Culture

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Author Note

Culture

In the poem ‘Bar’s Fight’, Lucy Terry demonstrated the attack by American Natives on the white families. The poem is written in couplets and every line has a different length and number of syllables which makes the metre irregular and uneven. The poem lacks poetic prowess and doesn’t have attractive metaphors. However, its real beauty lies in its simplicity. The poem explained the attack of Indians on white people. Lucy seemed to have known these families personally. Terry tried to express her gratitude in regards to the attack and her admiration for the deceased people. Despite this deep emotion, Terry is able to describe the happenings of attack quite vividly.

The explanation of stanzas chosen for this assignment, along with the questions they propose is given below.

The names of whom I’ll not leave out,

She states here that she will not mention the victims of the attack, which might be her way of giving privacy and respect to the deserving deceased men.

Samuel Allen like a hero foute,

The way Lucy described the white people, proves her close relationship with them. In this phrase, the word ‘foute’ is used which has no particular definition and is supposed to be an alternate spelling for ‘fought’, which in this context would make clear sense. Another possibility is that it was a misspelled to make it rhyme with ‘out’ in the previous phrase.

And though he was so brave and bold,

Mr. Allen was quite a fighter!

His face no more shall we behold.

This line says that the bravery of Mr. Allen could not stop his death. However, it is not clear that the poetess used euphemism for explaining his death or the phrase has a literal meaning. Was Allen’s face brutalized?

Eleazer Hawks was killed outright,

The death of this guy was quick, which in this context is a good thing.

Before he had time to fight,

He didn’t even was allowed to reason, as they were all ambushed.

Before he did the Indians see,

This phrase confirms that Mr. Hawks was taken out by surprise. An interesting thing to note here is that the kind and level of details mentioned here could only precisely be described by someone who observed the event. However, Lucy didn’t witness the attack and used her creative liberty here.

Was shot and killed immediately.

He was shot down and didn’t get the praise that Allen did. The question raises here is that what was the reason for his sudden death? Did he fail to put up an attack? However, his death seems quite cruel as he didn’t have an opportunity to defend himself.

Oliver Amsden he was slain,

The description here is not detailed and it gets directly to the point that Oliver was killed.

Which caused his friends much grief pain.

This phrase acts as a pace changer here as it mentions the consequences of this tragedy.

Simeon Amsden they found dead

Again not a detailed description at all. Mr. Amsden was found to be dead.

Not many rods from Oliver’s head.

An interesting thing to notice here is that Oliver’s corpse is mentioned as “rods” from his head. Was it just his head? The rod mentioned here is for explaining the measurement, although it was quite a long distance so it seems to be a little odd choice to mention it here.

Throughout the poem, the tone of the poetess seems to be very sorry and wistful. The stanzas explained above clearly depicts the sadness and sorrow in her heart for the deceased white people. In the first line, she said that she will not reveal the victims of the attack. And right after that throughout the poem, she mentioned the names of the deceased ones along with their brief description. She knew about the hardships and troubles faced by the victims during the attack and in order to show them respect, she decided to give them the privacy they deserve. But as the poem progresses, she just couldn’t control her emotions and mentioned a few white men who lost their lives in the tragedy. The details of the victims mentioned by the poetess show that she knew them very well and was deeply connected with them. Lucy, in the form of this poem, tried to pay the white men, tribute for their sacrifices.

In the poem, Lucy expressed her gratitude to the white people attacked by the Indians. However, In the ‘Criteria Of Negro Art’, Dubois focused on three things. According to Dubois, the real beauty of the world lies will be unleashed only when black Americans will be given equal rights as white Americans. Secondly, no piece of art is useful unless it is used for a proper agenda or propaganda. According to Dubois, the art presented by the people of any community must ensure that the basic rights of living are provided to the people of that community. And the last important point explained by Dubois in his essay is that he predicted that the art presented by the black Americans will not be appreciated. He had this doubt in his mind that the black Americans will never get the facilities that white Americans had at that time.

The following two paragraphs are taken from his essay:

[31] The ultimate judge has got to be you and you have got to build yourselves up into that wide judgment, that catholicity of temper which is going to enable the artist to have his widest chance for freedom. We can afford the truth. White folk today cannot. As it is now we are handing everything over to a white jury. If a colored man wants to publish a book, he has got to get a white publisher and a white newspaper to say it is great; and then you and I say so. We must come to the place where the work of art when it appears is reviewed and acclaimed by our own free and unfettered judgment. And we are going to have a real and valuable and eternal judgment only as we make ourselves free of mind, proud of body and just of the soul to all men.

[32] And then do you know what will be said? It is already saying. Just as soon as true art emerges; just as soon as the black artist appears, someone touches the race on the shoulder and says, "He did that because he was an American, not because he was a Negro; he was born here; he was trained here; he is not a Negro -- what is a Negro anyhow? He is just human; it is the kind of thing you ought to expect."

In the first paragraph, Dubois said that we must perceive a piece of art by black Americans in the same way as we receive them from white Americans. The real judge only judges the content, not its creator. He explained the fact that black Americans became dependent on white Americans almost for everything. He said that to publish a book written by a black person, he got to have a white publisher and a white newspaper in favor of him. Otherwise, any piece of literature or art done by any black American cannot be published. He insisted upon this very important point again and again that black Americans must be awarded the equal rights and opportunities as white Americans. Also, to ensure fair and real judgment, it is necessary for people to consider everyone equal in all regards.

In the second paragraph, Dubois gave an example of the piece of art presented by a black American. He said that if by any chance, a piece of art made by a black American comes under the liking of white Americans, then the white Americans will try to take the credit on their own. They will say that he (black American) was born and risen here and now he has created this masterpiece only because he is an American. They will not appreciate the Negros, whatsoever. At the end of the paragraph, Dubois asked this question that who are Negros anyway? And right after that, he said that they are just humans like all other humans in the world, but unfortunately, they are not treated fairly.

In the above-mentioned paragraphs, Dubois explained the unfair situation faced by black Americans. They were not given equal rights and luxuries as white Americans. They were not treated fairly. Their art was not appreciated and if it does get appreciated, the white Americans would not give the credit to Negros. Dubois wanted to uplift black Americans. He wanted to see them standing on their own. He wanted to convey this important message to them that they are not worthless and that they are created the same way as the white Americans and all other humans in the world. The only difference between the people of different communities is those which are created by people themselves. The Negros must become independent and stay positive and produce the stuff that they must own. They must show the world that they are equally capable of doing and creating amazing stuff (art) as the white Americans are, and they must fight for their equal rights.

This essay, ‘Criteria of Negro Art’ is a true depiction of the unfair events and happenings with black Americans. Dubois not only mentioned the unfair treatment but also provided the Negros with a suitable yet hard solution. He tried to motivate them to work hard and prove their real worth. He made them believe that they have equal and perfect capabilities to produce extraordinary pieces of art. He wanted to see them rise and fight for their agenda of equality.