



Regret Meaning in Music Lyrics “Ma”

by Rich Brian the Study of Semiotic

Ardhita Sheva Ramadhana¹, Ujang Suyatman² Erlan Aditya Ardiansyah³

^{1,2,3}English Literature, Sunan Gunung Djati Islamic State University, West Java

Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-05-06 Revised: 2026-10-14 Accepted: 2026-10-15 Keywords: <i>meaning of regret,</i> <i>music,</i> <i>lyric, song,</i> <i>rich brian</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.10447 Corresponding Author: shevcnco@gmail.com English Literature, Sunan Gunung Djati Islamic State University, West Java	<i>Music serves as a medium for conveying complex meanings, including expressions of regret. Although Rich Brian’s lyrics have been extensively studied in various contexts relating to Asian and American cultural identities, no research has specifically analysed the semiotic construction of regret in his song ‘Ma’, which is his most personal work to date. This study aims to fill this gap by employing Roland Barthes’s semiotic theory, which breaks down the sign into three levels: denotation, connotation and myth. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach, the data comprising the song’s lyrics is analysed in depth to uncover hidden layers of meaning. The findings of the research indicate that: On a denotative level, the lyrics depict a child who regrets being far from their family; on a connotative level, the choice of words evokes a sense of guilt that is expressed unspoken; while on a mythical level, this song challenges the cultural narrative that love for one’s family must be sacrificed for the sake of work. These findings confirm that the remorse expressed in the song “Ma” is not merely an expression of personal emotion, but rather a way for an individual to vent their feelings not through words, but through silence and actions as a sign of regret.</i>

1. Introduction

Music is a logical expression of feelings. Many song lyrics are intentionally crafted to convey social messages to the public. In music, songwriters incorporate various themes, such as romance, friendship, emotions, and regret. There is also another perspective (Bernstein & Picker, 1972), which describes music as sound that possesses artistic value and serves as a medium for conveying the creator’s ideas and emotions to the listener. From this definition, it can be concluded that music is sound that can be organized into lyrics arranged in such a way that the music creates sounds pleasing to the human ear sounds used to express human emotions.

Feelings of regret are an inevitable part of human life, regret arises from expectations that do not align with one’s will. Regret must be eliminated from the human mind. Otherwise, it will trigger certain emotions in people that lead to action. These emotions themselves drive people to act out. People act out because of the regret they feel.

This study will examine the theme of human regret in song lyrics. According to the researchers (Fathurohamn & et. al., 2022), lyrics are a fundamental component of a musical work, as they are an integral and indispensable part of it. Lyrics are universal, meaning that in all genres of music, they can be used to convey emotions that listeners can enjoy. According to another researchers (Aisyah & et. al., 2021), song lyrics are music that conveys the singer's emotions through words. Lyricists often incorporate their own experiences or what they have gone through into their lyrics. The meaning is expressed either explicitly or implicitly in the lyrics of a song.

These expressions of meaning are conveyed explicitly or implicitly in song lyrics. The concepts found in the human mind are called meanings. Meaning is an abstract concept derived from human experience, but it is not a personal human experience. Meaning is not shaped by personal experience because the abstract concepts derived from personal human experience differ from one person to another. According to another researchers (Susiati, 1994), if meaning stems from abstract concepts derived from personal experience, the meaning each person assigns to a given linguistic form will inevitably differ. The researcher draws on the theory of regret presented in Brian Prince's book A

Theory of Regret, which addresses the issue of acknowledgment arising from conflicting desires that cannot be communicated and now remain in a state of vague longing. It manifests only as emptiness, depth, and silence. According to an expert (Prince, 2017), regret in song lyrics is often conveyed through unconventional language, because music is fundamentally not bound by rigid rules of literal communication. The meaning in song lyrics is abstract or not easily understood. The nature of song lyrics, which differs from ordinary messages, requires a special approach to interpret the messages they contain. One of the most important aspects of music is the song, and within the song are the lyrics. According to researcher (Waluyo, 2002), song lyrics are a concise, rhythmic form of language, enriched by distinctive sounds and imaginative, figurative word choices.

Known by his stage name Rich Brian, his real name is Brian Imanuel Soewarno. He is regarded not only as a singer but also as a cultural figure who represents Asian identity in the global music industry. He was born and raised in Jakarta, Indonesia. He began to gain global recognition after his hit song "Dat \$tick" went viral in 2016. Rich Brian is an Indonesian rapper of Chinese descent who has built a career in the American hip-hop industry, openly embracing his Asian identity and addressing themes of racial stereotypes, minority identity, and his experiences as an Asian in America through his lyrics and music.

This approach was used to identify the meaning of regret within his family as conveyed in the song lyrics. The data for this study were drawn from the lyrics of the song "Ma" by Rich Brian. The original lyrics were taken from the website genius.com. The author conducted a literature review to identify gaps between recent studies and the latest empirical and theoretical aspects of the study in focus.

The primary focus of this study is the use of a descriptive qualitative method to examine human behavior in order to understand and interpret the reality of life through Roland Barthes's theory of semiotics, which divides lyrics as a system of signs into three levels: denotation, connotation, and myth. The semiotic approach allows the researcher to explain how meaning in song lyrics functions in conveying a sense of regret. The data was obtained from the lyrics of Rich Brian's song "Ma" and analyzed in depth by examining the denotations, connotations, and myths within the song. This study reveals the hidden meaning of regret that the songwriter seeks to convey to his listeners. The success of this

research demonstrates that the song conveys regret in the form of a vague longing for the past, which feels hollow in the silence.

This message encourages readers to learn from human experience. The song “Ma” represents a critical case because its emotional register operates across multiple semiotic layers simultaneously a dimension that descriptive lyric analysis consistently fails to capture. This study therefore addresses both of these shortcomings by highlighting myth as an ideological layer in which regret is not only felt but also culturally reproduced.

The research gap is needed to uncover the hidden meanings behind the arrangement of words. According to researcher (Salam & Sakinah, 2024), a semiotic analysis is highly relevant for examining how a musician crafts lyrics to convey a deep sense of regret to their listeners. A semiotic approach is crucial for analyzing song lyrics because musical lyrics are not merely ordinary text, but rather a complex system of signs that can serve as a sharp scalpel for uncovering hidden meanings in a musical work, particularly in the lyrics.

This study explores the meaning of regret found in the lyrics of the song “Ma,” popularized by Rich Brian. This study will uncover the hidden meaning behind the sense of regret that the songwriter intends to convey to his listeners. The results of this study will show that the song conveys a sense of regret in the form of a vague longing, which feels hollow amid the silence. The novelty of this message encourages readers to learn from the findings of this study.

Like a previous study (Setiadi C. , 2025), this research focuses on the song “Die with a Smile,” whose lyrics incorporate aspects of Roland Barthes’s semiotic analysis. The lyrics of this song can be categorized as romantic, reflecting the singer’s deep emotions toward their partner. In this song, the songwriter also wants to convey to listeners that loving someone with all your heart is very important. Sharing that love with the person you love can bring happiness, and everything you face in any situation in this world is worth fighting for as long as you’re with your partner.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative research method. As noted by experts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), qualitative research explores the meanings derived from textual data. Although qualitative research techniques are becoming increasingly popular among researchers, there is often a lack of clear guidance on how to analyze qualitative data effectively. Qualitative research focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon through descriptive data such as texts, observations, and interviews (Akinyode & Khan, 2018).

Data analysis in this study draws on Roland Barthes theory of semiotics, specifically the dimensions of denotation, connotation, and myth. The author considers this theory relevant to the research topic because it is analyzed from three different perspectives, thereby revealing the feelings of regret in the song’s lyrics. The author divides the song’s structure based on lyrics identified as conveying a sense of regret as data, and then analyzes the lyrics within each structural element using Roland Barthes’s theory of semiotics. The data used in this study consists of the song structure Verse 1, Chorus, Verse 2, and Outro of Rich Brian’s song titled “Ma”. The primary data consists of the lyrics to Rich Brian’s song “Ma” which was released on August 15, 2025, on genius.com (Rich Brian, 2025).

Meanwhile, secondary data to support the findings was obtained from various research journals, such as studies that analyzed song lyrics using Roland Barthes's theory of semiotics. Primary data was collected by listening to the music and reading the lyrics to understand their meaning. The author followed a step-by-step research process. First, song structures that indicate a sense of regret were selected and marked. In the second step, each marked song structure was examined by reading the lyrics of each song. Following this detailed process, the third step involved the researcher organizing the song structures which had been broken down into sections and analyzing them using Roland Barthes theory of denotation, connotation, and myth to explore the meaning of regret in the lyrics of Rich Brian's song "Ma".

This stage marks the completion of the data collection process based on findings regarding the research subject. The semiotic approach used (Barthes, 1977) to analyze several sections of these song lyrics is Roland Barthes's semiotic approach. Roland Barthes is one of the leading experts in semiotics who further developed Ferdinand de Saussure's theory. A more in-depth study of these aspects will lead to a clearer understanding of the song's lyrics. Roland Barthes divides this theory into three distinct levels; the first level begins with denotation, which analyzes the lyrics based on their objective meaning. The second level is connotation, which analyzes the lyrics based on their subjective meaning.

The third level consists of mythological symbols, which represent the culture that a particular social group considers natural. According to the researcher (Mulyadin, 2023), denotation is generally defined as the definitional, literal, common-sense meaning of a sign. In the context of linguistic signs, denotative meaning is the meaning conveyed by a dictionary. The connotation of a sign is partly related to other signs that appear alongside it in a text. For Roland Barthes, myth is the dominant ideology of our time. We usually associate myths with classic tales about the deeds of gods or heroes.

3. Result

In this section of the findings, the song structures identified as expressing feelings of regret are Verse, Chorus, Verse 2, and Outro. Fourth song structures were identified as conveying the meaning of regret in this study of the lyrics to the song "Ma" by Rich Brian; the researcher then presents the lyrics for each song structure to interpret the meaning of regret. The first song structure is the Verse:

Table 1. Verse

Lyrics
Sorry, I might be single 'til forty
I feel like a piece of shit (Shit)
Man, I just go home to my parents (Uh)
But I ain't been home in three years (Mm)
'Cause of some visa shit (Mm)
My daddy been growin' some greys (Dad)
Please don't ask me to go to your wedding, I missed my sister's, bitch (I'm so sorry)
And matter of fact, I missed my brother's too and that shit looked lit
Bitch, I'm a deadbeat uncle, my niece think I live in that screen

The sense of regret found in this verse can be interpreted as awareness and guilt over having lost time and important moments with his family due to distance and his life circumstances. Evidence of regret in this verse includes “Sorry,” “I missed,” “I’m so sorry,” and “deadbeat uncle,” linking it to the context of lost family time through the expressions of apology in the song’s lyrics.

Next is the song structure that serves as the second set of research data to reveal the meaning of regret in the lyrics of the song titled “Ma” by Rich Brian. Here is the structure of the second song, the chorus:

Table 2. Chorus

Lyrics
I was tryna make it back home, ma, I promise
You never gave me hard time, but I'm sorry
I've been working, bitch, I'm no one and done
I was tryna make it back home, ma, I promise

The sense of regret expressed in the chorus lyrics can be interpreted as the guilt felt by a child who realizes that his ambitions and busy work schedule have distanced him from his mother. This regret stems not only from his physical absence but also from the realization that his mother has always supported him without making things difficult for him, a point that will be analyzed in the discussion chapter. Evidence of regret in the chorus is shown through the phrase “I’m sorry” and the repetition of “I was tryna make it back home, ma, I promise” a desire to return, make things right, and fulfill his emotional responsibility toward his mother. Moving to the third part of the song structure, Verse 2:

Table 3. Verse 2

Lyrics
Not linkin' up with friends, all I got left to meet is serpents
My dog used to run out the house, but now I'd have to dig
Told the world this my home, but I feel so the opposite
I can't go home, I don't got the time

Thus, the meaning of regret in Verse 2 is conveyed through the singer’s awareness of the various losses that occurred while he was away from home. This regret includes the loss of connections with friends, the loss of a pet, and alienation from the place he once called home, as well as his inability to return due to time constraints. The expression of regret in Verse 2 “I can’t go home, I don’t have the time” and the repetition of “home” in this verse convey the sense that being far from home means many things have changed, and that the speaker realizes there are things they want to do but cannot because of time constraints and their current life circumstances. The structure of the last song is the Outro, here are the lyrics:

Table 4. Outro

Lyrics
Too fucked up, two fingers on the blunt
I might be tough, I used to cry a bunch
I feel better now, I was on a run
Too fucked up, two fingers on the blunt

Overall, Outro depicts the process of coping with emotional states. Outro does not directly express regret through an apology or an admission of fault, but rather highlights the emotional impact and the process of healing after facing an experience that causes inner conflict and regret. The outro depicts the emotional phase following an experience that leads to regret. Therefore, this outro section can be interpreted as the emotional impact of regret, and an effort to cope with anxiety and move forward. Thus, the predominant sense of regret in the song’s lyrics is not merely about past mistakes. Rather, it is about lost time and the irreplaceable opportunity to spend time with family. This serves as the common thread that ties together each section of the song.

4. Discussion

In the discussion section, I will provide a more in-depth analysis of the lyrics to Rich Brian’s song “Ma,” demonstrating the sense of regret conveyed in the lyrics. I will use Roland Barthes’s theory of semiotics as a tool to uncover the true meaning embedded in the song’s lyrics. This critical analysis, based on Roland Barthes’s theory, identifies three levels of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. The interpretation is based on evidence from the song’s lyrics. The following analysis is organized according to the song’s structure, which has been divided into four sections; Verse, Chorus, Verse 2, and Outro:

Analysis of Denotation, Connotation, and Myth in Verse:

In this analysis of the denotation theory, these lyrics are interpreted literally in accordance with the meaning of regret, which is described as a vague sense of longing (Prince, 2017), they express the possibility of remaining unmarried until the age of forty and the desire to return to her parents’ home. However, the physical reality is that she has been unable to return home for three years due to visa documentation issues. Realizing that his father’s hair was beginning to turn gray a sign of aging his nephew felt as though he were truly living behind a screen, since their interactions took place exclusively via cell phone. In accordance with Roland Barthes theory, the theory of denotation analyzes song lyrics through their objective meaning.

An analysis of the song’s lyrics reveals connotations related to a deep sense of regret; this theory of connotation emphasizes its subjective nature (Barthes, 1977). It addresses the issue of self-recognition that arises from conflicting desires, which cannot be communicated (Prince, 2017). The lyric “I feel like a piece of shit” (in the last line of Verse 1), in which the speaker identifies himself as a “deadbeat uncle,” expresses a feeling directed at himself.

This conveys a deep sense of self-guilt stemming from his failure to fulfill his normative role within the family. The visa issue implies the existence of bureaucracy that forcibly separates people, Success as an artist does not, it turns out, grant any special

privileges. The father's graying hair is not merely a physical change; rather, it symbolizes the greatest fear of a child living far from home: parents growing old while their child is not by their side. The second-level theory is that of connotation, which analyzes lyrics through subjective meaning (Barthes, 1977). In the third method of analysis, the elements that explore the meaning of the myth in the lyrics of Verse 1 reveal an issue prevalent in human life: success is often measured by career achievements.

However, in modern society, true success becomes meaningless if a person fails to be present for sacred family moments such as a sibling's wedding or neglects to care for aging parents. Such success feels hollow, empty, and silent like a void (Prince, 2017). A widespread myth in society holds that international artists lead perfect lives. The lyrics in Verse 1 debunk this myth by showing that there is a price to pay that success comes at the cost of time with family. In line with Roland Barthes's theory, In line with Roland Barthes's theory, this is a mythological symbol that represents a culture that has developed within a society and is considered commonplace (Barthes, 1977).

Analysis of Denotation, Connotation, and Myth in Chorus

In this analysis of the denotation theory, the Chorus section depicts an apology to the mother, accompanied by a promise to truly do one's best to return home. Although the speaker realizes that his mother has never demanded anything, he still feels the need to express his apology. In the theory of regret, it is explained that this stems from conflicting desires that cannot be communicated, have failed to be communicated, and now linger in the form of a vague longing (Prince, 2017). The lyrics in the chorus "I was tryna make it back home, ma, I promise" even emphasize the singer's promise to his mother that he'll return home; the fact that these lyrics are repeated twice in the chorus truly amplifies the singer's genuine emotions. In a connotative analysis, the lyrics in the chorus which express regret through the word "promise" imply a desire to "go home". It is not easy to express this sense of regret because the singer's life is now largely controlled by the demands of his employment contract.

There is a statement in these lyrics that contradicts common opinion: "You never gave me hard time, but I'm sorry," which implies a very heavy sense of moral burden. In fact, his mother was so supportive he never put any pressure on him and gave him unconditional love. This feeling of regret did not arise from any reprimand by anyone in her family, but rather from her own inner awareness that she felt she had not contributed enough. This aligns with Brian Prince's theory of regret regarding conflicting, unspoken desires that failed to be communicated and now linger in the form of a shared longing (Prince, 2017). The word "bitch" in the lyrics is not a curse directed at the mother, but rather a slang term expressing regret, used to convey the emotional message the singer is feeling. Its connotation is subjective (Barthes, 1977).

In a mythological analysis, this chorus reveals the dilemma caused by the demands of work. The lyric "You never gave me hard time, but I'm sorry" challenges the myth that represents the cultural view of the relationship between children and parents, especially mothers. Here, mothers are portrayed as figures full of sincere, selfless love who do not demand any specific achievements in contrast to the industry's myth, which actually demands relentless productivity so as not to fall behind the times. They find themselves caught between the desire to reciprocate their mother's love by spending time with their family and the demand to maintain their careers.

In the social construct of the general public, mythological symbols represent a social culture that society considers natural (Barthes, 1977). In the general public, a boy is often burdened with the expectation to work hard and become a successful figure who brings pride to his family. Ironically, it is precisely this myth of success that robs him of time spent with his family; time must be sacrificed. The source of her regret is the realization that, in her mother's mind, her "presence" might matter more than her "success". As discussed in the theory of regret (Prince, 2017), this stems from a recognition problem arising from conflicting desires that cannot be communicated.

Analysis of Denotation, Connotation, and Myth in Verse 2

An analysis of the denotation in this second verse reveals the social conditions the singer is facing while living abroad. The lyrics "Told the world this is my home, but I feel so the opposite" express that the singer once told the world that this place was his home. But now feels the opposite, a strange sense that things have changed. Denotation refers to the analysis of song lyrics based on their objective meaning (Barthes, 1977). Furthermore, the lyrics describing a changed situation "My dog used to run out the house, but now I'd have to dig" bring to mind his dog, who used to run out of the house, but now he has to dig through the ground just to see him.

This emphasizes the meaning of the line "now I'd have to dig" illustrating how the atmosphere is no longer the same as it used to be when the dog's presence was a joy. But now just to see him, he has to dig. The lyrics of this second verse further emphasize a situation that feels empty, profound, and silent (Prince, 2017). The song's lyrics describe a social environment that conveys a sense of loss, which fills him with regret. An analysis of the connotation in Verse 2 reveals that one of the lines "Not linkin' up with friends, all I got left to meet is serpents" illustrates the growing distance in his social relationships with his friends. The word "serpents" serves as a connotative symbol referring to people he considers untrustworthy. This situation indicates that his busy work life has isolated him from the social connections he once had.

This implies a crisis of trust and a sense of loneliness even at the height of his success. Although he is surrounded by many people, there are no genuine friendships. Consequently, his situation feels hollow, profound, and empty (Prince, 2017). The sense of regret that emerges can be felt through the lyrics "I can't go home, I don't got the time", because the time spent abroad building a career has robbed him of the opportunity to share the most precious moments in life. This powerfully illustrates how lost time cannot be rewound. Analyzing lyrics through subjective meaning is a hallmark of connotation in Roland Barthes's semiotics (Barthes, 1977).

The phrase "don't got the time" stands out in the lyrics, connoting a sense of limitation specifically, not having time because he is focused on his career which ultimately backfires, leading to the loss of freedom over his own life. The themes in this analysis are linked to a sense of loneliness stemming from the time he has traded for his successful career. An analysis of the myth in this second verse reveals a strong social belief among the general public that moving abroad leads to success.

However, the lyrics "I can't go home, I don't got the time" refute this ideology. Living abroad is often glorified as a symbol of independence. In fact, the lyrics highlight this myth by showing that his life abroad continues to unfold in tandem with the cycles of his family's lives such as his aging parents, siblings who are married but do not live with him, and even the death of his pet. The regret over such situations feels hollow, profound, and silent

(Prince, 2017). The myth that one cannot return home because there is no time. When the song's lyrics are considered in relation to the chorus and the preceding Verse 1, this statement reveals a conflict between the desire to return to one's family and the demands of life that force one to be away from home. An in-depth analysis of this myth uncovers deeply ingrained cultural myths that is, mythological symbols that represent a culture considered normal by society (Barthes, 1977).

Analysis of Denotation, Connotation, and Myth in Outro

In this analysis of the final section of the song's lyrics the Outro, the denotative analysis of this section provides a physical description. It depicts a chaotic state while holding a joint between two fingers "Too fucked up, two fingers on the blunt" with a sense of being overwhelmed, using the act of holding the joint as a sign of escape from his emotional state. In the following lyrics, "I might be tough, I used to cry a bunch" suggests that while she appears strong now, she actually used to cry a lot. Feeling better after going through a difficult time, the line "I feel better now, I was on a run" illustrates a shift in her emotional state. "On a run" can describe an effort to move forward and leave the past behind.

Then, in the final line, the repetition of the lyrics suggests that the chaotic state mentioned earlier is still in the process of coming to terms with itself. This repetition emphasizes the emotional state the speaker is experiencing, literally expressing regret for having been overcome by a vague sense of longing (Prince, 2017). Next, an analysis of the connotations in the lyrics of Outro the line "I might be tough, I used to cry a bunch" indicates a shift from a state of frequent crying to one of greater strength. From a more critical connotative perspective, this can be linked to social expectations particularly for men who are expected to control their emotions and demonstrate resilience when facing problems. Suppressing one's emotions in the moment, however, feels empty, profound, and silent (Prince, 2017).

This admission reveals what has long been hidden. The word "tough" in the lyrics is actually just a mask for survival in the music industry, while "cry a bunch" reveals his most vulnerable human side. This is an admission of emotional exhaustion. Meanwhile, the line "I feel better now, I was on a run" conveys the idea that one must keep moving and strive to break free from difficult circumstances. In general society, this is linked to the view that success is often associated with an individual's ability to consistently overcome problems on their own. This belief can be a source of motivation, but at the same time, it can make a person feel that they must pull themselves together immediately.

More critically, the phrase "on the run" implies an escape accompanied by a sense of regret. The statement in the lyrics that one feels "better now" implies a denial that this sense of improvement is merely a temporary effect of escapism, not the actual healing of emotional wounds. A lyrical analysis through subjective meaning (Barthes, 1977). This suggests the fragility of one's mental state, which can be understood as a stage where regret is no longer merely felt as guilt, but is confronted through an effort to move on with life. The myth of resilience describes a value that encourages individuals to rise above their emotional experiences.

The analysis of this myth in the Outro section challenges it by revealing the paradox behind the self-assured persona. Popular culture often perpetuates the myth that the passage of time will heal the wounds caused by unspoken regrets, which now linger in the form of a vague longing (Prince, 2017). These feelings are merely buried in the

subconscious; they reflect the mindset of modern society in responding to such feelings. This final stage is a mythological symbol that represents a culture considered normal by society (Barthes, 1977).

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the lyrics to Rich Brian's song "Ma" in the discussion section, this study concludes that regret is portrayed as a complex emotional feeling. It shows that regret in this song develops through several interrelated experiences, particularly physical distance from family and missed important family moments. These meanings are clearly evident in the song's structure, which includes Verse 1, Chorus, Verse 2, and Outro. The conclusion will be presented based on the song's structure as analyzed, namely:

In Verse 1, regret is primarily conveyed through the singer's absence during important family moments. The lyrics mention not returning home for several years, his father growing older, and missing his sibling's wedding. He is also seen by his nephew as someone who is present only on a screen, reflecting an awareness of lost time and missed opportunities to participate in important family experiences. Thus, this regret is not limited to any one specific mistake, but stems from the realization that time and moments spent with family cannot be rewound.

In the chorus, this meaning is reinforced through the repeated longing to return home, and his apology to his mother takes on special significance because she is portrayed in the lyrics as someone who has never made things difficult for him. This creates a conflict between his career ambitions and his desire to continue contributing to his family's life. Consequently, the chorus expresses regret as the emotional consequence of pursuing a career while recognizing the personal impact of that distance.

In Verse 2, the meaning of regret extends beyond the immediate family who feel a sense of loss. References to friends, the death of his dog, and his inability to return home illustrate how prolonged absence can lead to experiences that cannot simply be restored to the way they were before. The statement that calling a place "home" while simultaneously feeling the opposite reflects a sense of alienation and a loss of emotional attachment. Meanwhile, the Outro section explores the lingering emotional impact. References to emotional strain, reflections on the past, and the hope for a better future indicate a desire to adopt a wiser mindset and a need to become stronger.

In this context, the "Outro" section does not eliminate the sense of regret; rather, it illustrates the process of venting feelings and continuing to move forward. A key finding of this study is that the regret depicted in the lyrics of the song "Ma" is more closely associated with lost time than with a single, irreparable mistake. The artist repeatedly reflects on moments that could not be shared with family and loved ones. Thus, regret serves as a reflection on the consequences of distance, the ambition to build a career, and the passage of time. This song portrays regret as something that arises when a person realizes that certain achievements come at the cost of sacrificing personal relationships.

Furthermore, a closer look at the mythological meanings identified in this analysis clearly shows that the song's lyrics engage with contemporary cultural beliefs regarding emotional feelings, career achievements, and family responsibilities, as well as the demand to keep moving forward amid the pressure to cope with emotional issues independently. Such cultural beliefs within the general public can foster a person's resilience. Therefore, the portrayal of regret in the lyrics of Rich Brian's song "Ma" can be understood not only as an individual emotional experience but also as a reflection of the

broader cultural norms of society regarding career ambitions, the distance in family relationships, and emotional outbursts.

The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on regret as the primary theme conveyed throughout each song structure in the lyrics of Rich Brian's song "Ma." Rather than viewing this song merely as a general representation of family and homesickness, this study explores how the feeling of regret gradually unfolds through the song's various structures; Verse 1 conveys regret through missed moments within the family. The chorus emphasizes the desire to apologize and the unspoken longing to return home; Verse 2 broadens the scope of regret to include a sense of loss; finally, the outro depicts the emotional reflection on facing the consequences of the past.

This study has several limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting its findings. First, this analysis focuses on a single song lyric, namely "Ma" by Rich Brian. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all of Rich Brian's songs. Second, this study focuses primarily on song lyrics and their meanings. Other musical elements, such as melody, vocal delivery, rhythm, instrumentation, representation in music videos, and audience reception, were not examined in depth. Third, interpretations of connotative and mythological meanings involve the researcher's own interpretation.

Although the analysis is based on textual evidence in the song lyrics and the semiotic framework used, other researchers might identify different cultural interpretations. Therefore, these findings should be understood as a descriptive analysis, not as an absolute interpretation of the song. Finally, the discussion of contemporary cultural beliefs in this study is limited to the meanings that can be identified through the lyrics of the selected songs. This study does not present empirical evidence regarding how listeners actually interpret regret, family responsibility, or emotional feelings in these songs. Thus, future research involving audience responses could provide a broader understanding of how these meanings are received in contemporary society.

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations can be proposed for future research. First, future researchers could examine the theme of regret in other songs by Rich Brian or compare this analysis of the lyrics to Rich Brian's "Ma" with songs by other artists. A comparative study could determine whether representations of regret in contemporary music tend to emphasize family relationships, personal ambition, a sense of loss, or other forms of emotional experience. Second, future research could expand the scope of analysis beyond lyrics by examining the relationship between lyrics, music videos, musical arrangements, and vocal performances.

Such an analysis could reveal how various forms of artistic expression reinforce or, conversely, contradict the representations of regret contained in the lyrics. Finally, the findings of this study suggest that regret in music can be understood as something more than just an individual's emotional response. Such regret may reflect a broader tension between the demands of career ambitions and family relationships, as well as the gap between physical distance and emotional connection. It is hoped that future research will explore these implications further through an interdisciplinary approach involving literary studies, cultural studies, psychology, or audience reception research.

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