

**Mr. Bockholt's Sample**  
**Figurative Language Song Analysis**

**Song:** "Sound of Silence"

**Artist:** Simon and Garfunkel

**Figures of Speech:**

"Because a vision softly creeping/ Left its seeds while I was sleeping/ And the vision that was planted/ In my brain still remains." This metaphor by Simon and Garfunkel is comparing an idea to a seed. Seeds, while tiny, contain an embryo capable of producing a new plant. If a tiny seed is planted and nurtured with sunlight and water, in time it can produce an enormous tree. Likewise, an idea can start out small, just a fleeting thought. But if that idea is "planted" in a willing mind and "nurtured" with meditation, throughout time, that small idea can grow into a mature philosophy. This shows that Simon and Garfunkel have been thinking about the ideas presented in this song for a long time.

"Sound of silence." This phrase has two figures of speech: alliteration and oxymoron. The repetition of the "s" sound makes this phrase both poetic and memorable. More importantly, however, the "sound of silence" is an oxymoron, juxtaposing two inherently contradictory terms. Sound is the presence of noise; silence is the absence of it. While it is physically impossible for silence to make a sound, these contradictory terms in Simon and Garfunkel's song gives silence a palpable presence.

"Silence like a cancer grows." Here Simon and Garfunkel employ a simile, comparing silence to cancer. Cancer is a disease involving abnormal cell growth that has the potential to spread to other parts of the body, which can possibly prove fatal. Silence in this song is not just the absence of sound; it is the inability of people to communicate emotionally. This simile shows that when people fail to connect emotionally (when they keep their thoughts, beliefs, hopes, fears, and emotions silent), their ability to connect with others diminishes. The more people emotionally isolate themselves from others, the more that isolation can potentially spread to other parts of society.

**Theme:**

The song "Sound of Silence" is about modern technology and reveals that modern technology can emotionally isolate people from each other. In the dream the artists describe, a man is walking through the streets alone when he has "eyes are stabbed by the flash of a neon light." The neon light could represent the glowing allure of modern technology—the hypnotic attraction of television and movies, or, in more recent times, smartphones. The man then sees ten thousand people "bowing and praying" to the god of technology, "talking without speaking" and "hearing without listening." In the dream, all of society is so enthralled with modern technology that they are emotionally isolated from one another. While Simon and Garfunkel wrote this song in 1964—long before smartphones and social media—the lyrics couldn't have proved more prophetic about today: people bent over staring into the glowing screens of smartphones on social media websites, replacing authentic relationships and digital relationships. The man in the dream then attempts to break people out of their isolation but hears nothing but the "sound of silence." The artists are unable to be heard—literally and figuratively—through the noise of modern technology.