Tobiasz Majerkiewicz

Mrs. Thomasen

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The Effect of Upbringing on Future

All human life is equal, everyone has the right to live under the same code of human rights. But why do we, as a whole still discriminate others? The Harlem Renaissance was a significant event in the lives of African American people. It allowed the people to fight for what they deserved. The African American fought off the oppression by creating their own style of music, creating meaningful literature and protesting in a non-violent matter. Because of the outbreak of the renaissance many authors started to rise during this time. One author, Countee Cullen, who wrote the famous poem “Saturdays Child” describes his life as an African American overcoming the oppression of white culture to express the equality between the two races. Countee Cullen was an educated man, graduating from Harvard and in his childhood named class poet. Christopher Wallace was a famous rapper back in the late 1990’s. His song “Juicy” was released in 1994 and it talks about how hard he had to work to get here he is now. Biggie raps about his life growing up in the heart of a gang war as well as working so hard until he could afford anything and live in luxury. Similarly, to Countee Cullen’s poem “Saturdays Child”, Biggie Smalls, writes about his experiences as a child in the famous song “Juicy”. These two poems help the reader understand the struggles of growing up in a black neighborhood, as well as how hard it was for them to get where they are now. Biggie Smalls and Countee Cullen where both born to black culture. But unlike Cullen, who moved away from black culture, Biggie Smalls retained roots. Through their writing one can realize the difference in identity because of the different styles of writing. Unlike Biggie, Cullen writes historical and sophisticated poems because of his educational background, but Biggie writes his songs to appeal to his audience. Therefore, both poems have the same message, except they are written in two different styles that encapsulates their identities and personalities, but overall the poem that shines the most light on the topic at hand would have to be “Saturdays Child” by Countee Cullen.

Countee Cullen’s exact place of birth is still not confirmed but he lived by the code of ethics that every human being should have the same amount of respect. Cullen writes in his poem "Saturdays Child" how unfortunate his life was in the beginning because he was born on a Saturday. This is a reference to an old rhyme created by Mother Goose. The rhyme states that: "Saturdays child works hard for his money"(6). In Cullen's poem he talks about the obstacles he had to overcome and how hard it was to get to where he was now. Cullen had to fight through the deep depression as well as the death of his parents, which he states with use of symbolism: “Death cut the strings that gave me life” (Cullen 17) . Cullen focuses on the comparison between the African American childhood to the white rich childhood. Alternatively, Biggie Smalls writes about his time growing up in his song “Juicy”. Biggie talks about the people he looks up to, but most importantly, he talks about how his life changed. Unlike Cullen, he does not talk about others, he is only talking about his own life and how hard he had to work while growing up. Biggie earned the right to gloat about his success, stating, “I went from negative to positive” (Wallace 19).

Both “Juicy” and “Saturday’s Child” use rhythm to keep their audiences engaged. Rhythm gives a piece of literature some fluency and also sets the tone that the authors wants to pass onto the reader. Countee Cullen and his style of writing uses rhythm to contrast the life of rich and poor. Cullen’s poem “Saturdays Child” uses a rhyme scheme as follows: A, B, A, B rhyme. Using this structure, it helps him compare the life of being rich to the life of being poor. Having this type of rhyme structure helps him imitate the sound of the famous nursery rhyme by Mother Goose. Biggie Smalls was a successful vocalist and song writer from New York. His songs where written in the style of rap and because of the style the song was written in, this targeted a group of people who were in the poorer regions of New York. Most of his writing contained details that the white culture would not understand. This is what made Biggie very respected by the African American people. His reputation grew because of how strongly people could relate to his problems.

When analyzing literature, allusions can tell you a lot about the identity of the author because each of them is carefully chosen by the writer. When deciphered, they could tell us when they lived, favorite music, hobbies and what motivated them to become what they are now. When Cullen uses his allusions, he makes sure it helps the reader experience the trouble he went through in childhood. Cullen uses his allusion as a reference back to the Mother Goose rhyme “Mondays Child”. The poem insists that a child’s quality of life will correspond with the days of the week the child was born. Cullen states: “For I was born on Saturday/ Bad time for planting a seed,” (13-14). Cullen believes that coming into this world on a Saturday and put into poverty was not a pleasure. By using this allusion Cullen explains that when born into poverty one must work hard for himself. But other who are born wealthy and do no work because they have everything they will ever need. Biggie uses his allusion the show to the reader the people that where the driving force and inspiration towards his fame. The people for Biggie where prominent in the world of rap and leaders for the African American identity. Biggie had so many people to thank for his success but most importantly the people he watched on “Rap Attack, Mr. Magic, Marley Marl” (Wallace 5). Biggie poem is written as glow-up from his childhood and having the allusions of significant people helps Biggie pay a homage to his idols and influencers.

In conclusion both Countee Cullen and Biggie Smalls convey the same message in their poems. But due to each author having his own writing styles and identities, the message at hand could be received by the reader in different ways. The authors background also has a big effect on their identity because of what they were exposed to as children. Each of these authors grew up in different timelines and having the perspective of both authors on a very similar topic gives the reader an outlook and a timeline on how the childhood obstacles of a child born into poverty change. Countee Cullen uses allusions to represent obstacles he had to overcome to reach the climax of his life, however Biggie Smalls uses the allusion to show what people inspired, influenced and drove him to his success.

Work Cited

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