The eminence of insecurity in Anne Marie's song *Beautiful* (2021)

Firdausy Alya Hasana[1], Rizal Rafiuddin[2], Ni Nyoman Sarmi[3], Kusuma Wijaya[4], Rommel Utungga Pasopati[5]

[1][2][3][4][5]Universitas Dr. Soetomo, Surabaya, Indonesia
[5]rommel@unitomo.ac.id

Abstract

Many people feel insecure when they compare themselves to others or to society's idea of beauty. They often think they are not good enough, even though everyone has their own worth. The song *Beautiful* by Anne Marie talks about a person who feels insecure but later learns to accept herself. She wants people to see their own value, but this is not easy because of pressure from others and their own doubts. So, how is insecurity shown in Anne Marie's *Beautiful?* This study analyzes the song using a qualitative method. With ideas from psychology and literature, the song shows that insecurity is a normal human feeling, but it can change into strength through self-acceptance. The lyrics reflect this when struggles are turned into encouragement. In conclusion, the song shows that insecurity stands out as a strong theme, seen in the conflict between self-doubt and learning to accept oneself.

Keywords: Anne Marie, Beautiful, Insecurity, Self-acceptance

INTRODUCTION

Songs are often seen as a kind of literature, just like poetry, because they use language, rhythm, and emotion to tell stories and share ideas. Song lyrics usually carry meaning that can be symbolic or emotional, so listeners can connect to them on a deep level (Pramestya & Sumardijati, 2024; Riza et al., 2025). Songs are not only for entertainment but also a way to show identity, social issues, and personal struggles. This makes them important to study as literary works (Hanif & Adila, 2023; Riza et al., 2025). In today's pop music, many songs talk about common human experiences such as love, sadness, doubt, and confidence. These themes are emotional but also cultural, because they show how people see themselves and how society shapes their feelings (Iryani, 2024; Pasopati et al., 2025; Wijaya et al., 2025). By studying song lyrics like literature, people can learn how insecurities and struggles are turned into positive messages of hope.

Anne Marie is a singer who often writes about her personal feelings. In interviews, she has said that she writes from her own insecurities and turns them into songs that can support her listeners. She explained that music helped her during her teenage years when she felt anxious and unsure of herself (Gonzales, 2018; Pasopati et al., 2025; Wijaya et al., 2025). She also shared that writing down her insecurities inspired songs such as *Perfect to Me* and *Beautiful* (Levine, 2018). Her song *Beautiful* talks about the reality of insecurity that many people feel when they compare themselves with society's standards. The lyrics show feelings of not being good enough, but they also give encouragement to accept and value ourselves (Anne-Marie, 2021). The song teaches that imperfections do not make someone less, but instead are part of what makes the "*beautiful*". This shows that insecurity can be painful, but it can also lead to strength and self-acceptance.

This journal will study how insecurity is shown in Anne Marie's *Beautiful*. The research will look at how lyrics describe insecurity, how poetic language is used, and how the song gives a message of empowerment. Using a qualitative method, the song is studied as a literary

work where insecurity and self-acceptance are connected. The purpose is to shoe that insecurity, even though often seen as weakness, can also be a source when expressed in art.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with an explorative approach to study Anne-Marie's song *Beautiful*. The goal is to understand how feelings of insecurity and self-acceptance appear in the lyrics through psychology and literature. The data come from both online and offline sources, such as song lyrics, interviews, journals, and articles that talk about Anne-Marie and the idea of insecurity. The research uses a close reading technique to study the meaning and message of the song carefully. The steps include collecting information, reading and listening to the song many times, finding words or lines that show insecurity, comparing them with ideas from psychology and literature, and writing the findings with correct references. The main data come from the lyrics of *Beautiful*, while other data come from books and journals that explain insecurity, self-acceptance, and identity. In this research, beauty is the object of study, and theories about insecurity and identity are used as the tools to analyze. This method helps to explain how Anne-Marie shows insecurity as both a personal feeling and a common experience for many people.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Emotional Struggle in *Beautiful*

The lyrics of *Beautiful* contains meanings of emotional struggle. It is shown in the whole lyrics of the songs. The full song lyrics are as follows:

[Verse 1]
I woke up, look in the mirror today, yeah
Got so many things that I wanna change, and
Everybody's got something to say
But that's just who we are
My new clothes don't fit anymore now
Me and the mirror still continue to fall out
I don't like this stranger staring at me, yeah

[Pre-Chorus]
All my insecurities
Wishing for something different
All the things you do to me
Tell me the truth

[Chorus]
Are we beautiful?
All of us
'Cause we got something natural
It's a part of us
Darling, when they-ey put you down like that
Yeah, you can reply right back
You are beautiful, yeah (Beautiful)
I know, I know you are
I know, I know you are

[Verse 2]
I found myself looking again
Wondering why my body doesn't look like them
Know it might sound weird but I refuse to pretend
And then you probably think the same every now and again
I got more than all these scars
I got flaws and broken hearts
I don't like this stranger staring at me, yeah

[Pre-Chorus]
All my insecurities
Searching for something different
All the things you do to me
Tell me the truth

[Chorus]
Are we beautiful?
All of us
'Cause we got something natural
It's a part of us
Darling, when they-ey put you down like that
Yeah, you can reply right back
You are beautiful, yeah (Beautiful)
I know, I know you are (I know, I know, I know)
I know, I know you are

[Post-Chorus]
I know, I know you are

[Bridge]
We are beautiful, hmm
All of us
'Cause we got something natural
It's a part of us
Darling, when they-ey put you down like that
Yeah, you can reply right back
We are beautiful, yeah
I know, I know we are

[Chorus]
We are beautiful, yeah (Ah)
All of us (Yeah, yeah)
'Cause we got something natural (No)
It's a part of us
Darling, when they-ey put you down like that
Yeah, you can reply right back
We are beautiful, yeah (Beautiful)
I know, I know we are (We are)

I know, I know we are

[Outro]
We are beautiful
All of us
'Cause we got something natural
It's a part of us
Darling, when they-ey put you down like that
Yeah, you can reply right back
We are beautiful
I know, I know we are

The song explores the emotional struggle of facing one's reflection and feeling disconnected from the person in the mirror. In the beginning, the narrator wakes up dissatisfied with their appearance and overwhelmed by the pressure of other people's opinions (Anne-Marie, 2021; Iryani, 2024; Pasopati et al., 2025). They describe how clothes no longer fit and how they feel like a stranger to themselves. This leads to a confession of deep insecurities and a yearning for something different, highlighting the internal battles many people experience. The chorus shifts into a message of reassurance and empowerment, asking whether everyone is *beautiful* and affirming that beauty is natural and inherent. It encourages responding with confidence when others try to bring you down.

The second verse expands on these feelings by acknowledging comparisons to others and the frustration of not fitting idealized standards. Yet it also emphasizes that scars, flaws, and heartbreaks are parts of a larger, valuable whole (Anne-Marie, 2021; Ramadhani et al., 2025; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2014). Throughout the song, the repeated affirmations build a collective sense of acceptance, insisting that all people possess natural beauty. The bridge and final chorus reinforce the theme of unity, self-love, and resilience that everyone is *beautiful*, worthy, and deserving self-affirmation.

Personal Insecurity in and out of Anne-Marie's Life

Anne-Marie has often talked about her feelings of insecurity and anxiety. In many interviews, she admits that she has struggled with low self-confidence since she was a child. She said that she used to feel afraid of being judged by others and was unhappy with how she looked. This shows that insecurity can affect anyone, even people who seem confident in public. In her career as a singer, Anne-Marie tries to be open about these feelings so that her fans can see that they are not alone (Iryani, 2024; Pasopati et al., 2025; Snapes, 2019).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Anne-Marie said that therapy helped her understand her emotions better. She learned that it is okay to feel anxious and that being honest about her feelings makes her stronger. Through her music, she uses her emotions as a way to heal and connect with others (CapitalFM, 2020; Iryani, 2024; Pasopati et al., 2025; Rawal, 2023). She also mentioned that writing songs helps her face her problems rather than hide them. For her, music is a safe space to talk about insecurity and mental health.

Then, insecurity does not only come from inside a person, it can also be caused by social and cultural factors. One big reason people feel insecure today is social media. When people compare their lives or appearances to what they see online, they often feel not good enough. A study from the Ilomata International Journal of Social Science found that social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok can lower self-confidence and increase feelings of insecurity among students (Iorizzo, 2023; Kirana et al., 2025; Marisha et al., 2025).

For celebrities like Anne-Marie, this problem can be even harder. She said that being in the public eye makes her more sensitive to what people think about her. Sometimes, she

feels uncomfortable when she thinks others are judging her looks or behavior. This shows how external pressure—especially from media and audiences can make insecurity stronger (Iorizzo, 2023; Kirana et al., 2025; Snapes, 2019).

Music often becomes a way for people to express deep emotions that are hard to say directly. For Anne-Marie, singing and songwriting are ways to deal with anxiety and insecurity. She said that music allows her to be honest and real about her feelings, even the negative ones (Farashifah et al., 2025; Iorizzo, 2023; Kirana et al., 2025; Ramadhani et al., 2025). Songs like Anne-Marie's *Beautiful* might work in the opposite way starting from feelings of weakness and insecurity, but ending with encouragement and self-acceptance.

Anne-Marie's song *Beautiful* focuses on the feeling of not being good enough and learning to accept who we are. The lyrics describe sadness and self-doubt but then move toward confidence and self-love. This shows that insecurity is not always negative it can be the first step toward emotional growth. By expressing insecurity in her lyrics, Anne-Marie turns a personal emotion into a message for others (CapitalFM, 2020; Iryani, 2024; Pasopati et al., 2025; Rawal, 2023). The song tells listeners that everyone struggles with doubt, but that does not make them less worthy. This is similar to how many psychologists explain that facing insecurity can lead to stronger self-awareness and empathy. Therefore, *Beautiful* can be seen as both a reflection of Anne-Marie's personal journey and a universal story about learning to love oneself despite imperfections.

Analyses of Insecurity and Self-Image in *Beautiful*

Verse 1 of *Beautiful* shows how insecurity starts in a normal moment, like looking in the mirror after waking up. In this verse, Anne-Marie describes someone who immediately sees many things they want to change about themselves. This shows how insecurity often begins with negative thoughts about appearance and self-worth. The person feels uncomfortable in their own body, shown through the idea that their new clothes do not fit and that the mirror feels like an enemy. This reflects how people with low confidence usually focus more on their flaws than on their good sides. The verse also says that *"everybody has something to say"*, which means other people's comments and opinions can make insecurity worse. Social pressure and judgment can make someone feel not good enough or unsure about who they are (CapitalFM, 2020; Iryani, 2024; Pasopati et al., 2025; Resha & Izzaty, 2025).

The verse becomes stronger when Anne-Marie says she does not like the *"stranger"* in the mirror. This shows that the person no longer feels connected to themselves, which often happens when insecurity grows deeper. The mirror in this verse represents how someone sees themselves, and *"falling out"* with the mirror means they do not feel happy or comfortable with their reflection. This creates a feeling of confusion about identity and self-worth. Overall, Verse 1 shows insecurity as a mix of negative self-talk, pressure from others, and the feeling of losing confidence in oneself. It prepares the listener for the rest of the song, which later talks about learning to accept and love oneself again (Farashifah et al., 2025; Kirana et al., 2025; Ramadhani et al., 2025; Szabó, 2015).

In the Pre-Chorus, Anne-Marie shows how heavy and overwhelming insecurity can feel. When she says *"All my insecurities, wishing for something different,"* she expresses the desire to be someone else or to escape from negative feelings (Anne-Marie, 2021). This matches what researchers explain about insecurity: people often want to change themselves when their self-concept becomes weak or unstable (CapitalFM, 2020; Iryani, 2024; Marisha et al., 2025). The Pre-Chorus also shows how insecurity can grow stronger in the mind, creating pressure and emotional stress. Emotional expression through lyrics can act as a coping tool, and Anne-Marie's words show someone who is trying to handle strong feelings inside their head (Levy et al, 2024).

The next lines, *"All the things you do to me, tell me the truth,"* show the need for honesty and reassurance (Anne-Marie, 2021). This can be read as a request for emotional support from someone else, or even from oneself. When insecurity becomes too strong, people often look for clarity or comfort to calm their fears and doubts (CapitalFM, 2020; Iryani, 2024; Levy et al., 2024). The Pre-Chorus shows this need clearly, she wants to know the truth because insecurity makes her question everything, including her own value. Overall, the Pre-Chorus shows insecurity as a deep emotional fight, where someone wishes for change while still hoping for honesty and support to feel safe again.

The chorus of *Beautiful* highlights the message that everyone is *beautiful* because beauty is something natural within every person. When Anne-Marie asks, *"Are we beautiful? All of us"* the lyrics challenge the idea that beauty is limited to physical standards. Instead, beauty is shown as something universal and part of human identity. Research explains that when people learn to value their inner qualities rather than external appearance, they develop stronger and healthier self-esteem, which reduces insecurity and negative self-judgment (Farashifah et al., 2025; Kirana et al., 2025; Ramadhani et al., 2025; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2014).

The second part of the chorus becomes more uplifting when Anne-Marie encourages listeners to respond confidently when others *"put you down"*. By repeating the affirmations *"You are beautiful"* and *"I know you are"*, the song works like emotional support, reminding listeners to stay confident despite criticism (Anne-Marie, 2021). Studies show that positive affirmations help people stay emotionally strong and reduce the impact of negative comments, especially when dealing with insecurity or low self-worth (Creswell et al., 2013; Pasopati et al., 2025; Rawal, 2023).

Verse 2 of *Beautiful* shows a stronger level of insecurity, especially about body image. When Anne-Marie says she looks at herself again and wonders why her body does not look like *"them"*, it shows how comparing ourselves to other people can hurt confidence (Anne-Marie, 2021). Many people today, especially young adults, often compare their bodies with the pictures they see on social media, and this can make them feel not good enough. This matches a study showing that comparing yourself to others online can lower self-esteem and make people feel unhappy about their bodies (Pasopati et al., 2025; Rawal, 2023; Taylor & Armes, 2024). The verse also shows honesty when Anne-Marie says she refuses to pretend, meaning she does not want to hide how she really feels. This makes the verse more emotional because it shows her need to be accepted without pretending to be perfect.

The verse also says that insecurity is something many people feel, shown in the line *"you probably think the same every now and again"*. This means people often have the same worries but do not always say them out loud. When Anne-Marie mentions her *"scars, flaws, and broken hearts"*, she is talking about emotional pain and imperfections that are part of her life. Research shows that people who feel pressured to look perfect often dislike their own reflection, similar to how Anne-Marie calls her reflection a *"stranger in the mirror"* (Pasopati et al., 2025; Rawal, 2023; Ruiz et al., 2022). This verse shows that insecurity is not only about looks but also about emotional experiences and the fear of losing connection with oneself.

In the post-chorus, the repeated line *"I know, I know you are"* as a soft reminder that supports the message from the chorus. Even though the words are short, repeating them makes the listener feel comforted and understood. It sounds like someone gently encouraging you again and again until you start to believe in yourself. Many songs use repetition to make positive messages easier to remember, especially for people who feel insecure or doubt themselves. Research also explains that repeating positive phrases in songs can help improve mood and support self-acceptance because these phrases work like simple affirmations that slowly replace negative thoughts (Levy et al., 2024; Ramadhani et al., 2025; Tylka & Wood-

Barcalow, 2014). Through this short line, Anne-Marie strengthens the idea that everyone is *beautiful* and deserves to feel good about themselves.

The bridge of *Beautiful* changes the focus from one person to everyone. When Anne-Marie sings *"We are beautiful, all of us"*, she reminds listeners that beauty is something everyone has, not only a few people (Anne-Marie, 2021). The line *"we got something natural, it's a part of us"* shows that beauty comes from inside and does not depend on what people say. This connects with research saying that people feel more confident when they feel supported and connected to others, knowing they are not alone in their struggles. By using *"we"*, the song encourages listeners to see beauty as a shared human quality, not something they must chase or earn (Farashifah et al., 2025; Kirana et al., 2025; Ramadhani et al., 2025; Winstone et al., 2021)

The second part of the bridge gives a message of strength and courage. When Anne-Marie says, *"when they put you down like that, you can reply right back"*, she tells listeners not to let negative comments hurt them. Instead, they can answer confidently and protect their self-worth. This idea is similar to studies showing that people who practice self-compassion can handle criticism better and stay emotionally strong (Pasopati et al., 2025; Rawal, 2023; Todd et al., 2019). The line *"I know, I know we are"* repeats like a soft reminder, helping listeners believe in themselves (Anne-Marie, 2021). Overall, the bridge gives hope, support, and a sense of togetherness for anyone who struggles with insecurity.

The outro of *Beautiful* repeats the message that everyone has their own natural beauty. When Anne-Marie sings *"We are beautiful, all of us"*, she reminds listeners again that beauty is something we already have inside, not something we need to change or work for (Anne-Marie, 2021). The line *"it's a part of us"* shows that self-worth comes from accepting who we are. The outro also repeats the idea that when people try to put you down, you can answer with confidence instead of letting their words hurt you. This connects with research showing that repeating positive statements about yourself, called self-affirmation, can help people stay strong and handle negative comments better (Creswell et al., 2013; Ramadhani et al., 2025; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2014). The final line, *"I know, I know we are"*, sounds like gentle encouragement, ending the song with a warm feeling of support and confidence.

CONCLUSION

The lyrics of *Beautiful* by Anne-Marie show how people feel insecure and doubt themselves, but also how they can learn to accept who they are. The song explains how comparing oneself to others and facing social pressure can make someone feel unworthy. At the same time, it shows that insecurity can become a source of strength when a person learns to value themselves. This reflects how self-doubt and self-acceptance are connected, and how emotional growth comes from understanding and facing personal feelings. The song also reminds listeners that everyone has natural beauty and worth, and that it is important to respond to criticism with confidence. In the end, *Beautiful* teaches that accepting oneself can bring inner strength, self-love, and a sense of connection with others.

REFERENCES

Anne-Marie. (2021). *Beautiful.* On *Therapy.* Major Tom's.

CapitalFM. (2020). *Anne-Marie has opened up about her experience with anxiety: "I thought I was going to die.* https://www.capitalfm.com/artists/anne-marie/anxiety-battle-interview-mental-health/

Creswell, J. D., Dutcher, J. M., Klein, W. M. P., Harris, P. R., & Levine, J. M. (2013). Self-Affirmation Improves Problem-Solving under Stress. *PLoS ONE*, *8*(5), e62593.

Farashifah, N. I., Putri, A. S. L., Pasopati, R. U., Wijaya, K., & Hariyono, H. (2025). Spot's Empowerment to Arlo in The Good Dinosaur Movie. *EL2J (English Language and Literature Journal)*, *4*(1), 11-24.

Gonzales, E. (2018). *Anne-Marie is not afraid to speak her mind.* https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/art-books-music/a20108093/anne-marie-speak-your-mind-interview/

Hanif, I., & Adila, W. (2024). Insecurity in implicature as found in Taylor Swift's Midnights. *Prasasti/UNS Journal of Language Studies*, *9*(2), 196.

Iorizzo, E. (2023). *Anne-Marie paused therapy and let feelings 'come back' to write music.* https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/music/annemarie-lego-adhd-shania-twain-children-in-need-b1115496.html?

Iryani, N. E. (2024). Music as a Reflection of Female Struggles: Semiotic Analysis of 'Girls Like Us.' *Music as a Reflection of Female Struggles: Semiotic Analysis of 'Girls Like Us,' 6*(1), 013–024.

Kirana, K. S., Ramadhani, R. D., Nurdin, D. S. F., Hizbullah, A. D., & Pasopati, R. U. (2025). Awareness of Freedom and Responsibility behind Evelyn's Existential Despair in Everything Everywhere All at Once Movie Script. *Educalitra: English Education, Linguistics, and Literature Journal*, *4*(2), 182-192.

Levine, N. (2018). *Anne-Marie On Painful Experiences With Exes & Insecurities.* https://www.refinery29.com/en-gb/2018/03/194359/anne-marie-singer?

Levy, A., Granot, R., & Peres, R. (2024). Lyrics do matter: how "coping songs" relate to well-being goals. The COVID pandemic case. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *15*.

Marisha, F. M., Pambudi, N. K. S., Tania, N. B., & Nugroho, N. a. Z. (2025). The influence of Self-Concept on Feelings of insecurity among students using social media: Study of Instagram and TikTok. *Ilomata International Journal of Social Science*, *6*(1), 275–285.

Pasopati, R. U., Zhafirah, M. Q., Wirnoto, Y. A. A., Fadillah, M. R. I., & Andharu, D. (2025). The Psychoanalytical Roles of Imaginary Friends in Emotional Development in If Movie. *Alphabet*, *8*(1), 57-66.

Pramesetya, S. A., & Sumardjijati, S. (2024). Insecurity dalam lirik lagu. *Jurnal Komunikasi Universitas Garut Hasil Pemikiran Dan Penelitian*, *10*(2), 304–316.

Ramadhani, R. D., Kirana, K. S., Nurdin, D. S. F., Wijayanto, B. P., & Pasopati, R. U. (2025). Posey's Voluntary and Intentional Behaviors in Mitch Albom's For One More Day. *ELite Journal: International Journal of Education, Language and Literature*, *5*(4), 48-59.

Rawal, S. (2023). *British pop icon Anne-Marie: Therapy has helped me cope with my anxiety in a big way.* https://www.hindustantimes.com/entertainment/music/anne-marie-on-overcoming-anxiety-with-therapy-how-it-liberated-her-music-101682107900377.

Resha, R., & Izzaty, R. E. (2025). Self-Esteem and social comparison as a predictor of body image in adolescent girls. *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies*, *5*(10), 12152–12166.

Riza, D. A., Oktavia, D., Pasopati, R. U., Andharu, D., & Fadillah, M. R. I. (2025). The Interpretations of Morality and Ideology in Wes Anderson's Film Isle of Dogs. *Foremost Journal*, *6*(2), 176-183.

Ruiz, R. M., Alfonso-Fuertes, I., & Vives, S. G. (2022). Impact of social media on self-esteem and body image among young adults. *European Psychiatry*, *65*(S1), S585.

Snapes, L. (2019). *Anne-Marie: the platinum Essex pop star fighting anxiety and body shame.* https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/apr/20/anne-marie-the-platinum-essex-pop-star-fighting-anxiety-and-body-shame?

Szabó, M. K. (2015). The relationship between body image and self-esteem. *European Psychiatry*, *30*, 1354.

Taylor, J., & Armes, G. (2024). Social comparison on Instagram, and its relationship with self-esteem and body-esteem. *Discover Psychology*, *4*(1).

Todd, J., Aspell, J. E., Barron, D., & Swami, V. (2019). An exploration of the associations between facets of interoceptive awareness and body image in adolescents. *Body Image*, *31*, 171–180.

Tylka, T. L., & Wood-Barcalow, N. L. (2014). The Body Appreciation Scale-2: Item refinement and psychometric evaluation. *Body Image*, *12*, 53–67.

Wijaya, K., Santoso, L. S. V., Wirnoto, Y. A. A., Pasopati, R. U., & Kartiningsih, R. (2025). The Exposition of Collective Trauma in Short Movie of Bear Story. *EJI (English Journal of Indragiri): Studies in Education, Literature, and Linguistics*, *9*(2), 311-327.

Winstone, L., Mars, B., Haworth, C. M. A., & Kidger, J. (2021). Social media use and social connectedness among adolescents in the United Kingdom: a qualitative exploration of displacement and stimulation. *BMC Public Health*, *21*(1), 1736.