

Symbolic Imagery of Escapism in Lana Del Rey's Salvatore: A Semiotic Analysis Based on Roland Barthes

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History Article:

Received 06 25, 2025
Accepted 06 28, 2025
Published 06 30, 2025

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the symbolism in Lana Del Rey's song Salvatore in order to understand how visual and lyrical imagery constructs a narrative of escapism within the context of postmodern culture. The song presents various symbols such as "soft ice cream," "limousines," and "summer rain" that create an aesthetic, sensual, and fantastical world detached from reality. The method used in this study is Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis within a qualitative framework. The analysis involves identifying the denotative and connotative meanings of the key symbols in the lyrics, followed by examining the cultural myths constructed by these symbols in relation to escapism and feminine representation in popular culture. The results show that the symbols in Salvatore serve not only as representations of beauty or luxury but also as tools through which the narrator constructs an illusory escape. The symbol of "soft ice cream" signifies femininity that is soft yet commodified; "limousines" reflects false luxury under visual capitalism; while "summer rain" evokes emotional ambiguity. Thus, the song illustrates a construction of artificial reality, where escapism becomes a mode of feminine existence within a world dominated by imagery and simulation.

Keywords: symbolism, Lana Del Rey, semiotics, escapism, postmodern culture

How to Cite:

Anisa Triani, & Otong Setiawan Djuharie. (2025). Symbolic Imagery of Escapism in Lana Del Rey's Salvatore: A Semiotic Analysis Based on Roland Barthes. Jejak Digital: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin, 1(4b), 1832-1841. <https://doi.org/10.63822/89vw7793>

INTRODUCTION

In the post-modern era, popular culture no longer merely serves as a mirror of social reality, but has become a dynamic space where identity, reality and fantasy are simultaneously intertwined and negotiated. Postmodernism marks a shift from the certainty of one truth to a plurality of meanings and the dominance of simulation, where the boundaries between the “real” and the “idealized” become increasingly blurred. Baudrillard (1994) states that post-modern society lives in hyperreality, a world filled with signs and images that no longer refer to objective reality, but rather creates its own artificial reality through simulacra. In this context, visual and aesthetic symbols in popular culture are not only decorative, but become instruments for shaping meaning and collective emotional experience. Music, as one of the most influential forms of popular culture, plays an important role in constructing narratives of identity and escape through symbolism and lyrical imagination. Thus, the analysis of song lyrics becomes increasingly relevant to understand how symbolic narratives and fantasies work in a post-modern culture that tends to blur reality with illusion.

The semiotic theory developed by Roland Barthes provides an important framework for understanding how signs, both visual and lyrical, carry complex meanings in cultural texts. According to Barthes, every sign consists of two levels of meaning: denotation (literal meaning) and connotation (cultural or emotional meaning), which can then develop into myth, an ideological system of meaning that appears natural but is actually socially and historically shaped (Barthes, 1972). In this articulation, semiotics not only reads “what” is displayed, but also ‘how’ and “why” certain meanings are attached to certain symbols. Barthes' approach has been widely applied in analyzing song lyrics as symbol-dense cultural texts, including in Smith and Budianto (2024) article that examines the song A&W by Lana Del Rey. Smith found that the sign structure in the song is full of implications about social pressure, gender power relations, and the construction of women's identity in the post-modern cultural landscape. Therefore, Barthes' theory becomes very relevant to analyze the symbolism in Salvatore's song, which also plays with various visual and lyrical signs to form a sensual and illusive narrative space.

One prominent phenomenon in contemporary pop music is escapism, which is the tendency to use music as a means of psychological escape from oppressive realities. Escapism in music does not only occur through rhythm or melody, but also through symbolism and lyrical narratives that evoke imaginative worlds. Rohani (2024) in her research on PsyaArXiv explains that music escapism involves active cognitive engagement from listeners, who mentally construct alternative narratives as a form of emotional release, escape from social burdens, and the creation of psychologically safe spaces. Thus, music becomes an affective medium that allows a person not only to listen, but also to “live” in the symbolic world it builds.

Lana Del Rey, the stage name of Elizabeth Woolridge Grant, is known as an American singer-songwriter who carries a melancholic style with a touch of retro-glamor, as well as lyrics full of symbols and cultural references. In the context of Lana Del Rey's songs, various analyses show a strong tendency towards the incorporation of decadent aesthetics, nostalgic symbolism, and exotic pop culture representations. Crutcher (2019), in his study *Lana Del Rey's American Grotesque*, highlights how Del Rey consciously borrows various visual and thematic styles, ranging from Americana mythology, femme fatale imagery, to satire on consumerism and celebrity culture to form an ambiguous and paradoxical aesthetic. This aesthetic characterizes Del Rey's narratives, which often feature female figures trapped between artificial luxury and emotional emptiness.

Previous research shows that Lana Del Rey's lyrics utilize figurative language, symbolism, and visual imagery as a means of emotional expression and criticism of popular culture. Rahmat and Dianita

(2024) in a semantic study of the Born to Die album identified the use of complex and layered metaphors, which reflect feelings of loneliness, vulnerability, and unstable relationships in the lives of the lyrical characters. Meanwhile, Fazhira and Ihsan (2024) examined the neurotic tendencies in Del Rey's lyrics and found emotional patterns of anxiety, need for love, and escape from reality through romantic fantasies. These studies are in line with Martinez (2021) findings, which state that Del Rey's lyrics are often a medium for the expression of emotional trauma, especially those related to hope, broken relationships, and the search for self-meaning in an unstable environment.

However, studies that specifically explore Salvatore's song within the framework of semiotics and post-modern culture are still very limited. This research aims to fill that void by examining how symbols such as "soft ice cream", 'limousines', and "summer rain" function in shaping Del Rey's distinctive world of escapism, a sensual, illusive, and aesthetic narrative space. As such, this research provides a new contribution to the mapping of Del Rey's song symbolism, particularly within the framework of Barthes' semiotic theory and the concept of post-modern simulation.

Through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis framework that emphasizes the relationship between sign, meaning, and myth, and combined with Jean Baudrillard's concepts of escapism and simulacra, this research aims to reveal how the symbols in Salvatore's songs not only function as aesthetic elements, but also contain ideological content that forms the construction of a pseudo reality. Symbols such as "soft ice cream" and "limousines" are not just lyrical ornaments, but part of a sign system that displays desire, emptiness and escape in a glamorous and artificial format. By dissecting the connotative and mythical layers behind these images, this research is expected to enrich the field of contemporary pop music studies, especially in understanding how symbolic representations shape women's subjective experiences in a hyperreal and simulated narrative space.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Roland Barthes is one of the key figures in the development of modern semiotic theory, especially through his work *Mythologies* (1957) which dissects how signs in popular culture carry hidden ideological meanings. In Barthes' view, a sign consists of two levels of meaning: denotation, which is the literal meaning of a sign, and connotation, which is the meaning that arises from the cultural and emotional associations attached to it (Barthes, 1972). Furthermore, Barthes explains that connotation can develop into myth, which is a form of ideological discourse that makes a certain value or worldview seem "natural" and "normal" in everyday life (Barthes, 1967). In the context of music and song lyrics, this approach allows a deep reading of lyrical symbols as cultural texts that contain certain social constructions. Barthes did not see signs as neutral elements, but rather as "ideological tools" that work to shape reality through narrative and aesthetics (Chandler, 2007)

Escapism is a concept that refers to an individual's escape mechanism from a stressful reality into a fictional, imaginative or aesthetic world. In the realm of popular culture, escapism is often present through music, movies, or other forms of entertainment that provide a space to forget reality and construct alternative emotional experiences (Stenseng, Rise, & Kraft, 2012). According to Rohani (2024), music escapism is not just a passive escape, but involves active cognitive involvement of the listener in creating a mental narrative that is personal and emotional. In the case of Lana Del Rey's songs, escapism emerges through a lyrical style that presents exotic, retro, and sensual imagery that seems to place the narrator in another world, full of beauty but far from grounded reality. This resonates with Baudrillard's (1994)

thoughts, which state that post-modern culture lives in simulacra, a false reality built from signs without reference to the real world. In this context, escapism becomes a means to enter a hyperreal space, where aesthetic experiences blur the line between reality and illusion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis method to examine the symbolism in the lyrics of Salvatore by Lana Del Rey. The semiotic approach was chosen because it allows in-depth reading of the text, not only at the level of literal meaning (denotative), but also at the cultural (connotative) and ideological (mythical) meanings contained in the symbols of the song lyrics.

The object of research is the text of Salvatore's song lyrics, which are analyzed based on three main stages in the Barthesian framework:

1. Denotative analysis, which identifies the literal meaning of words or phrases in song lyrics such as "soft ice cream", 'limousines', and "summer rain".
2. Connotative Analysis, which explores the cultural, emotional, or symbolic associations of these elements in the context of popular culture and Lana Del Rey's aesthetic style.
3. Myth Analysis, which reveals the ideological values and cultural narratives formed through the use of these symbols, for example, how "soft ice cream" represents the construction of sweet but commodified femininity, or "limousines" as a symbol of illusive luxury.

In addition to semiotic theory, this research also refers to the concepts of escapism in pop culture and simulacra from Jean Baudrillard as supporting frameworks. Escapism is understood as the construction of aesthetic escape spaces in song lyrics, while simulacra is used to understand how reality formed through symbols in songs creates a hyperreal experience, more real than reality itself.

Data was collected documentatively from the lyrics of Salvatore's (2015) song released in the album Honeymoon. The lyrics were analyzed by close reading, then mapped based on semiotic structures to explore the relationship of signs and meanings in forming a sensual and exotic fantasy world narrative.

Data validity is maintained through theoretical triangulation, by comparing the results of the analysis against Barthes' theory, previous studies on symbolism in Lana Del Rey's songs, and literature on escapism in post-modern culture. Thus, this method aims to produce a complete understanding of the aesthetic and ideological functions of symbols in Salvatore.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the results of a semiotic analysis of the symbols contained in the lyrics of Lana Del Rey's Salvatore, emphasizing how they form a narrative of escapism and post-modern aesthetics. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, each element of the lyrics is analyzed based on three levels of meaning: denotative, connotative, and mythological. In addition, this approach is combined with Rohani's (2024) concept of escapism and Baudrillard's (1994) simulacra to understand how song lyrics not only form an emotional atmosphere, but also create a hyperreal space where listeners can experience aestheticized sensations and escape from reality.

Seven key symbols from Salvatore's lyrics were chosen as the unit of analysis that represent consistent visual, emotional and ideological patterns in Del Rey's work. Symbols such as "Miami city lights," "neon colors," to "soft ice cream" and "death by a strange man" not only create soundscapes and

images, but also shape the construction of identity, power relations, and emotional experiences of the lyrical characters. Through this symbolic reading, it can be seen that Salvatore's song is not only a medium of artistic expression, but also a discourse space where women, love, and fantasy are processed within the framework of consumptive and postmodern aesthetics.

Tabel 1. The main symbols in Salvatore's lyrics and their escapism meaning and relevance.

No	Lyric	Symbol	Denotative	Connotative and Myth	Escapism / Hiperrealitas
1	<i>"All the lights in Miami begin to gleam"</i>	Miami city light	The city lights are starting to come on.	Symbol of nightlife, metropolitan life, and glamorous urban aesthetics.	An image of a luxurious world that is used as an escape room from the reality of the persona.
2	<i>"Ruby, blue and green, neon too"</i>	Lamp colors	Bright colors lit up, including neon.	Symbol of exoticism, artificiality, and high-class nightlife lifestyle.	Visualization of a beautiful yet unreal hyperreal world.
3	<i>"Soft ice cream"</i>	Soft ice cream	Something sweet, cold, and soft.	Femininity that is sweet, sensual, and easy to consume (objectification of women).	A sensual experience as a form of escapism through retro aesthetics and lighthearted enjoyment.
4	<i>"Limousines"</i>	Limousine car	A large luxury car.	Symbol of social status, luxury, and exclusivity.	Visual representations of capitalism and social class fantasies in post-modern spaces.
5	<i>"Ciao amore"</i>	Italian greeting	"Good bye, Love."	Exotic language style, Southern European sensuality, dramatic romance.	Escape to exotic images of other cultures to form a narrative fantasy atmosphere.
6	<i>"In the summer rain"</i>	Monsoon rains	Rain that falls in summer.	Symbol of ambiguous emotions: between freshness, longing, and emotional purity.	An emotional experience that blends the warmth of summer and personal emptiness.
7	<i>"Dying by the hand of a foreign man, happily"</i>	Death by a strange man	The death experienced by the lyrical persona because of a strange man.	Romanticization of pain, loss, and surrender as part of dramatic love.	The pinnacle of escapism: the blurring between destruction and pleasure, like an aesthetic tragedy in a hyperreal world.

Data 1:

"All the lights in Miami begin to gleam"

The lyrics "All the lights in Miami begin to gleam" open the imaginative landscape of Salvatore's song by presenting the symbol of the city's glittering lights. Denotatively, the lights refer to the nighttime atmosphere in Miami, a city known for its luxury, nightlife and glamorous tropical aesthetic. However, connotatively in terms of Barthes' semiotics, the city lights are not just physical objects, but function as signs that carry specific cultural meanings: symbols of modernity, American exoticism, and the artificial appeal of the urban world. The light that "begins to gleam" marks the transition from natural light to artificial light from reality to an illusory world constructed through aesthetic sparkle.

In the context of escapism, Miami's city lights mark the narrator's entry into a world that escapes everyday reality. Miami is presented not as a real city, but as a representation of a luxurious and sensual lifestyle. The city is presented through the lyrical narrative as a fantasy space that offers an escape from emotional emptiness through an atmosphere full of light, color, and visual aesthetics. As described by Rohani (2024), escapism in music involves the active imaginative engagement of the listener to enter into an alternative space constructed by the symbol, in this case, the city lights serve as the "entrance" to the fantasy world of the narrative.

This symbol also functions within the framework of Baudrillard's simulacra (1994), where representations of the night city no longer refer to the factual Miami, but to Miami as image and myth, a hyperreal version that is more beautiful than reality itself. In this hyperreal world, the city lights become signifiers of an aesthetic experience that is celebrated without necessarily being rooted in concrete social reality. Thus, the symbol of the "lights of Miami" operates aesthetically and ideologically at once: creating a visually indulgent experience, but also wrapping reality in an illusion of luxury and illusory freedom.

Data 2:

"Ruby, blue and green, neon too"

The lyric line "Ruby, blue and green, neon too" features a bright and striking array of colors, with the closing mention of "neon" reinforcing the visual effect. Denotatively, these lyrics refer to the colors often seen in city lights or nightlight designs, especially in entertainment spaces such as bars, nightclubs, or metropolitan streets full of billboards. In Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, these colors function as signs that not only present a visual impression, but also carry connotations of a modern, luxurious and hedonistic lifestyle. The colors "ruby", "blue" and 'green' can be associated with strong emotions from passion to tranquility, while "neon" symbolizes an artificial world that is bright, unnatural and suggests technology and consumption.

From the perspective of escapism, the use of neon colors in these lyrics indicates an aesthetic yet unrealistic world. Neon symbolizes an alternative space where emotions, experiences, and identities are not limited by everyday reality. As argued by Rohani (2024), escapism in music allows listeners to construct their own emotional narratives, and these colors help create a visual atmosphere that reinforces Del Rey's sensual and eccentric narrative world. Neon colors also signify the move from natural reality to a space dominated by imagery and artificial light effects, a hyperreal world that promises an escape from the monotony of ordinary life.

In Jean Baudrillard's frame of mind, the neon color in these lyrics can be seen as part of simulacra, signs that no longer represent reality, but stand as reality itself. The world built by Del Rey is not just a representation of the night city, but a visual construction that has been detached from its original referent.

The neon colors in Salvatore not only describe the atmosphere, but also condition the listener's experience to enter into a world that is sparkling, beautiful, and separated from the limits of everyday logic. Thus, the lyrics reinforce the symbolic function of the song as an aesthetic as well as ideological space, where escapism, luxury, and sensuality are wrapped in intense and mesmerizing visual packaging.

Data 3:

"Soft ice cream"

The repetition of the phrase "soft ice cream" in Salvatore's song indicates that this symbol plays an important role in establishing the feel and meaning of the lyrics. Denotatively, "soft ice cream" refers to a cold, soft and sweet dessert, often associated with summer, light enjoyment and childhood memories. But in Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, this symbol does not stop at its literal meaning. It carries deeper connotations: a fragile delicacy, a melting sensuality, and even an image of femininity shaped by the impression of sweetness, softness, and ease of consumption. In popular culture, foods such as ice cream are often mythologized as sweetly packaged representations of instant pleasure and desire, yet imply the objectification or exoticization of the female body in visual space.

In the context of escapism, "soft ice cream" becomes the main symbol of the artificial pleasure offered by Del Rey's fantasy world. Through these words, Del Rey creates a soft and indulgent atmosphere, which distances the listener from the harsh realities of life. This symbol works as a psychological "shield" that wraps the narrator in pseudo-pleasure, as explained by Rohani (2024), that escapism through music allows listeners to experience emotional release through aesthetically pleasing symbolic objects. "Soft ice cream" presents a seductive summer feel, but it is also melancholic, as the pleasure feels temporary and melts easily, depicting the illusion of warmth in a relationship or reality that is actually cold and empty.

In Baudrillard's (1994) framework of simulacra, "soft ice cream" is no longer just a symbol of food, but a hyperreal representation of a world shaped by wants, not needs. It does not refer to real ice cream, but rather to an aesthetically created image of pleasure to escape the real world. The ice cream in this song conveys a superficial, fleeting and unfulfilling pleasure, a metaphor for fragile emotional relationships or illusory love. As such, "soft ice cream" is a sign that works on denotative (sweet object), connotative (sensuality and escape), and mythological (pleasure shaped by the culture of consumption) levels, making it an important symbol in understanding the post-modern narrative of escapism in Salvatore's song.

Data 4:

"Limousines"

The lyrics of "Limousines" refer denotatively to large luxury cars commonly associated with high social status, celebrity and exclusive living. In Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, a limousine is not just a means of transportation, but a sign that carries connotations of power, prestige, and a glamorous lifestyle. This symbol often appears in popular media as a marker of success in the capitalistic system: those who are in it are those who are "distant" from the reality of ordinary people. In the context of Del Rey's lyrics, limousines function as a representation of a luxurious yet artificial world, a world that looks idealized, but is actually built on performative symbols alone.

The symbol of "limousines" also reinforces the narrative of escapism in this song, by depicting a world of escape that is not only aesthetic but also structural where the main character (narrator) seems to live in a world full of luxury but separated from the harsh social reality. The presence of the limousine creates a spatial and symbolic distance between the character and the outside world, signifying a form of

escape through materialism and an upscale lifestyle. As explained by Rohani (2024), escapism through pop music can be mediated by symbols of wealth and power that offer a false sense of security, despite being inherently fragile and built on an emotional void. In Salvatore's lyrics, the limousine is not a true sanctuary, but a reflection of escapism in solitude wrapped in luxury.

In Jean Baudrillard's (1994) perspective of simulacra, the limousine is an example of hyperreality, where luxury is no longer a reflection of real comfort, but rather a visually constructed and consumed image of luxury. This luxury car does not need to actually exist in the lyrical character's experience; simply by mentioning it, the glamorous world has been created as an aesthetic effect. Therefore, the "limousines" in Salvatore's song act as a simulacrum that creates a mirage world: the female character seems to be living in splendor, while she is escaping from unhappiness, emptiness, or even a sense of loss. This symbol reinforces the song's theme as an exploration of how the post-modern world shapes reality through flashes of image rather than real substance.

Data 5:

"Ciao Amore"

The phrase "Ciao amore" is an Italian phrase that means "goodbye, my love" or "hello, my love," depending on the context. Denotatively, this phrase is a simple romantic greeting or farewell. But in Barthes' semiotic framework, it carries connotations of exoticism, sensuality, and a lifestyle associated with a warm and seductive image of Southern Europe. The use of foreign language, particularly Italian with its rich cultural associations such as opera, cuisine and classic movies, reinforces the impression of a romantic and aesthetic world that Del Rey creates in her song. The words not only point to an emotional connection, but also build a distinctive atmospheric mood: light, melodramatic and stylish.

In the context of escapism, "Ciao amore" functions as a symbol of escape through a foreign language and style, creating an emotional distance from reality through the romanticization of another culture. By using a language that is not the narrator's native tongue, Del Rey seems to build an alternative world disconnected from real life, a world where love and loss are present in a more beautiful, more artistic, and more controllable version. According to Rohani (2024), escapism in music is not always manifested in the form of physical escape, but can also be realized through the transformation of linguistic and aesthetic identities that allow the narrator to disguise pain or emptiness behind dazzling packaging. In this case, Del Rey not only conveys emotions, but also frames them with exotic nuances that create emotional distance.

Viewed from the perspective of Baudrillard's simulacra (1994), "Ciao amore" becomes a simulation of an imagined European romance, an image of love that has been commodified and stylized through media, songs, and films. The pronunciation of this phrase no longer refers to an actual love relationship, but to a culturally and aesthetically constructed version of love. As such, it becomes part of Del Rey's hyperreal world: a world where love, language, and feelings need not be authentic, but rather beautiful, memorable, and cinematic. "Ciao amore" is a testament to how small symbols can hold the weight of great meaning in shaping an artistic yet pseudo-emotional landscape.

Data 6:

"In the summer rain"

The phrase "in the summer rain" denotatively describes the rain that falls during summer, a natural phenomenon that is unusual in many regions but has its own poetic appeal. In Barthes' semiotic framework, summer rain is a sign with ambivalent connotative meaning: it brings both freshness and sadness, shade

and passion. In Del Rey's narrative, this rain forms a rich emotional atmosphere: romantic, dramatic, and slightly melancholic. Instead of referring to the weather, "summer rain" becomes a metaphor for the emotional turmoil that comes suddenly in the midst of a supposedly warm and sunny moment. It is a symbol that shows an inner paradox: intimacy and vulnerability touching each other in a sensual aesthetic frame.

In the context of escapism, summer rain creates a paradoxical emotional space where the sense of escape does not arise from extreme suffering, but rather from the confusion between happiness and sadness. As Rohani (2024) explains, escapism in music allows the listener to experience a simulation of emotions within a controlled aesthetic space. Summer rain is a form of that simulation: a symbol of emotional experience wrapped in a cinematic setting, implying that even suffering can be part of narrative beauty. Del Rey creates a world where even tears fall gracefully, not in real sadness, but in a visually and artistically edited form of sadness.

From the perspective of Baudrillard's simulacra (1994), "summer rain" is a perfect example of a hyperreal experience: it is not real rain that drenches the body, but a representation of rain that exists in the collective aesthetic imagination, such as in movie scenes, video clips, or perfume advertisements. In Del Rey's world, rain is not cold or troublesome, but warm, sensual and emotional, making it not a natural event, but an image that has lost its original referent. This phrase reinforces the idea that Salvatore's is a world that lives not for its authenticity, but for its ability to mimic and embellish emotional experiences into something worthy of admiration. Thus, "summer rain" becomes a subtle yet profound symbol of escape: an escape from reality into a mythicized and aesthetically enhanced version of emotion.

Data 7:

"Dying by the hand of a foreign man, happily"

The lyric "Dying by the hand of a foreign man, happily" displays a stark contrast between the concepts of death and happiness. Denotatively, this phrase describes someone who is willing to die by the hand of a foreign man, and does so joyfully. But in Barthes' semiotic framework, this is not a literal statement, but a sign that implies symbolic meanings: self-sacrifice in the context of exotic love, female vulnerability in the face of dominant masculine figures, and the romanticization of emotional suffering. "Foreign man" adds a dimension of exoticism and cultural distance, reinforcing the image of a mysterious, dangerous, but still desirable love. It is a classic myth that often appears in popular culture that true love is worth suffering for, even to death, as long as it is enveloped in an aura of beauty and luxury.

In the context of escapism, this line marks an extreme form of emotional escape: the desire to fully immerse oneself in destructive yet aesthetic love. Del Rey, through these lyrics, constructs the experience of emotion as something that can be enjoyed in suffering, as long as it is wrapped in intense, poetic cinematic imagery. Rohani (2024) explains that emotional escapism in music involves the consumption of intense experiences that do not have to be experienced in real life, but simply felt in the aesthetic realm. Therefore, this phrase presents an alluring tragedy: death not as a terrifying end, but as the culmination of a total and "beautiful" experience of love. Love in Del Rey's world is an escape room that does not offer healing, but the aestheticization of wounds.

Within the framework of Baudrillard's simulacra (1994), this phrase resides entirely in the domain of hyperreality. "Dying by a stranger" is no longer a factual event, but a stylized image shaped by various cultural narratives, from classical opera and film noir to modern music videos. In Del Rey's hyperreal world, death is not a biological end, but an emotional image that can be polished, consumed, and replayed as song. This aestheticized sorrow reflects how the postmodern world replaces lived experience with

representation, transforming tragic symbols into commodities. Thus, the lyric concludes *Salvatore* with the most extreme expression of escapism: the desire to be completely lost in a beautiful and fatal fantasy.

CONCLUSION

Through Roland Barthes' semiotic approach combined with the concepts of escapism and simulacra, this study demonstrates that Lana Del Rey's song *Salvatore* constructs an aesthetic world rich in symbols and imagery, which function not merely as narrative ornaments but as mediums of escape from reality. Symbols such as "Miami city lights," "neon colors," "soft ice cream," and "death by a stranger" operate on three levels of meaning: denotative, connotative, and mythological. Each element conveys an intense emotional experience while simultaneously revealing how femininity and relational identity are constructed within a hyperreal, aestheticized, and exotic space.

The main finding of this research is that *Salvatore* creates a postmodern form of escapism that does not merely act as passive withdrawal, but as an active, affective, and cinematic space in which suffering, love, and luxury are fused into a mesmerizing visual narrative. The song is not merely a musical expression, but a simulation of a world severed from its original referents. Thus, this study expands the understanding of contemporary pop lyrics as a field of cultural discourse, where symbols and images do not only convey meaning but also create alternative realities that are consumed both emotionally and aesthetically by listeners.

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