

Example

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CES 101.5

Group 11 - Race Beyond the Moving Screen: Entertainers Critiquing 'Official Culture'

Individual Topic - Breaking Down Stereotypes; Resistance Through Comedy

Working Title - Stand-Up!: Laughter is the Best Medicine

Thesis:

Why We Laugh comedy serves not only a history of Black America but also as ongoing dialogues of race relations. I propose that this understanding can be applied to other examinations of race, as well as gender and sexuality, to find socio-political critiques that ground and resist place in American society. Lind (2013) tells us that reality is socially constructed and that, "most often we understand and accept what it means in our culture to be lower class or middle class, male or female, Black...etc. because we learn what it means to be a member of a certain social group through our interactions with other" and especially through media (p. 7). In this paper I want to explore the nuanced resistance entertainers produce in their performances that destabilize official culture focusing specifically on comedy and stand-up comedy. First I will start with a theoretical grounding of comedy as a site of critique of official culture. Next I will analyze stand-up routines by Chris Rock, George Lopez, Anjelah Johnson and Margaret Cho to reveal this rupture in dominant discourses of race, gender and sexuality. I will then conclude with a comparison of the genera 'comedy' and stand-up to expose contradicting understanding of place in American society.

Working Bibliography:

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Lind, Rebecca Ann. 2013. *Race/gender/class/media 3.0: considering diversity across content, audiences and production*. Boston: Pearson.

Park, Ji Hoon, Nadine G. Gabbadon, and Ariel R. Chernin. 2006. "Naturalizing Racial Differences Through Comedy: Asian, Black, and White Views on Racial Stereotypes in Rush Hour 2". *Journal of Communication*. 56 (1): 157-177.

Townsend, Robert, Quincy Newell, Angela Northington, John Long, Angela Bassett, Ronald Jones, and Darryl Littleton. 2010. *Why we laugh*. [United States]: Codeblack Entertainment.

Wapshott, N. 2005. "Black humour In American comedy, race is no longer taboo". *NEW STATESMAN -LONDON-*. (4770): 43.