

Jennifer Patricio

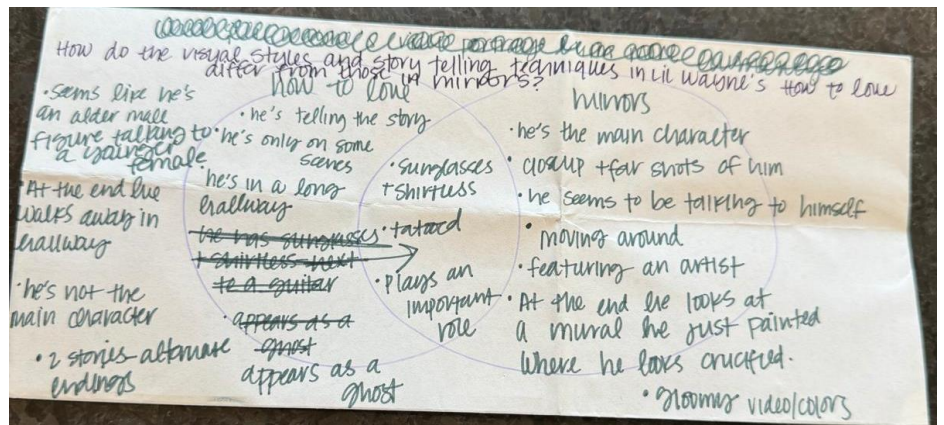
Dr. Campbell

English 1302

21 April 2024

## Lil Wayne's How to Love Music Video vs. Lil Wayne's Mirrors based on visual styles and storytelling techniques

While "Mirror" takes a more abstract and metaphorical approach, using a lot of symbolism throughout the entire music video, "How to Love" relies on a forward narrative approach to storytelling focusing on emotion and the character's development which makes it excel when comparing both music videos by the same artist. The only similarities that these two music videos display is Lil Wayne's point of view, whether it is as an older male figure or as him narrating what he sees in his own reflection.



Lil Wayne's How to Love video tells the story of a young girl, daughter of a single mother, who faces struggles during her childhood and teenage years which lead her to living a life of hardship just like her mother. This music video does not have Lil Wayne as its main character, instead it shares the story of the mother, daughter and what her adult life is like with two alternate endings.



The music video starts off with the mother of a young girl about to abort her child but changing her mind last minute and then running down a long hospital hallway. There are many scenes where there are long hallways throughout the music video. Then it shows Lil Wayne shirtless and with sunglasses as he usually appears in other music videos. The video then carries on showing the life the mother endured, domestic violence scenes with the young girl in the background. We see that the abuse that the young girl endured while in her mother's care changed her life, it shows the now-adult enduring hardship as a single mother of three children having to work at a strip club and prostitution to sustain her children.

The thought of the mother's hardship and decisions linger in the back of the viewer's mind wondering if the mother had made different decisions, would her daughter's life be different. This is because while these scenes are playing, the lyrics to Lil Wayne's rapping in the music video are "You had a lot of dreams that transform to visions, The fact that you saw the world affected all your decisions But it wasn't your fault, wasn't in your intentions" and then moves on to a scene where the music stops and the young girl now an adult, after all of her decisions, went to the doctor and obtained her test results which were positive for HIV.

Once again, we see a woman running down a hospital hallway in tears.



I think the running down the hallway symbolizes a contemplation of their choices and their lives, her, and her mother's, until that very moment. These scenes are only for brief

seconds, but they show a lot of emotion by the characters in the music video. This is the last scene of the long hallways. The video then “rewinds” and we see an alternate outcome of the young girl’s life, starting by her mother’s better choices, leading her to have a better childhood, teenage years, and adulthood.

The viewer then confirms what was suggested throughout the video- the daughter’s life outcome was predetermined by the mother and her choices. The visual styles and storytelling techniques in Lil Wayne’s How to Love to illustrate the story of love and struggles. The visual styles include scenes at the hospital, the strip club, the mother’s apartments, and school that help you understand where and how things affected the young girl’s way of thinking. “The message is deep, and in the video, Wayne plays second fiddle, not letting his performance shots get in the way of Robinson's storytelling. Together they illustrate a domino effect. Forget going from bad to worse: During the course of the five-minute clip things go from tragic to abysmal. “(Markman, MTV)

On the other hand, Lil Wayne’s video “Mirror” shows Lil Wayne as the main character in the video. He is talking to what seems himself, as he sees his reflection in the mirror. In this video he is featuring Bruno Mars. However, Bruno Mars only comes in on certain scenes and sings certain lyrics.

From the start, this video surrounds Lil Wayne, and his image. It shows a close of Lil Wayne’s face and then proceeds to give us a close of his tattooed body which are red and black. These are the same colors that are shown in the mural. In some scenes he has his long hair down but in most it is in a ponytail. There was so much symbolism throughout the music video, I cannot tell if that was part of it or not.

There is red and black paint that he utilizes to paint this mural with his hands and with a

can of spray paint. We also see black and red paint on Lil Wayne's body, chest, and hands. Bruno Mars does not touch the paint and just sings in front of a different mural throughout majority of the music video. I think the mural that Lil Wayne is seen painting is personal and that's why Bruno Mars does not touch it and it is a different one for each person.

As the video progresses, the viewer gets the idea that the paint is blood because you get a close shot of the word blood tattooed on Lil Wayne. At the end of the music video, you are shown a far shot of Lil Wayne standing in front of the completed mural which has been his work in progress throughout the entire video. In the mural, we see him crucified with a microphone in one hand and a red bandana on the other. He is red and he is crucified on a music note with two distinct people on each side smiling and covering one eye. You can see the cans of black and red paint and he is looking at it like a masterpiece.



On the other hand, Bruno Mars is not seen painting his mural, but it does develop throughout the music video its just marks of red and black paint with no certain design or imagery. Towards the end of the video, we see him touching and standing in front of Lil Wayne's mural in lament.

This video portrays emotion but in a different way than on his video, How to Love. The storytelling and visual styles are different. In How to Love we can see how the video develops in chronological order numerous times. In the music video “Mirrors” Lil Wayne explores themes of self-exploration and personal growth. The narration shifts from moment to moment which is displayed when it goes back and forth between Lil Wayne’s rap and Bruno Mars’ singing. It is not in chronological order; it creates more of a sense of depth.

### Works cited page.

“Lil Wayne - Mirror Ft. Bruno Mars (Official Music Video).” *YouTube*, YouTube, 31 Jan. 2012, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZLUa8JUR18](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZLUa8JUR18).

“Lil Wayne - How to Love (Official Music Video).” *YouTube*, YouTube, 25 Aug. 2011, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8Gf4-eT3w0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8Gf4-eT3w0).

Markman, Rob. “Lil Wayne Drops Deep Messages in ‘how to Love’ Video.” *MTV*, 24 Aug. 2011, [www.mtv.com/news/kba5yk/lil-wayne-how-to-love-music-video](http://www.mtv.com/news/kba5yk/lil-wayne-how-to-love-music-video).