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ENG 102

As soon as I read the spoken word poem “3 Ways to Speak English” by Jamila Lyiscott I knew I wanted to do my paper on this particular poem. With English not being my first language and having people tell me when I was young I was speaking it wrong and my accent when I said certain words didn’t make sense to them I definitely related to Jamila. The poem was very emotional just reading it but when I finally got to watch the video of her reading her work it was even more captivating because I was able to hear every emotion and hurt in her voice that you don’t always get when you just read it on paper.

Jamila captures her audience by starting the poem using big words, one of the words that is used multiple times throughout the poem is the word “articulate”. Jamila describes herself as articulate because she’s able to speak 3 tongues as she calls it, one for school, one for home and lastly one for friends. One of my favorite lines of the poem “Because English language is a multifaceted oration subject to indefinite transformation. Now you may think that it is ignorant to speak broken English but I’m here to tell you the even “articulate” Americans sound foolish to the British” I think this line and the way it was delivered was a great way of emphasizing that there is no correct way to speak English because everyone speaks it differently. Its seems that throughout time a lot of people have a set idea on just one way to speak English and if you don’t speak that way you’re looked down upon as not being intelligent enough.

One of the most powerful and emotional parts in this poem especially when listening to it has to be the part were history is brought up. “you can’t expect me to speak your history wholly while mine is broken” “the reason I speak a composite version of your language is because mine was raped away along with my history” when delivering these lines Jamila’s voice changes, you can hear a crack for a moment almost as if she’s getting choked up. Jamila is trying to get across how can she speak and conform to speaking English the “proper” way when hers was taken away and looked down upon on. As a minority in America is hard to be taken seriously because often people have a preset notion on the the type of person you are based on your speech or looks. Jamila does a great way on speaking about this “I’m so tired of the negative images that are driving my people mad so unless you see me rob a bank stop calling my hair bad” showing that racial profiling and discrimination still goes on so how can people expect her to conform and act and speak the way they want her too.

One of the most important messages I took out of Jamila’s spoken word is theirs no correct way to speak a language just because someone speaks it a “broken” way doesn’t mean they are not articulate. In my opinion being able to speak and communicate to different groups of people more than in one way makes you even more powerful. Jamila being able to use “what’s good” “whatagwan” and “…. hello” are parts of what makes her an “articulate” person she is able to reach and connect to more people that way.

**Artist Statement:**

From this assignment in particular I learned the importance to go deeper and analyze a piece and I guess although it doesn’t sound challenging it was for me because in a way you have to break down each part of the poem and try to see what the writer was trying to say and take it beyond that. I chose the format of doing an essay because that was what I was most familiar with I thought this was going to help me be able to write down all my thoughts in a cohesive manner because I’m not the most artistic person the essay was the format that I had more familiarity with.

To push my assignment further I defiantly think I could have gone deeper added more details and made a deeper analysis of the poem. I do think my analysis didn’t do enough as far as really break down the poem. I was out of class during the time we had to do the peer editing and I do believe that would have been a good way for me to expand my essay by seeing critique from others. For my next paper I think peer review is a must. After this assignment I think with every piece of writing especially poetry I will try to look deeper and see why the writer choice the format and certain words in their poetry.