

Love as portrayed in rock and metal

Everlong (Foo Fighters) vs Nothing Else Matters (Metallica)

How do rock/metal bands employ poetic devices to effectively express and portray love in their music?

Many song writers choose to write music expressing their feelings of love and past experiences through the use of poetic devices and figurative language. The use of metal and rock as forms of expression for songwriters to express their feelings of love is effectively conveyed through the use of poetic devices and figurative language. Metal and rock songs are two examples of expression that employ a range of poetic techniques and figurative language for artists to express and portray their feelings of love. This essay will explore this through a comparison between Foo Fighter's song *Everlong* and Metallica's song *Nothing else matters*, comparing the figurative language used, the rhythm, rhyme, and the differences in tonality.

Throughout the song *Everlong* by Dave Grohl, the use of a range of figurative language is a prominent feature used to express and portray love. Throughout the song, Dave Grohl uses metaphors to help the listener understand his feelings. The word "Everlong" isn't a real word, however, based on the context and its similarity to other English words, we can deduce that it would mean something similar to forever or describing something as if it may never end. The word "Everlong" is a metaphor for his feelings of love, representing how he wished the emotions he was feeling would never end. Additionally, Dave Grohl uses hyperboles to exaggerate his feelings. The line "breathe out so I can breathe you in, hold you in" is an exaggeration of wanting to be close together, holding each other, and cherishing everything about the other person. Furthermore, in the song, Dave Grohl uses a lot of repetition to bring emphasis to specific parts of the song. The most repeated part of the song is the chorus, being repeated 3 times. The chorus goes "And I wonder, When I sing along with you, If everything could ever feel this real forever, If anything could ever be this good again, The only thing I'll ever ask of you, You've got to promise not to stop when I say when" which further emphasizes how Dave Grohl feels when he's with this person. He is saying that he wishes he could be with her forever and for their time together to never end. In an interview, Dave Grohl said that *Everlong* is about "being connected to someone so much that not only do you love them physically and spiritually, but when you sing along with them you harmonize perfectly" which these lines help emphasize. Dave Grohl's use of figurative language is used to clearly portray his feelings and allows for the listener to understand his emotions.

Similarly, James Hetfield also uses figurative language in his song "*Nothing else matters*" to express his feelings of love and paint a picture of his understanding of love. In his song, James Hetfield uses lots of repetition to help emphasize certain points such as the lines "So close, no matter how far, Couldn't be much more from the heart, Forever trusting who we are, And nothing else matters" which gets repeated throughout the song. These lines help emphasize how James Hetfield feels that even though they are far apart physically, they can still be together emotionally, and that she is the only thing he cares about. The song also ends with "Never cared

for what they say, Never cared for games they play, Never cared for what they do, Never cared for what they know” which helps emphasize how James Hetfield only cares about this one person and no one else. Additionally, the song also uses hyperbole to exaggerate James Hetfield’s feelings. “Nothing else matters” is an exaggeration of loving someone so much that nothing else means anything anymore. Similarly to *Everlong*, *Nothing Else Matters* also uses figurative language to give the listener a deeper understanding of how the artist feels. Through an analysis of the use of figurative language in these 2 songs, one could argue that Everlong better utilized figurative language in portraying the idea of love from the more relatable use of hyperboles and more effective repetition. However figurative language isn’t the only poetic technique found in *Everlong* and *Nothing Else Matters* that is used to effectively communicate the artist’s feelings of love.

The use of rhyme in both of these songs helps in the artist’s portrayal of love. The use of rhyme in the song *Everlong* helps in communicating and portraying Dave Grohl’s feelings of love by making the song easier to listen to as well as making it more interesting for the listener. The song has an unconventional rhyming scheme, not rhyming every other line or in groups of 2 like most songs. The chorus of the song goes “And I wonder, When I sing along with you, If everything could ever be this real forever, If anything could ever be this good again, The only thing I’ll ever ask of you, You’ve got to promise not to stop when I say when, She sang”. The end of the first line rhymes with the 3rd: “wonder” and “forever”, the second line doesn’t rhyme with any other line but ends with the same word as the 5th line, the 4th line rhymes with the 6th: “again” and “when”, and the 7th line doesn’t rhyme with anything, leaving the listener hanging. This rhyming scheme brings emphasis to the end of the chorus “she sang”, not being part of the rhyme scheme. The only other line in the song that doesn’t match the rhyme scheme is the line “I sang”. This shows us that there was a connection between Dave Grohl and the person he’s singing about, and how they used to sing together and were fit for each other. It emphasizes the connection between the two of them. Additionally, the use of unconventional rhyme helps engage the listener and makes the song a more effective way of expressing love and portraying the artist’s feelings.

Similarly to The Foo Fighters, Metallica uses rhyme in their song *Nothing Else Matters* to help portray James Hetfield’s feelings of love. Each of the verses are broken up into 4 lines, 3 of which rhyme and the fourth is “and nothing else matters”. This helps bring emphasis to the line “nothing else matters” showing the importance of the person he’s singing about to James Hetfield. The choruses are three lines long, where the first two lines are basically the same and the last two rhyme. This, similarly to *Everlong*, allows the song to be more appealing to listeners as well as help effectively express the artist’s feelings of love. Through an analysis of the rhyme utilized in the two songs, one could argue that *Everlong*’s use of rhyme helps express Dave Grohl’s feelings of love more effectively than *Nothing Else Matters*’ use of rhyme. The rhyme scheme used in *Everlong* is more interesting to the listener as well as helps portray the love better. Additionally, the tone and rhythm of music used by the 2 artists to portray the idea of love plays important roles in the effectiveness of the expression of emotions.

The tone used by both songs helps the artist express and portray their feelings of love to the listener. *Everlong* is a fast song that represents the thrill of love and the strong feelings that

Dave Grohl feels. The song was originally written at 158 bpm, making it upbeat and relatively fast. The tone of the song is very happy, expressing the happiness and joy of love. The song also expresses feelings of longing, as well as wanting for his feelings to never end. “If everything could ever be this real forever, If anything could ever be this good again” demonstrates how Dave Grohl treasures his feeling of love and never wants it to go away. Additionally, the instrumentation of the music helps emphasize this thrilling feeling through the use of electric guitars as well as fast drums. The hi hats on the drums are played on 16th beats, making the song energetic and exciting. The use of a more upbeat song helps communicate and portray the feelings that Dave Grohl feels. Additionally, the higher bpm allows the listener to relate to Dave Grohl’s thrill and excitement he felt when he was in love.

In contrast to *Everlong*’s fast and upbeat vocals, *Nothing Else Matters* is a much slower song, played with acoustic guitar for most of the song, as well as being slower. The lyrics of the song talk about missing someone so much that nothing else matters, making it a much sadder song. “So close, no matter how far, Couldn’t be much more from the heart, Forever trusting who we are” shows us that James Hetfield is missing someone, and isn’t able to be with them, however will do anything to be able to be with them again. *Nothing Else Matters* uses the slowness to express strong feelings and portray the calmness and sadness you get when in love. Furthermore, as the song progresses, the song gradually gets “heavier”, with electric guitars and more aggressive guitar and drum parts, to signify the intense feeling of love. I believe that both songs use tone well to effectively convey and portray love in the song and is a matter of preference and the listeners current feelings to determine which uses it more effectively to express and portray love. From my current standpoint, I believe that Everlong utilizes tone more effectively to express the thrill, excitement, and joy you get from love.

In conclusion, rock and metal bands employ a range of poetic devices and language features to help effectively express and portray their feelings of love. Having analyzed both songs, I believe that *Everlong* explores love better than *Nothing Else Matters* due to its better use of figurative language as well as a tone that I believe matches the feeling of love better. Additionally, I think *Everlong* is a much more interesting song lyrically than *Nothing Else Matters*. Rock and metal bands employ poetic devices such as metaphors, repetition, rhyme, tone, and rhythm throughout their music to effectively express and portray love. Poetic techniques are powerful methods of exploring and illuminating ideas and concepts in music.

References

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