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Self-Assessment Essay  
Prof. Hammes

Writing has always been a useful and creative outlet for me to showcase my thoughts and beliefs. Over the years I have grown fond of being able to be the one in charge of a narrative I control, one of many powers being a writer gives you. However, this semester has allowed me to dive even deeper and has challenged me in ways that have exposed areas of weakness and also strength. I have grown to see where I need to improve and areas that I can continue to excel in to allow myself to be a great writer in the future. The skills this course was supposed to equip me with were being able to “Examine how attitudes towards linguistic standards empower and oppress language users”, “Explore and analyze, in writing and reading, a variety of genres and rhetorical situations”, “Develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing”, “Recognize and practice key rhetorical terms and strategies when engaged in writing situations”, and lastly, “Understand and use print and digital technologies to address a range of audiences”. Although I have had some prior experience in these various learning outcomes, this semester fully allowed me to work and develop certain skills that have turned out to be useful in gaining a full grasp on certain outcomes.

Linguistic standards refer to the way a certain person, community, or society best sees fit to talk or express themselves. This is a very vague definition, however just think of the way people talk such as the popular AAVE, or African American Vernacular English. Throughout this course, we have worked with many different instances of linguistic standards that have been used to both empower and oppress different groups, which we have many seen through the use of different rhetorical situations and terms. When I explored the work of Montell Fish who moved

to a more secular music space, both allowed him to grow yet have been the center of his oppression. In my Essay during phase 3, “Music Is An Art That Shouldn’t Control Us”, I was able to break down and formulate an argument that was centered around Montell’s choice to step away from theological music and branch out into his genre-less art that many opposed because they didn’t see it fit the standard that he once shared. In efforts to fully break this topic down, I found myself getting too deep and losing a bit of cohesion in terms of having a very strong and clear thesis. Exploring a linguistic standard was a challenge, and it showed me that I must work on not getting distracted with all the analysis one might end up having to do while exploring, and staying on track with creating a clear and effective thesis that is present throughout my entire essay. I was also able to explore Linguistic standards back in Phase 2 when having to create a mixtape and breaking down different lyrical strategies. This phase was the most significant in terms of observing and showcasing how linguistic standards can empower. I was able to break down specific lyrical devices used by artists and explain and showcase how they created a specific narrative or changed the direction of the song, which ultimately empowers their message as artists. Please observe below:

“Clearly this isn't all that there is  
Can't take what's been given  
But we're so okay here, we're doing fine”

Frank's use of word choice shows that he is accepting what he is being given and even though it's not ideal he is willing to live with it and accept this love. Ocean is creating a very real and raw emotional journey that many of us may or have gone through, he wants his audience to understand this dynamic and how he felt during this time period in his life. This young dumb and blinding love while was so pure for him. Frank takes his audience on a much more personal journey though, through his use of diction as it causes the reader to read a little deeper into his

In this part of the essay, I was able to break down Frank Ocean's almost cryptic way of singing in order to reveal the true message of his words. He used a lot of rhetorical and lyrical strategies to create his own linguistic standard that allows the listener to break it down and come up with their own empowering message.

In creating the Essays that I have discussed thus far, the importance of revising and collaborating on them has become more and more apparent. I cannot think of a better way of being able to create a cohesive essay without reading through it on your own multiple times. I've learned this and I wanted to develop the skill of taking charge of the narrative and controlling the direction in which the reader will go. The most important aspect of an essay in my opinion is being able to direct and write through the audience's perspective, as this will allow for an essay that will allow people to understand the exact purpose and message. The act of collaboration with your peers is also very vital, as it will provide you with very meaningful and insightful feedback that you are getting from an audience perspective, a perspective with which we are so desperately trying to include and interact with as writers. Feedback is a vital part, as we aren't perfect and can always look for ways to improve our writing, receiving such great feedback from the professor has allowed me to see my work in a different light. Often times as writers it can be hard to see where and what to improve. Receiving feedback on my last Essay allowed me to see how as previously stated, I can get distracted and often lose sight of the purpose and my thesis. This was evident when I was given feedback on how I needed to improve the cohesion of my essay and develop my argument a little sooner to keep things flowing smoothly. Without this feedback or even rereading my work, it would be very hard to improve as a writer and see where I could have done better.