

Childish Gambino



About the song:

- In 2018 he released, "This is America" to significant attention and acclaim from listeners.
- The song and video focused on the violence experienced by individuals living in urban areas and the few opportunities for success they have available to them.
- Childish Gambino was nominated and won the 2019 Grammy Awards for Best Music Video and Song of the Year for the single.

About the song:

- "American Idiot" criticizes American culture in the years following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City, and takes particular aim at George W. Bush's administration.
- The lyrics, "don't want to be a nation of new media, can you hear the hysteria?" expresses his dislike for the media adding to the chaos and panic after the 9/11 attacks (Genius, 2023).
- "The subliminal mind f**k America" suggests the media and government caused the panic to take away people's freedoms and push for their own political agenda.
- "All across the Alienation..." is a clever wordplay on an alien nation which suggests that America is a nation of aliens that is run by people that are foreign to the people of the nation (Genius, 2023).

Green Day



Background

- Donald Glover was born in 1983 at Edwards Air Force Base outside of San Bernadino, California.
- His family served in the military, so he travelled extensively as a child. Allowing him to see different types of communities and the hardships many people experienced.
- Glover is widely recognized as a talented artist and has worked professionally as an actor, comedian, singer, producer, director, and writer.
- His music is known for strong lyrics focusing on societal issues including gun violence in urban and minority communities.

OUT OF ONE, MANY DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN VOICE



Background:

- Green Day was formed in 1987 by childhood best friends Billie Joe Armstrong and Mike Dirnt who played guitar and bass respectively.
- Armstrong and Dirnt connected through their shared love for punk music, inspired by The Dead Kennedys (from San Francisco, CA) and The Ramones (from New York City)
- These bands inspired through their fast tempo and catchy lyrics that became typical of Green Day.
- Green Day built a following in the area around California after their album in *Kerplunk* was released and sold 15 million copies worldwide (AllMusic, 2023).

Aerosmith



About the song:

- "Living on the Edge" has a strong rhythm with lyrics that are often not recognized for what they are truly discussing.
- This song is actually addressing the problems of drug use across societal boundaries and the resulting violence that often results from the sale or purchase of drugs.
- The video with this song is suggestive of these topics but is presented in such a way that the average viewer may not immediately recognize the focus.

About the song:

- The song is about the hardship returning veterans faced when returning home from the war.
- The headline lyrics "I was born in the U.S.A." are not about pride in his own country but they express how America abandoned their veterans when they needed it the most.
- The lyrics go on to show how the U.S.A. were drafting everyone they could. "So they put a rifle in my hand, sent me to a foreign land..."
- "Come back home to the refinery, Hiring man says to me, "Son, if it were up to me". These lyrics link to how there were very high unemployment and suicide rates when veterans returned home from war.

Bruce Springsteen



Background:

- Bruce Springsteen was born on September 23rd 1949 and grew up in Freehold, New Jersey.
- He had a troubled relationship with his Father that influenced his later songs
- He was prolific in creating albums as he released 20 over his career and over 60 million copies sold (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2023).
- He was drafted by the military for the Vietnam war when he didn't want to go that would inspire "Born in the USA" which would become a worldwide hit song with its parent album eventually selling 30 million copies (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2023).

Background

- The band was formed in Boston, Massachusetts in 1970.
- The members of the band include Steven Tyler (lead vocalist), Joe Perry (guitar), Tom Hamilton (bass), Joey Kramer (drums), and Brad Whitford (guitar)
- Aerosmith was widely recognized as a force in rock and roll with heavy metal rhythms mixed with a strong blues influence.
- Their musical notoriety skyrocketed during the early 1980s when they began to write songs in response to the social issues of the 1980s including rampant drug use, crime, and violence.

Childish Gambino



Relation to Symposium theme

- Musicians offer the solutions of making different things that once seemed unthinkable, such as women playing a significant role in the genre of rock and roll, into common occurrences.
- This can change societal norms that are very segregated and make it much easier for people of different backgrounds to accept it.
- The musicians push for societal change on the whole, often do this through sharing their own experiences or a hypothetical experience that is realistic.
- This may be looking back at a hard time, or looking forward to a brighter future, but either way they are laying the foundations for society to catch up by outing the idea of change in people's mind.

Green Day



OUT OF ONE, MANY DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN VOICE

Relation to symposium

- The artists all try to contribute to the common good by raising awareness for a certain issue and calling out the people in power.
- This is encapsulated by their protests against violence and their reaction to it.
- With their large following they are trying to use their influence for good by pushing for change for the better
- Relates to the symposium theme by suggesting out of the many American artists, styles, eras, there is still one common message that they join to form



Common themes:

- The theme that connects "Born in the USA" to "American Idiot" of how people have been impacted by violence.
- The Vietnam war undeniably impacted Veterans with the backlash against them and struggling to settle back down in their own country.
- Where "American Idiot" shows how American society has been impacted by the events of 9/11

Aerosmith



Bruce Springsteen



Citations:

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