

THE EMPRISES OF LONGINGNESS ON BILLIE HOLIDAY'S "SOLITUDE"

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Abstract	Article Information
<p><i>Longing means craving for something, especially about love that has been gone for a long time. Solitude is a song by Billie Holiday released in 1952. The song describes the feelings of a singer who feels lonely because she has been left by her partner and also wants her partner to come back again. Then, this article would like to answer question of how may longingness be accentuated on Billie Holiday's Solitude? The longing experience of connection and companionship is a key theme in the lyrics of the song. Billie Holiday employs how she artfully conveys the delicate balance between vulnerability and strength, intensifying the emotional impact of the song. In conclusion, the exploration of Solitude song and the emprises of longingness not only illuminates the profound emotional depths of her artistry, but also underscores the enduring power of music to express and to transcend the universal human experience of longing.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Billie Holiday, Longingness, Solitude</p>	<p><i>Received:</i> 25/09/2023</p> <p><i>Revised:</i> 21/12/2023</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> 01/02/2025</p>

INTRODUCTION

A song such as *Solitude* by Billie Holiday, as a form of literature, blurring the lines between poetry and music. The lyrics of a song are such verses conveying deep emotions, stories, and themed discoveries. In this sense, song lyrics function as a distinct literary medium, often imbued with symbolic, metaphorical, and narrative elements (GeniusMedia, 2020; SongTell, 2021). The lyrics evoke a sense of melancholy and introspection, heartbreak, and the struggle to find solace in everyday life. *Solitude* presents a fusion of music and literature, as the lyrics dive into the realm of nostalgia, evoking feelings of longing and deep introspection. The song's lyrical poetry, composed by Eddie DeLange and Duke Ellington, shows art in creating evocative imagery that resonates deeply with listeners (GeniusMedia,

2020; MelodyInsight.com, 2021). Just as literature evolves on the interaction between concept and context, lyrics like *Solitude* find resonance in their connection to broader literary themes and cultural contexts. By examining the historical context in which the song was born, the researchers uncover layers of meaning and nuanced social commentary hidden in the lyrics.

Moreover, like literature, songs often reflect and respond to *zeitgeist* by capturing the general experiences and emotions of a particular era. Through *Solitude*, Billie Holiday evoked the longing and isolation felt by many of her day, creating a literary expression that became profound testimony to the human condition. The interplay between music and literature goes beyond the lyrics. The song's melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic structure add depth and meaning, enhance literary elements, and create an immersive experience for listeners (Fitriani et al., 2023; GeniusMedia, 2020). The symbiotic relationship between words and music in a song enhances emotional resonance and emphasizes the interconnectedness of these art forms. As a concept, sung song goes deeper into the realm of human desires, yearnings, and aspirations that transcend the boundaries of everyday life. It encompasses a deep emotional longing for something or someone, often accompanied by a sense of incompleteness or an intense desire for fulfillment (Coplan et al., 2021; Peplai & Wiley, 1982). In everyday life, people encounter instances of longingness that range from simple desires to profound aspirations. It can be the longingness for sense of belonging within community, fulfilling career, personal healing growth, or the longingness for a deeper connection with oneself.

Ultimately, the relationship between theory of longingness and *Solitude* by Billie Holiday is a complex one. The central themes of loneliness, longing, and human connection present in the song are certainly related to many theoretical frameworks that explore human experience (Attamimi et al., 2023; Coplan et al., 2021). Basically at its core, *Solitude* addresses topics that have been explored by theoretical perspectives, which is psychology and philosophy. The concept of longingness provides such a lens for understanding the emotional impact of the song and its relevance to human experience (Anderson, 2016; Coplan et al., 2021). The research question that guides this analytical article is how may longingness be accentuated on Billie Holiday's *Solitude*? To address the question, the researchers employ a multifaceted approach that draws from various disciplines, including lyrical analysis and literary criticism. The analyses indeed encompass the following key aspects such as lyrical analysis, musical analysis, and emotional impacts.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative method as it is the descriptive, analytical, and explorative ways to analyze the lyrics based on how human emotion works and related to the song. The aim of this research is to uncover the meanings, perspectives, and experience behind longingness of the song. Through qualitative approach, this study generates rich, detailed,

and specific context description about human emotions alongside with any emotional depth and nuanced artistic qualities of the song. The researchers also assert lyrical analysis to underline collected data from many perspectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Memories, Experience, and Despair in *Solitude*

Solitude, a renowned jazz melody composed by Billie Holiday, was released in 1956 in the album of the same name, produced by Norman Granz (GeniusMedia, 2020; MelodyInsight.com, 2021). The song narrates a melancholic tale of a person feeling desolate and alone after her partner leaves her behind. The lyrics of the song convey the longing of the protagonist for her partner to return to her. The song's themes of loneliness and longingness resonate with audiences, making it a timeless piece of art that continues to evoke emotions in listeners (MelodyInsight.com, 2021; SongTell, 2021). The study sheds light on the interplay between music and literature, demonstrating how song lyrics can be a distinct literary medium with symbolic, metaphorical, and narrative elements. Overall, the research highlights the profound emotional depths of Billie Holiday's artistry and the significance of music in expressing human emotions and experiences.

Furthermore, the composition indicates light on the complexities and nuances of a relationship, where only one person is trying to keep the relationship afloat and make it work while the other person seems to have moved on. The song gives voice to the isolation felt after losing someone people deeply care about, and the desire to have them back in her life (GeniusMedia, 2020; SongTell, 2021). *Solitude* stands as a testament to the immense talent of Billie Holiday and her ability to convey emotions through her music. The lyrics of the song are listed in the following:

[Verse 1]

*In my solitude you haunt me
With reveries of days gone by
In my solitude you taunt me
With memories that never die*

[Chorus]

*I sit in my chair
Filled with despair
There's no one could be so sad
With gloom everywhere
I sit and I stare
I know that I'll soon go mad*

*[Verse 2]
In my solitude
I'm praying
Dear Lord above
Send back my love*

[Chorus]

*[Outro]
In my solitude
I'm praying
Dear Lord above
Send back my love (GeniusMedia, 2020)*

The song intriguingly portrays the interwoven meanings between memories, experience, and despair. The character in the song is overwhelmed by an intense feeling of solitude that she believes could lead to an early demise (JazzJournal, 2022; SongTell, 2021). Her loss is the most bitter experience she has ever encountered in her life. The memories, which are deeply rooted in her thoughts, cause her to solely focus on the existence of her partner. In this regard, the matter of experience is not trivial, but rather, a reflection of her profound understanding of the emotions of those who were once close to her (Aulia et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2023). Furthermore, since the memories continue to haunt her, the experience remains vividly close, and as a result, keeps stinging her. She cannot envision any other situation than her despair over the loss of her partner. This reflects the syndrome of longingness, which could invariably lead to feelings of loneliness.

Psychological Perceptions of Prolonged Longingness and Loneliness

The relationship between psychology and the concept of longing can be comprehended by means of scrutinizing human emotions and desires in a more profound manner. The discipline of psychology goes deeper into various aspects of human behavior, cognition, and emotions, and longingness. In psychological terms, those can be perceived as a profound and intense emotional state characterized by desire or longing for something or someone (Coplan et al., 2021; Peplai & Wiley, 1982). It is frequently associated with sentiments of vacuity, detachment, and yearning for emotional connection or the fulfillment of unfulfilled needs. Psychology endeavors to fathom the underlying cognitive, emotional, and social factors that contribute to the experience of longingness and its influence on individual well-being. It also probes into the repercussions of unattained longing and its potential impact on mental health (Yuliasuti & Pasopati, 2021, 2022). Longingness, if unresolved, can give rise to feelings of depression, anxiety, and a perpetual sense of discontentment, and if individuals strive to discover ways to satisfy their needs but never seem to find what they are searching for, the situation could worsen even further.

The perception of longingness connotes an understanding of yearning that is not merely a simple desire but rather a state of affairs that demands explication. In this sense, it

refers to a condition that is separated by distance and desires to be shortened (Michelle et al., 2023; Yuliastuti et al., 2021). It could also connote a feeling of desire that is associated with further enthusiasm for taking action towards fulfilling that desire. The desire is exhibited not merely from the impetus in the unconscious mind but also from memories that have been prolonged for an extended period (Pasopati, 2018). Moreover, longingness is also an action that is related to craving. The individual craves it with a great intensity that cannot be modified by any other reason.

The perception mentioned above is seen from the meaning of longing as a verb. However, as a noun, the notion of longingness can also be regarded as a state of being that is not only about loving but also a sense of weariness that something may never happen again in reality (Coplan et al., 2021; Storr, 1989). This weariness is about the sadness that things will never occur again for the second time. The longingness for something or someone is not only about missing it and craving it intensely but also the sensation of losing it. There is a lingering in the state of longingness that people can only experience, but the object itself may never be realized again as seen in matter of trauma.

Furthermore, longingness could also allude to lovesickness, which emphasizes love as the primary concept of longing in line with the action of love. This perception also views longing as a psychological emotion of individuals with respect to matters of love. When experiencing lovesickness, people indicate a light psychological illness in the need to attain the love itself (Peplai & Wiley, 1982; Yuldasheva & Samindjonova, 2023). If it cannot be achieved, they will feel sick and could create a more severe condition. In a lighter sense, lovesickness could lead to greater creativity and motivate people to pursue love more fervently. Even though this sense could be beneficial for individuals in terms of experiencing a better sense of love, the heavier condition is seen in matters of loss. If someone has lost someone they love and becomes lovesick as a result, they could feel really bad and tend to accumulate further trauma.

Then, if longingness is not realized in life, the further matter could reach idea of loneliness. Loneliness is defined as a feeling of loss and dissatisfaction produced by a mismatch between the kinds of social relationships people want and the kinds of social relationships they have (Coplan et al., 2021; Yuldasheva & Samindjonova, 2023). It could also mean living without making relationships or having no desire to make intimate interpersonal relationships. The individual's feeling of loneliness emphasizes on the subjective discomfort the individual feels when the individual's relationship is less close. Feelings of loneliness may be a temporary condition resulting from a change in an individual's social life. It could also be more permanent if the person could not go forward and tend to stay on former memories.

Loneliness could also be understood as the existence of a dynamic personality in individuals from psychophysical systems that determine the characteristics of behavior through individual desires in social life. In this case, loneliness may catch up into the existence of depression in which its emotional disorders characterized by feelings of sadness, gloom, lack of enthusiasm, feeling worthless, centered on failure (Peplai & Wiley, 1982; Yuldasheva &

Samindjonova, 2023). Loneliness will also be accompanied by a variety of negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, unhappiness, dissatisfaction, self-blame and shame. Besides, further mental and emotional state comes together with loneliness as mainly characterized by a feeling of alienation and lack of meaningful relationships with others.

The relations between longingness and loneliness are indicated in how the loss of something or someone may result to feeling empty, lonely, having no friends, being isolated, and losing trust either (Akbar et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023). Longingness situates on the idea between grief and hope in matter of disconnection of those two matters. His/her reality then is considered not in accordance with his/her expectations or desires. The differences between reality and desire is how negative feelings may arise in response to the occurrence or loss or reduction of social interactions and the quality of relationships (Lay et al., 2019; Yuldasheva & Samindjonova, 2023). However, the cause is from external factors, but the experience is quite subjective. Therefore, anyone may experience longingness and loneliness that are so particular and peculiar as well related only to the private self of the sufferer.

Reflections of Longingness and Loneliness in *Solitude*

[Verse 1]
In my solitude you haunt me
With reveries of days gone by
In my solitude you taunt me
With memories that never die

The verse explores the bittersweet nature of solitude, where memories of the past become a haunting presence, evoking a sense of longing and torment. The use of "reveries" and "days gone by" emphasizes the distant and unreachable nature of these memories, intensifying the feeling of nostalgia and longing (Bull, 2023; Hipson et al., 2021). The use of "you" creates an impression of a specific person or presence, adding an element of emotional pain and anguish to the solitude experienced. The enduring nature of memories is portrayed as ever-present and everlasting, resisting the passage of time. The use of "never die" creates a sense of heaviness and emotional weight, highlighting the lasting impact of these memories on the protagonist (JazzJournal, 2022; SongTell, 2021). Overall, the theme of nostalgia, emotional pain, and the enduring quality of memories is expertly woven together, setting the stage for the rest of the song's emotions.

The verse indeed shows deep relations between longingness and loneliness. The memories that never die actually indicate how longingness has become such loneliness that keep haunting the character. Reveries of days been time that has been passed in the sense of longingness. The character knows that longing is an action that she does at the time. However, she also involves that longingness furtherly transforms into matter of loneliness in which solitude is coming by through the action of taunting as well (GeniusMedia, 2020; Lay et al., 2019). Taunting in this case is like challenging. Since the longingness keeps challenging the character, then the unrealized longingness from the loss of someone could easily become such loneliness.

[Chorus]
I sit in my chair
Filled with despair
There's no one could be so sad
With gloom everywhere
I sit and I stare
I know that I'll soon go mad

The first line depicts a person sitting alone, reflecting the image of physical loneliness. Loneliness often arises when a person is separated from social interaction and trapped in their thoughts. The second line highlights the deep emotional level of loneliness, triggering strong feelings of hopelessness and isolation. The third line describes a deep level of loneliness, causing a person to feel hopeless and alone (MelodyInsight.com, 2021; SongTell, 2021). The fourth line depicts a gloomy and negative mood, causing difficulty in seeing the positives or light in life. The fifth line depicts a person trapped in their loneliness, staring into nothingness, causing them to lose balance and experience a mental breakdown. The sixth line highlights the negative impact of prolonged feelings of isolation and solitude on one's mental well-being.

The Chorus above underlines matter of solitude is not about merely being individual. It is about a forced condition from the side of loss and also the aspect of being in despair. Therefore, the Chorus mentions clearly about grief and despair that has shaped such loneliness in the self of the character (Anderson, 2016; Bull, 2023). Sitting in the chair and staring are symbols of loneliness in which no one has really got in touch with the character. From the despair into madness, the transformation from longingness to loneliness is directly involved. The gloom is also the one that shape solitude reasoned in the sense of situation in between longing of connection and companionship.

[Verse 2]
In my solitude
I'm praying
Dear Lord above
Send back my love

The first line highlights the central theme of solitude, as the writer expresses their isolation and longing for connection and solace. They pray, seeking divine intervention and solace, and seek the return of a lost love. The third line addresses the Lord, seeking divine intervention to alleviate their feelings of loneliness. The final line reveals the writer's longing for someone they love, pleading for their return to reunite with them (GeniusMedia, 2020; SongTell, 2021). The verse 2 highlights the emotional aspects of solitude and the deep longing for connection and companionship.

The verse deeply exposes the longing towards someone that the character really loves. The indication of Lord above is about God himself. Moreover, the figure of God also means that the character no longer knows whom should she asks help to. She has been alone since the loss of the couple until she asks God to make the couple return for the sake of her own being. The lyrics also show such shift from longingness to loneliness in the word of praying (Anderson, 2016; Sarmi et al., 2023). It indicates a shift from hope as symbol of longingness to pray as matter of loneliness. She could no longer speak to anyone but God himself. It seems that she has surrendered everything and send back everything to the hands of God Himself.

The theory suggests that Billie Holiday's rendition of *Solitude* goes beyond a mere musical performance. It becomes an exploration of the human condition, tapping into the profound emotions associated with longingness and highlighting the transformative power to evoke deep emotional responses (Bull, 2023; Storr, 1989). The lyrics describe the emptiness and isolation felt in the absence of emotional connection, allowing listeners to relate to the universal human experience of desiring deep emotional bonds. Holiday's rendition moves out to explore the human condition and highlighting the transformative power of music to evoke deep emotional responses.

Through her artistry, Billie Holiday takes the audiences on a journey through the landscape of solitude, inviting them to reflect on their own experiences of longingness and the universal quest for emotional connection. In doing so, she creates a timeless and resonant piece of music that continues to captivate audiences, transcending time and generations. The song's intertwined meanings hold a deep significance as it highlights the importance of memories, experiences, and despair in shaping an individual's thought processes (Coplan et al., 2021; Storr, 1989). The character's feeling of loneliness is a powerful emotion that is portrayed vividly in the song. The intensity of her loss is palpable, and it is clear that the memories of her partner are deeply engraved in her mind. The matter of experience is not something to be taken lightly, as it holds a great deal of significance in shaping an individual's understanding of their emotions (Bull, 2023; Hipson et al., 2021). The haunting nature of the memories is an accurate portrayal of the character's emotional state, as she cannot seem to escape the thoughts of her former partner.

The character's despair is an essential element in the song, as it reflects the broader theme of longingness and loneliness. The sense of isolation that the character feels is a powerful emotion that is relatable to many individuals (Anderson, 2016; Coplan et al., 2021). The song's lyrics add depth to the character's emotions, as they provide insight into her thought processes. The loss of the partner is a significant event that has left an indelible mark on the character's life. The memories that she holds onto are a testament to the strength of their relationship, and it is clear that the character is struggling to come to terms with the loss.

The song's portrayal of the character's emotions is a significant reminder of the power of memories, experiences, and despair. It is a testament to the human capacity to feel deeply and to be affected profoundly by the loss of a loved one (Clark, 2017; Smith et al., 2023).

The character's sense of loneliness is an emotion that resonates with many individuals, and it is clear that the song's lyrics are intended to be relatable to a broad audience. The song's portrayal of the character's emotions is a powerful reminder that the human experience is shaped by a complex interplay of memories, experiences, and emotions.

CONCLUSION

Solitude by Billie Holiday not only showcases her artistry but also underscores the enduring power of music to express and transcend the human experience of longing. The research goes deeper into the concept of longingness as portrayed in Billie Holiday's song *Solitude*. The song explores themes of loneliness, yearning, and the human experience of longing for a lost love. The lyrics evoke a sense of melancholy and introspection, effectively conveying the emotions of the singer who feels isolated and desires her partner's return. Through the song's lyrics, Billie Holiday skillfully captures the delicate balance between vulnerability and strength, intensifying the emotional impact of the song.

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