

“It’s a Fake, It’s a Hoax It’s Not Just Another Music Video”

Banjo music isn’t typically the type of music that the common person would want to listen to. This instrument is usually associated with the Deep South, hillbillies, and crazy meaningless music. However, one band has somehow created a perfect mixture of bluegrass, folk, rock, and indie with the use of banjo and guitar. This band is known as the Avett Brothers.

The band from Concord, North Carolina gets its name from its two main vocalists, Scott Avett and Seth Avett. These two brothers along with three other group members compose meaningful love songs with their own twist to form a completely different type of genre that is simply indescribable. Their albums include a wide spectrum of types of songs from rock, ballad, folk and also a variety of “Pretty Girl from” songs.

Most recently the Avett Brothers produced a new album named “Magpie and the Dandelion”. In this album there is a song titled “Another is Waiting,” which focuses and aims at showing how magazines and other fashion related propaganda develop insecurities among women. The music video directed by Scott Avett was released closely before the album release.

Although the Avett Brothers only have a select few music videos, they usually are very similar. These similarities are shared in simply showing the band singing and playing

music numerous times. For the Avett Brothers it's usually in really unexpected places and often wearing really bizarre clothes.

The music video for “Another is Waiting” follows the expected concepts for its genre, it also displays an importance on the rhetorical appeals in the form of logos.

The expected outcome of the music video as a series of scenes that show the band members constantly and throughout the music video was evident. Also for its genre it was expected to see a pretty girl and making her the main focus. What may not be as evident is the high usage of symbolism within this video.

One component of this symbolism seen throughout the video was the usage of skeletons. This symbol was highly repetitive and as Molly Bang describes “our eyes search for repetitive patterns, which enable us to make sense out of what we see. We notice repetition amid confusion” (242). This technique seen throughout the music video was very important in the sense that the producer wanted the viewer to notice it among the confusion of trying to make sense of what was going on with the main character.

The pretty girl as the main character is shown pursuing a career in modeling. In the first sequence the viewer is taken into a modeling agency, where they first introduce the main character coming out of her interview. At the same time the lyrics to the song are already saying, “It's a fake, it's a hoax,” implying that this place is associated with lies and deception. During this scene they immediately show a few skeletons staring back at her.

The ideology of this symbol is usually associated with death and evil and in some cases anorexia. As Sturken and Cartwright explain “images and media representations are some of the forms through which we persuade others to share certain views or not” (246). The usage of skeletons as an image or symbol in this video is persuading the viewer to believe the bad in modeling and in propaganda associated with fashion and women’s appeal.

The viewer starts to understand the Avett Brother’s sense of logic or logos, to see and comprehend the evil in what this industry does to women. The Avett Brother’s are a perfect example of making the viewer understand their perspective due to their ethos, or credibility since they have written and composed many love songs and many songs about pretty women. These factors show their experience with all the women they know and have met, and reflect that they know what they are talking about when giving advice such as this one to their audience.

The producer takes the viewer to see the girl’s procession through this “nowhere road”. Initially the girl is happy with her new job. However, she can’t see that on this path “they doctor every photograph,” and she doesn’t see where this will lead her. This line from the song’s lyrics can also be contrasted and compared to how fashion magazines don’t show the real and natural beauty that women possess. They doctor or fix photographs, and make women seem as if they are completely perfect. Leading other women to believe that they are not good enough and that they are supposed to look like these models although they’re hiding their true natural beauty by “doctoring”. This doctoring can also be literally seen on women that go through many plastic surgeries to “fix” their image

since they believe that they should look like the women they see on magazines and commercials.

Later on when the producer shows the main character at her “peak” in a runway show, the lyrics are following along with the video when it shows the “conveyor belt” that she is about to be on in the form of a fashion runway. This conveyor belt is actually the one leading to a skeleton, or rather the self-image and low self-esteem that women develop through propaganda. This skeleton could also reflect the common eating disorder of anorexia amongst modeling and women who are not happy with whom they are due to the fake imagery employed into women’s minds.

As the main character is waiting and getting ready to be on the runway, the lyrics are also suggesting that she is another one that is waiting for that nowhere road. Shortly after, it shows Scott Avett, who also acts as the director of the runway show singing and telling the main character: “but I love you and I care, so you got to get off that conveyor belt”. This line becomes very important in the song itself since a lot of women feel as if they have no one to rescue them or tell them that they are beautiful just the way they are. This particular part in the song becomes very strong to its audience, which are insecure women who are experiencing low self-esteem problems. It becomes the pathos by emotionally engaging the listener and also the main character and directly saying that there is someone that cares.

The lighting in this scene is also very important, because it shows it as a very dark place and people are looking at the skeleton walking in a disapproving and disgusted manner. It shows that this “peak” in this road is where the skeleton experiences the moment that takes her nowhere. As she comes back through the back stage she collapses and is then swept with the other piles of skeletons. As the main character witnesses this, it becomes the point in which she realizes that she needs to escape and “get off the conveyor belt”. More importantly the artist now connects the concept of anorexia even more with the skeleton when they directly say “the nature of the road you’re on let’s me see your skeleton, well before your life is done”. This line is undeniably reflecting how anorexia leads its victims to the point of physically being able to see their skeleton even when they are still somewhat alive.

This scene is being used as a scare tactic to the main character and also the viewer. A strong and powerful image like this employs Sturken and Cartwright’s idea that “images are used for evidence” (246). In this last major scene it shows the viewer the evidence that these fakes and cons will only lead to women’s own self-destruction.

The music video was a great contrast to the generalities seen by other music artists. The reason why it may have worked so well could be because one of the band members himself was the producer for it. With powerful imagery and symbolism that the viewer might not be aware of at first, this banjo music and group of “hillbillies” from Concord create pure genius with their music video and showing people that banjo music and bluegrass is not always a “nowhere road”.

Works Cited

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