

Time and distance overcome essay



**ASSIGN
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----- 8. Essay – Time and Distance Overcome

The relationship between white and black people in America is still today an ongoing issue, which can be traced back in history. Even though the issue isn't as big as it was 50 years ago, it still has influence in America, in every perspective, both as individuals but also as a community. Today we have a black president in America, so America has changed, but how was that possible? And how is the relationship between blacks and whites?

Another interesting perspective is the telephone, is a thing to communicate with, but can it also be used to make a bond between whites and blacks? That is what the essay “ Time and Distance Overcome” deals with. The text is an essay written by Eula Biss in 2008. She is well-known for her essays, and she is a white woman. The essay “ Time and Distance Overcome” deals with the issue of racism in America, and the history of the telephone poles. The composition of the essay is divided into three segments, which is marked by three stars.

The first section is from line 1 to 64, and focuses on the history of the telephone. The second segment is from line 65 to 135 and focuses on racism, and the last part from line 136 to the end is the conclusion and it connects the two first segments, and tells about her personal relationship telephone poles. At first it doesn't seem like there is any connection between the first two sections, but it is the telephone pole that connects these two. In the first segment, the language and atmosphere is positive, as she describes the history of the telephone.

At start the people was sceptical towards the use of telephones, and the War of Telephone Poles became a reality. But still the telephone and the telephone pole become symbol of something positive, as it connects people, even though the distance is great. “ Despite the war on Telephone Poles, it would take only four years after Bell’s first public demonstration of the telephone for every town of over 10, 000 people to be wired” (page 2, ll. 57-58) The second segment, however, is a big contrast to the first.

It describes how the white people lynched the black people through America. It is interesting to notice that the tone and atmosphere in the second segment is much more negative than the first one, as the telephone pole becomes symbol of something negative. The main theme of the text is also found in this segment, and it is not before that the reader has read the second segment that the reader understands that the purpose of the essay wasn’t to talk about telephones but about racism in America.

The third segment tells Eula Biss’ personal relationship to telephone poles, since her grandfather worked as a lineman. At that time she liked telephone poles as it reminded her of her grandfather. “ My grandfather was a lineman. He broke his back when a telephone pole fell. [...] When I was young I believed that the arc and swoop of telephone wires along the roadways were beautiful. [...] I believed my father when he said, ‘ My dad could raise a pole by himself. ’ And I believed that the telephone was a miracle. Now, I tell my sister, these wires do not look the same to me. (Page 5, ll. 136-142) Today she doesn’t see them the same way. She was grown up and learned the history of the telephone poles, and everything has changed. Thereby the personal relationship links the two earlier segments together.

Even though the essay is split in three segments, the telephone poles appear again and again, and when we have finished read the essay we have negative and positive connotations when we hear the word telephone poles. It also becomes a symbol for breaking boundaries, as it can be seen in the title “ Time and distance overcome”.

The negative symbol could also be the comparison of the telephone poles with a cross, as it refers to Ku Klux Klan but also to Jesus as he was “ lynched” on a cross, since he was crucified for no reason, and in the same way: The black people was lynched for no reason. The War of the Telephone Poles can be interpreted as white people hatred towards blacks, as we can see how the lynching of black people can be compared to the telephone poles being chopped down. But in the end she gives the telephone pole a different meaning. One summer, heavy rains fell in Nebraska and some green telephone poles grew small leafy branches. ” (Page 6, ll. 144-145) Here the telephone poles get a new symbolic meaning. It gives hope, as it symbolizes a tree. And that might also be the intention with her essay. If we look at the year the essay was written in, it can be seen that it was around the time where Barack Obama was running for president during the election in America. Therefore she might be a follower of the thought of a black president, and this essay, tells that even though America has had a tough history, it can be changed.

Her intention can also be seen in the way she argues. In the second segment she uses a lot of pathos, and the language is rather brutal, as it describes very direct the lynching of the black people, and it’s very clear to the reader where her feelings for racisms lays. She clearly want the reader to feel

sympathy for the black people, and by using pathos she manages to convince the reader that the lynching of black people was reckless and wrong, with no reason at all. She also uses logos, but that is mostly seen in the first segment as she tells the story of the telephone.

In the second segment she also uses logos, when she tells about when the lynchings happen. This balance of logos and pathos makes the essay trustworthy, and it also show the intention of her essay. The themes of the essay also show the intention of the essay, as it would be the boundaries between white and black people. The essay is well-written, and Eula Biss is good at convincing her reader that her thoughts about racisms are right. And she is right, because the telephone poles, which have appeared to be positive and negative, can bring hope today.

The telephone is interpreted as the communication between blacks and white, and therefore it can be said the there is still hop left. The telephone had also big resistance in the beginning, but it ended out to be one of the most important technological revolutions of the 20th century. In the same way the relationship between blacks and whites could be revolutionary for the 21st century. And Eula Biss believes in that, and she her essay show that with the history of the telephone and the lynching of the black. (1034 ord minus citater)