
Music Review: A Haunting Sociological Masterpiece in the Song “Left Behind” by The Plot in You

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Music has always been a powerful medium for artists to explore and express sociological themes. The Plot in You’s single “Left Behind” is a testament to this, as it explores profound sociological aspects like interpersonal relationships, abandonment, and emotional resilience. The Plot in You is a metalcore band formed in Hancock County, Ohio, in 2010. They have consistently pushed the boundaries of post-hardcore and metalcore genres; their 2023 single release, “Left Behind,” is no exception. With its emotionally charged lyrics, relentless instrumentals, and haunting atmosphere, the song tackles moving on from a toxic relationship, abandonment, loss, and betrayal and having the strength to leave it all behind and move forward. In this song review, we embark on a sociological exploration of how “Left Behind” resonates with the complex dynamics of marriage and human relationships. From the impact of time to the nuances of power dynamics, this song encapsulates the multifaceted nature of human experience within the context of intimate connections. As we embark on this exploration, we navigate the haunting melodies and introspective lyrics, shedding light on emotional labor, the looking-glass self, and the temporal dimension intricately woven into the fabric of this musical masterpiece.

Embedded within the emotional tapestry of “Left Behind” are the concepts of emotional labor and the looking-glass self. The singer’s introspective journey reflects the emotional labor involved in maintaining a relationship—navigating desires, sacrifices, and the weight of societal expectations. The concept of emotional labor (BetterUp 2021) refers to when a person is responsible for managing their own feelings and the feelings of others. In the song, the singer’s struggle to make the other person care can be identified as a form of emotional labor. Although they are investing emotional effort into the relationship, it appears to be one-sided. In other words, he is giving his all in this, but it isn’t reciprocated. In contemporary society, many individuals find

themselves performing emotional labor, often in the pursuit of maintaining relationships that may not be mutually beneficial. This unequal distribution of emotional labor can lead to feelings of frustration and exhaustion, mirroring the sentiments expressed in the song. According to ThePRP website (2023), guitarist and vocalist Landon Tewers commented on the release of their single and discussed the motivation for it, saying, “‘Left Behind’ was inspired by old nostalgic bands and artists I grew up listening to. I wanted to make something as a tribute to that sound and hopefully elevate it. It’s a song about gaining back confidence and hope after cutting off a person that was draining and moving forward with a fresh perspective.” Both musically and lyrically, you can detect those inspirations; similar to the bands he grew up listening to, their songs were so raw, visceral, and emotionally charged that they resonated with teenagers. Tewers is also doing the same thing but with a metalcore twist.

The looking-glass self, a sociological theory by Charles Horton Cooley, is manifested as the singer gazes upon the self through the perceived judgments of the other. Lines such as “*Craving me was useless, all excuses drained*” capture the emotional labor of yearning within a relationship. The drained excuses signify not just personal exhaustion but also the societal pressures to justify one’s desires, echoing the looking-glass self, where individuals shape their self-concept based on imagined judgments from society. The haunting opening lines thrust the listener into the temporal dimension: “*Time has hit you different, but I don’t think you’ve changed.*” The interplay of time and personal evolution takes center stage, introducing a sociological perspective transcending individual experiences. In sociological terms, the temporal dimension refers to the dynamic nature of relationships over time.

In the context of “Left Behind,” the temporal dimension becomes a canvas on which the singer paints the evolving landscape of a relationship. The notion that time hits each person differently becomes a collective reflection on the temporal ebb and flow that shapes the sociological landscape of marriage. The singer’s observation that “*I don’t think you’ve changed*” introduces a sociological lens through which we view personal growth within the confines of matrimony. This observation

prompts contemplation on societal expectations surrounding change in relationships. As the lyrics progress, the exploration of sacrifice unveils a sociological theme deeply embedded in the institution of marriage. "*Craving me was useless*" speaks to societal expectations of fulfillment within relationships. The concept of drained excuses suggests emotional exhaustion, pointing to the societal pressure to justify one's desires within the context of marriage.

"*All the sacrifice had robbed me of my time*" introduces a poignant sociological exploration of societal pressures to make sacrifices within marriage. While sacrifice is often praised, the line suggests that certain sacrifices celebrated by society may erode the essence of self over time. This resonates with broader sociological discussions on the expectations and consequences of sacrifices within the context of marriage. The narrative takes a sociological turn, addressing power dynamics within relationships: "*You'd keep me down. I know better now. Won't bring me down again.*" The acknowledgment of being kept down suggests societal imbalances within marriages. The singer's declaration of knowing better now becomes a sociological proclamation of empowerment, reflecting the collective understanding of the sociological evolution of personal strength in the framework of marriage. The refusal to be brought down again signifies a sociological shift in power dynamics—an emancipation from oppressive forces within marriages. The singer's voice becomes a resonant vessel, carrying the collective narrative of those who have overcome societal imbalances in the context of marital connections.

The acknowledgment of keeping secrets and knowing one's biggest errors introduces a sociological investigation of intimacy—a fundamental component of marriage. "*I still keep your secrets, know your worst mistakes*" portrays the singer as a repository of shared vulnerabilities, reflecting the societal norm of emotional intimacy within marital relationships. This complexity is further emphasized by the notion of playing into weakness, offering a sociological commentary on the power dynamics that can erode individual strength within the context of marriage. The stripping away of strength becomes a poignant observation of the societal pressures and vulnerabilities that may compromise one's

resilience within marital connections. The singer's voice becomes an auditory canvas, portraying the nuanced interplay of societal expectations and personal weaknesses within the context of marriage. As the lyrics draw to a close, the temporal theme resurfaces, reflecting on emotional transformation within the context of marriage: "*Time has hit me different, I don't feel the same. Know I feel this distance, but I don't share the pain.*" The singer's voice becomes a sonic vessel for nuanced emotions—time hitting differently, a sense of emotional detachment, and an unshared pain within the broader societal framework of post-marital dynamics. The intentional repetition of "*I left behind*" serves as a sonic bookend, bringing the narrative full circle. The singer's voice becomes a sonic thread, weaving together the temporal, emotional, and sociological elements. The unshared pain becomes a sociological exploration of how societal expectations and norms shape the aftermath of marital relationships.

"Left Behind" by The Plot in You emerges as a profound sociological commentary on marriage and relationships. Through its evocative lyrics, the song navigates the temporal, sacrificial, and power dynamics inherent in intimate connections. It unveils the complexities of societal expectations, vulnerability, and emotional transformation within the context of marriage. As the song unfolds, it invites listeners to reflect on the shared sociological experiences embedded in the intricate dance of human relationships. In a society where marriage is often idealized, "Left Behind" disrupts the narrative, shedding light on the societal pressures and complexities that individuals face within the confines of matrimony. The lyrics become a mirror reflecting the collective challenges and triumphs within the broader sociological framework of intimate connections. As we delve into the haunting melodies and introspective lyrics, "Left Behind" stands as a testament to the power of music to articulate, resonate, and dissect the profound sociological intricacies woven into the fabric of human relationships. The Plot in You has a discography that often explores complex emotions, relationships, and personal struggles.

If you enjoyed the themes in “Left Behind” and are looking for other songs that delve into similar issues, here are a few recommendations from The Plot in You’s repertoire!

From their 2018 album *Dispose*:

With themes of self-destruction and the toll of toxic relationships, “Disposable Fix” provides a raw and unfiltered exploration of personal struggles and emotional turmoil. “Rigged” addresses themes of manipulation and deceit in relationships. It explores the realization of being deceived and the emotional aftermath that follows. “Feel Nothing” explores themes of emotional detachment and numbness, offering a deep dive into the complexities of feeling nothing in the face of tumultuous relationships. While more musically upbeat, “Not Just Breathing” explores themes of liberation and self-discovery. It touches on breaking free from the constraints of a suffocating relationship and reclaiming one’s identity.

From their 2015 album *Happiness in Self Destruction*:

A raw and intense track, “Dear Old Friend” delves into the darker aspects of personal relationships, addressing betrayal and the emotional toll it takes on individuals. The lyrics of “My Old Ways” delve into the struggle of breaking free from destructive habits and patterns in relationships. It reflects on personal growth and the challenges of leaving behind harmful behaviors. “Better Vibes” reflects on the aftermath of a toxic relationship and the pursuit of better days. It explores the idea of moving forward and finding solace in a more positive mindset.

Stand-alone Single:

“Crows” touches on the aftermath of a failed relationship and the emotional scars that linger. It delves into the haunting aspects of memories and the impact of past connections.

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