Jacob Wall

Professor Boswell

English 1301

22 November 2011

An Education

One is asked usually asked, especially the months before graduating high school, where are they going to get an education? But as to what is an education exactly, the answer is not so simple. You will get as many different answers to that question as you would if you asked someone what their favorite food was. You will get the simple answers - much as you would expect people to say pepperoni pizza, you will get those who define it that to be educated one must be up to date in current events and think critically. You would get a more in depth definition as well, one that aligns with Merriam-Webster, “the field of study that deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools.” You may also get a deeper answer that an education is more of a transitionary period and not really about what you learn in books at all but more so the ability to function in society.

Education as a transitionary period is seen in the movie, *An Education*. Jenny, the protagonist, is a young teenage girl who has a goal of getting into Oxford and in the beginning of the film does only things that will get her closer to being accepted. On her way home from a recital in the rain a young thirty-year-old playboy approaches her telling that she should put her cello in the back of his car, because as a music lover, he would not like to see it get wet from the rain. He remains very professional stating “I'm a music lover and I'm worried about your cello, jump in.” He later suggests she walk alongside his car due to what is implied a very huge gap in age and how creepy it would seem. While Jenny walked home alongside of David’s car, and soon to enter his car, they get talking and hit it off well to only start one of Jenny’s worst but best decisions of her life – dating David. You can tell from the music in the scene that it is very happy, once Jenny is home she starts to sing Sur Les Quais Du Vieux Paris by Juliette Greco. The significance is that Sur Les Quais Du Vieux, translated to *On the Riverbanks of Old Paris* is a love story song. While even though most people cannot speak or understand French just from listening to it and the way that Jenny sings to it you can only tell that it is happy. The decision of hers to take a ride from a stranger, while no matter how innocent, ends up costing hear a year of her life, her virginity, and so much more. One should not always look at the negatives however as she got an education in the University of Life, one that many in society don not obtain until they are much older.

In another scene it opens with Jenny and Helen getting ready to go to Oxford, after Jenny had David lie to her parents to say that David had gone to Oxford and they would go and see C.S. Lewis. The girls, quite stereotypically, took their time to get ready and discussed their weekend ahead with their respective boyfriends. Helen is very shocked, but happy for Jenny, that she has not slept with David yet. It was only then that Jenny finally came to the conclusion that she was going to lose her virginity to David. You can tell from Jenny’s facial expression and the fact that the music is quickly faded out that at first when Helen brings up the fact that she will lose her virginity to David that it is awkward but she very quickly warms up to the idea.

Jenny’s errors and misjudgments may have cost her a great deal, a year of extra schooling, her virginity, and embarrassment she ended up coming out a more educated individual as a whole. While she may have a lost education in the form of Latin translation, English, etc., she came out learning more about life, that education should come above guys in every case, and gained international knowledge from travels. Those life lessons, part of the overall definition of education, are key parts that must be learned in life in order to be educated.