Clocks, a Lyric by Coldplay Kolin Krewinkel

Period 3/4

Oftentimes, people regret their actions because of the impact they may have on someone else. In “Clocks,” the speaker abstractly talks about the regrets he has over his actions and the remorse he feels for them. By using various types of literary devices, the composers develop a clear mood and nature in the song, clarifying its meaning and message. In spite of the simple nature of the song, it still carries this clear message and clearly establishes its themes and mood using several methods. In “Clocks,” a lyric by Coldplay, the author uses metaphors, parallelism, and other figurative language to establish a theme of longing and regret.

First of all, Coldplay uses metaphors to help the song convey its message. When the lyrics say, “come out, upon my seas,” the writer is using an abstract metaphor. This helps establish that there’s another person in the frame. Additionally, it shows that it’s the speaker who is longing, not the other person. Secondly, when the author asks, “am I part of the cure — or am I part of the disease?” it helps to continue to use metaphors to advance the song. In asking, it shows that the author has doubts and perhaps remorse. On top of this, it shows the author has self-doubt to the point where he feels he may be making the problem worse. An additional form of figurative language used in the song also advances on the lyrics’ meaning.

Contrastingly, parallelism enhances and adds clarity to the author’s thoughts and feelings through simple repetition. During the breakdown of the song, the author sings, “you are,” repeatedly, helping to further convey the mood. After other build-up in the song, it shows the author has great admiration or respect for the person they’re singing about. Moreover, it shows the speaker feels some kind of inability to put into words about the person directly, only able to equate them to something else. After this, the speaker also says, “nothing else compares,” several times. Creating contrast, he’s saying that nothing is equal to the person he’s singing about, they’re incomparable. Not only that, but he’s elevating the target to a status of perfection, wishing nothing more than to have regret from them. The use of other types of figurative language finally helps draw the song to a close, completely establishing the metaphor.

Finally, using other figurative language, the speaker has tied a bow around his song, completing the picture only up to a point at which the basic meaning of the song can be understood. In the chorus of the song, he sings, “tigers waiting to be tamed.” The message of this quote is moderately vague, but appears to be an indirect metaphor for the future. This leads many to believe that this is talking about opportunities between the speaker and the target’s relationship. Also in the chorus, the song’s signature line, “closing walls and the ticking clocks,” helps to establish the mood of the song early on. This shows that the author feels a degree of helplessness in this situation. Additionally, they feel guilty over their actions and now feel trapped and encased by them. These methods all help tie the song together and raise its coherence.

In summary, Coldplayuses metaphors, parallel language, and other types of figurative language to establish a mood of longing, loss, and regret in their lyric, “Clocks.” Using these, the author clearly makes the listener aware of the speaker’s plight and feelings. Both the chorus and breakdown of the song establish the urgency the speaker feels and ensure the audience is aware of his intense remorse. This song is relatable to many people, and is an elegant statement of the way many feel when their actions burn bridges, hurt others, and sever relationships. Though this song is simple and lacks a large amount of lyrics, its clearly conveyed theme and mood allow its listeners to relate easily to the song and even further enjoy it.