

American pride

[Experience](#), [Anger](#)



“ For Americans, September 11 was a terrifying day of abject horror for both themselves as individuals and for their nation as a whole” (Gillespie 3). As we all can agree that America hasn't been the same since that day. The day when the south and north towers of the World Trade Center came crashing down making a distinct organization marker to describe our country's history as “ before 9/11” to “ after 9/11. ” After this Americans were questioning their own individual identity, national identity and patriotism towards their country.

Americans needed guidance, encouragement and strength and that's where some music industries came to the rescue and stepped up. Yes, there were a few artist that did play tributes or wrote songs for September 11, 2003, but there was one that took out unlike the rest, Toby Keith. Toby Keith's song “ Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue” expresses inspiring American patriotism with the relevance of what Americans faced after the tragedy of September 11, 2003. Toby Keith has always been seen as a successful musician for all music genres with his major record labels and touring all around for almost eight years.

Keith was always humble about his fame and fortune when others ask he would respond that he is “ no different than anybody else” (Gillespie). Six months before September 11, a tragedy had hit a lot closer to home for Keith's father was killed in a hit and run accident. All the anger, frustration and sadness was overwhelming for Keith. Instead of attacking someone or something with anger or blame he decides to write the song “ Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue” that would have much more meaning behind the

lyrics. Keith decides to write this song as an outline for a story after 9/11 and includes his father who was an Army veteran.

He uses a process of “unconscious and conscious identification” for his listeners to take from the song (Gillespie 12). Consciously his listeners will see his opinions and judgment for our nation and army while unconsciously they will take their own meaning by to their personal experience on 9/11. From the very beginning, Keith sets a high state of pride and patriotism. He begins the song by saying American men or women “will always stand up and salute” defining their support for our nation (Keith). He didn't want to just have focus on the national patriotism but relate to his father and the people who serve in our troops.

He begins to mention the fact that we do have soldiers who have died for the country but justified it so that we can sleep “in peace” at night (Keith). Toby is clearly a “proud supporter of our army” standing by that our troops are fighting for a reason (Gillespie 9). He continues to tell the story of his father, who lost his right eye in the army, and yet still flew the American flag out in their yard till the day he died. Seeming to be random to add in his song but Keith is telling us to still stand by our nation even if something does go wrong.

Of course corresponding to September 11, Keith calls the nation to act on after we have been “fallin' under attack” (Keith). For us to tell the intruders that were going to “lit up your world” (Keith). To act “like the fourth of July,” when we take action. Him choosing these concrete words of a certain national independence holiday enforces that he wants us to act like our “our

fathers and forefathers did" to get the independence we live in today. He also carries in the song the " notion of sacrifice, service and freedom" as a response to September 11 events(Gillespie 10).

Keith sings how now that the nation that he loves has had a " mighty sucker-punch came flying in from somewhere in the back" relevance to terrorists crashing into the World Trade Center towers. He tells how " the bulldog will fight" relating it to our United States army ordered to war by the President Bush(Keith). You can clearly hear the angry in his voice when he continues to say that we will talk about how the army is going to fight for justice when he describes that they will feel as if the " world is raining down" on them(Keith).

Music is essentially a medium process of an individual or community's identification expressed within the music. Keith's song can definitely be said he interplays with the recognition on individual's level and community level for our nation. He elaborates, narrates and communicates on the remembrance of September 11 and our national patriotism that followed. He spoke louder than any other artist could that inspired many to take a stand for our nation which made an everlasting difference.