

Kobi White

4/17/2019

Media, Culture, & Identity

Dr. Tilton

When a Woman's Fed Up Reflection

Why did you select this topic?

After watching the "This is America" videographic essay in class one day, I knew that I wanted to support my essay with examples from R&B music. Why R&B music? R&B music is my favorite genre of music to listen to and I knew that I would be able to form an argument based on R&B music as pieces of evidence to back up that argument. I also felt that this topic is not talked about enough within the media today so I wanted to pick a topic that would make the audience watching the video ponder for a minute. Picking a topic that is underrepresented within the media but also interesting to me was a challenge at first until I stopped to think about what my passions are. I realized that I could turn my music passion into a topic. From there, I was able to frame the idea that I wanted to support my argument with pieces of R&B music.

What is the argument of your piece?

The argument within my piece is that men tend to not recognize the worth of a good woman until she's gone. We live in a society today where black women are always constantly bashed for not standing by a man who has done her wrong on multiple occasions. I honestly believe that women nowadays are realizing their worth and are no longer putting up with the bullshit that men put them through. Since I have personally gone through my process of learning how to put myself first, I know how hard it can be to always put the needs and wants of the

partner before your own. I want black women to experience a love that doesn't involve suffering first and being glorified later.

What are the three keywords that you chose to apply and why? Did you consider other keywords? If so, why did you choose the ones that you did?

The keywords I chose were power, content, and ideology. I chose to apply these three words most of all because it was in the making of this essay that I realized that music artists also hold an extreme amount of power. They have the power to shape the content of the music that is consumed by society today. I also realized that the R&B music of the early 2000s communicated the message of only fighting for true love once it was almost gone. This is why I chose "Charlene" and "Put That Woman First" from the early 2000s then "Stay" from 2011 to show that the same ideology of only fighting for true love when it's almost gone was still present. I strongly believe that this ideology of only fighting for love once it's almost gone should fade away but I doubt that it will, given that these generations don't understand the value of intimacy and being vulnerable with that special person.

I did consider using stereotype, privacy, and representation within my essay but I felt that the ones that I mentioned above communicated to the audience easier than stereotype, privacy, and representation. I didn't want to make my keywords explicitly clear within my essay because I wanted to leave it open for interpretation from the audience. I didn't want to box myself or the audience in with the thinking of the keywords that were applicable to any video. In all actuality, many keywords are more applicable than others but I wanted the audience to make their own informed interpretation of the video because that is what media producers do in today's society.

How and why did you make decisions for the pieces of media that you used?

Anthony Hamilton is my favorite artist so I knew that I wanted to incorporate some of his music into my essay. Once I figured out which one of his songs I wanted to sample, I found two other R&B songs that communicated my argument when pieced together. I remembered Tyrese's song "Stay" and knew that it communicated a similar message to "Charlene" by Anthony Hamilton. As for the third song, it happened to come up on a suggested playlist on YouTube after I played "Stay." The third song was "Put That Woman First" and I wasn't surprised at how well it fit together with my argument. Now figuring out which parts of the music video to keep and to cut was a difficult decision but it ultimately came down to the lyrics and how I wanted to piece the story together. I knew that I wanted "Charlene" to be first because of the instrumental music in the beginning. Then I pulled the chorus of "Put That Woman First" because it was exactly what my argument was. "Stay" was difficult to figure out where to cut but then I thought about the video also making my argument of men not appreciating what they have until that special person has their bags packed and are ready to walk out of that door. I also knew that the music choices were there but as for transitioning, it may seem a little abrupt. It's intentional because that's how it feels when that person is gone. It feels like your world has just stopped suddenly.

How did the process of making your video shape how you understand media, culture, and identity?

Over the course of the semester, we have spent time as a class learning about keywords relating to media, culture, and identity. In doing that, I was able to pick up another lens to analyze the way I view the sources of media that I interact with on a daily basis. By picking music videos as support for my essay, I noticed how many keywords were applicable to the videos just through the reinforcement of stereotypes or the representation of African American men and women. I also was able to better understand media, culture, and identity through the aspect of planning out my essay. I knew that I needed to use the media that I had to convey a message about the culture created by today's society and how that plays a role in my identity. In a way, "Charlene" definitely is a piece of my identity because it is one of my all time favorite songs. But I also noticed that I had the power to craft what message I wanted to deliver to the audience through the use of any content that I had. Looking back, I can tell that I have learned a lot in terms of media, culture, and identity. But the largest takeaway I have is that the media ultimately has the power to shape any message they want to, regardless of it is being portrayed in a negative or positive light.