

Dyonne Diggs

December 2, 2016

ENGL 333

Dr. Chavis

“Being alive and being a woman is all I got, but being colored is a metaphysical dilemma I haven't conquered yet (Ntozake Shange).” As I watched the stage play, *For Colored Girls*, This quote made everything that had to do with my existence, clear for the first time. Understanding the conundrum that is being black and then also being a woman is something that isn't always understood in its fullest capacity. Realizing that the women suffrage movement didn't include black women, or that at a certain time a black man could own land, while a black woman could not. These interscetionalities; being a woman and being black are some few understand, Sojourner Truth is a woman that understood both before the term intersectionality existed. Certain things have changed since the great Sojourner Truth walked this earth, however a lot has not, especially if you are a black woman.

Born a slave and sold for one hundred dollars at a sheep auction, Sojourner Truth had already experienced way more than what most will experience in a lifetime. She spent majority of her childhood being shuffled around from owner to owner. Obviously none of us have experienced slavery, however we still feel the effects of it, to this day. I am not being sold to the highest bidder, as Truth experienced. However, I live where an entire system is designed for only one kind of person to fully succeed. While the emancipation law was still pending, Truth decided enough was enough, she took one of her children and literally walked off the plantation and never looked back. She traveled and also was the first black woman to present a case in front of

the United States court against a white man and win. She was definitely a trailblazer. These are things (aside from walking off a plantation) that are still taboo to this day.

In her "Aint I a Woman" speech delivered in 1851, which was completely improvised. Truth describes what is defined as intersectionality. During a convention men were going on about women wanting rights but they don't do physical labor and want men to put their coats over mud puddles and to be helped into carriages. This wasn't Truth's reality, even though she was indeed a woman, she was black and that disqualified her from any full rights that white feminists were fighting for. To white women, they are white, first then a woman and the same for women of color. I am led to use the example of the election, Donald Trump has actively spoke out against Women's Reproductive rights and also is against *Rowe Vs. Wade* and also wants to defund Planned Parenthood. With this knowledge, pre election, out of the white race, some 66% of white women voted for Trump, 60% were white males. White women voted against their womanhood, and voted in favor of their privilege. During the Women's Suffrage Movement, white women were fighting for women rights, but not rights for all women. I believe these prejudices still exist today.

Though not as extreme as the 17 and 18th centuries, on a daily basis black women must prove their womanhood and their humanity, as Truth had to as well. In "Aint I a Woman" she was fighting for her womanhood and her humanity. She was questioning "Aint I a Woman" in the sense of aren't a human and aren't I as worthy of the treatment that white women get as women, as well? This struggle between being colored and a woman is also evident in *The Anti-Slavery Bugle*, June 21, 1851. During the speech she expressed that there were things she had but had never owned. Her children, her husband(s) etc. Only black women can give birth and

their children not be, theirs. In the speech, white children have teachers but she questions “Who will teach the poor slave children?” aren't they all children? I am led to answer, no. Black children back then were commodities, not looked at a human, only something to be raised and profited from. Even though they were of value they were not valuable. This can be proven true today as it is normalized the criminalizing of black men, the fact that so many of us can be shot in the street and no one really have to answer for it. The fact that we are capitalized off of for our culture but not valued as human beings. Things have changed since the days of Sojourner Truth, however it is my argument that the disparities she endured are still very much happening they are just hidden. It is no longer publicly acceptable to say this movement for women’s rights are only for white women. However, putting in place laws that disproportionately effect African American women is the way racism and privilege is still around and thriving.