



Open Communication: Having your Voice Heard

Angela Brown

E-mail: akhristin.brown@centurylink.net

Received: 09-12- 2014
doi:10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.3n.1p.12

Accepted: 26-01-2015
URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.3n.1p.12>

Published: 30-01-2015

Abstract

Communication is the use of language to exchange information to one another. African slaves used to embark on communication by means of using common symbols and speech, telling stories, singing spirituals, writing poems. As time revolved, blacks valued education. Education and the ability to read write and effectively would give them the skill or trade they needed to overcome obstacles, to be competitive with society and to become successful. The nature of communication would evolve productively towards social and economic freedom.

Keywords: Communication, language, ideology, dialog

The African American language originated in the Dominican Islands. Slaves were brought to the islands before being slaves in America. In the islands, American slaves were able to communicate because of the tribes from Africa who spoke the same language. The dialect was easy to conduct everyday communication through common phrases. The language spoken was broken English. Phrases like "where are you going", "I already been there" were used in daily conversation. Some of the language from Africa is still used in American dialect. Words like banana and voodoo are a part of the English language. It is interesting that some of the spirituality in language was shared amongst African traditions implementing the culture passed upon generations of slaves. Communication is, in fact, a valued source of maintaining universal relationships.

African folk tales follow a form of storytelling used by slaves as a form of entertainment. African folk tales were heroic tales used by slaves. The folk tales had a hero like the road runner and the coyote that reflected the Loony Toon cartoons. The stories used animals as characters. The heroes of the tales were weak animals who fought stronger animals like the lion or the bear. The format of the stories was to tell a story of how slaves were to overcome slavery or to tell how the weak could triumph over evil. African slaves believed that someday they would be free. The folk tales were an inspiration that there was hope of obtaining their freedom from slavery.

The songs that the slaves sang were about the sorrow and pain of slavery. Gospel music in songs is written about a spiritual journey to reach salvation. Gospel songs speak of hope and disparity of the black race. Gospel music can be sad to listen to because of the mourning rituals it expresses in its music. Music has transformed from work songs, field hollers, and spirituals to that which would leave a powerful imprint on later forms of American music, gospel, ragtime, jazz, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, and rap. How the genre changed the message remains the same of hope and content. In order to understand the songs, you must identify with the content and anger of black suffering.

The important themes of "Go down Moses" and "Swing Low Chariot" are asking God to grant their freedom from slavery. The words "Let my people go and Carry me home sweet Charlotte," speak of the words of slaves. The timeline in which the poems were written was taken from the Bible. The poem "Go down Moses" refers to Moses asking the heroes to release the slaves from bondage. The final miracles from God, Moses was to kill his son. The song, "Swing Low, Sweet Charlotte," refers to releasing the slaves from Israel. Each poem speaks of justice and freedom that going to heaven is the answer to becoming free from slavery.

Trickster Tales are abstract stories speaking of free oppression. The tales are clever stories of hope. The tales speak of the black race as a strong heroic race. The tales give insight to overcome oppression from slavery. The tales use strong characters to build hope for the black slave. The tales reveal the struggle of how race dictates inequality.

African American Toast to Tradition is a collection of poems from Louisiana that reflect on black tradition. The poems are heroic stories about overcoming racism. "Shine and the Titanic" is a poem used to reflect the cleverness of blacks. The story explains how the weak overcomes obstacles of oppression.

There came a time where expansion would change the course of history. The abolitionist movement was an important motivation time of change. It resulted where blacks were educated and it was the first black newspaper to have the first voice to speak against slavery.

The reconstruction of America came after the Civil War. It was predicated on more violence, racism and discrimination. It was a time where manual labor was needed. It was a time of reformation. It elected the first black politicians to seek office. It was a time where blacks became principals of universities. It implemented the 14th, 15th and 16th amendment to the constitution. After the Civil War there was a hope.

The construction of the two World Wars allowed blacks in the military. The union of black nurses improved equality. The war motivated the Civil Rights Movement. The march in Selma was the turning point of the movement. It was televised as the most deadly marches in the movement. It led to President Johnson's signing of the Civil Rights Vote into law. The movement changed the law for blacks and allowed them to eat at public counters, to sit anywhere on buses, to have access to public parks and facilities, as well as to have an equal education. It became a movement of inspiration.

Discussion

Do you know the value of education? Education plays a big role in determining your level of success. Today, everyone needs a college education to get a good paying job. Slaves knew the importance of communication. If you identify with the importance of having an education, it will create opportunities for you. Everyone knows that knowledge is power. Therefore, by developing a skill or trade, you will become more successful.

Conclusion

Throughout history, slaves have expressed in their writing and communication that they have wanted freedom of expression and freedom from oppression. The protests manifested in the form of telling stories, songs, hymns, pastor calls, literature and poetry have spoken for equality. The old spiritual song is a call for justice that "change will come someday."