



## Metaphorical Analysis and the Meaning of Song “Another One Bite the Dust” By Queen

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### Abstract

A metaphor is a figure of speech that contrasts two unrelated items and helps communicate complex ideas or emotions by drawing on familiar or concrete concepts. Metaphor is often utilized in poetry, novels, films, songs, etc. This study provides a metaphorical analysis of the lyrics of "Another One Bites the Dust," a hit song by the British rock band, the Queen, published in 1980. Using a semantic approach, the study investigates the numerous layers of meaning provided by the song's lyrics, which have been interpreted variously by fans and critics throughout the years. The paper offers a detailed analysis of the song's metaphors and the function of the metaphors, including analyzing the metaphor "another one bites the dust" as a euphemism for death in one Santa Fe High School shooting in 2018, one of the deadliest mass shootings in the United States. The study concludes by reflecting on the song's lasting popularity and cultural relevance and the difficulties and opportunities associated with understanding metaphorical meaning in popular music. Based on the analysis, the writers discovered 15 metaphor data and 4 metaphor functions in the lyrics of "Another One Bites the Dust."

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## INTRODUCTION

A metaphor is a figure of speech contrasting two unrelated items with some qualities. It compares something to something else to generate a more vivid and fascinating image in the imagination of readers or listeners. In contrast to a simile, which employs the words "like" or "as" to create a comparison, a metaphor compares two things explicitly. For instance, "Life is a journey" is a metaphor since it compares life to a voyage although the two are different. Metaphors are frequently employed in literature, poetry, and ordinary language to assist readers in better understanding complicated ideas and emotions. Metaphors use physical objects or activities to describe abstract things, such as emotions or ideas. For instance, the statement of "he has a heart of stone" refers to someone who is emotionally frigid and unfeeling. While this metaphor is excellent for communicating the sense of emotional separation, its literal meaning can be confusing. If taken literally, the statement may imply that the person's heart is formed of stone, which is not the case. This illustrates the

challenge that metaphors provide to semantics. Metaphors are understood through shared cultural and linguistic knowledge, and their meaning can change depending on context and audience.

The analysis of metaphor as it emerges in these bigger pieces lends itself particularly well to semantic field theory treatment. According to semantic field theory, a word's meaning is determined by its use in context with other words. A semantic field is formed by these connected terms. According to *Conceptual Metaphor* by Lakoff and Johnsen (2003), metaphors are not just pertinent to someone's intellect or language that is figurative, but rather a collection of concepts that a person has got based on the experience he has experienced from everyday life. Semantic fields are collections of lexemes with shared conceptual domain and semantic relations.

Semantics and metaphor are linked because metaphor is using words or phrases to extend or diverge from their literal meaning, depending on semantic linkages between words to create new meanings or associations. Metaphor relies on the semantic relationships between words to produce connections and associations that are not always obvious or expected. The metaphor "her words were honey," for example, uses the term "honey" metaphorically to express that the woman's comments were sweet and delightful. The semantic relationship between the terms "words" and "honey" (both of which can be sweet and agreeable) is used to generate a new, figurative meaning in this metaphor.

Metaphor, according to Jacobson (in Soeparmo, 2013:18-19), has six metaphorical language has six functions: First, the emotive function expresses a good feeling, sadness, happiness, touched, worried and others. Second, the connotative function, which functions to influences the thoughts and behaviour of the reader. Third, the referential function is to talk about objects or events around them so that they become the main topic of conversation. Fourth, the poetic function is to convey a specific message or message. Fifth, the function of fatigue is to establish social solidarity. Sixth, the metalingual function explains language rules or regulations using language codes.

Throughout history, metaphor has played an essential part in creating the lyrical content of music. Music is a kind of communication through which ideas, thoughts, and emotions can be expressed. It is a universal language that everyone understands. Music allows people to express themselves and their thoughts through songs. The song lyrics express the songwriter's ideas, feelings, and thoughts so that everyone who hears the music can comprehend the songwriter's feelings or objectives. The lyrics of a song may contain figurative language such as metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and so on. Metaphors can give lyrics additional depth and significance, making them more impactful and memorable to listeners. The writers examine the metaphor part of Queen's song lyrics "Another One Bite the Dust" in this study.

As the song title suggests, "Another One Bite the Dust" is by the British rock band Queen. This track appears on the band's 1980 album *The Game*, written by bassist John Deacon. It topped the *Billboard Hot 100* for three weeks straight, beginning on October 4 and ending on October 18 (their second and last number-one single in the United States). The song was on the *Billboard Hot 100* for 31 weeks in 1980, the most of any single that year, and spent a total of 15 of those weeks at the top

spot. The song did well and has recently been more well-known among the younger generation because of its inclusion in the 2018 film "Bohemian Rhapsody." This documentary chronicles Queen from early days to their famous Live Aid performance in 1985. Queen's "Another One Bite The Dust" was featured in the movie.

However, this song got contentious as it was linked to a terrible episode, the Santa Fe High School shooting in 2018. It was one of the bloodiest high school shootings in American history. Ten individuals were killed, eight were students, two were professors, and thirteen others were injured. Dimitrios Pagourtzis, a 17-year-old student at the school was the shooter. After the incident, he was arrested. One injured victim informed reporters that the shooter entered the classroom and pointed his gun at another person while singing "Another One Bites the Dust" between shots. Pagourtzis said, "Another one bites the dust" after each shot. Because of this incident, this song was rediscovered decades after its first release.

Both positive and negative interpretations and numerous Metaphors occur in this song. In this regard, the researchers examined the lyrics using metaphor theory. This study investigates the metaphor lyrics in this song, as well as the song's meaning and relation with the case study Santa Fe High School Shooting 2018.

Rahmawati et al. (2022) conducted a study titled "Metafora Pada Pemberitaan Covid-19 Oleh Media Online CNN Indonesia Tinjauan Stilistika" [The metaphor on Covid-19 related news on Indonesia-based CNN online media. Stylistics Perspective] used Jacobson theory to study metaphor function and Nurgiyantoro theory to evaluate metaphor with stylistic features. A study conducted by Rahmadhanti et al. (2022) entitled Metaphor Analysis And Meaning Of The Song "Different World" assessed the song's meaning by breaking down each stanza of the lyrics and studying the sort of metaphor in the song. This study differs from prior studies as it examined the meaning of the song by each stanza of the song lyrics, and the metaphor identified in the song was analyzed using Jacobson's function of metaphor theory in Soeparmo (2013), with additional analysis case study metaphor. Examine the metaphor "another one bites the dust" in the song lyrics used in the case study of the 2018 Santa Fe High School mass shooting.

## **METHOD**

This research used the descriptive qualitative method. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), qualitative research investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials. The descriptive qualitative research methods are used to observe and understand the culture and behaviour of the local community. According to Moleong (2005:4), a qualitative descriptive approach is a research approach where the data collected is words, pictures, and not numbers. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social human problem. The research objects are metaphors from the

song lyrics. The subject of this study uses a metaphor from the song "Another One Bite The Dust" for analysis.

The data was collected through method technique documentation to element the metaphor in the song "Another One Bite The Dust." The following steps were carried out in this research. The first step, listen to the song. Second, reading and understanding the lyrics song. Third, finding the metaphor data. Fourth, analyzing and interpreting the data using the metaphorical technique. Fifth, analyzing the function of the metaphors. Sixth, analyzing the metaphor "another one bites the dust" used by the shooter in the shooting mass at Santa Fe High School in 2018. Finally, draw a conclusion based on the data obtained.

**RESULT**

During the analysis stage, the lyrics of Queen's song "Another One Bites the Dust" were employed to analyze the research findings. The finding divides into three: the song's meaning, the metaphor function in the song, and the relation of the metaphor "another one bite the dust" in the song's lyrics with the santa Fe High School Shooting in 2018.

Table 1. Metaphor in "Another One Bite The Dust" song lyrics

Metaphor Data	Metaphor Function	Metaphor Data	Metaphor Function
Steve walks warily down the street	<i>Referential</i>	And another one gone	<i>Poetic</i>
With the brim pulled way down low	<i>Connotative</i>	Hey, I'm gonna get you too	<i>Poetic</i>
Ain't no sound but the sound of his feet	<i>Referential</i>	You took me for everything that I had	<i>Emotive</i>
Machine guns ready to go	<i>Poetic</i>	And kicked me out on my own	<i>Emotive</i>
Are you hanging on the edge of your seat?	<i>Connotative</i>	How long can you stand the heat?	<i>Connotative</i>
Out of the doorway, the bullets rip	<i>Referential</i>	There are plenty of ways you can hurt a man	<i>Poetic</i>
To the sound of the beat, yeah	<i>Connotative</i>	And bring him to the ground	<i>Poetic</i>
Another one bites the dust	<i>Poetic</i>		

## DISCUSSION

### A. The meaning of the song

Before analyzing the metaphor, this study explained the meaning of the song. Here is the overall meaning of the song “Another One Bites the Dust”. The writers break down the song based on the stanzas and analyze the meaning.

First Stanza- Another One Bite the Dust Lyrics:

*Oh! Let's go!*  
*Steve walks warily down the street*  
*With the brim pulled way down low*  
*Ain't no sound but the sound of his feet*  
*Machine guns ready to go*  
*Are you ready? Hey, are you ready for this?*  
*Are you hanging on the edge of your seat?*  
*Out of the doorway the bullets rip*  
*To the sound of the beat, yeah*

This song tells the story from the perspective of a man named Steve. The song's opening lines, "Oh, let's go! Steve walks warily down the street, with the brim pulled way down low," immediately create a sense of tension and unease. Steve is portrayed as a man in a wide-brimmed hat in good spirits to do things. He said, "Let's go" to himself so that He didn't stop before carrying out his action. Steve went to walk to the highway with full vigilance. In the line “Ain't no sound but the sound of his feet. Machine guns ready to go”, Steve was so alert that he could hear the sound of steps ain't no sound but the sound of his feet. Given the words “machine gun,” the song mentions Steve was about to do his action using machine guns. “Are you hanging on the edge of your seat?” this line means Steve half-mocking while also seeming to challenge the people in front of him about whether they were ready to be shot by him and asking if they felt tense and frightened when they saw Steve shooting at them. Steve began his action, opening fire on people on the streets indiscriminately Blind with a machine gun. Next, “To the sound of the beat” refers to the bullets ripping off and the shot sounds to match the bass riff. Although his actions seemed sadistic, Steve enjoyed his actions very much.

Second stanza - Another One Bite the Dust Lyrics:

*Another one bites the dust*  
*Another one bites the dust*  
*And another one gone, and another one gone*  
*Another one bites the dust, yeah*  
*Hey, I'm gonna get you too*

*Another one bites the dust*

The chorus includes the second stanza, the fourth stanza, and the fifth stanza. The chorus contains meaningful words. In the chorus, “another one bites the dust” is repeated six times. the phrase "bite the dust" refers to someone who died on the spot or had just suffered a crushing defeat. The term “another one bites the dust” is a British euphemism that means ‘death.’ The term "bites the dust" is known to have existed since the 19th century, but its use is only beginning to become Popular since the 1930s. The phrase "biting the dust" means "death". When a person died, they were laid to rest in the ground, and in the untamed west, that often meant the desert. As the song progresses, the "biting the dust" metaphor becomes more prominent. The lyrics also use the metaphor, "And another one gone, and another one gone, another one bites the dust," creating a sense of inevitability and repetition, referring to Steve’s action, who shot down people. The line “Hey, I'm gonna get you too.” refers to Steve aiming his gun at the person.

Third stanza - Another One Bite the Dust Lyrics:

*How do you think I'm going to get along*

*Without you, when you're gone*

*You took me for everything that I had*

*And kicked me out on my own*

*Are you happy, are you satisfied?*

*How long can you stand the heat?*

*Out of the doorway the bullets rip*

*To the sound of the beat*

*Look out*

The third stanza contradicts the first stanza a little bit. The lyrics here are written from Steve's point of view. We hear his inner monologue as he strolls along solemn street. In simple terms, he has lost everything. He has lost the one he loved, all the things he valued, and his possessions. Steve is kicked out of his own house for some unknown reason. We can see this in the line “You took me for everything that I had. And kicked me out on my own. Are you happy are you satisfied?” But it should also be noted that people who have aggressive personalities and heartbroken tends to exaggerate the suffering he is experiencing. It could be a sentence that illustrates that all of Steve's possessions were taken over by his original lover depicting real possessions but only sweet memories of the moment Steve and his girlfriend were still together. And he sarcastically asks this person if they have found contentment in doing so. Steve's only remaining concern is whether or not she is content with her decisions. She likely transformed him into a murderer, and now his footsteps are heading in her direction. In the line “How long can you stand the heat?” Steve seemed to want to show his ex-lover that these people died because of her and intend to make his ex feel even more miserable & guilty.

The line “Out of the doorway the bullets rip” shows that Steve then vents His frustration with the bullets ripping.

Fourth stanza - Another One Bite the Dust Lyrics:

*Another one bites the dust*  
*Another one bites the dust*  
*And another one gone, and another one gone*  
*Another one bites the dust*  
*Hey, I'm gonna get you, too*  
*Another one bites the dust*

The fourth stanza is the chorus and has a similar meaning to the second stanza. The lyrics “Another one bites the dust” are repeated four times in this stanza. This stanza is related to the third stanza and continues the last line of the third stanza, “Lookout” which sounds like a signal that something might happen soon. The lyrics continued with the line, “Another one bites the dust,” which suggests something happened after the line, Steve killed more people.

Fifth stanza - Another One Bite the Dust Lyrics:

*Hey*  
*Oh, take it*  
*Bite the dust, hey*  
*Another one bites the dust*  
*Another one bites the dust, ow*  
*Another one bites the dust, hey hey*  
*Another one bites the dust, hey-eh-eh*  
*Ooh*

The fifth stanza is the bridge; it connects the song's chorus and verse. This stanza also has similar meaning with the second and fourth stanza. The line “Another one bites the dust” are repeated four times in this bridge.

Sixth stanza - Another One Bite the Dust Lyrics:

*There are plenty of ways you can hurt a man*  
*And bring him to the ground*  
*You can beat him, you can cheat him, you can treat him bad*  
*And leave him when he's down, yeah*  
*But I'm ready, yes I'm ready for you*  
*I'm standing on my own two feet*  
*Out of the doorway the bullets rip*  
*Repeating the sound of the beat*

*Oh yeah*

In the sixth stanza, we get a more in-depth view of life in general. The first two lines, “There are plenty of ways that you can hurt a man. And bring him to the ground,” suggest that the world is tough, and people can be brought down in many ways. The following lines mention specific ways, such as beating or cheating someone, treating them poorly, and leaving them when they are down. As seen in, “You can beat him. You can cheat him. You can treat him bad and leave him. When he's down”. You cannot expect a man to turn back once he is pushed beyond his turning point. These stanzas describe how a person can hurt someone emotionally and physically, but the narrator claims to be ready to face these challenges. Despite these challenges, the narrator claims to be ready for whatever comes their way. The line "I'm standing on my own two feet" suggests he will soon rise and become strong and independent, The next line, "Out of the doorway the bullets rip," suggests that Steve is trying to vent his heartbreak by shooting blindly while outside the building. If connected with the explanation in the previous stanzas, it is strongly suspected that Steve did the shooting in the presence of his ex, and the victims of the shooting were people who were already known to his ex. Everything is to make Steve's ex feel deterred and regretful - regardless of the lives of those subjected to venting his emotions. The final line, "Repeating to the sound of the beat," refers to the bullets ripping off, and the shot sounds to match the bass riff.

Seventh stanza - Another One Bite the Dust Lyrics:

*Another one bites the dust*

*Another one bites the dust*

*And another one gone, and another one gone*

*Another one bites the dust, yeah*

*Hey, I'm gonna get you, too*

*Another one bites the dust*

*Shoot out*

*Alright*

Lastly, the seventh stanza is the last chorus before the outro. The lyrics “Another one bites the dust” are repeated in this stanza four times. This stanza has the same meaning as the chorus stanzas. In the end, the line "shoot out" and "alright," as if Steve told himself to continue shooting without caring about the consequences.

## **B. The Metaphor Function in the Song's lyric**

This song contains some metaphor and function. Using the metaphor function of Jacobson (Soeparmo, 2013:18-19). The theory states that metaphorical has six purposes: emotive, connotative, referential, poetic, fatigue, and metalingual. However, the writers only discovered four of them in this



study, which are: referential, connotative, poetic, and emotive functions, as shown in the table in the result section.

1) *Steve walks warily down the street*

The metaphor down the street means along the road, refers to the path of the road. When moving south, the word 'down' is used. Steve is portrayed carefully walking down the street in this line. This metaphor function is referential. The referential function is used when people talk about objects or occurrences in their environment such that they become the major focus of the conversation.

2) *With the brim pulled way down low*

In this line, the metaphor "way down low" describes the brim, or Steve's hat is too low to hide his face. This metaphor is categorized as a connotative function. The connotative function of a message relates to its influence on the recipient. The lyrics describe Steve wearing his hat low to disguise his face since he is ready to commit a crime. Criminals frequently disguise their identities, including their faces.

3) *Ain't no sound but the sound of his feet*

The metaphor "the sound of his feet" refers to the sound of footsteps. This line describes the environment in which there is no sound other than Steve's footsteps. Because it describes the environment, this metaphor function is the referential function.

4) *Machine guns ready to go*

The metaphor 'Machine guns ready to go' suggests that Steve's gun is ready to fire at any time. This metaphor function is poetic because it delivers a clear message that the gun is ready for use and that he can kill anyone with it.

5) *Are you hanging on the edge of your seat?*

The idiom "hanging on the edge of your seat" refers to making people feel extremely thrilled, anxious, or filled with anticipation as they wait to discover what occurs next. In this line, Steve is half-mocking the victims while simultaneously daring the people in front of him to tell him whether they were ready to be shot and if they felt uncomfortable and scared when they saw Steve shooting at them. This metaphor function is connotative. The connotative function of a message relates to its influence on the recipient. With his query, this statement makes the victim nervous.

6) *Out of the doorway, the bullets rip*

The term rip indicates to quickly or violently tear, split, or open something; to go or move very fast through or into something. The metaphor "the bullet rip" refers to the bullet moving swiftly through or into anything. The bullet ripped through the doorway in this line. This metaphor function is the referential function because it describes the setting around.

7) *To the sound of the beat, yeah*

The metaphor 'to the sound of the beat' suggests that the sound of the gun is the beat. This lyric relates to bullets breaking off, and the gunfire sounds are designed to complement the bass riff. This metaphor function is connotative. The connotative function of a message relates to its influence on the recipient.

8) *Another one bites the dust*

The metaphor "Another one bites the dust" is the key metaphor and the song's main theme, since this line is repeated the most in this song. This metaphor implies to a person who died on the scene or was recently defeated. The phrase "another one bites the dust" is a British euphemism for "death." This lyric in the song alludes to every individual Steve killed. The metaphor function is poetic because it provides a clear message: Steve just murdered someone.

9) *And another one gone*

The metaphor "another one gone" refers to a dead person. This statement is similar to "another one bites the dust." This line emphasizes the previous line, which states that another person has been killed and is no longer alive. The metaphor function is poetic since it delivers the impression that a person is just dead.

10) *Hey, I'm gonna get you too*

This metaphor "I'm gonna get you" implies that Steve has pointed his gun at the intended victim and will shortly kill them. This statement is related to the previous lines in that Steve just killed someone, and others will be killed shortly. The metaphor function is poetic since it clearly conveys that a person will be executed.

11) *You took me for everything that I had*

In this metaphor, Steve's ex-girlfriend took everything away from him. 'Everything' in this statement could relate to Steve's property or Steve's affection. The emotive function is represented by this line, which represents Steve's despair and frustration.

12) *And kicked me out on my own*

The metaphor "kicked me out on my own" is related to the previous statement and further emphasizes that after taking everything from Steve, his ex-girlfriend also kicked him out of his residence. Steve's property is referred to by the phrase "on my own." Because this statement shows Steve's sadness and frustration at being abandoned by his ex-girlfriend, the metaphor function is the emotive function.

13) *How long can you stand the heat?*

This metaphor refers to a question Steve asked his ex-girlfriend about how long she could put up with Steve's behavior, which included shooting people to death due to his unhappiness and frustration. Steve's action of shooting people is represented by the heat. This

metaphor function is connotative. The connotative function of a message relates to its impact on the recipient. This line makes his ex-girlfriend feel bad and guilty.

*14) There are plenty of ways you can hurt a man*

The idiom "plenty of ways" refers to various possibilities. This statement implies that there are numerous ways to hurt someone. The metaphor function is poetic because it delivers a specific message that there are numerous ways to hurt someone. It implies to Steve's ex-girlfriend that she has harmed Steve in numerous ways.

*15) And bring him to the ground*

The metaphor "bring him to the ground" is related to the previous line. "There are numerous ways to hurt a man." The metaphor "bring him to the ground" refers to inflicting pain on someone until they reach rock bottom. The metaphor function is poetic because it delivers the concept that you can harm someone till they reach their lowest point. It implies to Steve's ex-girlfriend that she has been hurting Steve till he reaches rock bottom.

### **C. Metaphorical relationship between the song's lyrics and the Santa Fe High School Shooting**

Overall, this song represents the act, the feeling, the process, and the story behind the shooting done by Steve. After discovering the song's meaning and metaphor, the writers can now connect the song's metaphor to the shooter's metaphor in the 2018 Santa Fe High School shooting.

A school shooting happened at Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas, on May 18, 2018. Authorities reported 10 people: eight students and two teachers, and 10 wounded at least. Dimitrios Pagourtzis, a 17-year-old Santa Fe High School student, was charged with murder. Galveston County Sheriff Henry Trochesset provided new details about the events that unfolded after the shooting began and before officers could apprehend the perpetrator. One victim said the shooter at Santa Fe High School in Texas shouted, "Another one bites the dust" several times during the shooting. Student Trenton Beazely described the suspect on "Good Morning America" as "playing music, making jokes, having slogans and rhymes he kept saying." "Every time he killed someone, he'd say, 'another one bites the dust.'"

This case prompted the authors to consider why the shooter may have referred to the line "another one bites the dust" from Queen's Another One Bites the Dust, one of their most well-known songs. The plots of this song and the shooter narrative are remarkably similar. The metaphor "Another one bites the dust" refers to someone who died on the spot or had just experienced a terrible defeat. In the song, Steve also stated, "Another one bite the dust" after killing someone in the song's lyrics, and so did Dimitrios also yelled, "Another one bite the dust" after killing someone, according to one of the survivors, Trenton Beazel. So, Dimitrios, the shooter, used the metaphor "another one bites the dust" to refer to the fact that he had just killed someone.

On May 18, 2023, it becomes five years since the Santa Fe High School shooting. Families affected by the 2018 Santa Fe High School mass shooting can now receive evidence owing to a new

law. The relatives of the victims of the Santa Fe mass shooting are moving closer to closure five years later. If a murder case has not yet gone to trial, the new law allows prosecutors to meet with victims' families to discuss the evidence. Evidence is usually concealed from public view before a trial.

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite having a catchy tune and being extremely popular, this song is not the easiest to grasp when it comes to the lyrics. The main message Queen appears to be trying to convey is a firm refusal to submit to their attackers. The lyrics have never been thoroughly examined, but they appear to be about death; the phrase "another one bites the dust" is a British euphemism. The song could be about a metaphorical death or a story. One can only guess that the song is about a metaphorical death, such as severing a relationship or contact from his life, or it is just narrating a story since the narrative sets the setting. According to the findings, there are 15 metaphors found in the lyrics of this song, and 4 out of 6 metaphor functions are discovered in this song based on Jacobson's theory. The connection between the metaphor "another one bite the dust" and the metaphor used in the Santa Fe High School shooting is that Steve said "another one bite the dust" after killing someone in the song's lyrics, and Dimitrios said "another one bite the dust" after killing someone, as stated by one of the survivors, Trenton Beazel.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS (Optional)**

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