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Seaton AP Literature and Composition 11 December 2017 Reality of Race Henry Louis Gates, Jr. writes "Writing "Race" and the Difference It Makes" as a cultural criticism, advocating that race influences the study of literature and history. The author effectively and steadfastly builds his argument by noting how race influences everyday life through its appearances in readings, stereotypes, and status. Gates begins his criticism by noting how today, race influences literature by accentuating general human conditions, not specific groups. In the contemporary world, there are many generalized readings. For instance, accounts of living in trenches are not told by the people who lived that reality, themselves, but by writers that attempt to give vivid descriptions of how the living conditions were. During the nineteenth century, literary theories were particularly drawn to historical perspectives, on different time periods and people.

When interpreting literary works from the nineteenth century, I noticed that most readings take note or include excerpts of different events to offer the audience a deeper understanding through a different medium: people's perspectives. Race is biologically insignificant, however, humans insist on categorizing people by their characteristics. There are a myriad of characteristic depictions ingrained in everyday life and conversations as people use the terms "black, white, and yellow" when talking about the color of one's skin, cite common stereotypes, and refer to someone as "different" when they stray off and do something that is ethically wrong or uncommon. Since colors are generally associated with emotions, people draw relations between ethnicities and status.

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Society conditions people to believe the common stereotype that blacks are “ bad” and whites are “ good.” With all the negative connotations associated with black people, such as how they are drug-users, violent, and uneducated, blacks are generally degraded. Hundreds of people are “ killed every day in the name of differences” in different races. Statically, blacks are three times more likely shot by a police officer than whites are, but since white people outnumber the number of black people in America, people presume that police kill more whites than blacks, not considering the population size of each ethnic group. Since 2016, police officers have killed more than two hundred and fifty black people, thirty-nine being unarmed. Thirty-four percent of those unarmed people killed were black men, which is disproportionate to their constituting percentages in the United States population.

As time passed, blacks finally attempted to liberate and “ write themselves out of slavery.” Even today, blacks have troubles freeing themselves from the misrepresentations associated with them. It is especially difficult to do so because of the media heavily negatively influencing public perceptions of blacks. In films, blacks usually play the roles of the antagonist or the degraded protagonist that deals with some sort of trouble. Films and readings typically cause viewers to alter their opinions about blacks and since the media portrays them as “ bad,” people may deduce that indeed, blacks are bad though this is false. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. develops his argument by using strong emotional connections as well as real-world foundations to immerse the audience in the world of racial influence.

In the end, Gates's readership is able to truly understand how race is influential in everyday life; article readings, conversations, and stereotypes.