

PHIL 13N: Third Paper

due by 11:59 P.M. on Monday, November 23

One of the goals of this course is to develop your ability to understand “what it’s like” to have tastes other than your own. In this paper you will do just that. Your assignment is to write a **sociological analysis** or **profile** of a particular musical fanbase. This means *presenting a snapshot* of an artist’s fans (explaining both who they are and why they are fans), and then *exploring the implications* of this sociological snapshot on our understanding of musical appreciation in general.

Before you begin

You have been well prepared to write this paper from the seventh, eighth, and ninth micro-assignments. Before you begin, you should gather together all your “data” and “observations” from these micro-assignments, and review them. (You may choose to write on a different artist’s fanbase than the one you focused on in the micro-assignments, but that would create a lot more work for you than you probably want at this point.)

Paper guidelines

Your paper should be **approximately 1000 words in length** (i.e., 4 double-spaced pages). It should clearly do the following two things:

- **summarize** your findings about the artist’s fanbase (i.e., the results of your seventh and eighth micro-assignments, with an emphasis on any unexpected and/or notable results)
- **reflect** on what these findings might tell us about the nature of musical appreciation in general

You do not need to summarize *everything* you found in the seventh and eighth micro-assignments; just focus on the most important information. If you want to focus exclusively on one fan or one interview, that's fine, too. But whatever you do, you are to use the sociological information you present to draw some conclusions about the ways in which music can be appreciated, and can have value and meaning for its listeners. Remember, at the beginning of this unit, I asked you to pick an artist whose appeal you didn't understand. Now, at the end of your sociological "research", I want to hear what you've come to realize about the artist's appeal, and the ways in which these realizations have changed or challenged or broadened your ideas about music in general. (Basically, I'm asking you to do something similar to what Carl Wilson does in the ninth and tenth chapters of *Let's Talk About Love*, using his sociological findings to interrogate and challenge his presuppositions about musical appreciation.)¹

You may, and probably should, include a short introductory paragraph, but keep it brief and to the point: simply announce the artist you'll be discussing, and preview what your findings and conclusions will be. You may, and will probably need to, use the first person ("I/my/mine") throughout.

Audio option

Instead of submitting a traditional paper, you may choose to submit a 5–10 minute "audio essay", or podcast. Your podcast should cover all the same issues that would be covered in your paper (i.e., you should begin by presenting your findings about the artist's fanbase, and then reflect on what these findings might tell us). The podcast itself can be simple and low-tech (i.e., just you talking into a microphone). This option will work best if you have recorded an audio interview with a fan, which you can then directly splice into your podcast; but having an audio interview to present is not essential. The idea here is just to give you the option to express your thoughts in a less formal and more conversational manner, if you

¹Another way to understand what I'm asking you to do: If you think of your first paper as exploring what *introspection* and *critical thinking* have to tell us about "bad" music, and your second paper as exploring what *critics* and *philosophers* have to tell us, then you might think of this paper as exploring what we can learn from *the actual fans*.

want that.

You may, and should, organize your thoughts ahead of time, and may even want to write out a rough draft or outline. You may read out a prepared script, but you should sound like you're having a conversation, not giving a speech. Talk through your thoughts naturally, as you would to a friend. You may edit your audio together however you see fit.

Podcasts are due at the same time as papers. You may either upload your audio file directly to CourseWork, or upload your audio file to SoundCloud (or some other audio-sharing site) and then submit the link.

Your podcast will be graded on the same criteria as your paper would be, except that instead of the quality and clarity of your writing, I will be looking for the quality and clarity of your oral communication skills.

Formatting

Please prepare your paper for blind grading: the only piece of identifying information on your paper should be your SUID number; please do not include your name. Other than that, you may format your paper however you wish, but please keep in mind that it is going to be read by another human. A legible font, ample margins, and appropriate line spacing will all be appreciated.

There's no reason to reference any secondary literature for this assignment, but if you do, please include a full bibliographical citation at the end of your paper. You do not need to include citations to the particular fansites and forums you mention, either.

Please save your paper in PDF format, with the file name "PHIL13N Third Paper [YOUR SUID NUMBER].pdf" (e.g., "PHIL13N Third Paper 05584623.pdf").

Turning it in

Please submit your paper via CourseWork (from the "Assignments" link on the sidebar) by 11:59 P.M. on Monday, November 23.

Late papers will be docked 5% for each 24 hour period between the due date and when they are handed in (unless accompanied by valid medical documentation).

Late papers may be submitted up to 7 days after the due date; any papers not received by this time will automatically receive a 0.

Grading

Your paper will be graded on the quality and clarity of its writing and analysis. The grading rubric I will be using will be made available on the course website.