

Between the World and me

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Introduction

Between the World and Me

- The book is written in the perspective of a letter written to the authors son about the harsh realities he faced growing up as an African american male in west baltimore and new york during the late 20th century. The book goes into his mindset growing up and what he learned from “the streets” as well as what he could absorb from the outside world. He attended Howard University and discovered his “mecca” in the library where he was surrounded by many culture and books. Throughout the book he tries to give his son lessons on life and things to expect as an african american, especially the injustices that he might be experience like his father Ta-Nehisi.

About the Author

Ta-Nehisi Coates

- He is an African-American writer/journalist whose works include information and opinion on racial relations in america. In 2015 he won the National Book award for nonfiction on his book "*Between the World and Me*". Overall Coates' works help bridge the gap between races as he helps to inform others on topics they are unfamiliar with and as well as work to protect african american culture.

Major Themes

- One major theme in the book is the idea of protecting african american culture and its beauty from outside influences. Throughout the book he solidifies the idea that black culture and black people are beautiful and for so long they have been suppressed of their cultures. He thinks it is important to show off these things that make the black culture unique and beautiful.
- Another major theme in this book is how the black body has been “plundered” throughout the history of the U.S. and how it is important to protect the black body from further enslavement. Throughout the book Ta-nehisi speaks on a young african american male named Prince Jones who was wrongfully killed by a corrupt police officer and how Prince was robbed of his body. he compares atrocities like this to that of slavery and in which both the black body has been plundered. This idea shows how throughout history wether slavery or segregation or any other attrocity committed upon the african americans in the name of the government have simply been a plundering and ravaging of the black body itself. As he writes the letter to his son he places a sense of urgency on protecting the black body for future generations of african american culture.

Major themes Continued

- Another theme that is consistent throughout the book is the idea of “dreamers” and the “dream”. The Dream that Ta nehisi portrays is the classic american dream where anyone through hard work can achieve some sort of success, but he explains it in a way that puts emphasis on how the african american people have been robbed of their own freedoms and dreams in order to allow for this american dream. Within this “dream” theme he shows how the typical american dream could no longer be attainable if it werent for the exploitation of african americans throughout U.S. history. And the dreamers are those people who buy into the dream and ignore the facts that suggest this country’s freedom was built upon the slavery of african americans.

How This Applies to U.S. History

- All of these themes can apply to U.S. history and the idea of slavery. For example when the first African slaves arrived in virginia in 1619, it was the start of the plundering of the black body and the exploitation of slaves for the material gain of America. From slaves working on tobacco plantations and cotton plantations which plays a big part in american history because of the huge role African American slaves had in the very construction of this country.
- The idea of protecting black culture can relate to U.S. history because for so long in the history of America black culture has been suppressed from slavery to segregation to racism all through out history placing wrongful shame upon black culture.

How this applies to U.S history continued

- The themes of the “dream” in the book can relate to U.S history going all the way back to the start and how this country was founded upon freedoms and the ability to pursue happiness and the ability to own land as well as democracy but only if you were a white male. This shows how along U.S. history african americans have been plundered in order to make this country while all along not having freedoms in the very country african slaves created. And throughout history African Americans have been given small pieces of freedom with the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendment and the civil rights act of 1964. These acts while good further solidify the idea of racial injustice being committed all throughout the history of the U.S. because these rights should have been for everyone since the very beginning.

How this affects my thinking

Affirmed

- Reading this book has affirmed my perspective on the idea of the U.S. being built upon the plundering of the black body. For example ta nehisi brought up a point about how the freedoms promised by America were built upon the freedoms taken away by the african american people. So this has affirmed my perspective on the exploitation of african americans throughout history.

Changed

- While reading this book i have altered my perspective on the american dream and i have come to realize that the “american dream” has caused a lot of poverty and racism in america. Its also given me a new perspective on how slavery and while it technichally ended with the civil war has very much so continued even long after the civil war with segregation and racial injustices brought upon african american people by the system. Brought me to think about what freedom really is.

Takeaways

My takeaways from this book would be that i now have a whole new perspective on the history of america and the way that society works. After reading this book it has made me think more heavily on the plundering of the african american body throughout history and the idea of the “dream” and how it was stripped from the african americans. I wouldn't change anything about this book as i thought it to be very educating and i like how it is not persuading you to change a mindset it simply just educates the reader to make the decision themselves. Which is what Ta nehisi told his son he wanted.