

# Cornell west discussing the death of michael brown

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Video Analysis The video implements a number of important rhetorical concepts that relate to the expression of persuasive speech as well as notions of Civil Rights within the United States. From an overarching perspective, the video features Cornell West discussing the death of Michael Brown and the media and politicians' response to Brown's death. The present research considers the multiple rhetorical strategies that West implements in this video and his approaches to Civil Rights and equality within the new American century.

West begins by discussing the death of Michael Brown and raising the issue that Brown's death would have received a significant amount more attention if he were a white American. In these regards, West is implementing the recognition of psychic conversion. This term refers to the fact that as humans we live in a community together and that through our position in this community we must recognize the different elements related to community participation. The death of Michael Brown then is used by Cornell West of bringing to the public's attention the multitude of ways that individuals within dominate society have not appropriately contributed to and recognized the challenges many minority individuals experience on a daily basis.

West's impassioned pleas do not just target the white America, but are also highly pointed and contentious because they criticize President Obama's own response to the events that occurred. West raises an interesting parallel between what occurred in the Middle East and the United States response to those events and the response to events that occurred within the United States to Michael Brown's death. West is indicating that Obama is being

hypocritical in his response to these events. An important concept that emerges in these regards is the notion of double consciousness. Double consciousness refers to the concept of having a bifurcated identity, wherein one recognizes that he or she is has more than one identity. One of the undertones of West argument is that while President Obama is an African American, the President in some ways has assumed the identity of the white majority. This rhetorical approach is further recognized as West brings up the point that Obama put out a statement on the death of Robin Williams before he put out a statement on Michael Brown's death. Such a form of reasoning is tacitly criticizing Obama's double consciousness. Another significant point is the recognition that West is implementing analytic logic in this criticism of the media and political establishment. In these regards, he is raising areas where other approaches have been adopted and then showing how these approaches were not equally implemented when the same situation occurred with African Americans. Such a recognition is critical in establishing an important foothold for empowering African Americans and disenfranchised people. Ultimately, according to West, it is necessary for President Obama to increasingly recognize the plight of African Americans within the United States and take steps to speak to this experience to a greater degree than he has done in the past.

After criticizing President Obama, West next shifts his argument to addressing how tangible forms of change can be achieved in the black community. This shift is an effective rhetorical strategy because in the first part of the video West has criticized the current establishment and now is offering a means through which this establishment can be changed through

effective grass roots leadership. West states that the leaders must have integrity and implement the same forms of knowledge and philosophy that were adopted by individuals such as Martin Luther King Jr. The point, in these regards, is clearly that West believes current leadership is not dynamic enough to ensure that the African American community is effectively represented in America and that because of this when senseless deaths of people such as Michael Brown and Trayvon Martin occur, there is not effective recognition and legal enforcement to address these occurrences. While West makes an effective and impassioned plea, one questions the generalizations he implements in discussing the ways that leaders need to assume control and implement changes in the black community. Of course, Martin Luther King Jr. was a charismatic talent, but simply stating that such an individual should be emulated is not effective because he is such a rare individual. Instead, it seems that West needs to develop more tangible and objective ways that the African American community can address the forms of oppression and disrespect that are occurring within the American media establishment. Ultimately, this is the only way towards social progress.