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Composition I

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Who Doesn’t Want to “Rage Against the Machine”

It is almost impossible for me to pinpoint what my favorite genre of music is, or my favorite artist or band. When asked to decide, so many different choices flow through my mind. There are the classics, such as *Queen* and *The* *Beatles*, the psychedelic styles of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, the Western ballads of Marty Robbins and Johnny Cash, and the edgy metal and angst filled music of bands like *Rage Against The Machine, Pantera,* and *Metallica*. With so many options, I my usual answer for my favorite kind of music is, “My favorite music is the music that I like.”

When the assignment was given to choose a song that has some special meaning to me, I was unsure that I would be able to find a song that would fill the criteria. I usually choose a song to listen to by the way that it sounds as opposed to the words, and to the meaning. There are many songs that I can relate to, and others that are powerful and topical to events that are happening during the period in which they were written. I also had trouble deciding which direction to take this project. *Should I choose a joke song? Should I play it safe and choose a song that everyone would know? Should I choose a song to get people to listen to it?* I finally decided, that the best song to choose, would be one that I personally love to listen to and that people would not expect to have a deeper message. The song that I chose is “Guerilla Radio” by *Rage Against The Machine.*

Before doing the research for this assignment, I had never taken it upon myself to look at the lyrics for “Guerilla Radio.” I have always liked the song for its rap-like vocals, and edgy metal sound, though now I have a new-found respect for the song. When listening to the song before knowing for sure what Zach De La Rocha, vocals, is saying, to me the song was about being anti-cop and trying to listen to the music that a person wants to. I was somewhat correct, though the song has so much more to it. “Guerilla Radio” describes how the election process in the United States seems to serve only the wealthy. Notable lyrics that provide evidence for this are, “As the polls close like a casket, On truth devoured, A Silent play in the shadow of power.” I am in no way a conspiracy theorist; however, it is plain to see that there are problems with way we elect our presidents. Other memorable lyrics are, “The camera's eyes on choice disguised, Was it cast for the mass who burn and toil? Or for the vultures who thirst for blood and oil?” This furthers De La Rocha’s stance against the government and elected officials. These lines from the song also show support and understanding of the middle and lower class who must work every day of their lives just to survive. I too share this respect for the working class as I am a part of it. In some of the final lines of the song, De La Rocha says, “Sound off Mumia guan be free, Who gottem yo check the federal file, All you pen devils know the trial was vile, An army of pigs try to silence my style.” These lines show De Le Rocha’s interest in social justice due to his reference to a case against Mumia Abu-Jamal, as well as feeling like he cannot express himself. I have never felt like my ability to express myself has been infringed upon, though I would hate to have that right taken from me.

Above the powerful lyrics that discuss ongoing controversial topics, and the hardcore metal sound, my decision of “Guerilla Radio” was helped by my father. I have never had the best relationship with my father, so I didn’t spend much time with him when I was younger. The few times that I did get to see him, he would blast 100.3 “The Edge”. While I can agree that is not an entirely appropriate radio station for a six-year-old to listen to, it developed my love for hard rock and metal music. Whenever I hear “Guerilla Radio”, or *Pearl Jam*’s “Even Flow”, or just about any other hard rock song, I see myself sitting in the passenger seat of his early 90’s, faded red, Mazda truck. Some of the buttons falling off the radio and beige seat fabric was worn, tearing, and stained. Hard rock music playing just below a harmful decibel level. Taking the long way to get to Nana’s house to hear as much music as possible. Those are some of the happiest memories that I have with my father, and they have definitely helped to shape my taste in music.