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ENG 101-015

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10/14/2016

A Proposal for the Change in Limits of Education Shown through Art and Text

Introduction

My artifact, "I am Lucy Terry" by Ed Bullins was paper, textured, a little worn out while remaining put together. There is also slight discoloration that comes naturally because of its life through the years. It was typed and had illustrations on the front cover, introducing two of the characters to the reader and the audience. The first most prominent figure that takes up the majority of the cover is an African American male who appears to be fixing his jacket to make sure he's looking nice. The second figure who appears slightly more in the distance is an African American woman who is wearing a dress and appears to be amused by the male slightly in front of her. She has a sort of mesmerized look on her face that makes her seem as though the man did something to draw her attention, possibly his appearance of being slightly dressed up. The book is medium sized.

The artifact made me think of some kind of far off love or infatuation with someone because she is looking at him from a distance. It is almost as if she can't be with him similar to a Romeo and Juliet type of story.

I care about many things in my life, but mostly family, friends, and my education. Family and friends are important because it is valuable to always surround yourself with good people

that support you in life and make life more enjoyable. My education is important to me because it will give me opportunities for a good life, and the tools to execute my passions.

This play is about a young slave that is being illegally educated by her mistress. So, in this case education is so important to the slave that she is willing to become educated secretly and against the law. Her mistress must also see the value in education for willingly break the law in order to do this for her. It also proves that the author believes that everyone should have an education which is very important. (Bullins) The young slave also falls in love with a free black prince which creates a problem in the story, for it is very similar to the forbidden love of Romeo and Juliet. This is what will ultimately make the story even more exciting to the reader or to the audience. I hope the audience will gain a sense of the importance of education and the hardships of African Americans to gather the education they want and deserve.

Statement of Purpose

My exhibit is important because it discusses a subject that is relevant for all time periods. It primarily discusses executing your passions, and specifically education as a passion and importance in life. Education will always be a principal feature in life and something that people desire for the best quality of life possible. In this play "I am Lucy Terry", education is not made available to a young slave girl that has a deep want it. She dreams of what her life could be like if she had the knowledge and schooling that white children her age automatically receive. Her mistress values education as well, so when she illegally educates her, she did not have to be convinced, she more so offered. Having the education, she deserves, she no longer feels as though she is a slave or a child. She is now a free woman in her mind and desires to be treated as such. She grew up before "black people were given recognition for their achievements, their very worth, and their existences here in America", as it says in the play. (Bullins) Currently, some

government figures are trying to make a college education free to anyone that wants it. This is an advancement for education as well, making it more available for more people, similar to when it was finally made available for African American people. My exhibit will show the lengths people went through for an education back then, when it was not available the way it is right now.

Objective

The restrictions that Lucy Terry has in her life are hard to imagine in life today. She is a slave, without rights to be able to do as she chooses and fights to be able to change this because of the racism prevalent at the time. Lucy learns and works to get a proper education even though it was illegal for her to do so, given her situation. Currently, some politicians are working to make education even more available than it is today. So, you can see that availability of education and who deserves it has been in discussion for many years. Recently, the discussion has been about making a college education available and free to everyone. Those opposed to it mainly are focused on the cost of it and what this would do to the economy or the value of education. As education is currently free to everyone at the elementary, middle, and high school level it is now an argument of how high-level the available education should be rather than who should get an education. (Sherman, np) However, the reason behind education restrictions has dramatically changed over the years. At the time of the play, it stemmed behind racism and not willing to give slaves the right to have knowledge to be able to have a part in society. (United States Army Dept. of the Gulf. Board of Education for Freed Men 4) Currently, it stems behind political views of the economy and role of taxpayers. Those opposed to it are mainly concerned about the cost and what this would do to the value of education. My objective is to inform people of the connection from history and today, as the fight for an education is not over.

Plan of Action

My plan for my curated exhibit is to demonstrate the availability of education at the time. I will show examples of who was given an education and who was not, and the quality of education available. I will then compare it to the available education today so that the connection is easily visible.

I will achieve my objective through various sources. My sources will include books and texts about slaves at the time as well as current policies on education and the point of view that a college education should be free and available to everyone no matter their income.

Books:

-Report of the Board of Education for Freedmen for the Year 1864 to discuss the law back then
-How much Free Education? To show a viewpoint that does not believe higher education should be free

Video: “Bernie Sanders Free College for All” to hear a point of view that sides with Bernie Sanders and the free public university policy he had planned to take into effect

Popular culture & Journalism:

-article about expansion of college availability “Community Colleges on Obama Plan: It’s Good if Money’s there.”
-newspaper or article from current time period to show a connection to today and the issue that is still thriving in society: “Was College Once Free in the United States as Bernie Sanders Says?”

They will demonstrate the connection to today and why education was and continues to be limited, as there is a reason behind every action. They will also show the difference behind why education is limited, as it no longer has to do with racism, but more so availability and

costs. These specific resources will give me the means to research history as well as the politics involving the issue today.

I will not consult ethnography as currently, the free education idea in discussion is not based on a certain ethnicity, more so of lower-income families. For this reason, I will not use oral histories as well. I would not be able to interview a former slave to get his or her perspective of inability to have an education or a legal education. I will also be making connections sources from other time periods. My archival material will continue to be “I am Lucy Terry” as I will explore how she takes advantage of the education she is given.

Resources I decided not to use:

Ebony & Ivy: discusses African Americans in colleges and universities in the 19th century and the experiences and challenges they face relating to discrimination, not as effective as an article in this time period for my exhibit.

Advances in School Effectiveness research and practice: this discusses the current advances in education. It was more useful to use political views on if education availability should expand more.

The Demise of “Free” Education: “Education vouchers are one alternative that would create competition and higher-quality schools, particularly for the poor”: did not prove to have useful information

Racist-free Education: “A Blackfeet Indian woman who has kept her daughter out of school on Long Island because of a teacher’s racist remarks in class now faces charges of child neglect: this focuses more on racism in an educational setting rather than how it can limit access to education

[Free education]: [and agricultural labourers]: “From a working man’s point of view...”: did not have as much information as I would have liked

Annotated Bibliography

F. E. L. "How Much Free Education?" *The Clearing House* 13.3 1938. Web. Pp: 1. 6 Oct 2016.

This discusses the opinion of some problems that might occur if free education is adopted, even high school education. It identifies that it sounds like a good idea in theory, but mentions that all of the money must come from somewhere. It also discusses that some people may be forced to go if it is free, even if they do not want to be there and the money will go to waste.

This source was written in 1938, but it is relevant in showing a strong opinion about it at the time. Many still share this opinion today. It is also published by a publishing company, so it has gained credibility.

This source is relevant to my exhibition because it shows a change over time in opinions. It is also written by a working class, white male, so that can give perspective to the writing. Ladarola, Johnny, and Jimmy Dore. "Bernie Sanders: Free College for All." *YouTube*, (The Young Turks) 04 10 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmks6dafkba>

This source discusses the opinion of those that believe we do have the money to fund free public college education for everyone that needs it. Although we are in debt, we still have the biggest economy in the world and are among the richest countries in the world. Therefore, we have the money it just is not spent towards education.

This source is credible because it comes from reporters as well as CNN reporters, a major network. It does only show the democratic side of this issue but it does a good job in doing so.

This is relevant in my argument in showing the current fight for more education and why we should have it, as well as the necessary steps to obtain it.

Report of the Board of Education for Freedmen for the Year 1864, ProQuest I&L Research Collections, Printed at the Office of the True Delta, Ann Arbor, 1865.

This is a report of the Board of Education for people that are free in the year 1864. It discusses who was able to have an education legally at the time. It states that even this year for “the poor, free colored people”, as it states in the source, there was no schooling. Teaching a slave to read and write was a strong offense, and could be punishable by imprisonment for 21 years, or in severe cases, even death.

This text was a government document in 1864, so it is a very reliable way to discover how strict the law was for African American people that desire and education, and what exactly the law was. It is an artifact at the time so it is useful even to study the language of the text and how it was written compared to government texts today.

This text relates to my artifact because the slave in the play was illegally educated. Therefore, it is interesting to see exactly what the law was and the lengths and risks her mistress went to in order to educate her.

Sherman, Amy. "WAS COLLEGE ONCE FREE IN UNITED STATES, AS BERNIE SANDERS SAYS?" *Tampa Bay Times*, Feb 09 2016 *ProQuest*. pp: 1. 6 10 2016.

This work is discussing specifically Bernie Sanders and what he believes should be the new policy on higher education. He states that public colleges and universities should be tuition-free, as it is in most countries and as it used to exist in the United States, according to Sanders. Professors at the University of Kentucky and Cornell University agree that some colleges began free, but many “moved first to a low tuition and eventually higher tuition policy,” as professor Gordon Ehrenberg of Cornell University said. The article also discusses how Sanders and Clinton were almost competing to see who would be more progressive, as this was his most

progressive stance. It states how although Germany has free college tuition, it is not completely free, but paid for by the people through taxes.

This source is very up to date, as it was written this year as the events of the election also happened this year. So, the coverage was very up to date and no time was lost in publication. The use of three different professors for quotes from notable universities adds credibility to this article from an already credible newspaper.

This text informs my research as to show how education is being limited or perhaps will grow in the future in its availability. It is strictly current events, so nothing concrete that has happened but also gives an idea to the current purpose of growing availability, for focused on finances of students rather than race.

Smith, Katlyn. "Community Colleges on Obama Plan: It's Good if Money's there." *Daily Herald*, Arlington Heights, Ill., 10 Jan 2015., 4 Oct 2016. Pg 4.

This article discusses President Obama's proposal to make 2 years of community college free and available to everyone. Robert Breuder, college of DuPage President agrees that it should absolutely be free for everyone. Margaret Lee, Oakton Community College president, discusses how even if the proposal is not adopted, it will make a difference in the understanding of people to show how crucial it is in the development of the economy.

This source is credible because it comes from the Daily Herald, a credible news source. It also has quotes from relevant sources to cover the topic and give back up to Obama's proposal.

This source is also relevant to my exhibit because it is another recent source to show different ways that availability of education may expand. This is a little before Bernie Sanders showed his idea and also slightly less progressive so it does show a change even over a short amount of time.