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English Sec. 36

Hw: Draft- 10/21

### Michael Jacksons' Legend

Identity by definition is the fact of being who or what a person or thing is. In lesser words, identity is the definition of a person. For some people being shaped by there identity is okay with them, but for some other people they change and create a totally different character. Now I am sure everyone thinks that they know everything about the person named Michael Jackson, but when you really start to think about it do you truly know Michael or is it really the persona Michael Jackson created that you know everything about. Michael Jackson was born an African-American baby on August 29, 1958. He began his singing career at the astonishing age of 5. From the moment he began singing, anyone that would hear his voice would hear the raw talent he belted out. As a child, he was allegedly abused by his father. Growing up his father nicknamed him "Big Nose" which apparently caused some very deep mental pain because at the young age of 21, Michael had his first of many nose surgery's. This was the start of Michael's controversial identity crisis. "Who is the real Michael, was Michael black or white"? These identity issues have touched his music. In many of his songs, he writes about himself and his struggles. He was giving the audience a piece of him in every verse of his works. Michael Jackson the person was buried beneath Michael Jackson the legend.

Michael was not only an artist but he himself was an original piece of art. He was creating and changing the person he was and many of the people back in those times

weren't as open-minded about it. He was becoming something/one else. In the early 70's and 80's there was barely any person that willingly under-gone cosmetic surgery. No one purposely changing their own appearances. So why was Michael changing his? Michael's real personality was a shy, innocent, not yet a grown man with very big dreams. Although that wasn't what his image was portraying. The Michael Jackson that was up on those stages surrounded by millions of fans, was a very successful, young bad boy that could do whatever he damned pleased In the year's following 1987 people started to notice Michael's skin changing from a nice cocoa bronze to an ivory white. Michael's entourage were telling the media that he was diagnosed with a medical condition called Vitiligo. Vitiligo is a skin disorder characterized by smooth, white patches on various parts of the body, caused by the loss of the natural pigment. After the new's spread world-wide his African-American followers started to believe that he had a problem with his heritage and was purposely making himself "white". Now why would he go and do that?

In the years following the change of his skin color that made him go from black to white, he became known as "Wacko Jacko". The huge pop icon was now a supposed

nut case. Michael was a huge star as an African-American but the change of skin color made him a freak. I assume Michael got fed up with all the negative feedback he was receiving with that he released the song "Black Or White". At one point in the song he states "I said if you're thinkin' of being my brother. It don't matter if you're black or white". It was sort of ironic, a man singing about it not making a difference if you're black or white, when many people thought he was purposely bleaching himself to become white. Those people's thoughts and feelings undoubtedly caused many issues for Michael and his constant plastic surgery escapades and other unnatural changes of his body didn't help answer the question on everybody's mind, "who was Michael". Even with all these negative thoughts and feelings towards Michael, his popularity grew more than ever.

Michael Jackson has written approximately 137 songs known to the public. His inspiration came from what he has seen and lived through during his life. One song that I feel he addresses his fight with identity is "The Man In The Mirror". This verse in the song is what really speaks out "A willow deeply scarred, somebody's broken heart and a washed-out dream. They follow the pattern of the wind, ya' see cause they got no place to be. That's why I'm starting with me. I'm starting with the man in the mirror. I'm asking him to change his ways and no message could have been any clearer. If you wanna make the world a better place take a look at yourself and then make a change". He is trying to tell people that it is okay to change and change can be a good thing. I think the first sentence of the lyric means that if you follow the crowd, you will only get left behind. This song instantly became one of the favorites of the American people. The

songs that were made in the same fashion are what made Michael rise to the top and the world slowly began to understand who Michael was.

Not only was it Michael's specific features that defined him. He had many different dressing styles. He was never dressed down. Everything he would put on wasn't by any means ordinary, his dressing style was something like royalty. Michael was making his appearance as big as his title of being a "legend". Many of his pictures are in differently styled military jackets. After his death, the military style jackets have become a very good looking fashion trend. That wasn't the only thing that pointed towards his identity, there was also the very famous hand clothed with one white glove. It is speculated that he wore the white glove to hide his condition from everyone.

Although according to Chicago Sun-Times, however, "Mike's glove infatuation came at a Hollywood production studio in 1980 when he noticed an editor handling film with a single white glove to keep smear marks off. The young star was intrigued." It could have been one or the other, or a combination of both. For this reason, wearing one

white glove almost associated Michael. This so talented gave the music, style,



is now always with man was that he world and hope,

what more could you want from him?

Whenever you hear the name Michael Jackson you think about his music and his life. With the good though comes as much bad. My purpose was to analyze Michael without bringing him into a negative light at all. I turned his controversial color change into a way where he expressed himself. I want people to see him as I see him. A true legend. He has gone down in history as the King of Pop. His name will forever remain on the tongues of each generation. His music will always be known and sang. Michael Jackson created a persona that will leave a mark. He was an amazing artist. He deserved this world-wide love. The person Michael Jackson became was just what the world needed. He became everyone's hero and idol. My conclusion, then, is that if Michael Jackson didn't struggle with his identity, I truly believe he wouldn't have succeeded the way he did.

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