natasha Humera Ejaz, Natasha Noorani, Poor Rich Boy, and Sajid and Zeeshan, who are English language recording artists and singer-songwriters. The researcher uses the interpretive method provided by Richard Middleton to analyze the conveyed meaning of selected songs while using Bakhtin's concept of contextual harmonies as the underlying principle for the study. Music has a universal language, yet it is composed in a cultural context of instruments, language, class, values, etc. This study also examines these contextual markers in each song to better understand its overall effect.

Keywords: overlapping art forms of music and literature, song components, interpretive method, contextual harmonies, conveyed meaning, overall effect

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my ever laughing, ever joking and always compassionate partner in crime; my late brother, Faizan Rathore. Faizi, this one's for you and your love of music.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SONG

1.1 Introduction

Songs composed, written, and performed by singer-songwriters or the same combination of artists (for example, duos or bands) can be studied formally to understand their creation's artistic merit or value. However, many aspects of a song need to be considered, including the lyrics, the musical composition, and the vocal delivery. It can be challenging to analyze a song holistically for its artistic merit and literary value. When studying a written theater play or a movie script for formal literary analysis, the researcher can separate the text from the performers or the script from the actors and study the textual form in isolation. It is so because actors performing on someone else's written word have a different interpretation than the author who wrote it. In the unique case of singer-songwriters, the author and performer are the same, affecting the textual content's meaning because a song is composed in fragments. It is a chaotic process with many layers that construct meaning simultaneously. So songs cannot be studied by isolating these layers.

Suppose a song's lyrics and musical composition are studied separately by different researchers (literary scholars and musicologists) and not looked at together. In that case, such research will not be able to study what these layers create together. One can argue that it is an incomplete analysis, unable to look at the complete picture or the whole process of meaning construction in this art form. Thus, such interdisciplinary research needs to take place.

This research aims to identify the various components of a song and how they contribute towards generating a collective meaning based on the song's sound and mainly on the textual evidence taken and interpreted from the song lyrics under study.

The data was gathered by close, targeted reading of the text and repeated listening to the selected songs and classifying them into textual, vocal, and instrumental categories.

The researcher intends to raise some critical questions about the existence of a canon for song lyrics and their place within the broader literary canon. Can songs be categorized as poetry, or do they deserve to be a separate literary category? Which characteristics must a text possess in order to be considered literary? If songs are composed of more components than just the text, can they still be considered literary? Do a song's musical components affect its text's meaning, interpretation, and literariness? Song lyrics are already considered literature, but if a song's musical language and composition add another layer of meaning to the text, can the entire song be studied as literature? If poems can serve as song lyrics, why can song lyrics not be considered literature?

When Bob Dylan, a singer-songwriter, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016, it stirred a global debate regarding the artistic value of song lyrics and whether they stood up to other works of literature like poetry or novels. According to The New York Times, the Swedish Academy dramatically redefined the boundaries of literature by selecting a singer-songwriter to receive the highest award in literature. An act praised by Joyce Carol Oates and Stephen King, while Salman Rushdie called Dylan the brilliant inheritor of the bardic tradition (Sisario, par.4).

After this shift in 2016, song lyrics have garnered recognition as a legitimate form of literature that needs to be studied. However, in their complete being (i.e., musical, vocal, and textual components combined), songs have not been analyzed wholly within literary research. Although traditionally, only textual components can be considered a part of literature, the auditory effects created by that text can still contribute to the construction of meaning within that text; by adding another interpretative layer of meaning to the mix. Songs written, composed, and performed by the same person or group might convey more meaning than a play performed by actors who have merely read the script and not created it. Can songs then be equated with a playwright performing his one-person play? Saying that those two art forms can be equated might be pushing it too far, but parallels can undoubtedly be drawn between them.

The research also explores the problematic boundaries between high and popular culture concerning songs and their place within the literary canon. After all, high culture was once popular culture. The study aids the researcher in drawing valid inferences from the various components of the songs and how they help create meaning and literariness in the songs under study. A lot has been said about the distinction between high and popular cultures. The constant blurring and redefinition of their boundaries have also been studied. Some critics have also attempted to present their arguments for and against song lyrics being part of the literary canon after Bob Dylan was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016 (Sisario, par.2).

Many linguistic studies are conducted on song lyrics and their implications, but no research was conducted on songs as a whole. While excessive work has been done on poetry, based on the textual content and acoustic qualities, such as rhythm, rhyme, and meter, songs have not been studied before in their totality. Several articles and blogs were published online and in magazines regarding the selected artists and their works. However, there is little to no work on analyzing Pakistani songs written in English, an essential element of Pakistan's cultural fabric. This research aims to remedy that. The researcher took the liberty of adding to the method proposed by Richard Middleton.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Songs form an essential party of every society's pop culture and subculture. There is an established oeuvre of Pakistani songs in English. This cultural contribution has a lot of literary, social, and artistic value, which needs to be studied and discussed in terms of its literary and musical construction of meaning.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What components of meaning construction can be identified and studied in the selected songs?

2. How do the textual and musical components of each song inform the overall meaning being conveyed?

3. How do the boundaries between literature and music get blurred in the selected Pakistani songs?

1.4 Selected Artists, Songs, and Technical Advisor

1.4.1 Selected Artists

The researcher collected information by sifting through 70 Pakistani bands, duos, and solo artists who were writing and performing songs in English before selecting the following five, based on a variety of genres and locations.

The following table illustrates these selected artists and their music genre and location within Pakistan:

Table 1 — Selected Artists: Genre and Location

No.	Name	Genre	Location
1.	Aamir Zaki	Psychedelic Rock, Blues Rock	Karachi, Pakistan
2.	Natasha Humera Ejaz	Indie Folk, Jazz, Electronica	Islamabad, Pakistan
3.	Sajid and Zeeshan	Electronica, Alternative Rock, Ambient Music	Peshawar, Pakistan

| 4. | Natasha Noorani | Rhythm and Blues (R&B), Neo-Soul, Jazz | Lahore, Pakistan |
| 5. | Poor Rich Boy | Progressive Rock, Art Rock, Folk | Lahore, Pakistan |

1.4.2 Selected Songs

The researcher has selected chiefly two songs per artist through different times and eras of their musical careers to give a broader perspective of each artist's range and growth concerning the construction of meaning in each of their songs. One of the artists being studied by the name Aamir Zaki is of higher importance in the research because he has composed and recorded every part of the song by himself. The lyrics, instruments, vocals, and even music production is done solely by him, which might help the researcher uncover the construction of meaning in his songs on the deepest possible level because he is the sole owner and creator of these songs.

The table below shows the names of the selected songs per artist:

Table 2 — Selected Songs of Selected Artists

Selected Artists	Selected Songs
Aamir Zaki	1. Money 2. Mellisa

Natasha Humera Ejaz	3. The God Song 4. Today is a Place
Sajid and Zeeshan	5. King of Self 6. Walk on Air
Natasha Noorani	7. Occupy
Poor Rich Boy	8. Zardarazir

1.4.3 Technical Advisor for the Study

Amna Nizami is the technical advisor for this research. She is a Karachi-based musician, music teacher, and recording artist. She rose to prominence at the 2018 Pepsi Battle of the Bands, where she and her band made it to the top 8 bands of the season, her being the only female performer on that stage. She has helped the researcher understand the technicalities of the musical structure and how it layers over the vocals plus the lyrical content of the songs.

Kaghaz rose to fame in Pepsi Battle of the Bands Season 3. Before taking part in the show, they played underground. Kaghaz was created in Rawalpindi, where Amna Nizami was their lead vocalist, Mubbashir Sheikh Mashoo played the guitars, Salman Khattak (Bonzi) played the drums, and Hassaan Ahmed played synths. This band wanted to experiment with their music creation and was passionate about arts and music. Although Kaghaz had more interest in progressive rock, they did not want to limit or set boundaries by playing in a specific genre. She went to audition for the Pepsi

Battle of the Bands just after her wedding ceremony. She earned the name of Rockstar Dulhan for that and was admired by judges for her commitment (Paracha, par.1).

Nizami has a degree in architecture and an interest in music. She likes to push her boundaries and be creative in music. All members of Kaghaz came from different musical backgrounds, and each one brought their unique perspective to the table. They all wanted to experiment with different music forms to create something that gives its listeners an out-of-the-box experience. The idea behind naming their band Kaghaz (which means paper in English) was that it was used as a medium for sharing knowledge and wisdom for thousands of centuries. Moreover, they thought of themselves as blank pieces of paper upon which anything could be written. Nizami learned from her life experiences and wanted to express them through music. She takes music as a universal language that connects people around the globe without any language barrier. As a musician, she learned to appreciate the unique style and perspective that each band member brought to the table during their jam sessions. She is inspired by several musicians like Amir Zaki, Entity Paradigm, Faraz Anwar, Opeth, Tool, Porcupine Tree, and Pink Floyd because they helped her grow in her music journey. They created something they believed in, and she wanted the same. She thinks of herself as someone who can take inspiration from nature and her life experiences. Her creative process is to revisit those moments where she felt happiness or pain in her songs. When balancing her private and professional life, she thinks of it as every artist's struggle. Nizami believes that the professional life of a musician is very demanding and challenging. Still, she feels that striking a balance between the two becomes much easier if people around her can understand and support her for their passion. Amna recalls her fondest memories of creating music at the beginning of her music career when she had no instruments and borrowed from friends when she had to take a cab with all her friends and instruments to reach a gig. These experiences and struggles to define her. Pepsi Battle of the Bands pushed her to step out of her comfort zone by experimenting with different genres and music styles. It helps her grow, and she felt thankful for having such a great learning experience. Access to technology for youth has played a great deal in improving Pakistan's music industry. She thinks that Pakistan's music industry has a long road ahead. She believes in making music that can touch the heart of the listeners (Zubair, pars.1-13).

1.5 Definitions of Musical Terms Relevant to the Study

The following terms had to be studied and understood for the researcher to understand the construction of meaning through the song's musical components. The definitions of these terms might also benefit the reader from a more literary and less musical background.

1.5.1 Arpeggio

An arpeggio may be defined as a broken chord in which each chord note is played or sung one after the other, in either ascending or descending order (MasterClass staff, Arpeggios Explained par.1).

1.5.2 Tempo

A song's tempo is defined as the speed at which a piece of music is played. It is communicated in three primary ways, i.e., Beat per Minute (BPM), Italian terminology or Italian markings, or modern language (MasterClass staff, What is Tempo par.2).

1.5.3 BPM (Beats per Minute)

Beat per Minute is a measure of tempo. This method involves assigning a numeral value to the tempo. BPM indicates the number of beats in a minute. For example, a tempo of 60 BPM would mean that one beat is being played every second (MasterClass staff, What is Tempo par. 3).

1.5.4 Italian Markings

Italian has been the first western language of music for hundreds of years. The current terminology is usually in Italian, too, as it was the language of most composers when these notations became common. Even in modern times, most western musical languages borrow heavily from Italian. For example, the tempo is also conveyed through Italian words or markings. Some of the most regularly used tempo markings begin from Larghissimo, a considerably slow tempo ranging from 20 BPM and below. The Grave tempo is solemn and slow, ranging from 20-40 BPM. Tempo Lento, which translates to slowly in English, has 45-60 BPM. Tempo Largo is the most commonly

used tempo which translates to "slow" in English and ranges from 40-60 BPM. Tempo Lento and Largo have a similar range of BPMs, but the difference is that Lento is generally slow while Largo is reserved for more broadly played music. Tempo Larghetto is also a slow tempo ranging between 60-66 BPM. Tempo Adagio is another slow marking, which translates to at ease in English and ranges from 66-76 BPM. Tempo Adagietto lies between 70-80 BPM. Tempo Andante is a popular tempo and translates to at a walking pace in English (MasterClass staff, What is Tempo par.10). It ranges from 76-108 BPM. Tempo Moderato lies between 108 and 120 BPM, while Temp Allegro Moderato is a moderately quick or fast tempo ranging from 112 to 124 BPM. Tempo Allegro is the most commonly used tempo marking, including the heart rate tempo (ranging between 120-130 BPM) and between 120 and168 BPM. The higher tempos include tempo Vivace, a fast and lively tempo ranging from 168-176 BPM. Tempo Presto is another speedy tempo that goes up to 200 BPM. In contrast, Tempo Prestissimo goes even higher, rightfully translating to extremely fast, going from 201 BPM and above (MasterClass staff, What is Tempo pars.8-11).

1.5.5 Rhythm

Rhythm repeats a series of notes and rests (silence) in time to create a pattern. It is fundamentally the arrangement of short and long notes in a piece of music (MasterClass staff, Understanding Rhythm par.2).

1.5.6 Meter

Meter is the arrangement of strong and weak beats in a regular repeating pattern (MasterClass staff, Understanding Rhythm par.5).

1.5.7 Beat

The beat is the fundamental unit of music. Beat measures the pulse and rhythm of a musical passage or piece. Strong and weak bets are combined by rhythm to create rhythmic patterns (MasterClass staff, Understanding Rhythm par.7).

1.5.8 Percussion

Percussion refers to instruments that make sound by being struck. Common examples of percussion instruments are drums, cymbals, rattles and tambourines (Oregon Symphony, par.1).

1.5.9 Synthesizer

A synthesizer is an electronic musical instrument; usually a keyboard, producing sound using electronic signals. It can also imitate various instruments (MasterClass staff, How Do Synthesizers Work? par.3-4).

1.5.10 Bassline

A bassline consists of a continuous series of the lowest-pitched in the musical passage or composition. It is mainly played by bass instruments such as bass guitar, double bass, and keyboard (BBC, par.1, 2).

1.5.11 AdLib

Adlib is the short form of ad libitum. It is a Latin one that translates to at one's pleasure. In Latin, ad libitum, abbreviated as an ad-lib, translates to "at one's pleasure." In written music, it is a notation that gives the player the freedom to vary the note or tempo to his choice (Center for Jazz Studies, par.1).

1.5.12 Bridge

The bridge is a section of a song that presents differing elements to the original composition. The difference can be tempo, chord progression, keys, or meter (MasterClass staff, What Is a Bridge? par.2).

1.5.13 Chorus

A section of the musical passage contains the said passage's fundamental musical and lyrical motifs (MasterClass staff, What Is a Chorus? par.1).

1.5.14 Verse

Verses consist of a repeated segment of lyrics typically differing from the fundamental lyrical motif. Contrary to the chorus, verses can change throughout the song (MasterClass staff, What Is a Verse? par.2).

1.5.15 Intro

The intro is a section or passage of music that precedes all other elements of a song. It sets the key, tempo, rhythm and harmony of the song (Stoubis, par.3).

1.5.16 Outro

An outro is the conclusion of a song. It is a structural element that leads the song toward its end (Bacino, par.4).

1.5.17 Hook

Intending to "hook" the listener, a Hook is a lyrical line or a short piece of music with a catchy melody or rhythm. The purpose of the hook is to stand out in the listener's ear (Stoubis, par.2).

1.5.18 Harmony

Harmony is the homogeneity of separate musical mediums to form a cohesive whole. In layman's terms, harmony is the sound of two or more notes heard simultaneously (MasterClass staff, What Is Harmony? par.2).

1.5.19 Vocal Harmony

Vocal harmony is created by singing additional notes and the vocal melody that fits into the primary chord structure of the musical passage (MasterClass staff, How to Harmonize? par.2).

1.5.20 Timbre

The tone or sound quality of a particular voice or instrument is timbre. Timbre helps differentiate between two different voices or instruments playing the same note (Chase, par.1).

1.5.21 Rubato

Tempo Rubato is a tempo marking that allows the player to adjust the tempo as per their will. It allows the player to vary the tempo to create a particular effect or emphasize a musical passage (MasterClass staff, What is Tempo Rubato par.12).

1.5.22 Note

A musical note refers to the pitch of a specific audio vibration. In sheet music, a note can denote both the pitch and the duration of the musical sound. There are seven notes on the widely used chromatic scale, namely A, B, C, D, E, F, and G, representing a different frequency or pitch (MasterClass staff, What are Musical Notes? par.2).

1.5.23 Sharp

A sharp, represented by the hashtag symbol (#), indicates a half step rise in the pitch of the natural note (MasterClass staff, What are Sharp Notes? par.2).

1.5.24 Flat

A flat, represented by the symbol (♭), indicates the lowering of the pitch of the natural note by a half step (MasterClass staff, What are Flat Notes? par.2).

1.5.25 Key

A key is a set of notes corresponding to a scale. The Key of a musical passage can tell us about the sharps and flats in the song, the scale note, which is the central note of the song, among other things (Playing the Piano pars.1-2).

1.5.26 Octave

An octave is the interval between two notes bearing the same name. Octave can also be defined as the distance between a note and another note double its frequency (MasterClass staff, What is an Octave? pars.1-2).

1.5.27 Melody

A collection of musical tones arranged together to form a cohesive unit. The melody consists of pitch and duration. The pitches are arranged through a series of notes, and the duration divides by the length by specifying the time each pitch will sound for (MasterClass staff, What is Melody? par.1).

1.5.28 Pitch

The specific audio vibration produced by an instrument is called pitch. The musical pitch determines the sound of a note (MasterClass staff, Pitch in Music par.1).

1.5.29 Chord

A grouping of two or more notes within the same time duration forms a chord in a musical passage (MasterClass staff, What is a Chord? par.2).

1.5.30 Chord Progression

The definition of a chord progression is a sequence of chords played in succession. It is a group of chords that recur through a specific section of the song (MasterClass staff, What are Chord Progressions? par.2).

1.5.31 Dissonance

Dissonance refers to the lack of harmony in a musical passage. Dissonance is used to produce impressions of tension and build suspense (MasterClass staff, Consonance vs. Dissonance pars.2-3).

1.5.32 Consonance

Consonance refers to a harmonious sound created by playing notes that sound pleasant together. Consonance is used to produce the impression of relief and joy (MasterClass staff, Consonance vs. Dissonance par.3).

1.5.33 Texture

Texture in music is defined as the number of individual musical melodies and their relationship in a musical passage. For example, the texture of a piece of music can be thick or thin, may have many or few layers, it might be made of multiple melodies or just the rhythm (Schmidt-Jones 75).

1.5.34 Monophonic (Single-note texture)

Monophonic texture refers to a single note playing in a musical passage with no accompanying harmony (Schmidt-Jones 75).

1.5.35 Homophonic

Homophonic texture refers to a musical passage with two or more notes playing simultaneously (Schmidt-Jones 76).

1.5.36 Time signature

Time signature depicts the number of beats in a measure of a musical passage and the duration of note playing to be taken as a beat (MasterClass staff, Guide to Time Signatures par.2).

1.5.37 MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface)

A Musical Instrument Digital Interface or a MIDI for short, is a computer language that has codes for musical parameters like tempo, pitch, Etc., and allows different instruments to communicate with each other (MasterClass staff, Home Recording Studio par.6).

1.5.38 Arpeggiators

An arpeggiator is a feature in some synthesizers that can automatically create an arpeggio. It allows the user to change the sequence of the notes or the rhythm (Swisher 5).

1.5.39 Musical Genre

Musical genre is a system of classification that classifies music into different styles. The musical Genre is defined by distinct vocal and instrumental elements, geographical origins, and context (Pro Musician Hub, What is a Music Genre pars.4-6).

Rhythm and Blues

Rhythm and blues is a musical genre made in the 1940s by African Americans. It is a style of music that combines soul and blues. Its strong backbeat characterizes it. There are many subgenres of R&B in contemporary times, e.g. Neo-Soul, Funk, Soul, Disco, Motown etc. (MasterClass staff, R&B Music Guide pars.1-3).

Jazz

Jazz is a musical style characterized by its intricate harmony, syncopated rhythms and improvisation. African Americans first developed it in New Orleans. There are many other subgenres derived from this primary Genre, e.g. Bebop, Swing, Modern Jazz, Ethno Jazz, Jazz blues, Afro Jazz etc. (MasterClass staff, What is Jazz? pars.1-2).

Rock

Rock was born in the 1960s and 70s. It is characterized by intense, energetic and loud music. The loud, amplified electric guitar is a defining instrument of the Genre. This type of music is based on a strong, amplified bassline and driving rhythms (MasterClass staff, Rock n Roll pars.1-2).

Pop

Pop is an abbreviation of "popular" music; it is a form that appeals to the mainstream. It includes an upbeat tempo, easy to understand lyrical content and simple notation. Some subgenres of this type of music include e.g. pop-rock, dream pop, indie pop, ambient pop, and more (Dance-Schissel pars.1-2).

Electronica

It is a musical genre characterized mainly as dance music. The major features of this musical Genre include using synthesizers extensively and electronic percussion with samples of recorded music. Subgenres of electronic include Indie Electro, Electro-Acoustic Pop, Synth-Wave, Ambient Music etc. (MasterClass staff, Electronica Music Guide pars.1-2).

1.6 Significance & Rationale of Study

This research seeks to fill the gap in the study of Pakistani Songs written in English. It also aimed to devise a suitable methodology for studying songs in their totality under literary research. This research asked a few pertinent and underexplored questions which explored two sets of boundaries; the first between high and popular literature; the second between literary and non-literary texts about songs and song lyrics. This study fills the gap between the literary study of song lyrics and their place within the literary canon. This study also produces an original directory of over 70 Pakistani Artists (writing and performing in English), attached to the appendix of this research for those who wish to continue this study and explore it further.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

Due to time and word length limitations, the research was narrowed down to focus on five Pakistani artists only and two or one song per artist. The researcher also accepts the possibility of subjectivity and bias getting involved in the data analysis. However, the research was conducted with objectivity, as expected from any other literary research work.

1.8 Organization of the Study

CHAPTER 1—INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SONG

This chapter briefly introduces the explorative study of songs as a multidimensional and interdisciplinary art form that combines literature and music to construct and convey its meaning. It clarifies how a new methodology was devised to study songs and their construction of meaning by dividing them into different contributing parts. The contributing parts are sound and musical components plus textual components and then studying each part individually, as well as exploring the sum of the parts, i.e. the whole song or the overall effect created in each song. This chapter also introduces the research questions, previous research on such topics, and the selected artists and songs for testing the methodology. The significance, rationale and scope of the study are also discussed in this chapter briefly.

CHAPTER 2—REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter covers all the work that has been previously done and bears any resemblance to the study. The chapter also explains some key concepts about literariness and formalism, along with some relevant works of Richard Middleton and Mikhail Bakhtin. The chapter also covers important musical terms and definitions that the reader might need to understand before getting into the analysis section of the research. It also covers the works, life and achievements of the artists being studied and what has been said about them in newspaper articles, websites or blogs online.

CHAPTER 3 — RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter also outlines in detail the methodology used for conducting the study. It covers the two-fold theoretical framework behind the research method. The theoretical framework is based on ideas proposed by two theorists. The first theorist is Mikhail Bakhtin, and his concept of "contextual harmonies" plus "form and content" is proposed in The Dialogic Imagination (1981). The second theorist is Richard Middleton, who applies Bakhtin's ideas of meaning construction and subjectivity to develop an "interpretive approach" in his research titled, "Authorship, Gender and the Construction of Meaning in the Eurhythmics' Hit Recordings" (1995)" and "Studying

Popular Music". The theories mentioned above proposed by these theorists lay the theoretical base for the research methodology, covered in detail in this chapter. An extension of Richard Middleton's interpretive approach was used for devising a method of research, which divides each song into three components to study, i.e. Sound and Musical Components, Textual Components and Overall Effect. Each of these components then has a further classification detailed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4 — ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED SONGS

This chapter contains a detailed, three-fold analysis of each selected song for the study. It first studies each part of the song under the two broad musical and textual components outlined in the third chapter. Under the sound and musical components section, the following parts of the song are studied: tempo, time signature key, instruments used, compositional structure, genre markers, melody and other noticeable musical components that help convey meaning. While under the textual components section: song title; denotative and connotative meanings; setting, time and space; tone and vocals and literary devices. Literary devices are further broken down into the following components to analyze: persona; hyperbole and exaggeration; symbols and context; binaries; metaphors and similes; allusions and syntax. Once this detailed analysis of the first two categories is conducted, the third section of the analysis begins. This third part of the analysis studies the song's overall effect based on collecting all the data collected in the first two sections of the analysis. This study section offers a holistic analysis of the entire song and an overall inference of the song in question.

CHAPTER 5 — CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter concludes the study of songs as an interdisciplinary art form conveying meaning through musical and textual components. This chapter also discusses the importance of studying songs and the understanding through this research. Recommendations for future work and the scope of the study are also discussed in detail in this chapter. This chapter is followed by a bibliography of the works cited and an appendix of the selected songs analyzed in this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 The Literariness of Art and Russian Formalism

The ideas proposed by musicology experts such as Benthian Loy Marxan, Richard Middleton, Roy Shukar, Tzevtan Trodov and more are looked at in-depth. They further added to the interpretative method contextualized in the Pakistani musical environment to fit this research. The Literature Review also includes a case study of Bob Dylan and his Nobel Prize in Literature, which inspired this explorative study.

In the Literariness of Media Art by Benthian Loy Maxan 2019, the researcher talks about the origin of the concept of literariness in the 20th century, the need to classify literature, and how it is currently used for interdisciplinary analysis:

The beginning of the 20th Century saw literary scholars from Russia positing a new definition for the nature of literature. Within the framework of Russian Formalism, the term 'literariness' was coined. The driving force behind this theoretical inquiry was the desire to identify literature— and art in general—to revitalize human perception, which the automatization of everyday life had numbed. The transformative power of 'literariness' is made manifest in many media artworks by renowned artists […] The authors use literariness as a tool to analyse the aesthetics of spoken or written language within the experimental film, video performance, moving image installations, and other media-based art forms. This volume uses as its foundation the Russian Formalist School of literary theory, to extend these theories to include contemporary concepts in film and media studies, such as Neo-formalism, intermediality, remediation, and post drama. (Benthien 1)

The framework mentioned above shows that studies conducted on the literariness of hybrid art forms like films have existed since the 20th century. Formalism, also known as Russian Formalism, arose in the early 20th Century around 1910 by the Russian school of literary criticism. It began in two different groups. One

headed by Viktor Shklovsky in Petersburg was founded in 1916 and named "Society for the Study of Poetic Language". The other group was called the Moscow Study Circle, founded in 1915, which included the likes of Boris Eichenbaum and Roman Jakobson. Formalists based their literary theory by borrowing from the linguistic ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure and Symbolist notions regarding the autonomy of text; in an attempt to bridge the gap between literature and linguistics. They wanted a "science of literature" that was more objective and scientific and had as little as possible to do with the observer's subjectivity. They put a strong emphasis on the "form" of the literary text, i.e. an "emphasis on the medium", by analyzing how literature was "made strange" by the technique of "defamiliarisation". Technique and form received a priority over content and meaning that went beyond the text. They regarded literature as autonomous verbal art. The focus of Formalism mainly was on poetry and poetic technique. Through a "close reading" of a text, formalists liked to analyse the various components of the literary text that made it literary. They also studied the various purposes of "literariness" to separate poetry and fictional narrative from other forms of discourse. Formalism almost died out by 1929 due to its lack of perspective on literature, politics and the political, cultural and social tools. Viktor Shklovsky, as stated in his essay written in 1917 titled Art as Technique, believed:

> [...] the purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar". To make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object: the object is not important. (Shklovsky 2)

The quote above indicates that Shkovsky believed in studying poetic speech in its phonetic and lexical detail and the distribution of words and syntax, including other structural characteristics of a text, in finding out what inspired the artistic insight.

Roman Jakobson was the one to reintroduce Formalism through his structuralism and linguistic background; it became influential in the West, which took a name of its own in America as New Criticism. Jakobson was born in Moscow, Russia, in 1896 – the founder of the Prague School. In 1933, he became a professor of Russian

philology (1934) at a Czech university; he reached New York City in 1941, where he ultimately taught at Columbia University before switching to Harvard. Although most of his contributions have been made in linguistics, his idea about the literariness of a text was valuable to literary theory. In 1919, Jakobson wrote an article titled On Realism in Art. The article said, "the object of literary science is not literature but literariness, what makes a given work a literary work" (Jakobson 19). As a result of this statement, the formalists had a new agenda to determine the observable devices through which literary texts, mainly poems, were made literary, e.g. through rhyme, rhythm, meter, and other factors like sounds, phonetics, repetitions etc. In the same article, Jakobson said that:

> Until now, literary historians have preferred to act like the policeman who, intending to arrest a certain person, would, at any opportunity, seize any and all persons who chanced into the flat, as well as those who passed along the street. The literary historians used everything—anthropology, psychology, politics, philosophy. Instead of the science of literature, they created a conglomeration of homespun disciplines. (Jakobson pp. 19-20)

Other concepts, methods and inspirations used to develop this explorative study further were taken from texts such as Studying Popular Music by Richard Middleton (1991), Understanding Popular Music by Roy Shukar (2010) and The Dialogical Principle by Tzevtan Todorov (1984).

2.2 On Defining Artistic Value

In his paper, Two Conceptions of Artistic Value Robert Stecker classifies two concepts of artistic value and calls them the essentialist and non-essentialist conceptions (Stecker 52). Scholars on the side of the essentialist conception include Nick Zangwill, George Dickie, Noel Caroll, and Rober Yanal. As Stecker points out in his article, the essentialist conception of artistic value argues that:

> The overall artistic value of a work is the composite of all the types of value—including aesthetic value—which it attains. There is no such thing as artistic value per se, and no such thing as the value of a work of art considered as a work of art. (Zangwill 318)

The essentialist view of artistic value shies away from boiling the definition down to properties that a work of art may possess to claim any artistic value. They also argue that art as art does not have any artistic value in itself unless it also allows for aesthetic experiences. Stecker states his own definition of artistic value in the following terms:

My own view is that not only is this the right conception of artistic value, but that there are valuable artistic properties found only in some art forms but not in others, that none of these values are unique to art, that they are all instrumental values, and there is no one kind of value that a work has as art. This conception is empirical or a posteriori in the sense that, according to it, no amount of reflecting on the concept of art will tell you what artistic value is, whether it is intrinsic or instrumental, singular or plural, unique to art or not, always shared across art forms or not. (Stecker 52)

Scholars of art and philosophy like Noel Caroll equate artistic value with aesthetic experience and argue for a content-oriented approach to evaluating aesthetic experience instead of the affect-oriented approach. Hans Maes interviewed Noel Caroll in his book titled Conversations on Art and Aesthetics, where Caroll defines the aesthetic experience in terms of his content-oriented approach as:

Experiences have content. So, if one is going to characterize what an aesthetic experience is, one should specify what its content is. I've argued that it involves attentiveness to the formal, the expressive, and the aesthetic qualities of a work of art. [...] They are all forms of embodiment. In other words, you have an aesthetic experience when you are attentive to the way in which a work's point or purpose is embodied. (Caroll quoted by Maes 259).

While according to Caroll, the non-essentialist school of thought suggests that art is valuable for its own sake (Caroll quoted by Maes 259). Stecker elaborates on this non-essentialist view in his paper and states that proponents of this school of thought believe:

[...] that an understanding of what art involves knowing that art has a distinctive sort of value as art. In its purest form the conception insists that artistic value is unique to art and is what we value when we value something "as art"; it is one

single kind of valuable property; it is shared by all (valuable) artworks across all art forms; it is intrinsically valuable or renders art intrinsically valuable. However, there can be less pure versions of this alternative conception which drop or qualify some of these claims. (Caroll quoted by Maes 258)

Caroll argues against the non-essentialist view of artistic value that does not believe in a content-based approach to studying art but emphasizes a value or affect-based approach to studying art. He states that proponents of the affect-based approach should offer some form of characterization of the affect or value of a piece of art, apart from art just being valuable for its own sake. Caroll further states that a content-based approach, on the other hand, aims to characterize the artistic value of a piece of art based on the formal, aesthetic, and expressive properties of an artwork which aspiring artists can learn from (Caroll quoted by Maes 259).

2.3 A Case Study of Bob Dylan's Literary Contributions and Influences

When internationally renowned media outlets like The New York Times, BBC News, The Straits Times, and The New Yorker write about art, particularly music and literature, they often use the words artistic value with the same intention as the scholars listed above, but with a less detailed view of how it should be studied. When Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016, The New York Times reported it as the most radical choice since the beginning of the award in 1901. It further said:

In choosing a popular musician for the literary world's highest honor, the Swedish Academy, which awards the prize, dramatically redefined the boundaries of literature, setting off a debate about whether song lyrics have the same artistic value as poetry or novels. (Sisario et al.).

While veteran authors like Stephen King, Joyce Carol Oates and Salman Rushdie called it a great choice, others like Rabig Alameddine called it silly. In his featured video in The New York Times, John Pareles, titled Bob Dylan and His Poetic Gift, compares his surrealist writing style to big names like Charles Baudelaire and Gautier. Pareles defines Dylan's work as highbrow while mentioning his lyrics' intertextuality that refers to works of Shakespeare and the bible. He argues that what

made his work so popular and yet so valuable was his ability to bring together two radically different traditions of experiencing modern images through surrealism and telling stories through folk music.

The New Yorker reviews Dylan's acceptance speech in an article titled, The Rambling Glory of Bob Dylan's Nobel Speech and defends his position in the following words:

> […] he learned his consummate literary technique—how to wield metaphor and make simile sing, how to sew his songs with rhyme and spin a whole uncanny scene from a perfectly worded image—from the great vernacular tradition of American songwriting, a vast library stored not on shelves but in minds and chord-picking fingers. (Schwartz, par.6)

The Straits Times asked the simple question, "Can song lyrics be considered as literature?" while reporting on Dylan's 2016 Nobel lecture. The Singaporean newspaper further lists Dylan's literary and musical inspirations, as mentioned in his lecture, including Buddy Holly, Herman Melville, Homer, and Erich Maria Remarque. In his lecture, Dylan shares his view that he believes songs are both literature and not literature. He argues that songs are meant to be sung, not read, requesting his listeners to listen to his music instead of just reading it to understand the meaning in its total capacity. Alexandra Schwartz, an author at the Culture Desk section of The New Yorker, argues for Dylan's advice stating the literary power that animates his songs can't be fully accessed without the music (Schwartz, par.10). The researcher agrees with this technique of understanding music to its most total capacity through listening to the lyrics while experiencing the entire song instead of reading the lyrics in isolation.

2.4 Review of Literature Related to Selected Artists and Songs

2.4.1 Aamir Zaki's Life in Music

Instep Today called Aamir Zaki one of music's unsung heroes and a legendary guitar player while reporting his death in 2017 (Instep Desk, par.1). The news article describes Zaki as:

[...] the finest guitar player Pakistan produced, while others will remember him for the many songs he wrote, sung and produced. But Zaki was not just another prolific guitar player who played killer riffs. He was also a thinking artist, a musician ahead of his time; it can be felt when listening to his work. (Instep Desk, par.3)

According to the same article, Zaki started his career back in 1984 and was part of many musical groups throughout his career, including The Barbarians, Scratch, and Axe Attack. According to Instep Today, Zaki had a flair for jazz, blues and rock, evident in his debut album Signature (1994), which included English language songs like Money, Not Quite Maniac, Every Person is a Story, **and** Do You Really Love Another.

Zaki was known in the Pakistani music industry as a misfit, an unappreciated genius who refused to compromise on authenticity. His first fully English language album, titled Rough Cut (2007), was a collaboration with a famous female artist Hadiqa Kiani (Instep Desk, par.6). After these two albums, Zaki only released English language singles that were recorded in the isolation of his studio. These singles included many gems like Melissa, Universal Kiss, and People are People.

Instep Today further comments on this once in a generation artist's disdain for consumerism which was displayed both in his life and his art, as he refused to become a part of the mainstream music scene to maintain artistic control over his art and even wrote songs like Money which were blatantly against capitalism and consumerism (Instep Desk, pars.9-10).

The Express Tribune called Zaki the most influential guitarist in the country's history and a musical genius with a volatile temperament (Aijaz, par.6). Another article published in The Express Tribune titled Aamir Zaki: an odyssey of melody and anguish mentions Zaki's collaboration with Sarah Sarhandi, a British composed and violinist. They formed a duo to create collaborative songs like Dotted Waltz, a reimagination of Minuet in G by Johann Sebastian Bach performed at Kings Place in London, UK. They also worked on a film score for a Polish film that was displayed at the Polish museum. Sarhandi possesses the hard drive with all of Zaki's unreleased music, which she will be releasing after production (Mehmood, pars.32-46).

2.4.2 Natasha Humera Ejaz' Music in English

According to Instep Today, Natasha Humera Ejaz was selected for the Border Movement Residency (BMR), and she attended the two-month residency in Berlin. Natasha Humera Ejaz has two musical personas and performs under two different titles. The first is her real name, and the second is called Stupid Happiness Theory, which focuses on more experimental music. As mentioned in the Instep Today article, Natasha has made many songs surrounding spirituality, oneness, and finding the truth, like God is Me and The God Song (Instep Today, pars.3-6).

Adeela Akmal of The News International writes in her article about Natasha Humera Ejaz, saying that she has a knack for performing and lists her numerous credentials as a musical theatre actor in Pakistan, having acted in adaptations of Grease, Beauty and the Beast, The Bald Soprano, and Equus (Akmal, par.1). Akmal states that Ejaz has previously worked as a radio jockey (RJ) at FM 99 and City FM 89 in Islamabad, Pakistan. Her debut single, Today is a place, was soon followed by another single titled Right way to fall in 2010, while her fully English language debut album titled Till the End of Time, was released in 2015. Natasha also performed with a Norwegian orchestra in 2016. Her music video for her Urdu song titled Khwab was also nominated for Best Music Video at the Hum Style Awards. Ejaz's favorite musical genre is Afro Jazz, and her most favorite singer is Bobby Mcferrin (Akmal, pars.2-3).

According to an article published in The Express Tribune, Ejaz explored dance in songs like Khwab and Jahaan." She went with her creative flow and worked hard in shooting the video. She experimented with song concepts using choreography. The song is about the dream and experience of a person living in a dream. The depiction and symbolism for the delusions we experience in our lives. There were four songs on the EP. Raqeeb is about the conversion that one could have with one's loved one. The God Song is about hope, and Till the End of Time is about Natasha's relationship with her dad, and she thinks of it as the closest to her heart. According to the article, Ejaz mostly sings in English but is now composing songs in Urdu. Her electro-music album "It Might Get Glitchy" has six tracks and all of them are in Urdu. (Khurshid and Masroor, par.2)

2.4.3 Sajid and Zeeshan: Life, Collaborations, and Other Works

Sajid and Zeeshan are a Peshawar-based Pakistani music duo formed in 2003. The members' full names are Sajid Abdullah Ghafoor (vocals, guitars, and harmonicas) and Zeeshan Parwez, who is on synths, keyboards and FX modules. They produce music in the electronica, alternative and ambient genres. Their debut album was released in 2006 and was titled One Light Year at Snail Speed; in the next few years, they only released five singles and, after a long break, released their second album in 2011, titled, The Harvest (Khan, par.1).

Although their quantity of work is limited, they have still won many awards and accolades like Best Music Video in the first Indus Music Awards and Best Foreign Language Song at the second Indus Music Awards. In his article in The Express Tribune titled Sajid and Zeeshan: Living in Limbo Sher Khan writes:

> The band's music tends to focus more on 'life' rather than politics, and amidst all the political and emotional upheaval, the duo wants to ensure that they stick to their signature songs based on the themes of romanticism and artistic escape. [...] Harvest is a nostalgic album and, according to Parwez, wrote back in the 90s. (Khan, par.5)

Sher Khan then quotes Zeeshan talking about his band's creative process, "Every day that goes by, you learn something new. The compositions will venture into more abstract concepts this time around" (Khan, par.5)

In a blog titled "Sajid and Zeeshan — The Pashtun Linkin Park?" the author says that she had heard their song Lambay in Pashto and liked it. She did not have high expectations when she heard that they were doing an English song but she found them to be great English singers after listening to their songs. She found their Start with a Scratch to be a fantastic song. According to the author, they sang it like a great rock band and touched all the right tones. After listening to their other English tracks, she had to erase all her doubts regarding their skills. (SesapZai, par.2)

Biya Shadab of The Express Tribune writes about the duo's influential songs like Walk on Air, the first single from their second album named "The Harvest". The

band has Zeeshan Parwez, who plays keyboard and synths, and Sajid Ghafoor, who writes songs and plays guitar and harmonica and is a vocalist. Zeeshan has shown interest in electronic music, whereas Ghafoor has showcased his alternative roots. They released their first video, King of Self. Zeeshan expresses his thoughts that their reach would be limited due to their tracks mostly being in English. However, they made it to receive critical acclaim and won an award for "Best Foreign Language Song" at the 2nd Indus Music Awards. They also won a "Freestyle Dive" award at Lux Style Awards and Indus Music Video Awards. They later received their first album, "One Light Year at Snail Speed", with their fourth single in 2006. Ghafoor shared that his process of creating music is taken from what they felt. They wanted to express what they felt about their music. The author later talks about one of their videos which Parwez directs. However, compared to the depth of songwriting, it was simple. Parwez has made a name for himself in video production and working with artists like Ali Azmat, the Meekal Hassan Band, and Coke Studio projects. According to y Biya Shadab, Sajid and Zeeshan's performances in concerts are visually appealing and great music to hear. Sajid was the vocalist and played the guitars, while Zeeshan worked with electrical components and keyboard and provided backing vocals. Shadab praises the band's ability to combine acoustic and electronic components to create great music and very fresh lyrics. She later expressed her wish for both Zeeshan and Sajid to collaborate with other artists to produce music in genres other than electro-acoustic pop and to be more experimental with other genres. (Shadab, par.1-4).

2.4.4 Natasha Noorani's Music

An article published by H! Pakistan Magazine referred to Noorani as an ethnomusicologist because of her research interest in the social and cultural implications of the music being produced in different regions of Pakistan. She has a master's degree in ethnomusicology (the study of music concerning culture) from SOAS University of London, UK. Her research is primarily based on 20th-century Pakistani music and the institutions that curated it. Noorani is a Lahore based singer-songwriter and music promoter who dabbles in Rhythm and Blues plus Soul musical genres. She is the co-founder of one of Pakistan's top music symposiums, Lahore Music Meet (LLM). Noorani was selected for the Goethe Talents Programme 2019. Goethe Talents aims to connect and support young and aspiring musicians, singers,

songwriters, composers, and DJs worldwide. She is among the ten music scholars worldwide who make it to the program, held in Berlin, Germany. Natasha made a Biryani Brothers music group with her LMM (Lahore Music Meet) partner Zahra Paracha. She also collaborated with Strings and was associated with Coke Studio in the past. Noorani was not born in a musical family, yet she started perusing in her early teen years. She makes music in two languages, Urdu and English. She credits her family's intense music listening habits as a solid early influence in her life. Noorani experiments with her English songs and touches various genres from R&B to progressive rock, neo-soul, synth wave and even pop. She has performed internationally in Kathmandu, Nepal and London, UK. Ms Noorani likes to collaborate with other musicians. So far, she has worked with a famous band named Strings while working with young contemporary artists like her Maanu and Shorbanoor. Noorani believes that collaborations help artists grow and force them out of the musical tropes they were previously stuck in. As co-founder of LMM (Lahore Music Meet), she works with her partner, Zahra Paracha, to scout and curates the best new talent through attending underground gigs and scouring the internet. The aim is to help those talented indie artists who are unique and might have been overlooked by the mainstream music industry. Noorani is very vocal about the lack of monetization models available to musicians in Pakistan. She hopes the future will bring more reliable record labels and better business models around music (Raja, par.1-4).

Noorani says that she is "driven by a desire to learn and understand" how Pakistani music and culture interact with each other. She says, "It is ridiculous how little the musical history of Pakistan has been studied, especially how music has been shaped in the region of Pakistan, post-partition/contemporary music. I am obsessed with finding out more. A huge jigsaw puzzle of music history is just waiting there for us to figure out." Two years later, this is still true because music has always been separated from academia in Pakistan. After all, it is not considered as crucial as its counterparts like theatre or poetry (Uddin, par.2-4)

According to Noorani's website, she is trained in the Hindustani classical form of khayal gayaki, which is "a musical form based on a Hindi song in two parts that recur between expanding cycles of melodic and rhythmic improvisation." ("Khayal"). Her debut album "Munaasib" marked her arrival in the industry as a singer-songwriter. She

often explores a diverse range of genres from Rhythm and Blues to Neo-soul and even some progressive rock influences. Noorani does not believe in being restricted by genres. She dabbles in and out of various musical styles, from eastern semi-classical to western jazz and blues. Noorani believes that the next few years will see a boom in independent music platforms that cater to various artists and not just commercial music (Mohsin, pars.3-5).

Noorani talks about the importance of this song in an interview with Cutacut Magazine, published in 2020. Noorani says that the song came to her in waves, much like the rest of the album. Noorani further said she learned a lot about herself during the writing process. She says the persona of the song is an antagonist and most definitely autobiographical. When asked about her creative process while making this particular album, Noorani said that the album came to her "in waves". Saying she learned a lot about herself through the initial writing process and drafting phase of the album. Noorani calls herself or her performative persona the antagonist of the entire album. She credits her producer, Ali Suhail, for being a collaborator on the album, who has produced the entire album and co-written some songs, including Occupy. The mixing and mastering were done by Adeel Tahir, a musician based in Karachi, Pakistan. The electronic drums played on the song were by Daud Ramay. The progressive rock influence seeps into the song rather softly. She quotes the chaos and kindness of Karachi as one of the inspirations for not just this song but the entire album. She says that the many references to water in the album's songs probably came from her being so close to the sea. For example, in lines 6 and 7 of her song titled "Occupy", she compares herself to a river that's rushing through. (Uddin, par.4-6)

2.4.5 Poor Rich Boy's Musical Journey

According to an article published by Band Baji (the author uses a pseudonym) in Dawn's Images section, Poor Rich Boy is a Lahore-based Indie-Rock band founded in 2008. The trio started as two guitarists and a singer collaborating on a song, from which it expanded into something much more significant. Their music falls under the Progressive Rock, Art Rock and Folk genres. The band initially started with members Danish Khwaja, Shehzad Noor and Zain Ahsan. After Danish's exit from the group, Zain Moulvi joined them in 2010 as the bassist and Raavail Sattar as the drummer.

Umer Khan is the latest addition to the group, and he is on Vocals and Rhythm Guitars. They are revered inside Lahore's underground circuit as well as online following. In 2019 the band won the Shaan-e-Pakistan Music Achievement Award for Best Indie Track. The band currently has a substantial national and international audience on various social media and music platforms like Sound Cloud, Spotify, Instagram and Facebook. "Prelude to a Murder" is an acoustic number work by Shahzad Noor with Poor Rich Boy. It seems to be about complicated relationships, forming a relationship, the agony of post attachments and reattachments in many forms. They have a strong fan following among their peers and professional musicians. Nevertheless, they are one of the most underrated bands. Poor Rich Boys was formed in 2008, and they have created some of the most compelling and touching tracks. However, their following is slowly growing regardless of their appreciation of work. Mekaal Hassan partnered with them to produce all videos for their tracks in the album. Their style is an acoustic unplugged sound with great poetry and lyrics that mark their listeners (Baji, pars.1-4).

The author later admits that the only thing holding them back is their choice of language, English. Until they keep on making tracks in English, they will remain an industry's best-kept secret. The author praises the brilliance of this band. Poor Rich Boy's latest track, "Almost Tuesday", is from their upcoming album with the same name. Poor Rich Boy never rose to the fame they deserve because corporate-funded music has more been in practice. There is still music beyond it. Besides Almost Tuesday, two of their singles, Cereal Killer and Preacher, were released earlier; another track, Thistle, was also released. PRB also mentioned their track in Urdu titled Tootay Huay Admi released earlier and a delight to the ears (Baji, pars.5-10).

2.5 Conclusion to the Review of Literature

The researcher has reviewed the literature relevant to the research topic, including the selected artists' life, awards, collaborations, and songs. The review also involved a study of related theoretical concepts like the literariness of art, definitions of artistic value, and hybrid art forms. A case study of Bob Dylan's literary contributions and influences was also conducted in the literature review. The ideas of literariness and artistic value have helped the artist understand how previous scholars have tried to study

the true essence of an art form, especially hybrid art forms like musical theatre and opera. This knowledge empowered the researcher to understand the various song components in the selected songs. The review of literature written about Bob Dylan and his literary influences helped the artist understand how a literary review of an artist's contributions can be conducted, which helped the researcher formalize a structure for their own analysis. The complete review of related literature of the selected artists has helped the researcher develop a contextual understanding of the selected artists' musical genres, influences, and contributions. This has helped the researcher develop a deeper understanding of the selected artists' work, and now they feel better equipped than before to write the chapter of analysis.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction to the Methodology

The study carries out an interpretive analysis of the selected songs of Aamir Zaki, Sajid and Zeeshan, Natasha Humera Ejaz, Poor Rich Boy, and Natasha Noorani. The research is conducted under the light of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of subjectivity, meaning, and contextual harmonies which he used to justify his study of the novel, by breaking it down into small compositional components and then interpreting each individual component for its meaning. This method has previously also been applied by Richard Middleton to study the meaning creation of musical components in American and British popular music songs.

This research contextualizes the same interpretive approach used by Bakhtin to study novel, and by Middleton to study the musical aspects of a song, and apply it to study Pakistani songs while going a step beyond previously conducted research. Middleton only aimed to study the meaning creation of the musical components of a song, while this study gives equal weightage to the textual components and vocal delivery, along with the musical components present in a song. The researcher employed a two-fold methodology, combining a literary theory with a method to form a theoretical lens and methodology for this study.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework applied in this research is based on Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas of contextual harmonies and form and content proposed in The Dialogic Imagination Four Essays, published first in 1975. Bakhtin introduced these ideas about the novel and devised a formal methodology to analyze a novel by dividing it into different parts that come together to make a whole novel. He talked about striving to study a piece of discourse (in his case, a novel) in its totality. The second theorist, Richard Middleton, applied the theories mentioned above of Bakhtin to songs. He

devised a method called the interpretive approach by dividing the song into various parts that combine to make the whole and then studying the contribution of meaning by each part to develop a deeper understanding of the overall meaning conveyed by the whole song. (Bakhtin et al. 262, 259)

3.2.1 Bakhtin's Concept of Content, Form and Contextual Harmonies (Bakhtin's Dialogic Theory of Subjectivity and Meaning)

The study explores the concept of contextual harmonies as proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin, who states:

Every word gives off the scent of a profession, a genre, a current, a party, a particular work, a particular man, a generation, an era, a day, and an hour. Every word smells of the context and contexts in which it has lived its intense social life […] In the word […] contextual harmonies are unavoidable. (Bakhtin et al. 282)

The researcher is extending this idea of every word smells of the context to the language of music. Like every word possesses meaning, every musical note or style also conveys meaning. Contextual harmonies also exist in the musical language. Every musical style smells of the context, too, as pointed out by Richard Middleton in his essay titled Authorship, gender and the construction of meaning in the Eurhythmics'' hit recordings (1995). The unique quality of the song is that it has two main languages working in unison to construct meaning, including the textual language or the lyrics, as well as the musical language consisting of the melody, musical instruments, riffs, beats per minute etc. The researcher wanted to explore the construction of meaning in song and the overall effect created when two different languages work in unison through their interaction and when their contextual harmonies are explored individually and together. The study then aims to analyse the songs in the totality of their composition, i.e. musically, lyrically, vocally, culturally and contextually.

Bakhtin insists that form and content in discourse are one and that verbal discourse is a social phenomenon (Bakhtin et al. 259). If we extend this concept of form and content to the discourse in songs, we can start to look at songs as a whole, a whole piece of art consisting of many small parts. From the lyrical content to the instruments

and keys being played to how it is sung vocally and the overall effect. All these parts of a song combine into its form. All these parts are then the content of the song. That is to say, the text, voice, composition, and combined effect form the song's content. So to understand and study a song thoroughly, we need to look at its entire content. It is not very different from what Bakhtin did with the novel. He separated the novel into four different heterogeneous stylistic features that combine to form a unity. We can also separate a song into at least three stylistic features: textual components, vocal sound and musical components. These three features of song combine into the higher unity of the work as a whole, which is the overall effect that the researcher also aims to study. (Bakhtin et al. 262)

3.3 Research Method

3.3.1 The Interpretive Approach by Richard Middleton

Richard Middleton applies Bakhtin's ideas of meaning construction and subjectivity to develop an interpretive approach to studying music. This approach was first proposed in Middleton's paper titled Authorship, Gender and the Construction of Meaning in the Eurhythmics' Hit Recordings (1995). In the abstract to this paper, Middleton acknowledges that his method draws from:

> Bakhtin's dialogic theory of subjectivity and meaning, presenting the various parts of songs (i.e. textural lines and structural sections) as interactive 'voices', each with its characteristic style features. (Middleton 465)

Middleton believes that these features can be studied individually as interactive voices within the song, having stylistic properties of their own, which add to the construction of the meaning of the entire song.

> In a broader methodological perspective, the implications are that the interpretative approach […] appears to offer promise in the wider task of understanding musical textures as a location for the composition of human subjectivity. (Middleton 482)

The method proposed by Middleton suggests deciphering a song's meaning by dividing it into the components it is composed of (as Bakhtin did with the novel), which

includes the sound and all the acoustic characteristics that run parallel to the lyrics. This interpretative method allowed for a deeper analysis of the songs in all possible contexts, from the lyrics to the instruments used to the tone and genre of the selected songs.

In his book, Studying Popular Music (1990), Middleton explores the concept further and separates song into different components like the sound, song title, denotative meanings, connotative meaning, setting, tone, literary devices etc. One can further break it down into the following: technique, context, genre, artistic appeal, musical components and composition, overall style, theme/message, phrase lengths, accents, texture, pulse, regular or irregular accents, harmonic language (complex or predictable), repetition of phrases, electronic treatment, type of melody (conventional or unconventional), use of chords, use of riffs, call and response between vocal and musical sequence, use of collage, chord progression, beats per minute, implications and connotations, cultural referencing and many such components, as Middleton continues to point out during his book. This approach forms the basis of the research method for this study (Middleton, Studying Popular Music 3-45).

This research also uses Middleton's interpretive approach to study the songs, because such an approach relies heavily on contextual and observational data of the researcher, and allows more room for exploration with a subjective lens. The interesting part about using this approach is that each informed researcher can add a well-formed subjective understanding and interpretation of the song. The more interpretations of songs out there, the closer we come to quantifying a song's artistic merit and the artists' intent. The data was collected through repeated listening to the selected songs. All the songs were then be transcribed and analyzed with the help of textual analysis. According to Carl Botan, Gary Kreps, and Lawrence R. Frey's book, Investigating Communication: An Introduction to Research Methods, textual analysis can describe and interpret a message's characteristics. It states that "the purpose of textual analysis is to describe the content, structure and functions of the messages contained in texts" (Frey et al. 316). This method aligns with Middleton's interpretative approach and gives weight to the researcher's interpretations. The researcher looked at different textual components of the song from literary devices, i.e. persona, hyperbole and exaggeration, symbols, binaries, metaphors and similes, allusions and syntax. While also looking at phrasal lengths, denotative and connotative meaning, genre, song title, setting, tone,

and overall effect created through the lyrics of each song. This helped the researcher uncover the meaning conveyed through the lyrical content of each song. The researcher used and added to the method proposed by Richard Middleton in his research paper titled Authorship, Gender and the Construction of Meaning in the Eurhythmics' Hit Recordings (1995) and his book titled Studying Popular Music (1990). The researcher believes that a broader classification of such an analysis is required to delimit the research. The researcher thus divided their analysis of each song into three components:

1. The Sound (Voice) and Musical Components (Instruments)

2. Textual Components

3. Overall Effect

Within this three-part analysis of each song, the researcher identified as many individual parts of the song as possible. Each identified part was then placed under its relevant category, e.g. song title and literary devices go under the first category, i.e. textual components. In contrast, components like chord progression and beats per minute are classified under category one, i.e. musical components. It is important to point out that some subcategories were common to more than one category. So they are analyzed under every relevant section. For example, the connotative and denotative meanings can be conveyed through word choice, vocal presentation and the instrumental components present in the song, and the overall effect is then studied. The table on the next page, shows the classification under the categories mentioned above.

Table 3 — Categorical Classification of Songs for Analysis.

Categories	Sub-categories
Sound and Musical Components	The tempo, time signature key, instruments used, compositional structure, genre markers, melody and other noticeable musical components are studied.
Textual Components	Song Title; Denotative and Connotative Meanings; Setting, Time and Space; Tone and Vocals and Literary Devices (Persona; Hyperbole and Exaggeration; Symbols and Context; Binaries; Metaphors and Similes; Allusions and Syntax).
Overall Effect	Interpretative analysis based on the collection of aforementioned, as a result: defining an overall genre of the song.

The interpretive approach proposed by Middleton was applied as a research method in this study. It suggests deciphering a song's meaning by dividing it into its components including the sound and all the acoustic characteristics that run parallel to the lyrics. The method also focuses on various components of meaning construction that can be identified and studied in the selected songs—establishing discursive axes or planes on which a specific song can be mapped. This interpretative method allowed for a deeper analysis of the songs in all possible contexts, from the lyrics to the instruments

used to the tone and genre of the selected songs. The researcher divided the song's musical content into different components to understand the meaning conveyed through each musical component present in the song. For example, the vocal components, harmonies, keys, instruments, time signature, beats per minute, arrangement, melody, chords, structure, and composition of the song. The method proposed by Middleton suggests deciphering a song's meaning by dividing it into the components it is composed of, which includes the sound and all the acoustic characteristics that run parallel to the lyrics. The method also focuses on establishing discursive axes or planes on which a specific song can be mapped. This interpretative method allowed for a deeper analysis of the songs in all possible contexts, from the lyrics to the instruments used to the tone and genre of the selected songs (Middleton 481).

The interpretive approach is a holistic and contextual approach that will allow the researcher to study the language, signs and meanings conveyed through each musical component of the song. When the textual and musical analysis of a song is completed, the researcher then studied the overall effect through the interpretive approach, in the discussion section, to uncover the whole meaning of the song. (Middleton 477-478).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED SONGS

4.1 Introduction to the Analysis

The analysis for each song was broken down into three parts. The first section contains a detail of all the findings related to the sound and musical components of the song including the instruments used, the tempo, the genre, the vocals, and the melody, etc. The second section contains all the findings related to the textual components of the song including the metaphors, symbols, and the syntax of the lyrics, etc. The third section, is for discuss of the analysis; it examines the findings of the other two sections closely and contains commentary on the overall effect or meaning being conveyed by the selected song.

This three-part analysis is an exploration of the meaning conveyed by the selected artists in the selected songs. This exploration is rooted in Bakhtin's dialogic theory of subjectivity and meaning which makes the case for conducting a dialogue, discussion, or exploration of content with the aim of uncovering meaning, derived from a subjective and interpretative lens. Bakhtin's theory insists that everything has meaning. From every song, to every novel, or any other art form worth considering – everything has meaning. The means to get to that meaning however is through dialogue, through interpretation, and through the relation of the self with the other. In this research, the researcher is the "self" while the selected songs are the "other" (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, pp73-75).

4.2 Money by Aamir Zaki

According to Deezer which is an online music streaming service, this song was released in 1995 and was a part of Aamir Zaki's debut album titled Signature classified under the blues genre ("Signature").

4.2.1 Sound and Musical Components

The song's tempo is eighty-eight beats per minute (88BPM), and the time signature is four by four (4/4). The song Money by Aamir Zaki is composed in the Key of E major. The instruments used in the song include an electric guitar, bass guitar, piano keys and sequenced drums. The song does not follow the typical basic structural techniques. It consists of three verses that are almost spoken in the key of the song. Starting with a country-bluesy melody played on a semi-acoustic guitar with electronic effects on it, the song breaks into the first spoken verse. It sounds like a conversation, with the guitar part played after every verse. The song builds up a little after the second verse as the guitar uses distortion effect and plays a heavier and longer solo. As the song goes into its third verse, minor parts of keys enter the song, making it sound bigger before it is concluded, this is done to help the listener stay engaged by breaking the monotony of the previous parts.

4.2.2 Textual Components

Song Title

The song's title is straightforward, and its one-word content (Money) indicates that the song is going to revolve around issues revolving around money. However, it gives no hint whether it will be against the abuse of money as power or if it will talk about how money can buy happiness. It makes the reader/listener interested and reveals the central subject of the song.

Denotative and Connotative Meanings

The song says that money is fine, cool, a rule-breaker; it can talk, sing, and beat most anything (See Appendix, lines 1-7). It can be mean too, it can do things that even the listener cannot (9 -11). The songwriter says that money can make one beg, steal, sell one's soul and even make deals on one's behalf (12-15). Money is personified in this song as an entity capable of performing actions; all the meanings in this song are connotative. Its meaning can be inferred by the associations made with money. The author is implying that money can make people do crazy things like breaking the rules (e.g. through bribes) and that it influences buying anything you can put a price on. The

song suggests that if you do not have money, it can force you to beg for it or even steal it from someone else.

The Setting, Time and Space

There is no set time and place in this song. It is a general setting that does not depend on time and space variables, standard in songs.

Tone and Vocals

The author's tone is satirical, sarcastic and taunting, which gives a very cynical feel to the entire song. The vocal delivery has sarcastic undertones, which strongly imply the singer's discomfort with the power and control money can have over the lives of people. It might be inferred that the person singing the song suffers from a personal lack of wealth and has money problems.

Literary Devices

i. Persona

It is unclear whether the persona is autobiographical or from a character point of view. One can make informed assumptions about the persona based on the lyrics and their vocal delivery, suggesting that the persona is disturbed by the amount of power and control that money has over people's lives. It might be coming from a place of experience, i.e. the persona's lack of wealth.

ii. Hyperbole and Exaggeration

The song is full of hyperbole and exaggerations. It presents money as the ultimate, undefeated authority that can let one do anything (3) from getting away with breaking the hardest rule (8) to making people do anything one wants from them by throwing some money at them.

iii. Symbols and Context

Money is used as a universal archetypal symbol here for what it represents, i.e. power and control. To be precise, mentions of Rockefeller and Princess Anne (4) are

also presented as contextual symbols from pop culture that represent the elite classes, i.e. the successors of an oil magnate John Davidson (Beattie, par. 1) and the queen of England, Queen Elizabeth II (Lewis, par.1). These symbols need a contextual understanding that lies outside the lyrics for the listener or reader to understand what these references symbolize. The images represented in the song with lines like it makes you beg / it makes you steal does the job of conveying how helpless and desperate one can get for the sake of money and the power it holds (12-13).

iv. Binaries

The only binaries present in this song are the ones that are implied and not explicitly stated, and it is between those with money and those without, which calls to mind Karl Marx's division of the classes into the haves and the have-nots (Prychitko, par.17).

v. Metaphors and Similes

The song contains a wealth of symbols but no metaphors or similes.

vi. Allusions

There are two allusions made in the song. The first one is to the Rockefeller family, and the second is to Princess Anne, as explained in the symbols' section above (4-5).

vii. Syntax

The song's syntax employs parallelism to introduce ideas that have similar syntactical construction to illustrate the similarity between the two ideas. For example, the lines: "Money's fine / Money's cool" (2-3) or "Money talks / it even sings" (6-7) build upon the similarity between the ideas that are essentially talking about the power of money.

4.2.3 Overall Effect

The Working Man's Critique of Capitalism

Money problems and related issues are a recurring theme for many blues artists and song-writers as the genre's origins lie in the African-American man's struggle to survive in a white man's world (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, par.1). This song, in true blues fashion, is a critique on the power and control money can wield. Similar to classic songs like If I Had Money by Blues Delight, Money by Pink Floyd, and ABBA's Money, Money, Money this Aamir Zaki song carries on the tradition of commenting on the plight of a poor man in a rich man's world (ABBA 53).

The data and inferences made from the data collected above may overlap which helps in confirming the overall inference of the song. For example, in this song, the author's tone is sarcastic, and his persona also suggests sarcasm as the personality's main characteristic. At the same time, his vocal performance and lyrical content also confirm this trait. The sarcasm and angst conveyed through the song are thus confirmed by three different components of the song, i.e. the tone of the author in the text, the vocal performance and the persona of the character studied under literary devices.

The song's higher tempo adds a layer of anxiousness to the song, which seems like an informed choice by the composer. The song also conveys this anxiety regarding the power and control of money in a capitalistic world through the lyrical content and vocal delivery of the song. The three spoken verses make it seem like a personal rant by the artist, which adds a layer of frustration in the overall effect, in line with the intent of the lyrical and vocal parts. The bluesy country melody is to be understood in a cultural context of the genre. The themes of blues music are usually related to the struggles of the working class, and most songs are centered on money, drinking, and woman problems, this song is no different (General Blues, par.2).

All the components of the song make it seem more like a conversation. Even the bluesy guitar riffs used between the verses convey a similar sort of anguish that's consistent with the spoken verses of the song. Towards the song's second half, the build-up adds distortion effects on the longer and heavier guitar solo, invoking a palpable sense of restlessness in the listener.

The song personifies money as an all-powerful evil entity. According to the song, money makes one beg, steal, break the rules, and price one's happiness. This lyrical content is supported by the heavy guitar riffs, electric effects, and drum sequences; coupled with the taunting and sarcastic vocal delivery, symbolism, and parallelism - it gives an overall dark and cynical feel to the song.

Ironically, the song is composed in the key of E major, which is supposed to be a key for happy songs; this is a masterful decision by the composer as it adds a layer of almost juvenile irony to the song to create an overall emphatic effect. According to the great Austrian pianist and composer, Ernst Pauer, the Key of E major is "the brightest and most power key, expresses joy, magnificence, splendor, and the highest brilliancy" (Pauer quoted in Ishiguro 49).

4.3 Mellisa by Aamir Zaki

4.3.1 Sound and Musical Components

The song's tempo is a hundred and two beats per minute (102BPM), and the time signature is four by four (4/4). The composition of the song is in the Key of G major. The instruments used in the song include bass guitar, piano, keys and sequenced drums. This song has a fascinating and unique arrangement. It starts with only percussions and bass. Vocals enter the song on the key set by the notes on the bass guitar, and the groovy bass line complimenting the grungy vocals continues until the end of the first verse. While at the very end, keys enter with an organ effect creating a build-up towards the chorus lines: you are free to be, Mellisa / Free as can be, Mellisa (9-10). The two-line only chorus is technically based on 8 bars, leaving the listener craving for more. The song then goes into the second verse with only bass and percussions again, however, this time, the second verse has half the number of bars than before for verse lines, and the chorus has twice as many bars as before, making it very intriguing and catchy.

There is a bridge after the second verse as the song builds up its groovy bittersweet feel. Just as one expects the song to go into a third verse, the song maintains the same beat and groove; however, instead of a third verse that starts as the same melody as the previous verses but turns out to be a two-liner outro. The beat

unexpectedly drops right after the first line, and the bass stops playing; only the vocals and keys remain. The song ends with an ad-lib vocal with a chord of the keyboard fading out.

4.3.2 Textual Components

Song Title

The one-word title of the song (Mellisa) reveals that the song is probably going to be about a girl named Mellisa. It makes the reader or listener interested while revealing the central subject of the song, and the reader is left wondering whether it is a love song about a girl.

Denotative and Connotative Meanings

There are many adjectives used in this song that cannot be understood without understanding the connotative or contextual meaning of the words, e.g. the word bound, which means to enclose or something (6). However, the implied meaning is not physical restriction but talks about emotional restriction from living freely. The phrase poison of doubt refers to how doubt can make one feel like they are slowly killing themselves (20). Similarly, the word strong is not used to denote physical strength but implies an emotional and mental strength in the character of Mellisa (21).

Setting, Time and Space

This song has a general setting, which involves a house that a girl named Mellisa was leaving, so it is set in the real world; that is all that can be deciphered from the information provided in the lyrics. There is a general sense of place but not an exact setting of time and place.

Tone and Vocals

The tone of the author is optimistic, encouraging and inspirational in this one. They are telling the subject, Mellisa, that she is strong and free and asking her to live out her hopes and dreams (8). The persona singing the songs asks the subject Mellisa is telling her that she is free to be (9) and that his prayers are with her (16). The song's

vocals have a very inspiring and light feel to it despite all the grungy stylistic choices. The soft grungy parts of the vocal conveyed the struggles of the main character named Mellisa, while the earthy and inspiring tone conveyed hope. Inline, with the overall message of hope and freedom in the song. The vocalist is telling the story of Mellisa, the central subject. He is talking about how tough things have been for her, all the while giving her life advice.

Literary Devices

i. Persona

The song's persona hints at being autobiographical. However, there is no way of knowing for sure. The character of Mellisa seems to be based on a real girl. Whether her name was Mellisa or not, the reader or listener can only speculate. One can speculate that Mellisa and the persona have some indirect relation. Maybe they are their neighbors, which would explain why only one of them knows the other's name and why he had to find out from other people that she was leaving home, in the following lines: But when they told me you were leaving home / I felt a strange kind of pain (3-4).

ii. Hyperbole and Exaggeration

The line "your hopes and dreams are a river in flow" is an exaggeration to stress that the character is free to flow along that river (8). Similarly, the line "I know you just can't go wrong" (22) is another hyperbole used for effect.

iii. Symbols and Context

The song's subject, Mellisa, can be considered a symbol for any girl resisting the standards set by a patriarchal, misogynistic society. Mellisa can represent a girl who has moved out of the house because they forced her to get married. She might also be a girl getting out of an abusive relationship or changing locations for a job etc. It could mean countless other, similar things. In this light, Mellisa becomes a symbol for every girl who has the spirit to resist unfair subjugations at the hands of the society she is living in.

iv. Binaries

The opening lines, "I've seen your face so many times now / and you don't even know my name" (1-2), represent a contrast. It is between the familiarity that the persona feels with the character of Mellisa and the indifference that Mellisa has towards him. The same lines serve as the closing lines, re-emphasizing the strange feeling of kindness the persona feels towards the song's subject.

v. Metaphors and Similes

The line: "Your hopes and dreams are a river in flow" (8) employs the use of metaphor by equating a flowing river with the hopes and dreams of the character of Mellisa, implying that her hopes and dreams are as free as the river that flows through without stopping and finds its way, no matter what. It implies that her hopes and dreams cannot be stopped and in association, neither can she. In another line, the lyrics state that love is a golden cage (13) in which the golden cage stands for the restrictions or lack of freedom imposed on a person by their loved ones. How does one stop a person from doing things they love? All the while insisting they do so because they care about the person.

vi. Syntax

The author uses antithesis to bring out the contrast in the feelings, or the lack thereof, between the two characters. The two characters being, Mellisa and the persona addressing Mellisa. In the two opening and closing lines of the song, i.e. "I have seen your face so many times now / and you don't even know my name" (1-2).

There are also examples of parallelism in the lyrics. For example, these lines, "sometimes words can't communicate / sometimes silence is all we need" (11-12), reinforce the same idea of slowing down, of not over-communicating and causing more harm than benefit in the process.

4.3.3 Overall Effect

An Unsung Anthem for Women's Freedom

The exact circumstances of the song are unclear, whether it's about a woman who is being married off against her will, a girl who is leaving home for further studies, or just moving to another city for work -- all these possible scenarios have one thing in common. The persona of the song is rooting for her success, happiness, and freedom.

The meaning uncovered through the data collected above was confirmed through a significant quantity of overlapping evidence, which helps confirm the song's overall meaning. In this song, for example, the author's tone is optimistic and inspiring. The lyrics, musical components and vocal performance confirm the same. A theme of moving past one's struggles and hope then becomes apparent for the song.

The 102 tempo of the song is a moderate tempo that's neither too fast nor too slow, which is apt for the song because it is not melancholic, neither is it too energetic a message being conveyed. It is a message that's rooted in the reality of overcoming adversity. This tempo falls under the Italian Andante marking, see section 1.5.4 for more details. It is a popular tempo that translates as at a walking pace exactly how the song sounds (MasterClass staff, What is Tempo par. 10). According to Hans Zimmer, tempos are essential for setting moods; the tempo of this song does justice to the song's overall mood (MasterClass staff, par.4).

The song is composed in the key of G major, which gives it specific qualitative characteristics that directly affect the meaning being conveyed through the song. Some emotional characteristics of most songs composed in the key of G major according to the great composer Mozart, sounds simple, satisfied, childlike, innocent, and depicts joy and gratitude (Mozart quoted by Ishiguro, p.113). In a word, every gentle and peaceful emotion of the heart is correctly expressed by this key. The genre of this song can thus successfully be described as soulful.

The unique arrangement of the song is an exciting choice. The song begins with a groovy walking bass line (where the bass line follows the drums), giving it a funky feel. The baseline acts like a pacesetter for the song and defines the harmony of the

entire song. The funk genre seeps through into this song. The emotional and introspective lyrics make soul the song's overall genre, which is essentially a toned and slowed down cousin of funk. Another reason for classifying this song in the soul genre is that funk typically has a more up-tempo rhythm and is primarily a dance music genre. Mellisa is a complicated song that blends the funky bass line, the emotional lyrical content, the moderate tempo, the vocal delivery and the soft key of G major to convey the song's message. The message is to appreciate someone (Mellisa) who has the strength to break free from others' expectations of her, to fulfil her hopes and dreams.

4.4 The God Song by Natasha Humera Ejaz

4.4.1 Sound and Musical Components

The song's tempo is a hundred and twenty beats per minute (120 -147 BPM), and the time signature is four by four (4/4). The song is composed in the Key of A major. The instruments used in the song include bass guitar, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, drums and synths. An acoustic intro marks the beginning of the song. Then the drums and bass enter, after which vocals follow. The synths used in the song give a very spacey and celestial feel. While guitar slides give it a country feel. The percussion and rhythm guitars help build the song further like a journey of the narrator, which is another aspect borrowed from the country music genre.

The vocals begin with two melodically similar verses, which give way to an instrumental part in the song, and then they enter again as an ad-lib, creating the song's climax. The music suddenly softens after the song's climax when the drums and bass stop playing while the ad-lib vocals enter. After the climax, the bass line returns to the song and the acoustic guitar, making this part sound similar to its intro. The percussions only enter on crashes now, but this reintroduction of the acoustic guitar, bassline and percussions help in creating a build-up with the guitar solo on the slide. When this solo ends, all the music stops except for the last note, which helps sustain a very playful and uplifting vocal ad-lib that enters on a higher tempo of 147 BPM than the rest of the song that has a tempo of 120 BPM. Vocal harmonies are also part of the background in some parts of the song. The instruments in the song are being recorded live, along with a few electronic elements added here and there. Giving it a very genre-bending indie, rock, and country music feel.

4.4.2 Textual Components

Song Title

The title of the song is very attention-grabbing as it mentions a topic of universal interest. It indicates that the song is going to revolve around God. Whether the song takes a religious, spiritual, philosophical or more psychological direction is unclear through the title. It clearly states that it is The God Song which piques the interest of a curious mind.

Denotative and Connotative Meanings

Throughout the song, God is being talked about in connotations. In the first line, the song introduces a crazy man (1) who is running up (2) towards the persona and asking them to wait for him (4). When one looks at the connotations attached, one realizes that this crazy man is not referring to an actual person but a trait of God, who seems crazy because we do not understand him. The song then continues to talk about the same crazy man throughout the song and assigning qualities to him. The persona says that she wants to wait for this man because he has asked her. She says she does not know what he has hidden up his sleeve (6), where she is not referring literally to the man having a trick up his sleeves, but the connotation instead is attached to God and her not knowing God's plans. She says only God knows what he has up his sleeve and that she has trust in this man (5-6). She says that this man works in mysterious ways (10), a common phrase we use while talking about God. The artist takes the aid of connotative meanings throughout the song to get her point across.

Setting, Time and Space

This song has a very general setting, which involves a man running up a piece of land. It is unclear whether the song is set in the real world or a fictional one. The title of the song and lyrics suggest a more psycho-spiritual setting inside the artist's mind without an exact set of time.

Tone and Vocals

The tone of the author is playful, subservient as well as strangely intimate. It is purposefully unclear whether it is a woman talking about her God or her lover. It is the love of a woman for her God whom she sometimes teases but always trusts. The ad-libs of the vocals convey an ecstatic, joyous and celebratory message even though these parts have no actual words, and the artist only improvises freely by making arbitrary sounds.

Literary Devices

i. Persona

The song's persona can safely be assumed to be autobiographical because the artist writing and performing the song is a female and the song has a very personal feel.

ii. Hyperbole and Exaggeration

The first two lines, There is a crazy man / running up my land (1-2), uses the word crazy as an exaggeration because there is nothing too crazy about a man running up a land. It creates a feeling of anticipation in the listener, who becomes curious to find out why this man is so crazy and what else he does other than running. At the end of the song, the expression "my God" creates an exaggerated effect of surprise, shock or even dismay.

iii. Symbols and Context

The crazy man referred to in the first line of the song symbolizes God, as we later find out from the song. Similarly, when the song mentions waiting for him (4), it is a symbol for putting faith in God's plan and letting him take the wheel of your life and reveal your destiny to you in time. The song also mentions a sleeve. It is referred to as his sleeve (6) in one part of the song and your sleeve (16) in another. The complete lines are talking about not knowing what God has hidden up his sleeve. So, this symbolic sleeve is God's sleeve, symbolizing his omniscience and it's hidden from everyone else, symbolizing the enormous knowledge gap between God and humans.

The song uses the word trust (18) to symbolize the religious or spiritual faith of the persona in a divine plan.

iv. Binaries

This song establishes a straightforward binary between God and the Persona; this relationship can be interpreted in many ways: woman and man or God and humankind. The song creates a contrast between the awareness of God and the unawareness of humans. This contrast is deepened when it reveals that God has hidden secrets that the persona is unaware of, meaning that God has the upper hand as he has more information. Another thing that builds further contrast between God and the persona is, and in turn, brings this binary to light. The persona must trust (18) that God is taking care of them without knowing how he works (9) or does it, establishing that God has all the agency in this relationship.

v. Metaphors and Similes

Although this song has many symbols and connotative meanings, it does not contain any metaphors or similes.

vi. Allusions

There are no allusions present in this song.

vii. Syntax

There are many syntactical nuances in this song, run-on lines like, And he wants me to wait / to wait, for him (3-4), are used for emphasizing the waiting part, which conveys a vital part of the song's meaning. It is a reference to a commonly held belief that all good things come to those who wait, and this simple syntactical technique allows the artist to convey the meaning in a pithy manner (LiteraryDevices Editors, All Things Come to Those Who Wait par.1). Other lines like, [Be] cause my God, he works / in mysterious ways (9-10) use syntax to put the words together in a manner that conveys multiple meanings instead of one. It can mean that the persona's lover is mysterious, and she is saying my God (9) out of frustration or dismay, while it can also mean that the persona's God (my God) works in mysterious ways.

4.4.3 Overall Effect

Abstractions of a Higher Power

This song is spiritual in its subject, vocal delivery, and lyrical content. It is akin to the Persian and Urdu poetry concepts of the love of God (Ishq-e-haqeeqi) and the love of God's creation (Ishq-e-majazi) or in simple terms, feelings of romantic love for another human being (Tehreek Dawat e Faqr, par. 6-12). The singer adds wordless chants with arbitrary syllables in the end of the song. These chants seem like a fusion between scat singing and African-American church chants invoking a sense of spirituality without religiosity in the listener (Robinson 3). The song has similar lyrical content to hit songs about a higher being like the British band ABC's song titled Dear God, In The News by Kris Kristofferson, and the same church choir feelings as in Jesus Take The Wheel by Carrie Underwood.

There is overlapping evidence that helps confirm the overall meaning and essence of the song. For example, the slide guitar melody used throughout the song is typical of country music. At the same time, the lyrical content and its journey-like feel created through the percussion and rhythm guitars played behind the vocals are also typical features of a country song. So it is confirmed that the song borrows heavily from the US-originated country genre.

The high 115 BPM tempo of the song means that it is moderately quick, which makes it a quick-paced and upbeat song. The tempo suddenly shifts towards the end of the song when the vocalist ad-libs chants that seem like a prayer or celebration of the song's subject, i.e. God. Here, the tempo shifts to 147 BPM, the Allegro tempo and the most frequently used tempo range (120-168 BMP). This higher tempo part of the song, along with percussion instruments and vocal harmonies, create a ceremonious feel; it sounds like divine praise for a higher power, see section 1.5.4 for details on this tempo.

The song is composed in the key of A major, which gives it specific dynamic characteristics that affect the song's mood and, in turn, it is meaning. According to Ernst Pauer's, the key of A major is "full of confidence and hope, radiant with love and redolent of simple genuine cheerfulness, excels all other keys in portraying sincerity of feeling". Most songs composed in the key of A major have festive themes centered

around spirituality or optimistic declarations of love, contentment, heavenly themes, trusting in the spirit of the divine (Pauer quoted in Ishiguro, p.49).

This genre-bending song borrows heavily from country music. It uses its technique for storytelling through the lyrical content and the musical components of rhythm and percussion, which help build up a sense of journey in the song. The intimate tone of the lyrical content in this song is entirely in line with the playfully subservient persona and an intimate-sounding vocal performance. Together, they create this sense of romantic reverence throughout the song, which is the layer of meaning that one uncovers after repeated listening - it is a song of praise, a hymn.

4.5 Today is a Place by Natasha Humera Ejaz

4.5.1 Sound and Musical Components

The song's tempo is a hundred and eleven beats per minute (111 BPM), and the time signature is four by four (4/4). The song is composed in the Key of Bb major, also known as B-flat major. Only one instrument is used in the song called the Spanish guitar, or an acoustic guitar with nylon strings. The song begins with birds chirping, then the Spanish guitar enters and then the vocals enter a soft, indie style. The vocalist then delivers two verses back to back, and the song ends in a repetitive chorus.

The arrangement and production of the song are simplistic, unplugged and stripped down while it still somehow manages to stay effective. The acoustic sound created by the Spanish guitar creates a vulnerably soft effect in the song. The birds chirping at the beginning of the song make it seem like it is recorded in an outdoor space, while the lack of other background noise makes it sound like the artist is sitting alone with her Spanish guitar and singing.

4.5.2 Textual Components

Song Title

The song's title is intriguing because it is equating time and space, making them sound interchangeable. One can guess from the title that it has some yet-to-be-

discovered symbolic meaning or at least a hint of a metaphysical connotation that needs to be uncovered through the rest of the song.

Denotative and Connotative Meanings

The song begins with the persona saying she is filling empty streets with her ideas which sounds like an imaginative way of expressing her reclusive nature and content aloneness. She says that there is a great divide between her finding out what is true and real. This reference to a great divide connotes the metaphysical concept of knowing a universal truth and reality through the enlightenment of the mind. However, the persona is experiencing barriers in getting to that level of universal knowledge. There is a mention of being inquisitive and asking why (8), which asks the more important, philosophical questions about the meaning of life, the existence of free will or fate, and more. There is a lot of abstract, imaginative and otherworldly imagery in the song, like filling up streets with pretty neat ideas (2-3) or dancers picking the persona up for rides and taking her to a particular place inside her mind (9-12). The imagery is almost psychedelic, bordering on schizophrenic. The story does not follow any laws of nature or physics in this song meaning. It is not physically possible to do the things that the song talks about. So most, if not all, of the meanings associated with the song's lyrics are mainly connotative and abstract.

The scene proceeds as dancers take the persona up to a place that exists in the persona's mind, which alludes to the fact that all of this is happening in the persona's imagination. The song then talks about a stranger's grin (14), making the persona's feet spin. The effect of this stranger's smile is that all the dark corners of the persona's mind have been brightened. This stranger is soon discovered to be not a stranger at all, but the persona's reflection, her own pretty face (19) in the mirror, which has led her down a path of ecstatic self-discovery. The repeated ending line, "Show me the mirror again" (17, 18, 20), ties the whole song back to the beginning, where the persona talks about her mind, her own eyes, her inquisitive nature and now her reflection in the mirror.

Setting, Time and Space

The sound of birds chirping, and a single Spanish guitar make it safe to assume that the song has an outdoor setting. Where birds are chirping, maybe the persona is sitting under a tree or in a park singing to herself, alone. Then it is safe to assume because there are no other noises or chatter in the background. However, all the activities in the song take place inside the persona's imagination, so her mind can be considered the internal setting for this song.

Tone and Vocals

The tone of the vocals is very raw, stripped down and natural. The singer sounds like a girl next door, sitting, singing and musing by herself. The feel of the vocals can only be described as indie, a more do-it-yourself style of tone and vocals that is melodic and angst-free.

Literary Devices

i. Persona

The song's persona is autobiographical with a very toned down and personal feel, typical of this artist.

ii. Hyperbole and Exaggeration

The persona talks about filling up empty streets (1) with just her ideas. She talks about the great divide (6), which keeps truth and reality away from her. No actual dancers are picking her up for a ride to any magical place. The whole song is a combination of hyperbole and exaggeration. Whether it is the almost narcissistic nature of the persona, the imagery in the song, or her imagination going wild, the entire song is one big exaggerated display of the persona's imagination.

iii. Symbols and Context

The empty streets mentioned in the song's first line can be seen as a symbol for an idle mind or an uninteresting and hollow world. The great divide is another symbol that can be looked at as not just the barrier between the persona finding truth or reality

but can also represent a mental condition or the lack of connection the persona feels with the rest of the world and the people living in it. The mention of a stranger who turns out to be the persona herself can be considered a symbol for the persona's dissociation from reality, truth, and sense of identity.

iv. Binaries

The binary between empty streets and streets filled with pretty neat ideas is one of the first ones to appear in the song. There is another binary created between each side of the great divide (6). There are truth and reality on one side, and the other is naturally the opposite, meaning falsity and fantasy. There is a pseudo-binary created for effect in the song, between the stranger that she sees and her reflection in the mirror. This binary is created within the persona's self, highlighting her estrangement with herself.

v. Metaphors and Similes

There are no metaphors or similes present in this song.

vi. Allusions

The last repeated line, "show me the mirror again" (17, 18, 20), alludes to "that stranger's grin" in line 14, confirming that the stranger is her but not explicitly stating it.

vii. Syntax

The syntax of this song is very abstract and confusing on purpose, the song-writer applies a stream of consciousness narrative technique to:

[…] render the flow of myriad impressions —visual, auditory, physical, associative, and subliminal—that impinge on the consciousness of an individual and form part of his awareness along with the trend of his rational thoughts. (Britannica, stream of consciousness, par. 1)

It is a seemingly simple song as far as sentence structure goes, but the choice and phrasing of words give it a more absurdist feel where the persona keeps jumping

from one idea and image to the next. She breaks an idea or thought being talked about in one line, e.g. "to that stranger's grin" in line 14 and then "now all these corners" in line 15, quickly jumping ahead to another idea before completing the first one, almost like an Urdu Ghazal type structure.

4.5.3 Overall Effect

The Power of Creativity and Living in the Moment

The entire song is characterized through writing, musical styles, and vocal delivery as an almost dream-like or drug-induced sequence of events with a lot of visual imagery. The visual imagery through the lyrical content creates a separate world that brings up art forms like painting, and dancing to introduce colors and movement in the mind of the reader. The abrupt end with the repeating lines show me the mirror again can be indicative of the come down from a drug-induced psychedelic high, or the inflated ego of an artist after having created a piece of art, or captures a moment of narcissism of a person who is about to collapse after a manic episode.

The overlapping evidence in this song includes the use of Spanish guitar that creates a brighter and more percussive sound quality than the acoustic guitar, while it is also much louder. This song's lyrical content also talks about brightening up the corners of the persona's eyes with brilliant ideas that spring in her own mind (3-4). All the imagery of the song is filled with wild and loud imagination of the persona, combined with the loud sound of a single instrument, i.e. the Spanish guitar, helps generate a combined effect of a personal, private and whimsical experience.

The fast 111 BPM tempo of the song means that the song is composed in Allegro. A tempo described as fast, quick and bright is in line with the above discussed overall composition of the song that achieves a brightened, almost psychedelic effect through each contributing part, i.e. the melody, the vocals, the tempo, the lyrics etc. The song is composed in the key of Bb major or B-flat major which has the effect of a quaintly positive message, i.e. a song that is unusual but still piques one's interest. Most songs composed in this key are romance, optimism and imagining a better world, which is loosely in line with this song. The key combined with the tempo, the Spanish guitar, and the birds chirping in the background gives a hot and joyful feeling in a fanciful way

(Symphony 101, par. 2). According to Pauer, the key of B-flat major is "open, frank, clear, and bright. Also the expression of quiet contemplation" (Pauer as quoted in Ishiguro, 50).

The song borders on abstract when one looks at the lyrics alone, but it all begins to come together when heard in its totality. The artist's key, tempo, and choice of an instrument are all informed decisions to achieve the desired effect, which creates a strong base for the lyrical content to wander off into different planes of consciousness of the mind, which are being equated to a place in time and space. The song jumps between many interwoven ideas, from filling up long streets with ideas to the quest for knowledge to an unstable self-image, self-obsession, and eventually self-discovery. It is layered with meaning on top of meaning. Nevertheless, the topics shift too rapidly from one line to another, barely doing justice to the complexity of these issues. However, it is a complete journey of the artist's state of mind in that supposed day, which is a place

4.6 King of Self by Sajid and Zeeshan

4.6.1 Sound and Musical Components

The song's tempo is a hundred and twenty-nine beats per minute (129), and the time signature is four by four (4/4). The song is composed in the Key of C Sharp Minor (C# Minor). The instruments used in this song are a semi-acoustic guitar, bass and a MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) used to produce electronic beats. There are no live percussion instruments in the recording, but the MIDI is used to create the electronic percussion beats and other electronic effects. The song begins with ambient white noise and the sound of a moving car, then the engine sound fades, and a semi-acoustic guitar riff enters along with the vocals. The song's structure is a common one, a single verse followed by the chorus, followed by another verse and chorus, ending with a bridge and chorus. The song does not have a separate intro from the verse, nor does it have a separate outro from the chorus. The beat builds before the second chorus, which helps keep the song moving and interesting for the listener. The effects used on the vocals and guitars during the bridge and last chorus break the monotony of listening to repetitive lyrical content.

A strong rock influence can be heard on the guitar riffs. A fusion of electronic sounds created on the MIDI gives this simple song a produced effect. The MIDI creates a fusion of electronic elements and an experimental synth sound and electronic dance beat with arpeggiators in the background.

4.6.2 Textual Components

Song Title

The song's title immediately makes one think that this song will be about conquering one's inner demons or being in control or something along the lines of overcoming obstacles. Because this is a song written by Pakistani musicians, there is a chance that this concept of being a King of Self was inspired by Iqbal's famous concept of *Khudi* which can be referred to here as self-actualization for the sake of brevity. (Iqbal Academy, par.1)

Denotative and Connotative Meanings

The song is full of connotations where the author is comparing themselves to a fast car, meaning that their life is going too fast and instilling anxiety in the reader or listener who is waiting for the fast car to crash inevitably. It adds a sense of urgency to the song from the beginning. There are two references to things in lines three and four, the former being a reference to those things that one wants to leave behind (i.e. regrets, fears, emotional or physical pain etc.). The latter being things that one is afraid one is rushing into, i.e. responsibilities, commitment, jobs, or simply put – the rat race. The fifth line brings it back by saying, "you are not a rock star". It is a cautionary message for the song's listeners, letting them know that a lifestyle of drugs, sex, and alcohol will not do them any good because they are real people with real responsibilities and not the rock stars that they watch on TV or admire. The song connotatively conveys the message that we, as normal human beings and not rock stars, cannot afford such a chaotic, dangerous and explicit lifestyle with no regard for our actual self. The song tells the listener not to copy anyone else and be themselves, try to control our lives and ourselves and stay away from temptations like a rock star lifestyle, or a fast car, or a bag of gold for that matter.

Setting, Time and Space

The song starts with the sound of a race car. The first line of the song mentions a highway, which is the only indication of a setting.

Tone and Vocals

The song's tone is very melodic and has an early electronic sound. The vocals are relaxed and almost in the foreground, repeating a motivational message. The genre can be described as a mixture of alternative rock and electronica.

Literary Devices

i. Persona

The persona appears to be an older person who has been through the daily grind of life, lived the rock star life and has returned to tell the youth of this current era not to waste their lives as he wasted his. He tells them to overcome these temptations and become a king of self (11), like himself. The persona appears to be omnipresent and omniscient, bordering on sounding like the voice of the good angel, on the right shoulder of each believing man – which is a cultural reference for Muslims who believe in that metaphor.

ii. Hyperbole and Exaggeration

There is not much hyperbole or exaggeration in the song except for one instant. The tenth line of the song mentions that music holds a melody only you can feel (10), where you refers to the listener. This exaggeration is to get the point across, for the listener to be motivated by and get a sense of self-worth.

iii. Symbols and Context

The fast car mentioned in this song's first line symbolizes the fast lifestyle of misguided young adults who get into a life of drugs, alcohol, and other risk-taking behavior (like racing in a fast car on the highway). A bag of gold is mentioned in the eighth line of the song, a symbol that holds multiple meanings. The first is a reference to a packet of gold leaf, a familiar brand of cigarette smoked in Pakistan. This packet

of gold leaf represents the fast lifestyle that the author pleads for the listener to throw away because, just like a pack of cigarettes, such a lifestyle leads to bad health, suffering, and that fast car finally crashing. The second meaning of this bag of gold refers to all the materialistic things in life like money, possessions and belongings, all the things for which all humanity runs a rat race. Again, the author asks the listener to let go of material gains that do not bring you real happiness. Such things, incidentally, are also bad for the health and happiness of one's soul. This metaphor in totality refers to all things which may come in the way of a person's happiness and health.

Your music mentioned in the ninth line of the song, refers to the music of the soul, similar in meaning to famous idioms like "marching to the beat of one's drum" which according to the Farlex dictionary of idioms, means "to behave in a manner that does not conform to the standard, prevalent, or popular societal norm" (Editors of Farlex Dictionary).The artist is asking the listener to not conform to the popular societal norm of a fast lifestyle and not to follow "rock stars" like sheep but instead to listen to your own heart because "it is easier just to be the way you are" (14).

iv. Binaries

There is much symbolism in the song but not a lot of clearly defined binaries. There is one binary between that of a rock star and a normal person. The rock star is an unachievable godlike personality who can do drugs, alcohol and have a fast lifestyle without any real-life consequences. It refers to an artificial and unreal persona created for audiences. In contrast, an ordinary person is gullible enough to try and follow such a lifestyle without any idea about the real-life consequences.

There is a second, loose binary between the bag of gold and your music (8-9). Both of which have been mentioned in the section above. It creates a contrast, if not a straightforward binary, between chasing that bag of gold of opportunity and risk-taking behavior versus listening to one's music and not listening to the tune of the rock star.

v. Metaphors and Similes

The fast car mentioned in the first line and repeatedly throughout the song is a metaphor for the fast lifestyle.

<u>vi. Allusions</u>

The title and the repeated references to becoming the king of self (11) might be an allusion to the famous lines by the Italian author Pietro Aretino, "I am, indeed, a king, because I know how to rule myself" (Britannica par.2). Ruling one-self equals to a self-actualized person who can control themselves when faced with temptation, meaning a person who takes responsibility for his action and, as a result, takes control of his life.

<u>vii. Syntax</u>

The syntax of the song is relatively simple, easy to understand and repetitive, which gives a unique quality to the song. There is a certain sing-along quality to it, even if listening to it a second time. The narrative never breaks. The song starts as a conversation and ends with the end of that very conversation. A repeated message in the chorus constantly reinstates the song's positive message; towards the end of the song, the meaning of the words used in the song changes. For example, at the beginning of the song, being a rock star was equated to having a fast lifestyle filled with reckless behavior, but in the place of words towards the end of the song, being a rock star is equated to living a responsible and healthy lifestyle free of materialistic worries. The syntax of this song might appear to be simple in its form, but it helps convey a complicated message.

4.6.3 Overall Effect

A Cautionary Tale for the Youth of Pakistan

Sajid and Zeeshan have a writing style that can be mainly characterized as instructional in nature. Whether it's King of Self (2006), Walk on Air (2011) or Lighten Up (2020) all of Sajid and Zeeshan songs carry motivational messages for moving through life, with contentment and grace. This song in particular is about warning the youth against impulsive and self-destructive behaviors such as drinking, driving recklessly, and smoking. Other songs of the same lyrical nature include modern classic country songs like High Cost of Living by Jamey Johnson, Whiskey Lullaby by Braid

Paisley, and the pop The A Team by Ed Sheeran, about a heroin-addicted young adult living in a homeless shelter.

The overall meaning uncovered through the data collected above was confirmed through several cases of overlapping evidence. Which helps confirm the overall meaning or effect of the song. For example, the song's lyrical content; the sound of a race car at the beginning of the song; and the fast tempo of the song helped set the tone of the song while pointing to the overall message, which is to urge youngsters to reflect on their fast-paced and dangerous lifestyle.

The 129 tempo of the song falls inside the most frequently used tempo marking that includes the "heartbeat tempo" as well. It is a relatively fast tempo that makes the song's pace relatively quicker than other songs the researcher has analyzed in this research. This fast-paced tempo is an informed choice by the artists as the songs lyrical content also talks about a "fast" lifestyle that involves racing cars, smoking and doing drugs, amongst other things. The tempo falls under the Italian Allegro marking and is the most popular tempo used in songs. The tempo is fast. However, it is not fast enough to be automatically presumed as a dance number or a happy song, which it is not.

The song's composition is in the key of C Sharp Minor which according to Ernst Pauer is seldom used and can be used to convey multiple feelings including those of "earnestness and a passionate intensity" (Ishiguro 48). Songs composed in this key usually have themes surrounding intimate conversations, penance and lamentations. This information does not help identify a genre (which was established in the textual components' section as electronica). It instead helps identify the central idea of the song. The lyrical content and the musical composition and vocal delivery convey a motivational message to the audience, asking them to make better life choices by saying no to drugs, and be in complete control of their own conscience.

4.7 Walk on Air by Sajid and Zeeshan

4.7.1 Sound and Musical Components

The song's tempo is a hundred and thirty-three beats per minute (133 BPM), and the time signature is four by four (4/4). The song is composed in the Key of E major. The instruments used in this song include electric guitars, synths, electronic percussion, drum kit and bass. The song has a typical song structure. Starting with a verse then going to the chorus, followed by a second verse followed by an extending chorus of eight lines with the first four lines being the same as the first chorus followed by an additional four new lines, written in the same melody as the chorus. The extended chorus is followed by a guitar solo (typical of the rock genre), followed by the extended chorus repeated twice. Towards the second half of the last extended chorus, the music drops and the beats stop as the chorus ends. The same upbeat guitar strumming enters at the beginning of the song, after which the beat renters along with percussion, the percussion die out as the song softly ends.

The arrangement of the song is very up-tempo, with electronic dance beats playing in the background. A constant distortion effect can be heard on the electric guitar and other characteristics typical of the pop-rock genre. The distortion on the guitars plays alongside electronic effects, arpeggiators and synths being played in the background.

4.7.2 Textual Components

Song Title

To Walk on Air or to be walking on air is a phrase that Merriam-Webster dictionary defines as feeling very happy. The conventional meaning of the phrase thus makes a case for the song to be a happy one, but the peculiarity caused by the use of the word walk instead of the more commonly used, walking makes one wonder whether there is more to the title than the meaning of a common phrase ("Walking on Air").

Denotative and Connotative Meanings

The song begins with a mention of sleep and how it helps the persona escape from the lows (2) of life. The connotation attached to lows is situations and circumstances in the persona's life that might be causing stress and low moods. Sleep (1) connotes escaping or having a rest from the everyday anxiety-inducing worries of life. The words let go (3) connote letting go of one's worries. Being "left with no more screams" (8) connotes no more remorse or energy to complain, more like a bitter acceptance of reality. Being lifted off the floor and walking on air is an idiomatic reference to feeling elated, happy or excited. It might also refer to reaching nirvana or a Zen state, where one is not bothered by worldly worries.

In an interview with Bina Shadab, Sajid and Zeeshan were asked if "Walk on Air" was about self-development and raising standards. Zeeshan responded with the following information about the song's meaning:

> "The song is about learning from life and what one has been through, and from that understanding, undoing it all or changing it to make things better. […] If walking on the ground is not working, you must lift, and walk on air." (Shadab, par.5)

Shadab further went on to say that the song "leads to understanding and acceptance of circumstances" (Shadab, par.6). That it was about giving it you are all in life. Just letting go and going with the flow.

The song says that having light conversations (5) or sipping coffee without frowning (15) and standing tall in the face of adversity are all such events that can be good for one. The song also insists that worrying about not having enough time to get one's life out of a fix (18) or running away from your problems cannot be suitable for one, nor will it have any productive benefits. Instead, the song asks that one needs to do both their best and hope for it.

Setting, Time and Space

There is no set time in this song. However, there are hints of a general physical setting and place. There is mention of sleep (1) so one inevitably imagines a bedroom.

There is a mention of light conversations (5) which introduces other characters into the setting. There is a mention of a floor (9) and then mention lifting from that floor and walking on air. So there is a hint of a bed, a place where conversations can be had (perhaps a living room), there is the floor, and there is the air above it. One can say that the imagery suggests that the place in the setting is that of a house. There is mention of time, space, and even place in the song (11-13), but the lyrical content surrounding these words does not add information to the setting of the song. Instead, it is a rather metaphysical take on both concepts.

Tone and Vocals

Although it is an up tempo, electronic number, the song's tone remains soft with the help of the vocal delivery. The genre that it would then fall under would be a fusion of electronic rock and soft rock. Maybe it falls under a subcultural sub-genre that can henceforth be identified as a soft electronic rock.

Literary Devices

i. Persona

The persona is a vague figure that is seemingly having an inner dialogue or communicating with inanimate concepts like sleep, time, and space (11-13). The persona is, in a way, listing how they got through their troubles with the help of coping mechanisms. One can only discover the persona by analyzing his reactions to and thoughts about certain concepts or activities. For example, the persona states that sleep helps them momentarily escape from the lows of life. Then sleep suddenly turns into a more permanent concept. The persona vaguely refers to how they cannot get much sleep and have been thinking about forever to let go (3), which may simply mean that the persona wants to let go of their worries and finally sleep for relief. However, the syntax makes one wonder whether the persona is talking about a more permanent sleep, i.e. letting go, forever.

The persona then talks about not having enough time and not having enough space to do things they want. They also mention running away from their problems and trying to escape, but eventually still ending up in such a fix (18). Then the persona talks

about their resolve during times of adversity and standing tall while facing challenges, accepting reality, and choosing to be happy. The entire song seems to be in strange inner monologues. The artists have most skillfully accomplished that they have let us, the audience, into the very personal, inner working of the persona's mind and psychology. It helps the audience relate to the song's message, which is ultimately to stand tall in the face of adversity, facing one's worries, and then achieving happiness or a state of enlightenment by letting go. So much so that one can begin to walk on air.

The above information establishes that the persona is at least a middle-aged man (safe to assume as the artists, writer, and vocalist are all male) who has seen adversity and tried to run away from life's problems like many of us. While ultimately redeemed themselves by facing these issues and standing their ground so much, they are now finally free of life's everyday anxieties. Staying true to its form, Sajid and Zeeshan give out another message of hope and strength to their listeners.

ii. Hyperbole and Exaggeration

There are quite a several instances within the song that use hyperboles, beginning with the first line. The song begins with lyrics that state that sleep has never been so sweet (1) which is the first hyperbole to convey the message with a certain intensity. The song carries on to state more exaggerated phrases for emphasis. For example phrases like: thinking forever in line three, everything came down on me in line seven, started to walk on air in line ten, left with no more screams in line eight, and all my life was in such a fix in line eighteen are all hyperbolic exaggerations to convey the intensity of the persona's experience and lessons about life.

iii. Symbols and Context

Sleep has been used as a symbol for escapist mentality. As mentioned in the song, it serves as an escape from worldly worries and the low points in one's life. The song subtly mentions a more permanent form of sleep or escapism as well, which might border on being a subliminal reference to suicidal ideation or death, at the very least.

Light conversations (5) can serve as a loose symbol for recreational activities one may have to escape from stress and difficulties. Being left with no more screams

(8) can symbolize helplessness, hopelessness, and despair. Walking on air is a symbol of tranquility or, in other words, achieving a sense of calm amongst a storm of problems. On further deliberation, to walk on air (10) appears as a symbol of a more transcendent state of nirvana, free from all suffering, pain and even a sense of self.

iv. Binaries

Some binaries present in this song are those created by the presence or absence of something. For example, the absence and presence of sleep serve as one. The absence of sleep refers to life's problems, anxieties and the real world, while a presence of that sleep offers an escape from all the connotations mentioned above attached with the absence of it.

Similarly, the presence and absence of time is another binary found in the song. Time is a complicated concept, and as the latest science suggests, it may not have the characteristic of being absent. Even if it does, it has not yet been observed by humans. However, the reference to time in this song is more metaphysical and philosophical in nature rather than a scientific one. For human beings, time is relative to their emotional well-being, i.e. there are degrees to how fast or slow time passes depending on the events happening around them. For example, if someone is anxious for time to pass, it seems to pass slowly. When one is behind on a deadline, one thinks that time has suddenly started passing more quickly. So alluding to an absence of time is, in reality, a reference to not having enough time to find solutions to one's problems in life, in the case of this song specifically. There is no mention of a presence of time, but that is naturally not required because it is a permanent condition for all humans and lyricists (LiteraryDevices Editors, Metaphysical par.1)

Another binary mentioned in the song is that between running and standing tall (17-19). The reference to running in the song references the common expression, "running away from one's problems" which means trying to escape from life's problems thrown at one by simply choosing to avoid and ignore those (YourDictionary Editors, par.1). On the other hand, "standing tall" is another common idiomatic expression. In the case of this song, it means to stop running from the problem and instead of facing it bravely, risking a confrontation and not retreating from the adversities of one's life.

v. Metaphors and Similes

There are no metaphor or similes present in this song.

vii. Allusions

Several allusions are made in the lyrical content of the song, which is identified in other parts of the textual analysis. These are all allusions to idiomatic expressions, from running to standing tall and especially walk on air are all allusions to common idiomatic expressions like "running away from one's problems", "to stand tall in the face of adversity" and "walking on air". The meaning of each of these expressions has already been discussed in other sections of the textual analysis.

vii. Syntax

Once again, Sajid and Zeeshan stay true to their form by using a very abstract syntactical technique, but it achieves a beautiful purpose. The phrasing and placement of the words within each line make it possible for the reader or listener to derive as many meanings and interpretations from it as they can. This syntactical quality allows for the lyrical content to contain many meanings and stay open-ended, that is to say, open to interpretations.

4.7.3 Overall Effect

A Self-Help Guide to Happiness

In classic Sajid and Zeeshan manner the song Walk on Air also sends a motivational message to those who are not doing so well in live. It instructs and inspires the listener to find different ways to cope with the stresses and changes in life, and to rise above all the lows they are experiencing in life. The lyrical content of hope in the face of adversity is reminiscent of similar classics like Walking on Sunshine by Katrina and The Waves, Three Little Birds by Bob Marley, and Lovely Day by Will Withers.

The inferences made from the aforementioned collected data may overlap, which reconfirms the song's overall meaning. For example, in this song, the vocalist's tone is inspirational, valid for most Sajid and Zeeshan songs. The lyrical content of the

song is also inspirational and making references to self-development and achieving happiness by facing your troubles. The upbeat tempo and melody of the song are also in line with the overall inspirational message of the song. The inspirational message conveyed through the song is then confirmed by three individual parts of the song, i.e. the vocal tone, lyrical content and composition of the song.

The 133 BPM tempo of the song is one of the most frequently used tempo marking in songs. This tempo falls under the Italian Marking, Allegro. The upbeat, slightly high temp of the song gives the lyrical and vocal content of an inevitable push which helps convey an overall motivational message. The Key of E major in which this song is composed has certain emotive features associated with it through centuries of songs arranged in this key. According to Ernst Pauer, E major is "the brightest and most powerful key. It expresses joy, magnificence, splendor and the highest brilliancy" (Ishiguro 49). Songs composed in the Key of E major are usually centered on the festive themes surrounding celebrations of god, love, and self celebrations. For this particular Sajid and Zeeshan song, the song's central theme is a celebration of self-discovery and self-determination.

Like most other songs by the band, this song conveys an inspirational message of unwavering strength in the face of adversity; while choosing to be accepting, happy, and content. The arrangement of the song contains some chaotic elements typical of the soft-rock genre. For example, the electric guitar is played with much distortion in the sound. In comparison, the electronic beat on top of it gives the song a very multidimensional element in terms of the meaning and interpretations which can be derived from it. The upbeat tempo, along with electronic beats, distorted guitar and a bright vocal tone and timbre, conveys the complexity of the song and the chaos of real life. These starkly different musical choices in the song's arrangement reflect a well-rounded motivational message: there are problems in one's life, and sometimes one wants to escape. However, if they face their problems head-on, they will feel like they are walking on air.

4.8 Occupy by Natasha Noorani

4.8.1 Sound and Musical Components

The song's tempo is ninety beats per minute (90 BPM), and the time signature is 4/4. The song is composed in the Key of D major. The instruments used in the song include an electric guitar, bass, percussion, and MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) used to create electronic beats.

The song begins directly with a verse sung by the vocalist with single guitar strums playing behind the vocals and vocal harmonies, creating a soft sound to set up anticipation for an inevitable build-up. The verse ends and is followed by a small silence, after which ad-lib vocals enter along with percussion, electric guitar and bass at the same time, creating a grand sound. These vocals go on for four cycles, after which the song breaks into the second verse, which has a different melody from the first verse. This second verse melody begins high in falsettos for the first two lines, and the vocals then descend to lower notes for the following two lines. This technique makes the mood transition of the song more interesting, catchy and versatile before going into the more monotonous and repetitive pattern of notes in the song. Percussion stops as the second verse ends, followed by a momentary silence, and the previous ad-lib part repeats for two cycles this time, leading to the bridge. The ad-lib part stays in the background for the entire bridge, as the lyrical vocals of the bridge take the front stage. The electronic percussion accent changes as soon as the bridge ends and gives way to an instrumental part composed of 4 bars before going back to the first verse. The percussion accent changes again, adding more variety to the overall mood and sound. The percussion effects on this repeated (first) verse are not the same as that on the first verse, and this acts as an aid for the vocal melody; allowing more space for melodic variations in this repeated verse as compared to the first time it was heard at the beginning of the song. The beat breaks throughout the repeated (first) verse; it continues to break for a few seconds after the verse finishes, finally going back to the first percussion accent used in the song, concluding in the same ad lib vocal melody as before.

The song genre is a fusion of indie and soul music. It is a mainly vocal-driven song with the impact created through backing vocals and harmonies by the same artist layered on top of the main vocals. The electronic beats and MIDI effects aid the vocals

by setting and changing the moods according to the requirement of the vocal parts of the song.

4.8.2 Textual Components

Song Title

The one-word title of the song, "Occupy", conveys several connotations that can only be confirmed by analyzing the song's lyrical content ("Occupy"). The initial meaning conveyed from the title is nothing more than the word's definition, which is to take up space; to engage attention or energy; to fill or hold in possession, or to reside as an owner or tenant.

Denotative and Connotative Meanings

In the fourth line, the persona of the song sings about thoughts festering in her heart and these thoughts are coming to her faster than light as mentioned in the second line of the song. The persona compares herself to a river in line seven and in line eight, calls her lover's heart a place that she wants to rush through in line seven and occupy in line eleven. All the lyrics carry a ton of connotations. She says her lover has tainted eyes, and he hides something behind it, it might mean that she is suspicious of her lover, or it might be an empathetic plea to her lover to share his troubles, that he is hiding behind those tainted eyes (13). She says the halo around her crown (21) is falling along with their secrets (20). It implies a fall from grace or falling down from the pedestal (20). Whether she was placed on that pedestal by her lover or by herself is unclear. It is vague, much like the rest of the song. It is why she now has to comply because her status as a saintly woman has come crashing down. As the song goes on, the persona talks more about her lover's eyes, particularly the color of his eyes or in her words pigments of your eyes (line 25). She says nothing compares to the color of her lover's eyes. However, the burdens hidden behind them cause the prism or her light to fade (26-27). One possible interpretation could mean her beloved's troubles sadden her, and she feels burdened under the heavyweight of his troubles, so much so that it causes her source of light and happiness to disappear.

The whole song romanticizes the idea of meeting one's lover's gaze, which is a popular cultural trope found primarily in the culture of the subcontinent, i.e. Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Pakistani music is usually made in local languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, etc. It uses this trope of lovers' gaze meeting as this electric moment between the two that has a telepathic ability to communicate how much they love each other without expressing it verbally or through touch. The song adds another layer on top of this popular trope by referring to something hidden behind her lover's eyes, finding love there and some secret or some piece of information that burdens the persona. It leaves the listener questioning if her lover was unfaithful, misogynistic, or abusive. There are countless possibilities. Saying that her lover's eyes are now tainted or polluted might mean that she no longer sees love in his eyes, but also the lies he told her or the secrets he kept from her. If the song is interpreted in this context, then the lyrical parts where she questions her lover if she thrilled him or what thrilled him to do what he did (which is still vague at this point). She says that she tries to fight her lover by trying to find some color or strength to fight him with, but she runs all out of color as her prism fades, and she becomes entangled in the power of her lover's gaze again (23-27).

Setting, Time and Space

There is no real-life setting of time and space present in the song. The imagery in the song suggests the metaphorical presence of a river. A lover's tainted eyes and heart are compared to a place where the persona would like to rest her head (35-37). There are similar references to time that do not indicate a setting but mention time's fleeting presence. There is a mention of a moment in the second line of the song's first verse. Another passing mention of a minute is referred to vaguely during the bridge of the song.

Tone and Vocals

The tone of the vocals can be identified as neo-soul (also known as progressive soul), which is a style or genre of music for which Noorani is known. Her sound is an amalgamation of an intense, soulful delivery along with a nasally and airy jazz tone, which is a loose definition of how most female neo-soul artists sound, including Ms. Noorani.

In an interview with The News, she stated that she keeps experimenting with different musical styles. However, she said that most of her songs and performances fall under the jazz, neo-soul and R&B genres (Mohsin, par.1). Neo-soul or progressive soul is a musical sub-genre heavily influenced by R&B, 1970s style soul and hip hop (rtmsholsey par. 1, 11). Neo-soul is more musically complex than its contemporary R&B counterpart. It also explored a wider range of themes and subject material than popular Rhythm and Blues music. Neo-soul artists talk about their socio-political identity and associations. Neo-soul vocals and lyrics have an introspective quality that demands internal confrontation with the harsh realities of life. According to Dimitri Ehrlich, a renowned music journalist, plus a musician, producer and songwriter himself, Neo-soul artists explore classical soul idioms while breathing a new, living and breathing presence into them. In other words, the lyrical content of neo-soul songs is more conscious-driven. Ehrlich says neo-soul music humanizes the often reductionist, factory-produced and popular Rhythms and Blues of contemporary times (Ehrlich 72).

Another exciting aspect about this genre is that artists create complete concept albums around the same theme, with unique musicianship, production, use of live instrumentation, and a sense of band like cohesion between the artist and the session players in terms of creativity and composition of the song (Jenkins par.2).

The deeply personal lyrics are a characteristic of this genre, and the neo-soul vocals are characterized as vocals that bridge the gap between hip-hop and mainstream popular music. Neo-soul vocals usually have bluesy tones backed by downtempo and often electronic hip-hop beats. (Britannica)

Literary Devices

<u>i. Persona</u>

As the song's singer is an unmistakably soulful female voice, it is safe to assume the persona is also that of a woman in love. The persona seems to have a very active imagination and is used to talking in romantic metaphors. For example, she compares herself to a river running through her lover's heart and occupying his heart like a territory. The persona is also suspicious, as she questions her lover's true motives hidden behind his eyes twice in the song with the help of symbols that have negative

connotations. For example, she says her love is keeping secrets from her behind his tainted eyes. Further suspicious is created about the lover by the suspicious persona when she questions whether her lover was thrilled to be with her or not.

The persona also seems to have internal strife or struggle that she is constantly going through due to her interpersonal relationship with her lover. Although the lyrics are incredibly vague, it clarifies that the persona questions whether her lover is truthful and perhaps even faithful towards her. There is an idea that adds an extra layer of complexity to the persona's psychological set-up: the persona is still more than willing, despite all the red flags, to stay in the relationship and with her lover. This dichotomy of thought makes the persona complain that she is "complying" but still complies because she is in love. The persona emerges as a suspicious and non-trusting person who lets emotion dictate her behavior rather than logical thinking. The persona in this neo-soul song is immensely humanized and becomes highly relevant, as most human rationale falters in front of the human condition.

ii. Hyperbole and Exaggeration

The song uses hyperbole to exaggerate the imagery of the song. For example, the persona says her thoughts are coming to her in a moment and travelling faster than light. It is not scientifically possible, but the persona has used such phrasing to highlight that her mind is filled with all-consuming thoughts. She further sings that these thoughts are "festering" in her heart, which connotes that the persona's thoughts are negative. The word festering is often found as an adjective alongside negative emotions (e.g. hatred or resentment) and means to grow bitter over time persistently ("Festering").

Apart from these two examples, the singer-songwriter has used many exaggerated symbols and metaphors, which will be discussed in detail under the relevant subheading of the song's analysis.

iii. Symbols and Context

Light is used as a symbol for the persona herself and her source of happiness or sense of self-worth. The persona first uses light in the first two lines of the first verse, implying that her lover is faster than her. In the context of the entire song, one

understands that by faster, she means more clever and manipulative. So she is saying her partner is more clever and manipulative than her. Later in the 20th line of the song, the persona mentions that her halo is falling along with her secret. The halo is a circle of light that surrounds saintly and god loving people. ("Halo") The context then becomes that the persona was previously a very saintly and good person, but then something happened with a cleverer person than her, and now her light, or her sense of self-worth and respect, in this case, has gone. In the twenty-seventh line of the song, the persona says that her prism has faded. This reference to a prism is a rather scientific one. When you pass white light through a prism, it separates into different wavelengths of light, creating different colors. As humans, we can only see seven of those colors that fall under the visible spectrum for humans. These seven colors are violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. If we try to understand this prism as a means for the persona to spread different colors of her light, or in this case herself, these colors would indicate all the different and conflicting emotions she feels towards her lover (Sole et al. 144). Nevertheless, when you analyze light as a symbol in this song, the story becomes clear. The persona's lover is diminishing all sources of the persona's light or sense of self.

The tainted eyes of the persona's lover and thoughts "festering" thoughts in the mind of the persona are both symbols repetitively mentioned in the song. These symbols have been previously analyzed in detail in the "Denotative and Connotative Meanings" section.

iv. Binaries

The binaries established in this song are primarily metaphysical. For example, one clear boundary is between the persona and her beloved. One is faster than the other. One has secrets, one has tainted eyes, while the other has a halo surrounding her. These symbolic binaries have been explored in detail in other sections of the analysis.

Another interesting binary is between the previous self and the current self of the persona. The previous self was innocent, trusting, almost saintly and not strictly rooted in reality. In contrast, the current self of the persona is more aware, wiser, but slower, sadder and mistrusting.

<u>v. Metaphors and Similes</u>

The persona compares herself to a river in the seventh line of the song, which becomes a part of the song's repeated chorus. The metaphysical and abstract nature of this vague metaphor is worth exploring. The persona does not only compare herself to a river but "a river rushing through", which might be a strong indication of its meaning because emotions also come in rushing through when any human being is put in a vulnerable position. This metaphor is extended to say that the persona is not only a river but a river rushing through someplace. Which place is that? It is answered right in the eighth line. The place is her lover's heart. Her lover's heart becomes a metaphor because it is directly compared to a "place" where the "river" can rush through. The lyrical content of this song is highly introspective and psychological. The persona is saying, she is a river, her lover's heart is a place where this river can rush through, and maybe rest, i.e. become a pond and occupy that very place, i.e. her lover's heart.

Light can also be considered an extended metaphor in this song, but it has been previously discussed in detail under the "Symbols and Context" section of this song's literary analysis.

<u>vi. Allusions</u>

There are no allusions present in the song.

vii. Syntax

The syntax of this song is very interesting, abstract and unique. The words have been ascribed to strangeness due to their placement within the lines and unique phrasing. Not only is the language vague, but it also has a certain kind of surrealist, absurdist and imaginative quality. The unique syntactical quality of the song is that the song's meaning does not become predictable or apparent. Unless one has listened, read, and re-read it a few times, the singer-songwriter must take a creative decision to achieve a more cryptic effect in the song.

4.8.3 Overall Effect

A Hint of Stream of Consciousness in Song

Similar to Natasha Humera Ejaz's Today is a Place, this Natasha Noorani song also carries a the song forward through a stream of consciousness narrative technique, keeping the details vague, the song almost elaborates on the process stream of consciousness through the stream of consciousness technique beginning from the very first verse where the persona sings about thoughts coming into her mind and festering in her heart with a speed of light (1-5). See section 4.5.2, subheading vii. under sub-section: Literary Devices for more details on the stream of consciousness narrative technique. Many progressive rock or metal bands like Dream Theater, Radio Head, and Better than Ezra follow this writing technique.

There is much overlapping evidence that reaffirms the qualitative characteristics of the neo-soul musical genre. The lyrical content, for instance, is filled with the introspection of the persona, and the listener is transported to the persona's inner world, which is a trait typical of the genre. The soulful, dreamy, airy and yet intense vocal tone of the singer is also associated with the neo-soul genre and the experimental nature of the musical components present in the song.

The 90 BPM tempo of the song is a moderate tempo that is neither too quick nor too slow. It falls under the Italian marking of Andante, which translate to at a walking pace (See section 1.5.4 for details). It is a popular tempo for introspective songs or songs with social commentary and meaningful messages. This tempo makes the song sound more like a conversation, which the listener's ears are already attuned to hearing. The key of the song usually gives it certain affective qualities, and this one was composed in the Key of D major. According to the famous composer Ernst Paeur's analysis, songs composed in this key convey the following characteristics: "Majesty, grandeur, and pomp, and adapts itself well to triumphal processions, festival marches and pieces in which stateliness is the prevailing feature" (Ishiguro 49).

Songs usually composed in this key are that of triumph and rejoicing in victory after a battle or a war; the more inviting and warm symphonies of holidays and marches etc. It was an intelligent and meaningful choice by the composer. As the song's title

suggests, the song is about occupation, much like what happens after a war is won. As one discovers, later through listening to the rest of the song, one realizes the song is referring to an occupation of the heart, which is equally, if not more deserving of victory rejoicing.

4.9 Zardarazir by Poor Rich Boy

4.9.1 Sound and Musical Components

The song's tempo is ninety-eight beats per minute (98 BPM), and the time signature is four by four (4/4). The song is composed in the Key of C major. The instruments used in this song include acoustic guitar, electric bass, MIDI, vocal harmonies and percussion instruments like very prominent tambourine, shakers and snare. The song does not have a studio feel but a very garage sound, in the sense that it has a very authentic, raw and unplugged sound, though not precisely under produced. Too many chords have not overcomplicated the song played on the guitar. The slide and harmonic instruments and the steely, metallic and industrial sounds are played on the MIDI.

4.9.2 Textual Components

Song Title

The song's title is Zardarazir, a random word with no meaning other than the sociopolitical and cultural meaning associated with it within Pakistan. In Pakistan, people often use this word to refer to the political husband and wife duo, the former President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari and the late former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto. So if the listener is aware of this pop-cultural name for the duo, they can immediately identify that this song will be about them. There can be countless inferences made from the title alone. It can be a political song, a propaganda song, a song about their marriage or any number of things the two of them had in common.

Denotative and Connotative Meanings

In the first two lines of the song, a picture the persona once took is called a two-dimensional affair, the denotative meaning suggests that the picture was a symbol for

reminiscing (1-2). The picture is just there now to remind him of the affair they had. Once the song proceeds, it becomes clear that the two-dimensional mention of the affair is also foreshadowing the fact that the affair no longer exists in the third dimension, i.e. the real world or the human world. Humans experience live in three dimensions, and the mention of a single missing dimension foreshadows the idea that something is missing from the picture, so to say. As the song says, the listener realizes that the mention of a two-dimensional affair connotes the death of the persona's beloved. As this song came out almost a decade after Benazir Bhutto's assassination, the Benazir-Zardari theory also checks out, without any loopholes so far.

Once the song is analyzed from this famous political power couple's perspective, the following two lines make a more sinister meaning than one would initially assume. In lines four, five and six, the persona says that although they were not in the frame of the picture and nowhere to be seen, they are sure they were involved somehow (5-6). These lines connote the widely believed and propagated conspiracy theory that Asif Ali Zardari was involved in Benazir Bhutto's assassination. Despite the national interest, this conspiracy theory has not been disproved so far due to the lack of investigation into the former premier's death. Line ten of the song mentions that a song plays his beloved out of the scene which connotes the death and funeral of the persona's beloved (10).

Setting, Time and Space

There is no set sense of time and space in the song. The only mention of things that connote a space's existence is that a picture was taken with the help of a camera, a few coffee stains and some books, so it is safe to assume that the song is set in the real world. If one follows the timeline of Benazir Bhutto's assassination, one can infer that the song is set soon (a day, a week, or more) after Dec 27, 2007 (Jones, par.2).

Tone and Vocals

The song is sung like an elegy or out of a broken heart. It almost sounds like a sad romantic song, which makes sense.

Literary Devices

i. Persona

The song's persona, as it becomes clear after listening to it once, or paying attention to the title, or for that matter, the song's video, is inspired by former President Asif Ali Zardari. The song has reimagined his relationship with his late wife and former Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto. The persona is in a state of nostalgia and reminiscing about their early days as a couple when she had different hair and was just a girl. The persona is missing his beloved and saying farewell.

ii. Hyperbole and Exaggeration

There is not much use of hyperbole or exaggeration in the song. Quite the opposite is true in the case of this song.

iii. Symbols and Context

As mentioned in lines eight through ten, the background and the song playing symbolize the external world and mourning Benazir's death. However, the song's central idea remains about the internal struggle, strife, and remorse of a man who has lost the love of his life, possibly through his own actions.

The books mentioned in line fifteen and the old coffee stains mentioned in line seventeen of the song are symbols of the beloved's presence in the place where they lived together (15-17). These arbitrary reminders now suddenly hold much value because they symbolize the beloved's presence and memories in the persona's life.

iv. Binaries

There is a binary of man and woman in the song or between the lover and the beloved. The man in the song is described as having agency, someone who is not seen but somehow involved in everything. On the other hand, the woman only exists in the picture and the man's memories. Her physical appearance has been mentioned in the third line as, "You had different hair back then" and the only actions surrounding the woman are that she drinks coffee and reads books (3-17).

v. Metaphors and Similes

There are no metaphors or similes present in this song. However, much symbolic language has been explored in the Symbols and Context section of the analysis.

vii. Allusions

The title alludes to Benazir and Zardari, discussed in detail in the Song Title section of analysis. The song also loosely alludes to the famous PPP anthem for BB ("Jeay Bhutto Benazir") as the song that played her out of scene (8-10).

vii. Syntax

The song employs the use of very clever wordplay. It does not directly accuse anyone of anything or say anything but the connotations one can derive with some context is interesting. The arrangement and phrasing of the words help construct multiple meanings from the song.

4.9.3 Overall Effect

A Song About Lost Love, with a Political Backdrop

Upon hearing the song for the first time, it sounds like a lament for the persona's lost love, who has passed, or moved on, and he is thinking about her fondly. However, it takes a more sinister turn when the song continues to allude to the idea that the persona himself might be responsible for his lover's death. It becomes even more chilling for a Pakistani listener when they realize the song is actually about the political leaders Asif Ali Zardari and the late Benazir Bhutto, popularly known by the abbreviation, BB. The researcher could not find many counterparts in the western world for songs about political power couples except for one song written and performed in the 70s by John Valby titled The Clintons. However, Pakistani singers and song-writers have a long standing tradition of writing songs about politics, in both English and local languages like Urdu, Pashto, and Punjabi. Some examples include the two songs No

Love (1994) and Yes Love (1995) by Doctor Aur Billa, Chief Saab (1994) by Sajjad Ali , and Mr. Fraudiay (1995) by Awaz (Paracha, pars.12-45).

The overall meaning uncovered through the data collected above was confirmed through several cases of overlapping evidence, which helps confirm the overall meaning or effect of the song. For example, the title of the song and the indirect references in the lyrical content of the song confirm that it is about Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari and their complicated romantic relationship.

The song's 98 beats per minute tempo fall under the most popular tempo marking Tempo Andante, suitable for songs involving internal monologues or a more conversational tone and nature. The composition of the song is in C major, which gives it specific effective properties. According to Pauer, songs composed in C major have a "pure, certain and decisive manner" (Ishiguro 48). The Songs composed in this key are usually about innocent romances and naïveté. Some of the greatest songs - relating to finding a silver lining in times of trouble, loss and bereavement - are also composed in this key. For instance, some of the most iconic Beatles' songs, composed in this key, have messages surrounding hope, e.g. their song titled "Let it be" gives a message of letting go of one's worries and troubles. Another Beatles song, composed in this key, is "Imagine: which talks about escaping from the upsetting circumstances of reality and imagining a world that is kinder, nicer and more humane. Similarly, the persona is trying to escape the bitter reality of his beloved's death (along with his possible involvement in the event) by escaping into a more specific and happier time in the past, when they were still in love with each other.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As this was an explorative study, and a newly defined research method that examines meaning construction in both the lyrical and musical components of song, the research questions were tackled in different chapters of the research. The first two questions relating to the components of meaning construction in a song and how they inform the overall meaning of the song, were answered in the third chapter of this study, where various components of meaning construction in songs were identified and classified under the appropriate categories between the three broader categories of Musical Components, Textual Components and Overall Effect. While the textual components of the song helped the reader uncover the literary meaning behind each song, the musical components of meaning construction identified through this research are of greater significance. It is so because such interdisciplinary research for interpretive analysis of songs has not been done before. This research helps discover how different components of musical composition translate into a piece of specific music depending on the way an instrument is played; an effect is used, the tonality and arrangement are composed, etc. The third question regarding the blurring of boundaries between literature and music is understood as a result of answering the above two questions and while analyzing the songs by using the proposed methodology. The first question regarding how the boundaries get blurred between the music and literature in the selected songs, is answered through the overlapping evidence collected from both musical and textual components of the selected songs. Where these different components interact with each other to convey an overall message, this is where the boundaries get blurred.

Songs result from the union of music and text, and they convey meaning in unison, intermingling and interacting with each other. They create a deeper meaning than the sum of its parts. Literature and music can interact and communicate and form a mixed language of their own to convey meaning. It is where the boundaries get blurred, and this is worth exploring more. For example, if a song is composed in a

primary key and is only instrumental, it will likely convey light and happy emotion. However, if the song's lyrical content conveys a dark and sad emotion, the primary key used in the song then starts carrying a different meaning than when it existed on its own. The song most likely becomes a sarcastic or ironic song composed on a happy key but talks about unfortunate situations. Together they might convey the duality of the world or carrying contrasting emotions for a lover; or other complicated messages depending on the key, the lyrics, and the interpretation of all the other components present in the song. An in-depth and interdisciplinary study of the various components of the songs, including the musical, vocal and textual elements, has enabled the researcher to understand the multilayered communication through song and analyzing the meaning to its very last detail. This research has helped add to the interpretation of the selected songs and understand the "literariness" of his multilayered and complex compositions.

This research can be continued through further study. By using the same methodology to study other songs by the same musician and other musicians writing in English in Pakistan. No work has been previously done in this regard. This research can expand into a much bigger project that can serve as a record, anthology, and even an encyclopedia for all the Pakistani music written in English. The methodology is not exclusive to Pakistani artists but can be used globally.

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APPENDIX

Transcribed song lyrics to all eight selected songs for the study.

1. Money by Aamir Zaki

Money's fine

Money's cool

Money breaks, the hardest rule

Rockefeller and Princess Anne

If you can't do it, your money can

Money talks

It even sings

Money beats most anything

It can be mean

 I tell you man
If you can't do it, your money can

It makes you beg

It makes you steal

Sell your soul

And make a deal

Cause you know it well

And you understand

If you can't do it, your money can
Ma – ma – money x4

(Lines 1-19)

2. Mellisa by Aamir Zaki

I've seen your face so many times now

And you don't even know my name

But when they told me you were leaving home

I felt a strange kind of pain

I know some people around you

Their love and care may have bound you

But how can any soul ever know

Your hopes and dreams are a river in flow

You're free to be, Mellisa

Free as can be, Mellisa

Sometimes words can't communicate

Sometimes silence is all we need

Sometimes love is a golden cage

Sometimes all of us need to break

Free, just like you, oh Mellisa (enjambment, run on line)

And my prayers are with you, Mellisa

You're free, so free, Mellisa

And may you always be, Mellisa

I know there's always an easy way out

I know there's always the poison of doubt

But Melissa I know you're strong

I know you just can't go wrong

I've seen your face so many times now

And you don't even know my name

(Lines 1-24)

3. The God Song by Natasha Humera Ejaz

There's a crazy man
Running up my land
And he wants me to wait
To wait, For him

God knows what he's got
Hidden up his sleeve

All I know is that tonight

Tonight, I trust him

'Cuz my God, he works

In mysterious ways

There's a crazy thought

Running through my head

What if I was to wait

To wait, For you?

God knows what you've got

Hidden up your sleeve

All I know is that tonight

Tonight, I trust you

'Cuz my God, you work

In mysterious ways

(Lines 1-20)

4. Today is a Place by Natasha Humera Ejaz

I walk these empty streets

Fill them up with pretty neat

Ideas that spring my mind

From the corner of my eyes

I try to find truth and reality

And the great divide

That keeps them both from me

And I am inquisitive as to why

Soon I see dancers by my side

Picking me up for a ride

To that exquisite little place

Somewhere at the back of my mind

My feet can't help but spin

To that strangers grin

Now all these corners

They're so bright

Show me the mirror again

Show me the mirror again

Show me that pretty face again
Show me the mirror again

(Lines 1-20)

5. King of Self by Sajid and Zeeshan

Fast car on a highway
The music that you hear in your ears makes you wonder

All the things that you wanna leave behind

All the things that you're rushin to

You're not a rock star

But you can see yourself up there

Under the bright light you feel you're the reason

Throw away that bag of gold

Listen to what your music holds

It's a melody only you can feel

You're about to be the king of self
O self

You've got a fast car

But you're not a Rockstar

It's easier just to be the way you are

Don't find a reason for what you want so bad

'Cause what you want is what you want

Now you're on the spot

Throw away that bag of gold

Listen to what your music holds

It's a melody only you can feel

You're about to be the king of self

O self

Just a fast car

Wish I was a rock star

Rock star

Be a fast car

Be a rockstar

Be a fast car (X2)

Be a rockstar

Throw away that bag of gold

Listen to what your music holds

It's a melody only you can feel

You're about to be the king of...

Throw away that bag of gold

Listen to what your music holds

It's a melody only you can feel

You're about to be the king of self

(Only 2nd time) O Self

Throw away that bag of gold (X5)

(Lines 1-20)

6. Walk on Air by Sajid and Zeeshan

Sleep, you have never ever been so sweet,

Welcoming me up from all my lows,

And I, I've been thinking forever to let go,

But somehow, everything took me away, from you

And having light conversations,

Can do so good, but I did know

When everything came down on me,

And I was left with no more screams,

I gently lifted the floor

And, started to walk on air

Time, you remind me of solutions I never had,

Always leaving me to breathe for more,

But space, was never shorter than its place,

And still I roam around and round and all around

And sipping coffee without frowning,

Can do so good, but I did know

When running didn't do the trick,

And all my life was in such a fix,

But silently I stood tall,

And said to myself,

I know, when everything comes down on me,

And I am left with no more screams,

I'll gently lift up the floor and

Start to walk on air

And sipping coffee without frowning,

Can do so good, but I did know

When running didn't do the trick,

And all my life was in such a fix,

But silently I stood tall,

And said to myself,

I know, when everything comes down on me,

And I am left with no more screams,

I'll gently lift up the floor and

Start to walk on air

(Lines 1-34)

7. Occupy by Natasha Noorani

Faster

Faster in a moment than light

Fester

Festering in my heart

I acknowledge

There's a thought that maybe I could be a

River rushing through

Your heart is a place

Is a place that I could rest my head?

Your heart is a place

I would like to occupy

What I fear is nothing really left you don't despise

What is everything you hide beneath your tainted eyes?

I'm wondering

Wondering

What thrilled you?

Thrilled you?

I'm wondering

Did I thrill you?

Secrets falling down

With the halo on my crown

I'm complying

It's been a minute

Finding a trace of color to fight with

The pigments of your eyes

The burdens they imply condemn

My prism to fade

Faster

Faster in a moment than light

Fester

Festering in my heart

I acknowledge

There's a thought that maybe I could be a

River rushing through

Your heart is a place

Is a place

That I could rest my head

Your heart

Is a place

I would like to occupy

(Lines 1-40)

8. Zardarazir by Poor Rich Boy

I took a picture once last year

A two dimensional affair that we had

You had different hair back then

I wasn't there in the frame

I was nowhere to be seen

But I'm sure I was involved.

I guess it's ok after all.

And in the background there it is

Playing softly as it were

The song that played you out of scene

And that is just as it should be

And it has been

It has been lovely knowing you

The desk is as it was back then

The books have not been rearranged

I couldn't bring myself to wipe

Any old coffee stains you left

But I don't ever go in there

Or maybe that's just where I live

And in the background there it is

Playing softly as it were

The song that played you out of scene

And that is just as it should be

And it has been

It has been lovely knowing you.

(Lines 1-25)