



Name Surname

Professor's Name

Course

Date

The Weight of Being a Cultural Icon: Kendrick Lamar's Struggles as a Role Model

Not a lot of people on the planet Earth can say that they relate to Kendrick Lamar's life. Only a few can say that they understand the struggles and generational pain he often raps about. And one or two people can say that they've carried the same heavy weight of being a cultural icon and moral compass for so many. These are the main themes in his latest album *Mr. Morale and the Big Steppers*. Pulitzer-winning musician's 2022 album challenges his listeners' perceptions of who he truly is.

“Kendrick made you think about it, but he is not your savior,” raps the critically acclaimed musician in the song “Savior” and almost lets down his listeners. In 2020, during George Floyd's protests, the general public was infuriated by his silence on the ongoing events. They expected him to support the protests directed at fixing the African American population's problems, but Lamar seemed to prefer to be under the shadows.

Often viewed as the most prominent artist of the 21st century, Lamar's fans see him as a thinker who can guide his community through troubling times. His songs are often telling the painful stories of black communities, and he has many times used his platform to bring more attention to people whose voices are unheard. Therefore without much warning or consent from Lamar himself, he became the voice of the people, and a lot of pressure was put on his shoulders. He was being accountable for actions that no other person would ever be questioned for.



After the events, Lamar almost disappeared from the music industry, barely making any public appearances up until May 26, 2022, when his new album *Mr. Morale and the Big Steppers* was released. Deeply personal stories show the struggles the rapper, as a human being, has been going through his entire life. Abuse, cheating, traumas, insecurities, and every ugly detail were out there for the public to see and judge.

Kendrick Lamar shows his true feelings about being a leader. The rapper condemns the fact that black rappers are often viewed as the shepherds of the black community. Though there have been many artists who bring a lot of joy and healing to people, they are still human beings who make mistakes and are weak sometimes. The album serves as a reminder that not everyone who people relate to and respect is equipped to be a leader, and to prove his point, Lamar points out all the ugly mistakes he has made in life.

Mr. Morale and the Big Steppers has to be Kendrick Lamar's most vulnerable and personal work to this date. The album features 17 songs, and melodically they offer a very exciting listening. But Lamar's work goes beyond the sound. It's a tale of a troubled man who became the voice of his people only to shut down his own. Though some listeners may feel betrayed by Lamar's refusal to be the leader, for many, he became all the more relatable.