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COME 180B

5/3/2019

For almost as long as music has been around, music has been used to stir up controversy. For example, many of the songs written in the sixties criticizing the Vietnam War were heavily criticized themselves for their provocative language and themes. Despite backlash, many of these songs are still well known today. It is an undeniable fact that controversy sells, and in some cases this leads to artists and record companies manufacturing controversy in order to sell more copies of a song, regardless if the artist actually believes in what he or she is saying. In the rap artist Hopsin's emotionally charged song "Ill Mind of Hopsin 7" which was written in 2015, this is not the case. In this paper, we will detail the way in which the artist Hopsin details falling out of faith with Christianity by using crude language and anger. We will also record how the song was received by the media and general population, and dive into many of the criticisms of the song from many different outlets both religious and not.

As indicated in the introduction above, the artifact that we analyzed was a song by Hopsin called "Ill Mind of Hopsin 7" which is a controversial song that describes his views about religion and life in general. He describes in the song how no one truly knows if religion is real and if there really is a heaven or hell. He does so by screaming what he believes and almost preaching it to his listeners to see if he can find an answer. The intended audience of this song may be people that are facing the same sense of struggle as Hopsin and are in a dead end of what

to believe in. They could also be fans of his other music and are attracted to his style of rap and religion being combined into one to form a unique theme.

The main goal of this song is to inspire people into really thinking about those hard to process topics about why we are here and if everything that has been taught to us is all a lie. For some people this may be a huge struggle in their life when they give up hope but this song is here to help them know that they aren't alone in this process and that it is normal to struggle with these types of topics. This message is conveyed in the song through Hopsin seeming like he is pleading and cursing to find answers which makes his message very effective to the audience that he is really struggling. This format is interesting because it seems like the preacher is the one who is lost, which is a different kind of idea because normally the preacher has the answers and is trying to pass them off to others but in this way the roles are almost reversed. This kind of approach makes this song very impactful on many people and Hopsin is able to really get his point across well for people to be able to understand his pain.

Overall, this artifact connects to today's society because this is a problem that many people nowadays have where they struggle with the idea of religion and our purpose of being here. Some people look back at the idea of the Bible not representing life today and that all of those stories were in the past and can't be proven to have happened or not. This song seems to reflect our generations beliefs about religion and is more skeptical at just accepting that there is a God or not and how everything that is taught to us is just something that was taught to the people that taught it to us. This song is symbolic of a struggling millennials mind and how it may not be prudent to just believe everything that is told to you.

Some of the thematic elements in this song are very interesting when analyzed due to the different subjects it touches upon. You see the artist referring to the things that have not happened in an attempt to prove that is why he is living his life the way he is. He also explains other angles on the thought of religion and government and tries to bring to light the possible connection between the two of them. Hopsin brings religious elements into a rap song in a way many people would not dare to because it could offend people that are of faith. This is partly the reason why many find the song so real and interesting.

The language of this song, although very crude at times, has a powerful message behind it. The lyrics are used as a storyline explanation. Many valid points are brought up along with personal spins put on those valid points. The main theme found in the song is “It’s us, find power.” This is a huge statement that speaks volumes to the people that do not speak out against something they believe in and just end up going along with it. Although Hopsin was Christian, he had some doubts which led him to fall out of his faith. Hopsin caught backlash from fans and had to deal with many people giving him a hard time about it. In the Bible it is spoken about how Eve spoke to the snake which in a sense solidified her faith in God. Hopsin uses the metaphor of his life and Eve’s life and how they are so different so that is why he doesn’t believe. Hopsin also speaks of spending money in clubs and spending time with nuns. He states in the song that he would spend all his time and money with the nuns if he had solid evidence of a reason to. Both metaphors are good ones when looking into Hopsin’s religious lifestyle. This language is very strong and used very closely in this song when explaining why believes what he believes.

Hopsin speaks of being a “scared dog with his tail down,” which I think is almost a joke. The symbol spoken about previously being a statement of speaking out, leads me to believe that

he is attempting to be humorous. Being humorous during this moment makes the message louder that just because people are looking at him like he is “hellbound” for leaving the faith does not mean that it is wrong that he left. He is being shamed into feeling like a sinner when that is part of their faith to not look down upon others. Some irony filled thoughts about the government and Catholic faith were spoken about and stirred up some fascinating thoughts about the world of possibilities.

The messages conveyed within this song are simple, believe what you want because in the end you are living your own life and only have yourself to look at in the mirror. However, the way in which the messages are conveyed are very complex. The uses of language are very strong to the point that Hopsin uses the words to dance around the difficult positions he is speaking about. He was a believer at one point so he does have respect for the faith. This respect, however, is pushed when he says his new found position. In short, he just wants to be the best person that he can be while he is alive and breathing and doing anything less would be not living his life to the fullest. To Hopsin, going to Church would be a waste of his time now.

This song and its messages rocked the media after its release. A lot of people accepted the idea that it was okay to just be you and follow what you want. Being any kind of anything is alright as long as you are trying your best to be the best. All of the yelling and swearing towards the end really makes his words pop in the sense that he was serious about the possibilities. This song makes you think more than get mad. Even if you are a person of faith you can still be explained other possibilities without taking offense to the words. And during this song you are made to think about situations that people do not talk about. Situations that are hard to talk about

and normal culture says that the two subjects should not meet in conversation. Hopsin believes that they should so the problems can be dealt with.

Anybody struggling with understanding their relationship with their religion might respond positively to this artifact and would maybe even figure some things they couldn't quite put their finger on previously. People that are considered atheist could maybe find a better direction for their life if they haven't already. It could also be argued that there would also be people negatively affected by this artifact. Clearly the harsh language is a large part of it and would offend anybody that does not use this harsh language on a regular basis. Also people of faith might take offense when someone is speaking about said faith using vulgar language. Anybody that is strong in their faith and is being contested about it sometimes would take offense and feel like they are being cheated out of their beliefs.

Cultural norms that are embedded in this artifact would include quite simply religion in general. Right on the nation's currency it says in God We Trust which is almost forcing the citizen's of the United States to "trust in God." This is part of the song that contests both government and religion. This cultural norm is another symbol in our culture that is a very influential part especially on people that already know religion. It makes it American to continue believing in the religion. Another cultural norm is the pledge of allegiance. This is taught to children in the United States during grade school and follows through the rest of life.

Much of the work completed this semester was qualitative and quantitative. Both of the previous major projects that were done in this class followed this criteria. This project, however, was different in many ways. In this paper we analyzed a single article of media as opposed to surveying a number of people or comparing data from a survey. Both of the previous projects

were not very personal, and opinions were not encouraged, only the data. This project, however, was much more personal. Since the subject matter was very full of emotion and required analysis, we were required to put more of ourselves into the paper as a result. This was especially apparent in the critical analysis of the paper.

Hopsin's song is not just about losing faith in a religion. It is about losing faith in an entire system. Every doubt that he has is laid out into the song, and he shamefully questions everything about what he has learned and believed in. It is a song about losing the sense of power and purpose religion once gave, and the horrible realities of that. And yet, as much as this song is about loss of faith, it is just as much a song about realizing power. Specifically, the power in oneself, and possibilities of that being enough. Hopsin clearly had a lot of emotional stake in this song, and wrote about it because it meant a lot to him. This song is still heavily criticized today, but one criticism that can never be said is that Hopsin just created a song for the money that comes with controversy. He wrote about what spoke to him, and in doing so gave us an artifact that can be analyzed for generations.

References

Hospin (2015). "Ill Mind of Hopsin 7". On Pound Syndrome. Los Angeles, California: Funk
Volume.