“3005” Music Video Analysis

Childish Gambino’s “3005” song and accompanying music video is one of the most metaphorically deep music videos of the last decade. It is full of references to various topics, including childlike innocence, finding meaning in a life full of money and fame, and many other references that relate back to Gambino’s *Because the Internet* album. Gambino, whose real name is Donald Glover, is so much more than just a rapper, as he has directed and produced several TV shows and movies, one of which being a short film that accompanied *Because the Internet.* “3005” is a song that the common listener would think is a love song on the surface, as the chorus of the song is, “No matter what you say or what you do/ when I’m alone I’d rather be with you/ F--- these other n---- I’ll be right by your side/ until 3005,” but a deeper dive into the lyrics suggests otherwise. “3005” is a story written about the struggles of growing up as a successful rapper in the era of the internet where life seems like it has no true meaning, and the music video allows the listener to visualize Gambino’s mundane outlook on his own life.

Part of “3005” is Glover telling a story through his Childish Gambino moniker about a rapper who is entrenched by a lifestyle that has no true meaning. However, this realization of a life without any true meaning progresses throughout both the song and the music video. At the start of the first verse, Gambino says, “Hold up, wait a minute/ all good just a week ago/ Crew at my house and we party every weekend, so/ On the radio, that’s my favorite song/ make me bounce around, like I don’t know, like I won’t be here long.” At this point, it doesn’t seem like his life has really caught up to him, as he raps about having fun with his friends and partying every weekend. This is symbolized in the music video through his first few times around the Ferris wheel, as he looks out upon a fair setting where nothing seems wrong and he’s just coasting through life repeating the same thing.

As the song progresses, Gambino begins to realize that his life experiences haven’t really felt as if they have meant anything, and he begins to feel isolated. He raps, “Got a house full of homies, why I feel so the opposite?” as he begins to question why he feels alone even though he’s constantly surrounded by people who he calls his friends. In the music video, the bear sitting next to him may be a substitute for a friend or partner, as Gambino claims that he has nobody that he can call a true friend since all of his so-called friends use him for his money. This progresses even more at the beginning of the second verse, as he says “I used to care what people thought. Now I care more, man nobody out here’s got it figured out. So therefore, I’ve lost all hope of a happy ending.” At this point in the song, he changes the tone of his lyrics and implies that he feels rather isolated living a life where he cares too much about what other people think. In a more direct sense, it seems as if he feels hopeless about a happy ending to his life. All of this is in context with the rest of his album, which makes the statement that the growing up in the internet era is what has caused him to feel this way.

The “3005” music video adds a visual element to the track that allows the listener to have a more in-depth understanding of how Gambino feels in this song. The video itself may seem very basic to the average viewer, as it just shows Glover and a teddy bear riding next to each other on a Ferris wheel with a few camera pans throughout the video. However, a seemingly simple and unexciting music video is full of tiny references and metaphors that bring this track to life with exceptional symbolism. One of the most noticeable aspects of the video is the repetitiveness of the Ferris wheel scene and how unenthusiastic Gambino seems about rapping the lyrics to his song. With this aspect of the music video, Glover is showing how the life of partying every weekend with people that are just using him for money is getting to Gambino, and he is just doing at all over and over again, leaving him feeling like he likes any significant purpose to his life. The camera only pans away from Gambino during the chorus of the song, but both pans show drastically different surrounding areas. After showing the fair scene with the first camera pan, the second time the camera pans away to a view of a fiery city. With this element of the music video, Glover is using the fair metaphor to show that Gambino’s life as a rapper may seem like it is all fun and games with no consequences. This is until he realizes that the world is a place that will take advantage of him and leave him out to dry if he continues the lifestyle that he is living.

Another noticeable aspect of the music video is the evolution of the teddy bear throughout the music video. As the video progresses, the teddy bear goes from being in perfect condition to completely mangled and beaten. This is another form of symbolism that Glover uses in the music video to show Gambino’s decaying hopes of a life full of meaning. The mangled bear could also be seen as a sign of childhood innocence fading away, as Gambino faces the hard truth of growing up and having real adult responsibilities.

Overall, the “3005” song addresses many different topics that are brought to life in the music video. It relates back to the *Because the Internet* concept album, where Donald Glover tells the story of a rapper who is entrenched in a Hollywood lifestyle and is trying to find meaning in his life. With elements in the music video such as the teddy bear, the Ferris wheel, and the fair scene, Glover brings a visual element into the story that is “3005” that allows the listener to experience Gambino’s gloomy outlook on finding a purpose in his life.