**Why theNeedleDrop is bias! and so what?**

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**Introduction**

Anthony Fantano is an American music critic and YouTuber who runs a YouTube channel that goes by the name of, “theneedledrop”. (Wikipedia contributors, “Anthony Fantano”) On Fantano’s YouTube channel, he mainly reviews music from all kinds of genres. When reviewing the music, he gives a score between 0-10. 0 is considered to be a very bad album and 10 tends to be a perfect or very good album considering to Fantano. Fantano is very well-known within the music industry as a very famous music critic who has a lot of influence over his fanbase. Not only does Fantano have influence over his fanbase, but he has also influence over the artists he reviews. Some of the many examples is when rock band Daughters released its first new album in 8 years which Mr. Fantano gave it a perfect score of 10/10. This most likely gave the Daughter’s tour to be sold out and even the label noticed this large tick of sales and streams (Coscarelli). Another example is when Lil Xan, a Mexican-American rapper and singer, had some words to say towards Fantano when he gave his album, *Total Xanarchy,* a “Not Good” score meaning that it wasn’t even good enough to be on the scale of 0-10 (Wikipedia contributors, “Lil Xan”):

With the needle drop I think he knows a lot about alternative rock and all that weird stuff, but when it comes to rap, I think he has no say because he gave lil peep like a one and two weeks later lil peep is dead. You know what I mean? And lil peep is a great artist! So the needle drop has no way to speak on rap. He can speak on alternative rock or all that weird Japanese shit that you like…. Please do not speak on rap (Hip Hop Content, 2:09)

As we can see, Fantano has much of an influence over the music industry whether its positive or negative. However, much discourse online (such as lil Xan) details the feeling that his viewers have that he has a genre bias towards rock/metal music which doesn’t give him much a “right” to review other genres of music such as rap. This has lead to the research question and objective of, ***Does Mr. Fantano have a genre bias? If so, can he even give legitimate reviews of music?***This question has much more of a meaningful discussion to not only bias in music reviewing, but how bias affects all of us.

**Data Cleaning**

In order to obtain the data to answer the research question, utilizing the python packages of Selenium and Beautiful Soup was required to web scrape the YouTube channel of Mr. Fantano. When web scraping his channel, the algorithm was designed to observe whether the video in question was an album/ep/mixtape review in order to prevent obtaining other videos non-related to album/ep/mixtape reviews (i.e., track review, weekly review, yunoreview). The algorithm also only scrapes videos that had a valid 0-10 score within the description (Doesn’t include videos where Fantano doesn’t write a valid score in numeric form i.e., eight/10). The not good scores were not included because according to Mr. Fantano:

Not good is more of a classification than a literal interpretation of those two words. Of course, an album that is zero out of ten in my opinion would be not good but again I would take it more as a classification... definition of that classification personally when I give an album that is not good… I’m essentially saying that this project is a non-starter. (theneedledrop,2:12).

Mr. Fantano goes on to state that this classification means that the record doesn’t hold any value and is very thin of content that it doesn’t place on a 0/10 scale (theneedledrop). Utilizing the same logic, classics that Mr. Fantano has given out will also not be included within this data because they are their own classification. When scraping the videos in question, the web scraper was able to obtain the description of the video in order to obtain the score given for the album/ep/mixtape, genre, year the album was released, and the date the video was released (see appendix A). As of 5/22/2022 to 1/21/2011 , Mr. Fantano has done 2064 album/ep/mixtape reviews (Web scraping didn’t go into 2010 due to potential IP ban from web scraping).

However, this pattern of the way he forms his description hasn’t been consistent through his YouTube career. Sometimes Fantano doesn’t include a genre within his description and currently there is not way to obtain the genre of the album he has reviewed. Thus, the reviews that do have a genre within the description will only be used within this project. For simplification, reducing the sub-genre into their parent-genre was necessary for discussing about the genre preference. To understand the sub-genres into their parent-genres, referring to the RYM website to understand the parent-genres and sub-genres (RYM). The algorithm searches within the genre section of the description to convert the sub-genre to a potential parent-genre (see Appendix B). Since genre is very important in answering the question of bias, we can only accept the reviews that can be identified with a parent-genre which cuts the sample size to 1936.

With the algorithm, there is some improvement that needs to be done when discussing about what sub-genre fits the parent-genre. An example of this discussion would be pop rap, is it considered more rap or pop? Should it go under the rap or pop category or both? In my opinion, though there are elements of other genre within certain genres, I believe that it always goes back to the root/parent-genre that can be labeled as such. Pop rap is rap with elements of pop in it. In order to keep this idea consistent, the algorithm has a hierarchy in which it identifies the genre of music. **Discuss this more!!**

**Data**

Some interesting findings can be from the initial evaluation from the data. Mr. Fantano has completed 2064 reviews with the top artist being reviewed is Drake, and the value count doesn’t include collaborate albums i.e., Jay-Z and Kanye – Watch the Throne doesn’t individually contribute to both Kanye and Jay-Z (see Appendix C). Since 1/21/2011, Mr. Fantano has released an average of 172 reviews per year (see Appendix D). All his reviews scores have an average score of 6.32 (SD = 1.6) (see Appendix E). Out of all the reviews, Mr. Fantano has reviewed rock genre-based music 725 times which is the most out of all the genres (see Appendix F).

After the data cleaning, the sample size reduces to 1936 with parent-genre classifications. In order to use the tools to discover the potential bias, we can only observe the genres that have a sample size greater than 30 to comply with the normal distribution idea. Thus, we are only able the following genres: Rock, Rap, R&B, Electronic, Pop, and Folk (see Appendix F). Rock has a sample size of 725 and mean of 6.48 (SD = 1.44) (see Appendix G). Rap has a sample size of 559 and mean of 6.09 (SD = 1.7) (see Appendix H). R&B has a sample size of 286 and mean of 6.06 (SD = 1.73) (see Appendix I). Electronic has a sample size of 195 and mean of 6.38 (SD = 1.5 ) (see Appendix J). Pop has a sample size of 128 and mean of 6.17 (SD = 1.7) (see Appendix K)

\*Important notes

-Can’t make fantano and pitchfork comparison because the difference between continuous and discrete

-Find citations for sub genres of the genre

-Look at video on how he reviews music

**Conclusion discussion**

Fantano should review other genres of music to discover new music and give opions from a specific genre loving perspective

-When discussing fantanos bias, it could be about certain aspects of music he likes more in rock than in rap

-Looked at liked videos about theraypy by logic

-anthony fantano ama on reddit what music he grew up listening to

-The gerneation fantano grew up in was the rock/metal era while right now hip jop/rap is dominating the music industry

--Find citations about the shift in music culture

-Discuss how hard unbiased opinions such like jury duty

-Potentially that rap music is not good anymore? He prefers more old hiphop than trap/rap

**Appendix**

**Text

Description automatically generatedAppendix A**

*An example of a YouTube description by the Needle Drop (*[*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BACSjK-EmtY&t=1s*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BACSjK-EmtY&t=1s) *)*

**Appendix B**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Parent-Genre** | **Sub-Genre** |
| Rap/Hip Hop | Rap, Hip Hop, Trap, Drill |
| Pop | Pop |
| R&B | R&B, Soul, Funk |
| Rock | Rock, Grunge, Emo, Punk, Screamo, Metal, Hardcore |
| Jazz | Jazz, Bop |
| Electronic | Electro, Dub, Synth, Dance, House, Disco, edm, glitch, idm |
| Folk | Folk |
| Country | Country |

*All the parent-genre that are made up of sub-genres*

**Appendix C**

Text

Description automatically generated with low confidence

**Appendix D**

Chart, bar chart

Description automatically generated

**Appendix E**

Chart, histogram

Description automatically generated

**Appendix F**

A picture containing text, scoreboard

Description automatically generated

**Appendix G**

Chart, histogram

Description automatically generated

Chart, histogram

Description automatically generated**Appendix H**

**Appendix I**

Chart

Description automatically generated

**Appendix J**

Chart, histogram

Description automatically generated

**Appendix K**

Chart

Description automatically generated

**Appendix L**

Graphical user interface

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Citations**

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