

Critical Listening Critiques: Sweet Home Chicago

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For the blues song, Sweet Home Chicago, I listened to by Robert Johnson I chose several adjectives in category E as they coincided a lot with each other. I will start with the adjective pleading. I chose pleading because of the actual pleading lyrics. The way the lyrics repeat, "baby don't you want to go" or "honey don't you want to go", is the definite feel of pleading. He's pleading for a woman to go to his sweet home Chicago. The rhythm in this song, probably being a blues genre song, was cohesive to the pleading also. A lot of blues have that inter connected feel of form with vocals that unify the song just out of that combination alone. Also in category E, I chose yearning because once again of its lyrics throughout the song. The sheer fact he is trying to plead for this woman to go to Chicago, is also communicating to me that he is personally yearning to be in Chicago. This song did have a musical ending, but as far as its comprehensiveness, I understood what he wanted throughout every chorus. The question is, did he ever make it to his sweet home Chicago. Also, another question is, did she ever go? I'm not sure if there is any way that any listener would ever know. So, my comprehensiveness left me feeling a little bit unsatisfied in the fact I never got the answer to those questions lyrically. But, it's probably good to mention that Robert Johnson might not have intended the listener to have a solid known thought on that. Next, the longing adjective I chose also coincided with adjectives pleading and yearning. The vocals were so very longing to want to go to Chicago. Not only into the lyrics was he longing communicatively, but just through his voice also. The notes and chords played on his acoustic guitar helped connect that longing, pleading, and yearning feel of an adjective for this song. Whenever I've heard blues music, it has always spoken to me in a different way, I think because of the notes and pitch combination and chords. The genre of blues music definitely sets itself apart from other genres in its unique sound. In the older era, I think there was a lot of "longing" for a lot of things, and blues music helped fulfill the hurt for a short time period when things weren't so good. Even today people can connect their longings with the blues music. The final adjective in category E I chose is Plaintive. I chose this because this song had a somewhat sad sound. His voice while singing the lyrics had such a woeful and pitiful combined feeling to them. Its communication was a plaintive cry for what he was yearning for throughout the duration of the song. All the adjectives I chose from category E Bundles up this songs cohesiveness and the complexity of the involved message this song gives. From category F, I chose the adjective melancholic because I found this piece a bit gloomy. This might be strange to compare, but when an alcoholic drinks, they sometimes can become melancholic. So, I associated this adjective with this song of him singing the wooing blues. He seems gloomy melancholic strumming his guitar to the blues, while an alcoholic drinks sometimes in their woes of life. Not to say all blues genre songs are melancholic, but this one does have a slight depressive somber sound. I think a lot of blues can fit this adjective. For one, look at the genre name, "The Blues". I can't help but notice as I listen and hear the crackling and popping of the music due to the lack of better technology in the days of his existence when he recorded this, it glooms me out to think of the hardships him or his family might have lived or witnessed. The good thing coming away from the melancholic communicative feel I felt, was that on the flip side, I became non/melancholic seeing him obviously such a great blues artist and shine in this era despite his race. In categories B I chose the adjective quaint. I chose this because of the old sound of the blues that has been heard for generations. I am pretty much assuming that this man, Robert Johnson had his guitar and his voice. A lot less than what we have in the complexity of recording a song today. In

this era, I don't think this man had the devices to help his talent. It's quaint to me how his communication shined to me through his sheer talent alone. That being said is why this piece was so coherent to me. He was quaint and sweet in his picturesque way, also while laying his communication flat down in what he said with the "monkeying' around". The simplicity of Sweet Home Chicago was quaint in its melody but packed a hard punch with its simplicity of form. A man's voice and his guitar skills alone were strong and all it needed for its cohesiveness to grab the emotion of Sweet Home Chicago.

I enjoyed so much listening to Robert Johnson sing and play his guitar. I give so much whole hearted value to this composition. This man can pluck and strum his guitar to a blues sounding rhythm and keep you interested right with him. Everybody may not have this opinion, but I give it therapeutic value for myself due to the emotions coming out of this artist's mouth and out the emotionally felt energy coming out his fingertips on that guitar. This is great music because I was compelled to want to listen to him sing and play combined. I also I think this is good music because it has made me want to look into more of his songs. When an artist intrigues me to want to hear more of their material, I think that is a plus. There was obviously no other musicians singing or playing instruments, so this solo piece was strong because it was such an enjoyable artful combination with a single artists that needed no harmony to have people feel something. This song is timeless, therefor a great piece.