

Would “Where is the Love?” by The Black-eyed Peas recruit someone into involvement in a social movement? Particularly an anti-war movement?

[clip from Rosenthal follows:]

potential functions by the needs of movements they might serve, beginning with how music serves those already committed, and then moving on to questions of how it might help educate, recruit, and/or mobilize those *not* already committed to a struggle. I then assess some preliminary data regarding whether such claims are accurate reflections of real movement dynamics or simply romantic illusions.

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[end of clip]

Rosenthal’s essay, which investigates the effects of music on a movement, states that besides “serv[ing] those already committed, music can “help educate, recruit, and/or mobilize *not* already committed to a struggle” (11). I think that “Where is the Love?” by the Black-Eyed Peas, released in 2003, is intended to do all of these things in relation to the movement against the War in Iraq. The song asks if there is any love in the world, a question that in the music video is depicted as a question mark, which is pasted on walls as a poster, stuck on a Bible, and superimposed on news images of national and international events. The video depicts people coming together: for example, when band members are driving the panel truck, little kids are following it, which is a metaphor for following an idea or movement. Also, the kids frequently are mouthing the words “where is the love?” which shows that they are getting the message, and the message is also coming from them. It’s a diverse group of kids, and the adults shown in the song also are diverse in age and race. The images seem to be depicting a wide diversity of people who are drawn into the movement by the song, which is broadcasted through the neighborhood through a loudspeaker mounted on top of a panel truck. Because the song was released shortly after the invasion of Iraq, it is often interpreted as an

Comment [LM21]: This is the big question this paper is currently attempting to answer. Even though you later delete these questions, it’s a good idea to write them out, as a tool to help keep you focused on the task at hand.

Comment [LM22]: It makes sense to make a sacrificial copy of the Rosenthal essay and of the lyrics of the particular song you’re working with. (If you don’t have the lyrics, they can easily be found online. Warning—Lyric sites really try to get you to buy their ringtones. Elyrics.com is less aggravating than most.) Use scissors and tape to cut up pieces of both documents and tape a piece of Rosenthal to a piece of lyrics. This will help you to plan out your paper. You will only need a few short quotations, if you choose them carefully.

Comment [LM23]: Although you should have a brief summary of the essay elsewhere in your paper, a statement like this helps to put a quotation into context, because it reminds the reader of how the quotation fits into Rosenthal’s larger plan.

Comment [LM24]: Top slice!

Comment [LM25]: Bottom slice! A clear position statement says it’s your idea, and responds directly to your source’s idea with a related idea of your own. Also, it links to the assignment, which is to write specifically about anti-war music.

Comment [LM26]: Explains the song and the video, and gives details that support that the song is a piece of “movement music” and that it is anti-war.

anti-war song even though it raises a variety of social issues. However, the following stanza specifically relates the lack of love in the world to violence in Iraq:

New days are strange, is the world insane
If love and peace is so strong
Why are there pieces of love that don't belong
Nations droppin' bombs
Chemical gasses fillin' lungs of little ones

The connections to Iraq in the above stanza seem clear: "Nations droppin' bombs" refers to the first night of attack on Iraq, when Bagdad was bombed repeatedly, a strategy the military called a "shock-and-awe" campaign.

"Chemical gasses" refers to the notorious attacks by Saddam Hussein on Iraqi Kurds. This song could be persuasive enough to recruit someone into an anti-war movement. To determine the role of a piece of music in bring new participants into a movement, Rosenthal writes, "...we need to look at many facets of the music, not just to the song itself but the variety of forms and activities that grow around it." (13) In this case, the forms and activities that grow around the music include the activities of fans of the group, people who listen to their music, write about it in blogs and tweets, go to the concerts, and so on. These fans may tend to be politically active, because many of the songs by the Black-Eyed Peas are political. For those listeners, this song might inspire some of them to get involved specifically in an anti-war movement.

[clip from Rosenthal page 13:]

a movement of resistance in the South. Education can also mean presenting a different way of looking at "old facts," as Leon Rosselson does in his revisionist version of the life of Jesus, "Stand Up for Judas."⁵ Songs can link together ideas or events that the listener may not have grouped together, as Ochs posited a common enemy to the labor and civil rights

[end clip]

Comment [LM27]: Top slice introduces the stanza and relates it to your argument.

Comment [LM28]: When quoting several lines of a poem/lyric, always format it as a block quotation.

Comment [LM29]: Bottom slice!

Comment [LM210]: Here, I am able prove the relevance of this stanza to the Iraq War by linking words of the songs to my memories and knowledge of that time. You may not be able to be this specific, but it certainly helps!

Comment [LM211]: Starting to focus on a new question regarding the song.

Comment [LM212]: Top slice!

Comment [LM213]: Bottom slice is addressing one (implied) question.

As well as recruiting people to get involved, this song also could be educational, in some of the ways Rosenthal identifies, by “presenting a different way of looking at ‘old facts,’” and by “link[ing] together ideas or events that the listener may not have grouped together” (13). In the following stanza, this song simultaneously does both of these moves:

Overseas, yeah, we try to stop terrorism
But we still got terrorists here livin'
In the USA, the big CIA
The Bloods and The Crips and the KKK

This stanza is presenting “old facts” in a new way, and also is linking those “old facts” together in ways the listener may never have seen before. The “old facts,” which everyone knows, are that the USA is engaged in a war against terrorism, and that the CIA, the Bloods, the Crips, and the KKK are all groups that engage in violence. But it is “presenting a different way of looking at” those facts, by saying that all of these organizations are terrorist groups. It is grouping together two street gangs, a racial hatred group, and the U.S. government’s Central Intelligence Agency (which gathers and interprets information about other countries, and engages in covert activities in those countries). By linking these organizations together using the word “terrorism,” the Black-Eyed Peas are saying that the CIA is no better than a violent street gang or the notorious KKK, because all of them are terrorist groups. It also is implying that our war against terrorism is suspect, because it is hypocritical, and because we can’t claim to be the good guys when we are tolerating and even supporting these “terrorist” organizations. Unless the listener already is very politically involved, it is unlikely that she has linked these organizations in this way, which many would find surprising and even shocking.

Comment [LM214]: A classic transitional sentence: it refers to the subject that was just discussed (recruiting), and then it refers to what will be discussed next (education).

Comment [LM215]: To do an analysis, turn a quotation into a series of questions that you then apply to a piece of evidence. In this case, the evidence is a few lines from the song, and the questions are as follows:
Which “old facts” are being presented in this stanza?
How is it giving a different way of looking at those old facts?
What ideas or events is this song grouping together?
How/why may the listener not have grouped them together before?

Comment [LM216]: This sentence states the position—the thing that the analysis that follows is proving. Of course you may not realize what you’re proving until you write the analysis. But that doesn’t mean you have to put it at the end of the paragraph. I wrote this sentence last, but I put it here.

Comment [LM217]: Bottom slice!

Comment [LM218]: Which “old facts” are discussed?

Comment [LM219]: What ideas or events is this song grouping together?

Comment [LM220]: How is it giving a different way of looking at those old facts?

Comment [LM221]: How is it giving a different way of looking at those facts?

Comment [LM222]: How or why may the listener not have grouped them together in this way before?