

English, Level 2

October 13th

Film

Ms Bagley

12 Years A Slave : Reading Log.

"You're no free man, and you ain't from Saratoga. You're from Georgia. You ain't nothing but a Georgian runaway, you're just a runaway Nigger." 12 Years A Slave, directed by Steve McQueen, explores the theme of African American slavery during the 1840's and follows the tale of New York-born Solomon Northup who was captured in Washington DC and sold into slavery. This harrowing tale explores the racism, violence and power structure within slavery, as well as introducing the idea of intelligence within black communities. Through McQueen's flawless cinematography and impeccable script, this text is one of the most influential films representing our humanitarian history.

In the 1840's, waves of slavery were rocking throughout America. Most prominently in the South, negro individuals were often captured and forced into slave labour on cotton picking farms. Large cotton plantations were developed in the land; plantation cotton became the most popular form of slavery as the plantations used unpaid slave labour. In the film '12 Years A Slave', we are introduced to the task of cotton picking when Solomon is sold onto Epps cotton farm. In the time frame in which the film is set, slavery was legally protected under the constitution as it was integral to the agricultural economies of the South. We see at the debut of the film that racism was not apparent in the North, as the protagonist was a 'free man.' Although slavery was of direct importance to the economy of the Southern states, the northern industries depended on the southern crops. Slavery itself is a concept that has been apparent in our history for hundreds of year. Primarily, we identify the African American slavery time period as one of the most inhumane and prejudice moments in our history. Slavery of African American ended in 1865, however the concept of slavery is still clearly apparent in our society today. Contemporary slavery refers to the institutions of slavery that still continue to exist in our present day. According to research from early 2015, the estimated amount of slaves today ranges from around 21 million to 29 million. The text clearly links into the concept of slavery and gives insight into the kind of processes humans go through every day. There are different forms of slavery that are issues in our society. Sex slavery, child labour and human trafficking are examples of the contemporary forms of slavery that exist in our world. I was aware that these degrading human rights were occurring, however I found that through this film I was able to understand the 'logic' behind the issue of slavery. Through the use of a protagonist that essentially came from a similar background to the viewers, that is, has a family and was a free man, McQueen enticed the viewers to understand the sheer brutality and unjustness that the time frame in which this film was set.

"If you want to survive, do and say as little as possible. Tell no one who you really are and tell no one that you can read and write. Unless you want to be a dead nigger." Another feature that I found extremely prominent throughout the film was the degrading of intelligence amongst individuals. Through the use of protagonist, Solomon, we are introduced to the idea that if a negro could read or write, they were a

English, Level 2

July 4th

Short text Song

Ms Bagley.

Same love : Reading Log.

"For those that liked the same sex, had the characteristics. The right wing conservatives think it's a decision, and you can be cured with some treatment and religion. Man-made rewiring of a predisposition." Same Love, sung and written by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis was released on July 18th 2012. It was then nominated for a grammy, and holds the title of 'MTV Video Music Award for Best Video with a Social Message.' The three minute song explores the prejudice surrounding homosexuality and the culture we have created around it. Through the strong lyrics, Macklemore powerfully portrayed a song about love, acceptance, christianity and the society that we generally live in. The piece explores Macklemore's personal experiences with coming to terms with his sexuality, as well as allowing the listener an insight into the medial world we have created around this subject.

For as long as human history has been recorded, homosexuality has been discriminated against. The hate toward gay individuals generally stems from the bible, in particular the statement that seems to stick with me is *'You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.'* Religion holds a large section in terms of homophobia. There are a large number of different actions taken whilst discussing religion and sexual orientation, ranging from quietly discouraging homosexual activity, explicitly forbidding same-sex marriage and actively opposing social acceptance of homosexuality, to execution. Several organisations exist that assert the 'conversion therapy' which they believe can help 'diminish' same-sex attraction. *"When I was at church, they taught me something else. If you preach hate at the service those words aren't anointed. That holy water that you soak in has been poisoned. When everyone else is more comfortable remaining voiceless rather than fighting for humans that have had their rights stolen. I might not be the same, but that's not important. No freedom 'til we're equal, damn right I support it."* Throughout the text we are introduced to the idea of freedom and equality for all humans. As an avid LGBT supporter, I found that this song was incredibly personal for me and portrayed beautiful elements. On August 2012, four year old Zachary Dutro-Boggess passed away after being beaten so severely that his intestines tore. His mother, Jessica Dutro-Boggess was found guilty of murdering her son because she thought that he was gay. In her witness hearing, her defence for the brutality was "He was gay. He walked like it and he talked like it." His seven year old sister at the time watched her mother murder him. This is simply one case out of hundreds of violent hate crimes toward homosexuals. We have created a society where we are taught to judge someone on the preference of their sexuality, and before we are even able to voice ourselves; there are individuals like Jessica Dutro-Boggess, murdering her son before he probably even knew what the term 'homosexual' meant.

"If I was gay, I would think hip-hop hates me. Have you read the YouTube comments lately? 'Man, that's gay' gets dropped on the daily. We become so numb to what we're saying." As a person who lives in a predominantly conservative part of the country, I do not have physical experiences with hate crimes toward gay individuals; I do however, have access to internet. In verse 3 of Same Love, Macklemore expresses his opinions that the word gay, faggot, queer have become part of our everyday vernacular, without realising the implications behind the term. I found that I personally identified with this theme, as in the 2015 slang, we still use these derogatory terms. When we remind one another these words are homophobic and offensive, all we can come up with to defend our actions is 'Oh, but we didn't mean it that way. Faggot means a bundle of sticks.' The word 'gay' has become an insult, contradicting the old term of happiness and colour. Young children now identify that 'gay' means not cool, however as a community we try to teach our children respect and equality. The writers of this song have intelligently weaved social issues into a song that is appealable to almost all audiences. I realised whilst studying this song that the implications behind the text do not mean to discriminate against other individuals with religious beliefs, rather wish to share the message the message that homosexuality does not make anyone less human. The concept they have created also shows the history of human rights, as they refer to the 'walk outs' and 'sit in' linking back into the idea that everyone in this world is human; and pigmentation of skin or sexual orientation does not define the content of their character.

Macklemore and Ryan Lewis incredibly powerful song 'Same Love' is an insightful and moving piece of audio. It allows readers to identify with the humanity that we seem to have lost in our modern society. The morals that we hold toward one another is shown beautifully in this song, as we are reintroduced to the idea that we are all human, no matter what your sexual preference may be. The song shows links to the real world, as the addition of the concept of communities within social media add's to the overall message of equality and respect for each other. I found I identified with this song as the morals the lyricist holds are similar to that of my own, meaning that I was even more passionate about the song as the context was influential and powerful.

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English, Level 2

October 2nd

Poetry

Ms Bagley.

Sons : Reading log.

"The part, where we celebrate our decision to throw another black boy into a cage and trust that prison will teach him how to respect women better than we ever could, if we didn't give up on him; jails will not fix broken people. Jails will break them harder." Terisa Siagatonu & Rudy Francisco slam poetry piece 'Son's' was performed at the national slam poetry finals on September 19th 2009. The three minute poetry explores prejudice of sexism and racism within rape culture. Through Siagatonu & Francisco's use of emotive language and modernist style of poetry, they create an ambience in their piece that allows viewers to connect with the message portrayed throughout the text. The piece follows the pairs thoughts and feelings toward the culture created surrounding rape culture, furthermore powerfully expressing their views on sexism towards women.

In our recent history, rape culture has become a clear indicate in our lives. From magazine spreads to new articles; the media and connotations behind rape culture in our live has begun to be treated almost as a trivial situation. *"When the state of Ohio found two sixteen year old boys guilty of raping a sixteen year old girl, both boys cried their eyes out moments after the verdict. Every major media outlet coddled them, instead of the girl they raped. CNN was grieving over the death of their futures in football. they said nothing of the cemetery growing inside the body of the girl, nothing of the graveyard where she will bury her trust in men"* This important theme that these writers have created begins to show the concept of power that the media has over rape victims, as although it is sickening, often sexual attacks are portrayed in the media as the victims wrong-doing. The connection to the concept of rape culture within the text links clearly into modern society. From 2001, there has been an estimated 400,00 unprocessed 'rape kids.' I was aware that this was a clear issue in our society, however this poem has allowed me insight into the idea of racism connected to rape culture. Media plays a large role in the portrayal of black individuals in the media, and it is not uncommon for black individuals to be persecuted simply because of their skin colour, an ancient battle of racism that is shown in texts such as 'To Kill A Mockingbird' and '12 Years A Slave.' Throughout the text, we are introduced to the idea that if the poets were to have children, they would choose to have a son. I believe that they used this analogy to present that the fact that although in today's media, it is often young black individuals that are victimized, it is also young females. From birth, rape culture teaches young individuals which gender gender they will be. Dependent on their gender, they will also learn whether they will be the perpetrator or the victim. This theme that reoccurs throughout the piece explores the concept of female empowerment, stated by Siagatonu; *"If i've learned anything about being a woman, it's that no matter how empowering i seem, my existence was designed to never stand a chance.* The culture created both in the media and in our lives shows that young women must know how to 'defend themselves' however there is little speculation surrounding teaching young boys who may become instigators morals and control. I personally found that throughout the text I was comparing

myself to these scenarios, and came to the realisation that the male power scheme created in our lives has been drilled into me from such a young age. It made me understand that this culture we have created defeats the purpose of humanity, as this horrific occurrence has become an everyday event.

As a population, we see that we are trapped in a web of racial and gender inequality, shown through sexual assault toward women. *"And if i don't raise him, in a community that will teach him how to unravel himself from his sexism, from the raw and parts of his masculinity, if he doesn't learn better from me, than what rape culture will teach him when i'm not looking, then he is as good as en he is as good as crooked cop street, as good as jailbird, sex offender, wife beater, hopeless case, caged dog, he is as good as the next brown boy sobbing on the witness stand, apologising to the girl that he raped. Promising that his mother taught him better than that. Hoping that someone in that courtroom will forgive him. For what? He has yet, to learn."* I found that this text also explored an essential part of the culture created, as it introduces the idea that things such as sexual violence is taught. No one is born violent, inhumane or unjust, but community and surroundings influence behaviour, furthermore meaning that without guidance from people with humane morals, they forced to learn the ways of the world from cultures. Rape, no longer knows closed doors, or dark alleyways, but is implemented into our everyday lives and routines. The portrayal of women in our society is objective, and this piece distinguishes the problems with society and our views of dominance over women.

Terisa Siagatonu & Rudy Francisco's moving slam poem 'Sons' is a powerful and insightful piece that allows listeners to quickly question the morals we hold surrounding rape culture and sexism within our communities and the negative connotations that the media has surrounding the issues. Their presentation of the piece adds sophistication to the subject, but uses emotive language and action that encourages the viewer to immerse themselves in the subject arising. I found that this piece truly made me think about the world and society in which we live in, furthermore touching on issues that I believe are of a worldly matter.

