The A team

The singer-songwriter, Ed Sheeran, wrote ‘The A team’. This folk-ballad creatively tells us the effect of drugs in someone’s life and gradually takes that life. The songwriter has cleverly hidden the dark message and has created a song that can be listened to by younger audiences like me, but with the message for older listeners.

The song has been constructed with verses and a chorus that alters each time. The verses play the role of describing the character. The first verse tells us how her life is now; she struggles to pay rent as she earns little and still misuses it on drugs. The chorus distinguishes most of the ‘story’ and mentions how long she has been in this state; been this way since 18. It describes what her appearance is; but lately her face seems, slowing sinking, wasting, crumbling like pastries. I find the addition at the end of the chorus quite informative since it tells us what has happened to our character. The addition of ; covered in white, closed eye and hoping for a better life, This time we'll fade out tonight, straight down the line means she has died because of drugs.

The addition of language features in the song has added detail so the listeners can have a vivid outlook of the character and help hide the message. One feature that is persistent in the verses is imagery. The lyrics; ripped gloves, raincoat, dry house, wet clothes, are all examples of imagery. This assists us as listeners because we now know what her gloves are like, we now know what her clothes are like, and we can imagine someone in wet clothes and a ripped raincoat with ripped gloves. With that we can say she once had the luxuries we had but she can’t anymore because she has wasted all her money on drugs. The effect of imagery helps you picture the situation and tells you more in a shorter way instead of saying she had old gloves that were ripped, they have creatively used imagery instead.

Another language feature that is included is repetition. The line that consistently repeats is the line ‘angels to fly’. The phrase basically means her spirit has gone and ‘flown’. The constant repetition is like and emphasis that she has died, this is what drugs will do to you. Almost like a wake-up call.
The last language feature that appealed to me was the use of a simile. The simile ‘crumbling like pastries’ refers to her face changing to a sadder or depressed look and it’s because of the drugs. Using a simile is another creative way to hide the message.

With the soft acoustic guitar (played by Sheeran) accompanying the song helps the listener enjoy and take in the lyrics. In the concluding lines, the playing of simple chords and soft singing help end the song in way that leaves you thinking. Because, in the final line ‘angels to die’ the simple fade is like she’s faded out, this really adds to the effect.

The dynamics of the song has turned out quite well. The song begins with a soft, gentle voice with emphasis on the second and fifth lines. The chorus begins in a soft tone that then grows into a bold tone. Then when it hits the line ‘angels to fly’ it fades back to the soft tone. This for me engages the audience, by the way it grasps us then the line ‘angels to fly’ comes then the mood is soft and sad again.

In my opinion Sheeran has composed a sensational song, the accompaniment of the acoustic guitar definitely help set the mood and is a great choice of instrumentation but maybe an addition of another instrument would help the dynamics more. But overall the message for me was far too hard to find as me being a younger listener but I think that was Sheeran’s intention. Depending on which age you are really changes the message, it’s not fully hidden in technical language it is just creatively worded with language features, and that is what makes this song interesting.

http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/edsheeran/theateam.html
http://www.songmeanings.net/songs/view/3530822107858862704/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_A_Team_(Ed_Sheeran_song)

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