An Essay on Education

Write a five-paragraph-essay (900-1200 words) in which you reflect on and discuss Frederick Douglass and Sugata Mitra's thoughts on the importance of education.

**Quotes on Education**

“Education means emancipation. It means light and liberty. It means the uplifting of the soul of man into the glorious light of truth, the light by which men can only be made free.”

*– Frederick Douglass, "Blessings of Liberty and Education" (1894)*

"I tried to look at where did the kind of learning we do in schools, where did it come from? And you can look far back into the past, but if you look at present-day schooling the way it is, it's quite easy to figure out where it came from. It came from about 300 years ago, and it came from the last and the biggest of the empires on this planet. ["The British Empire"] Imagine trying to run the show, trying to run the entire planet, without computers, without telephones, with data handwritten on pieces of paper, and traveling by ships. But the Victorians actually did it. What they did was amazing. They created a global computer made up of people. It's still with us today. It's called the bureaucratic administrative machine. In order to have that machine running, you need lots and lots of people. They made another machine to produce those people: the school. The schools would produce the people who would then become parts of the bureaucratic administrative machine. They must be identical to each other. They must know three things: They must have good handwriting, because the data is handwritten; they must be able to read; and they must be able to do multiplication, division, addition and subtraction in their head. They must be so identical that you could pick one up from New Zealand and ship them to Canada and he would be instantly functional. The Victorians were great engineers. They engineered a system that was so robust that it's still with us today, continuously producing identical people for a machine that no longer exists. The empire is gone, so what are we doing with that design that produces these identical people, and what are we going to do next if we ever are going to do anything else with it?"

*– Sugata Mitra, "Build a School in the Cloud" (2013)*

Sources:

Frederick Douglass: ”The Blessings of Liberty and Education”. Political Speech, 1894. <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/blessings-of-liberty-and-education/>

Sugata Mitra: “Build a School in the Cloud”. Ted Talk, 2013. <https://www.ted.com/talks/sugata_mitra_build_a_school_in_the_cloud/transcript>