

Youth music as a tool for display of american values

Sociology, Identity



Youth music has changed over the years and even though it may seem all “cool” to us (the youth), it is not all pleasing to the ears of many people not apart of our generation. In the Music & culture book, authors give their own opinion on whether music is contradictory to American values and whether or not there is a huge cultural decline in the youth as time changes. To me, youth music does not contradict American values because not all music makes America look bad. Maybe some songs are contradictory to American values but it is very unfair to say that every American youth song contradicts American values. For example, Tupac Shakur had many violent negative songs that definitely contradicted American values, but he also had songs such as dear mama and keep your head up that were very positive and definitely correlated with American values because we value mothers and look to empower, strengthen, and motivate woman during tough times.

American values are basically the things that we as a country truly do not take for granted and treasure. As a country we truly value family, education, hard work, and money. So what they mean by saying music is contradicting these values is basically that music gets away from those things and it replaces those with sex, drugs, and violence, which in my opinion is not correct because not all music is the same.

According to my grandma, music is the blame for the “supposedly” cultural decline in youth because she thinks now days the only thing on the radio is music that promotes violence and I’m sure my mother’s opinion would be different because she actually listens to a lot of music that is on the radio today.

In class you told us about how in “ I love Lucy” the man and woman did not sleep in the same bed and how over time that started to change and now you could just turn to MTV and see half naked couples sleeping in the bed together engaging in sexual activity. You also showed us Madonna’s MTV awards “ like a virgin” performance and how you could not watch it because it was supposedly contradicting to American values, which goes to show that as time changes this what this country values changes and previous generations do not agree with the changes in what this country values in the present day in age. For example, we went from a nation that was more hands on to a nation that values technology and now a days my Grandma sweeps instead of vacuums, and grandfather sometimes hand washes instead of washing his close in the washing machine down stairs, the old culture is always hesitant to fit in with the new culture and it’s values. We also now see how rap went from story telling like “ Children’s Story” by Slick Rick to NWA using the “ N-word in almost every song. This goes to show that over time the country changes and so does what it values.

In class we also discussed how our grandparent’s listen to different music than we do and how we will listen to different music and despise the music that our grandchildren listen to in the future, which is kind of hard to believe but is true. This is another example of how time changes, USA values change, and music changes.

American values change over time just like music. In the 1800’s America valued men, slavery, and field work which is way different than what America values today. I’m pretty sure that if someone came out with the

type of music we make today they would be in big trouble. The point I'm trying to make is that as time changes so does American values and music. As time goes on, the previous generation will always feel as if the present generation of youth is contradicting those old American values.

Allan Bloom would argue against me and say that youth music such as rock and roll, rap, and hip-hop contradicts American values. The one thing I know for a fact that he would say is that it takes away from education because that is exactly what he said about rock and roll back in the 80's. But I feel as if my argument could definitely hold it's own against greats like Allan Bloom and the other author's in Music and Culture.

Whether or not youth music contradicts American values, it's all an opinion meaning that even though I feel youth music does not contradict American values, there is no correct answer because many reasonable statements and examples can be made from both sides of the spectrum. Most of the time this argument is our generation defending itself from the previous generations throwing dirt on our music. This is an argument that will continue as long as we continue to listen to music and new music is made. The word "change" is extremely meaningful when it comes to America's music because older generations will always deem the youth music contradictory and make the previous generations feel as if there is a huge cultural decline whereas the youth feel completely comfortable and feel no sense of a cultural decline.