

Wicked Redemption:
A Musical Perspective Analysis of
“Ain’t No rest For The Wicked”

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A Music Perspective: Uses discursive non discursive and rhetoric to analyze an artifact (music in this case) with a certain criteria and purpose of revealing whether or not it is a redeeming piece of music.

- Discursive Symbols:
 - Units with fixed associations (letters/numbers)
- Non Discursive Symbols:
 - Units beyond words or numbers (nonverbal/paralanguage)
- Musical Artifacts:
 - To be an artifact, the meaning (intended or not by creator) must be widely shared by an identifiable group

Music as Rhetoric: persuasive elements of music as to argue something through a musical channel.

Musical Rhetoric:

- Persuasive arguments conveyed through music that reinforce/challenge taken-for-granted beliefs/behavior
- Non Discursive Rhetoric:
 - Study of how these symbols function as persuasion
- Music Perspectives:
 - Explains how musical sounds (non discursive) with or without lyrics (discursive) function rhetorically

Musical Aesthetics/Communication: This is the appreciation/evaluation of musical forms or designs; This is the way musical interpretations can be interpreted separately by others and each have their own meanings not necessarily shared collectively.

- Musical Aesthetics:
 - Appreciation/evaluation of musical form/designs sometimes within a well defined criteria
- Musical Communication:
 - Refers to individual and unique meanings, not necessarily shared, that we attach to musical work

Illusion of Life: Based from Susanne Langer's early work

Illusion of Life:

- Called this because music is not real life; it represents human experiences and emotions
- Impacts:
 - Discursive symbols (letters/words) are not real things; they are representations of real things
 - Non Discursive symbols (musical sounds) are not actual emotions; rather they are representations of emotions

Music & Emotions: The way music makes us feel personally/intrinsically, or together as a group
Music Communicates Emotions using:

- Intensity Patterns:
 - Tension (allegro/ fast paced) and speeding up (accelerando) and increased volumes (crescendo)
- Release Patterns:
 - Relief (slow rate/largo) and slowing down (ritardando) and reducing volumes (decrescendo)
- Paralinguistics as in Music:
 - As we listen to cues, pitch, and tone in vocal communication as so we listen to rhythm, harmony, melody, instrumentation and articulation

Virtual Time & Experiences: The lyrical accounting of the artists' perspective, as not actual time but an imaginary time where imagination, reflectivity, emotion and experience all collide through music.

- Virtual Time:
 - Actual time is succession one-dimensional of moments (minutes) whereas music suspends this and substitutes rhythm, harmony etc. of its intensity/release patterns
- Virtual Experience:
 - Not real experience but a lyrical accounting of life via an artist's perspective

Comic Vs. Tragic Lyrics: The telling of a sad and hopeless story, or a happy and fulfilling story.

- Comic Lyrics:
 - Not funny or hilarious, but the protagonist is determined to beat the odds/cannot fail
- Tragic Lyrics:

- Protagonist has sense of hopelessness, attempts to cope with reality
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Augmentation of Lyrics: How the lyrics are oriented to convey a certain message.

- Poetic Lyric Illusions:
 - Lyrics are backwards looking, reflecting on the resolved past
- Dramatic Lyric Illusions:
 - Forward looking into unresolved future

Congruity Vs. Incongruity: Whether the song lyrics are designed to convey a cohesive message, or a confusing and torn story purposefully.

- Congruent Interaction:
 - Emotional meanings of lyrics which are reinforced
- Incongruent Interaction:
 - Emotional meanings of lyrics which contradict one another, and alter meanings which would have been conveyed by either one

Congruity of “Ain’t No Rest For The Wicked”

- Congruity Analysis Conclusion:
 - -tragic lyrics + release patterns + poetic illusion e.g.

“He'd stuffed his bank account with righteous dollar bills
cash, but first you know I gotta ask”

“I told him, You can have my

What made you want to live this kind of
life?”

(poetic illusion)

But even still I can't say much because I know we're all the same

Oh yes we all seek out to satisfy those thrills”

(tragic lyrics)

Ambiguity & Ascription

- Strategic Ambiguity
 - Strategic Ambiguity is making a claim using vague language that avoids specifics but helps listeners

“But even still I can't say much because I know we're all the same

Oh yes we all seek out to satisfy those thrills”

(ambiguous lyrics)

- Strategic Ascription
 - There is also a story being told in these lyrics

Listen to the Song

Piece together the Conclusion...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKtsdZs9LJo>

Analysis of “Ain’t No Rest for The Wicked”

- Musical congruity -tragic lyrics + release patterns + poetic illusion e.g.
 - Group theme that the “wicked” can’t rest, and need to survive through unethical methods
 - Slow beat after chorus, gives us time to understand whats happening
 - Backward reflecting, happened in the past, and is being reflected upon
- Lyrical Ascription
 - Story of what happened to himself
 - Tragic lyrics- protagonist has sense of hopelessness and “whatever happens happens” attitude
- Lesson
 - The wicked will do what they need to survive, no matter what they need to do, and that we are all wicked in that we’ll do whatever we need to survive no matter the method
 - There is no redemption for any of us...

Conclusion

- We will do what we need to to survive
 - Sellnow’s Illusion of Life method is a viable and effective tool for analyzing songs through multiple levels and filters
 - We will continue to use this tool to analyze future pieces/artifacts and continue to learn new/ surprising things utilizing this tool
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- Hope you Enjoyed! Thank you

**Ain't No Rest
For the Wicked**