
Writer's Statement about "The Effects of Double Consciousness"

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The "Effects of Double Consciousness" presented a tough topic for me since it hit so close to home. In the beginning, I struggled with how to condense my topic so that I would be able to fully complete it in the amount of time I was given. It started on a wider spectrum involving the entire African American community, but this proved too much for me to tackle within a single semester. Instead, I decided to focus my entire paper on myself and family, which made my entire project both more accessible and all the more personal.

Originally, I intended to write a simple research paper like many of my classmates. However, during an office visit, Professor Launier suggested I consider making a documentary instead. At first I was thrilled, but once I began processing what making a documentary entailed, I realized that it would be harder than I first anticipated. This would be the first time I'd ever created a documentary on my own from scratch. My biggest obstacle was figuring out how to convey my message through film. I realized I would need trips back home to Miami to capture live footage of my family discussing my topic as primary research. Using my voice as narration, I would incorporate evaluations and background knowledge in between the footage to help articulate the message.

The entire process as a whole was very overwhelming at times and on several occasions I'd run into obstacles. My professor was very helpful through all of it, providing advice and useful ideas. Even though I was creating a documentary and not writing a final research paper, I, like all of my peers, had to write it out piece by piece to partake in peer review and receive grades for the process. Peer reviews were always helpful since my classmates suggested ideas and corrections from another perspective but in voices similar to my own. I always used peer reviews to provide direction that helped me better clarify my topic so that it was understandable and relatable for not only professors but also my peers. I did not have a particular target audience in mind; rather, I wanted the video to be relatable to anyone who watched it.

My topic was about the feeling of having to be more than one person depending on your surroundings—especially focusing on African Americans and the impact of historical realities like the fight for civil rights, slavery, discrimination, etc.—and how this has personally affected me from the views of my family members. This topic is universal: even though I was specifically referring to African Americans, many others suffer from the effects of double consciousness as well. This was my purpose for doing this research and telling my story. I wanted to explain and express it through my eyes while opening the eyes of others.