

The farewell to miss american pie

Life



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ Bye-bye Miss American Pie”. These words were now immortalized in the halls of music industry, and perhaps will be last tribute to the legendary era of ‘ rock and roll’ and turbulent times of the 60’s. This song was created by Don McLean, and became phenomenal hit in 1971, charting almost four weeks on the billboards. But there is more than saying goodbye to Ms. American Pie, which in itself is a symbol and image to the profound interpretation of the song. The message pierces more than a county boy strumming a guitar, or it speaks beyond the farewell to an unknown lady.

Don McLean, in his official website, made interesting comments regarding the song. While he allowed the song to be interpreted in various lenses, he himself confessed that the song was an allusion to historical or factual events, people and places that his song discussed. Don McLean said, “ I am very proud of the song, it’s biographical in nature, and I don’t think anyone has ever picked up on that, the song starts off with my memory with the death of Buddy Holly.

But it moves on to describe America, as I was seeing it, and how I fantasizing it might become, its part of reality and part of fantasy but I’m always in the song as a witness, or even as a subject, sometimes in some verses” (Starry, Stary Night Video 2000, cited in [www. don-mclean . com](http://www.don-mclean.com)). Realizing that McLeans work is to be approached in autobiographical sense, the memories of his childhood his personal persuasions and feelings can be deduced.

In the very first line, “ A long, long time ago, I can still remember, how the music made me smile, and I knew If I had a chance, that I could make those people dance, and, maybe they’ll be happy for a while...”(Miss American Pie lyrics). The persona in the song, was “ I”, a first person point of view, <https://assignbuster.com/the-farewell-to-miss-american-pie/>

bolstering the point of McLean that this is biographical. The persona clearly stated that it was his ‘memory’ and it was his wish to ‘make people smile and happy’ for a while. This simple statement speaks of a typical young man musician’s dream, his own wishful thinking.

As also stated in his website, the song was openly dedicated to the death of Buddy Holly and his companions, who died in a plane crash. This tragic death, moved to illustrate the transiency of life, and wishes in that sense are to be as pure, as simply stating: “chance to make people dance and make them happy for a while”. Clear from the second and third stanza the descriptions were, “But February made me shiver...bad news on the doorstep, I couldn’t make one more step”. This alludes to the death of Buddy Holly, one of the prominent rock singers in the 60’s (RS, 2004).

Their plane crashed in February 3, 1959, which shocked their audience of their untimely death. It could be said that the dedication of the song to Buddy Holly was not because he was a major contributor to the genre of McLean’s music, rather, it was a common knowledge that Buddy Holly was the pioneer of rock & roll music, long before, Elvis Presley, and the Beatles invaded the long playing discs. But the death of Buddy Holly was more than the death of an individual, as the song suggests “This’ll be the day that I die...”.

The demise of Buddy Holly signifies the death of a young promising man, the death of dream, and the death of wishful thinking. Linking the first stanza, to the second and third, the dream of the persona, to live, to entertain, presented a harsh reality of transiency, of “non-permanence of things. Like the death of Buddy Holly, who may epitomize the budding career of an

<https://assignbuster.com/the-farewell-to-miss-american-pie/>

ambitious young man only to be interrupted by the fact that, death is no respecter of persons.

The chorus lines, were repetitious saying “ bye-bye Miss American Pie”. The seeming relevance of this allusion is the representation of American Pie, as the symbol of the “ young and vibrant Americans”. As McLean admitted, “ the song was written as my attempt at an epic song about America, and I used the imagery of music and politics to do that. Also, I was influenced by the Sgt. Pepper album, and the American Pie album was my attempt to do that, but the song totally overshadowed the album” (McLean, 2000, cited www.don-mclean.com).

Thus, the “ American Pie” is an image of America, and the persona’s attempt to picture the America as it strives to be, and it might become. But contrasting words will reveal that, if the persona illustrates “ American Pie” as the young America, then why a bid of farewell? Is the persona, trying to say goodbye to future America has? Again, it can be viewed skeptically, the young dream, as mentioned earlier, the wishful thinking must not be allowed to vanish, it must move, it must sojourn.

The next lines driving the chevy, “ but the levee was dry”, this illustrates the life of the young America to rise, go on, to go farther, or move on. But the dry levee was said to illustrate the painful realities of life as we move along. Even driving oneself to that dream, the levees of experiences and circumstance would always be dry. A realism is seem to be presented, that life is not a bed of roses, rather it was a long winding trip to the end. The melancholic lines continuously read: “ The good’ol boys were drinking, whiskey and rye, saying this’ll be the day that I die...” .

<https://assignbuster.com/the-farewell-to-miss-american-pie/>

Presenting the realistic point of view, the good old boys verbalized the promising young people, yet with the painful realities, they have succumbed to the defeatists attitude of lurking themselves, as pictured by the words, “ drinking, whiskey and rye”. The drinking symbolizes solitary, loneliness and isolation. This thought bolstered the point of death, and surrender by proclaiming “ this’ll be the day that I die”. Two oppositions may come into the picture.

First, wishful thinking and dreams versus the paralyzing truths of life, we may succumb to surrender and declare our defeat with our own death---demise of our dreams, our lives, our hopes. Yet, this could pose as challenge, that the farewell to Miss American Pie, may be a welcome to her—as we welcome the challenges and bitter moments in our lives with energy and courage. The song illustrates several allusions more to the music icons, the rage of politics, the America’s society, but this attempt is to illustrate the more profound meaning of the song, realization of life, and how do we deal with it.

As said, we may live and fight be sad, and drink whiskey and rye to our own discontent or we may rise above the situation, and welcome our American Pie, with “ Hi, Hi, Miss American Pie...”

Sources:

1. Don McLeans. Don McLean’s American pie. AmericanPie. com. 2007.
May 29, 2007
2. The Immortals: The First Fifty, Rolling Stone Issue, 946. Rolling Stones.
April 15, 2004.
3. Bressler, Charles. Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice.

4. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994 (please include the source in LA Times, the data is difficult to recover, LA Times, February 3, 1959.)