

Poetry Analysis of “Cave In” by Owl City

Owl City is an electronic music project produced single-handedly by Adam Young. He is the artist of many “good” songs in the literary sense; “Cave In” being one of them. Owl City’s music is known for its calm electronic influence and whimsical effects, paired with soft vocals. “Cave In” by Owl City contains all of the literary elements required to be considered a “good song”--symbolism, imagery, figurative language, tone, and finally, theme. It contains all of these elements while still being a pleasing song to listen to.

A lot of symbolism is evident in the song “Cave In”. One of the examples can be found in the first and second lines, which state “Please take a long hard look through your textbook / ‘Cause I’m history”. These lines are considered symbolism because the ‘textbook’ is symbolizing the history of the speaker’s life, who is instructing the listener to “look through it”. This phrase most likely means to reassess actions and think of past memories *before* those actions and memories become a thing of the past. Another example of symbolism is in lines 16 and 17. “Because we've heard it said that every mushroom cloud / Has a silver lining”. In these lines, the mushroom cloud symbolizes a bad event or negative occurrence, while the silver lining represents an upside or a good happening. It is as if saying every bad thing has something good to it. These two examples are a good show of symbolism shown in “Cave In” by Owl City.

In this song, imagery is also present. In line 20, the example of “Cause the road tastes like wintergreen” can be found. This line is an instance in imagery because it appeals to one of the five senses--in this case, taste. “Taste like wintergreen” tells of the flavor of driving on a road in the song. Another example of imagery can be found in lines 21 and 22, “The wind and the rain

smell of oil and octane / Mixed with stale gasoline”. Here it gives the description scent of the wind and rain, which apparently smells like oil, octane, and stale gasoline; most likely from the cars traveling on the road. This gives a good sense of imagery because of its ability to be imagined, as does the “taste like wintergreen” line.

“Cave In” by Owl City also has several instances of figures of speech. Many different types can be found in this song, such as metaphors, personification, hyperboles, etc. An example of a metaphor can be found in line 11, where it states “Because my backbone is paper thin”. This line is a metaphor because the speaker compares his backbone to the thin width of paper without using “like” or “as”. “Because my backbone is paper thin” in this song means that the speaker’s “backbone” is not supportive and is comparable to paper, “backbone” meaning the foundation for stress and pressure. A hyperbole can be found in line 4, “Cause I’ve been dying to leave”. This is an example of a hyperbole because it is an exaggeration--the speaker was not literally near death because of the desire to leave. Finally, an instance of personification can be found in line 31 “And if my intentions stray I’ll wrench them away”. This line would be considered personification because while it may be possible to “wrench away” humans, one cannot physically wrench away intentions, as intentions are not even a material thing. This instance, along with the other examples given, are all forms of figurative language found in the song “Cave In”.

The tone of this song is the desire for freedom. The speaker is talking about how he will become a mere memory; how he will leave everything. The speaker has been wanting to leave for a while, which can be seen in line 4 - “Cause I’ve been dying to leave”. He wishes to do away with the pressure on his shoulders and to be at ease; relieving stress. Evidence of this can

be seen in lines 12 and 13, “Get me out of this cavern / Or I'll cave in”. To summarize, the tone of “Cave In” would be to escape stress and become free.

The theme of “Cave In” is to relax and escape from reality if there is intense pressure, so much that one could ‘cave in’ underneath it, hence the song title. “Cave In” paints a picture of a person running away from their life for fear of crippling under the weight of pressure of being good at something. Proof of this observation can be seen in lines 9 and 10, where it says “I've had just about enough / Of quote, "diamonds in the rough"”. The quote “diamonds in the rough” means having exceptional talent that is not shown, or refined--just like diamonds, which seem ordinary until polished and cut. This particular line gives insight into the theme of the song and what the speaker is receiving tension from, as it suggests he feels like he has no special talent when it is really buried under the surface.

Many may say that “Cave In” by Owl City is not a good song; that they do not like the way it sounds or the beat of the music. In fact, many people may not like techno music. There is no plausible argument for that, as everyone is entitled to their own opinion. Some may say that the only thing Owl City is good at composing are idiosyncratic songs with no meaning, just with electronic flair, which is evident in “Cave In”. However, this claim is incorrect. “Cave In” has a lot of meaning that can be easily overlooked. If one says it is not a good song in a literary sense, they are horribly mistaken. “Cave In” by Owl City is, in fact, a great song when it comes to the literary SIFTt elements. It contains many creative aspects of literature, such as imagery, symbolism, theme, tone, and figurative language.

In conclusion, “Cave In” by Owl City is considered a good song because it contains all of the literary elements needed to be worthy of being “good”. It has all the SIFTt elements included

in it, which are symbolism, imagery, figurative language, tone, and theme. Even though it may sound whimsical and insignificant with unique lyrics, “Cave In” tells of a deep meaning that has more to it than meets the eye. Because of all these factors, “Cave In” by Owl City is most certainly a good song.