Kathryn Atherton

Analysis of a Written Document

Page 29 of the document, page 118 of “I (Heart) Amy Carter”

From *The Riot Grrrl Collection*, edited by Lisa Darms

* Meet the Document
  + Type
    - Other (zine page)
  + Describe it as if you were explaining it to someone who can’t see it
    - There are five items pasted into the page like a scrapbook
    - On the left is a “Dear Miss Manners” column by Judith Martin
    - In the center is another advice column called “Dear Dotti”
    - Below “Dear Dotti” is a shorter article about Drew Barrymore and Sara Gilbert
    - On the right of the “Dear Dotti” column is a picture of a young Amy Carter and her parents
    - Below this picture is a doodle of a heart. Inside the heart it says “Audre Lorde R.I.P”. There is an arrow pointing to a photo below of Audre Lorde
* Observe its parts
  + Who wrote it?
    - Various unknown people wrote the articles, in other pages it says Tammy Rae issues the *I (Heart) Amy Carter* zine, so I assume she put the page together
  + Who read/received it?
    - The subscribers to the mailing list of *Riot* *Grrrl* zine, the subscribers to the mailing list of *I (Heart) Amy Carter*, and now anyone who accesses *Riot Grrrl* archives online
  + When is it from?
    - Earlier pages say the issue was published in December of 1992
  + Where is it from?
    - Long Beach, CA
* Try to make sense of it
  + What is it talking about?
    - Two of the articles are people asking advice on “rebellious” behavior, specifically clothing, manners, and sexuality. The advisors give a “conventional” person’s backlash to the punk culture which has become more and more prominent in their everyday life.
    - The last article describes the glamorization of the same behavior in Hollywood.
    - The two photos show feminist activists that the author admires and crushes on.
  + Write one sentence summarizing this document.
    - The author criticizes the media for glamorizing “rebels” while also criticizing young women for wanting to be themselves/“rebel” against the mainstream and not be “little girls”.
  + Why did the author write it?
    - I think the author created this page to juxtapose how the public sees and reports on what is considered to be “rebellious behavior” in the media. The author probably read these pieces and laughed in disbelief, like I did, especially reading them together.
    - I think that additionally, the photos of the young feminist activists are there to remind the readers of the work these women have done for society and inspire the readers to continue to work so that harsh judgements like those published by the advice columns become less and less common.
  + Quote evidence from the document that tells you this.
    - “Does your mother know you’re out, little girl? You need to be smacked across the bottom and kept at home until you learn guys are for gals and vice versa.”
    - “What Miss Manners finds shocking is the rigid conventionality of the revolutionaries you describe.”
    - “Let us not hear any more nonsense about artists only being real when they have the superficial proof of wearing studio work clothes.”
    - “If rudeness were an indication of artistry, this would be the Renaissance.”
    - “She shares her first hot screen kiss with a girl.”
  + What was happening at the time in history this document was created?
    - The third wave of feminism was beginning.
    - Anita Hill testified about being sexually harassed by a man nominated to the Supreme Court
    - Ideas of sex positivity and sexual empowerment were spreading into the mainstream
* Use it as historical evidence
  + What did you learn from the document that you might not learn anywhere else?
    - I learned about the culture of the media during this time toward third-wave feminism and how it was perceived by members of the feminist community.
    - I also learned a little bit about the impact that Amy Carter and Audre Lorde had/have on the feminist community.
  + What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic?
    - I would like to find out more about Audre Lorde’s and Amy Carter’s work.
    - I would also like to know more about the reaction to Drew Barrymore’s movie described in the article.