

Task: Essay

Student Number: 2004366

Course: Film and TV

Tutor: Robert Jones

Word Count: 1515

Kid Cudi

This essay will discuss the album *Man on The Moon: The End of Day* by Kid Cudi which was released in 2009. Kid Cudi is a musician, primarily in the genre of Hip Hop and saw the way rappers express themselves through the topics of their songs change. With the industry mostly about artists bragging about their wealth and the use of drugs, Kid Cudi comes across as wanting to change it up and to find a different way to connect with his fanbase. Listening to the album you can identify the main theme behind it, which is his experience with mental health, and trying to attain happiness. It begins with the darker aspects of his mental health and shifts into him trying to find the light in his life.

The album has had a big influence on me because of the subject matter. I know for myself hearing other peoples experience within this area of mental health makes me feel more comfortable in what I am going through. Hearing what Kid Cudi has to say has had a big effect on me as he proves you are still able to achieve great things even with these obstacles in front of you. There are words that touch me more than others such as, “but they all didn’t see, the little sadness in me” (Cudi, 2009). I believe people would be surprised as to who in their life may be affected by this “disease”. Hearing that line, I can relate, and I know many other people would too. Opening up about this issue people will find difficult as they believe no one will fully understand how they are feeling. This is the reason Kid Cudi is one of the biggest artists in the world right now as listeners can find comfort within his music and have them feel less lonely with what they are going through.

Kid Cudi at first got inspiration from himself to create the music he wanted, using lyrics that are very personal to himself; “I was going through a lot of stuff at that time in my life and so I felt like I needed to write those things down just to get them off my chest. I wasn't really thinking about making a hit record or anything like that, I was just making the song to get my feelings out. That was the frame of mind I had when I created the song.” (The Guardian, 20th January 2009). With the sound of the album Cudi found inspiration from 60’s and 70’s English progressive rock bands. “Pink Floyd and Electric Light Orchestra really ultimately determined the soundscapes for my entire career” (YouTube, 2014). Kid Cudi wanted to find his individual sound and create his own path instead of imitating everyone else in the industry. To achieve this, he decided to work with a much smaller group of producers such as Emile Haynie, Jeff Bhasker, Plain Pat, Ratatat and others.

The interview with Wonderland (2020) highlights how a buzz was building around Kid Cudi 11 years ago, but no one could have foretold the impact that his album, *Man on The Moon* (2009) would have. The album is said to have “reshaped the perimeters of rap”. Cudi’s sound is said to be “innovative and immersive, challenging the standard of hip hop that had dominated the 00s”. The

album explores themes across alienation, rage, isolation and insecurity. In the interview Cudi reflects on his creative process and talks about how the year 2020 felt like the right time to present his most recent work. Cudi talks about how his album was influenced after seeing Jim Carrey's movie *man on the moon*, an unfiltered approach to comedy that he applied to his own music. The album reflects what he was dealing with at that time and he wanted to take his listeners "on a ride". Kid Cudi had a chance to speak with John David Washington during the Wonderland interview about his newest release *Man on The Moon III: The Chosen*. During the interview Washington discusses Cudi's trilogy of *Man on The Moon*, his 3 pieces of work that are connected and which show us his journey of being in darkness trying to find light. "I was writing my life, I was literally living it and writing it down. All the *Mr. Rager stuff* (second album), the darker shit, that wasn't me creating some character and being witty. That was me trying to explain what I was feeling at the time".

While researching the album I came across some secondary research where a Jake Zeeman (YouTube, 2019) created a video discussing his thoughts on the album and Kid Cudi's career as a whole. In the video Jake Zeeman talks about how he sees the structure of the album, separating it into 5 acts. Beginning with *Soundtrack 2 My Life* Zeeman speaks on the meaning and how Kid Cudi displays his "endless introspection while being on a high energy rap heavy beat". Zeeman discusses that the song appears to be quite upbeat, but the topic within is much darker than expected, with Cudi opening about his depression. Act 2 takes us to *Solo Dolo* with Kid Cudi (2009) taking us into the "darkest side of his dreams". We hear Cudi present his experience with loneliness in the world and how he distracts himself from reality with his dreams. The next act *Day 'N' Nite* (Cudi, 2009) is where "Cudi shifts from darkness to optimism about the future". This track helps Cudi with the problems he and his Uncle, who had sadly passed, had with each other, and how he dealt with the strain inside him because of their unsettled issues. Turning to drugs he finds himself being able to escape the pain. Act 4 is *Pursuit of Happiness* (Cudi, 2009) where it "returns the album to introspection with Cudi seeking temporary happiness through drugs and alcohol, it's a cycle he's unable to break free from that ultimately results in his failure". Collaborating with MGMT and Ratatat, Cudi discusses the downside of fame and fortune, together with problems that have haunted him since the passing of his father. With the last act we have *Up Up & Away* where Kid Cudi (2009) "closes the album and returns the record to an up-lifting vibe, with Cudi pointing out that people will judge you no matter what, so live your life and move in a positive light". Looking at the first song Cudi has come a long way, but is still in the exact same place, within his dreams. Starting off the album with "In My Dreams", where he's inviting us into his head, and then with the last track, "Up Up and Away", he is still where he was at the beginning, getting up in the day, smoking and trying to take himself away from all the problems he is facing.

As a result of listening to Kid Cudi's album and researching, I have become aware of writing down my own thoughts and feelings. At the beginning it was difficult to see the benefits of doing so, not believing that it will help by getting stuff off my chest. I thought to relieve yourself from the weight on your shoulders you would have to speak to someone, but that is not always the case. A first step can be expressing your thoughts and feelings on paper.

I am also aware of the connection between this essay and the rip-o-matic I will be making. Researching the album highlights the structure in someone's journey with their mental health and this format of the album is what I plan to use for my own edit. I will be using the move from darkness into light, to form the structure of my own piece. Like I was able to connect with the album, I believe people would be able to connect to my video using this approach and that it will resonate.

Looking back at the journey of researching this essay, I felt that the process was much easier for myself as I was able to relate to the subject and the research I discovered. I now have a clear picture of the process I will follow in creating my video piece, and the thoughts I had in my head are much more structured around what I want to achieve. Not only has the research made me consider what language I may need to use, but it has also had me think about the impact that any music, should I use, to apply to my piece of work needs to have.

Undertaking this assignment, I have realised the importance of research and how researching a topic can influence the direction you want to take with a piece of work. If you do not investigate a topic, your outcome would be one dimensional and you are at danger of only portraying your opinion and not fully understanding other people's thoughts on a subject. Fully researching allows you to consider wider opinion and the impact you want to achieve through your own work.

Word count 1515 (including references)

Bibliography

Gwyther, Huw (2020) Kid Cudi Wonderland Winter Issue viewed 15th December 2020, [Kid Cudi Talks With John David Washington For Our Winter 2020 Issue \(wonderlandmagazine.com\)](http://wonderlandmagazine.com)

"Day 'N' Nite." *Man on The Moon: The End of Day*, Universal Motown Records, 2009. Kid Cudi.

"Soundtrack 2 My Life." *Man on The Moon: The End of Day*, Universal Motown Records, 2009. Kid Cudi.

"Pursuit of Happiness." *Man on The Moon: The End of Day*, Universal Motown Records, 2009. Kid Cudi.

Rogan, Joe (2014) *Kid Cudi on Overcoming Addiction* Available at: [Joe Rogan - Kid Cudi on Overcoming Addiction - JRE Classic - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JREClassic) (Accessed: 17th December 2020)

Sawjani, Archana (2009) 'Kid Cudi: I've always been ahead of the curve' *The Guardian* 20th January

"Solo Dolo." *Man on The Moon: The End of Day*, Universal Motown Records, 2009. Kid Cudi.

"Up Up & Away." *Man on The Moon: The End of Day*, Universal Motown Records, 2009. Kid Cudi.

Zeeman, Jake (2019) *How a Misfit from Cleveland Impacted Hip Hop* Available at: [Kid Cudi: How A Misfit From Cleveland Impacted Hip Hop - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KidCudiHow) (Accessed: 13th December 2020)