
Analyzing Taylor Swift's Song, 'Blank Space'

Taylor Swift has been on top of the music charts since she started her career. Her most recent album, 1989, has broken many records and has given the public numerous songs that will be stuck in the heads of Americans forever. One of these is "Blank Space", a song about a psychotic serial girlfriend who goes through the familiar process of falling in and out of love with a boy every couple of months. Some of the lines in this song include phrases such as, "Find out what you want/Be that girl for a month," and "Boys only want love if it's torture". Overall, the song shows how women are supposed to be perfectly poised and sophisticated; yet, when they are not they are seen as crazy and manipulative. It also shows that men are pigs who only love for selfish reasons. This song stands out as a commentary on gender as it addresses issues that pertain to both genders. It is seen how this song affects members of the different genders psychologically through the concepts of essentialism, overt aggression, the Id, and benevolent sexism.

Essentialism describes the behavioral differences between genders as a product of qualities resident in that gender. So, for example, under essentialism, a woman is crazy and manipulative because it is naturally part of her genetics as a woman. An example of this in the song is, "Stolen kisses, pretty lies/You're the king baby I'm your Queen". This line gives the idea that because she is his queen, "pretty lies" is an expected side effect. The adjective 'pretty' with the word lies is also an example of benevolent sexism, where a member of a certain gender is treated especially well because they are that particular gender. With 'pretty lies' it gives the connotation that the lies are acceptable, because they are beautiful like a women, when really anyone should be scolded for lying. Essentialism is also seen in the idea supported by the song that men use women in relationships; it is just a trait that comes with the Y chromosome. An example of this in the song is, "Cause you know I love the players/And you love the game". By making players plural, it implies that the next line about players applies to all men who are identified as players. The entire line implies that all men, who are players, love the pain they cause when they 'play' women. Overall, the song blank space uses the idea of essentialism to commentate on how some qualities of men and women are seen as innate and are therefore excusable.

Another concept illustrated in the song is overt aggression, which is a physical threat or action that purposely harms another person. This concept in the song is best seen in the music video, where Taylor Swift is a rich bachelorette who brings men to her mansion whenever she is single. By the end of the music video she has thrown a vase at the man, stabbed his portrait, destroyed his car, and either knocked him out or killed him, it is not entirely clear. The overt aggression goes along with the idea that women are manipulative and crazy. Overt aggression is also found in the song with lines such as, "You can tell me when it's over/If the high was worth the pain", and "It'll leave you breathless/Or with a nasty scar". It becomes clear that the end of this relationship always had the intention in ending in pain.

During the whole song of blank space, both in the lyrics and in the music video, the characters are led purely by their Id. In psychoanalytic theory, the Id is the part of the subconscious that drives the desire for sex and aggression, and other things that are seen as socially unacceptable in society. An example of this in the song is, "Rose gardens filled with

thorns/Keep you second guessing like/"Oh my God, who is she?"/I get drunk on jealousy/But you'll come back each time you leave/"Cause darling I'm a nightmare dressed like a daydream". There are multiple examples of the Id in this line. First, the line that states "Rose gardens filled with thorns" does a great job at explaining the idea of the Id. The Id gets someone to do what looks pleasurable and fun, just as a rose looks desirable, but there are most always negative consequences for following this desire, hence the thorns on the rose. Another way the Id is seen at this point is when she states, "I get drunk on jealousy". Getting drunk connotes an unrealistic bliss and possibly an obsession with the substance that causes the drunkenness. The fact that she gets drunk on something seen as bad, jealousy, is another way the Id is used in this song. The Id is entirely based on finding joy in things that are seen as bad, such as getting drunk on jealousy. Finally, "a nightmare dressed like a daydream" is exactly how the Id presents itself, something that will lead down a dark road, but sounds so enticing that it is followed. Overall, the entire song is based off of characters following their Id and letting it guide their lives.

Overall, it is not clear whether Taylor Swift was trying to commentate on gender or if she was oblivious of the messages she was portraying with the lyrics and the music video of one of her hit songs. It is most likely that she was aware of this as she is often described as a crazy ex-lover who dates too much in the media, so this could be her way of responding to those accusations in a sarcastic tone. Her song exemplifies how men and women are expected to fit certain roles and negative consequences such as overt aggression and side effects of the Id are seen if these are not always kept.

Reflection Paragraph

I did not like this essay. It was helpful for understanding how the terms are seen in real life, but I had a hard time finding something to write about that I cared about and I felt like I had to stretch to find things to talk about when I finally did find that topic. Also I had a hard time reaching the word count for this paper. The entire time I felt like I was stretching to find discriminations against gender in the song, and I feel like we should not be trying to find things to be offended about, because that is where discontent comes into play. More than anything, this taught me that you can find gender discriminations in anything and be offended by anything if you choose to be. I was honestly quite discontent that my assignment was to find problems in our culture when we have already have got enough to deal with, so why go out and find more to add to our list of things to fix? So, overall, I think the essay did what you wanted it to do in that I had to study the terms in order to use them correctly, but I did not enjoy the assignment and it did not make me feel empathetic towards gender discriminations, it made me more indifferent.